The Acute Angler

November, 2020
Volume 53, Number 11

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

November Hot Shot

And That Makes 10!

While trolling off of Cedar Key during the GOFC Amberjack, Grouper, and Red Snapper Online Tournament, Virgial Cooper landed this gigantic King Mackerel to complete a big 10 species slam for 2020. Way to go Virgil!

Submit your photos on http://www.gofc.us/wp/photos/photo-submission/

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President's Corner

By Mark Haberman,
GOFC President

Strange times require thinking outside the box. With the COVID-19 pandemic still going strong, the board decided to hold our first ever virtual tournament. FWC was kind enough to give us three bonus weekends (now two more have been added) for red snapper. This was the perfect opportunity to have our first ever red snapper, amberjack and grouper tournament. Participants could enter one of each via email, total longest length of all three species would win the tournament. Frank McMeekin was able to enter all three species for a total length of 98.25 inches to take home the top prize. Congratulations Frank, job well done!

On November 14th, the club held its more traditional tournament out of Steinhatchee for redfish and trout. Virgil Cooper claimed top prize for the biggest redfish with a 7.55 lbs. fish. Tim Pederson caught a 3.75lbs. beauty to earn the top prize for biggest trout. After fishing and sufficient amounts of bragging, we held a joint cookout with the University of Florida Salty Gator fishing club. It was great to see all the young but proficient fishermen and women. I would like to personally thank Ron Sanderson, our tournament director, for all his efforts in organizing the event.

Now for the good news and the bad news. First the bad news. Unfortunately, the board has decided to suspend our yearly auction, one of my favorite events of the year. Hopefully, with talk of several promising vaccines in the news, life can return to normal next year, and the annual auction will be back and better than ever in 2021.

The good news.
The board has approved our second annual social event to be held out at the Ultimate Boat and RV Storage facility on December 4th starting at 5:30 PM. If you have never seen this facility, be sure to come and check it out. It is a top-notch facility. Food and drinks will be provided, and you will have an opportunity to win some great raffle prizes. You will also be able to check out our brand-new wrap on our GOFC trailer. The wrap installed by Sharp D Signs turned out stunning, and I can not wait for everyone to see it. So be sure to bring plenty of fish stories, a large appetite and I'll see you there.

Tight lines,

Mark

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Upcoming Events

GOFC Social at Ultimate Boat & RV Storage

Make plans to attend a fantastic Club Social to be held at Ultimate Boat and RV Storage in Newberry, on **Friday December 4th, 2020 from 6:00 - 8:30 PM**.

We will use one of their shelters as the Social "Headquarters" and food and beverages will be provided as well as door prizes.

Bring your family and enjoy the fun!

Ultimate is located at 22211 W Newberry Rd, Newberry, FL 32669.

Visit their website to see their location and facilities -- https://www.ultimateboatrvstorage.com

"This your first time here, bud?": A novice saltwater angler gets a fishing kayak

By Max Van Oostenburg

Within days of relocating to north Florida in 2018, I realized I had to figure out a way to be on the water consistently. One cannot help but be near water in this state, but not having a way to be on the water left me feeling like I was only seeing glimpses of Florida's unique natural beauty. The thoroughly engrained fishing habit I developed growing up in Michigan, expanded upon for a couple seasons in Colorado, and honed further while working and living in Washington state, only intensified my drive to get on the water in my new surroundings. I had grown accustomed to standing in the water as I fished in these other locations, but my natural inclination toward caution, lack of knowledge about the area, and stubborn preconceived notions about the dangers of Florida's aquatic wildlife, have been enough to keep me from doing much wade-fishing here. After months of circling around the idea of buying some sort of watercraft to fish in, I finally decided to buy a fishing kayak this spring (due to supply issues caused by the pandemic, I didn't actually get the kayak until September, but that's another story). What follows is an attempt to summarize the process I went through in choosing a kayak for inshore fishing, and an initial reflection on the choice I made.

My search for the right fishing kayak was guided by four basic considerations. First, it had to be suitable for navigating saltwater inshore environments. This meant it needed to be durable enough to withstand the intense sun and occasional bumps from oyster beds, as well as have enough stability to accommodate some slight chop. Second, financial constraints rendered kayaks at the upper end of the market beyond my means. While I wouldn't need to settle for a bargain kayak at Wal Mart, I also was not in the market for a decked out Hobie. Third, I had to be able to transport the kayak safely atop my 27-year-old station wagon. Finally, I wanted a wide-open deck that would be easy to stand in and have as few places as possible for my fly line to become ensnared. This last criterion ended up eliminating several otherwise great options, as many fishing kayaks on the market are set up with a center console to accommodate electronics. While this feature may appeal to many, it is not currently part of my approach to fishing.

With the help of my girlfriend—an avid amateur researcher of consumer products and internet shopper—I eventually arrived at a short-list of candidates: the Vibe Sea Ghost (both the 11 ft. and 13 ft. models), the Old Town Topwater 120, and the boat I eventually decided on—the Crescent Lite Tackle.

