
April 2026 Newsletter!

2 messages

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Sun, Apr 12, 2026 at 11:09 AM

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To: fishonclubnpr@gmail.com



Your April 2026 Newsletter!

The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, April 14. Doors open at 6:30, meeting starts at 7:00. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Captain Jared Crisp of Knee Deep Charters.



The guest speaker at our March meeting was Captain Dave Blanchard who gave a great presentation and told us all about water conditions, baits and tactics while fishing.



Captain David Blanchard 727-709-6592

Captain Christian Zarra 727-433-1788

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General Membership Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Morningstar at 7:05pm.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Captain Dave Blanchard of Live Action Fishing Adventures. He said that what is *extremely* important while fishing, regardless of what you're fishing for or what kind of bait is being used, is water clarity, water temperature and tides. He explained what he does while trolling and using different

gadgets with whitebaits and lures. Chicken rigs are his favorite as they are the most productive with all kinds of fish. He further explained all about hook sizes, line strength and tactics he uses while fishing. An excellent speaker, Captain Dave also followed up with a great question-and-answer discussion after his presentation.

Our annual Spring Picnic is coming up on March 28 and event chairman Frank Poggio said he's all set with the food, fun and games. There is a signup sheet for all going.

The next social dinner will be on March 18th at Whiskey River on the Water beginning at 5:30. The social for April will be on the 22nd at the Gulf Harbors Yacht Club.

Tournaments – the current tournament is for trout and all details are in the club newsletter. There is also a tournament for Autism Anglers Fun Day on April 4 and the Rusty Bucket Fishing tournament on May 30.

The annual Anclote Kids Fishing Tournament was held on February 28 and it was a great time for the kids.

Members told about their recent fishing and the bite has increased substantially.

The 50/50 winner was Terry Reelitz - \$60 - which he donated to our Wish to Fish subsidiary.

Number of members and guests in attendance – 26.

The next general membership meeting will be April 14.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted,

John Grieder



From the FWC

Issue 44

April - June 2026



Our Purpose: To identify excellent Florida freshwater fishing opportunities and to provide anglers with relevant information that will enhance the quality of their outdoor experience.

TrophyCatch Tracker



Chandler Smith drove the #38 GoOutdoors Florida TrophyCatch truck to a win in the Craftsman Truck Series at Daytona!

The big news this quarter was a very successful marketing campaign promoting Florida fishing and license sales. [GoOutdoorsFlorida](#) and [TrophyCatch](#) partnered with Front Row Motorsports to sponsor a truck in the Craftsman Truck Series Fresh from Florida 250 race at Daytona in February. The truck design featured an eye-

catching full-length bass graphic. Chandler Smith pushed the truck to a thrilling photo-finish win in the last seconds of the race. Over a million people watched the race and saw the Florida bass front and center as he drove up to victory lane. It was a win for racing fans and conservation alike.



During the race week FWC staff worked a booth, handing out prizes and talking with attendees about Florida fishing. Multiple TrophyCatch participants were greeted warmly when they introduced themselves at the booth.



The grand finale was the reverse drawing among our five [Phoenix](#) TrophyCatch boat finalists which took place right on the Daytona midway! The "last one standing" and lucky winner of the Season 13 boat was Justin Goodman (left). It was an incredible week of fun and excitement all promoting Florida's great fishing.

TrophyCatch Season 14 is still going strong as Florida's annual spawning season winds down. Multiple double-digit and Hall of Fame bass were submitted in the last quarter, including the lucky catch below. The latest totals for the TrophyCatch program are:

- 13,349 Lunker Club (8-9.9 lbs.) bass
- 3,372 Trophy Club (10-12.9 lbs.)
- 176 Hall of Fame (13+ lbs.)
- **16,897 TOTAL approved bass submissions to date**



This 12 lbs. 4 oz. Trophy Club bass (above) was caught in Putnam County! Check out the [Hooked On Putnam](#) page for an exciting opportunity to win an awesome fishing trip prize package when you submit and have catches approved for TrophyCatch that are from Putnam County!

[Register for TrophyCatch](#) or view approved angler catches to help plan your next fishing trip at [TrophyCatch.com](#). Follow [TrophyCatch on Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for featured big bass, program updates and partner highlights.

[Did you know?](#)



You can check the FWC's [Freshwater Fish Stocking page](#) to search for waters near you that have been stocked with a variety of fish species. Recent stocking information is available by year in list format or by searching the [Interactive Stocking Map!](#)

Featured Fish: Blue Tilapia

Size: The blue tilapia is one of our largest nonnative fish. The state record is 10.09 pounds. The Big Catch minimum size for recognition is 5.00 lbs. or 18 inches.

Identification and similar

species: The broken lateral line distinguishes this fish as a

cichlid. Adults are blue-gray shading to white on the belly; juveniles may possess dark spots on the body. The borders of the dorsal and caudal fins may have red to pink edges. Nile tilapia and Mozambique tilapia are very similar but usually have distinct vertical striping on the caudal fin (tail). Possible hybridization between these species further complicates identification.

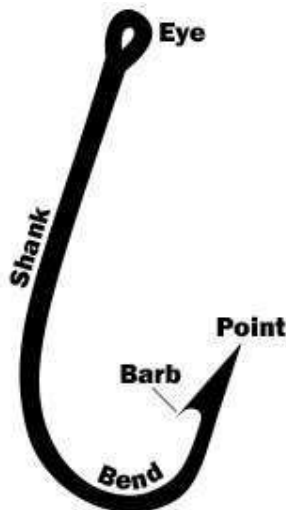


Angling qualities: Tilapia are not known for their sporting quality, but do fight well on rod-and-reel. Tilapia can be caught using small pieces of hot dog, bread balls, dog food, or live worms for bait. They are rarely caught on artificial lures. They can be harvested by cast net (where allowed) and are popular bowfishing targets. As an illegally-introduced nonnative there are no bag or size limits. Tilapia have white, flaky meat with a mild flavor and are considered excellent eating. Tilapia are commonly available in grocery stores and restaurants.

