



USVI TARGET SPECIES AND SEASONS

The vibrant waters of the Caribbean teem with a diverse array of target species throughout the seasons. This is the best guide to understanding the prime times and ideal conditions to catch the prized fish of the Caribbean. From the majestic Blue Marlin at the North Drop to the swift Wahoo and the acrobatic Sailfish, each season brings its unique opportunities and challenges!

OFFSHORE FISHING – Get ready for the thrill with offshore game fish like Marlin, Sailfish, Yellowfin Tuna, and Wahoo! These fighters often bite suddenly and put up an intense battle. Marlin are famous for their marathon fights, especially around the full moon, while Tuna boast impressive strength. Wahoo, on the other hand, strike hard and can zoom away at speeds up to 50 miles an hour!

GAMEFISH	LOCATION	SEASON	BAIT / LURES
ATLANTIC BLUE MARLIN	North & South Drop FAD's	All year, best May-October	Lures, Ballyhoo, Belly strips, Mackerel
WHITE MARLIN	North & South Drop FAD's	All year, best April-May	Lures, Ballyhoo, Bellystrips
SAILFISH	North & South Drop FAD's	October-March	Lures, Ballyhoo, Bellystrips
YELLOWFIN TUNA	North & South Drop FAD's	August – February	Lures, Ballyhoo Feathers
BLACKFIN TUNA	shelf areas on all islands, FADs	All Year	Lures, Feathers
SKIPJACK TUNA	shelf areas on all islands, FADs	All Year	Lures, Ballyhoo
DOLPHIN FISH (MAHI-MAHI)	North & South Drop, shelf areas on all islands, FADs	October-January (peak season) May, July	Lures, Ballyhoo, Flying Fish
WAHOO	shelf areas on all islands, FADs	All year, best September-May	Lures, Ballyhoo



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INSHORE FISHING – Inshore fishing is a beloved tradition in the Virgin Islands, popular among both locals and visitors. Target species like Barracuda, Bonefish, Kingfish, Mackerel, Snook, and Tarpon make for exciting catches. You can try various methods such as fly fishing, topwater bait, and trolling.

GAMEFISH	LOCATION	SEASON	BAIT/LURES
BONITO (LITTLE TUNNY)	most inshore areas, drop-offs and around schools of bait fish	All year, best January-May	Fry, feathers
BARRACUDA	reef & bank areas	All Year	Lures, spoons, ballyhoo
HARDNOSE	most inshore areas and around schools of bait fish and FADs	April-September	Fry, small feathers
BAR JACK	most inshore areas and around schools of bait fish	All Year	Fry, squid, ballyhoo, feathers
CREVALLE JACK	most inshore areas and around schools of bait fish	All Year	Fry, squid
RAINBOW RUNNER	North and South Drops, reefs & banks, FADs	April – September	Fry, squid, ballyhoo, feathers
YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER	near reefs & bank areas	All Year	Fry, cut bait
KINGFISH	reefs, most mid-shelf areas and drop-offs	All year, best February-May	Ballyhoo, fry, skirts
CERO	Near shore, reefs	All Year	Lures, feathers, fry, ballyhoo



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SHALLOW WATER & FLATS FISHING – In the Virgin Islands, shallow water and flats fishing mainly targets Barracuda, Jacks, and Permit. Bonefish and Tarpon, also favored catches in these areas, are exclusively catch and release. Snook make an occasional appearance as well.

GAMEFISH	LOCATION	SEASON	BAIT/LURES	FLY FISHING
BONEFISH	near shore, shallow areas, sea grass & sand flats, bays, mangrove lagoons	All year, best late March-September	Live shrimp, small jigs often baited with shrimp or crab	Small flies tied to imitate shrimp, crabs
PERMIT	shallow sea grass & sand flats, bays, lagoons, back reefs	All year, best April-October	Small live crabs, pieces of crab, small sea urchins	Crab patterns
TARPON	mangrove lagoons, bays, harbors, deeper water adjacent to shallow flats, around offshore cays	All year, best March-October	Silver spoons, white jigs, live bait fish	Large streamers, various 'tarpon' flies
BARRACUDA	around reefs, channels adjacent to shallow water, mangrove lagoons and bays	All Year	Live fish, bait fish imitations, silver spoons, feathers	Bait fish imitations, needlefish imitations
JACKS	around reefs, channels adjacent to shallow water, mangrove lagoons and bays, back reef flats	All Year	Squid, shrimp, cut bait, small spoons, spinners, jigs	Small streamers, shrimp imitations
SNOOK	mangrove lagoons, bays, harbors, along beaches with sharp drop-offs and submerged structures	All Year	Live shrimp, small fish, bait fish imitation lures, jigs	Bait fish imitations
MAHOGANY SNAPPER	around reefs, channels, adjacent to shallow water	All Year	Bait fish, squid, fry	