The Acute Angler

June, 2022
Volume 55, Number 6

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

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June Hot Shot

First Gag Grouper of the 2022 Season

Tom Jaworski, Charlie Courtney and Danny Martin got their first gags of the season early. After a stop at Seahorse Reef to fill the live well with pinfish, they headed out in rough seas to an area of rocky bottom in about 45'.

President's Corner

By Ross McElroy

GOFC President

(But I did get a good ten hours of sunshine.) After a one day postponement because of the storms that passed through south Florida we were able to get in our spring "All Species Tournament" on Sunday June 5.

Your brilliant president thinking he was so smart decided to fish out of Steinhatchee instead of going out of Cedar Key like everybody else. The day started out fine. Got bait (live shrimp and fresh mullet). Got on the water a little after 6am. So far so good. Plan was to get in some early top water action before the sun got really up, then go up and maybe catch a flounder on the sandy submerged old creek channels of the trenches to the north. Next up we would go out to 9 -mile or little bank and put a Spanish and/or king in the boat. Then we would run down to the Pepperfish area where we would try to get our trout and reds.

Started off fishing a suspending bait that I had been catching reds on. Nope. After a few minutes decided to try the top water. Got a three pound trout of my first cast with a Spook Jr. on an oyster bar at the river entrance. So far so good. Picked up a second trout . By this time the current had taken us off the oyster bar. Oops Trolling motor didn't work. So, no problem, north to the trenches for our flounder. Oops #2 It had been awhile since I had fished this area and I had not remembered that the sun had to get up well over head before you could really see the sandy creek beds well enough to fish the way you need to; so, after wasting an hour or so, no big problem, out to nine- mile and pick up our Spanish. Oops #3 Once we made the 6 mile or so run out I never saw so much hay on the water in my whole fishing life! We couldn't troll or cast more than fifty feet without grassing up. This is not turning not according to plan!!! So, at midday. with half a day wasted and only trout in the boat, it was south to Pepperfish to find the bigger trout and reds and possibly a lost flounder for a third species. That might still be enough to win this thing. About a mile north of Pepperfish, LOUD THUMP!! Oops #4. Hit a submerged rock! No visible damage to prop or skeg, but spun the prop! After trying to limp along with a spinning prop I gave up and made the phone call. SEA-TOW to the rescue.

At 4:30 we were back at Steinhatchee. Oh well, even an old man looks better with a good tan.

Congratulations to Chic. Condolences to Mark, Dale and Stephen for missing the weigh-in cutoff by 4 minutes.

Ross McElroy

President, GOFC

From the Editor

By Jeff Gartland

GOFC Editor

Learnamants are back!!! Ever **cast netted for shrimp** on the St John's river? Are you a master class **shallow water grouper** fisherman at Crystal River? I'm not so I'm thrilled to see that some of our seasoned members who are, have stepped up to show us how. Charlie Courtney will lead the Shrimp Learnament, Saturday, August 27 (see page 9). John Patrick, the expert on Crystal River fishing, will lead an on-the-water shallow water grouper learnament in late October/early November. Details to follow.
We joined GOFC for the friendship and to learn. These excellent events combine the best of both. See you there!

Feedback: We're always looking for feedback from our members. Do you have a speaker you'd like us to invite to our monthly Speakers meeting? How about and a topic you'd like to see covered in an Acute Angler article? Maybe a change to the tournament format or schedule? How about a specific Learnament? Let us know. This club belongs to the members and it's up to the members to make it work.

Sponsors– I'm going to leave this request for new sponsors in place for another month. We are looking to increase our sponsorships. Our newsletter is emailed to 185 contacts.. We publish 12 issues/year. The majority of our members are homeowners and boat owners in need of many business services. Advertising rates are shown on page 3.

Sadly, several of our locally owned, full page sponsors/ advertisers have been purchased by out of state owners whose new budgets no longer include GOFC advertising.

It is through the generosity of our sponsors that we can keep our annual membership dues at $50. That includes 5 tournaments with a minimum of $300 in cash prizes per tournament and 3 seafood feasts: January oyster roast, February Awards banquet and the November Ellett Auction/shrimp boil. Let's also include the monthly Speakers meetings, knowledge sharing and newsletter articles. Nowhere else does your $50 go this far.

Other ways to help your club

There are so many ways to help out, just of which are:

- **Write an article** for the Acute Angler newsletter. A day of saltwater fishing is a lot more challenging than writing about something you know. Like getting back to port after a long day on the water, seeing your article published feels pretty good. newsletter@gofc.us
- **Help manage the website**. If you have skills in websites building/management we have a continuous need to keep the GOFC website fresh GOFC website
- **Help out at tournaments**, members only banquets and general meetings.
- **Submit your favorite fishing photos** (see next paragraph).

Please feel free to contact newsletter@gofc.us if you have any questions.

And as always:
All members are encouraged to submit photos to the GOFC website. Here's the link: Photo Submission Form. Submitted photos will be displayed on our Hot Shots page: GOFC Hot Shots. If you want to show off a catch, a new boat, capture a fun trip, or just get your fishing buddy or family on the website here's your chance.
Please don't hesitate because you think it's "not good enough". If you like it, that's all that matters.

Hot Shot photos are automatically entered in the year end photo contest. Prizes are 1st Place $150, 2nd Place $100, 3rd Place $50.
The winners of the 2021 Photo Contest are featured in the February issue. Look it over. Maybe you'll win 2022. Worst case, you'll be sharing a memory.

I look forward to hearing from you (newsletter@gofc.us) and sharing the tremendous depth of knowledge and experience within the GOFC membership.

Jeff Gartland

GOFC Editor

Support Your Club—GOFC Advertising Rates

Advertising Rates and Information

Consider advertising with the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club (GOFC) and get your product information to interested boaters and fishermen. We offer several advertising options; including our monthly publications, website or a combination of both.

Newsletter Advertising

Your ad will appear in a monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club. Advertisers can reach about 130 member families.

The GOFC Newsletter, *The Acute Angler*, is about 20 pages in length and published monthly. The Acute Angler is an electronic PDF format color publication. As an added bonus, ads include a "logo" ad with internet link on our GOFC website (https://gofc.us/sponsors/) SPONSORS PAGE at no extra charge. Check out the website, you will not be disappointed!

Website Advertising

Advertisers can also choose web site advertising only; either as a link on our website "Useful Links" page; or as a banner ad. Our webmaster can provide current website specifics upon request at webmaster@gofc.us.

Advertising rates:

NEWSLETTER RATES: ***(includes free "logo" ad with link on our website sponsor page)***

- Full page ad — $60.00 per issue
- 1/2 page ad — $45.00 per issue
- 1/4 page ad — $37.50 per issue
- 1/8 page ad (Business card size) — $30.00 per issue

WEBSITE RATES:

Home Page Banner Ad	$60.00 per month full banner (60 x 468) $30.00 per month half banner (60 x 234)
Non Home Page Banner Ad	$40.00 per month full banner (60 x 468) $20.00 per month half banner (60 x 234)
Useful Links Page Ad	$15.00 per month

Terms of Payment: Payments due quarterly.

Ad Specifications: 300dpi resolution, black and white, TIFF or JPG format, on disc or Email attachment.

Contacts: For further information or to place an advertisement:

- Advertising: Mark Haberman mhaberman68@gmail.com or 352-215-5295
- Webmaster: Ryan Kremser webmaster@gofc.us
- Treasurer: Debby Knopf treasurer@gofc.us

Upcoming Events

June 28, 2022 Speakers Meeting, Troy Gehrlich, Gehrlich Electronics. UF Vet School (see page 5)

August 27, 2022 Shrimp Learnament, This favorite St John's River event survived Covid and is on for 2022 (see page 9).

October 22, 2022 - Fall Big 10 Species tournament/ Cedar Key (Register here)

November, 2022 Shallow Water Grouper Learnament, Crystal. Another favorite is back. Details to follow.

November 17,2022—Ellett Auction at ED and Marcia Ellett's home.

December 3, 2022 - Redfish/Trout Roundup Tournament/Steinhatchee. (Register here)

Monthly Meetings—Upcoming meetings will be announced by email. Typically we meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Veterinary Academic Building .Fellowship begins at 7:00 pm and the meeting proper begins at 7:30.

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Upcoming Events

June Meeting
Tuesday, May 28, 2022

Fellowship starts at 7:00 PM
Meeting proper starts at 7:30

Speaker: Troy Gehrlich, Gehrlich Electrical Shop, near Wahoo's restaurant.

Troy will speak on **"Maintenance and checklist of boat electronics before every trip"** Troy is the go to guy for all things related to boat electronics. Many of our members rely heavily on Troy for trolling motor fixes. This is the first time we've been able to book Troy as a speaker. Get there early and expect a full house!

Location: UF Vet School -
VAB Auditorium
937 SW 16th Ave Gainesville, FL

Look for the GOFC signs. Parking and entrance is on

New name tags at June meeting

Be sure to get a name tag as you enter the April 26 Speakers meeting. Your name tag will have a number that makes you eligible for our main door prize.

Director Chic Hinton and Vice President Ryan Kremser are making up the name tags to help members get to know each other and encourage conversation.

From 7:00—7:30 is free pizza and a chance to mingle and meet, so plan to be there before the General meeting start at 7:30 PM.

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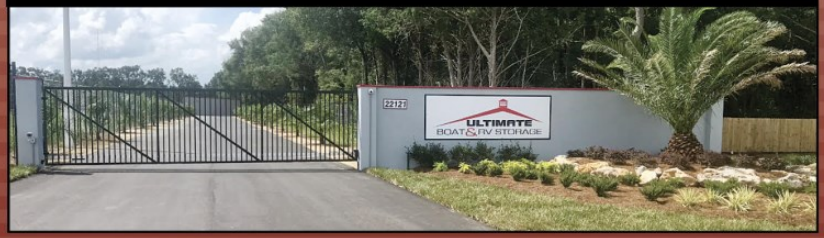

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Chic's "Nothing but the Truth" Fishing Report

by Chic Hinton

For all GOFC members who like to head offshore to the blue water, now is the time. June is the month that both grouper and red snapper are legal game.

This is also the month when you should sharpen your weather skills since during this season nasty thunderstorms develop almost daily.

As the summer heats up, trout will be headed for the deeper grass flats and will start showing up on Seahorse reef. I've heard reports of several 5 pound Spanish mackerel being caught in the area around Seahorse reef. The best time to catch a big one it's just after the sun rises. Trolling larger spoons usually catches bigger mackerel and increases your chances of hooking a kingfish. If you were wanting a mackerel for dinner use a wire leader. If you are looking to catch and release, use a mono leader and they will release themselves and your lure!

Red snapper season opens June 17. Snapper must be a minimum of 16 inches with a limit of two per person. Early reports are the red snapper can be caught in 50 feet of water or deeper while last year you had to run to almost 100 feet for a good red snapper bite.

There is some good news coming out of the Cedar Key boat ramp. The inside ramp bridge is now complete. This will be an improvement since the new bridge will increase the overhead clearance by several feet and the exit will be much wider. However the inside ramp basin will continue to be a mud pit at low tide.

The GOFC Spring Big 10 Species tournament was held Sunday, June 5, after a Saturday weather delay. Yours truly took first place in an epic back and forth between participants that came down to the final minutes of the tournament. My winning secret? PUNCUALITY! See me for details.

If you have suggestions for club activities or meetings please email newsletter@gofc.us.

See you on the water!

Chic

The1st Appearance Report

Presented by Tom Jaworski, captain of the "1st Appearance".

