

Inshore Sportfishing

Near shore game fishing in the US Virgin Islands is the mainstay of marine recreational fishing for both local residents & visitors. Inshore recreational game fishing is an island tradition & conducted primarily from small family-owned boats. Several local tournaments are held each year that target midwater game fish. Some large game fish tournaments also include a class for inshore fish.

Working the Birds

One important aspect of mid-water game fishing is to be able to pinpoint hot spots & seabirds are one of the best natural indicators of these spots. Seabirds' range of visibility is extensive & often will lead boats directly to bait fish being brought to the surface by predators.

Seabirds are extremely efficient & valuable fishing guides. Protect our natural fishing guides by discouraging them from taking baited lines. Avoid small islands & cays where they nest & rear their young because they are easily disturbed by loud noises & may abandon their nests & hatchlings.

Reserve & Closure Sites

There are areas in the US Virgin Islands that are either closed to fishing year-round or during certain months. Contact DPNR or Environmental Enforcement for a copy of the rules & regulations governing these areas. You may also refer to the Division of Fish & Wildlife website.

www.dpnr.vi.gov/fish-and-wildlife

The closed areas aid in the protection & reproduction of certain species, ensuring that they will be present for many years to come. By providing safe habitats for them to grow & reproduce, fish larvae & adult fish will eventually migrate to other areas, re-populating them for fishing. The protection of at least one area leads to continued & improved fishing in many others.

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.



FAD locations within USVI waters are:

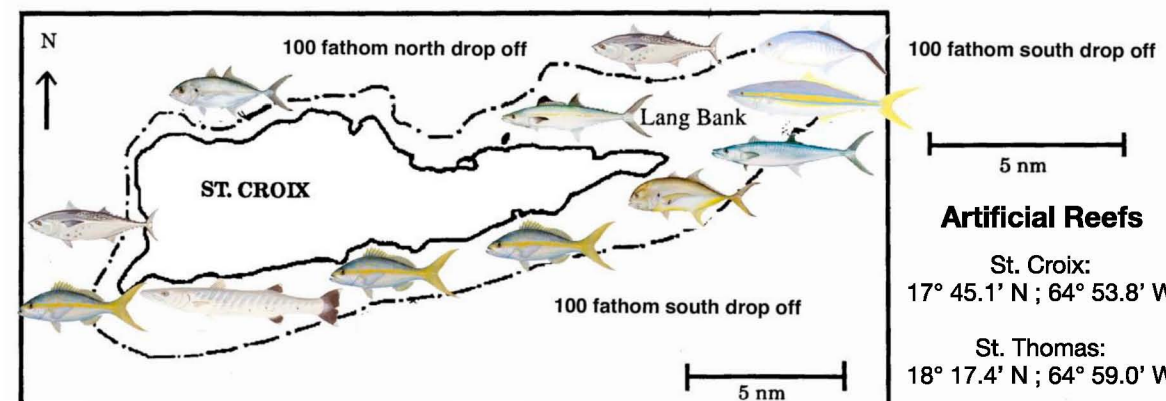
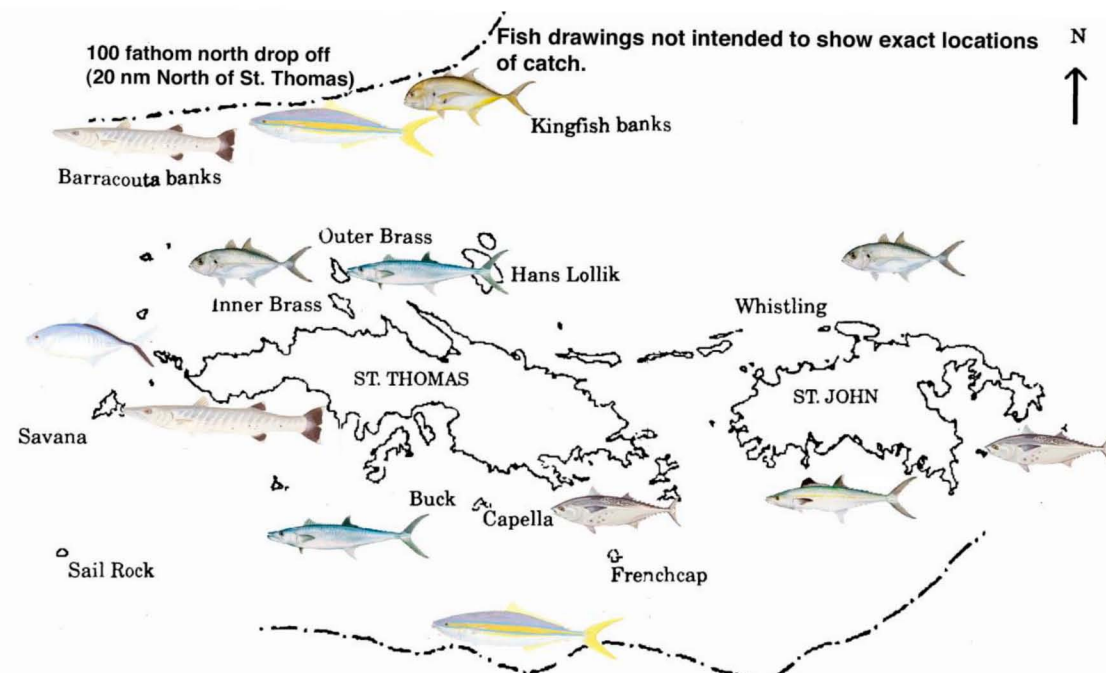
Submerged