Where to catch them: The blue tilapia may be Florida's most widespread nonnative fish. It is abundant throughout most of the state and can be found in lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and canals. It is tolerant of saltwater and found in some near shore marine habitats, such as Tampa Bay (see the article on **Freshwater and Saltwater Fish** below).

Interesting facts: Even when you don't actually see them, you can often tell that blue tilapia are present by their very large beds along the shoreline. Males dig circular nests more than 2 feet across in shallow water over a sandy bottom. The male swims out to a passing female and leads her to the nest where courtship and egg-laying occur. The female takes the eggs into her mouth, where they are protected until they hatch. The fry are occasionally released to feed, but whenever threatened they return to the female's mouth for protection until they are about three weeks old. This type of parental care is called mouth-brooding.

[Hooked on Hooks](#)



No matter how good of a rod you're using, no matter what brand of line is on the reel, no matter what you paid for that lure, it all meets the fish at only one point — the hook. Knowing the right kind of hook to use, selecting the correct size, and keeping it sharp will . . . put more fish on the hook!

The parts of a hook (left) are relatively simple, and will apply to nearly all kinds. There are many different kinds of hooks available, but don't let yourself be overwhelmed — a few basic hooks will meet most of your needs. When choosing hook size, go smaller rather than larger when in doubt . . . many large fish have been caught on small hooks! Note that the numbering of hook sizes increases as the hook gets smaller (the bigger the number, the smaller the hook!). The exception is when the numbering gets down to 1 for larger hook sizes (1/0 or greater), in which case the hook size now increases as the number does (1/0, 2/0, 3/0, etc.).

The **Aberdeen** (below) is an excellent all-around choice for light freshwater bait fishing. The fine wire minimizes damage to the bait and reduces interference with its

natural movement. The long shank also makes hook removal easier even if the fish has partially swallowed the bait. This hook is designed to bend and pull loose under heavy pressure if it becomes caught on a solid object such as submerged brush. For this reason, don't use too heavy a line with an Aberdeen — if there's a big fish on the other end instead of a stump, you want the drag to slip before the hook straightens! Good sizes include 6-10 for bream, 4-6 for crappie (specks), and 2-6 for light-line bass or catfish angling.



A small #6 Aberdeen hook was used to land the 12-pound catfish that surprised the angler above. The fish was originally stocked by the FWC about 10 years before.

For heavier bait fishing, many savvy anglers have turned to the popular **circle hook** (right). Although not a new design (it's been in use by commercial anglers for years), the circle hook has more recently been popularized as a valuable tool for recreational fishermen too. This unusual-looking hook is designed to minimize gut-hooking, instead catching the fish near the corner of the mouth almost every time. Not only that, but anglers experience a significantly higher percentage of successful hookups too — circle hooks reduce the number of missed strikes. Instead of setting the hook when you get a strike as you do with conventional hooks, you should simply apply increasing pressure and the fish will basically hook itself. Circle hooks are especially helpful for unusually difficult hooking situations, such as bait fishing for tough-mouthed larger bass or tarpon.

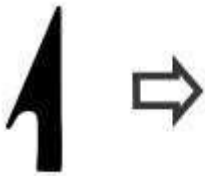


Worm hooks (below) for weedless rigging of plastic baits come in a variety of styles. These hooks usually have a distinct elbow bend in the shank near the eye, where

the following part of the hook will emerge from the plastic bait. These are available in straight or offset shank styles. In order to rig a “straight” worm that will not twist unnaturally when retrieved, lay the hook on top of the worm and note where it should emerge from and re-enter the body. By rigging the worm this way, you should be able to avoid making the worm kink. Sizes used generally range from 1 to 5/0, depending on the size of the plastic bait. Wide gap versions have become increasingly popular for plastic baits.



Getting to the point: Modern hooks come out of the package much sharper than their ancestors did! If you are using a name brand hook, you may not need to sharpen it at all or only touch up the point if it gets dulled. For freshwater hooks, a small whetstone works better than a metal file, which tends to remove too much metal too quickly. Sharpen the hook on each side first, and then finish up by sharpening the point opposite the barb. If the hook hone has a “point groove,” then the final step is that much easier. The traditional test of hook sharpness, seeing if it “sticks” when you touch the point to your thumbnail, still works.



Barbless hooks: Although more and more hook styles are becoming available barbless, most of the time it's still up to the angler to provide this option for himself if he wants it. Barbless hooks have the advantages of penetrating a fish's mouth more readily and being easier to remove (from fish, shirt, or fishin' buddy!), in addition to reducing the level of hooking injury likely to occur to the fish itself. Especially for beginning anglers, quick hook removal from fish or self is a major convenience. De-barbing is probably most important for bait fishing, where the chances of a fish swallowing the hook are higher. However, many anglers de-barb all their lure hooks, too. Regardless of whether you fish simply for the sport, or strictly for the frying pan, the FWC encourages anglers to use barbless hooks so that those fish that are released have a better chance of survival.

So remember: a good rod-and-reel combo and decent line can help you catch fish, but you'll want to have a good hook too!

[Featured Site: The Florida Fishing Trail](#)

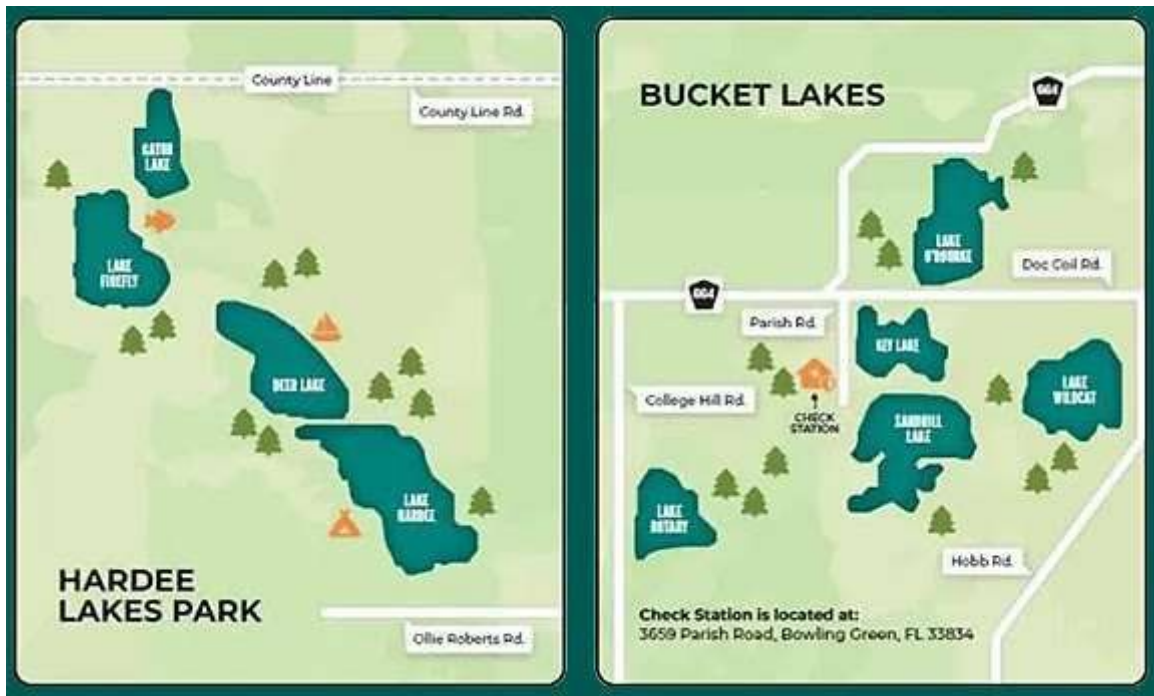


The Florida Fishing Trail has just opened and offers a diversity of freshwater fishing opportunities within Hardee County.

Location: Hardee County

Description: 9 lakes located on 1,200 acres

[The Florida Fishing Trail](#) is an exciting new freshwater fishing destination, showcasing what's possible when conservation, access, and partnerships come together. Located in Central Florida, this unique system spans more than 1,200 acres of reclaimed land and features nine lakes managed as a Fish Management Area, with a strong focus on sustainable, high-quality bass fishing.



The Hardee Lakes Park waters all may have unlimited boat and pier anglers. The Bucket Lakes offer limited quote access. Check the article links for details and rules.

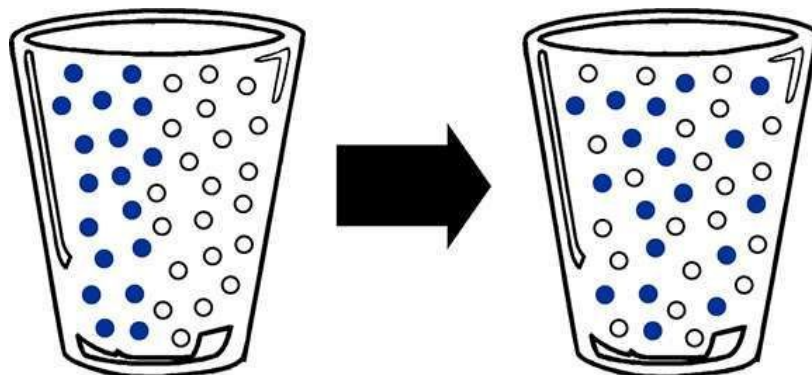
Developed through a partnership between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), [The Mosaic Company](#), and [Hardee County](#), the Trail transforms former mining lands into a thriving outdoor resource for anglers. Early success on the water, including strong catch rates, highlights the power of science-based management and thoughtful design. Whether you're a seasoned angler or introducing someone new to fishing, the Florida Fishing Trail offers something for everyone. Before visiting, be sure to review the [Florida Fishing Trail rules and regulations](#), including hours of operation, to plan your trip. Visit the Florida Fishing Trail website to learn more.



Fisheries Biology: Freshwater and Saltwater Fish

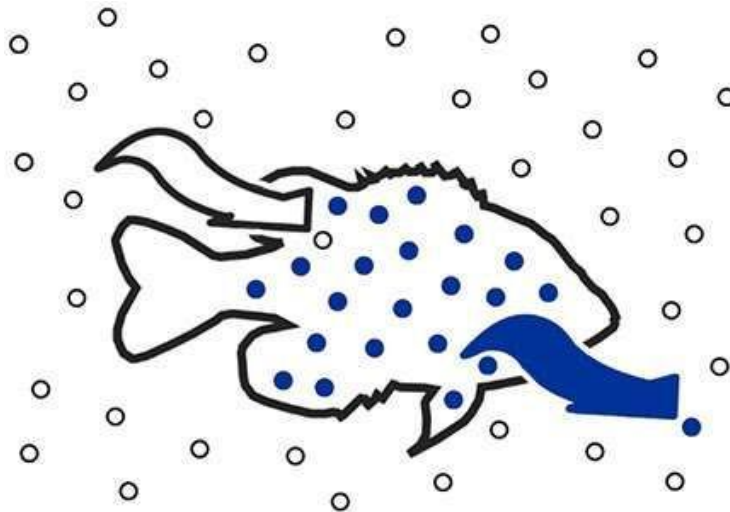
One of the broadest generalizations used to group fish is whether a given species occurs in freshwater or saltwater. When anglers draw this distinction, they are thinking of what fish species will be available for them to catch where they've decided to go fishing. When biologists compare the two, however, their thoughts will run to fish biology and fish excretory (or waste elimination) systems.

One of the most basic biological principles is that different substances dissolved in a solution tend to move from an area of higher concentration to one of lower concentration, until the distribution is even. Put a few drops of blue food coloring into a glass of water without stirring it, and eventually the water will be one color (instead of clear in one part and blue in the other). This process is called **diffusion**.



