



Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron – America's Boating Club Cape Coral



The Westin Hotel and Conference Center overlooking Glover Bight

Cape Coral Boater's Relocation Guide

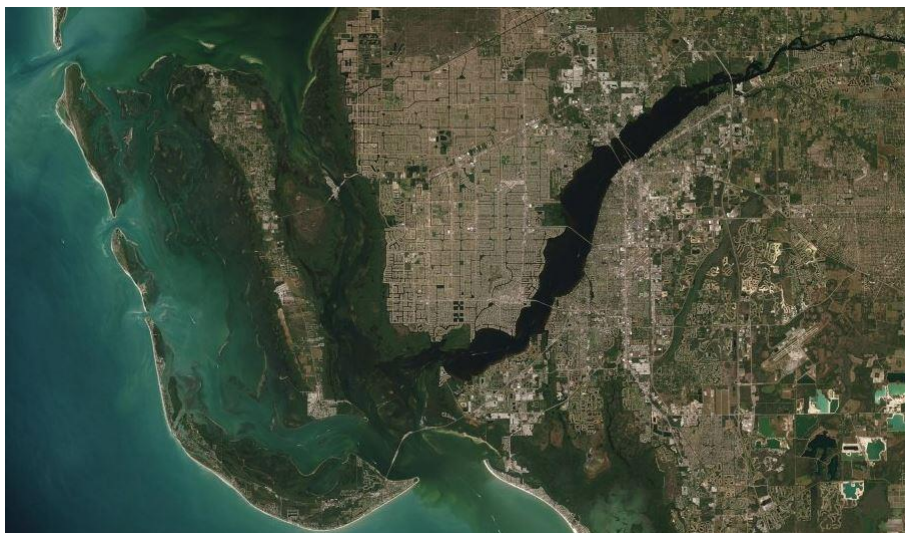
Written by the Boaters of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron

For Boaters New to Cape Coral and the Lee County Waterways

Introduction

Welcome to Cape Coral. If you are a new resident with a boat or thinking about moving to the area to enjoy the boating lifestyle then this guide is for you. Cape Coral and the surrounding communities attract boaters from across the country and around the world. Boating here is just a little bit different and you will hear from others that for many places “local Knowledge is required”.

Boaters new to the area quickly find that boating is different down here from their past experiences on inland freshwater lakes and rivers. Boaters find themselves having to navigate marked channels to get out to the popular boating areas.



Since we boat in one of Florida's largest

estuaries you can't always go where you want to. The Gulf of Mexico is accessed via the Caloosahatchee River, and San Carlos Bay. Boaters can also explore Matlacha Pass, and Pine Island Sound.

Understanding the impact of the tides and how they influence of the river's current becomes second nature after a while.

The environment in Southwest Florida is known to impact your boat and trailer in ways you may not be prepared for. The brackish water of the river and the saltwater in the bays and Gulf will take their toll on all of your equipment and maintenance is not something you can ignore.

This brief guide will get you started with most of the basics and point you to other resources for more details where applicable. The guide has been prepared by members of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron – America's Boating Club Cape Coral, with years of experience exploring our waterways.

Our organization is a unit of the United States Power Squadrons®, Inc. (USPS), the world's largest non-profit educational boating safety organization. Our primary objective is the promotion of boating safety through education. All work and no play tend to make Jack and Jill a dull pair so we also hold many on and off the water member recreational activities and social events.

Contents

Introduction	2
Contents	3
Cape Coral Basics	5
Gulf Access Canals.....	5
Freshwater Canals.....	6
Boat Launches	6
Where to Keep Your Boat	6
Trailer Boaters.....	6
Storage Facilities	6
Marinas	7
Unique Issues	7
You Can't Boat Where the Birds Walk	8
Saltwater	8
Manatee and Dolphins.....	8
Tides and Currents	9
Heat and Dehydration.....	9
Red Tide and Blue Green Algae.....	9
Local Weather	10
Hurricanes	10
Legal Stuff	10
Registration	10
Required Equipment	10
Knowing the Rules.....	11
On the Water	11
Wildlife Sanctuaries	12
The Intracoastal	12
San Carlos Bay	13
Pine Island Sound.....	14
Matlacha Pass	14
Speed Limits	14
Idle Speed No Wake	14
Slow Speed Minimum Wake	15

Maximum Miles per Hour	15
Seasonal Speed Zones.....	15
Normal Operation	15
Cape Coral Canal Speed Limits.....	15
Paddle Craft.....	16
Fishing	16
Swimming.....	16
Conclusion.....	16
United States Power Squadron.....	17
Other Resources for Boaters.....	17
Websites	18

Cape Coral Basics



Courtesy SW Florida Planning Council

Cape Coral is located in Lee County Florida and is considered to be a water wonderland. Situated on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River boaters have access to the Gulf of Mexico via Caloosahatchee River on the east and south side of the city and Matlacha Pass on the west.

