

Every Go Bag Tells a Story. What's in Yours?

Living on Sanibel and Captiva means understanding the importance of being ready. Storms, evacuations, power outages and other emergencies can change plans quickly. Having a Go Bag ready gives you one less thing to think about when time matters.

Most emergency kits include the basics: water, flashlights, batteries, medications, important documents and first aid supplies. But a Go Bag can also reflect the person carrying it.

During National Preparedness Month, FISH of Sanibel-Captiva's Neighbors in Readiness initiative is asking our island community a simple question:

What's in your Go Bag?

Pack for Your Life | There is no single Go Bag that works for everyone. Think about your household, your daily needs and what you would need if you had to leave home with little notice.

A family with young children may need diapers, wipes, snacks and a favorite book. A pet owner may pack pet food, a leash, medications and veterinary records. Older adults may need extra medications, medical information, glasses or mobility supplies. Someone who owns a business or works on the islands may want chargers, backup contact information or documents they need to continue working.

The goal is simple. Pack for your life, not someone else's checklist.

Make Room for Something Personal | Preparedness includes the things you need to stay safe. It can also include something that helps make a difficult situation a little easier.

Maybe it is a family photograph. A child's favorite stuffed animal. A deck of cards. A journal. A favorite snack. A small keepsake from home.

That item may never appear on an emergency supply list, but it may be exactly what someone in your household needs during a long evacuation or an uncertain day.

Prepared Neighbors Help Neighbors

At FISH, preparedness connects directly to Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

When more households are prepared, our entire island community is better positioned to respond. Residents can take care of immediate needs. Families can leave more quickly when evacuation becomes necessary. Emergency responders and community organizations can focus attention on neighbors who need additional help.

Your Go Bag can even include a few extras for someone else. Spare batteries, another phone charger, additional water or a few extra snacks could help a neighbor who had less time to prepare. Preparedness starts at home, but its impact reaches beyond your front door.

Join the “What’s in Your Go Bag?” Challenge

Throughout National Preparedness Month, FISH is inviting Sanibel and Captiva residents, members of our island workforce, businesses, families and children to share what preparedness looks like for them.

1. Pack a new Go Bag or check the one you already have.
2. Take a photo of your bag or lay out a few of the items inside.
3. Post your photo in the comments of FISH’s “Every Go Bag Tells a Story. What’s in Yours?” social media post the first week of September 2026.
4. Tell us about one item you packed and why it matters to you.

Don’t use social media? Email your photo and a short description to Simon Robson, Community Outreach and Resiliency Director, simon@fishofsancap.org. With your permission, FISH can share it with the community.

Talk About It at Home

Building a Go Bag is also a good opportunity to talk with the people in your household. Ask each other:

- What would you need if you had to leave home quickly?
- What is one thing you would want to bring with you?
- What would help a child, older adult or pet in your household?
- Are medications and important information easy to grab?
- Could you pack one extra item to help a neighbor?

These conversations can identify needs before an emergency happens.

Your Bag. Your Story. Our Community.

Preparedness is one of the ways Sanibel and Captiva can take care of each other.

A Go Bag cannot prevent an emergency. It can help you respond with greater confidence when plans change quickly. Whether yours includes medications, dog treats, important documents, a flashlight, a favorite book or a family photograph, it should reflect the people and things you are preparing to protect.

Take a look at yours. Update what needs updating. Add what matters to you. Then encourage a neighbor to do the same.

Every Go Bag tells a story. What’s in yours?