While each of these kayaks largely met the criteria I describe above, the Crescent Lite Tackle stood out in three ways: aesthetics, performance, and manufacturer's proximity. Looks were certainly not primary among my concerns, but I have to admit I find the relatively simple look of the Lite Tackle quite appealing relative to many other fishing kayaks on the

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market. In terms of on-the-water experience, several professional reviews emphasized that the Lite Tackle's unique hull design is intended to accommodate fishing while sacrificing as little maneuverability and "paddle-ability" as possible. While I plan to use it mostly for fishing, I also enjoy just being out on the water and appreciate Crescent's emphasis on the kayaking component of kayak fishing. Finally, the Lite Tackle is manufactured regionally in Carrollton, Georgia, while the Sea Ghost and Topwater are manufactured in China and Maine, respectively. As someone who likes to support to businesses that are as local as possible, this was a big appeal for me.

In addition to these features, the customizability of the Lite Tackle offers some exciting potential. Each side of the kayak features a track mount compatible with YakAttack brand accessories like rod and paddle holders, and there are two additional stationary YakAttack "Mighty Mounts" to the rear of the seat. The front hatch can fit multiple large bags or pieces of gear, as well as two assembled rods of up to 8 feet in length. The open storage area in the rear features an adjustable and fully removable bungee fastening system, and the flat transom at the stern is designed to accommodate a trolling motor.

The Lite Tackle is 12'4" by 34" and weighs 75 pounds, which makes loading and unloading it onto the roof of my car a somewhat challenging but manageable task. My car does not have any sort of roof rack, so I ordered an $80 removable car-top kit made by Pelican that has worked very well. I am fortunate enough to have ample garage space for storage, and for now I use the pads from the car-top kit as a makeshift kayak stand.

After almost two months and a handful of short outings in the marshes near Cedar Key, I can report that I am very satisfied with the Crescent Lite Tackle. Admittedly, it is my first and only fishing kayak, and I would probably have good things to say about a few 2x4s fastened together if they enabled me to get on the water. At this point, I am still at the early stages of learning about both inshore fishing and kayak fishing, but I see the Lite Tackle as a perfect vessel for the journey.

The quote in the title of this article comes from an inquisitive stranger who was pulling his Hobie into shore as I was ignorantly putting in the Lite Tackle for its maiden voyage at Shell Mound during a low tide. He went on to politely explain to me that I had picked just about the worst possible time to launch. Thus, even before I had a chance to get on the water, I was confronted with my immense ignorance of the marine environment that has become such a frequent subject of my imagination since moving to Florida. As I paddled around that afternoon, severely limited in terms of where I could explore due to the low water level, the disappointment of my novice mistake gave way to a sense of excited anticipation for the process of experiential knowledge accumulation I knew I had just kickstarted. I look forward to seeing where this next chapter in my fishing life takes me.

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GOFC Board Confirms Officers and Board Members for 2021

By Ryan Kremser

During this year's virtual meetings, GOFC President, Mark Haberman, made several calls for volunteers to serve on the GOFC board in 2021. A request for volunteers was also emailed to all members.

Thanks to several members who stepped up and volunteered to serve the club, GOFC will have a vibrant and robust board of directors in 2021.

The board extends a special thank you to long time board member and former Club President Jay Peacock who will be retiring from the board at the end of 2020. After serving tirelesly on the board for many years, and quietly shouldering much of the behind the scenes work that keeps the club functioning, Jay has decided to take a much deserved and long overdue break. Jay will remain an integral part of our club, of course, and hopefully have a little more time for some actual fishing!

Despite having some big shoes to fill, Tom Jowarski has courageously volunteered to take over Jay's role as Club Secretary and we're sure he'll do a great job.

Below is the list of GOFC Officers and Board members for 2021.

2021 GOFC Officers

- Mark Haberman – President
- Vice President – Ron Sanderson
- Treasurer – Debby Knopf
- Secretary – Tom Jaworski
- Immediate Past President – Glenn (automatic seat on board)

2021 GOFC Board of Directors

1. Matt Albrecht (alternate)
2. Tom Bacsik
3. Stephen Degraff
4. Bill Gair
5. Jeff Gartland
6. Eric Hill
7. Chic Hinton
8. Kevin Jones (alternate)
9. Ken Knopf
10. Ryan Kremser (Newsletter Editor)
11. Ross McElroy
12. John Patrick
13. Dale Reed
14. Mark Robinson

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Featured Recipe

Fried Speckled Troud with Black-eyed Peas

By Hank Shaw

From Hunter-Angler-Gardener-Cook

Ingredients

Trout

4 to 6 skinless speckled trout fillets
1 cup milk
1 cup fine cornmeal, a/k/a "fish fry"
1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
Peanut oil for frying

Salad

1 cup black-eyed peas
2 cups chicken broth
2 cups water
1/4 pound bacon
1 chopped onion
3 chopped garlic cloves
1 or 2 roasted red peppers, canned or freshly roasted, chopped
3 cups chopped turnip or mustard greens
Salt, black pepper and cider vinegar to taste

Instructions

1. Start by cooking the black-eyed peas. Bring the water and chicken broth to a boil and add the peas. Lower the heat to a very gentle simmer and cook until they are tender, but not falling apart. While this is happening, cook the bacon in a large saute pan. When the bacon is crispy, remove it and chop. Set it aside for now.

