

# WINTER TROUT FISHING IN FLORIDA

Article by Captain Lace Allenius. Photos by Adam Cross & Jamie Burkhart.

The sunrise peaked in the Sarasota sky as we headed out on our journey. Capt. Bruce Burkhart and I smiled as a rainbow crested over the Ringling Bridge. It was a beautiful winter day and the wind was just starting to kick up a bit. Feeling the chill of January, I zipped up my Salt Life fishing jacket and took in the gorgeous morning surrounding us. We were fishing for trout and it looked like a promising daybreak. With February nearly upon us, I was excited to do my preparatory fishing in anticipation for the upcoming month.

*“The Ringling Causeway is a tall, long bridge that spans Sarasota Bay, connecting downtown Sarasota with Bird Key, St. Armand’s Key, City Island, Lido Key and Longboat Key. The bridge features waterfront parks at each end as well as a pier and close proximity to Bird Key Park. Walkers, runners, cyclists and even skaters relish the opportunity to scale its height and enjoy the unsurpassed view of Sarasota Bay and the surrounding area. Looking west from the peak of the north side of the bridge, you can spot the Gulf of Mexico. After dark, walking toward the mainland (east) down the south side of the bridge provides a fabulous view of downtown Sarasota with the*



*buildings appearing to burst right from the water.”* (credit: aroundsarasota.com)



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Winter weather temperatures for Florida trout generally vary from the mid 50’s to mid 60’s. Try

to fish when the water is projected to be above 60 degrees, as trout fishing can be uncomfortable and fruitless in temperatures that are too frigid. Sarasota offers some great winter trout spots

and the bite can prove to be very hot during this season. It’s good to look for trout in the deep grass flats of Sarasota Bay and it’s helpful to cast into potholes and

varied structure found along the bottom.

When it comes to bait, Tsunami Holographic Shrimp baits work great for trout, as do Yo-Zuri Crystal 3D Minnows. Jerk shads, mirror lures and full size swim baits are the best type of artificials to look for when picking up your tackle for trout. If you’re going to use live bait, small finger mullet and 2 ½ inch pinfish are some of my favorites. When targeting inshore fish, I prepare myself with Fish Bomb chum and use it before casting my lure. Having a Cush-It on the base of your rod butt is also a nice way to avoid the discomfort that can occur on your leg or hip when fighting a big one. Also, please remember that trout have soft mouths and it’s more of a game of finesse than muscle when fighting these fish.

Another great thing about trout fishing in Sarasota Bay is the awesome bycatch that this fruitful area typically yields. It’s always nice to stack some tasty fish in your Grizzly cooler before heading in for the day. Flounder, Bluefish, Spanish Mackerel, ladyfish and grouper are all possibilities when cruising these local waters. Cooler water, in the winter months, will bring trout onto the warm shallow estuaries near the shore, making them more easily accessible to flats boats and shoreline wading fishermen.

On a personal note (and during a moment of silent fisherman’s reflection), while breathing in the fresh air of January in Sarasota Florida, I thought back about my fishing trips from the previous year. Just a year ago, New Year’s Eve spurred an article titled, “Reeling in the New Year”, written about a Sarasota fishing trip. Now, I couldn’t be more satisfied with a full year’s work of published articles in local, national, and international fishing magazines. Earning a Captain’s license was also a milestone and an incredible learning experience that I would recommend to any avid angler. This year, let’s all continue reeling in our hopes and dreams and tight lines to everyone who is taking this life-long fishing journey along with us. 🎣

For more information, please visit: [FishingAdventuresWithLace.com](http://FishingAdventuresWithLace.com), Email: [1lacerose1@gmail.com](mailto:1lacerose1@gmail.com), Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Fishing-Adventures-with-Lace-Allenius/349615338481321](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fishing-Adventures-with-Lace-Allenius/349615338481321)



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