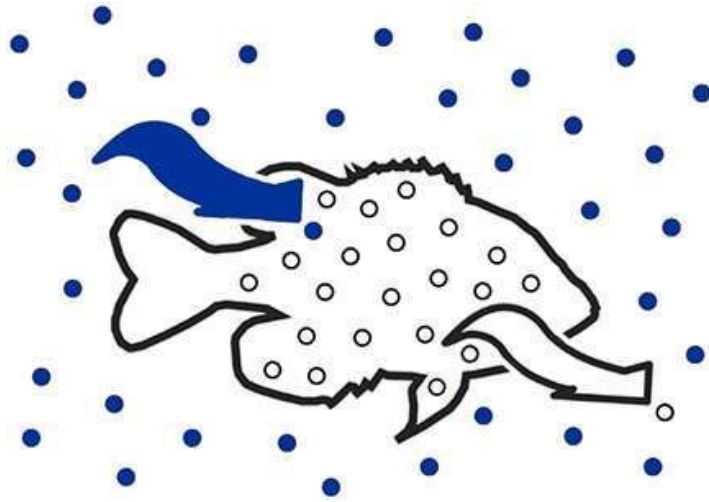
A substance in solution will eventually become evenly distributed throughout the solution through the process of diffusion.

Since all fishes actually live in a solution — water — the same basic principle is extremely important to them. In freshwater, the concentration of salts and minerals important for life is much higher in the fish's own body than it is in the surrounding water. These salts tend to move from the fish's body (high concentration of salts) to the surrounding water (low concentration of salts). Similarly, the nearby water itself tends to move from the surrounding environment (high concentration of water) into the fish's body (lower concentration of water). **As a result, the excretory system of a freshwater fish must get rid of excess water that enters the fish, while at the same time keeping important salts from escaping from the fish's body into the watery environment.** A freshwater fish's urine is very dilute, containing excess water that the fish must rid its body of, but few of the salts that the fish needs to retain.



For a freshwater fish, water tends to enter the body while salts tend to leave.

A saltwater fish has just the opposite problem! The concentration of salts in the saltwater around it is higher than within its own body, and excess minerals tend to travel into the fish's body. At the same time, pure water itself is at a higher concentration within the fish's body than outside it, and the fish must keep this water from leaving its body. **A saltwater fish's excretory system works to rid the body of excess salts, while simultaneously preventing the loss of water.** The urine of saltwater fishes therefore contains high concentrations of minerals, but low amounts of water.



For a saltwater fish, salts tend to enter the body while water tends to leave.

Some species of fish can tolerate a very wide range of **salinities** (salt concentrations) in the surrounding water. Their excretory systems are highly adaptable, and are actually able to adjust to freshwater or saltwater conditions; fishes with this ability are called **euryhaline** (say YOUR-EEE-HAY-LINE). Blue tilapia (a freshwater species; see above) can live in saltwater, while snook and tarpon (saltwater species) can live in freshwater. This adaptability is just one factor contributing to the diversity of fishing available in our Florida fresh and salt waters!



Tournament Board

2026 Tournaments

Fishing tournaments are easy and fun and there's nothing to sign up for -- these are all free to play for all members! Just make a catch, follow the guidelines posted below and you're in!

These tournaments are **Free-to-Play for all members!**

Our current tournament is:

February 1 to April 31 - Trout

Upcoming tournaments include:

May 1 to July 31 - Snapper

August 1 to October 31 - Snook

November 1 to December 31 - Mackerel

There will also be a ONE DAY tournament in November with details to follow.

AND...also a \$ prize (besides bragging rights) for the longest fish caught for 2026 (not including sharks).

All guidelines below must be followed for all tournaments

Guidelines:

- 1 - Catch fish (!)**
- 2 - Measure fish**
- 3 - Take a picture of your catch**
- 4 - You MUST post a fishing report on the club website***
- 5 - Only species for each tournament posted will be count. (Ex: if you catch a trout when mackerel tournament is running, it won't count)**
- 6 - Fish caught on individually owned boats/kayaks/rentals/headboats or from the shore are ok. Fish caught on charters will not count.**
- 7 - Sit back (and/or keep fishing) and wait for the results which will be announced at the first general membership meeting after tournament closes**

Winners circle: 1st place - \$25; 2nd place - \$15; 3rd place - \$10

*Entering a fishing report on the club website is easy. Just give it a try and you'll find the process intuitive. If you have a problem with making your report just

contact any board member below for assistance.



Our next **Social dinner** is all set for April 22 at the Gulf Harbors Yacht Club - fun starts at 5:30



Guests at the March meeting included Bruce Archambault's grandson Bruce IV (third from right) along with Bruce IV's girlfriend and other pals on spring break.





See you all at the meeting!

Tight lines!!

FISH ON! FISHING CLUB OFFICERS

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Vice President -

Treasurer - Mike [Spanhel::727-2203-1209::spanhel@verizon.net](tel:727-2203-1209)

Secretary - John Grieder ::973-557-3054:: property_logic@yahoo.com

Sergeant at Arms - Stu [Johnson::305-855-3156::stuartj286@gmail.com](tel:305-855-3156)

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Sun, Apr 12, 2026 at 11:10 AM

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Your message wasn't delivered because the recipient's mailbox is quarantined. If the problem continues, please contact your email admin.

mtaproxy303.free.mail.ne1.yahoo.com gave this error:

This mail has been blocked because it failed authentication checks against the sending domains DMARC policy. See <https://senders.yahooinc.com/smtp-error-codes#dmarc-fail> for more information.

Diagnostic information for administrators:

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To: <fishonclubnpr@gmail.com>

Cc:

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Date: Sun, 12 Apr 2026 15:09:52 +0000

Subject: April 2026 Newsletter!



Your April 2026 Newsletter!

The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, April 14. Doors open at 6:30, meeting starts at 7:00. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Captain Jared Crisp of Knee Deep Charters.



The guest speaker at our March meeting was Captain Dave Blanchard who gave a great presentation and told us all about water conditions, baits and tactics while fishing.



Captain David Blanchard 727-709-6592 Captain Christian Zarra 727-433-1788

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General Membership Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Morningstar at 7:05pm.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Captain Dave Blanchard of Live Action Fishing Adventures. He said that what is *extremely* important while fishing, regardless of what you're fishing for or what kind of bait is being used, is water clarity, water temperature and tides. He explained what he does while trolling and using different

gadgets with whitebaits and lures. Chicken rigs are his favorite as they are the most productive with all kinds of fish. He further explained all about hook sizes, line strength and tactics he uses while fishing. An excellent speaker, Captain Dave also followed up with a great question-and-answer discussion after his presentation.

Our annual Spring Picnic is coming up on March 28 and event chairman Frank Poggio said he's all set with the food, fun and games. There is a signup sheet for all going.

