Palm Beach & Jupiter Fishing Cheat Sheet

Palm Beach County — FishSonar.com

Top Species: Sailfish / Permit / Cobia | Best Months: Nov – Apr Offshore / Year-Round Inshore | Water: Offshore, Inshore & Blue Heron Bridge

Sailfish

Istiophorus platypterus

Nov – Mar Peak | Catch & Release Only | World-Class Gulf Stream

WHERE TO FIND THEM

- Gulf Stream just 1–4 miles offshore — closer here than almost anywhere
- Jupiter and Lake Worth Inlet mouths during migrations
- Weed lines and temperature breaks on the Stream edge
- The "sailfish highway" between Palm Beach and Jupiter in 80–300ft
- Kite fishing grounds north of Palm Beach Inlet

BEST TIMES

Palm Beach is widely regarded as the best Atlantic sailfish destination in the world. The Gulf Stream passes just 1–2 miles offshore in winter. Cold fronts push massive pods through. A single boat releasing 10 sailfish in one day is not exceptional here — November through March is the season.

REGULATIONS

Atlantic sailfish: catch-and-release only. No harvest. Use circle hooks for best release survival. Kite fishing is the local technique. Verify current FWC rules.

BEST BAITS & LURES

- Live pilchards kite-fished on the surface — the #1 Palm Beach technique
- Live goggle-eyes — the premium bait for larger fish
- Ballyhoo under a skirt trolled on color changes
- Bridled live bait slow-trolled in the Gulf Stream

TACKLE SETUP

20–30lb spinning/conventional. 50lb braid. 80lb fluorocarbon 6–8ft leader. Kite fishing is the Palm Beach signature technique. Have multiple outfits rigged — when they're biting, work fast.

Cobia

Rachycentron canadum

Mar – May Beach Run | 33" Fork Min / 1 Per Day

WHERE TO FIND THEM

- Palm Beach beaches — sight-cast from the sand during spring run
- Jupiter Beach surf zone — cobia cruise the breakers in migration
- Nearshore reef edges and buoy lines 20–60ft
- Offshore buoys and floating structure in the Gulf Stream
- Behind manta rays and loggerhead turtles — cobia swim alongside

BEST TIMES

The spring Palm Beach cobia run (March–May) is one of the most unique fishing experiences in the world. You can walk the beach and sight-cast to cobia cruising the surf zone. Fish 15–60 lbs wade right along the sand as water temps warm. Early morning with polarized glasses is essential. Peak is April.

REGULATIONS

Minimum 33" fork length in Atlantic federal waters. 1 fish per person per day, 6 per vessel. Closed season varies — verify current FWC and NOAA rules before harvest.

BEST BAITS & LURES

- Live eel — the premier cobia bait on the Palm Beach beach run
- Large blue crab or spider crab for sight-fishing from shore
- Large paddle tail swimbait cast ahead of cruising fish
- Bucktail jig (2–3oz) in white or chartreuse

TACKLE SETUP

Heavy surf rod 9–11ft for beach fishing. 30–50lb braid. 60–80lb fluorocarbon leader. Cast 10–15ft ahead of the fish — let the bait settle in its path. Wait for the fish to turn before setting the hook.

Common Snook

Centropomus undecimalis

Year-Round | Slot 28–33" | C&R Summer/Winter



WHERE TO FIND THEM

- Jupiter Inlet — legendary snook inlet with year-round residents
- Lake Worth Inlet — big snook on outgoing tides at the jetty
- Blue Heron Bridge — snook sit under bridge structure year-round
- ICW bridges between Jupiter and Boca Raton
- Canal mouths and mangrove shorelines along the ICW

BEST TIMES

Jupiter Inlet produces snook year-round. Summer nights are legendary — big snook stack in the inlet current and eat anything that washes through. Spring migration (April–May) is peak. Blue Heron Bridge snook can be sight-fished during daylight on incoming tides.

REGULATIONS

Atlantic coast slot: 28"–33". One fish per day. Closed Jun 1–Aug 31 and Dec 15–Jan 31. Snook permit required. Verify current FWC rules.

BEST BAITS & LURES

- Live pilchards free-lined in Jupiter Inlet current
- Live mullet — irresistible to big inlet snook
- DOA Shrimp glow under Blue Heron Bridge lights at night
- Topwater plugs at first light on Jupiter Inlet jetties

TACKLE SETUP

7' medium-heavy spinning. 20–30lb braid. 40lb fluorocarbon leader. Jupiter Inlet has powerful current — heavier jig heads (1/2–1oz) may be needed on strong tides.

