

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

FLORIDA KEYS

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MARINE
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FOUNDATION



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Program Criteria

- Comply with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Follow Established Policies, Recommendations, and Guidelines for Responsible Angling
- Voluntarily Exceed Standards Specified by Law, Policies, and Guidelines to Promote Responsible Stewardship of Fisheries Resources
- Participate in Trainings
- Conduct an Onboard Educational Briefing
- Provide Outreach and Education Materials
- Promote the Blue Star Fishing Guide Program
- Participate in at Least One Conservation-Related Activity per Year
- Require Captains and Mates to Attend a Continuing Education Opportunity Once per Year



Periodic Evaluations and Trainings

Initial Evaluation

- Training workshop is available online
- Training is comprehensive and include aspects of inshore, offshore, and flats fishing, best practices, and information about different habitats and wildlife within FKNMS
- Once training is complete, Blue Star coordinator evaluates and certifies the operator

Annual Evaluation

- Refresher training will be available online
- Annual evaluation will be conducted through: in-person or online client evaluations, secret shopper-style evaluations, or prearranged, voluntary ride alongs.

Incentives to Participate



- Recognition of participating guides by NOAA
- Receive educational materials for clients
- Networking with other guides, agencies, advisory council
- Marketing opportunities through articles, radio shows, outreach, website promotion, etc

BLUE STAR FISHING GUIDE BRIEFING
You are in a very special place – welcome to Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary



What is Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary?

- Part of a national program to protect unique marine resources
- All waters surrounding the Keys, from Miami through the Tenugas
- Created by Congress to protect North America's only living barrier coral reef

The Florida Keys Ecosystem: Mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs

- Mangroves line more than 1,800 miles of shoreline along the sanctuary
- The sanctuary protects one of the largest seagrass beds north of the Equator
- Coral reefs are home to 25 percent of all marine fish species

Sanctuary Zones: What type of zone are you in? What are its rules and regulations?

- FKNMS is divided into types of zones that determine what activities are, or are not, allowed
- Some zones separate different user activities, such as fishing and diving
- Other zones are for research only, or preserve large spawning and nursery areas

The cover of the "Blue Star Fishing Guide Operator Handbook 2018" features a large, light blue star with a white outline and a white fishhook inside. The text "Blue Star Fishing Guide Operator Handbook 2018" is centered in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a URL: <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov>.A vertical poster with a blue background. At the top, it says "LOOK BEFORE YOU BOOK!". Below that is a photograph of a boat on the water. The Blue Star logo is prominently displayed in the center. Below the logo, it says "NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES FLORIDA KEYS". The main text reads "Ask if your fishing operator is BLUE STAR recognized". At the bottom, it says "Look for the Blue Star logo when booking a fishing charter. Blue Star-recognized operators are dedicated to education and responsible tourism." The footer includes the NOAA logo and the text "Office of National Marine Sanctuaries National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY".A screenshot of a Facebook post from the NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The post is dated October 16, 2016, and says "Congratulations to Rainbow Reef Dive Center on becoming our newest Blue Star operator. If you are diving in the Florida Keys remember to book a Blue Star operator- <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/onthewater/bluestar.html>". The post includes a photo of two men standing on a boat. One man is holding a blue folder or book. The boat has a sign that says "RAINBOW REEF". The Facebook interface shows "2 shares" and "1 Like".

Looking Ahead - Next Steps

- ✓ Community working group creates recommendations to agency to develop Blue Star Fishing Guides
 - ✓ Secure funding sources for initial program year
 - ✓ Agency staff finalize program framework, create outreach materials, begin marketing the program
- Recruit, certify, and recognize participants
- Adapt program as necessary for following program years

Recognized Charters



Forever Young Charter Company
Islamorada, FL



First Choice Charters
Islamorada, FL

More than 15 operators have begun process to recognition

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