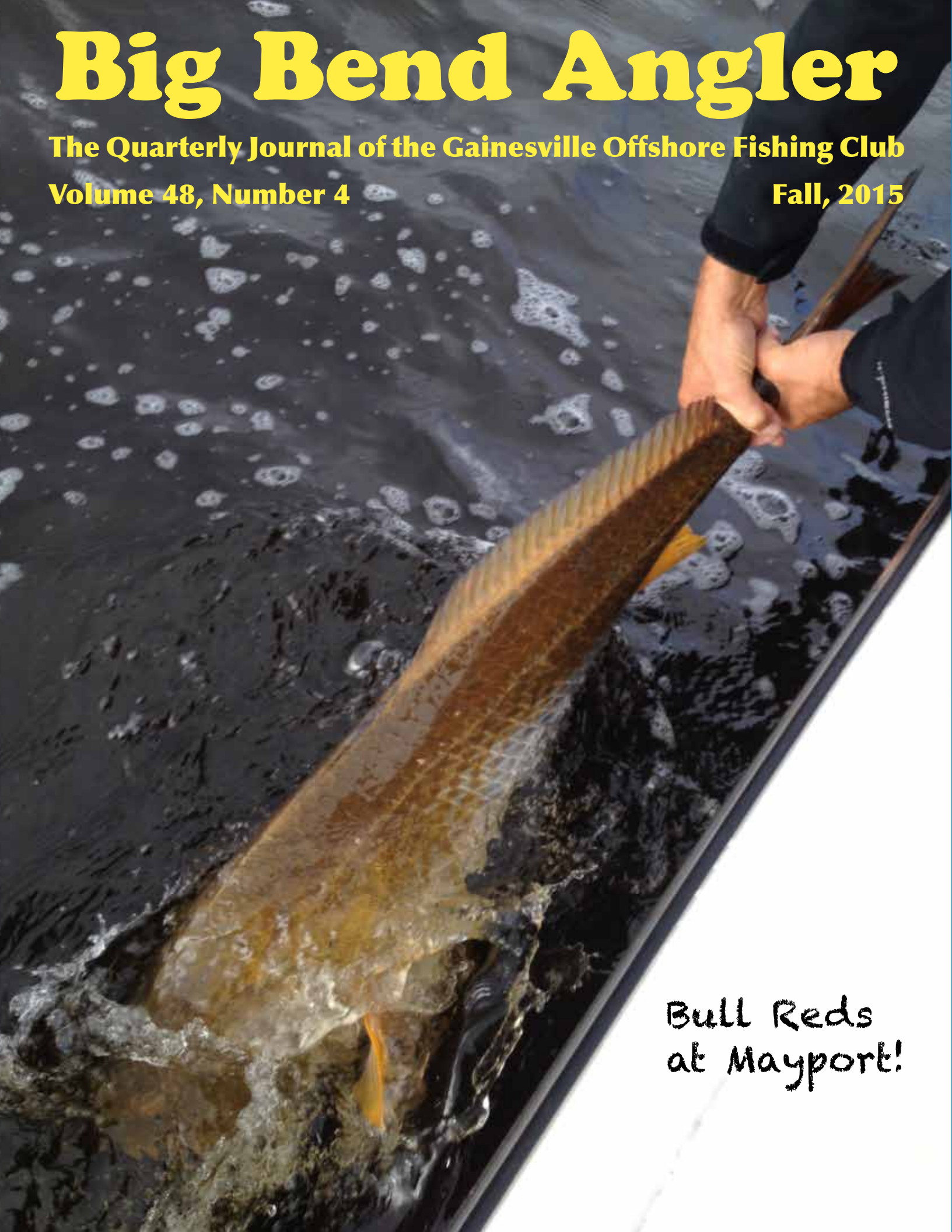
Big Bend Angler

The Quarterly Journal of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Volume 48, Number 4 Fall, 2015



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Volume 48, Number 4 Fall, 2015

Big Bend Angler

The Quarterly Journal of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club Founded 1968

Your GOFC Team

President:	Leroy Holmes
Vice President:	Hal Wilson
Secretary:	Jay Peacock
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GOFC Meetings

When:

4th Tuesday of each month.
Fellowship begins at 7:00 PM,
program begins at 7:30 PM

Where:

U.F. College of Veterinary Medicine's New Lecture Hall

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Events Calendar

Monthly Meetings

Monthly club meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month (note that this is ***not*** the last Tuesday in those months having 5 Tuesdays). Fellowship begins at 7:00 p.m., with the meeting program beginning at 7:30. No monthly meetings are held in February, June, August, November or December, being replaced, respectively, by the **Seafood and Awards Banquet**, **Fish Fry**, **Annual Social**, the **Cookout & Auction,** and your own Christmas holiday activities. The GOFC Board of Directors meets at 7:00 p.m. at the Northwest Grill the 1st Tuesday of the month. Interested GOFC members may attend.

Coming Events

The **October 27th monthly meeting** will feature Join us for our monthly club meeting where Star Brite Pro Bass Angler Patrick Pierce will update us on:

- The truth about ethanol
- The truth about fuel additives
- Sun protection for your boat
- The best way to wash and protect your boat
- Boat maintenance, storage, and other questions

The annual **Auction and Cookout** will be held on Friday, November 13th at the home of Ed and Marcia Ellett in lieu of the November monthly meeting. This event is hosted once again at the home of Ed and Marcia Ellett. Richard McDavid and family will be continuing the tradition of providing great eats in the form of his renowned Frogmore Stew. We will raise money for the Club by auctioning off items donated by members, so start sorting through your tackle and outdoor gear for items you no longer need or use that can be donated for the annual Ellett auction.

Cover

Dale Reed releases another bull redfish at Mayport. A 20-25 knot wind kept him bottled up in the mouth of the St Johns River, so he made the best of it by catching a few of these monsters. Live blue crabs were the bait of choice.

Amberjack and Red Grouper Closed Until January 1st

NOAA Fisheries News Release

The recreational harvest in the Gulf of Mexico of greater amberjack closed at 12:01 a.m., local time, on September 28, 2015 and red grouper closed at 12:01 a.m., local time, on October 8, 2015. Recreational harvest of both species will remain closed until January 1, 2016.

The 2015 landings data indicate the 1,130,000-pound recreational annual catch target for greater amberjack would be harvested by September 27, 2015. Despite the reduced bag limit for red grouper, the 2015 landings data indicate the 1,900,000-pound recreational annual catch limit would be harvested by October 7, 2015.

