

Florida Fish Busters

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Make fishing more enjoyable for all of us—be an ethical angler.

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If you really want to know why fishing is fun, all you have to do is take a child out and watch the stream of emotions that light up his face as he learns to bait a hook, cast and finally hook-up and retrieve a fish. The joy of learning, the



reconnection with nature and our heritage, and the fulfillment of knowing he can catch his own -- just like the pioneers -- all contribute to that sensational smile.

Those are the same reasons -- social scientists discover time and again -- fishing remains such a popular recreational activity. Herbert Hoover said “Fishing is much more than fish. It is the great occasion when we may return to the fine simplicity of our forefathers.”

Dozens of studies have consistently verified that involvement with family members and friends, escaping the daily routine, relaxation, being outdoors close to nature, and the sport and challenge of fishing are the top five reasons for fishing. Further, these motives remain at the top of the list regardless of the group being studied.



What this means is that conservation agencies, guides, facility planners, anglers and boaters all can play roles in making fishing more fun and satisfying for everyone on the water. The key is an abiding love for aquatic resources and the conservation stewardship ethic that helps keep those natural resources pristine. The following checklist of ethical angling practices provides a starting point that will make fishing more enjoyable for everyone and help ensure current and future generations can enjoy safe and sustainable fishing opportunities.

AN ETHICAL ANGLER:

- ☑ Promotes, through example and mentoring, ethical behavior in use of aquatic resources.
- ☑ Values and respects the aquatic environment and all living things. Treats other anglers, boaters and property owners with courtesy and respect, including removing boat trailers promptly from active launching areas, watching his wake around other boaters, and providing adequate fishing space to anglers already on the fishing spot.
- ☑ Avoids spilling and never dumps pollutants, such as gas or oil. Appropriately disposes of trash, including worn lines, leaders and hooks. Recycles whenever possible and keeps fishing sites litter-free.
- ☑ Purchases required fishing licenses and permits. [If you are exempt, you may still purchase a license as a way to contribute to conservation. See MyFWC.com/licenses.]
- ☑ Learns and obeys angling and boating regulations (see MyFWC.com for details, or pick up a copy of the Florida Fishing Regulations where you buy your license) and can identify fish so he can adhere to the rules.
- ☑ Keeps no more fish than needed for consumption, and never wastefully discards fish, while complying with the law. Carefully handles and releases

alive all fish that are unwanted or prohibited by regulation. Uses tackle and techniques that minimize harm to fish when catch-and-release angling.

- ☑ Takes precautionary measures to prevent spread of exotic plants and animals and does not use diseased or nonnative baits.
- ☑ Participates in conservation efforts such as beach cleanups, vegetation transplanting, tagging studies and creel surveys.
- ☑ Practices safe angling and boating by following the laws and using common sense practices to prevent injury to himself, others or property.
- ☑ Protects the environment from damage caused by careless boat operation, including being aware of prop-scouring of vegetation, wake damage to shorelines, power-loading problems at ramps, anchoring on reefs and danger to and from striking animals such as manatees or sturgeons.
- ☑ Conserves energy and water in his daily life, knowing how it affects local fish and wildlife.

Fishing Licenses

Fishing licenses generally are required by law if you are between 16 and 65 years old. However, many anglers know buying a license helps fund fish and wildlife conservation and voluntarily buy one as a way of showing their stewardship ethic.

Instant licenses are available online at [MyFWC.com/License](https://myfwc.com/license) or by calling 1-888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356)

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