The city contains approximately 400 miles of canals where canal homeowners may keep their boats. Trailer boaters have access to the water at five public boat ramps and paddle

craft enthusiast have two launch ramps dedicated for their use.

Gulf Access Canals

Approximately 200 miles of Gulf access canals run through the city. Homeowners along the canals are allowed to build docks and keep their boats behind their homes in these canals. The Gulf access canals are divided in five “basins”. They are referred to as the Northwest Spreader, the Southwest Spreader, The South Spreader, The Southeast Spreader, and the Northeast Spreader. Each basin has a unique access point with four of them leading to the river and one leading out to Matlacha Pass.

When describing the canal system, you will hear people talk about “sailboat” access to the river. In these areas there are no bridges that a vessel has to travel under.

A larger portion of the Gulf access canals require boaters to go under bridges. Most of these bridges have clearances in the 8-to-9-foot range. And on some canals, it can take up to 45 minutes to get out to the river. Some residents in the southwest side of the city also have to pass through a lock to get out to the river.

If you are looking for a home in the area it is wise to check a chart to see what clearances the bridges have and to get an idea of how long it will take you to navigate the canal system to get out to the river.



Freshwater Canals

There are approximately 200 miles of freshwater canals in Cape Coral. The original plan was to connect these canals to the Gulf access canals, but permits from the Army Corp of Engineers were never obtained. The freshwater canals are divided into 18 “basins” and although many connect you will find weirs have been installed to maintain the water level in various sections.

In the freshwater canal system, you will find residents with smaller boats that they use to enjoy a day on the water and fishing. These canals are the source of the water used in the fire hydrants and for the residential sprinkler systems.

Boat Launches



The city currently maintains four Gulf access launch ramps, three that have access to the river and one that leads out to Matlacha Pass. Details on these ramps can be found on the [City of Cape Coral](#) website. There is a parking fee and an annual parking pass is available.

The freshwater canals currently have one public ramp that is improved and a number of unimproved access points. The city is looking into opening up an additional 28 access points, at least one in each freshwater basin.

These new “Pocket Parks” will have very limited parking

and are intended to drop off and pick up points for residents of these canals.

Where to Keep Your Boat

If you don’t plan on living on a canal but plan on owning a boat here are some things you need to know about your options.

Trailer Boaters

If you plan on keeping your boat on a trailer the city has some rules about storing it at your home. The city requires that boats and boat trailers be parked or stored in your rear yard behind the last structural wall of the primary structure. Boats and boat trailers may not be parked, stored or kept in front or side yard of a single or multi-family residence, or on a vacant lot in a residential area. A maximum of two boats on trailers, or an empty boat trailer may be parked in the rear yard provided it/they are not allowed to fall into a state of disrepair.

Storage Facilities

If you are new to Florida, you will quickly learn there are no basements, but we have lots of storage facilities to hold all of the stuff you used to keep in your basement and attic. These storage facilities also have plenty of space for boat trailers.

Marinas

Cape Coral has one public marina and a couple of private ones. Keeping your boat in the water comes with its own set of issues that boaters new to the area need to contend with. The alternative at many private marinas is rack storage. Here too there are issues to consider, especially hurricanes.



Proposed New Look Cape Coral Yacht Club Marina

In the Water

Marinas fill up fast so if you are looking to keep your boat in the water year-round at one of the marinas you may have to get on a waiting list. There are a number of marinas that rent slips by the day, week and month so be prepared to check around.

Be sure to discuss with the marina all the services they offer and be sure to ask about their policy about what they will and will not do when you are out of town. Make sure you fully understand your responsibilities before and after a hurricane.

Dry Storage

The alternative is keeping your boat in a storage rack and the area has a variety of types available. You will find open racks with a tin roof on top, enclosed metal buildings and concrete and cinder block structures.

These facilities can be fussy about the type of boat they will accept, especially when it comes to your propulsion system. Outboard engines are the most common system down here and they are typically what you will see. Inboard/outboard and jet drives are also acceptable in these facilities. However, if you have an inboard system with through hull fittings be sure to be ready to show them some pictures so they can get an idea if they can handle it.

Before signing any contract at one of these facilities check the wind rating for the structure. We can get a one of those category 5 storms passing through on occasion and you want to make sure the rack or building can withstand the storm.

Most of these facilities can handle boats up to 35 feet and offer a variety of services, before and after launching your boat. Premium services come with a premium price.

Unique Issues

We have hinted at some of the unique issues boaters face in Southwest Florida, in this section we will look a little deeper at those.

You Can't Boat Where the Birds Walk

We boat in an estuary, meaning the area where freshwater meets saltwater. This typically creates shoaling and very shallow water. Pick up a chart of the area and you will see that the Caloosahatchee River has a series of dredged channels and outside those channels you are likely to find birds walking at low tide.

The same is true in Matlacha Pass where there are no dredged channels, just the natural flow that shifts over time. Pine Island Sound has a series of dredged channels allowing safe passage up to Charlotte Harbor.



Saltwater

The river is brackish water with tannins that will turn your hull brown and destroy your engines if you fail to flush them with freshwater after each outing. If you are bringing an inboard or inboard/outboard boat down here it is wise to change it to a closed cooling system. If that is not practical see if you can have a freshwater flush system installed.

Saltwater running through your inboard risers and exhaust manifolds can decrease their life span forcing you to replace them every 2-3 years. The rubber gasket on inboard/outboard engines need to be inspected and replaced on a regular basis as the combination of saltwater and the sun will rot them out quicker down here.

If you plan on leaving your boat in the water, be sure to have a high-quality bottom paint applied. Also plan on regular maintenance of your boat's hull to remove the aquatic life that like to attach itself to everything.

Manatee and Dolphins



Manatees love this area, normally migratory mammals many of them live year-round in our waters. As a protected species they enjoy special privileges and you will find that in most areas outside of the marked channels there are manatee protection zones. In the winter months some of the marked channels have seasonal manatee zones and speed limits are reduced

Remember we said our waters are shallow, that is where you will find the various types of seagrasses that the manatees like to eat. Manatees eat about 8 hours a

day and can consume 100 pounds of seagrass. In the State of Florida, it is a \$50,000 fine for harassing or feeding manatees, so keep your distance and treat these creatures with the respect they deserve.

Dolphins are also plentiful and you will see them feeding in the shallows and out in the open water. They are easier to spot than manatees due to their dorsal fin. With manatees you will see the wake created by their tail fin as they move through the water.

Tides and Currents

Being on the Gulf we are impacted by tides, so learning to read a tide table is a good idea. The tidal range is about 3 feet, meaning the range from high to low. Since the waters are shallow you will see shoals and spoils area exposed at low tide. Twice a month, at the ebb of spring tide, in the area known as The Miserable Mile the shoals on both sides of the dredged channel are fully exposed. The Miserable Mile is a one-mile stretch in Pine Island Sound that was created when the Gulf Intracoastal Water was created.

On the Caloosahatchee River the current meets the incoming tide and can make navigating a bit tricky at times. Don't be surprised as you near the river's end by the impact of the tide.

Heat and Dehydration

Here in Florida you don't have to worry too much about hypothermia or the effects of cold-water immersion but heat stress is a major concern. Any time the temperature is above 75 degrees and the humidity is about 75% you can expect to experience the effects of heat stress. So, that means just about every day.

There are two types of heat stress, one is caused by water depletion, and the other salt depletion. Boaters experiencing water depletion show signs of excessive thirst, weakness, and headache, which if left untreated can lead to loss of consciousness. The symptoms of salt depletion include nausea and vomiting, muscle cramps, and dizziness.

Heat stress can be easily avoided by making sure you bring plenty of water with you and drinking it while you are out on the water. Don't wait until you start feeling symptoms. Water is the prevention and the cure, caffeinated drinks, and alcohol contribute to heat stress because they are diuretics that cause you to lose water.

HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT STROKE	
Faint or dizzy	Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating	No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin	Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting	Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse	Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps	May lose consciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Get to a cooler, air conditioned placeDrink water if fully consciousTake a cool shower or use cold compresses	CALL 9-1-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

Weather.gov/socialmedia
Weather.gov/heat

@SacramentoOES
SacramentoReady.org

Red Tide and Blue Green Algae

Red tide and blue green algae are both naturally occurring events that happen on a semi-regular basis. It seems that there is little we can do to prevent it and it requires us to become better stewards of our waterways.

Red tide has been occurring in the Gulf of Mexico forever, there are written accounts of it going back to when the explorers first came to the area. Red tide is found in the Gulf and travels typically along the coast from north to south.

Outbreaks of blue/green algae occur in the canals along the river. The Caloosahatchee River picks up too many pollutants that wind their way down the Kissimmee River and pass-through Lake Okeechobee. Some of the Gulf access canals get blooms of the algae because of too much fertilizer being rinsed into them from the lawns.

Work is underway with studies of how these outbreaks of blue/green algae can be controlled.

Local Weather

Our weather is pretty predictable, in the winter it is dry and in the summer it rains. But year-round you can go boating!

Never take the weather for granted down here. Always check the forecast before heading out for a day on the water. However, there are some simple things you need to know.

In the rainy season (summer) it typically rains every afternoon. You can expect the rain to start around 3:00 p.m. and it will come at us from the east.

In the winter it tends to get a bit windy and can make navigating in certain areas a bit difficult.

No matter what the season keep a weather eye out for approaching storms from the west and the east. If you have an open boat, one without a hardtop you will want to carry some rainsuits and perhaps even a motorcycle helmet with a visor.

Hurricanes

June to November is hurricane season, if you plan on moving here you need to plan for dealing with this when one is forecasted. Many decisions need to be made about leaving, staying, what to do with your house and your boat.



For your boat the decisions are made by a couple of factors, what your insurance policy dictates, and where you keep your boat. There are many resources that can help you plan for a hurricane. Some are listed at the end of this document.

Legal Stuff

Registration

If you are bringing your boat with you when you move to Florida the state requires you to register it within 30 days establishing residency. This can be done at the local tax collector's office. The [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) has all of the regulations posted on their website.

Required Equipment

Like all states boaters in Florida must have all of the Federally mandated equipment on board when operating their boat. The Coast Guard publication "[A Boater's Guide to Required Equipment for](#)

[Recreational Boaters](#)” is available free at most marine dealers, marine supply stores, online and at the office of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron.

Once you arrive consider having a free Vessel Safety Check completed to make sure you have all of the required equipment. The examiners may even have some tips on other items that come in handy on our waters. The Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron has a number of qualified examiners that will come to your boat.



Knowing the Rules

Most boaters new to the area are surprised by the amount of boat traffic on our waterways. As a popular vacation destination getting out to the Gulf of Mexico via the Caloosahatchee River through the last narrow 2 miles can seem like the wild west. The rules of the water are different than the rules of the road so knowing the Navigation Rules is important.

Federal

All boating activity is governed by the International and Inland Rules of the road. Many boaters moving here who spent their lives on inland waters never really learned these rules. Down here with all of the recreational and commercial traffic knowing the rules could save your life.

[The Navigation Rules](#) have one goal, prevent collisions on the water. In the event of a collision on the water it is deemed your fault as you didn't follow the rules.

State

The State of Florida has added some rules that are specific to boat operators. Some of the key differences involve who needs a Florida Boating Safety I.D. Card to operate a vessel, can operate and rent a personal watercraft and who has to wear a personal flotation device.

The Florida Boater's Guide is a free publication that is also available at the office of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron. The [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) also has all of the rules posted on line.

Local

The [City of Cape Coral](#) has some other regulations that boaters need to know. They govern the use of the boat launch ramps, liveaboards, personal watercraft, water skiing, and mooring among other things. Those can be found on the city's website.

Despite the many illegal "slow no wake" signs residents put up in the canals the Gulf access canals are manatee zones. The speed limit in the Gulf access canals is "slow speed, minimum wake." The definition can be found below in a section called Speed Limits.

On the Water

The waterways surrounding Cape Coral form one of Florida's largest estuaries. This may be a new term for many inland boaters but it simply means we boat in a partially enclosed coastal body of brackish water. We have the Caloosahatchee River and a number of smaller streams that feed it and it all connects to the Gulf of Mexico.

Throughout the area many shallow areas, shoals, and oyster beds. Because the waters are so shallow marked channel's guide boaters down a safe passage to the Gulf. In Lee County Florida there are over 1,500 aids to navigation marking the hundreds of channels.

Many of the channels have been dredged creating spoils areas that boaters need to avoid or risk going aground. Some of the spoil's areas have built up over time and created additional small islands that boaters like to explore. One of the more popular ones is Picnic Island in the middle of the Miserable Mile.

Wildlife Sanctuaries

Not all islands that you pass on the waterways are open to exploring and boaters need to learn which ones are designated wildlife sanctuaries. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates the [J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge](#). Headquartered on Sanibel Island the refuge seeks to protect the many natural wonders that surround us.

In additions to "Ding' Darling boaters will encounter the [Matlacha Pass National Wildlife Refuge](#) which includes 31 islands and surrounded by the [Matlacha Pass State Aquatic Preserve](#).

In Pine Island Sound is the [Pine Island Sound Aquatic Preserve](#) and the [Pine Island National Wildlife Refuge](#).

On all the lands protected in these sanctuaries boaters will see native flora and fauna plus the nesting grounds of many migratory birds.

The Intracoastal

Getting out to the Gulf of Mexico or up Pine Island Sound to Charlotte Harbor you will be boating on the Intracoastal Waterway. This can confuse boaters who are not familiar with this the navigation aids on this waterway. Failing to learn how to read its navigational aids has caused many boaters to go around.

The Intracoastal Waterway system was designed and built to support commercial boat traffic. It was created from several channels dredged as far back as the 1800's. These channels are normally about 100 – 200 feet wide and typically maintained to a depth of 12 feet.

You will encounter two separate stretches of the Intracoastal, one dating from 1880's, the other was created in the 1960's.

Okeechobee Waterway

Originally known as the Cross Florida Waterway, the [Okeechobee Waterway](#) connects the Gulf of Mexico with the Atlantic Ocean. Started in the late 1880's it was not completed until 1939.

It runs up the Caloosahatchee River, across Lake Okeechobee, to the St. Lucie River and out the Indian River into the Atlantic Ocean. In all it is 154 miles from end to end and you will pass through five locks.

When navigating on the Caloosahatchee River boaters need to remember that the red lateral aids to navigation are on the north side of the river.

This means when leaving Cape Coral and traveling downstream the red aids need to be on kept on the starboard (right) side of the boat. When returning to Cape Coral and traveling upstream the green aids need to be on kept on the starboard (right) side of the boat.

Yes, this sounds counterintuitive to what you may have learned, however it is one of the many quirks of boating on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

At the southern end of the Caloosahatchee River, you can enter the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway that runs up through Pine Island Sound. Prior to 1960 when this waterway was constructed, boaters wishing to get up into Pine Island Sound needed to go south into San Carlos Bay and across to the east side of Sanibel Island.

The dredging of the shoal that runs from marker #2A to #8 created the Miserable Mile. It got its name as one too many coal barges got stuck crossways in it due to the tides, current and winds. The Miserable Mile runs for one mile and is 200 feet wide and 12 feet deep. There is no speed limit through this passage and boats with deep drafts are forced to stay in the channel or risk going aground.

San Carlos Bay

To get out to the Gulf of Mexico or down to Fort Myers Beach boaters follow the marked channels in San Carlos Bay. Inside the marked channel there is no speed limit however not far outside of the channel you will be in manatee zones.



Courtesy Sea Grant Florida



Sanibel Island Light

Pine Island Sound

Boaters who enjoy the cruising lifestyle have discovered Pine Island Sound as a great place to drop anchor overnight. In the sound it is best to stay in the marked channels but watch for the many coves and islands that can provide shelter along the way.

Pine Island Sound runs between Pine Island and the barrier islands of Sanibel, Captiva, North Captiva and Cayo Costa. In the sound are a number of popular restaurants that local boaters like to frequent.

Matlacha Pass

If there is one place that local knowledge is definitely required it is the south part of Matlacha Pass. This channel is well marked but it twists and turns and the closest marker that you see, may not be the next you need to go to. The north end of Matlacha Pass opens up and is not as twisty as the south end.