Wahoo

Acanthocybium solandri

Fall – Winter Peak | Gulf Stream Offshore

WHERE TO FIND THEM

- Gulf Stream proper, 100–400ft of water off Palm Beach
- Temperature breaks and current edges in the Stream
- Blue water weed lines in the Gulf Stream corridor
- High-speed trolling lanes north-south along the Stream
- Offshore wrecks in 200–400ft

BEST TIMES

October through February is prime wahoo season off Palm Beach. The Gulf Stream's proximity means wahoo are accessible without a long run — often just 2–5 miles from the inlet. Fish early morning when surface activity is highest. First run can strip 200 yards of line instantly.

REGULATIONS

No minimum size for wahoo in Florida recreational fishing. No current bag limit. Federal regulations apply in offshore waters. Verify current NOAA and FWC rules.

BEST BAITS & LURES

- High-speed trolling lures at 12–18 knots (Iland, Islander)
- Large dark-colored skirted ballyhoo rigged on wire
- Large Rapala X-Rap or similar high-speed plug
- Vertical jigs (300–400g) dropped to the bottom in blue water

TACKLE SETUP

Heavy conventional trolling gear. 50–80lb class. 80lb mono or braid. Wire leader (single strand or 7x7 cable) — wahoo teeth slice everything else. 6–9ft of wire ahead of bait. Set drags properly before deploying.

Permit

Trachinotus falcatus

Year-Round | Blue Heron Bridge | 2 Per Day / 11" Min

WHERE TO FIND THEM

- Blue Heron Bridge (Phil Foster Park) — world-famous permit spot
- Tidal flats adjacent to Peanut Island in Lake Worth Lagoon
- Lake Worth Inlet jetty rocks on incoming tides
- Nearshore reef edges 20–40ft off Palm Beach
- Jupiter Inlet shallows during permit visitations

BEST TIMES

Blue Heron Bridge is one of the most famous permit fishing spots in the world — accessible by foot, with fish visible in 6–10 feet of water year-round. Best on the incoming tide when permit push through the bridge opening to feed. Early morning and late afternoon most productive. Spring and fall see the heaviest concentrations.

REGULATIONS

Minimum 11" fork length. 2 fish per day per angler. Most are released. Verify current FWC rules before harvest.

BEST BAITS & LURES

- Live fiddler crab — undisputed #1 permit bait at Blue Heron Bridge
- Live shrimp on light tackle presented naturally
- Merkin crab fly pattern for fly fishing the bridge
- Sand fleas fished on the incoming tide at the bridge

TACKLE SETUP

Light to medium spinning. 10–15lb braid. 15–20lb fluorocarbon leader. As little weight as possible — let current carry the crab. Fly fishing: 9-weight with clear intermediate line and crab fly. Permit are notoriously difficult — be patient.

Tides & Timing — Palm Beach & Jupiter

Incoming Tide — Blue Heron Bridge

The most important tide in Palm Beach fishing. Permit, snook, and tarpon push through the Blue Heron Bridge opening to feed on the Lake Worth flats. Be at the bridge 2 hours before high tide. Also excellent for Jupiter Inlet snook on the flood.

Outgoing Tide — Inlets

Jupiter Inlet and Lake Worth Inlet produce excellent snook on falling tide. Baitfish pour from the lagoon and snook stack at the mouth. Last 2 hours of outgoing are prime. Live pilchards in the current are deadly.

Winter Offshore (Nov – Mar)

The world's best sailfish season. Gulf Stream just 1–2 miles offshore. Deploy a kite with live pilchards on the surface for the classic Palm Beach technique. Cold fronts push massive pods of fish through — days with 10+ releases are documented.

Spring Beach Run (Mar – May)

Walk Jupiter and Palm Beach beaches in the morning with polarized sunglasses. Cobia cruise the surf zone — sight-cast a live eel or large paddle tail 10–15ft ahead of the fish. One of Florida's most unique fishing experiences.

Top Gear for Palm Beach & Jupiter (Amazon)

Penn Spinfisher VI 6500 Live Liner
The Palm Beach sailfish kite-fishing reel
Buy on Amazon

Fiddler Crab Trap — Wire Collapsible
Fresh fiddlers are the #1 Blue Heron Bridge permit bait
Buy on Amazon

Tsunami Trophy Surf Rod 11'
Beach cobia casting distance is everything
Buy on Amazon

Single Strand Wire Leader 174lb
Wahoo will cut through anything except wire
Buy on Amazon

Affiliate Disclosure: FishSonar is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to Amazon.com. Product links may earn us a small commission at no extra cost to you. Regulations listed are general guidelines — always verify current rules at myfwc.com before fishing.