









GAMEFISH	SEASON	LOCATION	LIMITS AND LENGTH RESTRICTIONS	BAIT/ LURES
 <i>Makaira nigricans</i> Atlantic Blue Marlin*	All year with a peak season from May-October	St. Thomas north and south drop. St. Croix 100 fathom drop off. FADs	No commercial harvest; no sale. Minimum size regulation of 99" Lower Jaw Fork Length	Ballyhoo, belly strips, mackerel, lures
 <i>Tetrapturus albidus</i> White Marlin*	All year with a peak season from April-May	St. Thomas north and south drop. St. Croix 100 fathom drop off. FADs	No commercial harvest; no sale Minimum size regulation of 66" Lower Jaw Fork Length	Ballyhoo, belly strips, lures
 <i>Istiophorus platypterus</i> Sailfish*	October - March	St. Thomas north and south drop. St. Croix 100 fathom drop off.	No commercial harvest; no sale Minimum size regulation of 63" Lower Jaw Fork Length	Ballyhoo, belly strips, lures
 <i>Thunnus albacares</i> Yellowfin Tuna*	August - February	St. Thomas north and south drop. St. Croix 100 fathom drop off and all shelf areas. FADs	Minimum legal harvest size 27" fork length and a recreational bag limit of 3 yellowfin tuna per person per day	Feathers, lures
 <i>Thunnus atlanticus</i> Blackfin Tuna	All year	Shelf areas on all three islands, FADs		Feathers, lures
 <i>Euthynnus pelamis</i> Skipjack tuna*	All year	Shelf areas on all three islands, FADs	No limit for skipjack tuna	Ballyhoo, lures
 <i>Acanthocybium solandri</i> Wahoo	Peak season from September - May	Shelf areas on all three islands, FADs		Ballyhoo, lures
 <i>Coryphaena hippurus</i> Dolphin Fish	October – January (peak season) May, July	North and South drop and shelf areas on all three islands, FADs		Lures, Ballyhoo, Flying fish

* Federal Permit Needed (Please refer to DFW's Recreational and Commercial Fisherman's Information Booklet)

FADS

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) create additional fishing opportunities by encouraging seasonal pelagic fish to congregate within these areas, helping to relieve fishing pressure in other areas. At this time, there are 10 FADs located within U.S.V.I waters. FADs are lost from time to time. Please contact DFW for an updated FAD list.

DISTRICT	FAD	LOCATION
St. Croix	S	17°46.5'N; 65°00.8'W
St. Croix	U *	17°44.0'N; 64°54.6'W
St. Croix	C	17°58.9'N; 64° 30.3'W
St. Croix	B	17°51.6'N; 64°30.8'W
St. Croix	R	17°39.0'N; 65° 04.0'W
St. Croix	T	17°52.3'N; 64° 42.8'W
St. Thomas /St. John	E	18°11.05'N; 64°55.9'W
St. Thomas /St. John	H	18°38.3'N; 64°58.8'W
St. Thomas /St. John	J	18°27.7'N; 64°54.2'W
St. Thomas /St. John	K	18°36.4'N; 64°58.4'W

*Navy underwater buoy, in the process of being transferred to DFW.

ETHICAL ANGLING

- 1) Help fish stocks increase through catch and release.
- 2) Limit your take, don't always take your limit.
- 3) Observe regulations and report violations to the Division of Environmental Enforcement (340) 773 5774 in St. Croix or (340) 774-3320 in St. Thomas..
- 4) Bring all garbage in, don't teach it to swim.
- 5) Captain your boat, practice safety afloat.
- 6) Show courtesy and respect, others' rights don't neglect.
- 7) Share what you know to help your sport grow.

For more information on Recreational Sportfishing contact:

DPNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife
www.vifishandwildlife.com



Deep Water Game Fish RECREATIONAL FISHING IN THE U.S VIRGIN ISLANDS



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES



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SPORTFISHING

Offshore recreational fishing for billfish and other pelagics in the U.S. Virgin Islands began in the mid-1950s. Recreational sportfishing has expanded greatly in recent years, and a thriving offshore marine recreational fishery exists throughout St. Thomas and St. Croix.

WORKING THE DROP

Offshore recreational fishing is done primarily from vessels over 30 feet in length unless deep water is accessible close to shore. It is customary when offshore fishing in the U.S. Virgin Islands to fish "the drop", where the insular shelf drops off. There are two "drops", in St. Thomas / St. John District; the north drop and the south drop. These drops are areas 20 miles north or eight miles south of the islands and St. Croix is surrounded by a drop which is 0.5 to 4 miles north or south. These are areas where migrating schools of small fish are abundant and attract larger pelagics, such as billfish, tuna, wahoo and dolphin fish. "Working the drop" consists of trolling with lines baited with either artificial or natural baits and traversing back and forth across the 50-100 fathom depth contour, usually in a westerly or easterly direction.

WORKING THE BIRDS

Captains, mates, and anglers constantly scan the horizon for seabirds that will lead them to areas where bait are hitting the surface of the water. Watch for tropicbirds and boobies on the way out to the drop. They are pelagic "plunge divers" who will feed on sub-surface baitfish that are most likely being preyed upon by flyingfish, ballyhoo and mackerels. Frigates and seagulls are surface feeders and will spot schools of bonitos, jacks and dolphin being pushed to the surface by blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, tunas and wahoo. When trolling large areas of ocean, offshore anglers can improve their chances of fishing success by looking for seabirds.

WATCH YOUR LINES!

If it appears a seabird is going for baited lines create loud noises to scare them. This action alone could prevent feeding birds from getting entangled in fishing lines. It is important to protect these birds (some are endangered). Remember, be an environmentally conscious angler. Dispose of your fishing line properly. Monofilament fishing line is deadly to wildlife. Weight fishing lines to avoid hooking seabirds. If you accidentally hook a seabird while fishing, don't cut the line! Reel in the bird slowly and

lift the bird carefully out of the water. Find the hook, cut the barb, then back the hook out. Make certain all fishing line has been removed and that the bird is otherwise uninjured before releasing.

MOON PHASE

There is a correlation between the number of fish hooked and/or caught and the full moon. This data suggests that more fish are raised, hooked and caught immediately before the full moon, during the full moon and immediately after the full moon. Most tournaments in the U.S. Virgin Islands are scheduled close to or during the full moon.

TIME OF DAY

The best times for catching most offshore species are between 8 am - 4 pm. As a rule, most blue marlin are hooked between 9 am - 3 pm while white marlin and sailfish are hooked between 8 am - 4 pm.

BAIT

Most recreational anglers in the USVI troll both artificial and natural baits simultaneously. However, some will troll either all artificial or all natural bait. The most commonly used baits are ballyhoo, lures and feathers.

LOOK FOR FLOATERS

Items floating on the surface for a length of time serve as cover for baitfish, and in turn, attract large pelagic species. Floaters can be anything from seaweed to tree limbs.

FISHING

Fishing within U.S.V.I waters is regulated by both territorial and federal restrictions, specifically for species such as billfish and swordfish. Both federal and territorial regulations can be found in the Commercial and Recreational Fisher's Information Booklet distributed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife and can be found at www.vifishandwildlife.com or by calling their offices at (340)773-1082 in St. Croix or (340) 775-6762 in St. Thomas. Copies may also be obtained from the Division of Environmental Enforcement at (340) 773-5774 in St. Croix and (340) 774-3320 in St. Thomas.

MAP OF FAD LOCATIONS IN ST. CROIX, ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN

