The Acute Angler

August, 2021
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The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

August Hot Shot

Nice Red!

Chick Hinton wrapped up August with this 26" redfish that was caught on a fingerling mullet while fishing with Tom Jaworski and Jeff Gartland Near Cedar Key.

Submit your photos on http://www.gofc.us/wp/ph

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President's Corner

By Mark Haberman,
GOFC President

Well…..Covid strikes again!!

Just when we thought we were going back to in-person meetings, Covid 19 case's in north central Florida have sky rocketed. The board had to make a very tough decision to postpone our August meeting until September 28th. Fortunately, Rick Ryals, our featured speaker has agreed to postpone as well, and should be able to speak with us in September. Keep an eye on your email, Facebook, and our website for further details.

Ok….Now for some good news. Mark your calendars! Our annual fall tournament has been tentatively scheduled for October 9th out of Cedar Key. The tournament will be dedicated to long time member Charlie Zoby who unfortunately, passed away recently. The weigh in will be at the park pavilion located next to the boat launch. We'll be grilling out and socializing after the tournament, I can already hear all the fish stories about the one that got away. As always, watch your email, Facebook, and our website for further details. Hope to see you there!

Tight lines and
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Upcoming Events

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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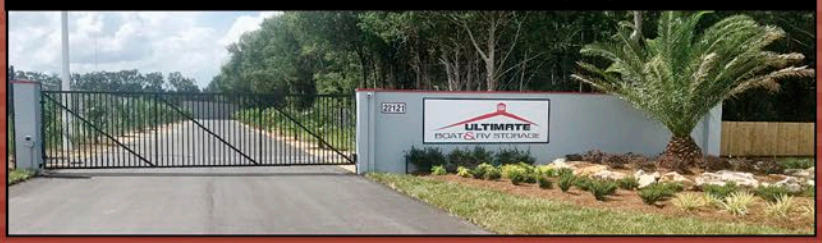

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Glenn and The Day of the ~~Dead~~ Reds!

By Stephen Degraff

This here is Glenn.

He was the GOFC President and is a current board member.

This is me, the person he invited to join him on this hot summer day.

Why am I telling you this? Well, I thought it would be nice to put faces to the (***TOTALLY TRUE***) story I am about to tell. NOW, sit back and enjoy the adventure!

Yesterday started out just like any other Friday for me. Dark-thirty cup of coffee and driving my truck. Where it differs is, this time I wasn't driving to work. I was driving to meet Glenn and go fishing.

We met up at Hitchcock's in Newberry at 5:30am and headed off to Steinhatchee with a "let's see what we can catch" attitude. We really didn't know what to expect since neither of us had fished that region in so long and we didn't have any idea what the water conditions would be like with all the rain and bad weather the previous weeks. So we convinced each other that a bad day of fishing is always better than a good day at work. We loaded up the 18' panga and rigged up for reds, trout, and a single rod for the toothy creatures I would normally expect this time of year.

By the way, if you haven't seen Glenn's 18' Panga, it is a sweet boat and rides like a dream.

High tide was +3.3 @ 7:20am, low tide was +1.5 at 1:50pm with a whopping UV index of 11+. (This is why you will see me in a hooded shirt.) I am unsure what the water temp was. As I do every trip, I taste the water for salinity and it was definitely on the light side. We fished nearshore, I don't think we dropped a line in water deeper than 2.5 ft.

Ok, got those variables out of the way and now back to the good stuff.

We launched out of Rocky Creek and started fishing just a few hundred yards north in some of the tidal creeks. Not a single bite. We eased back out, used the proven scientific method of flipping the coin and tails landed, so we headed south.

Sorry, necessary side note\warning: If you have never launched out of Rocky Creek, be very careful. I don't launch there if I am in a boat that drafts more than a foot. Also, it is very accurately named. It is rocky. And do not try to run out of the south entrance, take the hard right and follow the markers. See image below.

We decided to fish a spot I like that is just north of Pepperfish. Unfortunately we only caught one trout that was just short of legal. Ohh well, another bust. At this time, the tide was on its way out and it was getting too late to fish any other nearshore structure, so we decided to move up the coast a little farther north.

We stayed in the 2 ft range as water clarity and bottom looked really good and there was no one scalloping this shallow. There were plenty of bait fish and a couple other boats fishing in the area so we decided to do what they were doing. AND WE FOUND REDS!!!!!

I am not talking about a red here, a red there, I am talking about a lot of reds. Now they were not the honking big reds you see schooled up offshore, but they were solid mid slot reds, the 4¼ - 4½ lb range!

And for a couple dudes that haven't wetted their lines this year, it was copper heaven!

