The Acute Angler

July, 2021
Volume 54, Number 7

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

July Hot Shot

Nice Grouper!

Tom Jowarski caught this 6.8 pound 29 inch gag grouper on a recent trip out of Cedar Key with buddies Chick Hinton and Ross McElroy.

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President's Corner

By Mark Haberman,
GOFC President

Finally, some good news on the horizon! The UF Vet Med School has finally given us permission to resume meetings in the Veterinary Academic Building Auditorium (Bldg. 221). We have our first post covid indoor meeting scheduled for August 24th at 7:30pm. Doors will be opening at 7pm with free pizza provided while it lasts. I'm very excited to announce that we've booked Rick Rylals as our first post pandemic speaker.

Rick Ryals is a very well known Saltwater Angler based in Jacksonville. He is the co-host of the Florida Sportsman Best Boat Television Show on Fox Sports, the Host of the Florida Sportsman Action Spotter Podcast, and author of the book "Dolphin".

Want more good news? We have a club social scheduled for July 30th at 6pm out at the Ultimate Boat & RV Storage facility located at 22211 W Newberry Rd, Newberry. This is an outdoor event and is free to all members. Please make plans to attend and feel free to bring a dessert, side dish or chips. Soda and water will be provided or you can bring your favorite adult beverage. We will be frying fish, giving away raffle prizes, and telling lots of fish stories. Hope to see you there.

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Upcoming Events

In-Person Meetings Returning in August

The GOFC board is excited to announce that in-person meetings will resume again in August at the University of Florida Vet School. We've already got some high-profile speakers lined up to help us get started on the right foot! Look for more details in the coming weeks.

2021 CCA Banquet and Auction

The Gainesville Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association will hold their annual banquet and auction on Thursday, September 9th 2021 at Legacy Park in Alachua. This year's event is being held in a new, bigger venue and will feature a catered dinner by Wahoo Seafood, live music, raffles, silent auction, live auction, and more! The event is always well attended by GOFC members and this year will be no different. Tickets can be purchased here: CCA Banquet Tickets

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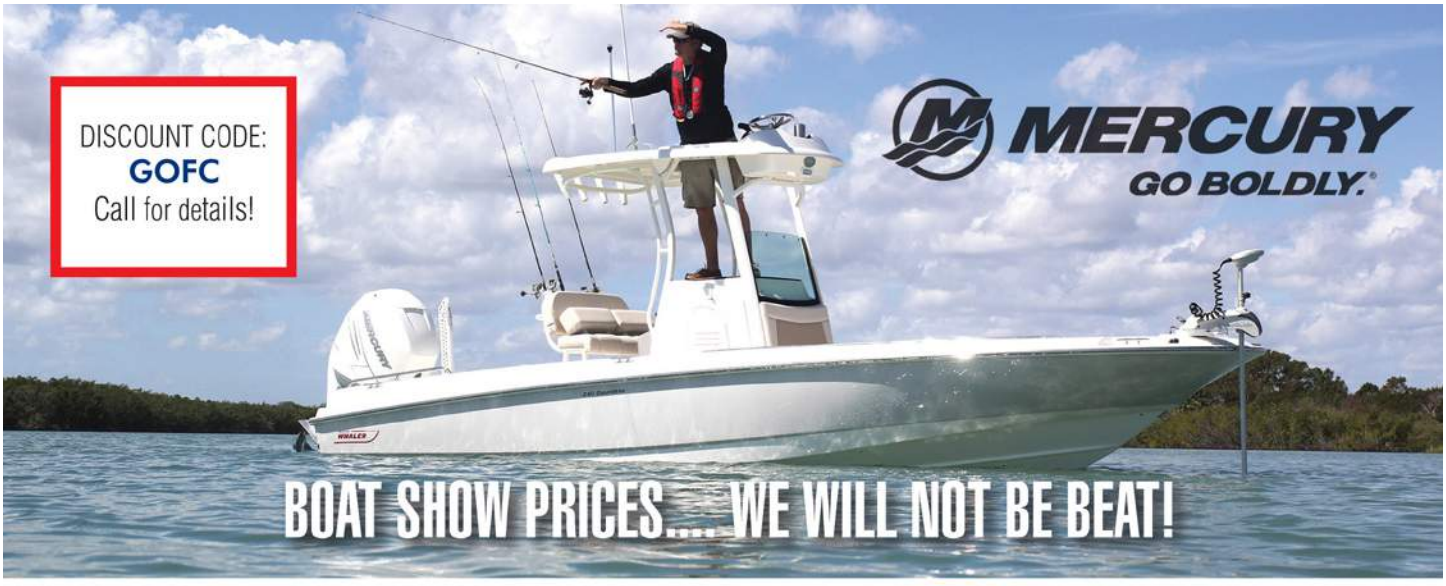