The next social dinner will be on March 18th at Whiskey River on the Water beginning at 5:30. The social for April will be on the 22nd at the Gulf Harbors Yacht Club.

Tournaments – the current tournament is for trout and all details are in the club newsletter. There is also a tournament for Autism Anglers Fun Day on April 4 and the Rusty Bucket Fishing tournament on May 30.

The annual Anclote Kids Fishing Tournament was held on February 28 and it was a great time for the kids.

Members told about their recent fishing and the bite has increased substantially.

The 50/50 winner was Terry Reelitz - \$60 - which he donated to our Wish to Fish subsidiary.

Number of members and guests in attendance – 26.

The next general membership meeting will be April 14.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted,

John Grieder



From the FWC

Issue 44

April - June 2026



Our Purpose: To identify excellent Florida freshwater fishing opportunities and to provide anglers with relevant information that will enhance the quality of their outdoor experience.

TrophyCatch Tracker



Chandler Smith drove the #38 GoOutdoors Florida TrophyCatch truck to a win in the Craftsman Truck Series at Daytona!

The big news this quarter was a very successful marketing campaign promoting Florida fishing and license sales. [GoOutdoorsFlorida](#) and [TrophyCatch](#) partnered with Front Row Motorsports to sponsor a truck in the Craftsman Truck Series Fresh from Florida 250 race at Daytona in February. The truck design featured an eye-

catching full-length bass graphic. Chandler Smith pushed the truck to a thrilling photo-finish win in the last seconds of the race. Over a million people watched the race and saw the Florida bass front and center as he drove up to victory lane. It was a win for racing fans and conservation alike.



During the race week FWC staff worked a booth, handing out prizes and talking with attendees about Florida fishing. Multiple TrophyCatch participants were greeted warmly when they introduced themselves at the booth.



The grand finale was the reverse drawing among our five [Phoenix](#) TrophyCatch boat finalists which took place right on the Daytona midway! The "last one standing" and lucky winner of the Season 13 boat was Justin Goodman (left). It was an incredible week of fun and excitement all promoting Florida's great fishing.

TrophyCatch Season 14 is still going strong as Florida's annual spawning season winds down. Multiple double-digit and Hall of Fame bass were submitted in the last quarter, including the lucky catch below. The latest totals for the TrophyCatch program are:

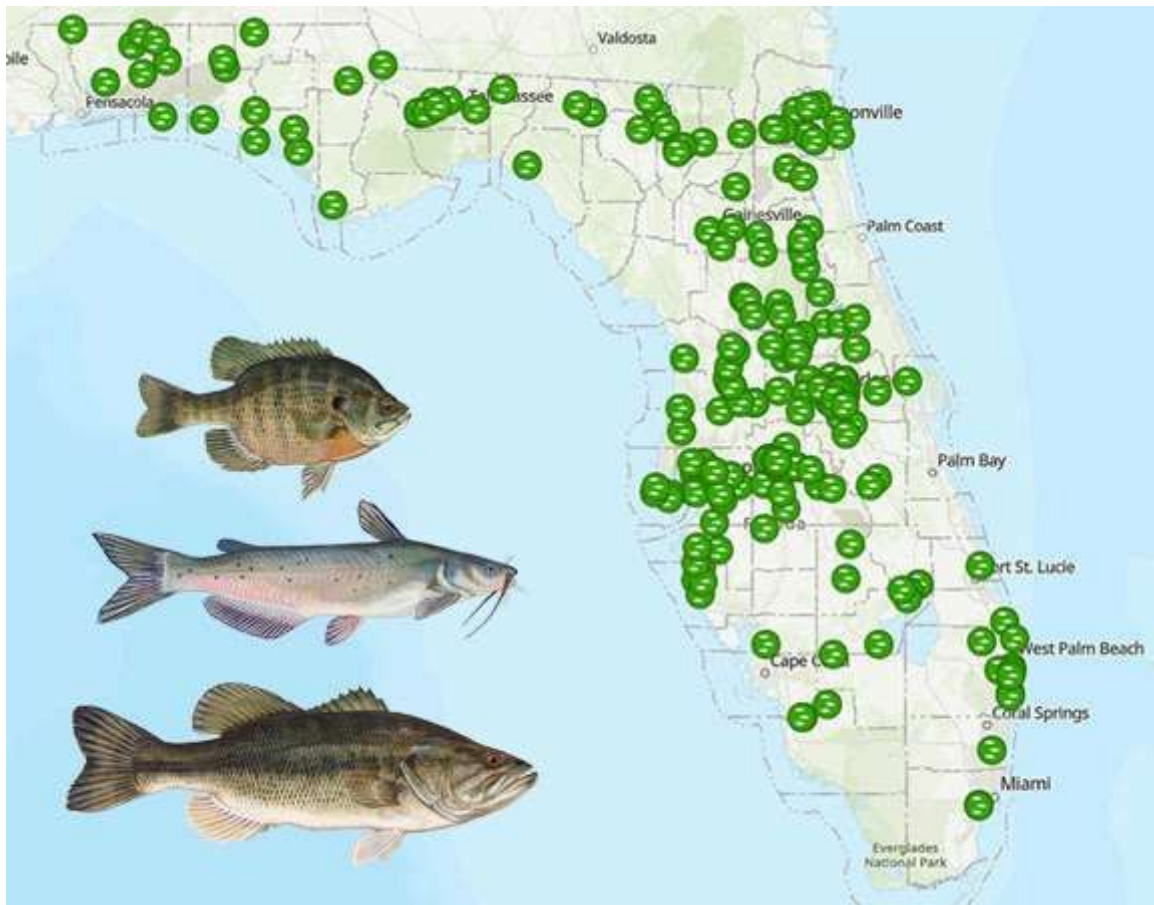
- 13,349 Lunker Club (8-9.9 lbs.) bass
- 3,372 Trophy Club (10-12.9 lbs.)
- 176 Hall of Fame (13+ lbs.)
- **16,897 TOTAL approved bass submissions to date**



This 12 lbs. 4 oz. Trophy Club bass (above) was caught in Putnam County! Check out the [Hooked On Putnam](#) page for an exciting opportunity to win an awesome fishing trip prize package when you submit and have catches approved for TrophyCatch that are from Putnam County!