Bullet Points from May 24, 2022 General Meeting, Speaker Captain Marrio Castello/Tall Tales Charters, Crystal River

Reeling for Healing
-Lindsey spoke about a new charity to benefit someone suffering from **trauma**
- Saltwater Therapy by taking them on a fishing outing.
- 4 levels of sponsorships includes advertising & discounts on charters. Accepting donations of cash and fishing supplies

Tall Tales Charters 352-454-7719

-Captain Marrio Castello fishes from Homosassa to Yankeetown

-**Redfish** techniques 1/8-1/4 chartuse jigs with JUMBO shrimp in dark water

-tail to head and then on keeper, does not like to use popping corks

-throw close to mangroves by St. Martin Keys over sand patches casting up current to drift back

-Mud minnows is 2nd choice- pin fish in warm months using 4/0 circle through anal free lining

-Mirrodine MR17, little john, DOA CAL 5.5 glow, walking the dog letting it sink

-Sept/Oct for big bulls

Snook fish front side of sand and oyster bars

-8" live mullet or pin fish free line hooked through the nose, DOA CAL 5.5 glow

-30/40# leader 8lb test line with 4/0 circle hook

-40 foot rule for casting in clean water

Trout Big trout in months of Nov/Dec & March/April

-5-12' water using ¼ oz jigs with shrimp dragged across the bottom

- Sing Happy Birthday after the initial bump before setting the hook .

Let's make 2022 the "Summer of Shrimp"!

(Or did Red Lobster already do that?)

First, we'll celebrate the bounty of shrimp that are showing up at Cedar Key and FWC declaring a Cedar Key open season for cast netting the tasty critters (effective May 1: two gallon bucket/person, five gallons/boat).

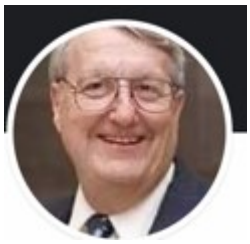
Next, plan to attend the **Shrimp-a-thon/Learn-a-ment Saturday, August 27 at Crystal Cove Marina on the beautiful St. John's river. This one of a kind event. If you've never cast netted for shrimp or been on the St. John's river** This is a must do. If you've done it before, you'll definitely want to do it again. See page 9 for more information.

Finally, former GOFC editor, Charlie Courtney will provide us with some of his favorite, flavor tested recipes for fresh caught local shrimp.

We have plenty of room in the digital world so if you have a favorite seafood recipe

Charlie's Kitchen

by Charlie Courtney



Shrimp and Squash Zoodle Scampi

3 zucchini turned to zoodles (I used 1 zuke + 1 straight neck squash)
2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
4 cloves of garlic
2 lbs peeled & deveined shrimp of choice (I used ~ 1lb for 2 people)
Salt
Pepper
Chopped parsley
Juice of one lemon
I also used a splash of sherry

1 - Make zoodles from the squash with a spiralizer and let them dry for a few hours to render the water. You can also use a little salt to help too.

2 - Heat a griddle to medium heat (~350 degrees) with olive oil. Salt and pepper the shrimp on one side, place that seasoned side down on the griddle and cook for 1-2 minutes until just getting some color. Season the top side, flip, add garlic, butter, wine, and lemon juice. Stir until sauce reduces some, and remove the shrimp.

3 - Add more olive oil to the pan, allow to heat, and add the zoodles. Season the noodles with salt and pepper. Sauté 2-3 minutes, then add more butter, olive oil, garlic, wine, lemon juice, and stir until the sauce reduces and zoodles are nearly at your preferred level of doneness, then add shrimp. Mix the shrimp with the zoodles, then place on your serving plate.

Serve immediately.

The Shrimping Learnament is Back!

Shrimp-a-thon / Learnament
Location: Crystal Cove Marina
121 Crystal Cove Dr, Palatka, FL 32177
Date/Time: Saturday August 27, 2022
Depart the Crystal Cove Marina between 8:15-8:30 AM

Charlie Courtney will be our leader for this fun event. Please RSVP to Jeff Gartland (713-269-3598) or (jeffdgartland@gmail.com) if you plan to attend. Call or e-mail if you have pre-trip questions too.

What to Bring:

1) Shrimping Cast Net (webbing on perimeter (helps it open on way down))
2) Gloves – pulling long, wet line can be rough on the hands
3) Button-less shirt – amazing how a cast net can find/tangle with a button at the least opportune time! The new GOFC, long sleeve T-shirts are perfect.
4) Five gallon bucket to measure a boat limit, towel to cover, extra ice to keep shrimp cool as accumulate
5) Laundry baskets/plastic washtub to flush net of shrimp after throws
6) Saltwater fishing license/all boat safety gear current.
7) Cold drinks and appropriate warm weather clothing, including an extra shirt – yes, it will be hot!
8) Sometimes, extra rope to tie to/extend your cast net rope.

Trip Plan:

Based on initial scouting report, the plan will be to shrimp on/near telephone wire crossing opposite side of river from Crystal Cove Marina. For those who feel the need to use more boat gasoline than a gallon , ask Charlie for tips on areas to explore.

Event Duration:

Captains choice, meaning when a limit is filled, or, you are exhausted. Plan to join us for lunch at Corky Bell's Seafood . Just tie your boat up at the dock and come on in.

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What Make a Good Picture?

By Mike Dumas and Dawn Cross

As fisherman we all plan our trips, some more than others, but generally we have some idea of what we want to do before going out on the water. The same should be true of your photography. Chances are at minimum you'll have a smart phone on board and want to capture some moments of your day. These pointers are intended to help you in your photo "plan". Much like fishing, photography has few basic skills. Pay attention to those and see your photo quality improve with every trip.

Since this is the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club, first let's talk about fish:

- A live fish makes a lot better picture than a dead one.
- Always wet hands before handling fish to protect their slime coat and prevent infection.
- Remember that a fish can't breathe out of water, so try to plan your shot ahead of time, and return the fish back to the water within about 10 seconds.

Moving on to the technical,

Lighting:

- Avoid backlighting the subject, which causes deep shadows (right).
- Face the angler at a 45 degree angle to the sun to give depth to the image
- Use the HDR setting or night mode on smart phones in low light condition.
- Use a fill flash to remove shadows caused by the angler's hat, even in bright sunlight.