Here is how we fumbled across them. Mimicking another boat nearby we drifted north from Pepperfish, straight up the coastline. We didn't follow right behind them, we chose a line about 200 yards farther out. (If I had to guess, they were drifting in the 1½ ft depth.) We eventually noticed turbulent water. It looked like something very large was moving around in it but it was hard to tell with how choppy the water was.

I threw a weedless, soft plastic bait on a Carolina rig and immediately hooked up! This fish ripped off line like a cobia and I started to panic thinking I wouldn't be able to stop the thing. I imagine I looked like all heck broke loose. I had Glenn scrambling to raise the trolling motor and chase this fish before it spooled me. Blood was pumping and all logical thought was gone. By the time Glenn got his pole in and started working on the trolling motor, the fish started running out of gas. Of course that is when I realized I made a rookie mistake. This was no monster cobia. It was actually an average sized redfish and I just needed to tighten my drag down a bit more. (I had serviced it the night before and neglected to test the drag.)

So I got my drag tightened up, managed to escape disaster and land our first keeper red.
It was a 23 in, 4¼ lb red and was immediately

deposited in the cooler for its own safety. 😉

Unfortunately, we lost the school in the commotion. But we knew they couldn't be far off. All we had to do was find them again. And that we did.

Since I now knew what we were into, I changed lures to a Johnson silver minnow ¼ oz, copper spoon. I sometimes go to the ½ oz when I need to make longer casts or I know the reds are in the upper slot.

I don't know if it was the same school of reds or another, but we found them...

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This time Glenn hooked up, I threw into the school and hooked up as well.

And we were back in the thick of it and there was no more time for pics. In hindsite, I wish we would have put the power pole down, but alas another mistake that thankfully didn't cause us too much grief.

We got both fish in the boat. Three reds, I released mine unharmed and we continued the chase for more.

Looking back, or if I decide to go again next week, I would definitely fish the school much differently. I would anchor up current from them, chum and have multiple rigs. One top water, semi-weedless and one spoon.

If I used live bait, I would go with shrimp. I would use a Carolina rig or popping cork.

If you go chasing the reds, start in the 2ft range and look for a mixture of grass and hard bottom. Also keep your eyes open for the different textures in the water. Sometimes it is difficult to tell but other times you will definitely be able to see them tailing or churning up the water. You can also catch the airboats as they hunt the reds on the flats. We watched one airboat move around ahead of us doing the same thing.

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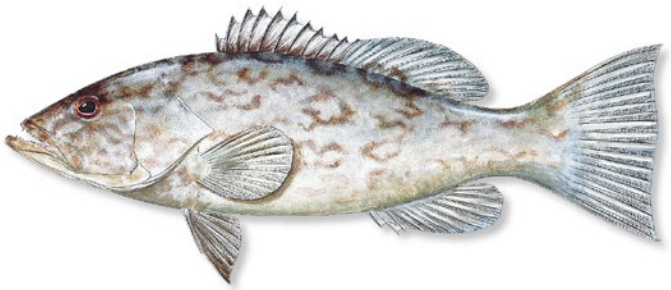
FWC Updates

Gag grouper fall season opens Sept. 1 in Gulf 4-county region

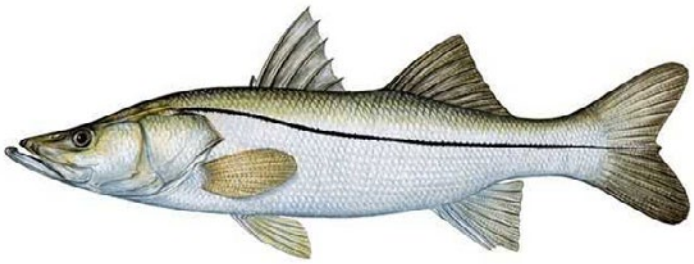
The gag grouper recreational season in Gulf state waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson and Taylor counties will open for harvest Sept. 1 through Dec. 31.

The season for all other Gulf state and federal waters is June 1 through Dec. 31. Monroe County state waters follow Atlantic regulations.



The minimum size limit for gag grouper is 24 inches total length and the daily bag limit is two fish per harvester within the four-grouper aggregate bag limit. Charter captains and crew have a zero bag limit.

If you plan to fish for gag grouper in 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.



Snook season starts Sept. 1

The recreational harvest season for snook starts Sept. 1 statewide with the exception of state waters from Pinellas/Hillsborough counties (including Tampa Bay) south to Gordon Pass in Collier County. These waters are catch-and-release for snook due to impacts from red tide.

Unique to the region, snook are one of the many reasons Florida is the Fishing Capital of the World.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) encourages anglers to use proper handling methods to help released snook survive and promote high species' abundance for anglers today and generations to come. To learn more about catch-and-release and the best way to handle a fish, visit MyFWC.com/FishHandling.

A snook permit, as well as a recreational saltwater license, is required to harvest snook unless the angler is exempt from the recreational license requirements.