Recreational harvest or possession of greater amberjack or red grouper is prohibited during the closure. The closure applies in both state and federal waters for vessels that have a valid Gulf of Mexico reef fish charter/headboat permit.

Grouper Size Limit May Increase

Gulf Council News Release

The Council took final action on a framework action that considers changing the gag season and recreational minimum size limit, and the black grouper recreational minimum size limit. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the minimum recreational size limit for gag and black grouper will increase to 24 inches total length, the opening date of the recreational gag season will change to June 1 to coincide with the opening of the red snapper season, the December 3-31 fixed closed season for gag will be removed. The goal is to have the recreational gag season to remain open through the end of the year, or until the recreational annual catch limit is projected to be reached.

President's Message

By Leroy Holmes

The year is nearly done, and we still have a lot more to come. Be sure to attend the October Monthly Meeting as it will be the last regular meeting of the year. Star Brite/Star Tron Pro Bass Angler Patrick Pierce will teach us a lot about how to care for our boats.

We also have a number of Club activities scheduled for the last few months of the year. The annual Auction and Cookout will be held on Friday, November 13th at the home of Ed and Marcia Ellett. The money raised from this auction goes a long way towards supporting our artificial reef efforts.

On Saturday, November 14th, Former GOFC President John Patrick (who holds more Club records than anyone else) will lead club members out of Crystal River to the area's shallow water (as in 10 feet or less) grouper rocks and demonstrate techniques for hooking and landing these fish.

Gator Domino's is a Proud Sponsor of Doug Johnson's Reeling For Kids Celebrity Fishing Tournament.

Official Pizza of Gainesville Anglers.

Doug Johnson's Reeling for Kid's Fishing Tournament August,22 2004

Benefiting BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF ALACHUA COUNTY

The Club schedules no activities during December, so members will have time to be with friends and family for the holidays.

"Just as in cooking there's no such thing as a little garlic, in fishing there's no such thing as a little drag."

— H. G. Tapply, *The Sportsman's Notebook*

Fishing Reports & Forecasts

All GOFC Members Are Invited to Submit Reports of Their Latest Fishing Trips

Our fishing report section include reports for the previous 3 months of fishing activity. In addition to our regular contributors, all GOFC members are urged to send us their reports for inclusion in the member reports section of the next quarter's issue of Big Bend Angler. By tracking these reports over the year, readers should gain a stronger understanding of how things change with the seasons and what to do about it, so that you too can catch your share of the big ones.

Almost to the Middle Grounds

By Ken Knopf

With the banks closed on Columbus Day, Debby and I headed out of Cedar Key with near perfect weather, to try a near middle grounds grouper trip. We were eager to try some numbers we got from a commercial grouper fishing friend.

We left the ramp just after first light and headed for Seahorse Reef to catch live bait. Got our chum line going and started catching nice big pinfish on squid tipped Sabiki rigs. After we had the live well about half full Debby suggested we put some out back under balloons.

About ten minutes later one of the balloons popped, and the reel starts screaming! I was expecting good sized Spanish mackerel, but the way the line was melting off the reel I knew it was bigger, much bigger! Debby had to palm the spool to keep some line on the reel! After about a twenty minute fight with several more strong runs, she had regained enough line so we could see the fish about twenty yards from the boat, confirming it was a big King!

The water then erupted in a huge splash of white spray that quickly turned a ghastly pink with a large flash of gray! A shark had just nailed the king! Debby reeled in the front half of the fish, which weighed 17 pounds and was plenty long enough even without the tail to be legal! About twenty minutes later we had a repeat performance with another 25 to 30 pound king that got off the hook right next to the boat! By this time the live well was loaded and we headed offshore.

As we ran offshore, we observed bait schools as far north and south as we could see in the vicinity of GOFC Artificial Reef #2. After a long forty-five mile run we got to the new grouper spots, and, although the bottom was good looking on the depth finder, there were no fish! After checking a two to three miles area of good looking bottom, I was getting discouraged that the only thing in the box was half a kingfish with big teeth marks!

We hit the gas and went to one of our own spots about twenty miles north. There we managed to put some nice mangrove snapper up to 7.3 pounds in the box along with one small keeper gag grouper.

This spot is normally loaded with fish such that the depth finder is lit up like a Christmas tree! We saw just a few fish, just enough to keep us there long enough to get the snappers. Best lesson from this is not to leave fish when they are hitting! Probably should have stayed on Seahorse Reef!

Debby's big mangrove snapper

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Reports
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Seahorse Spanish

By Charlie Courtney

On September 24th, Ken Knopf, Allen Turner, and I ran out to Seahorse Reef in Ken's boat to get some Spanish mackerel for the grill and a bluefish for Ken to round out his Big 10 catch for the year.

The action was fast an furious, with lots of fat Spanish mackerel and an even greater number of voracious ladyfish. We ended the day with 11 Spanish to 3.7 lbs that we kept, releasing another 30 or more as we had all that we needed. We then ran a little farther offshore where Ken boated a kingfish in the upper teens that struck a blue runner. We had another 3 kingfish-type strikes but only landed the front half of the bait fish each time.

Wife, Debby, and I ate some of the mackerel the next night, and it was excellent. Here is my recipe:

1. Rinse the fillet and pat it dry with a cloth.
2. Oil the skin side of the fillet so it will not stick to the grill or grill basket (I prefer a wire grill basket). I used olive oil.
3. Place skin side down on the grill basket.
4. Sprinkle the non-skin side with salt, pepper and Emeril's Fish Rub (or your seasoning of choice).
5. Drizzle the non-skin side with lemon juice.
6. Drizzle the non-skin side with butter or margarine.
7. Grill some 10-20 minutes over indirect heat* until fillet flakes when poked with a fork.
8. Eat!

*Indirect grilling makes everything much more moist than simply placing the fillet directly over the coals or a gas flame. On my charcoal grill I placed the hot coals on one side of the grill's fire bowl and the fish basket on the other side, away from direct radiant heat. The fish then cooks by convection, which helps preserve moisture in the meat. A pan of water placed next to the coals adds moisture to the air inside the grill and helps block out direct heat. A similar trick can be worked with gas grills having two or more burners.

The Amazing Ribs web site has a great reference on indirect grilling: http://amazingribs.com/tips_and_technique/2-zone_indirect_cooking.html.

"Commercial fishing is much more than numbers of dollars, numbers of men, numbers of fish. Anyone who strolls down to the docks recognizes that. The average visitor quite likely wouldn't know a croaker from a cod or a sea robin from a sea bass, but that in no way impairs the enjoyment of the docks. On those wharves there is all the romance that so many hope to find near the sea, because fishing is about as close as a man can get these days to earning his livelihood as his forefathers did through countless centuries."

— John T. Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore* (1957)

What a Difference a Day Makes

By Ed Ellett

What a difference a few days can make with pelagics like Spanish Mackerel!

My son, Cole, and his father in law, Larry, were coming to visit with their brides, Ainslie and Kathy (and my 18 month grandson, Easton!!) for the Tennessee game weekend, September 25th (yes, they were going to the game). Cole had to work Friday so was flying in late, but Larry, was able to come in Thursday evening.

Cole and Larry enjoy fishing, so I planned a full day trip Friday with Larry and morning trip with Cole and Larry Sunday before their 7:20pm outgoing flight.

A good day on the Reef.

Lou Graf was available to join Larry and I on Friday.

Knowing the above visit was planned for a couple months, and my 23 foot Mako had not been used for some time, I coaxed Marcia into joining me for impulse trip September 13th to be sure boat was operating well and scout. The boat operated quite satisfactorily.

Seahorse Reef scouting produced ample action, but mainly ladyfish. We ended nice excursion with two average size Spanish mackerel, one "micro mackerel", one speckled trout and one bluefish. That said, there was bait everywhere, birds diving and clear water — looked like the stage was well set to hold a nice school of mackerel, if they happened to show up.

I was encouraged to hear enticing mackerel catch reports from GOFC members Gene Shintock, and, Carlos Morales the Tuesday before our trip. The early week weather prediction was "iffy" as noted a 50% chance of am rain for Friday, but the prediction improved to 10% the evening before our trip. Friday was a beautiful day, and, the Spanish were present in numbers! Pictured is Larry with his first ever Spanish Mackerel — a nice 2.5 pound+ fish.

My wife, Marcia, and Kathy prepared seasoned redfish, baked flounder, sand trout and mullet Friday evening. All very tasty, yet, popular vote went for seasoned redfish. We would hold the Spanish for

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Fishing Forecast

Around The World

by Captain Russ Roy

This Fishing Report comes to you from around the World! That's right — the GOFC covers the Globe! Or some of it anyway.

This summer, my son Kevin and I spent some time in Greece, including the islands of Santorini and Crete. These are in the middle of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and we got there and back by riding large, and fast, ferries. (No trolling!)

Other than ferries, there aren't many vessels to see. Around the islands there are some sailboats out, but no smaller commercial or recreational fishing boats. There were a few cargo boats and tankers out, but only a few.

Most everything on Mediterranean islands is on their coasts. Thousands of years ago the larger islands were covered with vegetation, including large forests. They got more rain back then and they supported lots of animals and birds, including species you would associate with Africa.

Today, these islands are more like deserts; in fact Santorini's climate is officially classified as "desert." This is a result of thousands of years of overfarming, overgrazing, and cutting down all the trees to use building houses, boats, etc., and not replanting, so lots of erosion.

Tourist areas are mostly on the coasts. In the tourist season, summer basically, hotels are at capacity in many places, certainly on Santorini, and in Chania where we stayed on Crete.

The Mediterranean Sea is beautiful, very clear and very blue. Looking out from an island cliff at a sailboat, you often can't tell whether the sailboat is sailing on the water or in the sky.

The beaches on Santorini are rocky (Chania has some sandy beaches) and the water is very clear. It is also rather sterile. There are very few fish to be seen, other than some very small ones now and again, no birds diving, no fish jumping, nothing but people. Jet skis and small sail boats but no surfcasting, no recreational boats trolling just offshore, just people, but plenty of them.

At one of the harbors there were a number of small recreational sail and outboard boats, but very few going out even on fine weather days. None of them looked to be set up for fishing.

There were several commercial fishing boats about 50 to 70 feet, and half were rigged as "long" liners with about 50 hooks on the lip of a barrel, with the line coiled in the barrel, and about six barrels to a boat. The rest were gill netters. Pretty destructive stuff.

At the restaurants along the waterfront, all emphasized seafood on their big menu posters. When I asked where they got their fish and shellfish (including squid and octopus), it was all farmed and imported or wild caught and imported: nothing local. Like going to a seafood place in Cedar Key and finding out the grouper came from a fish farm in Thailand.

Greeks I talked to, including one who was a long time friend of Kevin's, all said the same thing: the Mediterranean Greek waters were all severely overfished to the point where the stocks were not going to come back, ever.

My semi-informed opinion is that Greece will not make it in the Euro Zone. Greece needs to make a lot more money than it does now to pay off its debts. Tourism is their biggest source of revenue, and it appears to be maxed out. There are other countries in the same region with the same kinds of beaches and weather, and these will be increasingly competitive. (They can buy their "home grown" seafood from the same farms the Greeks do.) There is no manufacturing in Greece and not much agriculture (the Greek mainland is eroded like the islands).

So, we can be thankful that, while our fisheries management in Florida is not perfect, we are doing way better than Greece. We should really pay attention to political decisions about water quality and fisheries policies, however, because "too late" can pop up pretty quickly.

Right now, back here in Florida, my better informed opinion is that the period from the middle of September to the middle of December is about the best time of the year to fish. Fish are bigger than they were in the spring, and most are available during this period.

AJ's this year are the exception as they are now closed. This seems to be a stressed fishery. I think AJ's should be managed like redfish with no commercial take. I expect a lot of commercial AJ winds up being sold as grouper, or swordfish, etc., somewhere along the chain.

Starting with inshore, reds and trout are plentiful, and a lot of anglers are culling them, looking for big ones. There is plenty of live bait around, so a pinfish trap out while you hook and line some live baits at the same time is a good idea. Bigger live baits will attract bigger predator fish.

There are bluefish to be had but this seems to be a down year. Bluefish are famous for having a "boom and bust" population cycle: large numbers for a year or two and then they get scarce. Don't have a bluefish for the Ellett yet? Must be a down year!

The other two inshore fish, sheepshead and flounder, can still be caught, but you will need to choose your target area carefully.

For the former look for deeper holes up brackish creeks with shell on the bottom. Suspend a jig head down just off the bottom with a small piece of shrimp or crab and set the hook quickly. Another similar approach is to use a weighted circle hook; there is one lure that is a "jig head" but with the circle instead of the J hook. (The people who make fishing lures are similar to the people who make anything else for sale. They know you want the latest thing because it will work better than that old stuff, right?) Right now somebody is working on the new "trapezoid" hook. Soon there will be videos on TV showing professional guides catching fish with trapezoids instead of circles. The best hooks will have iridium in them. Right now the pro guides are studying on how to pronounce "trapezoid" and "iridium" so they will be ready for the new season of videos. Remember, you read it here first!

For flounder, there are a variety of possible bottoms to look for, and here I do mean bottom. Flounder won't be on the bottom, they will be in it, with just their eyes poking out. Thus they need some sand or soft mud to wiggle down into. They also need some structure nearby, grass or shell or pilings, etc, so that there is forage swimming around. When you find this kind of bottom, work for flounder. The new trapezoidiridium jig heads will also work here. If you don't have them, you will know why you didn't get a flounder,

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Forecast

Continued from page 6

Heading offshore, Spanish and king mackerel will be on their usual spots: deeper grassflats with schools of bait. They will be bigger than the spring ones, so go with larger baits, including good sized live or dead baits rigged with stingers. Look for the new mononuclear wire; it is very tough and must be cut with a laser torch.

If you aren't going to eat it, release it safely — no sterile Gulf waters for us, thank you.

Don't tell fish stories where the people know you; but particularly, don't tell them where they know the fish.

— Mark Twain

Steinhatchee Artificial Reef Area

Date Deployed	Material	Latitude	Longitude	Depth (ft)
12/31/1965	Steel Scrap & Concrete Rubble	29°39.480'N	83°37.490'W	20
4/16/1990	Steel Scrap & Steel Boiler Parts	29°40.018'N	83°37.564'W	22
6/24/1992	Concrete Culverts & Pipe Metal	29°40.005'N	83°37.602'W	22
5/11/1993	Concrete Culverts & Metal Scrap	29°40.017'N	83°37.426'W	22
6/27/1998	Concrete Cubes (112 modules)	29°39.688'N	83°37.727'W	20

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Redfish Roundup

By John Byatt

All too often it seems, scheduling a GOFC tournament riles up the weather gods; but not for the Redfish Roundup this year. The tournament committee must have made the right sacrifices (perhaps a new Mann's Stretch 30?) because the morning over in Steinhatchee couldn't have been more perfect. Nice and cool, with not a breath of wind, although several boats (Carlos and me included) delayed our departure from Gainesville to let some heavy rain pass through before hitting the road.

Most of my fishing around Steinhatchee over the last several years has been out of a kayak launched at various primitive ramps north and south of town. The last time I'd tried inshore fishing out of my boat was last year at the height (or should I say depth) of the red tide event last September.

Both Carlos and I fish mostly out of Cedar Key, so at the CCA Banquet held two days before the tournament I asked Steinhatchee inshore guru, Tommy Thompson for pointers on where we might find redfish. Tommy suggested a well-known point not too many miles north of the main channel, so that's where we headed after launching at the very civilized hour of 9:30 am.

Low tide was around 7:00 am, so the trolling motor was used to travel the last quarter mile or so to the rocky bottom just offshore of the point. I've not yet equipped the panga with a power pole, so the iPilot trolling motor was used non-stop for the next four hours to either peg us in position or move around the point. There was still enough floating grass to make anything with a treble hook a chore to use, so we both elected to use mostly weedless spoons; mine silver, Carlos' was gold. The redfish didn't seem to care about the color.

In fairly short order we had several around 18 - 20" to the boat, with the two largest in the release well. There was an amazing amount of bait activity that we'd sometimes use as a cue to move around some to see if we could hook up with whatever was harassing the little fish.

Apparently, not all of the predators were the target species. A good-sized jack had Carlos' heart racing for a while; and he also was an ace with trophy-size lizardfish, but we found no more reds until we moved back close to our original starting point.

A solid redfish whacked Carlos' spoon and it was immediately obvious this was a good fish. Five minutes later we had it up against the tape measure on the gunnel and were celebrating the capture of a red ¼ inch shy of upper slot.

Carlos definitely had the hot hand this day, because ten minutes later he's hooked up to another fish that looks like a twin of the one that just went in the cooler. Knowing that my net boy duties wouldn't be needed for a while, I continued casting to the same area and in short order was hooked up to another hoss red. Now we're having fun!

My fish was being particularly stubborn so Carlos ended up netting his own redfish, then had it chill in the live well while he helped net mine. Measurement time; Carlos' fish was 26" and joined it's slightly larger sibling in the cooler. Mine was 28" and had its picture taken with the captain of the boat, grinning like a maniac, and then slid back into the water.

Around 2:00 pm we decided to round out the rest of the day and see if we could find any trout a little further out. Another boat that had been fishing about 75 yards away quickly moved into the spot we just vacated. Hopefully they saw some action too.

After finding some patchy bottom with about 4-5 feet of water, we drifted out with the tide and hooked up with a steady stream of fish of the pin, lizard and lady variety, but didn't find any trout. However, Carlos did hook and land a very nice pompano, which in my view is way better than seatrout.

There were about half-a-dozen boats that entered the tournament and all managed to find the target species, but Carlos two fish lay head and dorsal fin above the competition and took first AND second prize honors. A big thanks goes out to Tommy for the hot tip on the winning location!

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"Give a man a fish and he'll ask for a lemon. Teach a man to fish and he'll leave work early on Friday."

— Sark Asm

A "Keys" Trip… Cedar Keys

By Carlos Morales

August 2015 — With visions of broad tailsand rocked-up gags, Morgan Sherburne and Brandon Hubbard (who took first and third in Spanish Macks at this year's Cobia/Mac tourney) joined me for an offshore trip out of Cedar Key. Both are avid fly anglers, but are recently displaced from their familiar Michigan waters. Surprisingly, it never takes much convincing to see if they'd like to join me for a fishing trip.

So, off to ~45' we headed, skipping any near-shore spots. Due to the blistering summer heat, we figured there wasn't much point. We were greeted with calm seas and made the trip out fairly quickly, getting our baits down and bracing for what we hoped would be immediate impact ... except nothing touched our baits.

About an hour into us soaking bait, I noticed a distant and wide weed line slowly approaching. The weed line was also filled with trash and plant debris. I kept tabs on the approaching algae/trash heap, assuming we'd have an annoying 5-10 minutes as the it would wrap itself up in our lines and make a mess of everything.

When the weed line was about 100' away, I felt a tug on my line and started to reel up. Unfortunately, I could tell it was something that was too small to be useful — it turned out to be a remora. But, as I am about to bring him aboard to remove the hook, I see another fish swimming behind it. "It has a forked tail, so it must be a mackerel", I think, "…but that doesn't look like a mackerel". It then hits me: mahi-mahi!

Having grown up fishing in South Florida (though mostly on piers, under bridges, and on head boats), dolphin fish are my all-time favorite catch. They are fun to catch, beautiful to behold, delicious to eat, and they have a hardy and robust fishery, becoming mature in as early as 6 months: the perfect sportfish!

I immediately throw the rod in a holder (sorry remora… hang-out for a second) and begin shouting a stream of instructions that probably made no sense to anyone but me. The gist was simple: abandon thy grouper rigs, procure a pitch rod, and get that dolphin!

A yozuri was pitched behind the dolphin and was hit almost immediately; their acute level of awareness regarding what is in the water around them is impressive (the fish turned on a dime after the plug splashed). Immediately the show begins — jumping and hollering. I keep the mahi hooked-up expecting to see its friends appear, but none do. Now with a slightly calmer head, I instruct Morgan and Brandon to be on the lookout and ready to pitch to what should surely be an incoming horde of peanuts.

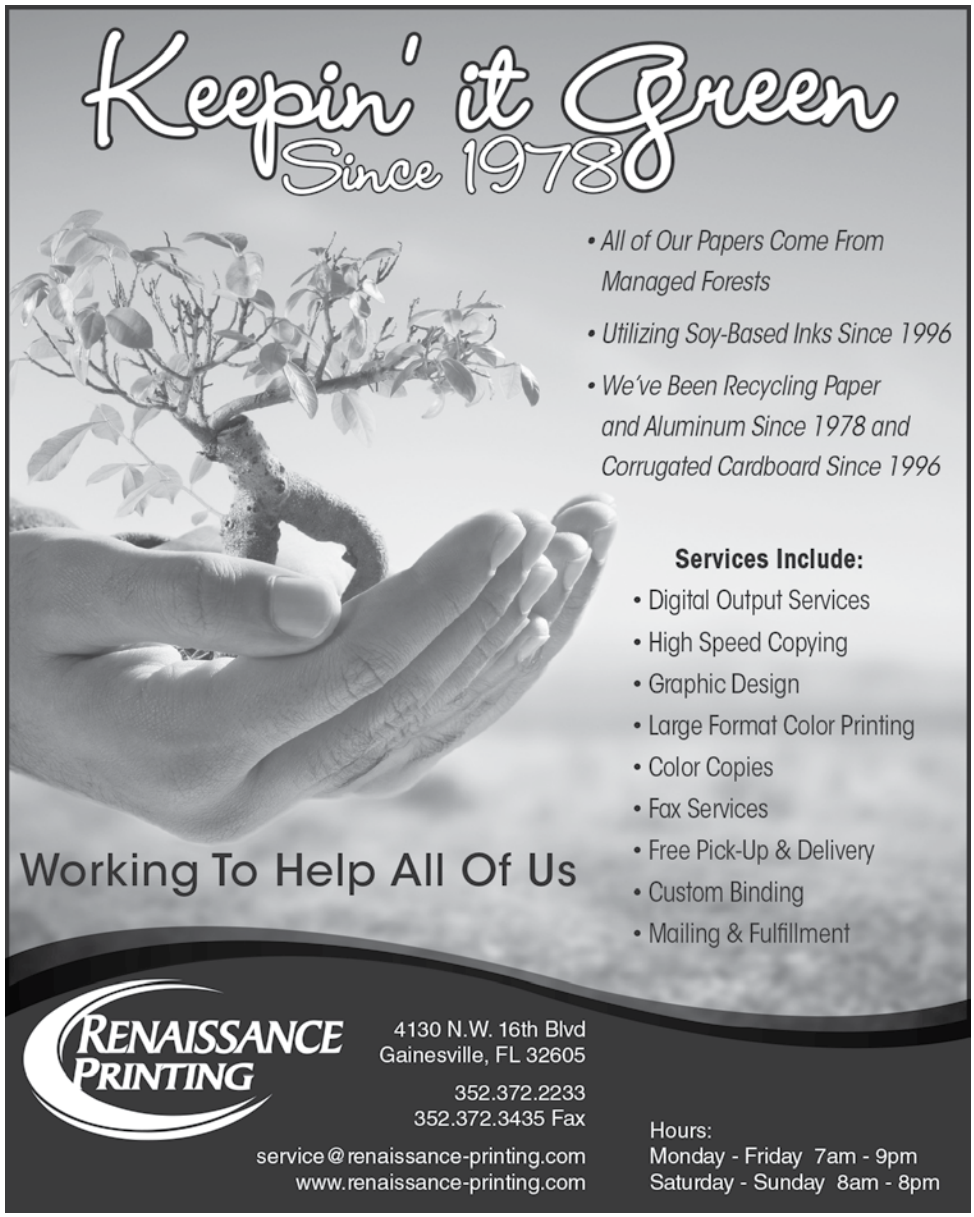
But then the worst happens: he comes unbuttoned. My level of disappointment is hard to describe. All I can think is, "I can't lose this fish… it's a dolphin out of Cedar Key!" Surprisingly the fish keeps with the boat, and we pulled anchor to stay drifting with the weeds.

"During your time on earth, you shouldn't be afraid to do something that's not in the exact path you originally chose, especially if it includes a lot of fishing."

— Author Unknown

I began to go through every lure in my bag until on the 3rd or 4th attempt I was able to get him to eat again: bucktail jigs to the rescue. I waste little time keeping this

Cedar Key on Page 12



Stone Crab Season Opened October 15

FWC News Release

Florida's recreational and commercial stone crab claw harvest season opened October 15th in state and federal waters. To ensure this valuable resource is available for generations to come, take care when removing crab claws, and follow all protective management guidelines for stone crab harvest.

To be harvested, stone crab claws must be at least 2¾ inches in length when measured from the elbow to the tip of the lower immovable portion of the claw (see illustration). View a video on how to properly remove the claw, and increase the likelihood of survival of the released crab.

Claws may not be taken from egg-bearing stone crabs. Egg-bearing females are identifiable by the orange or brown egg mass, also known as a "sponge," which is visible on the underside of the crab when it is picked up or turned over.

Recreational harvesters can use up to five stone crab traps per person. Stone crabs may not be harvested with any device that can puncture, crush or injure a crab's body. Examples of devices that can cause this kind of damage include spears and hooks. Recreational and commercial traps may be baited and placed in the water 10 days prior to the opening of the season but may not be pulled from the water for harvest purposes until October 15. Traps that are not being fished should be removed from the water to avoid ghost fishing, a process in which marine species get caught in the trap for extended periods of time and are not harvested.

Stone crab trap specifications recently changed in Collier, Monroe and Miami-Dade counties. Effective as of October 5, the use of round entrances (also known as throats or funnels) will no longer be allowed for stone crab traps used in state or federal waters off Collier, Monroe and Miami-Dade counties. The changes will also require that the rectangular or rounded rectangular entrances typically used in stone crab traps be no larger than 5½ by 3 1/8 inches at the most narrow portion of the opening. Stone crab traps being used in other areas of the state may have an entrance that is 5 ½ by 3 ½ inches.

Harvesters are encouraged to take only one claw, even if both claws are of legal

size, so that the released crab will be better able to defend itself from predators. A crab that is returned to the water with one claw intact will be able to obtain more food in a shorter amount of time and therefore regrow its claw faster. There is a recreational daily bag limit of 1 gallon of claws per person or 2 gallons per vessel, whichever is less.

The season will be open through May 15, 2016, closing May 16.

Stone crab regulations are the same in state and federal waters.

Almond Oil company

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For More Information

Reports

Continued from page 5

Monday evening dinner along with leftover bait shrimp.

My family and I enjoy eating Spanish. My freezer was bare. I would have been pleased to keep a limit (45), but we stopped fishing in 11:30 range to try some inshore fishing for redfish or flounder on the high tide — we were nine shy of our Spanish limit.

Inshore, we got in an hour to an hour and a half before the tide was noticeably running out (I'm not very brave with my 23 foot boat, inshore, on an outgoing tide). We were pleased to catch six reds, three legal - largest 21", and Larry caught a legal, 13" flounder. I told him he would be the envy of several GOFC members missing the flounder species in the Ten Slam Award quest (yours truly included). Also, pictured is our end catch from Friday.

Sunday, the weather prediction was 25% am rain chance with NE wind 5-8 knots. All we needed was half a day, and Cole wanted to get in on the Spanish action. It had been a long time since he experienced the thrill of catching one on light tackle. On arrival, weather was okay, but the actual wind was more in 10-15 knot range. A tolerable land breeze, but not as pleasant as Friday.

Cole had the first hookup and landed a nice 3 pounder. I cast behind him and caught another three pounder. Later in the day, Larry caught the largest of the day, a three pound, two ouncer.

We stopped fishing the Reef at 10:00 with 19 Spanish and a bluefish, and headed for the kingfish grounds with hope of finding a king for Larry. No bait, no birds, water sandy — we gave it a try until 11:00, and then called it a day.

Cole and I made a point of not talking about the Gator game the day before. We were all "stunned" by the outcome — Cole, Marcia and I in a good way, and Larry, Kathy and Ainslie in a let down way! Definitely a weekend to remember, and it was interesting to see what a dramatic difference a few days can make with pelagic species like Spanish mackerel!

"You can always tell a fisherman, but you cannot tell him much."

— Corey Ford, *Field and sStream Magazine*

"Ten percent of the big fish still remain. There are still some blue whales. There are still some krill in Antarctica. There are a few oysters in Chesapeake Bay. Half the coral reefs are still in pretty good shape, a jeweled belt around the middle of the planet. There's still time, but not a lot, to turn things around.."

— Sylvia Earle

Men's Ellett Point Standings

25 October 2015

GOFC member	Amberjack	pts	Bluefish	pts	Cobia	pts	Flounder	pts	Grouper	pts	King Mackerel	pts	Redfish	pts	Sheeps-head	pts	Spanish Mackerel	pts	Trout	pts	Bonus points	Total points
Morales, Carlos	22	22.92	3.7	25.00	33.60	25.00	1.00	18.18	6.25	13.35	9.50	6.99	7.10	25.00	4.40	14.27	3.50	22.04	5.20	18.81	**6**	**197.56**
Wilson, Hal	24	25.00		0.00	28.10	20.91		0.00	5.67	12.12		0.00	5.26	18.52	7.71	25.00	3.97	25.00	1.67	6.04	**6**	**138.59**
Cooper, Virgil		0.00		0.00	20.35	15.14		0.00		0.00	16.58	12.19	4.62	16.27	4.80	15.56	3.38	21.28	6.91	25.00	**9**	**114.45**
Reed, Dale		0.00	2.19	14.80		0.00		0.00	11.70	25.00		0.00	6.33	22.29	4.77	15.47	2.55	16.06	3.24	11.72	**9**	**114.33**
Byatt, John		0.00	2.25	15.20		0.00		0.00	8.50	18.16		0.00	6.30	22.18	4.40	14.27	2.69	16.92	3.69	13.35	**3**	**103.09**
Clark, Cliff	13.5	14.06	3	20.27		0.00		0.00		0.00	23.50	17.28	3.52	12.39		0.00	2.20	13.85	3.60	13.02	**3**	**93.89**
McElroy, Ross		0.00	1	6.76	22.10	16.44		0.00		0.00		0.00	4.50	15.85	5.50	17.83	2.00	12.59	4.50	16.28	**6**	**91.75**
Ellett, Ed		0.00	1	6.76	15.00	11.16		0.00		0.00	14.06	10.34	2.81	9.89		0.00	3.06	19.29	1.75	6.33	**3**	**66.77**
Creamer, Travis		0.00		0.00		0.00	1.38	25.00		0.00		0.00	4.31	15.18		0.00	1.34	8.44	2.81	10.17	**3**	**61.79**
Horn, Phil		0.00		0.00	19.97	14.86		0.00		0.00	7.12	5.24		0.00		0.00	1.70	10.71	5.04	18.23	**3**	**52.03**
Thomas II, Jon		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	34.00	25.00		0.00		0.00	3.40	21.41		0.00	**0**	**46.41**
Kiel, Brian		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	10.90	23.29		0.00		0.00	3.38	10.94		0.00	2.00	7.24	**0**	**41.47**
Cutright, Jack		0.00		0.00		0.00	0.81	14.77		0.00		0.00	2.33	8.20		0.00	1.32	8.31	1.38	4.97	**3**	**39.26**
Mcdavid, Elliott		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**5.35**	**18.84**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**4.50**	**16.28**	**0**	**35.12**
Bacsik, Tom		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	3.56	22.42	1.25	4.52	**0**	**26.94**
Roy, Russ		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	5.00	16.21		0.00	2.25	8.14	**0**	**24.35**
Magnifico, Justin		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	17.13	12.59		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	**9**	**21.59**
Courtney, Charlie		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	6.00	21.13		0.00		0.00		0.00	**0**	**21.13**
Giordano, Craig		**0.00**	**0.84**	**5.68**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**1.81**	**11.40**		**0.00**	**0**	**17.07**
Helseth, Jack		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**2.57**	**16.18**		**0.00**	**0**	**16.18**
Williams, Austin		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**7.00**	**14.96**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**0**	**14.96**
Graf, Lou		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**1.25**	**4.52**	**3**	**7.52**
Baillee, Waldon		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**3**	**3.00**