Example of poor backlighting

Composition:

- Use the "rule of thirds" or the lens grid to align subject. Have the fish or the angler lined up with the intersection of the lines, not crammed up against the edge, or dead center every time.

Cameras and smart phone:

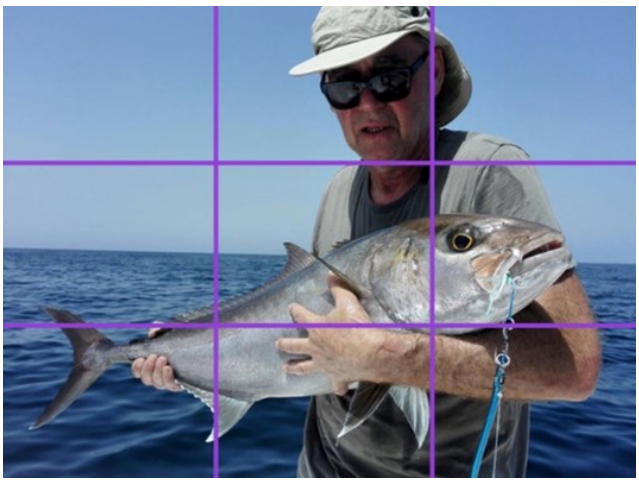
- Keep camera out and ready with a clean and dry lens cloth handy to remove water droplets from camera lens.
- Use the portrait setting on your smart phone for best results.
- Use the **burst setting on smart phones** for action photos, as it will take repeated photos that you can sift through later to pick the best shot. This works great for photos of an angler casting, fighting a fish at boat side, or when pulling a fish from the water, to catch the water dripping from the fish.
- Wet the fish just before the photo and focus on the eye of the fish in your photo.
- Have the angler looking at his catch, not always directly at the camera.
- Frame photo with scenery in the background to document the location.
- When possible shoot in the early morning or the late afternoon when the light is soft and warm.
- Use a polarizing lens or filter to eliminate glare. I shoot through my polarized sunglasses lens with my Smartphone when I'm in a pinch.
- Familiarize your partner with your camera before landing a fish so you can return the fish quickly

What Makes a Good Picture (cont'd)

and safely to the water.

- Try to make your photos tell a story by taking action shots of other anglers, scenery and even some candid shots so you and others can relive the experience at a later date.
- And last, but not least, don't forget to remove that #%$@&?! lens cap!

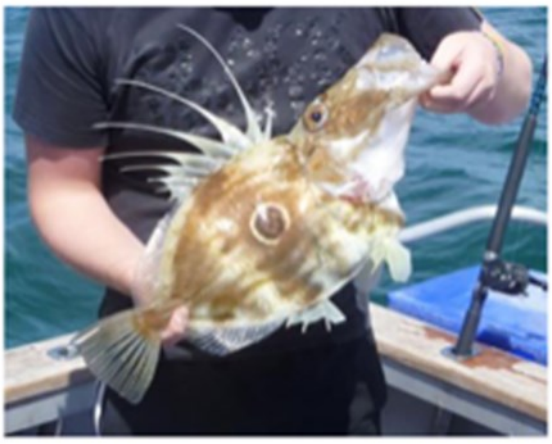
This is a good photo. It captures a special moment, has good composition and lighting with background location scenery



Here's another good picture for similar reasons.

Photos can be improved by cropping out clutter

This is a cleaner photo with the left side cropped. It would be even better without the rod in background.



Now you decide. Is this a good or bad photo and why?

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Fishy Business

By Josh Vine

Here I sit, on the banks of the Choctawhatchee River in the Florida Panhandle, thinking “What could I possibly share with the folks of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club?” Many of you are expert fishermen and fisherwomen who have been exploring the waters of the area and doing what you love longer than I have been alive. I need to be reading articles from you all! However, my experience as a fisherman may be a little different than most.

As a child, when I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I immediately shouted “Professional fisherman!” However, at that time, professional fishing, to me, meant hopping on a shiny bass boat sprinkled with glitter and slinging in eight pounders to win the biggest tournament. Bassmasters on TV, right? Thanks, Outdoor Channel. I never would have thought that my passion for fish and fishing would have led to me where I am today.

Currently, I’m a graduate student at the University of Florida studying Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, with an emphasis on fisheries ecology and biology. My research focuses on Gulf Sturgeon movement ecology and biology, particularly in the Choctawhatchee River and Bay in the Florida Panhandle. I won’t bore you all with the details, but if there is any interest, I’d be happy to speak with any of you or write another article in the future. For now, I want to focus mostly on my background and experience as an angler and researcher, as well as the things that initiated my passion for fish and fishing.

Picture 1: Juvenile Gulf Sturgeon captured in the Choctawhatchee River, Florida

It all started on a small pond in Aiken, South Carolina, tossing out crickets to bream beds with a cane pole, likely around age three or four. My pop was on to something, and I was hooked. Shortly after I moved on up to the classic Zebco push-button, with which I would launch purple weedless worms as far as I possibly could in hopes to snag me a two pounder. It happened occasionally, but I never was a great bass fisherman.

Not long after my pond escapades I was introduced to the magic that the Atlantic Ocean had to offer. Family vacations to Edisto Beach, South Carolina were a yearly tradition, and as soon as I stepped foot on the island, I was asking my old man to take me fishing. Of course, this annoyed the hell out of him, because he was busy unloading everything my mother anticipated needing for a two-week stay at the beach. All I needed was some bait, so I never understood the problem.

By this time, I had graduated from a Penn Gold Series spinning reel paired to a medium-light Ugly Stik. I’d tie me on a high/low rig with a couple J-hooks and post up in the surf, situate my rod in a PVC pipe sand spike, and wait in anticipation for Mr. Whiting to show up. Simple and effective. That’s the best thing about fishing – one can make it as simple or as complicated as the heart desires. At that point in my life, it was all I knew, and one thing I knew for sure was that whiting was darned good eating! I would sit there for hours and watch that rod tip, and still do to this day.

