

# RedFish

- Scientific name; Sciaenops Scellatus



# Redfish Facts

Redfish, one of Florida's top sport fish.

Redfish are aggressive feeders that will take a Varsity of artificial and live baits.

Once hooked they are tenacious fighters and although they rarely jump their strong runs and long fights make them an anglers dream.

# Redfish

- In southwest Florida, catching a snook, tarpon and a redfish on the same day is referred to as a grand slam.
- Other names include, red drum, puppy drum, spottail, red bass and channel bass



# Redfish on fly



# Redfish Description

- Redfish are easily identified by a black spot on there tail. Some have multiple spots and rarely a redfish will be spotless.
- The spots purpose is generally thought to be a defense mechanism to fool predators as to which end is the head.



# Red with six spots



# Redfish Description

- Their common name Red Drum describes their reddish hue and the sound they make when they are caught and while breeding.
- The drumming is produced by special muscles rubbing against the inflated air bladder. Like rubbing your finger on a balloon.





# Redfish Description

- Red Drum are reddish brown on the back fading to white on the belly.
- Juveniles have a copper or bronze tint and sometimes have a blue tint to there tail.
- The body is elongated and thick with a gently arched back and sloping head.
- They have two dorsal fins.
- The front has sharp spines and the back is soft.



# Red Drum Description

- The tail is broad and either flat at the end or slightly concave.
- The long side fins or pectoral fins are the color of rust.
- The color will vary depending on where the fish lives. Fish taken off shore and on sandy bottoms will be lighter in color.





# Red Drum Description

- Red Drum in Florida can live from 25 to 35 years.
- Reds on the west coast are generally smaller than on the east.
- On average they can grow to 40 inches, 40 pounds on the west coast.
- Range is from Key West to Massachusetts.
- Throughout the Gulf of Mexico.





# Redfish Facts

- Redfish live in a wide range of salinities, making them very versatile.
- The ability to tolerate low salt levels depends on the size of the fish.
- Juveniles can live in near fresh water where adults prefer higher salt levels.



# Redfish facts

- Redfish are also comfortable in a wide range of water temperatures, from 50 degrees f. to 81.5 f.
- Small redfish can tolerate an even wider temperature range, from about 36 to 91.
- They are vulnerable to sudden drops in temperature and will head for deeper water during cold snaps.





# Redfish facts

- Male redfish mature at about two years and four pounds of weight.
- females at about four years and thirteen pounds.
- They spawn in the fall when the water starts to cool and the daylight decreases. Ten and a half hours or less of daylight.
- They spawn near passes and inlets.

# Redfish facts

- Redfish in the everglades may travel further offshore to spawn.
- Spawning is often triggered by a spring tide, new and full moon phases.
- By the end of there fist year redfish are about 13-14 inches.
- They grow throughout their life although once the reach three feet long they grow in girth more than length.





# Redfish facts

- In the 1970's redfish populations began to decline in Florida.
- Possibly from declining water quality, loss of habitat and diversion of freshwater water flows.
- The surging popularity of blackened redfish in the early 80's resulted in similar declines throughout the U.S.

# Redfish facts

- In 1986 state and federal governments began enacting regulations to protect redfish.
- A complete ban on commercial fishing in 1988.
- Florida's hatchery program started in 1988 at the Port Manatee hatchery.
- Between 1988 and 2004 more than six million juvenile redfish were released into Tampa bay, Sarasota bay, Biscayne bay, Indian river, and the estuaries of Collier and Volusia counties.



# Season and possession limits

- Reds may be taken all year.
- They must measure over 18" and under 27"
- To measure, you can squeeze the tail to make the fish as long as possible.
- One fish per person a day
- Two fish possession limit



# Records

- Florida record is 52lbs 5 oz
- Caught in Cocoa in 1996.
- Largest on fly, 43lbs, 1995 in the banana river
- Largest ever caught 92 lbs



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# Best Tides and times to fish for redfish

- Generally the best tide is a incoming.
- Reds will feed on the newly covered oyster bars foraging for crabs, shrimp and small fish.
- Reds will move deep into the back country on spring high tides.
- On the falling tide look for fish to be coming out of bights and small bays. Fish the drop offs and eddies.
- Early morning and late evening will be the most productive.
- Overcast day are very good.

# Tackle for redfish

- Most of the time a 6' 6" to 7' medium action spinning rod rigged with 8-12 lb test mono or 15-20 braid will be best.
- In the fall a heavier rod may be necessary to catch large breeding fish in fast moving currents and passes or from piers and jetties.
- For fly fishing a 9' 7-9 wt with a wff line and a 9' leader.



# Baits

- Reds will take a variety of lures and baits.
- Jigs, plastics, and Gulp baits work great for fish feeding on the bottom.
- In shallow water a subsurface and floating plug will attract strikes.
- They are attracted to noise, making popping and gurgling lures effective.

# Fishing spots

- In the fall look for spawning fish in passes, around jetties and piers and near shore reefs and submerged structure
- In Pine island sound and the southern part of the Everglades National Park. Redfish will tail as they forage in the shallow grasses.

# Fishing spots

- Around Naples and the Ten Thousand Islands reds tend to tail less as they feed over oyster bars more than grass.
- These fish can still be site cast. Shallow bays and bights can be productive
- Look for oysters in three feet or less depth.
- In the back country of Everglades, Rookery Bay and The Marco area, work mangrove shore lines near moving water.