The Acute Angler

November, 2021
Volume 54, Number 11

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

November Hot Shot

Amberjack Fun!

Debbie Knopf snapped this great photo of Ken Knopf enjoying the beautiful fall weather and a little AJ action!

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

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No upcoming events

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President's Corner

By Mark Haberman,
GOFC President

Cold fronts are coming through on a regular basis, water temps are cooling off, and gag grouper are chewing in shallow water. All signs indicate that 2021 is coming to an end. This also means my term as club president is also coming to an end. It has been an absolute honor to serve. I would like to thank all the board members for your hard work and support over the last two years. I would especially like to thank our members for your support, loyalty, and dedication to the club. The Covid-19 pandemic has been difficult on all of us, many businesses did not survive, and people lost their jobs. GOFC was no exception, we had to adjust to zoom board meetings, cancel club meetings, speakers, tournaments, and events- but thanks to all of you, our club survived and is looking to come back stronger than ever!

It is my pleasure to announce our new club president, Ross McElroy. Ross is a long-time member and an extremely knowledgeable fisherman. Ross will be backed up by our new vice president, Ryan Kremser. I have full confidence that Ross and Ryan will keep the club headed in the right direction next year, and for years to come.

I hope everyone has a great Christmas and a fantastic 2022.

Tight lines and see ya on the water!

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Upcoming Events

No upcoming events just yet. Have a happy and safe holiday season!

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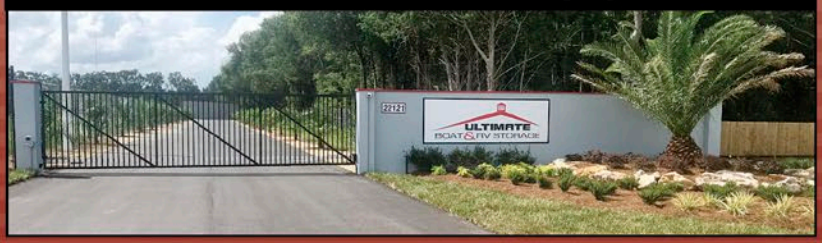

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Trolling for Inshore Grouper During the Fall

By Jeff Gartland

Every season in the Gulf Coast has much to offer the fisherman. My favorite is the Fall when the heat breaks, the water cools, the winds lay down and the grouper move in closer.

My boat is a Robalo R180, an 18' deep vee with an 8'4" beam. The high gunwales keep us dry, and the Yamaha 150 moves it along, but any significant chop can make for a very rough ride, even with the trim tabs set. Running long distances offshore is not an option. Even though grouper season opens June 1, for me grouper fishing kicks off around October 1 and really gets going with the cold fronts of November and December. Any structure in 20' or more of water during those months is likely to hold gag grouper.

Last year my best month was December. Early in the month GOFC member John Richard and I went out of Cedar Key on a cold, overcast Friday morning. Unable to find any pinfish along the Main Channel we decided trolling was our best choice. John rigged up with a well-used blue Stretch 30. I rigged a red and white one to my Penn 6000 on a 6' Power Stick with 50# braid and 6' of 50# fluorocarbon leader. We made a WNW course to intersect four grouper numbers John had but hadn't fished for several years. I've since seen this area marked on maps as the Cedar Key Grouper Grounds. We started trolling at 4-5 mph. We'd trolled for about an hour when, BAM!, our first hit. We slowed the boat and I pulled in a 22" red grouper. We marked the spot and made several other passes with no luck. John recommended we move on since we were fishing primarily for gag, not red grouper. Red grouper and kingfish are commonly found on "Swiss cheese" bottom. Gag groupers prefer structure like rocks, live bottom and wrecks. We kept trolling north keeping an eye on the down scan and side scan for possible structure. We trolled for another hour and marked several new spots over good looking bottom anomalies but had no hook-ups. It was on our way back south in 25' of water that John's rig got a hit like a freight train. We kept the boat in gear to stop the fish from "rocking up", then slowed. John pulled in our first gag, a 28" beauty. After several more passes John hooked another gag just like the last one. The beauty of trolling for grouper is that the moving boat pulls the grouper away from the rock or ledge leaving it no chance to snag the line on the structure and break off. After the second gag grouper the bite slowed, and we started trolling our way back to the Main channel and home knowing that we'd found a good structure spot!

John went home to St Petersburg, and I bought a blue Stretch 30.

A few days later another cold front passed through stopping all fishing. That Thursday a friend and I went back out. I went out the Northwest channel this time and we were in 3' swells, but no chop. We slowly made our way to the grouper spot. This time I had on a blue stretch 30. My friend had brought the classic red and white. We made four passes over the spot and caught four gags, all on the blue plug and none less than 26". The area we were catching the gags had a large cloud of bait fish coincident with where we saw bottom structure on the side scan. The second gag we caught regurgitated a pile of cigar minnows, with a blue tint on their belly, solving the question of

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2nd place - Greg Swearingen 1.77lb
3rd place - Jerry Brown 1.67lb

BASS STRINGER:
1st place - Greg Swearingen 8.35lb
2nd place - Tommy Turner & Crew 6.17lb
3rd place - Jerry Brown & Crew 5.83lb

LARGEST TROUT:
1st place - Andrew Fagan 2.44lb
2nd place - Brad Rohrbacher 2.33lb
3rd place - Tyler Jacobs 2.06lb

TROUT STRINGER:
1st place - Brad Rohrbacher & Crew 7.47lb
2nd place - Kyle Hill & Crew 7.05lb
3rd place - Vince Pilcher & Crew 5.94lb

LARGEST REDFISH:
1st place - Russell Dingman 5.99lb
2nd place - Tyler Jacobs 5.50lb
3rd place - Andrew Fagan 5.48lb

LARGEST GROUPER:
1st place - Luke Hahn 10.67lb
2nd place - David Bozeman 10.27lb
3rd place - John King 9.35lb

LARGEST SPANISH:
1st place - John Hayes 1.86lb
2nd place - Joe Sprouse 1.70lb
3rd place - Will Peebles .97lb

GROUPER STRINGER:
1st place - Luke Hahn & Crew 19.99lb
2nd place - David Bozeman & Crew 18.86lb

KIDS DIVISION:
1st place - Evan Peebles 4.55lb Redfish
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why blue outperformed the red and white Stretch 30.

I made one last trip to the area before the season ended. We caught a 28” gag on the first pass on the blue plug. After that, nothing. We trolled south marking potential new spots but had no success. We hit the spot again on the way back and caught another 26” gag on the blue plug with a red and white Stretch 30 trolling right beside it.

A few of my observations are color does matter, so change up occasionally, trolling is a great way to explore an area and mark bottom structure, structures that hold fish are often small so mark them carefully, structure and bait are a killer combination and if the bite in a good area slows, leave it and come back later.

I enjoy anchoring up and fishing for grouper but it’s hard to beat the thrill of a big fish hitting a plug on a troll. Fall is a great time for inshore grouper so get out there!

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FWC Updates

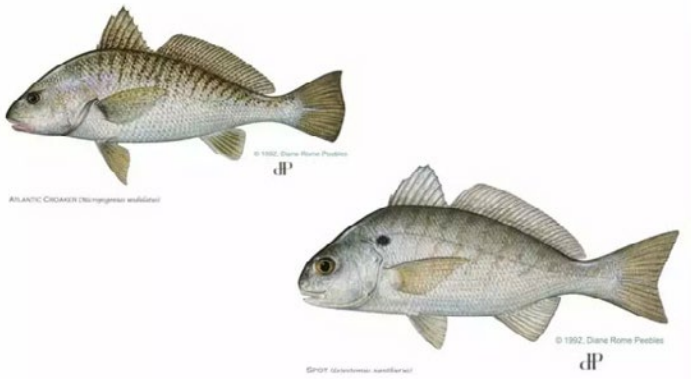
New regulations for spot and Atlantic croaker on Atlantic coast effective Dec. 1

New regulations for spot and Atlantic croaker in state waters from the Florida-Georgia border through Miami-Dade County will go into effect beginning Dec. 1.

There have been recent coastwide declines in abundance and harvest of spot and Atlantic croaker along the U.S. Atlantic. These changes are part of a coastwide, multi-state conservation strategy for the Atlantic stocks of these species.

The new regulations include:

- A daily recreational bag limit of 50 fish per person for each species.
- Commercial vessel limits of
  - Spot: 2,200 pounds.
  - Atlantic croaker: 1,200 pounds.



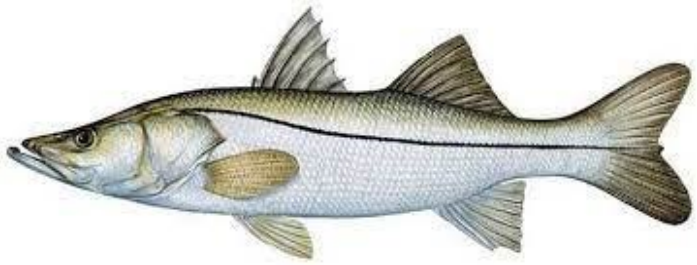
Snook seasonal closure in Gulf starts Dec. 1

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. 28, 2022, reopening to harvest March 1, 2022. Regular season closures are designed to help conserve the species during vulnerable periods, such as during cold weather.

Anglers may continue to catch and release snook during the closed season.