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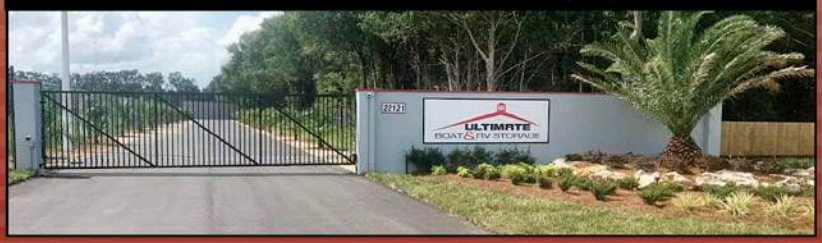

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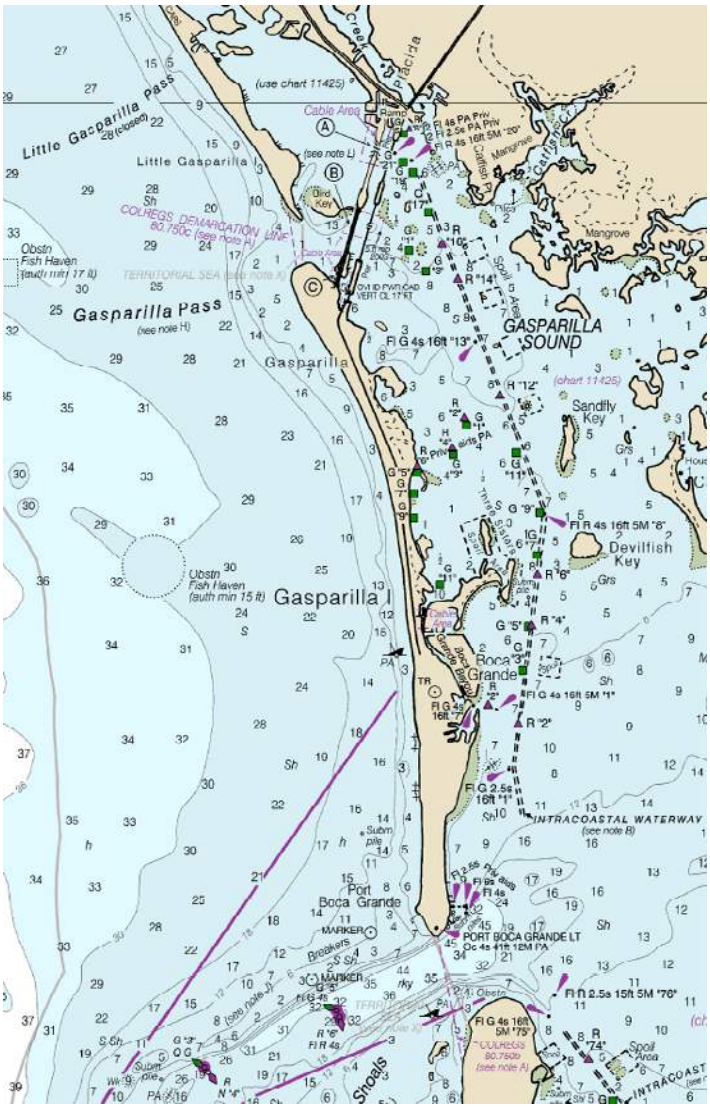
Making a Hard Decision

By Ron Sanderson

We had some friends visiting from Daytona that we had fished with a lot. Dad and Jim had often fished Nine Mile Hill and the Mangrove Hole in Daytona, always catching fish. We had not been living in Placida long, so we were all looking forward to trying new waters. I was excited to get to go with them on this trip.

