

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Image Guidelines for Fishing and Boating Scenes

Florida is the “Fishing Capital of the World” due to great resources and responsible management, and we want to keep it that way. Promoting Florida fishing and boating includes an obligation to portray the fun, excitement and camaraderie in a positive fashion that reflects safe and sustainable use of Florida’s natural resources. As a consequence, the following photographic tips and guidelines are provided, and we encourage all of our partners to use them to the greatest extent possible.

SUBJECT MATTER TIPS

1. Photos of anglers should reflect good taste and safe, legal and conservation-minded fishing practices.
2. Emphasize the fun of fishing with big smiles and natural settings. Remember that trash in the background, excess blood, or tobacco or alcohol use can severely limit our ability to use an image.
3. When possible leave fish in the water for the photo, if they are going to be released--and definitely, if they are illegal to harvest. A good angle is with the fish held at the surface and the photo taken from over the angler’s shoulder. It gives size and perspective to the fish without ever taking it out of the water.
4. Ensure that boating safety equipment is evident in the photo, for instance, life jackets should always be on children in a boat and on anglers in small boats that are underway.
5. Photos should routinely depict safe boating practices, including avoiding overloading small vessels, use of kill switches, etc.
6. Fish that are illegal to harvest, due to creel or size limits, should be shown in the water—for instance, undersized sailfish jumping or a goliath grouper alongside the boat about to be released. Gaffs should not be used on any fish that may be released. Tarpon that are out of the water should preferably have a “legally harvested” tag showing.
7. If you have to remove fish from the water, try holding your breath while the fish is out of the water as a reminder to release it quickly. Handling fish by the jaw can be very damaging. Large fish should never be suspended by the jaw, not even to weigh them, if they are going to be released. To protect the slime layer, use wet hands to handle fish—gloves and towels tend to erode the fish’s protective slime layer. Similarly, use of knotted nets can injure the fish; knotless rubber coated nets are preferred. Never touch the eyes and gills. The proper way is to hold the fish horizontally with its weight distributed as evenly as possible. Lip grips can be damaging if the jaw is hyper-extended or the fish is too heavy and is suspended only by the jaw. However, holding and supporting the fish horizontally with a thumb (depending on the species be careful of sharp teeth) or lip grip in the mouth and using the other hand to help support and control the fish can keep it from thrashing around or getting loose. Properly used, hemostats, needle-nosed pliers or

dehooking tools can be useful for backing the hook out, but cut the line if it is deeply embedded.

8. For More Information see the following Web sites:
 - a. Saltwater fish handling tips can be found at:
http://catchandrelease.org/Catch_and_Release_web.pdf
 - b. Boating safety regulations can be found at:
MyFWC.com/boating/safety-education/

PHOTOGRAPHIC TIPS

1. Digital or film—Digital cameras work fine for most applications. However, if you plan to print the image, a minimum resolution of 2 megapixels (good for a 4” x 6” image) and as high as 10 megapixels for a cropped magazine cover shot or poster are needed. RAW format is preferred, since it provides the photo editors with the greatest flexibility. However, RAW files are larger and take longer to record, so for many applications a JPG or TIF file is acceptable.
2. ISO—ISO refers to the light capturing quality of film, but a similar setting is available on many digital cameras. Lower numbers (25-100) require more light, but capture much greater detail. High numbers (400-1000+) can provide images in low light and help stop motion by allowing higher shutter speeds; however, they sacrifice detail.
3. The rule of thirds applies—when composing photos, it is often best to not center your subject, but place them so that the focal point is about one-third of the way from an edge. This creates a nicer aesthetic feel.
4. Close up—Scenic shots are great, while wide angle, panoramic or fish-eye effects all have their place. However, for many fishing shots you’ll want to come close to filling the frame with the fish, the angler and their fish, or a scene including the tackle and fish. Getting close is always best; using an optical zoom is good as well, but avoid using the digital zoom because you are not actually increasing the quality of your image.
5. Merges—merges occur when some distracting background seems to merge with your subject, for instance a branch that seems to be growing like horns from someone’s head. As you are composing your shot, be aware of the background.
6. Smiles—when photographing anglers, it’s all about the fun of fishing that should be reflected in the anglers’ smiles and body language. Mix the direction up with anglers sometimes focused on the fish, rather than the camera.
7. Lighting—Natural light, especially early morning and late afternoon, tends to provide the most dynamic effect. When using a flash, ensure you are close enough for the power of your flash and be aware of the redevye effect. To some degree that can be corrected with redevye reduction flashes that flash several times to cause the subject’s pupils to contract prior to the photo; however, it can often interfere with spontaneous composure of the

photo. To avoid shadows on someone's face, for instance from their cap bill, consider using your camera's fill flash.