Snook remains catch-and-release only in state waters from State Road 64 in Manatee County through Gordon Pass in Collier County through May 31, 2022, in response to the impacts of red tide. Snook also has a regular season closure in the Gulf that runs May 1 through Aug. 31.

Atlantic state and federal waters, including Lake Okeechobee and the Kissimmee River, will be closed Dec. 15 through Jan. 31, 2022, reopening to harvest Feb. 1, 2022.



Flounder recreational harvest reopens Dec. 1

The recreational harvest of flounder in all state and federal waters will reopen Dec. 1.

The minimum size limit for flounder is 14 inches total length and the daily recreational bag limit is five fish per person.

This annual season closure and other management measures were approved by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission late last year because a stock status update suggested statewide, the flounder fishery has been in a declining trend and it is likely overfished and undergoing overfishing on the Atlantic coast of Florida. Other south Atlantic and Gulf states have also reported declines in flounder populations and have been making their own regulation changes.

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Recent Catches

Angler	Species	Weight	Date Caught	Location	Lure/Bait
Virgil Cooper	Greater Amberjack	45”	10/22/2021	Cedar key	Pinfish
Tim Pedersen	Greater Amberjack	40”	10/22/2021	Cedar Key	Bait
Chic Hinton	King Mackeral	17.38 lbs	10/22/2021	Cedar Key (Kingfish Hole)	Rapala Magnum
Chic Hinton	Redfish	6.44 lbs	10/22/2021	Keaton Beach	Gulp
Dale Reed	Spanish Mackeral	4.3 lbs	10/3/2021	Cedar Key	Drone
Jack Cutright	Spanish Mackeral	3.28 lbs	10/16/2021	Cedar Key	Jig
Melvina Cutright	Spanish Mackeral	3.58 lbs	10/16/2021	Cedar Key	Jig
Ed Ellett	Spanish Mackeral	4.4 lbs	10/16/2021	Cedar Key (Seahorse Reef)	Jig
Tom Jaworski	Redfish	4 lbs	10/15/2021	Cedar Key	Gulp
Chic Hinton	Grouper - Gag	8.75 lbs	10/9/2021	Cedar Key	Stretch 25
Chic Hinton	Grouper - Gag	8.75 lbs	10/9/2021	Cedar Key	Stretch 25
Tim Pedersen	Spanish Mackeral	4.3 lbs	10/9/2021	Cedar Key	Lure
Virgil Cooper	King Mackeral	6.2 lbs	10/9/2021	Cedar Key	Lure

Saltwater Fishing Report - October 21, 2021

By Gary Simpson

Anglers are great speculators, and the speculating was widespread as recently as a few weeks back regarding the scarcity of speckled trout along Florida's salty Big Bend coast. Starting in the spring and all the way through the hot weather, trout were generally hard to find … even on the prettiest grass flats.

This seasons-long trend reached from Crystal River all the way up to Keaton Beach —arguably the best speckled trout stretch anywhere — and it worried inshore fishing fans to the point of hatching theories. Some chased the "overfished" angle, and others figured the wetter-than-usual year had salinity levels insufficient to draw in a normal trout population. The best one, though, was the "snook theory". This one was intriguing … and it seemed possible enough. That the poor trout year coincided with the largest number of snook present in these waters in recent times seemed proof enough. Snook must've been eating the juvenile trout as fast as the adult trout could make 'em.

I was one of many who believed this might be happening. Then, as if by magic, a month or so ago the trout arrived in a big way. It is not unusual to see an uptick in trout (and small redfish) numbers when nighttime temperatures start regularly dropping below sixty or so. It's a cool-weather happening that has long been relished by shallow water gulf anglers. But the uptick this year was enormous.

"A new group of fish — redfish and trout — has moved in", Capt. Don Campbell said early this week. Then the Steinhatchee guide told us about his day on the water with the four-person Porter party from Georgia. Fishing various baits and lures on the clear flats Saturday, the visitors had an amazing day of fishing. The water was cooler and clearer than it had been in several months and the fish were abundant and hungry. Casting Saltwater Assassin grubs, Gulp baits, shrimp, and even gold spoons, they caught fish. To be more precise, the four fishers caught around 125 speckled trout. Each angler can legally keep just one spotted seatrout more than 19-inches long. After icing four big ones up to 23.5-inches, the party had to release five more. Further, there were numerous redfish out on the open Steinhatchee grass flats. The Georgia anglers boated 27 reds by the captain's count, and kept four upper-slot fish (not much under 27-inches long). At day's end, the Porter party had 20 trout and 4 redfish to show for a day in which they caught more than 150 fish.

This was an impressive report for sure, but not an outlier. Equally impressive trout stories have come from most gulf ports (especially from Cedar Key, north) for a couple of weeks now. Maybe the snook haven't ruined our trout stocks after all..