The Acute Angler

Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Volume 48, Number 8

December 2015

It's now easier than ever to renew. Just go to the "Join now!" tab on the GOFC website (http://www.gofc.us/wp/join-now/), fill out the form online and pay using PayPal, only $25 gets you a full membership until 2015 if you have not joined yet.

If you'd prefer to support the US Post Office, complete the NEW MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL form (download from the website) and mail it to the GOFC Treasurer.

Debby Knopf, Treasurer
Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club
3324 W. University Avenue
PMB #337
Gainesville, FL 32607

Please make your check payable to GOFC.

Or just bring cash, a check or a credit card to the next club meeting and pay Debby at the meeting.

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WHO'S WHO AT GOFC

PRESIDENT:
LEROY HOLMES

VICE-PRESIDENT:
HAL WILSON

SECRETARY:
JAY PEACOCK

TREASURER:
DEBBY KNOPF

Upcoming GOFC Events

GOFC Events:

There are no club events in December, but President Elect, Hal Wilson is working with the board to put together some great speakers and events. As usual, club meetings will be the fourth Tuesday of each month, at the new auditorium in the Vet School. Plan on bringing your scales to the first couple of meetings to have them certified. If there's a topic you'd like to see covered at one of the monthly meetings, or a particular speaker you'd like to have present to the members, contact one of the club officers or board members with suggestions.

Membership Dues:

Although renewing members don't need to pay 2016 dues until January; if you'd like to take care of this before the year end, payments ($50) made in November and December will provide membership benefits for 2016. See column on the far left of this page for directions.

Oyster Roast:

The annual Oyster Roast will be held on January 22, 2016 at the Crapo Home. More information and directions will come. You can be assured this will be an excellent event. There will be lots of fun, food, fish stories.

Monthly Meeting:

The meeting will be held at the Vet School as usual on January 26, 2016. The speaker is still TBA but you can be assured Hal will make it a meeting you will not want to miss.

Seafood and Awards Banquet:

The annual Seafood and Awards Banquet is scheduled for February 26, 2016 and will be held at Ken and Debby Knopf's boat barn. This is an event you will not want to miss! More details to come.

The mission of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club is to promote and support recreational saltwater fishing in the Big Bend area; to provide educational and recreational experiences for its members of all ages; and, to promote responsible conservation of saltwater resources.

WEATHER OR NOT TO GO……

It is fun to plan a fishing trip. Our fishing friends have told us about how they're biting. Gary Simpson says the big ones are "jumping in the boat." So it is time to do some planning! One aspect of that is to check weather and tide forecasts. Weather certainly plays a role in boating, from safe and smooth to life-threatening, so we always get as much information as we can before we go. Weather also influences fishing success. Weather, including tides, has a lot to do with how and where we fish and even if we want to go at all, even if it is very safe as far as the boating aspect.

There are a number of professional weather forecasts available, but these can often be disappointing, including the ones you have to pay for. Just how trustworthy are all these forecasts? Understanding some weather basics can help us make a better decision to go or not. It is also important to understand the characteristics of your boat so you know how it will respond to a particular forecast.

It is also the case that a forecast might be safe enough, but no good for the type of fishing you want to do. An example would be going out for spawning sheepshead in late February or early March. A sheepshead bite is usually pretty "soft" and you have to feel it and quickly respond to have a good shot at a hook-up. If you are anchored in a choppy sea of one to two feet, this is safe enough for most of our Club boats, but it is going to be hard to feel the bite. Years ago we had a Club member, a woman nicknamed Cookie, who had a sheepshead technique: drop your bait done close to the bottom, count "a thousand and one, a thousand and two, a thousand and three" and set the hook. She claimed it worked as well for her as trying to feel the bite, but most of us want to demonstrate our "feeling the bite skill" so no countdowns! Going up and down one or two feet all the time means we will use up a lot of shrimp.