We put the boat in at the little marina in Placida, FL, about 7:00 AM. The bite from Gasparilla Sound through Boca Brand Pass was on! We knew it was going to be a great day on the water.

On the way out, we went through Gasparilla Sound then the small pass on the north end of Gasparilla Island. As we entered the Gulf of Mexico, I was



mesmerized by the number of Tarpon rolling. They were so thick, it was almost as if you could walk across the water and never get wet. Of course, this was 1973 and the numbers back then were amazing. I had not discovered Tarpon fishing yet!

We caught a boatload of fish that morning, often on double hookups. But as we were fishing, we were also keeping an eye on the weather. You know, the afternoon rain storms that always build up on summer days in Florida. About noon, we saw them beginning to build far offshore and decided it was time to go.

For some reason, instead of coming back through the north pass into Gasparilla Sound, we decided to run south along the beach and come in through the much larger Boca Grand Pass. The seas were still nice, and it would be a change of scenery. Everything was going great, and I got to drive the boat!

As we were running along, suddenly, the motor lost power. The RPM's dropped to nothing. Of course, Dad thought it was something I did until he saw that the throttle was still pushed forward. I tried pulling it back to neutral and pushing it forward again. The motor revved but then immediately lost rpm's. Dad told me to move over so he could try it. He turned the motor off, restarted it and it continued to do the same thing. Our forward motion was only 3-4 knots.

While the storm was approaching, we thought we would be able to make it through the pass before it arrived. However, we were fighting an outgoing tide and the winds were picking up. About the time we got to the mouth of the pass, the skies opened, and the winds increased. Lightning was flashing and we could see lightning strikes hitting the island. We were still moving forward about 3 knots, but the outbound tide flow was also picking up.

We had made it about 300 yards into the pass when we were suddenly in the middle of a microburst! The winds picked up, the waves were now 4-5 and it was raining so hard, you could not see the front or the back of the boat. Jim and I got in the cabin as dad tried to navigate to the ramp. He realized that the outgoing tide had pick up and along with the winds, we were now going backwards instead of forwards. We could not tell how far we had moved, but knew we

were being pushed towards the jetty.

Between the thunder, lightning, wind, and rain, I heard Dad yell to drop the anchor. I scrambled to get it overboard and prayed it would hold in the sandy bottom. It didn't and we continued to be pushed backwards dragging the anchor through the sand. The rain was still so heavy, we could not see how close to the rocks we were. We only knew that it was a bad situation.

The motor was useless to us and I will admit, we were all concerned. Our friend Jim was a Captain in the army and had been a fighter and helicopter pilot in Vietnam. He had survived being shot down, and when he said, “this is not good” I knew we were in trouble. Finally, after about 30 minutes of being tossed to and fro by the waves, the anchor took hold, the rope pulled tight, and the boat swung around to face the ebbing tide.

It would be another 30 minutes before the rain lifted enough for us to get our bearings. When it did, we could see that we were only about 20' away from being smashed against the rocks by the storm. About an hour later, another boat came by and offered to tow us in. When we tried to retrieve the anchor, it was stuck to the point that we had to just cut the line.

These days, I pay attention to what several forecasts say about the weather, seas, and winds. We were lucky that day and had done all to safeguard our self. We still found ourselves in harms way. I know sometimes we really think we “have to fish on a certain day”. But, there is nothing more important than the safety of those you are responsible for. While several things help me make decisions to go or no go, I always think about think about that day.