My family had a 17-ft Boston Whaler Montauk, and when the weatherman permitted, we would fish some local sandbars created by the south fork of the Edisto River. I thought my dad was the greatest fisherman in the world at the time, and he was teaching me everything he knew. Turns out he actually had no idea what he was doing and was really just doing his best to fuel my passion for fishing, which was well into development at this point. Around age ten, my old man had the gonads to bring me along on his yearly fishing trip with his buddies at the coast. Fortunately for him, I was able to ignore 90% of their conversations; however, the remaining 10% was various bits of life and fishing advice that I retained. I’ve been fortunate enough to become a regular on this trip – they need a young buck to keep them going anyways.

My angling adventures remained relatively limited throughout my teens and early twenties, but very similar to those I’ve previously described. I did some lake and river fishing for catfish and trout, but nothing special. I attended Clemson University right out of high school, where I received my bachelor’s degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. During my undergraduate experience I had some interesting professional opportunities inside and out of the fisheries world. I worked as a wildland firefighter for one full semester, and I interned with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) for two summers: first at a cold-water trout hatchery in Walhalla, South Carolina, and then at the Clemson office with the South Carolina Stream Team.

Fish hatchery work was pretty neat - daily activities included feeding millions of brook, brown, and rainbow trout, scrubbing raceways (i.e., long, flow-through concrete pools to grow fish), and removing “morts” (dead trout that didn’t make it). We would also load the stock-

ing trucks, which would then travel across the state and release fish into designated stocking creeks and rivers. At this point in my life, I was totally confused about what we were doing. In my ignorance, I would always argue for habitat-based fisheries management - improve the habitat, and in return, the trout stocks should be plentiful, right? That's not what the hatchery program is about at all. These trout are part of a put-and-take fishery, in which all fish released are meant to be caught by anglers. They are not expected to survive into the next year, nor are they expected to contribute to natural fish stocks. Hatchery released fish are actually meant to alleviate fishing pressure on native fish stocks and provide extra fishing opportunities for anglers in the area. Don't quote me on this, but I recall speaking with the hatchery manager at one point, who mentioned a report produced by SCDNR revealed that the work we did at the hatchery contributed nearly $17 million to the state fisheries program through various pathways associated with increased trout fishing opportunities in South Carolina.

Picture 2: Adult Atlantic Sturgeon captured in the Santee River, South Carolina, while working with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. This was the first

The SCDNR Stream Team work was a lot of fun – we traveled throughout South Carolina rivers and streams backpack electrofishing. I saw tons of extraordinarily beautiful non-game fish that one would likely consider tropical if they had the chance to see them. Many of these fish are less than three inches in length, but have extravagant coloration, and can be found in upland streams no wider than 2-3 feet. A couple of my favorites were the turquoise darter and mottled sculpin. Unfortunately, these species are nearly impossible to catch with a rod and reel, so it was quite the opportunity to get to fish with electricity.

My work with the stream team led me to a full-time position with the Diadromous Fisheries group at SCDNR. Diadromous fish are considered those that spend time in both fresh and saltwater (e.g., American shad, eel, herring, sturgeon). That was when the real fishing opportunities started, not only for work, but also because I was living in Charleston, SC, which provides a lot of opportunities for an avid angler. Workwise, at this point, I was on the water nearly every day. We would set gillnets for Atlantic and Shortnose sturgeon and occasionally American Shad in nearly every major river in South Carolina. We spent a lot of time soaking nets. When I wasn't fishing for work, I was looking for opportunities to get out on a recreational boat, or simply fishing from the beach or nearest dock.

About three years after arriving in Charleston I was given an opportunity to conduct Atlantic sturgeon research at Clemson, so I packed my bags and returned to the foothills of South Carolina. It seems counterintuitive considering my species of interest inhabited coastal waters, but you've got to go where the opportunities arise. It was tough to leave the coast, which is where my passion for angling truly lies. There's something about the ocean that just draws me towards it. It's hard to explain, but I'm sure many of you can relate. I signed up for a short two years to earn my master's degree and was thinking I would return to the coast as soon as I possibly could.

My master's research at Clemson was intended to answer questions related to abundance and movement of Atlantic sturgeon in the Savannah River, which borders the states of South Carolina and Georgia. I used side-scan sonar equipment to enumerate sturgeon in the river while they were present on the spawning grounds in the fall spawning season. This was a really interesting idea to me at the time – I got to go "fishing" while not having to deploy any sort of gear in the water. I would troll between 4-6 mph over a 9-mile portion of the Savannah River three or four days a

week, twice a day. The survey took about six hours total. That's a lot of time on the river, not to mention I was recording the sonar surveys and had to revisit the files and count fish in the lab when the season was over. Let's just say I got really good at scrolling through sonar recordings and counting sturgeon.

At Clemson the second time, I met a friend who could be considered one of the most influential fishing companions in my life. We immediately hit it off, mostly due to the fact that fishing was a priority in our lives, but also because we both vacationed and fished out of Edisto Beach, SC, throughout our childhoods. However, his experience was a little different from mine – he got to spend his mornings 60 miles offshore in a sport fisher trolling for pelagics. I had a lot to learn. We made plans to fish in Edisto as soon as we got the chance, which ended up being July 3, 2017. He invited me to a portion of the island I had never been able to access - Edingsville Beach.

He had access to a portion of the beach that I'd never had a chance to fish, but always heard offered great fishing opportunities. Our plan was to target bull reds and shark in the surf. Reds can be a little tough to catch in July, but shark are plentiful in the warmer months. We threw the cast net for some fresh mullet in the ponds on the island and made our way to the surf with fresh bait.

The surf in this spot was much different than what I was used to fishing. It's a very interesting type of beach – very natural, limited houses, and a lot of marsh. There were two inlets near our fishing spot, but we focused our efforts on a little portion of the beach where the sand and shell transitioned into almost a plough mud reef. There are literally live oysters in the surf, which made walking around barefoot a dangerous task. We walked out into the surf, launched the baits as far as we could, and placed our rods in the rod holders. Time to crack a beer and wait to hear the drag scream.