Elite Angler Ellett Point Standings

25 October 2015

GOFC member	Amberjack	pts	Bluefish	pts	Cobia	pts	Flounder	pts	Grouper	pts	King Mackerel	pts	Redfish	pts	Sheeps-head	pts	Spanish Mackerel	pts	Trout	pts	Bonus points	Total points
Knopf, Ken	13.7	18.22		0.00	31.00	24.32		0.00		0.00	24.00	24.00	6.13	25.00	5.14	22.16	3.76	25.00	5.03	25.00	9	**172.69**
Knopf, Debby	18.8	25.00		0.00	31.87	25.00		0.00	5.42	25.00	25	25.00		0.00	3.35	14.44	2.96	19.68		0.00	6	**140.12**
Patrick, John		0.00		0.00	20.55	16.12	1.18	25.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	5.80	25.00	1.80	11.97		0.00	3	**81.09**
Turner, Allen		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**3**	**3.00**

Cedar Key

Continued from page 9

one on the hook, and immediately bring him aboard.

We went on to catch another solo dolphin with the patch, and a small tripletail, before things slowed down and we decided to motor along the length of the slick and blind cast jigs.

Some minutes later Morgan gets hit by something hard, right on the surface.

The fish proceeds to scream out drag and dive straight down. The behavior was confusing and no matter how I moved the boat, the fish always wanted to stay in its shadow, some ~30-40' directly below.

After about 15 minutes of fighting (Morgan was using my old 3000 series / 10 lb trout setup), we find a monster Florida bonito / false albacore / little tunny on the other end, weighing in at slightly over 11 lbs.

A not so little little Tunny.

It wasn't until I got home that I realized what a catch that little tunny had been. The club record stands at 12.5 lbs, set in 1984 by Vickie Hill!

Drifting with the weed patch that day, we managed to hooked into, or observe, the following species: Spanish mackerel, triple tail, mahi-mahi, little tunny, live squid, and an ~8-10 foot tiger shark.

We eventually left the weed patch and went our separate ways in search of grouper (which we never found), but for a few hours it felt like we had been transported to the Florida Keys.

Cedar Key on Page 13

Women's Ellett Point Standings

25 October 2015

GOFC member	Amberjack	pts	Bluefish	pts	Cobia	pts	Flounder	pts	Grouper	pts	King Mackerel	pts	Redfish	pts	Sheeps-head	pts	Spanish Mackerel	pts	Trout	pts	Bonus points	Total points
Haynes, Nia		0.00		0.00		0.00	2.00	25.00		0.00	10.50	25.00	2.50	25.00	5.00	25.00	2.00	25.00	1.00	9.09	0	**134.09**
Reed, Liz		0.00		0.00	18.00	25.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	2.25	20.45	3	**48.45**
Cutright, Melvina		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**1.31**	**16.38**	**2.75**	**25.00**	**3**	**44.38**
Ellett, Marcia		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	1.06	13.28	1.00	9.09	3	**25.37**
Rothfork, Brittany	**23.7**	**25.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**0**	**25.00**

Youth Ellett Point Standings

25 October 2015

GOFC member	Amberjack	pts	Bluefish	pts	Cobia	pts	Flounder	pts	Grouper	pts	King Mackerel	pts	Redfish	pts	Sheeps-head	pts	Spanish Mackerel	pts	Trout	pts	Bonus points	Total points
Kiel, Casey		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	7.80	25.00	35.40	25.00		0.00	4.06	25.00		0.00	2.13	25.00	0	**100.00**
Wagner, Reid		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**7.40**	**23.72**	**28.00**	**19.77**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**2.62**	**23.06**		**0.00**	**0**	**66.56**
Wagner, Riley		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**6.40**	**20.51**	**14.50**	**10.24**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**2.84**	**25.00**		**0.00**	**0**	**55.75**
Wagner, Ryan		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**2.48**	**21.83**		**0.00**	**0**	**21.83**
Kiel, Kaitlyn		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**3.00**	**18.47**		**0.00**		**0.00**	**0**	**18.47**

Cedar Key

Continued from page 12

As a follow-up, I made an almost identical trip the next day (aboard fellow club-member Art Mowry's beautiful boat) with the same M.O.: head to deep water looking for grouper. Several hours into the grouper-less trip we began to return to shallower spots, when from his boat's tower I spotted the same weed slick, this time with a large tree in the middle.

With a pitch rod already in-hand we motored over and within 30 seconds saw the same beautiful forked tails … except this time she came with friends: about 40!

So, the next time you're offshore during the dog days of summer and see floating debris, take a moment to check it out — you might be pleased with what you find.

Artificial Reefs in Taylor County

Florida Sea Grant

Taylor County has supported construction of public artificial reefs since 1965, when the first reef was permitted and constructed west of the mouth of the Steinhatchee River. The reef program remains active today, with the help of a volunteer reef team and many contributors including the University of Florida-IFAS, Taylor County Board of Commissioners, and other local government partners including Dixie and Wakulla Counties. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission has supported reef construction and related monitoring from State (saltwater fishing license revenue) and Federal funds (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sport Fish Restoration Program).

Steinhatchee Reef has a mixture of prefabricated concrete materials and metal scrap including iron pipes, steel ductwork and various parts from industrial machinery. This is a very popular dive and fishing location due to its close proximity to port, located within State waters. Winter sheepshead and gulf flounder fishing can be very productive, when these species aggregate on hard bottom to spawn. The most recent addition to this reef placed 112 concrete cubes with large 24" central cavities. The cube location lists the end of one of two parallel lines of reef patches running NE to SW approximately 500 feet apart.**Andree Reefs** were originally called the Taylor Big Bend Regional Reef, part of a five-county reef building effort in 1995. The reef design and materials are a modification of the Suwannee Regional Reef System arrays, which were built at varying patch size and distance between patches off Levy and Dixie Counties in the early 1990s. Andree Reef #1 has 6 reef patches, each consisting of 4 concrete cubes (24 total) arranged in a hexagon with approximately 164 ft between patches (50m). Andree Reef #2 has the same pattern of patches and spacing, but was built with 16 concrete cubes per patch (96 total). This site is located in Federal waters and attracts a variety of marine life including gag, Goliath grouper and several species of marine turtles.

