THIS IS FLORIDA · POWER OUTAGE

Fishing for survival in a power outage

Eat the fish the day you catch it. The cast net is the food tool. The rod is the slow backup.

November 10, 2026. One file. There is no iPhone app yet. Plain-language guide, not medical or legal advice. Gear limits and the mullet bag are as Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission pages stated them that day. Confirm the current rule before keeping a fish.

Save this file before the power goes out

A page on the internet is not in the house when the lights go out. The site needs a signal. The phone needs a charged battery. A PDF that was never downloaded is the same as a book that was never bought.

- On an iPhone: tap this PDF, tap the share button, then Save to Files. A tab left open in Safari is not a download.
- On a laptop: the download belongs in the browser's Downloads folder, then on a phone or a printed page.
- Print this guide. Put the paper in a zip bag with the salt and the unscented bleach. Paper still works when the battery dies.
- Do this on a normal day, on Wi-Fi, before storm season. Store shelves and cell towers both get busy at the same time.

Cook what you catch before the day is over

Gut it, cook it through, and eat it. A grill, a pan, or a pot is the whole method. Federal food guidance uses 145 degrees Fahrenheit for fish. The flesh turns opaque and flakes. A fish caught at 90 degrees with no ice is dinner tonight. It is not a stockpile.

Fish is protein. It does not replace rice, beans, oats, oil, and salt. A house that already has those calories can put a fresh fish on top. A house that has only a rod, and no stored food, does not have a plan. Lean fish alone will not carry a person's calories.

Most days there should be no extra. Salt only what will not be eaten that day, and only if the salt is already in the house. Do not eat a fish that washed up dead. During red tide, do not eat oysters, clams, or mussels. Cooking does not remove that toxin. FWC's red tide page is the one to read before keeping a fish from a bloom.

Mercury is the long-game limit, not the one-week limit. Florida Health tells women who may become pregnant, and young children, to go easy on shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish, and to keep largemouth bass, bowfin, and gar to a rare meal. A few meals of ordinary fish in a short outage are a different case from a summer of nothing but big bass.

The cast net is the food tool

A rod belongs in the kit for a dock or a bank when nothing is schooling. A cast net is the food tool. One throw can fill a meal when the fish are there. A random throw into a still pond is the same as not fishing. Look for mullet flipping, bait showering, or a grass edge on a moving tide.

- Learn on a net of 6 to 8 feet. A 10- or 12-foot net feeds more once the throw is reliable. Bigger than that mostly tangles a beginner.

- Florida's recreational maximum is 14 feet of stretched length, measured from the horn at the center to the lead line with the net pulled taut.
- One net if the person is on foot. No more than two nets from a boat. A county can be tighter.
- Rinse the mesh with fresh water when the day is done. Salt left in the net rots it. A rotten net is not a backup.
- Practice on ordinary weekends. A net that has never been thrown does not become dinner because the power went out.

Mullet, shrimp, and the legal list

Mullet school, they show on the surface, and they are oily enough to be worth cooking. FWC's recreational rule for striped mullet, silver or white mullet, fantail mullet, and redeye mullet sets no recreational minimum size and a daily bag of 50 fish per person. From September 1 through January 31 the vessel limit is 50 mullet. From February 1 through August 31 it is 100. Parts of Pinellas County have a tighter seasonal bag. Parts of Charlotte County have night closures.

Recreational cast nets and seines, as the gear rule publishes them, may be used for black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, weakfish, and unregulated species. Every regulated fish still has its own size and bag. Snook and spotted seatrout are not on that gear list. If the species is unclear, put it back. Shrimp have their own current bag on the FWC shrimp page.

In ordinary times a Florida saltwater fishing license is required unless an exemption on the FWC page fits. Practice on legal fish, on a legal net, while a ranger and a bait shop are both open.

After a storm, the first line of shore water and the canals are often sewage and fuel. This feeds a household that can reach the water. It does not feed a whole city.

Salt and dry only the extra

A brine by itself does not preserve fish. A sealed jar of raw fish is how people get botulism. Fish can carry that organism, and it can grow in a closed container when the fridge is down. Leave the cure open to the air.

- Gut the fish as soon as it comes out of the water. Take out the guts and the gills. Split any fish bigger than a hand so the flesh is thin. Rinse the blood off.
- Use canning or pickling salt, bought before the storm. Food and Agriculture Organization guidance uses about 1 pound of salt for every 3 pounds of cleaned fish. A kitchen shaker will not do this.
- Put a thick layer of salt in a plastic bucket, a glass crock, or a stainless pot. Lay the fish skin side up, not touching. Cover every surface with salt. Repeat. End with salt on top. A loose cover keeps flies out. Do not seal the lid.
- When the flesh is firm, rinse the loose salt off and dry the pieces in moving air, out of the rain, until they are stiff. Thin pieces dry. Thick wet chunks rot first. This takes days.
- Florida humidity puts water back into dried fish. Bag it only after it is actually dry. If it feels damp again, put it back in the air.
- Soak the salt out and cook it before anyone eats it.
- A sour smell, slime, fuzzy mold, or a pink film means it is spoiled. Throw it out. Do not taste it to check.

Pressure canning is not the basic plan

Almost nobody has a tested pressure canner, pint jars, new lids, and enough fuel for the USDA process. If the canner is not already in the house, do not buy one for storm week. Eat the fish today. An Instant Pot or any small electric multi-cooker is not a canner.