"Two to four foot seas" in the forecast really means a broader range of seas, some less than two and some more than four. With a 18 to 20+ ft boat, this might not be too bad for trolling, although some "advanced" technique might be needed, but things might get difficult if you anchored up and tried to work some strong amberjacks up. "Short," too small to keep AJ's, could tire you out pretty fast in these seas when you have to struggle to keep your balance while you also have to pull pretty hard on a reef donkey.

-continued on page 5

IMPORTANT GOFC CONTACTS

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FWC Commission Meeting – Panama City

Action: Marine Fisheries items discussed Nov. 18-19

Information: The FWC Commission discussed several marine fisheries management items Nov. 18-19 at its meeting in Panama City including:

Regulatory action:

- Greater amberjack – Gulf: Closed recreational season Nov. 21 through Dec. 31, 2015.
- Gray triggerfish – Atlantic: Effective Nov. 21, size limit changed from 14" fork length to 12" fork length and a recreational bag limit set to 10 fish per person per day.

Draft rules on:

- Dwarf seahorse (coming back in February for a final public hearing): Creating additional conservation measures including:
- changing the recreational bag limit to 5 seahorses total, no matter the species;
- establishing a commercial trip limit of 200 dwarf seahorses;
- establishing a commercial quota of 25,000 dwarf seahorses per year; and
- prohibiting harvest north of Anclote Key State Park Lighthouse on the Gulf coast and north of Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse on the Atlantic coast.

Discussions on:

- Federal fishery management updates
- Innovations in Marine Fisheries Management – An update on a survey and workshops held over the summer to gather public input on marine fisheries management.
- Red snapper regional management – Potential Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council action to manage certain aspects of the recreational red snapper fishery on a regional (potentially state-by-state) basis.
- Mutton snapper - Staff presented a summary of stakeholder concerns about mutton snapper regulations and potential management changes for the recreational and commercial mutton snapper fisheries for Commission discussion. Workshops will be held in February 2016.

Snook

Action: Gulf season closes Dec. 1; Atlantic closes Dec. 15

Information: The recreational harvest season for snook closes:

- Dec. 1 in Gulf state and federal waters, including Monroe County and Everglades National Park, and will remain closed through Feb. 29, 2016, reopening to harvest March 1, 2016.
- Dec. 15 in Atlantic state and federal waters including Lake Okeechobee and the Kissimmee River and will remain closed through Jan. 31, 2016, reopening to harvest Feb. 1, 2016.Snook can continue to be caught and released during the closed season.

Snook Symposium

Action: Save the Date

Information: Join us for a day-long public discussion about snook management and research in Florida, including the results of the soon-to-be-released 2015 stock assessment, population recovery following the 2010 cold kill, and opportunities for improving snook management. **More information to come. Registration opening soon. Check the website regularly.**

- When: January 13, 2016
- Where: Caribe Royale, 8101 World Center Dr., Orlando

Learn more: MyFWC.com/Snook2016 850-487-0554 or Marine@MyFWC.com

Gag Grouper

Action: Gulf seasonal closures

Information: Gag grouper will close for recreational harvest in most Gulf of Mexico state waters Dec. 4, with the last day of harvest being Dec. 3. All Gulf federal waters will close Dec. 3, with the last day of harvest being Dec. 2.

State waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson and Taylor counties were open from April 1 through June 30 and were not open during the July 1-through-Dec. 3 season. Monroe County is also excluded from the July 1-through-Dec. 3 season because it is included in the Atlantic rules for gag grouper.

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WEATHER OR NOT TO GO…… Continued

In addition to rough seas, windy fronts, thunderstorms and water spouts, other weather conditions to consider include Moon phases, tidal flow, water temperature, air pressure, "rapid" changes in the last two, air temperature, cloud cover, and fog. The more time you spend on the water, the more you realize it is useful to have not one "fishing plan" but several. If the original plan was to go up a creek at low incoming tide and fish inside because there was a windy forecast for the open flats, then realizing that the wind was blowing enough and in the right direction to keep the water from coming into the creek meant a change in plan. Dang! Too windy outside and no water inside, going to mean a pretty inventive new plan! Good thing we brought a copy of GOFC Big Bend Angler to read while we see if the wind will stop.

