



FLORIDA FISHING

Putnam County is home to 3 of the “Top 10” fisheries in Florida, as designated by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Florida’s climate ensures excellent fishing year-round.

All of Putnam County’s water bodies have natural shorelines that are undeveloped and protected lands. Numerous public ramps and docks provide access to all of our waterways, for boating and shore fishing. This gives our residents and visitors the opportunity to see the “Real Florida”.

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PALATKA PUTNAM COUNTY



The St. Johns River flows north for 310 miles, from Indian County to the Atlantic Ocean, and is divided into three basins - upper, middle and lower. Putnam County is in the lower basin and centrally located to the river's best fishing. Not only has it earned the title of "Bass Capital of the World", but it offers a list of other freshwater, saltwater, or brackish-water fishing. Freshwater species include largemouth bass, black crappie (speckled perch), bluegill, shell cracker, warmouth, and catfish. Saltwater species include red fish, flounder, sea trout, and tarpon. Shrimp migrate up the brackish water during the summer months and striped bass can be caught mostly during the fall and winter months.

From downtown Palatka south to Lake George, some 42 nautical miles, the St. Johns River's tree-lined shores and extensive vegetation provide excellent habitat for fish. Lake George is a 46,000 acre natural impoundment of the St. Johns River. It is the second largest lake in the state of Florida, with three spring-fed tributaries, and holds acres of eelgrass beds, as well as old pilings, docks and jetties. In between the big lake and Palatka, the Ocklawaha River flows into the St. Johns north of Little Lake George via Rodman Reservoir/George Kirkpatrick Dam. Further north, Dunns Creek connects a 5-mile stretch southeast to Lake Crescent, a 15,960 acre lake bordering Putnam County and Flagler County.

North of Palatka's Memorial Bridge to Trout Creek in St. Johns County there are plenty of drops, sandbars, docks, pilings and natural structure to satisfy any anglers idea of a good fishing trip. The river and its connecting waters have numerous marinas, motels, guide services, ramps and launches for local and visiting anglers.

Putnam County has the highest economic impact from freshwater fishing of all rural counties in Florida, with a population under 75,000. Local anglers contribute much to the economy by fishing weekly, while purchasing boats, motors, boat registrations, licenses, trailer tags and marine equipment. Putnam waters also attract many bass clubs from surrounding counties on a regular basis.

Palatka and Putnam County are recognized all across the country as one of the favorite sites for the Bassmaster Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS) professional fishing circuit. BASS and its ESPN cameras have been at Palatka's riverfront to showcase the St. Johns River, where the world's top 100 professional anglers compete for the event's \$100,000 first place prize. Dating back to 1973, there have been more than 20 BASS events held in Putnam County and, as always, it is an exciting event, which attracts hundreds of spectators and gives the community national recognition, and a terrific economic boost.

Palatka's riverfront has also been the site for the largest one-day bass tournament east of the Mississippi River. Each year in May, the Wolfson Children's Hospital Bass Tournament (WCH) launches nearly 600 boats, with anglers from all over the southeast. Rodman Reservoir, known for its big bass, also hosts its Annual Save Rodman Reservoir Bass Tournament in April, which draws nearly 200 boats each year, and supporters/spectators turn up in big numbers.

Putnam fishing has it all... whether it be a family day in a boat, a dock, along the bank, or in the competitive atmosphere of tournament fishing.

Editorial provided by Greg Walker

"BASS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD"