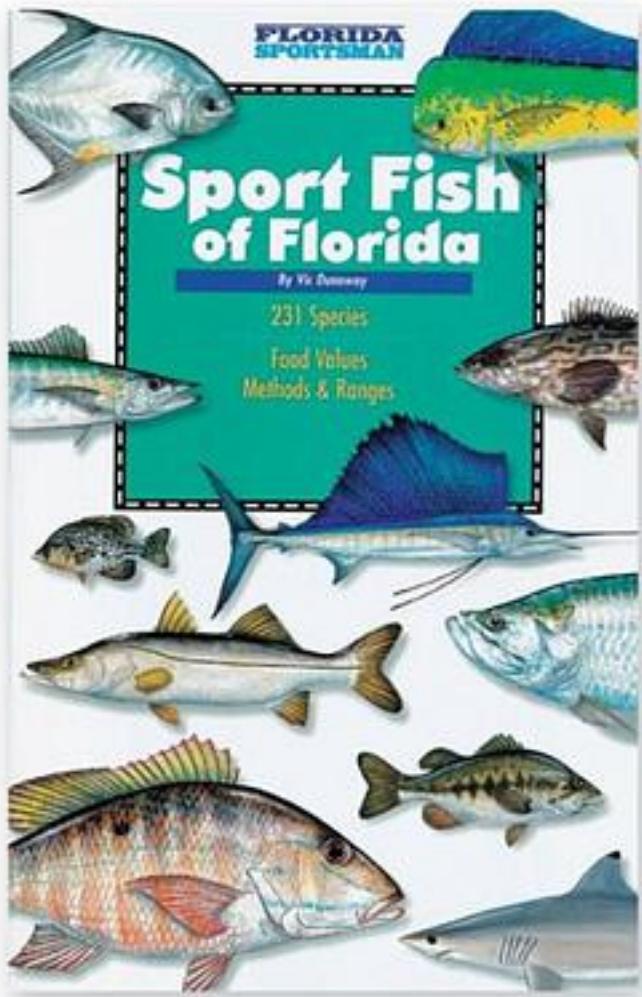


Sport Fish of Florida



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THE ANGLER'S PRACTICAL GUIDE The good, the bad, the ugly--for the very first time, they're all here together in a book of their own, a book that illustrates and describes virtually every kind of fish an angler in Florida--or the Bahamas or Caribbean Islands--could expect to find on the end of a line. In this book you'll find the scoop on every hook-and-line species from the mightiest Marlin to the lowliest Lizardfish, along with advice on how to catch each one and how good it is to eat. Because it's designed as a practical guide for fishermen, every effort has been made to keep biological jargon at bay. However, there is one nod to the world of science that is unavoidable--the inclusion of scientific names so that each of the species can be definitely pinpointed. Without scientific names, confusion would reign, because most species are known by more than one common name and, in many cases, two or more different species share the same common name. It would have been nice to sort the species by their preferred environment--offshore, inshore, reef, flats or whatever. But as fishermen realize all too well, fish have tails and can swim where they please. The same kind of fish you catch on a flat today and in a bridge channel tomorrow may well strike your bait out on the deep reef next weekend. The constant element of surprise is one of the most appealing aspects of angling in this great area. Alphabetical and strictly scientific classifications would have other drawbacks, so it was decided to use a mixed system that lets the species fall into whatever groupings would be natural. Most of the chapters cover a particular family of fishes. Some, however, deal with species that are not related but have certain habits or attributes in common. All are listed in a complete index at the end of the book.

BE SURE TO ABIDE BY THE LAW A great many kinds of fish are protected by conservation laws that may include licenses, daily bag limits, possession limits, minimum and maximum size limits, permitting and other legal requirements. Many different jurisdictions and agencies are involved in managing the fisheries--at least a half-dozen in Florida alone, to say nothing of other countries--and their regulations sometimes conflict. In Florida, information is available from such sources as Florida Sportsman Magazine, county courthouses and many tackle shops. Visitors to Florida or the Islands usually are able to get the needed information from their travel agents, resorts, fishing camps or charter captains.

BEWARE OF TOXIC FISH Ciguatera is a type of poison carried by certain individual fish in tropical waters. Although only a minute number of fish are affected, people sometimes acquire the toxin, mostly by eating very big specimens of predatory types, such as the Great Barracuda, Amberjack, and even some larger varieties of Grouper and Snapper. The resulting illness can be serious and lingering, but is rarely fatal. Ciguatera seems to be more common in some species than in others, but its occurrence is rarely predictable. In a given area, a few fish of a particular species may be carriers of the toxin while the majority of individuals of that same species are perfectly safe to eat. The toxin comes from microscopic organisms called dinoflagellates that attach themselves to marine algae. Grazing fishes acquire the toxin by eating the algae. Predators acquire it by eating the grazers; however, it must accumulate in the muscle tissue of the predator for a considerable amount of time before reaching levels that are dangerous to human beings. It is always wise to let the big predators go and eat the smaller ones. A second kind of marine fish illness--Puffer poisoning--is more serious--often fatal, in fact. But it is also far more easily avoided. All you have to do is refrain from eating a

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