Weather is a big topic, so what I want to do is work up a series of articles about specific weather topics so that planning a fishing trip can be done more easily. The more experience you have on the water, the more you learn about weather, and weather forecasts, but there is always room for more learning, especially when it comes to safety. So here is an invitation: if you would like to know more about a specific weather topic, send me an email (raroy4@cox.net) and I will put that on the list. I guarantee that whatever I come up with won't be any worse than the National Weather Service and maybe even a little better!

Russ Roy

(Professor Weather)

Ed Ellett, CPCU, CLU, CIC

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FWC approves Gulf greater amberjack conservation measures

At its Nov. 18 meeting in Panama City Beach, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved closing Gulf state waters to recreational harvest of greater amberjack for the remainder of 2015. Greater amberjack closed to harvest in Gulf federal waters Sept. 28.

Greater amberjack will close to harvest in state waters on Saturday, Nov. 21 and will remain closed through Dec. 31. Both state and federal waters will reopen Jan. 1, 2016.

This closure should help prevent exceeding the annual federal recreational quota, which is the poundage of fish that can be caught each year while maintaining a sustainable fishery.

The Commission approved keeping the recreational red grouper season open in state waters. Though the federal season has closed, the Commission voted to keep the season open based upon a reduced bag limit from four to two fish implemented earlier this year, the low risk to significantly impacting the federal recreational quota and the importance of the recreational fishery in the fall and winter seasons, especially in southwest Florida.

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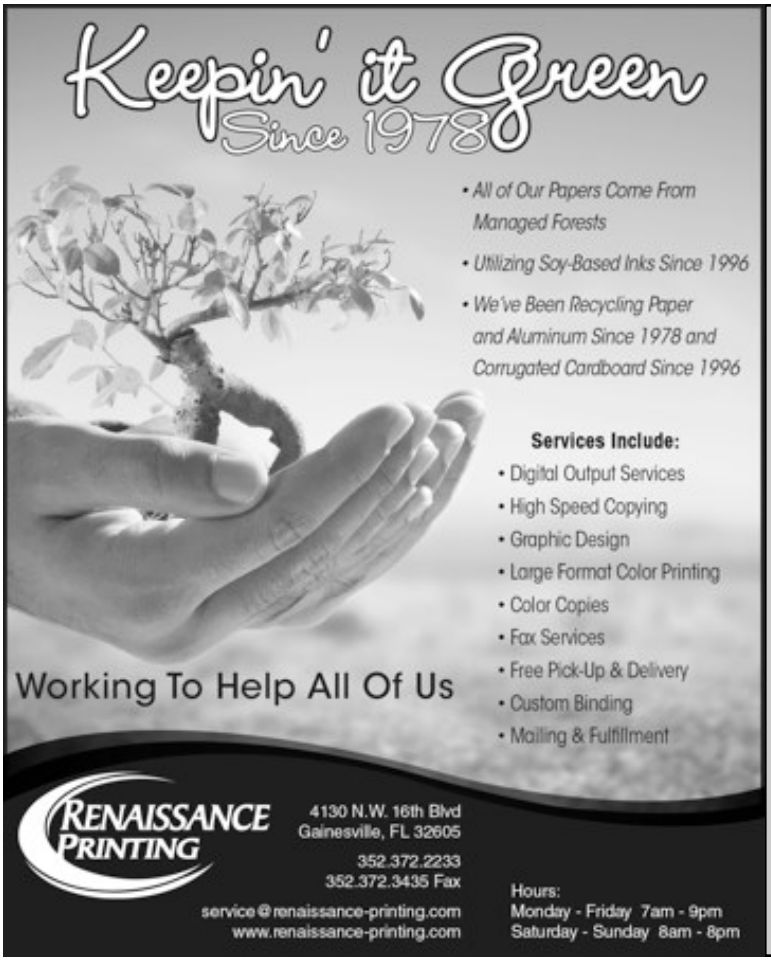