2. Saute the onion in the bacon fat over medium-high heat until the edges brown. Add the garlic and the greens and toss to coat in the bacon fat. Cook until the greens wilt. Turn off the heat, add back the bacon, then mix in the red peppers. Cover the pan and set aside for now.

3. Pour the milk into a shallow bowl. Mix all the breading ingredients. Pour enough peanut oil into a frying pan to come up about 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Heat the oil to 325°F to 350°F. If you don't have a thermometer, the oil will be ready when a bit of the breading sizzles instantly when flicked into it. When the oil is hot, dredge the fish in the milk, then coat with the breading. Fry until golden brown, about 3 to 5 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels.

4. To finish, warm the black-eyed pea salad and put some on everyone's plate and top with the fried fish. Serve with beer or an uncomplicated white wine.

Recent Catches

Angler	Species	Weight	Date Caught	Location	Lure/Bait
Ken Knopf	Spanish Mackeral	3.91 lbs	10/12/2020	Seahorse Reef	Spoon
Tim Pedersen	Spanish Mackeral	5.9 oz	10/16/2020	Cedar Key	Lure
Jay Peacock	Spanish Mackeral	2.87 lbs	10/18/2020	Steinhatchee	Cut Bait
Virgil Cooper	Spanish Mackeral	4.68 lbs	10/25/2020	Cedar Key	Lure
Dale Reed	Greater Amberjack	37.5 inches	11/1/2020	Cedar Key	Pinfish
Ken Knopf	King Mackeral	11.48 lbs	11/1/2020	Seahorse Reef	Pinfish
Debby Knopf	King Mackeral	17.65 lbs	11/1/2020	Seahorse Reef	Pinfish
Ken	Spanish Mackeral	4.38 lbs	11/1/2020	Seahorse Reef	Spoon
Debby Knopf	Spanish Mackeral	4.98 lbs	11/1/2020	Seahorse Reef	Jig
Virgil Cooper	King Mackeral	34.78 lbs	11/1/2020	Cedar Key	Lure
Virgil Cooper	Redfish	7.55 lbs	11/14/2020	Keaton Beach	Lure

FWC Updates

New Gulf record lionfish

Donald C. Vautrinot was spearfishing for red snapper off Destin Oct. 18 when he went back down to snag a few lionfish. And there it was.

"I saw a monster lionfish and immediately knew I wanted to measure it," Vautrinot said. "I got really excited because I knew the Gulf record was around 18 inches but I didn't know exactly and we didn't have a cell signal to check it out there."

Once back at shore, they took it to Okaloosa County coastal resource manager Alex Fogg for an official measurement. Fogg confirmed, at 18.19 inches (462 mm), Vautrinot was the new Florida state record holder for longest lionfish caught in the Gulf of Mexico.

"I was pretty excited and messaged my wife the news right away," said Vautrinot.

Vautrinot beat the former Gulf of Mexico record of 18.07 inches, caught off Escambia County and held by Joshua Falkner.

Vautrinot's Gulf record is still shy of the overall state record of 18.78 inches (477 mm) caught by Capt. Jimmy Nelson in 2015 in the Atlantic off Islamorada.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) encourages removal of lionfish, which are an invasive species that could have a negative impact on native fish and wildlife.

The FWC lionfish record program includes categories for both length and weight in spearing, hook and line, and junior (16 and under) divisions.

Record holders will be recognized on MyFWC.com and may receive prizes as well.

Enter your record fish today by visiting MyFWC.com/Lionfish and clicking on "State Records Program."

Make sure to review the application form thoroughly before submitting your catch. Potential record lionfish must have been harvested using legal methods.

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Sharp-Toothed Mackerel Win a Round - November 19, 2020

By Gary Simpson

Logan Miller and Al Clements launched Logan's new Contender at Cedar Key Sunday morning and cruised through choppy seas to Seahorse Reef. When they arrived on the reef, there were no birds diving. Neither were there baitfish visible at the surface. On top of these poor indications, the water was far less than clear as they could barely see a color change when the bottom went from sand to grass.

They remained hopeful just the same and began casting silver spoons, looking to tempt mackerel, for which the reef is famous. In place of the wire that most mackerel fishers use to fend off the macks' razor teeth, Miller and Clements had rigged with 80-pound test fluorocarbon for leader. Almost anyone would have expected it to do the job.

Surprisingly, considering the lack of promising signs, Spanish mackerel were present in a big way …. but fish after fish cut off their lures. "Some of them might have been kingfish" Clements later mused. The anglers cast and trolled, jolted by freight-train strikes all the while. Some fish made it to the boat, but many made off with spoons.

"Finally", Clements said, "I lost every spoon I had".

Fluorocarbon line possesses the same refraction index as water, and is therefore nearly invisible in it. It's also quite hard, and resistant to cutting. Whether of the king or Spanish variety, though, the Cedar Key mackerel on Sunday were able to slice through thick fluorocarbon and steal a lot of lures.

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.

Time to renew your GOFC membership?

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(http://www.gofc.us/wp/join-now/)

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