[Register for TrophyCatch](#) or view approved angler catches to help plan your next fishing trip at [TrophyCatch.com](#). Follow [TrophyCatch on Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for featured big bass, program updates and partner highlights.

[Did you know?](#)



You can check the FWC's [Freshwater Fish Stocking page](#) to search for waters near you that have been stocked with a variety of fish species. Recent stocking information is available by year in list format or by searching the [Interactive Stocking Map!](#)

Featured Fish: Blue Tilapia

Size: The blue tilapia is one of our largest nonnative fish. The state record is 10.09 pounds. The Big Catch minimum size for recognition is 5.00 lbs. or 18 inches.

Identification and similar

species: The broken lateral line distinguishes this fish as a

cichlid. Adults are blue-gray shading to white on the belly; juveniles may possess dark spots on the body. The borders of the dorsal and caudal fins may have red to pink edges. Nile tilapia and Mozambique tilapia are very similar but usually have distinct vertical striping on the caudal fin (tail). Possible hybridization between these species further complicates identification.

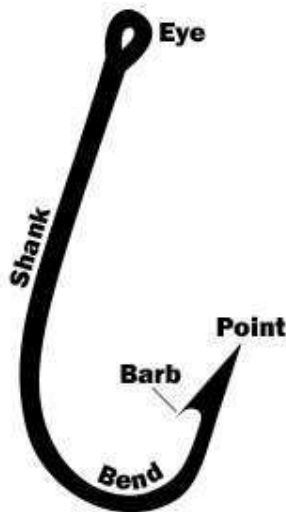


Angling qualities: Tilapia are not known for their sporting quality, but do fight well on rod-and-reel. Tilapia can be caught using small pieces of hot dog, bread balls, dog food, or live worms for bait. They are rarely caught on artificial lures. They can be harvested by cast net (where allowed) and are popular bowfishing targets. As an illegally-introduced nonnative there are no bag or size limits. Tilapia have white, flaky meat with a mild flavor and are considered excellent eating. Tilapia are commonly available in grocery stores and restaurants.

Where to catch them: The blue tilapia may be Florida's most widespread nonnative fish. It is abundant throughout most of the state and can be found in lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and canals. It is tolerant of saltwater and found in some near shore marine habitats, such as Tampa Bay (see the article on **Freshwater and Saltwater Fish** below).

Interesting facts: Even when you don't actually see them, you can often tell that blue tilapia are present by their very large beds along the shoreline. Males dig circular nests more than 2 feet across in shallow water over a sandy bottom. The male swims out to a passing female and leads her to the nest where courtship and egg-laying occur. The female takes the eggs into her mouth, where they are protected until they hatch. The fry are occasionally released to feed, but whenever threatened they return to the female's mouth for protection until they are about three weeks old. This type of parental care is called mouth-brooding.

[Hooked on Hooks](#)



No matter how good of a rod you're using, no matter what brand of line is on the reel, no matter what you paid for that lure, it all meets the fish at only one point — the hook. Knowing the right kind of hook to use, selecting the correct size, and keeping it sharp will . . . put more fish on the hook!

The parts of a hook (left) are relatively simple, and will apply to nearly all kinds. There are many different kinds of hooks available, but don't let yourself be overwhelmed — a few basic hooks will meet most of your needs. When choosing hook size, go smaller rather than larger when in doubt . . . many large fish have been caught on small hooks! Note that

the numbering of hook sizes increases as the hook gets smaller (the bigger the number, the smaller the hook!). The exception is when the numbering gets down to 1 for larger hook sizes (1/0 or greater), in which case the hook size now increases as the number does (1/0, 2/0, 3/0, etc.).

The **Aberdeen** (below) is an excellent all-around choice for light freshwater bait fishing. The fine wire minimizes damage to the bait and reduces interference with its

natural movement. The long shank also makes hook removal easier even if the fish has partially swallowed the bait. This hook is designed to bend and pull loose under heavy pressure if it becomes caught on a solid object such as submerged brush. For this reason, don't use too heavy a line with an Aberdeen — if there's a big fish on the other end instead of a stump, you want the drag to slip before the hook straightens! Good sizes include 6-10 for bream, 4-6 for crappie (specks), and 2-6 for light-line bass or catfish angling.



A small #6 Aberdeen hook was used to land the 12-pound catfish that surprised the angler above. The fish was originally stocked by the FWC about 10 years before.

For heavier bait fishing, many savvy anglers have turned to the popular **circle hook** (right). Although not a new design (it's been in use by commercial anglers for years), the circle hook has more recently been popularized as a valuable tool for recreational fishermen too. This unusual-looking hook is designed to minimize gut-hooking, instead catching the fish near the corner of the mouth almost every time. Not only that, but anglers experience a significantly higher percentage of successful hookups too — circle hooks reduce the number of missed strikes. Instead of setting the hook when you get a strike as you do with conventional hooks, you should simply apply increasing pressure and the fish will basically hook itself. Circle hooks are especially helpful for unusually difficult hooking situations, such as bait fishing for tough-mouthed larger bass or tarpon.

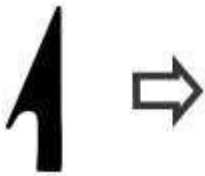


Worm hooks (below) for weedless rigging of plastic baits come in a variety of styles. These hooks usually have a distinct elbow bend in the shank near the eye, where

the following part of the hook will emerge from the plastic bait. These are available in straight or offset shank styles. In order to rig a “straight” worm that will not twist unnaturally when retrieved, lay the hook on top of the worm and note where it should emerge from and re-enter the body. By rigging the worm this way, you should be able to avoid making the worm kink. Sizes used generally range from 1 to 5/0, depending on the size of the plastic bait. Wide gap versions have become increasingly popular for plastic baits.



Getting to the point: Modern hooks come out of the package much sharper than their ancestors did! If you are using a name brand hook, you may not need to sharpen it at all or only touch up the point if it gets dulled. For freshwater hooks, a small whetstone works better than a metal file, which tends to remove too much metal too quickly. Sharpen the hook on each side first, and then finish up by sharpening the point opposite the barb. If the hook hone has a “point groove,” then the final step is that much easier. The traditional test of hook sharpness, seeing if it “sticks” when you touch the point to your thumbnail, still works.