Someone who already owns a real pressure canner follows the National Center for Home Food Preservation process for fish and does not shorten it. That USDA process is for fatty fish such as bluefish, mackerel, salmon, trout, and mullet. It is not for tuna, not for shellfish, and smoked fish has its own time. Pint jars only. Gut the fish within 2 hours and keep it cold until it is packed. Pack it raw, skin against the glass, with 1 inch of headspace. Add no water, oil, vinegar, or vegetables. Vent steam for a full 10 minutes before pressurizing. In Florida, hold 100 minutes at 11 pounds on a dial gauge, or 10 pounds on a weighted gauge. Start the clock only at pressure. If the pressure drops, start the 100 minutes over. Let the canner cool by itself. A jar that bulges, leaks, or smells wrong is not food.

Heat, then the fridge clock

A northern grid-down plan is about freezing for months. That is not the peninsula. A closed block house with no air conditioning can overheat after the wind has already passed. North Florida and the Panhandle can still freeze. A blanket and one warm room belong in a Tallahassee or Jacksonville kit. They are not the plan in Miami, Tampa, or Melbourne.

- Stay in the shade. Open the windows at night if it is safe. Cover them by day. Drink before thirst.
- Stop if someone is dizzy, sick to the stomach, or stops sweating. That is a medical emergency.
- A battery fan is a tool. A whole-house air conditioner on a tiny solar kit is a fantasy.
- A refrigerator holds about 4 hours if the door stays shut. A full freezer holds about 48 hours. A half-full freezer holds about 24.
- Meat, fish, milk, eggs, soft cheese, leftovers, and cooked rice at 40 degrees or warmer for more than 2 hours get thrown out.
- A frozen item that still has ice crystals, or is still at 40 degrees or below, can be cooked or refrozen. When the temperature is unknown, throw it out.
- Cook the freezer down on a grill outside on day one if that can be done safely. Do not run a grill in the house or in the garage.

Water. The pool is not on the list.

Broward County hurricane guidance calls for at least 1 gallon of drinking water per person per day for 3 to 5 days. Cooking, washing, pets, and the heat take more. Bought water, and a clean bathtub filled before the wind, are the supply. Rain caught before it touches a dirty roof is the next source.

- Boil clear water at a rolling boil for 1 minute, then cool it. Florida is not high altitude. Boiling is the method that covers viruses.
- If boiling is impossible, use unscented household bleach with 5% to 9% sodium hypochlorite and nothing else in the bottle. Follow the label's drinking-water line if it has one.
- If the label has no drinking-water line, CDC's amount for that bleach is 8 drops per gallon of clear water, or 2 drops per quart. A little less than 1/8 teaspoon per gallon is the spoon version.

- Cloudy water gets strained through a clean cloth, then double the bleach. Stir. Wait 30 minutes. It should smell slightly of chlorine. If it does not, repeat the dose once and wait another 15 minutes. Do not keep adding bleach after that.

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or another cleaner.

- A hollow-fiber straw is for clear lake or river water. It takes out bacteria and parasites. It does not remove salt, fuel, or pool chemicals. The maker's own instructions exclude salt water, brackish water, and pool water.

- Green, paint-like, or foul water stays undrunk. Do not drink a blue-green algae bloom and do not cook with it. Boiling does not remove that toxin and can concentrate it.

- The ocean, brackish water, a canal after a flood, and a swimming pool are not drinking water.

Buy this before June

[ ] Drinking water, at least 1 gallon per person per day for 3 to 5 days, and more if it fits.

[ ] Rice, beans or oats, oil, and several pounds of canning salt.

[ ] A 6- to 8-foot cast net, and a simple rod as the slow backup. Practice both.

[ ] Unscented bleach, 5% to 9% sodium hypochlorite, in a bottle someone has actually read.

[ ] A hollow-fiber straw, for clear fresh water only.

[ ] This guide, printed, in a zip bag.

[ ] A charged power bank, a battery fan, a way to cook outside, and the medicines the house already uses.

Where the numbers come from

Confirm the current rule before fishing, and confirm a water advisory before drinking from a lake. The agency page wins when the signal is up.

- Cast net and mullet: FWC recreational gear rules and the mullet page, as published for 2026. Net at or under 14 feet stretched length. Mullet bag 50 per person. myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/mullet/

- License: FWC saltwater recreational licenses. Practice legal.

- Red tide: FWC. Do not eat dead fish. Do not eat oysters, clams, or mussels from a closed area.

- Fridge and freezer times: FoodSafety.gov and CDC. A closed fridge is about 4 hours. A full freezer is about 48 hours. Half full is about 24. The 40-degree line is the throw-out line. Fish cooked to 145 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Drinking-water amount: Broward County hurricane guidance, 1 gallon per person per day for drinking, 3 to 5 days, with more needed for food, pets, and washing.

- Boil and bleach: CDC, how to make water safe in an emergency. One-minute boil. For 5% to 9% unscented bleach with no label instructions, 8 drops per gallon of clear water, double if cloudy, then 30 minutes.

- Salt then dry: Food and Agriculture Organization guidance. About 1 pound of salt to 3 pounds of cleaned fish. Dry until the pieces are stiff. Do not seal the container.

- Pressure canning, only if the canner is already owned: National Center for Home Food Preservation, USDA fish in pint jars. nchfp.uga.edu

This Is Florida. A listing on the website is not an endorsement. Rules and advisories change. This printed page is a memory aid.