Researchers are collecting data on the harvest of snook. If approached by a biologist or if you see a donation cooler marked with "Snook Carcass" at your favorite fishing access point, please provide your filleted snook carcasses.

These carcasses provide biological data, including the size, age, maturity and sex of the catch. This information is important to the FWC in completing stock assessments.

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Recent Catches

Angler	Species	Weight	Date Caught	Location	Lure/Bait
Austin Mundt	Menhaden	.99 lbs	7/18/2021	Steinharchee	Jig/Plastic Tail
Tim Pedersen	Grouper - Gag	6.14 lbs	7/27/2021	Cedar Key	Pinfish
Dale Reed	Cobia	16.62 lbs	7/31/2021	Cedar Key	Pinfish
Chick Hinton	Redfish	5.75 lbs	8/29/2021	Cedar Key	Live Bait
Austin Mundt	Redfish	3.44 lbs	9/04/2021	Cedar Key	Cut Bait
William Mundt	Spanish Mackerel	1.33 lbs	09/04/2021	Cedar Key	Artificial Lure

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Saltwater Fishing Report - September 3, 2021

By Gary Simpson

Snook Season a Big Deal Now

For many years, it was a huge deal in the southern half of the state, but not a noteworthy season opening in our North Florida coastal waters. Things have changed in a big way.

The September 1 opening of Snook Season is certainly important to lots of Big Bend anglers this year. The sublime game fish has in recent years become plumb abundant in our most nearby salt waters — and they're equally fine table fare. Now, FWC doesn't make it easy, but recreational anglers may harvest one snook per day. To be legal, this snook must measure between 28 and 33-inches in length. Oh, and the snook-harvesting angler must, too, have purchased a Snook Stamp to go with his saltwater fishing license.

Recent reports suggest there are plenty of Big Bend linesiders available in and near that narrow 'legal slot'.

Al Clements launched his kayak Saturday at Shell Mound, just above Cedar Key. The Gainesville angler headed toward Suwannee when he reached open water. The water, he said, was dirty and rough. Casting a Gulp! shrimp, Clements hooked a drag-peeling screamer that would soon reveal itself as a snook. The hard-fighting fish cleared the water four times during the battle. Finally at boatside, Clements measured the fish at 33-inches. Just five days later, it would have been a top-of-slot keeper. This one, though, was released in good shape. The angler did boat two good speckled trout that he could keep for dinner.

Leonard and Dafney Giddeon fished out of Cedar Key last weekend. Near Snake Key, the Archer couple fished live mud minnows and pinfish while at anchor. They fished the live baits in two different ways — on the bottom with a small weight, and freelined weightless. Over Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, they boated numerous redfish barely too small to harvest … but they did manage to bag at least one 22-inch keeper each day. The pair also boated flounder and mangrove snapper — and released 7 snook from 22 to 32 inches long.

Kayak angler, Eric Anderson launched at Crystal River while his friend, Micanopy neighbor Rich Verilli, launched in his own kayak. The anglers had bought live shrimp and live pinfish for bait. Fishing these, Anderson's first three fish were all large Gafftopsail catfish. While the anglers fished, they saw several sizable fish rolling nearby that they recognized as tarpon. Their stealthy vessels side-by side, Anderson and Verilli continued to catch fish…but their catches were more cats. The tarpon, though, were rolling nearer and nearer.

Finally, the bite came. Anderson's live shrimp, fished on a 1/8-ounce jighead with spinning tackle, was taken by a blazing acrobat. The fish leapt 5 times through a twenty-minute fight before the angler unhooked it at boatside. "It would have been enough just to have hooked and jumped one", Anderson said, "but it was really great to catch it". After Verilli took a quick picture, Anderson released his first-ever tarpon, a four-foot-long specimen.

Eric Lovvorn and Christina Perez were fishing shell bars two Saturdays ago near Yankeetown when a large fish screamed off with the strip of cut lizardfish Christina was casting on a jighead. When it finally slowed after a long, drag-scorching run, they guessed that she must have tied into a huge redfish. Through the battle, the fish never showed itself … but finally at boatside, they saw that it was a large snook. Eric netted the impressive 37-inch, twenty-pounder and, after a picture, they released the beauty in good shape.

The annual run of saltwater shrimp up the St. John's River has evidently been slowed by reduced salinity during this wet summer. The much-anticipated run, however, is not a bust altogether. Many good-looking 5-gallon limits have been netted in the Green Cove Springs area and larger numbers of crustaceans are finally arriving in the Palatka stretch of river. Now, that's not saying that a shrimping trip to Palatka is a good bet quite yet. The word from Messer's Bait and Tackle in Palatka sums things up well: "We have some shrimp now … but you're gonna have to make a lot of throws to fill up a bucket".