T2: 18° 33.811' N; 65° 08.839' W
T5: 18° 36.830' N; 64° 59.130' W

Surface

T4: 18° 35.595' N; 65° 03.239' W
T7: 18° 38.102' N; 65° 03.310' W
T12: 18° 10.206' N; 64° 59.485' W
X10: 17° 37.944' N; 64° 47.787' W

MAP OF MID WATER GAME FISHING SITES



Artificial Reefs

St. Croix:
17° 45.1' N; 64° 53.8' W

St. Thomas:
18° 17.4' N; 64° 59.0' W

Gamefish



*Ocyurus
chrysurus*
**Yellowtail
Snapper***

Season

All year

Location

Shallow & deep reef areas

Bait / Lures

Fry



*Sphyræna
barracuda**
Barracuda

All year

All reef areas

Spoons,
Small
Lures



Caranx crysos
**Hardnose
(Blue Runner)**

April -
September

Most inshore areas & around
schools of bait fish, FADs

Blue Fry,
Small
Feathers



Caranx ruber
Bar Jack

All year

Most inshore areas & around
schools of bait fish

Blue Fry,
Scuttle
(Squid),
Feathers



*Caranx
hippos**
Creville Jack

All year

100 fathom dropoffs, most
inshore areas & around
schools of bait fish

Fry, Scuttle
(Squid)



*Elagatis
bipinnulata*
**Rainbow
Runner**

April -
September

North & South Drops of St.
Thomas, St. John & St. Croix,
FADs

Fry, Scuttle
(Squid),
Feathers



*Scomberomorus
regalis*
Cero

All year

Between islands & from the
shoreline to the shelf edge in
St. Croix

Ballyhoo,
Fry, Lures,
Feathers



*Euthynnus
cavalla*
**Bonito
(Little Tunny)**

All year with
peak season
January - May

Most inshore areas & drop-
offs, around schools of bait
fish

Blue Fry,
Feathers



*Scomberomorus
cavalla*
Kingfish

All year with
peak season
February - May

Most mid-shelf areas & drop-
offs

Ballyhoo,
Fry, Skirts

Bycatch

Bycatch can be defined as the portion of a catch, or harvest, that consists of non-target organisms; animals taken incidentally during fishing operations. These can include birds, fish, marine mammals & turtles. Should you catch a species you do not want, please return it to the sea as quickly as possible.

Lionfish are frequently found & caught in the USVI. While they are delicious, they do have long venomous spines. Always be very careful when handling lionfish. If you catch a lionfish, please do NOT release it (kill it instead), as it is part of our management program to remove all lionfish.

Ethical Angling

- Help fish stocks increase through catch & release.
- Limit your take - don't always take your limit.
- Observe regulations & report violations.
- Bring all garbage in - don't teach it to swim!
- Captain your boat - practice safety afloat.



For more information on recreational sportfishing visit:

dpnr.vi.gov/fish-and-wildlife
DPNR's Division of Fish & Wildlife

St. Croix:
45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted
St. Croix, VI 00840
(340) 773-1082

St. Thomas / St. John:
6291 Est. Nazareth 101
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 775-6762

Department of Planning & Natural Resources Division of Fish & Wildlife

Midwater Game Fish Recreational Fishing



* Within Federal waters (3 - 200 nautical miles offshore), the size limit is a total length of 12 inches.