As a Licensed USCG captain, and with 40 plus years’ experience operating boats, it is tempting sometimes to think, “oh I can handle it”. Sometimes our experience clouds our judgement. Do not get complacent! Make good decisions. Sometimes you just have to say…” Not today”

Captain Ron Sanderson
Vice President
Tournament Director

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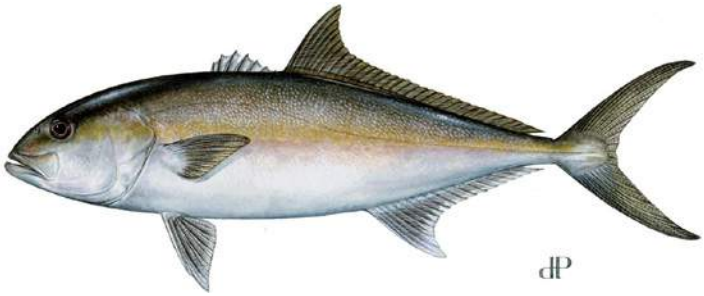
FWC Updates

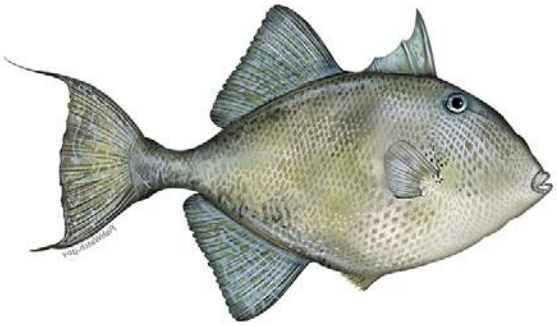
Greater amberjack and gray triggerfish reopen to recreational harvest in Gulf waters Aug. 1 L

The recreational harvest of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish will reopen in Gulf state and federal waters August. 1.

Greater amberjack is scheduled to remain open through Oct. 31 in Gulf state and federal waters. Gray triggerfish is scheduled to remain open through Dec. 31 in Gulf state and federal waters but an early quota closure is possible for either species.



If you plan to fish for amberjack or gray triggerfish anywhere in Florida state or federal waters from a private recreational vessel, you must sign up as a State Reef Fish Angler (annual renewal is required). To learn more, visit MyFWC.com/SRFS. Sign up today at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com.



Last day of recreational red snapper season in Gulf state and federal waters is July 28

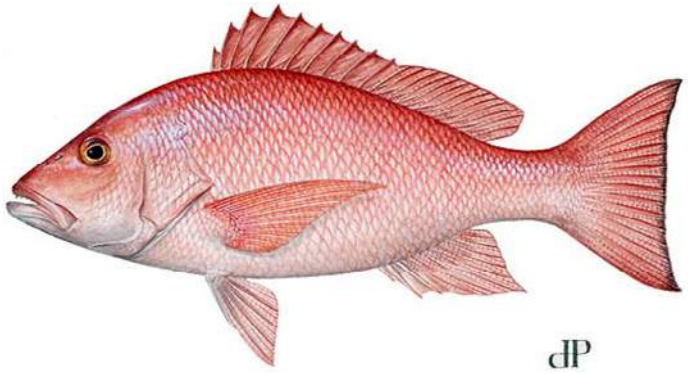
Photo: https://www.flickr.com/photos/myfwcmedia/albums/72157681823130963

The last day to harvest red snapper in Gulf state and federal waters for private recreational anglers is July 28. The season closes July 29.

The current season also applies to for-hire operations that do not have a federal reef fish permit, but they are limited to fishing for red snapper in Gulf state waters only.

To learn more about the recreational red snapper season in Gulf state and federal waters, including size and bag limits, visit MyFWC.com/Marine and click on "Recreational Regulations" and "Snappers," which is under the "Regulations by Species – Reef Fish" tab. Looking to keep up to date on Florida's saltwater fishing regulations? Find them on the Fish Rules app. Learn more at FishRulesApp.com or follow Fish Rules at Instagram.com/FishRulesApp or Facebook.com/FishRulesApp.

