

Florida Fish Busters  
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National Fishing and Boating Week.

By: Bob Wattendorf

National Fishing & Boating Week is June 2-10, and across the nation there will be fishing derbies, regattas, educational events, boating demonstrations, festivals and many other aquatic activities. In Florida, most of these events are sponsored by local groups and businesses. In addition to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC's) Web site ([MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)), you can also visit [TakeMeFishing.org](http://TakeMeFishing.org) to discover fishing sites and events near you.



“The idea behind National Fishing & Boating Week is really quite simple,” says Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) President Frank Peterson. “We’re trying to get the family up off the couch to get outside and have some fun.”

Darrell Scovell, director of the FWC's Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management, recognizes the importance of promoting fishing to the public. “Angling creates a way to get families and individuals involved by reminding them about how fun a simple fishing trip can be and how important it is that we don't lose sight of our role in nature,” he says.

Interest in outdoor activities is slowly declining as kids spend more time indoors — a trend that also contributes to America's obesity problem and some say to reducing public support for environmental programs. Teaching young people to fish, boat and respect the environment at an early age can open their minds to how interdependent nature and people are, inspire their curiosity and open the door to a lifetime of recreational fun.

Richard Louv, author of “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder” emphasizes the expanding disconnect between young people and nature. Louv describes “nature deficit disorder” as the price humanity pays for alienating ourselves from nature. Edward Wilson coined the term ‘biophilia’ to describe a person's need “to affiliate with other forms of life.” Perhaps that would imply we are at risk of letting our children become ‘biophobic,’ if we don't provide them an opportunity to connect with nature. Louv cites actual studies showing the relationship between lack of parks and open space to high crime rates, depression and other urban maladies and refers to new studies suggesting exposure to nature may reduce symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



The future of our resources is in the hands of our youth and in the vision and commitment of the parents, extended family, teachers and friends, who help mold their ideals and values. Recreational fishing is an American tradition as old as the country and has long been valued for the peace and tranquility it can provide to anyone who wishes to escape the pressures of life for a few blissful hours. Fishing also provides an opportunity to spend quality time in a peaceful, non-intimidating setting, talking and reconnecting with family and friends. As fishing skills develop, a level of self-confidence is attained and organizational and planning challenges are met.

Recreational fishing also has health benefits for adults. The New York State Recreation and Park Society reports that nationwide polls indicate 89 percent of Americans have high levels of stress and 59 percent have great stress at least once a week. Ann Reskin, from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, says stress is a major factor in many chronic health problems. In fact, health care expenditures are nearly 50 percent greater for workers who report high levels of stress. It's now widely believed that job stress increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, certain psychological disorders and musculoskeletal disorders of the back and upper extremities. Psychologists have demonstrated a simple walk in the woods can boost the immune system — not only while you're out in nature but for several days afterward.

So whether it's National Fishing and Boating Week or any other day of the year, consider taking some time away from the stresses of life and enjoying nature out on the water with someone you care about.

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Act now and get **FREE STUFF** when you buy a five-year freshwater fishing license. Until the first 3,000 are sold, you will receive a package of free fishing items in the mail automatically. Order before June 3rd, and you may be able to make this part of dad's **Father's Day** present. Verify by checking the status at [MyFWC.com/Fishing/5yr-2007.html](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/5yr-2007.html) before ordering. The license cost is only \$61.50 and remains valid even if license prices go up, or you move out of state.

Included in the package are hooks (Daiichi), reel grease (PENN), FloatHi GLO (snap on float), and lures from Charlie Brewer's Slider Co. and Don Bett's Spin Baits. In addition, you'll find innovative products like the Hydrosonic Fish Call (CAGI), and florescent worm feed. Premiums include a floating key chain from Seminole County, a waterproof Polk County Lakes Map, and a Largemouth Bass decal from Advanced Graphics. A variety of coupons fill out the package.