

Dichotomous Key for common Florida saltwater fish

- 1a Tail is long, whip-like..... Southern stingray
- 1b Tail is fan-shaped or forked..... 2

- 2a Body is covered in scales..... 8
- 2b Body does not appear to be covered in scales..... 3

- 3a Upper portion of tail is much larger than lower portion of tail 4
- 3b Upper and lower portions of tail are symmetrical..... 5

- 4a Head is pointed..... Black-tip shark
- 4b Head is rounded; shovel-shaped..... Bonnethead shark

- 5a Fish has silvery/reflective coloration..... 6
- 5b Fish is dull brown in color..... Gag grouper

- 6a Fish has dark spot on gill cover and at base of pectoral fin..... Jack crevalle
- 6b Fish has no spots on body..... 7

- 7a Body is longer than it is deep, symmetrical top to bottom..... Florida pompano
- 7b Body is about as deep as it is long; head steeply sloping..... Lookdown

- 8a Tail is fan shaped..... 9
- 8b Tail is forked..... 14

- 9a First and second dorsal fins are fused..... Grey snapper
- 9b First dorsal fin is separate from second dorsal fin 10

- 10a Fish has vertical stripes..... 11
- 10b Fish does not have vertical stripes..... 13

- 11a Anal fin and second dorsal fin are enlarged and tapering..... Atlantic spadefish
- 11b Second dorsal fin is elongated; anal fin is small..... 12

- 12a First dorsal fin has 10 fin rays..... Atlantic croaker
- 12b First dorsal fin has less than 10 fin rays; chin has multiple barbels.... Black drum

- 13a Fish has multiple spots on body, dorsal and caudal fins..... Spotted sea trout
- 13b Fish has single or multiple spots near base of tail but not on fins..... Red drum

- 14a Fish has a single dorsal fin..... Bay anchovy
- 14b Fish has first and second dorsal fins (may be fused)..... 15

- 15a Fish has vertical bars on its body..... 16
- 15b Fish does not have vertical bars on body..... 17

- 16a Fish has dark spot above pectoral fin..... Pinfish
- 16b Fish has no spots, only stripes..... Sheepshead

- 17a Fish has single dark stripe along its lateral line..... Snook
- 17b Fish has multiple horizontal stripes..... Striped mullet

