Barbless hooks: Although more and more hook styles are becoming available barbless, most of the time it’s still up to the angler to provide this option for himself if he wants it. Barbless hooks have the advantages of penetrating a fish’s mouth more readily and being easier to remove (from fish, shirt, or fishin’ buddy!), in addition to reducing the level of hooking injury likely to occur to the fish itself. Especially for beginning anglers, quick hook removal from fish or self is a major convenience. De-barbing is probably most important for bait fishing, where the chances of a fish swallowing the hook are higher. However, many anglers de-barb all their lure hooks, too. Regardless of whether you fish simply for the sport, or strictly for the frying pan, the FWC encourages anglers to use barbless hooks so that those fish that are released have a better chance of survival.

So remember: a good rod-and-reel combo and decent line can help you catch fish, but you’ll want to have a good hook too!

[Featured Site: The Florida Fishing Trail](#)

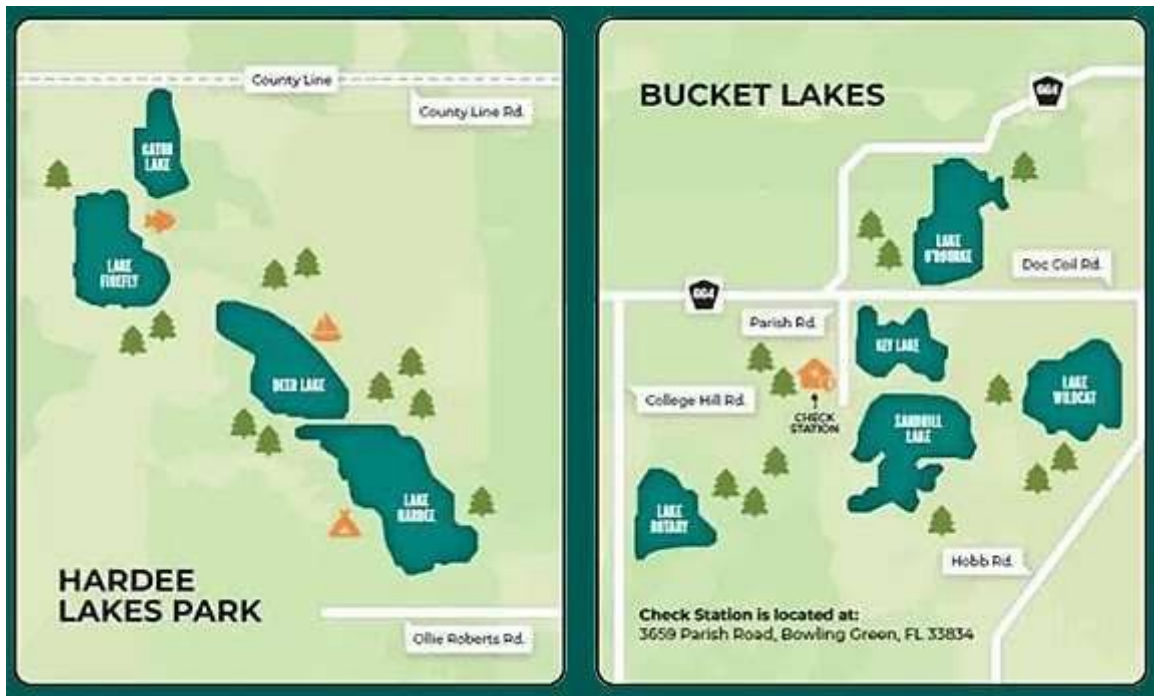


The Florida Fishing Trail has just opened and offers a diversity of freshwater fishing opportunities within Hardee County.

Location: Hardee County

Description: 9 lakes located on 1,200 acres

[The Florida Fishing Trail](#) is an exciting new freshwater fishing destination, showcasing what's possible when conservation, access, and partnerships come together. Located in Central Florida, this unique system spans more than 1,200 acres of reclaimed land and features nine lakes managed as a Fish Management Area, with a strong focus on sustainable, high-quality bass fishing.



The Hardee Lakes Park waters all may have unlimited boat and pier anglers. The Bucket Lakes offer limited quote access. Check the article links for details and rules.

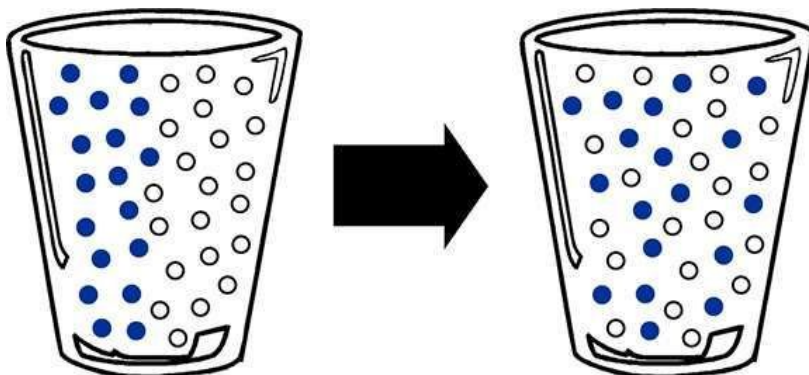
Developed through a partnership between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), [The Mosaic Company](#), and [Hardee County](#), the Trail transforms former mining lands into a thriving outdoor resource for anglers. Early success on the water, including strong catch rates, highlights the power of science-based management and thoughtful design. Whether you're a seasoned angler or introducing someone new to fishing, the Florida Fishing Trail offers something for everyone. Before visiting, be sure to review the [Florida Fishing Trail rules and regulations](#), including hours of operation, to plan your trip. Visit the Florida Fishing Trail website to learn more.