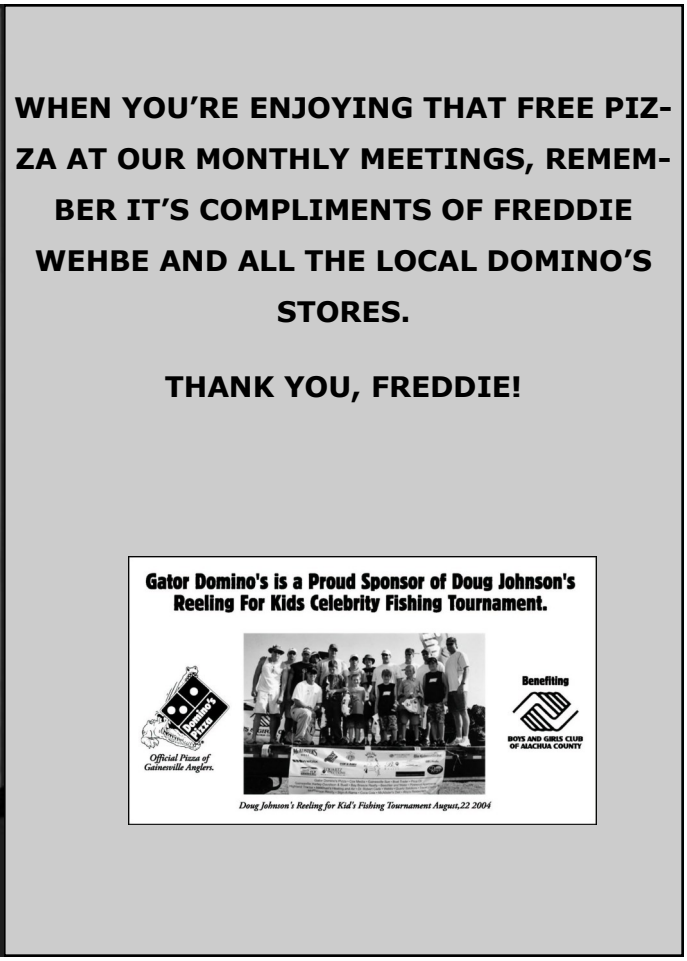

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Amberjack, triggerfish reopen to recreational harvest in Gulf waters Jan. 1; amberjack size limit changes Jan. 4

The recreational harvest of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish will reopen to harvest in Gulf state and federal waters Jan. 1 and the greater amberjack size limit will change from 30 inches to 34 inches fork length in Gulf state and federal waters Jan. 4.

Recent stock assessments have indicated that greater amberjack and gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico are overfished, which means there are not enough fish for these populations to remain sustainable.

Greater amberjack are also undergoing overfishing, which means more fish are being removed from the population than is sustainable. Greater amberjack closed early on Sept. 28 in Gulf federal waters and Nov. 21 in Gulf state waters. These closures were intended to help prevent exceeding the annual federal recreational quota. A quota is the poundage of fish that can be caught each year while maintaining a sustainable fishery.

Changing the greater amberjack minimum size limit will help ensure more female greater amberjack are left in the water and have a chance to reproduce before being harvested. Fork length is measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the center of the fork in the tail.

Gray triggerfish closed early on Feb. 7 in Gulf state and federal waters after NOAA Fisheries determined that the recreational quota was exceeded in both 2013 and 2014, and the 2015 recreational quota was projected to be met. The 2015 early state waters closure was intended to help limit future early season closures and rebuild the stock.

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Flounder fishing trip out of steinhatchee to get Debby her flounder

Thought I was fighting a Bull Red Friday, and, was very pleasantly surprised to have nice Snook show up! Several pictures were taken and fish was released in good condition. I've caught three Snook in my life, and, this one eclipsed the size of the other two on a quantum basis. Great to join the more and more prevalent stories of folks in our neck of the woods catching Snook!

Airboat fishing near Cedar Key

Objective fishing trip to get Hal his final leg of the "all ten" trophy

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