We had a few good bites to start the day, but nothing special. We hooked into a couple 3-to-4-foot blacktip and spinner sharks that gave us a show. Upon realizing they are hooked, they launch into the air and spin ferociously, which inevitably leads to broken lines and spirits. If I recall correctly, we may have landed one or two. Fortunately, beers were cold enough to help with that.

At one point, I particularly remember running out of large mullet that we caught earlier, but we still had some finger mullet left. I like to soak large baits in the surf as to eliminate the potential for small bycatch, but beggars can't be choosers. I stacked three finger-mullet on my circle hook and started trudging out into the surf through the frothy breakers to make a cast thinking, "If I were a fish, I'd eat it. More bang for your buck, like a shish kabob."

This was apparently a good alternative to a big bait, because not long after setting out the line I received a nice strike. The drag screaming and rod doubled over, I found myself sprinting to the rod holder, completely wrecking my feet on oyster shells in the process. I didn't care because I had a nice fish on, and I could tell we were in for a fight. Unfortunately, the fish ran directly across my buddy's line, so we got a bit tangled to start. Keep in mind this is our first time fishing together, but we handled it like we'd been fishing buddies our whole lives. We quickly de-escalated the tangle situation, and I was back to fighting. By this time, the fish had pulled out 300+ yards of line and was headed up the beach. I slowly worked my way towards the fish while I kept an eye on the ground for stray live oysters that wanted to end the fight early.

About thirty minutes into the fight, I began to notice clouds building to the south. I pointed them out to my buddy and asked that he check the radar. Not like it mattered. We were a solid three miles from the nearest piece of cover, which was not enough time to escape an imminent storm. It's still better to know what's headed our way, and like Florida in July, one can pretty much expect nasty storms to build by early afternoon in South Carolina.

We made the decision to stick it out, continue the fight, and brave the storm. Scary moments were to come, but I figured if I was going to get struck by lightning, it might as well happen while I'm fighting a big fish. Like I said, we couldn't really escape the storm in time anyway. At one point I had the bright idea to get into the water as to lower our chances of direct lighting impact. There were no trees nearby, so me holding a 12-ft lightning rod was definitely the tallest point within a few

Picture 3: Fighting the fish through the storm on Edingsville Beach, South Carolina

miles, and lightning bolts were slamming every 30 seconds around us. I had accepted my fate, was literally being dragged up the beach by a huge fish and was thinking about how I was going to explain to my mother why I've got a picture of myself fighting a fish through a thunderstorm. The picture is pretty awesome though.

The storm passed and the fish was still hooked. Huge success. Back to a normal fight. At this point in time, we suspected the fish was likely a nice sized shark, and I began to horse it in a bit more. I noticed a shadow in the breakers and saw a dorsal fin to confirm, but we still didn't know which species. The shark still had a lot of fight left in it, even after an hour of fighting and dragging me up and down the beach, but we had it in the breakers and began to see leader. Crunch time, and it was our first time fishing together, so we had to focus. Landing a big shark in the surf is definitely a two-man job, and fortunately we were both on point. He quickly gripped the caudal peduncle and dragged the shark into the sand. Fish landed. We snagged some awesome pictures and carefully walked the defeated lemon shark back into the surf for a clean release.

This was one of the wildest angling experiences in my life. I remember limping back to the house with more cuts on my feet than toes, but it was totally worth it. When I get the opportunity to fish Edingsville beach these days, shoes are on the top of my equipment list.

I've had some amazing fishing experiences thanks to the GOFC, as well. I showed up to Gainesville in Fall 2019 with no knowledge of the area, but plenty of gear and excitement to learn. I just needed to find a friend with a boat who wanted to get out on the water. My first experience with GOFC was the shrimp-a-thon, for which I was hooked up with member John Herbert. His wife, grandson, and I caught our limit of shrimp in St. Johns that day, and I had one hell of a time. Thanks, John! If you're reading this, let's get back out there this Fall. We went out one other time that season and did quite well. If anyone else is interested in shrimping, I'd be happy to throw the net for as long as it takes to fill the cooler. I've got a deep hole net, but unfortunately no boat to get to the shrimping grounds.

The first GOFC meeting I attended, I was immediately greeted by Mark Haberman. He seemed like a good guy, asked for my information, and he ensured me he would get me out into the Gulf. This was the beginning of a great friendship, and I owe nearly all my fishing opportunities since my arrival in Gainesville to the captain of Chillin da Most. Thanks Mark! This article is already a little long winded, but I could likely write at least few more articles from experiences on Chillin da Most. Just to name a few: Our first trip he put me on a stud king mackerel, we've had a handful of trips with limits of red and gag grouper, and at least one other trip with limits of grouper and snapper. My favorite trip so far was an overnight middle grounds trip, which I have to believe was instigated by my constant nagging to Mark and the rest of the crew about going deep. We got the weather in summer 2021 and he finally caved. It was a gorgeous night, and an even better fishing experience. I've provided a handful of my favorite pictures from my experiences with Mark and the rest of the Chillin da Most crew that may or may not have been shared with the GOFC.

Picture 6: King mackeral caught on Chillin da Most. First offshore trip with Mark Haberman.

Picture 7: Double red grouper catch with Kevin

Picture 8: Double Gag catch with the Mark Haberman

Thanks for spending the time to read this article, and I hope that it did a decent job introducing you to myself as an angler and fisheries researcher. The direction I wanted to take this article was relatively unclear to me from the beginning, but it was meant to broadly touch base on various aspects and the origin of my passion for angling and fish in general. I hope you all enjoyed it, and I'd be happy to talk and/or fish with any club member in the future. My heart lies in offshore ventures, but nearshore/inshore fishing is something I also enjoy. I recently purchased a kayak as well, so if anyone is looking for a kayaking partner feel free to reach out! I've got plenty of gear and knowledge to share. Looking forward to more tight lines and sunrises on the Gulf.