8. Bracketing—This refers to taking a few exposures that will be lighter than or darker than the default setting. Various cameras access this feature in different ways. By selecting -0.5 to -2.0 you can add more blue to a gray sky, and by going +0.5 to +2.0 you can lighten things up and expose the shadows, for instance under a Bimini cover.
9. Polarized filters are extremely helpful in reducing glare from the water and enhancing contrast, while making water scenes more vivid. You can actually hold your polarized sunglasses close in front of a camera lens and benefit from the same effect.
10. Take extra shots, with digital cameras you don't have to print what you don't use but the extra shots, especially of groups, may offer subtle improvements.

(Examples of photos are on the following pages)

SAMPLE PHOTOS



Notes: Fish are legal sized, and there are enough anglers to justify the creel limits. Although not preferred due to an emphasis on harvest, this photo is acceptable.

Photo compliments of FWC



Notes: Fish is being handled properly with the weight supported. The possibility of live release is evident and the smile denotes the fun and excitement.

Photo compliments of FWC



Notes: A well-composed photo featuring a nice-sized fish with the tackle and some habitat showing.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: The youth fishing fun and excitement is evident along with the PFD. Fish is being handled satisfactorily and could be released.

Photo compliments of FWC



Notes: Another great shot that shows family fishing/boating fun with proper use of PFDs.

Photo compliments of RBFF



Notes: This is a great photo of a nice fish and probable live-release, but the emphasis on advertising makes it less desirable for use in agency publications (unless paid for by advertising/sponsor revenues).

Photo compliments of JF Griffin Publishing



Notes: This is clearly a fish being harvested and is legal, so it is acceptable but not highly preferred.

Photo compliments of FWC



Notes: Underwater photos of live fish in natural habitats are very useful. However, fish should not be fed and evidence of disturbing fish or habitat should be avoided.

Photo compliments of Glen Lau



Notes: Holding a fish by the lower jaw like this is NOT advised, but given the size of the fish and youth of the angler, it would be acceptable.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: Scenic photos like this often have extra utility, because there is space to place text or mast heads on the photo, or use it for a wrap around cover.

Photo compliments of Stan Kirkland, FWC



Notes: Goliath grouper cannot be harvested and, therefore, should never be brought aboard a boat. Handling like this will very likely result in the fish's death.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: Lip grips can help control fish, especially when they will be harvested. Holding the fish under the body helps support the weight preventing damage.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: Although generally a good photo and handling, special considerations with tarpon make it highly preferable that a harvest tag be evident in any photo showing a tarpon on a boat.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: This is a good photo of a tarpon. Since it is still in the water, a tag isn't required.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: Good photo. Inflatable PFD on woman poling (looks like a fanny-pack) and evident PFD on angler in the bow.

Photo compliments of Tim Donovan, FWC



Notes: Another properly handled bass that shows off the fish and ethical catch-and-release practices.

Photo compliments of Phil Chapman, FWC



Notes: The use of the glove in this photo is not recommended. The sore on the fish although not induced by the capture tends to make it unsightly for most agency uses.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: The presence of significant amounts of blood in this photo is undesirable. Simply having rinsed the anglers arm off would have made for a nicer shot.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: The size of this sailfish is questionable, and it shouldn't be drug over the gunwale of the boat.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: Handling sharks in this manner should not be encouraged for safety reasons.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: This is a nice shot showing proper handling and encouraging release.

Photo compliments of Florida Media



Notes: This is an example of a merge corrected via photoediting software. The left image looks like there is a bracket stuck on the angler's head; the right image removes this distraction. It should be reported as edited.



Notes: Good photo again supporting youth fishing fun and safe boating.

Photo compliments of Joe Benedict, FWC