The **Steinhatchee Fisheries Management Area** is permitted to University of Florida, providing research and public

Reefs on Page 15

Boy Scout Scalloping and Camping

By Brian Kiel

Ya gotta love an organization like Scouting for today's youth to try new adventures, push boundaries beyond their comfort zone, learn how to lead others, be able to make mistakes in a safe forgiving environment, and overall just have fun being a kid! This is a summary of Troop 277's September campout.

Here we go…….

28 Boy Scouts and 12 Geezers (fathers) from Troop 277 in Ponte Vedra Beach headed off for a Steinhatchee Scallop and Fishing campout.

Twenty three of these scouts had never scalloped before so this was going to be really cool to introduce to them a truly unique Florida activity (9 of the 12 dads had not scalloped before either).

A week prior to this campout a Snorkel Training Workshop was conducted with some of the scouts who wanted to earn their BSA Snorkel Badge and improve their snorkeling skills.

Snorkeling class is in session.

Leaving after school Friday evening we arrived after dark at Manatee Springs State Park, and the scouts set up their tents.

Saturday morning was a quick cold breakfast, and we hit the road for Sea Hag Marina. We had rented five of their 24 foot Carolina Skiffs and after our Captain safety briefing our Scout Chaplain led us in prayer for a safe & fun filled adventure.

Since the Steinhatchee area water clarity and underwater visibility was poor (dark) due to the heavily tannin stained water, we headed 17 miles to the north to the Keaton Beach area. Interestingly we saw no scallopers until we hit Keaton. Once there, there was a small scallop flotilla of approximately 30 boats.

Underway from Sea Hag

Now putting 40 people "ON THE SCALLOPS" was going to be a daunting challenge, but we were extremely lucky as the first spot we stopped at the scallops were abundant, and we did not have to move the entire day (that prayer really worked)!

The Haul.

After some cleaning instructions, the boys went to work on their catches.

The cleaning crew hard at work.

Once the scallops were cleaned, there wasn't a lot of time left for fishing. Nevertheless fishing operations commenced. We didn't have time to move so we used small hooks to catch pinfish and similar fish.

Andrew and his pigfish.

After a few fish were caught (sharks, catfish, pinfish, spottail pinfish, pigfish, black seabass, & puffers) it was time to return the rental boats to Sea Hag. Some of the boys got to run a boat for the first time on the trip back.

Taking turns as captain.

Back at camp Saturday night the scouts had enough time to cook their patrol dinners before it got dark. Saturday night's campfire program was run and organized by the scouts: skits, songs, and ending with a solemn Flag Retirement ceremony (by burning). The scouts did a great job!

About to depart for home after Sunday breakfast, the scouts do Roses & Thorns (each scout states his highlight and low side of the campout). Roses were mostly scalloping, and the Thorns were the heat at night & no Dairy Queen stop after scalloping.

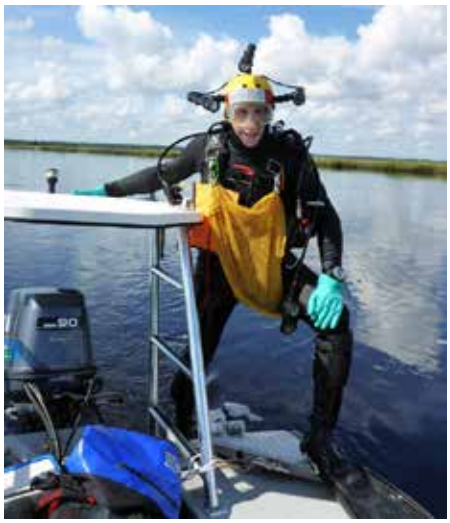
Black Water Shark Toothing

By Brian Kiel

Called in sick on October 10th (wifer is out of town), and I hooked up with a fellow blackwater diver to do some toofing. A few hours later we are diving 40+ feet (in a Georgia river) with great visibility — almost a foot. Have ta use lights though!

The tidal range was only supposed to be a 4.5 foot tidal swing, but at mid tide it was honking (already diving with 37 lbs but needed to add more weight). Had an AWESOME day diving 4 tanks apiece!!

Heading out



Brian is all geared up for low visibility work!

The first dive yielded Megalodon teeth, small vertebrae and whale ear bones. (Megalodon is a gigantic prehistoric species of shark.)

The second dive yielded up whale ear bones, whale teeth, and more shark teeth, including a monster 5 5/8" Megalodon tooth

One would not want to encounter the original owner of this tooth!

The third dive yielded up more of the same . . . shark teeth, whale ear bones and whale teeth.

Our total take for the day (whale ear bones and a few other whale teeth missing). Note the dollar bill and 6 inch rule for size comparison.

AWESOME day!! It'll be tough to exceed today's finds.

Reefs

Continued from page 13

access over a large area artificial reef site (LAARS). The permitted area ranges in depth from 30-50 feet, and encompasses a triangular area of 100 NM2, centered off the mouth of the Steinhatchee River. The public fishing reefs deployed in summer 2007 are found at depths of 35-40 ft. Three of these sites were enhanced with more cubes in July 2012, with an additional 4 sites established. Each location has either 16, 24 or 40 concrete cube modules. These sites hold a variety of reef fish with white grunt, black sea bass, gag, and hogfish in abundance, with seasonal winter visits by schools of large red drum.

Buckeye Reef is the deepest artificial reef site currently permitted by Taylor County, re-issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in January 2011. This site has been a popular diving and fishing destination for more than a decade, and now is permitted to receive additional materials through 2020. There are two material types- scrap metal and prefabricated concrete tetrahedrons of several sizes. Hogfish, white grunt, black sea bass, gag, Atlantic spadefish, gray snapper and Goliath grouper are common on the 1 NM2 area. The September 2012 deployment was placed within swimming distance (about 200') from the existing steel pile to speed colonization by reef fishes.

GPS numbers for the Steinhatchee Reef array are given on page 7 of this issue. Numbers for the remaining reefs mentioned above can be found on the web at:

http://taylor.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/TACOReefGuidev4October2012.pdf

The GOFC recently helped fund an addition to the Buckeye Reef, the numbers of which are not given at the above web site. The numbers for the new addition are:

29-38.808 N 83-54.250 W

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