The two parts are divided by a bascule bridge with a closed clearance of 9 feet. The bridge is operated by the Lee County Department of Transportation. Hours of operation are posted on site.

Speed Limits

The State of Florida has followed Federal guidelines and established Manatee Protection Zones throughout our waterways. In addition, you will find areas with other speed restrictions.

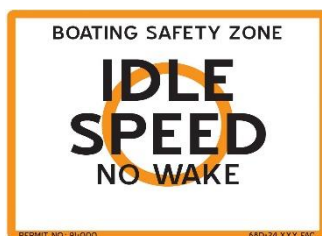
All regulatory signs, including speed limit signs, in the state must be permitted by the state and carry a permit number and cite the state regulation. Many canal homeowners like to put up their own signs which are not legal or enforceable.

Lee County publishes the Southwest Florida Waterway's Boaters Guide which is available at the office of the Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron and [online](#). This guide provides an overview of the speed limits outlined in the State of Florida Administrative Code, [68C-22.005 Lee County Zones](#).

A detailed map is available on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's website under the [Wildlife Habitats](#) section.



Idle Speed No Wake



Idle Speed No Wake is the most restrictive vessel speed. Idle speed requires a vessel to proceed at a speed no greater than that which will maintain steerage and headway. At no time is any vessel required to proceed so slowly that the operator is unable to maintain control over the vessel or any other vessel or object that it has under tow (Rule 68C-22.002 (1) F.A.C.).

Slow Speed Minimum Wake

This is the speed limit in all Manatee Protection Zones and typically within 300- 500 feet from the shoreline.

Slow speed requires that a vessel be fully off plane and completely settled into the water. The vessel must then proceed at a speed which is reasonable and prudent under the prevailing circumstances so as to avoid the creation of an excessive wake or other hazardous condition which endangers or is likely to endanger other vessels or other persons using the waterway. Due to the different speeds at which vessels of different sizes and configurations may travel while in compliance, there is no specific numeric speed assigned to Slow Speed (Rule 68C-22.002 (4) F.A.C.).



Maximum Miles per Hour

In our area you will typically find speed zones with a 25 MPH limit. This is found in most of the marked channels on the Caloosahatchee River.

Maximum XX miles per hour (MPH) speed zones are controlled areas within which a vessel's speed made good over the bottom, measured in statute miles, shall not exceed XX miles per hour.

XX is the maximum speed at which a vessel may lawfully be operated within the marked area. The vessel must still operate at a safe speed that does not create an elevated bow which restricts visibility or produce an excessive wake as vessel operators are responsible for their wakes (Rule 68C-22.002 (5), (6), (7), and (18) F.A.C.).

Seasonal Speed Zones

In a number of areas Caloosahatchee River, you will encounter seasonal Manatee Zones. In these places the you will find a lower speed limit from November 1st to March 31st.

Normal Operation



When a you leave a controlled speed zone and see a sign that says “Resume Safe Normal Operation” it means there is no speed limit. However, Navigation Rule #6 Safe Speed describes this as “Every vessel shall at all times proceed at a safe speed so that she can take proper and effective action to avoid collision and be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.”

Cape Coral Canal Speed Limits

As mentioned above Gulf access canals are “slow speed minimum wake” as they are designated Manatee Protection Zones.

The freshwater canals have no speed limit. This means they are governed by Navigation Rule #6 Safe Speed. So, boaters in the freshwater canals are advised to boat with caution.



Paddle Craft

Southwest Florida is a paddle craft paradise and in Cape Coral you have access to the [The Great Calusa Blue Way](#). With 190 miles of marked paddling trails throughout Lee County paddlers can explore nature in a way other boaters can't.

Fishing

Fishing the waters down here is a great pastime. If you are new to the area you may want to go out a few times with one of the many charter captains to get an idea of some of the best spots. There are many fishing clubs that meet regularly including one run by members of our squadron.

The [Southwest Florida Waterway's Boaters Guide](#) has a listing of the many artificial reefs that are popular spots out in the Gulf of Mexico.

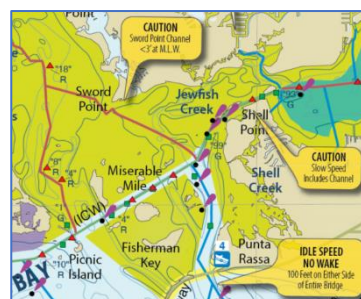
No matter what type of fish you are after it is always best to check the current Florida rules as they change frequently. The most up to date fishing regulations are found online at the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#).