In closing, I always said I wanted to be a professional fisherman as a child. I may not be considered a tournament champ just yet, but I've got a handful of fishing techniques pretty well mastered ranging between both research and angling contexts, such as traditional fishing, electrofishing, gillnetting, cast netting, and even remote fishing methods including side-scan sonar and acoustic telemetry. I may not be considered a professional fisherman in a traditional perspective, but what I find most interesting is that I followed my passion, which led me to be a type of professional fisherman that I did not know existed as a child.

Keep fishing,

Josh Vine

Email: j.vine@ufl.edu

(803)292-3152

Photos from the May 24 Speaker's Meeting

Winners of the May 1, 2022 Cobiathon/Mack-Attack tournament

Chic Hinton—1st place King Mackerel 14.37#

Debbie Knopf, not in attendance, took 1st place Spanish Mackerel at 3.69#. Shown is Mike Dumas, 2nd place Spanish Mackerel 3.56#

Fishing together Phil Horn and Tim Pederson took 2nd 13.5# and 3rd 11.94# King Mackerel.

This guy just showed up and said "Gimme that". He's awfully big so Mark Haberman smiled and said "Here it is".

Understanding the Ellett Contest

With credit to Brian Kiel

Understanding the John Ellett Contest

The John Ellett contest is a club contest that runs one year long and pits club members against each other in a friendly fishing contest encompassing three categories: Men's, Women's and Elite. A simplified formula awards points on a relative basis based on the heaviest fish of each species, with the exception of amberjack and kingfish which are based on length. Each species category has a maximum of 25 points and points are totaled to give an overall Ellett standing. For example, if the heaviest trout entered was a 6 lb. trout, this trout would receive the maximum 25 points, while a trout weighing half of that weight (3 lb.) would receive half of the 25 points (12.5 pts.). A 1.5 lb. trout would receive 6.25 pts. Current Ellett standings are printed in the club's Acute Angler newsletter, magazine, and on the GOFC website (Ellett standings).

It's easy to participate in the contest. All that's required is that you submit a weigh slip of any or all of the ten species the club fishes for: spotted seatrout, redfish, flounder, sheepshead, cobia, kingfish, Spanish mackerel, greater amberjack, bluefish, and grouper. Any scale can be used to estimate the fish weight, however, when a fish exceeds the maximum weight for a particular species (see bottom of weigh slip under Heavy Catches), that fish must be weighed on a State certified scale like those found in commercial establishments that use a scale to determine the value of an item sold to the public. A fish house like Northwest Seafood in Gainesville will usually weigh fish, if asked nicely. The weight should be noted on a receipt or store weigh slip, signed by the individual weighing the fish, and attached to the GOFC weigh slip to be turned into the club. The club Weighmaster keeps a certified club scale at home for members to use (contact the GOFC Weighmaster/Record Keeper, weighslip@gofc.us).

To win the contest you don't have to catch the largest fish, just catch as many of the 10 species as you can (hopefully a couple will be heavy fish). Participation in club events also helps as points are awarded for participation in club Tournaments (2 pts.) and Funaments (1 pt.). Writing an article for the Acute Angler is worth 3 points.

Awards are given to three places with the top male & female angler receiving a coveted inscribed pewter plate from the Ellett family, who happen to have sponsored this contest since its inception. The Ellett contest dates run from January 1st to December 31st with awards given out during the March Awards Banquet.

In addition to the Ellett awards, the club also gives awards and recognition for the heaviest three fish of each species. The club also maintains a list of GOFC Record Catches that include 109 species, so keep any species that is either not noted or exceeds the record. You can also submit a weigh slip for one of the "Other Two" species (dolphin and tripletail) to be computed for a separate award following the same guidelines for Special Category

Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Links to current Ellett contest standings.

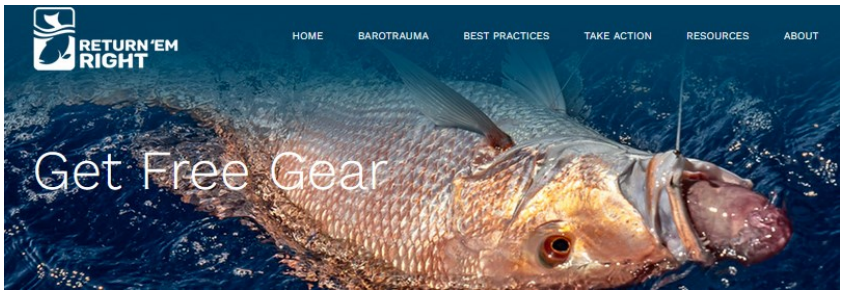
Elite

Men's

Women's

With special thanks to Carl Vining and Staci Sanders!

"Return' Em Right" offers free descending devices



Most of us have reeled up a fish from depth with the stomach forced outside by an expanding bladder. We have also experienced the heartache of watching it float away on surface unable to dive after being released because it is undersize or out of season.

It's now a legal requirement (the DESCEND act) for anyone bottom fishing in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico to have a venting tool or descending device.

To educate anglers in responsible release practices the Return "Em Right program was started. Anglers can register for a 15 minute online review of best practices. Upon completion Return 'Em Right will send free of charge a kit with two descending devices, lead and all the tools you'll need. This is a $100 value and the right thing for anglers to do.

