

Buying a flats or bay boat

Flats and Bay Boats

When considering purchasing a boat to use for fishing in shallow waters, because of their similarities, bay boats and flats boats may come to mind. There are a few differences to consider when deciding which boat is best for your specific needs.

Flats

These boats are also known as skiffs, and are built for shallow coastal waters. Used primarily for flats fishing, they are great for catching tarpon, redfish, snook, and bonefish. They have the ability to glide across calm water silently, and be maneuvered by a pole. They are usually suitable for water that is 12 inches deep. However, there are some flats with a shallow enough draft to be used in as little as 5 inches of water. These boats can hold two to three people. They are built with enough casting deck space on the bow and stern for fishing. They are also equipped with rod holders, livewells, and tackle storage. This does not leave much room for seating.

When purchasing a flats boat, there are a few qualities that are important to look for. You want your flats boat to be quiet, not warning all the fish of your arrival. It should also be easily maneuverable with poling. You want to be as dry as possible when you are fishing on your flats boat, so making sure that the boat is a smooth ride is crucial. The bigger the boat, the smoother the ride will be. However, a bigger boat will not be as shallow. It is very important to make certain that the boat is safe, because you will be standing most of the time, and throwing the balance off while fishing. This boat has an outboard engine propulsion, ranging from 17 – 25 feet in length, and can accommodate up to three people.

Popular manufacturers of flats are:

Action Craft	Century Coastline	Ranger AR
Glasstream	Sea Hunter	

Bays

Bay boats are a cross between a center console and a flats boat. The higher gunwales make this boat more versatile, allowing for the ability to go off shore on the calm seas. It is also built with a shallow draft, enabling you to fish in shallow waters. A bay boat also has the ability to be maneuvered by pole. The center console allows for easy rod maneuverability around the deck. Bay boats are equipped with livewells, rod holders, dry storage, and ice coolers. There is more dry storage than on a flats boat, which is important for keeping your items safe from water damage. There are also options for attaching bimini canvas or T-tops.

When it comes to fishing, a bay boat is ideal for catching multiple types of fish. If you stay close to shore you can catch tarpon, sharks, bonefish, redfish and many more. When venturing off shore you will find grouper, snappers, and even kingfish just to name a few.

This boat has an outboard engine and stern drive propulsion, with 50 – 250 HP. They range from 16 – 22 feet in length, and can usually accommodate three people comfortably. The price range of bay boats is \$11,000 - \$35,000.

Popular manufacturers of bay boats are:

Carolina Skiff	Key West
Triumph	Mako
Ranger	Kencraft

Both flats and bay boats are ideal for shallow waters and fair weather fishing. They are not well suited for cruising, skiing, or traveling. They are reasonably priced, and easily transported because they are lightweight.

About the Author

Kristy Bateman is the writer for Earl's Blog on SellUrBoat.com. These articles are unique and helpful to anyone interested in learning about boating and or fishing. Please visit SellUrBoat.com to view a variety of unique articles from Kristy. SellUrBoat.com is [The Simplest Solution to Buying and Selling 'Ur' Boat](http://TheSimplestSolutiontoBuyingandSellingUrBoat.com).

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