If you are into freshwater fishing especially for bass check out the [Cape Coral Bass Club](#). They hold monthly meeting and regular tournaments.

Swimming

The City of Cape Coral has one public beach and it is located on the Caloosahatchee River and the Cape Coral Yacht Club. Boater's looking for a place to pull up to a beach and swim will find some spots along the very south end of the Caloosahatchee River. Picnic Island on the west end of the Miserable Mile is a popular spot also.

Estero Island the home of Fort Myers Beach is a destination for many but caution is required as there are many places where boats are not allowed. In others shoaling means you must park off shore and swim in.



The south end of Sanibel Island is another favorite area but here like Fort Myers Beach watch for no boat areas and the water is very shallow off shore.

Those interested in exploring a bit farther out can visit [Cayo Costa State Park](#) for what many people consider to be the best beach in the area.

If you are planning on swimming in the Gulf of Mexico, please be sure to anchor your boat, wear a personal flotation device and throw a fender in the water tied to a line. The anchor is to keep your boat in place as it can drift faster than you can swim. The personal flotation device is for when you get tired and the fender and line is so you can pull yourself back to the boat.

Conclusion

We hope this brief overview has helped you to gain a bit of an understanding of what boating is like in our area. We enjoy our waterways and hope that if you chose to live here you learn to love them as much as

we do. They are nothing like you may have experienced elsewhere for many reasons. The key is to take your time and learn the waters and the many rules designed to keep you safe on them.

United States Power Squadron

[Cape Coral Sail and Power Squadron](#) has been a part of the community since 1964 and our members partake in our three pillars, educational, social, and civic activities.

- The promotion of boating safety through education. We offer course and seminars that help recreational boaters improve their skills.
- Social activities run by members include activities for every type of boater. Including outing to local waterfront establishments, kayak trips, overnight cruises, fishing, seminars, and more.
- Community service programs to promote safety on the water. Including free vessel safety checks and a life jacket loaner program.



America's Boating Club Cape Coral regularly offers the United States Power Squadron's, America's Boating Course. This and all our courses are taught by volunteer instructors with years of boating experience. America's Boating Course is approved by both the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and the State of Florida. Passing the course earns you the State of Florida Boaters Education ID card.

Over the years our graduates tell us that they found our in-person classes to have an advantage over online courses. They enjoy being able to interact with the instructors, get their questions answered, and meet other new boaters. The instructors go beyond the basics and make sure to provide practical insight into the lessons and share their knowledge of the unique waterways that surround Cape Coral.

If you are in town stop by our offices at 917 SE 47th Terrace Cape Coral FL 33904. Call first to confirm current office hours. In season we have a booth at the local Farmer's Market every Saturday morning right behind our building in Club Square.

Other Resources for Boaters

If you decide Cape Coral is for you then you might want to pick up a copy of [Safe Boating in Southwest Florida Cape Coral Edition](#). This book was written by one of our members and describes over 80 channels that boaters will encounter from the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam, down the Caloosahatchee River, up Matlacha Pass and down Pine Island Sound to San Carlos Bay.

We also recommend a couple of charts produced by [Waterproof Charts](#), #25E Barrier Islands / Boca Grande to Estero Bay, which cover the area that NOAA included on their chart 11427 and #7E Cape Coral Canals which is a detailed look at our canal system focusing on the Gulf access canals listing all of the bridge heights.

For those wanting the best listing of places to get food and fuel on the water we recommend The Chart Art Boaters Destination Guide. It is a waterproof guide you can keep on your boat and provides directions on how to reach each destination.

All these items are available for purchase at our offices.

Throughout this guide we have provided links to many websites, however links can change so if one does not work search the name. Here are some of those sources that you may want to explore.

Websites

- The City of Cape Coral, Parks and Recreation, Beaches and Boating
- Lee County, Parks and Recreation, Beaches, Boat Ramps
- Southwest Florida Waterways Lee County
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Boating, Saltwater Fishing, Freshwater Fishing, Licenses & Permits
- US Harbors, Cape Coral Bridge
- USCG Boating Organization, Regulations, Safety
- Boat U.S., Hurricanes

For more information on the waterways around Cape Coral



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