New Ellett Entries from May 15 —June 1, 2022

Angler	Species	Weight or length	Date caught	Location	Bait or Lure
Tim Pedersen	Cobia	12.45 lbs	6/8/2022	Cedar key	Bait
Stephen Degraff	Spanish Mackeral	4.32 lbs	6/5/2022	Cedar Key	Silver spoon
Stephen Degraff	Bluefish	2.24 lbs	6/5/2022	Seahorse	silver spoon
Chic Hinton	Spanish Mackeral	4.0 lbs	6/6/2022	CK	Spoon
Tim Pedersen	Spanish Mackeral	5.16 lbs	6/3/2022	Cedar Key	Lure
Phil Horn	Spanish Mackeral	5.34 lbs	6/3/2022	Cedar Key	Trolling
Tom Jaworski	Grouper - Gag	7.5lbs	6/1/2022	Cedar Key	Pin fish
Tom Jaworski	Flounder	1.59 lbs	5/31/2022	Cedar key	Shrimp
Rhonda Horn	Seatrout	3.13 lbs	5/30/2022	Keaton Beach	Pinfish
Staci Sanders	Redfish	6.2 lbs	5/28/2022	Cedar Key	Bait
Staci Sanders	Flounder	2.2 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar Key	Bait
Carl Vining	Spanish Mackeral	3.8 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar Key	Lure
Carl Vining	Bluefish	3.6 lbs	5/28/2022	Cedar Key	Lure
Ken Knopf	Spanish Mackeral	4.20 lbs	5/29/2022	Seahorse reef	Spo9n
Debby Knopf	Spanish Mackeral	3.73 lbs	5/29/2022	Seahorse reef	Spoon
Tom Jaworski	Spanish Mackeral	4.69 lbs	5/29/2022	Sea horse Reef	Drone spoon #4
Mary Mundt	Spanish Mackeral	2.1 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar key	Gulp
Austin Mundt	Seatrout	1.25 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar key	Gulp
Mary Mundt	Seatrout	1.31 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar key	Gulp
Mary Mundt	Spanish Mackeral	1.44 lbs	5/29/2022	Cedar key	Gulp
Marcia Ellett	Spanish Mackeral	1.56 lbs	5/28/2022	Seahorse Reef	Artifical
William Mundt	Seatrout	1.94 lbs	5/28/2022	Cedar key	Gulp shrimp
Marcia Ellett	Spanish Mackeral	1.9 lbs	5/28/2022	Seahorse Reef	Artificial
Mark Rustemier	Spanish Mackeral	2.82 lbs	5/18/2022	Seahorse Reef	Jig
Brian Kiel	Spanish Mackeral	3.22 lbs	5/18/2022	Seahorse Reef	Jig
Ed Ellett	Spanish Mackeral	4.54 lbs	5/18/2022	Seahorse Reef	Flores jig
Ross McElroy	Spanish Mackeral	3.66 lbs	5/15/2022	CK	Spoon
Ed Ellett	Spanish Mackeral	3.8 lbs	5/15/2022	Seahorse Reef	Gulp
Carl Vining	King Mackeral	36"	4/22/2022	Keaton Beach	Lure
Staci Sanders	Spanish Mackeral	2.6 lbs	5/15/2022	Cedar Kay	Lure

Help FWC Cobia Research (and earn some cash!)

FWC has received funding to study cobia migratory patterns and reproductive status. As the flyer says they are offering $50 for your cobia carcass. All you have to do is:
- Turn over the carcass within 24 hours
- Call 727-685-7354. This phone number will ring an FWC employee at the Cedar Key Field Lab 24/7
- The main thing is to keep the organs intact after filleting the fish.

"We will experiment with the best approach at intercepting carcasses as the season progresses. We may keep a cooler there right at the Cedar Key boat ramp, we may arrange for the angler to drop it off as they leave the island, or we may have staff meet anglers in person at the dock. Getting the carcass from an angler after they have returned to Gainesville is also an option. Our aim is to remain flexible. We will be doing this over a period of three years, so we are open to feedback." Phillip Stevens

Letter from Phillip Stevens, PhD, FWC Fish Biology

Dear Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club,

I wanted to let you know about an opportunity to help FWC with cobia research (see attached flyer). We received a research grant to investigate the Gulf Stock of cobia, which includes cobia in SE Florida, around the Keys, and along Florida's Gulf coast. Specifically, we are interested in cobia movement patterns and reproductive status as they pass coastlines along their migratory route. We are trying to obtain the carcasses that are left after recreational anglers have filleted their legal catch. If the gonads are left intact, and we can obtain the carcass within 24 hours, we can learn a lot about the reproductive status in addition to collecting genetic information. The grant I mentioned allows us to pay a monetary award for your participation. We will have a person hired at the FWC Cedar Key Field Lab shortly to help with the project. So, anglers fishing out of Cedar Key should be able to drop their cobia carcass off at the lab on their way out. If fishing elsewhere, we should still be within range to meet the angler within 24 hours even if the carcass is brought back to Gainesville.

We would be happy to provide more information to the club over a video chat or in person at your next meeting.

I've copied Dr. Robert Ellis who is leading our Florida Gulf coast effort.

Philip Stevens, PhD
Research Scientist – Fish Biology
FWC – Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
100 8th Ave Southeast
St Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: 727-896-8626

There has been a change to the GOFC official rules relating to King Mackerel (Kingfish)

To all GOFC Members. Please be aware of the following changes:

These changes were made and approved in January's GOFC Board meeting on 1/11/2022.

Change #1 = GOFC Webpage - https://gofc.us/rules/

Last bullet item in the section titled - *"Fish Entry Conditions" Now states:*

"Amberjack **and King Mackerel** can be entered all year long regardless of closed seasons with the requirement that they be released unharmed if caught during a closed season. Amberjack **and King Mackerel** will be entered and scored based on overall length measured from the tip of the jaw or tip of the snout with closed mouth to the center of the fork in the tail. **Entries must include a photo with the complete length of the fish.** Amberjack **and King Mackerel** can still be entered by weight for club record purposes as long as the fish was caught during an open season."

Change #2 = GOFC Webpage - https://gofc.us/about-tournaments-and-contests/

Sections 3 and 5

First bullet item in section 3 titled - *"Ellen Angler of the Year (Official Contest Weigh Slip)" Now states:*

- A year-long contest in which points are awarded (based on weight) for blueflish, cobia, flounder, grouper, redfish, sheepshead, spanish mackerel, trout and (by length) for amberjack and king mackerel

First bullet item in section 5 titled - *"Top Offshore Angler of the Year (Official Weigh Slip)" Now states:*

- A year-long contest in which points are awarded (by weight) for cobia, grouper, spanish mackerel and (by length) for amberjack and king mackerel