Fisheries Biology: Freshwater and Saltwater Fish

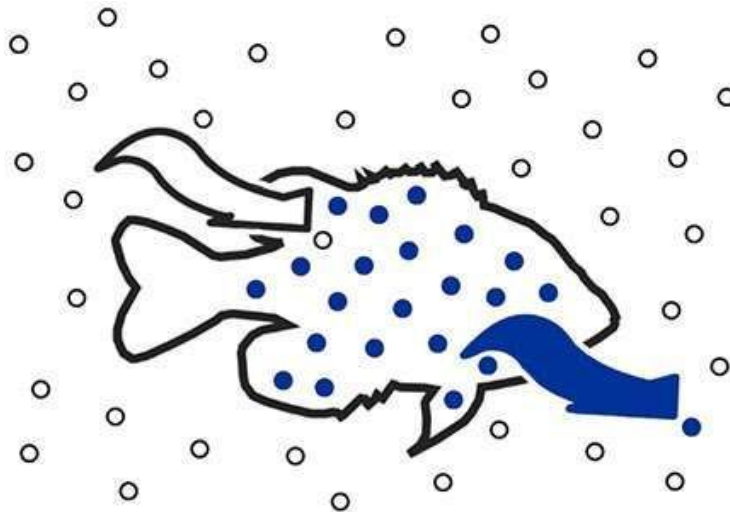
One of the broadest generalizations used to group fish is whether a given species occurs in freshwater or saltwater. When anglers draw this distinction, they are thinking of what fish species will be available for them to catch where they've decided to go fishing. When biologists compare the two, however, their thoughts will run to fish biology and fish excretory (or waste elimination) systems.

One of the most basic biological principles is that different substances dissolved in a solution tend to move from an area of higher concentration to one of lower concentration, until the distribution is even. Put a few drops of blue food coloring into a glass of water without stirring it, and eventually the water will be one color (instead of clear in one part and blue in the other). This process is called **diffusion**.



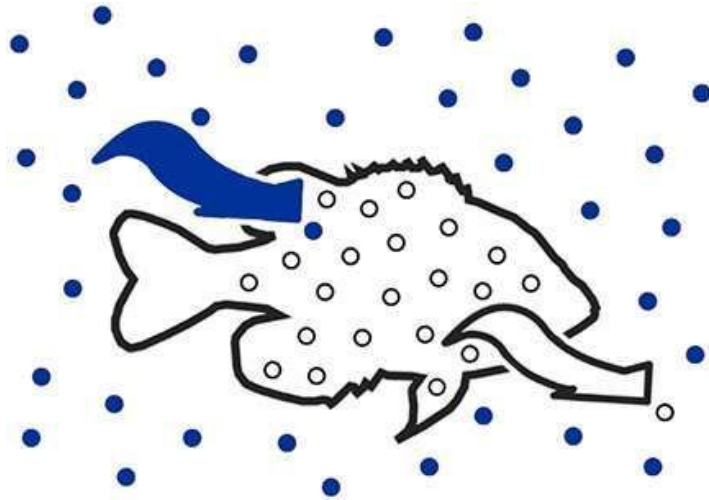
A substance in solution will eventually become evenly distributed throughout the solution through the process of diffusion.

Since all fishes actually live in a solution — water — the same basic principle is extremely important to them. In freshwater, the concentration of salts and minerals important for life is much higher in the fish's own body than it is in the surrounding water. These salts tend to move from the fish's body (high concentration of salts) to the surrounding water (low concentration of salts). Similarly, the nearby water itself tends to move from the surrounding environment (high concentration of water) into the fish's body (lower concentration of water). **As a result, the excretory system of a freshwater fish must get rid of excess water that enters the fish, while at the same time keeping important salts from escaping from the fish's body into the watery environment.** A freshwater fish's urine is very dilute, containing excess water that the fish must rid its body of, but few of the salts that the fish needs to retain.



For a freshwater fish, water tends to enter the body while salts tend to leave.

A saltwater fish has just the opposite problem! The concentration of salts in the saltwater around it is higher than within its own body, and excess minerals tend to travel into the fish's body. At the same time, pure water itself is at a higher concentration within the fish's body than outside it, and the fish must keep this water from leaving its body. **A saltwater fish's excretory system works to rid the body of excess salts, while simultaneously preventing the loss of water.** The urine of saltwater fishes therefore contains high concentrations of minerals, but low amounts of water.



For a saltwater fish, salts tend to enter the body while water tends to leave.

Some species of fish can tolerate a very wide range of **salinities** (salt concentrations) in the surrounding water. Their excretory systems are highly adaptable, and are actually able to adjust to freshwater or saltwater conditions; fishes with this ability are called **euryhaline** (say YOUR-EEE-HAY-LINE). Blue tilapia (a freshwater species; see above) can live in saltwater, while snook and tarpon (saltwater species) can live in freshwater. This adaptability is just one factor contributing to the diversity of fishing available in our Florida fresh and salt waters!



Tournament Board

2026 Tournaments

Fishing tournaments are easy and fun and there's nothing to sign up for -- these are all free to play for all members! Just make a catch, follow the guidelines posted below and you're in!

These tournaments are **Free-to-Play** for all members!

Our current tournament is:

February 1 to April 31 - Trout

Upcoming tournaments include:

May 1 to July 31 - Snapper

August 1 to October 31 - Snook

November 1 to December 31 - Mackerel

There will also be a ONE DAY tournament in November with details to follow.

AND...also a \$ prize (besides bragging rights) for the longest fish caught for 2026 (not including sharks).

All guidelines below must be followed for all tournaments

Guidelines:

- 1 - Catch fish (!)
- 2 - Measure fish
- 3 - Take a picture of your catch
- 4 - You **MUST** post a fishing report on the club website*
- 5 - Only species for each tournament posted will be count. (Ex: if you catch a trout when mackerel tournament is running, it won't count)
- 6 - Fish caught on individually owned boats/kayaks/rentals/headboats or from the shore are ok. Fish caught on charters will not count.
- 7 - Sit back (and/or keep fishing) and wait for the results which will be announced at the first general membership meeting after tournament closes

Winners circle: 1st place - \$25; 2nd place - \$15; 3rd place - \$10

*Entering a fishing report on the club website is easy. Just give it a try and you'll find the process intuitive. If you have a problem with making your report just

contact any board member below for assistance.

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[Message clipped] [View entire message](#)