If you plan to fish for red snapper in state or federal waters from a private recreational vessel, even if you are exempt from fishing license requirements, you must sign up as a State Reef Fish Angler (annual renewal required). Sign up at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com. To learn more, visit MyFWC.com/SRFS.



State Reef Fish Anglers could receive a questionnaire in the mail regarding their reef fish trips as part of Florida's State Reef Fish Survey. These surveys were developed specifically to provide more robust recreational data for management of red snapper and other important reef fish, and have allowed FWC the unprecedented opportunity to manage Gulf red snapper in both state and federal waters. If you receive a survey in the mail, please respond whether you fished this season or not.

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Recent Catches

Angler	Species	Weight	Date Caught	Location	Lure/Bait
Ed Ellett	Grouper - Red	5.82	6/3/2021	50' Cedar Key	Cut bait
Mark Rustemier	Grouper - Red	5.50	6/3/2021	Cedar Key	Live bait
Virgil Cooper	King Mackeral	5.00	6/10/2021	Cedar Key	Lure
Virgil Cooper	Grouper - Red	10.27	6/11/2021	Cedar Key	Bait
Ed Ellett	Flounder	3.28	6/24/2021	Barge Canal Crystal River	Jig
Ross McElroy	Grouper - Red	4.94	7/13/2021	Cedar Key	Pinfish
Austin Mundt	Seatrout	2.06	7/17/2021	Steinhatchee	Gulp
William Mundt	Flounder	1.88	7/18/2021	Steinhatchee	Gulp
William Mundt	Redfish	2.06	7/18/2021	Steinhatchee	Gulp
William Mundt	Seatrout	1.13	7/18/2021	Steinhatchee	Gulp

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Saltwater Fishing Report - July 23, 2021

By Gary Simpson

The close-call passing of storms strong enough to have earned names have made for some unusual offshore fishing tales in recent years.

On the heels of Elsa's passage, a group of Suwannee anglers went far offshore looking primarily for grouper and snapper. Gary and Andrew Weseman, David and Trish Bolton, Randy Robinson, and Bill Pleiman ran out of Suwannee on a fine weather day two Saturdays ago, to water nearly 100 feet deep. Fishing with cut bait and squid, their catches included a nice number of their main targets … the fish box held both gag and red grouper and red and lane snapper. But the anglers also had shots at species seldom seen in these waters, including yellowtail snapper and a school of Mahi dolphin that hung around the boat for some time.

The coming weekend will be the last this year to harvest red snapper, as the season closes in the gulf on July 28 for recreational anglers.

A not-so-good period of inshore fishing in our nearest gulf shallows seems to have turned for the better on the heels of heavy July rains. Trout remain harder to find than usual, but redfish and snook action is good. Capt. Sean Campbell and Rick Pena went out from Cedar Key at daylight on Monday. They didn't need to run very far to find feeding fish. Casting a variety of lures including topwaters, jerkbaits, and swimbaits, the longtime friends caught and released a pair of snook to 33-inches, eight slot-length redfish, one over-slot red, and five nice-sized trout. The flats were active, with "lots of baitfish and diving birds". The weather was unsettled, though, and they counted more than a dozen waterspouts before a rainstorm ran them back to the boat ramp a little after noon.

In the Reeling for Kids tournament, the Master's winners earn the biggest paychecks and claim the greatest bragging rights. These are the teams with the heaviest combined weight of three designated species.

The 2021 Master's Inshore champions were Rick Pena and his Rick's Rods Team. Their redfish/trout/Spanish mackerel trio totaled 11.55-pounds. The Shawn Simmons Team finished close behind with an 11.25 total, and the Matt Cowart Team tallied a 10.95 total.

The Master's Offshore champions were the Dan Sherraden Team. Their red snapper/grouper/kingfish trio totaled 78.50-pounds. The Kaleb Beckner Team was second with a 69.10 total. The Chris Topping Team had a three-fish total of 68.50 to claim third place.

As always, The Reeling for Kids Saltwater Challenge attracted the some of the gulf's top sport fishers while amassing considerable revenue for the Boys and Girls Club of Alachua County.