The Acute Angler

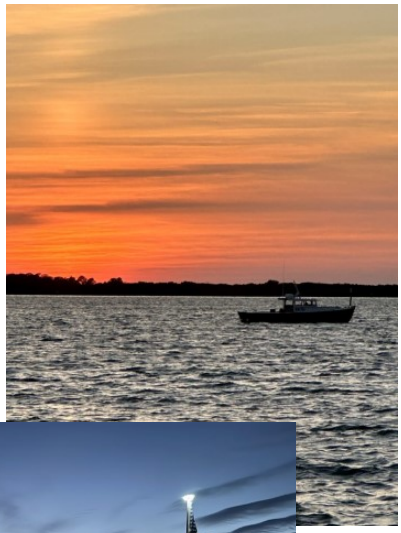
June, 2023
Volume 56, Number 6

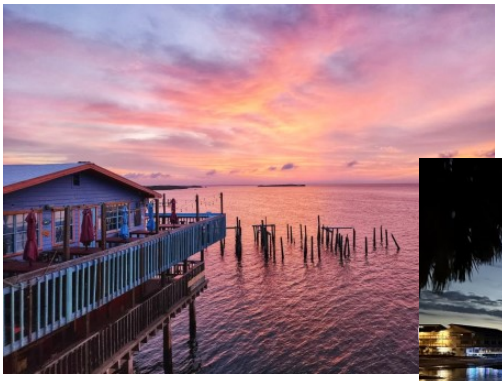
The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

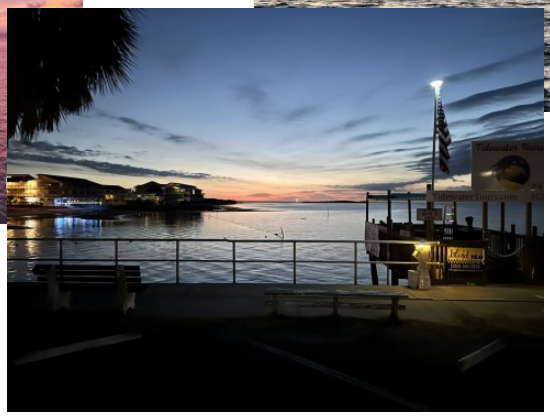
June Hot Shot

Why we fish.

Sometimes it's just the view...







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President's Corner

The dog days of summer are fast approaching. In our area, that means it's time for red snapper and bay scallop seasons to begin! Now we just need the weather to cooperate!

The annual fish fry will be held today, Saturday, June 17th at Ken and Debby Knopf's new boat barn near Alachua. Thanks to the Knopfs for hosting and thanks to all those who are contributing fish to this year's feast! It's going to be a great time!

Mike Allen will be the speaker at this month's general meeting on the 27th. Mike is the director of the University of Florida's Nature Coast Biological Station in Cedar Key and a recreational fisherman himself. Mike's team performs research on marine ecosystems and fisheries in the Big Bend area. His talks are always fascinating.

The board is currently planning a scalloping learnament for later this summer. There will also be at least one shrimp learnament this summer depending on when and where the shrimp arrive. So keep an eye out for more information on those and other events, there's a lot going on!

Some may recall in a past issue I reported on the Sea Urchin situation at Kenton Beach. Later in the newsletter I have an update to share.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming events!

Your 2023 GOFC President,

Ryan Kremser

From the Editor

For many our favorite time of the year is upon us, Summer and Scallop Season! See later in the newsletter details and maps of the season compliment's of the FWC. Note the different bag limits for the first 2 weeks! We unfortunately have sad news about the closing of the Red Grouper Season on July 21st and it will stay closed until January 1, 2024. Triggerfish, one of your editor's favorite fish to eat, closed on June 1st for 2 months and re-opens on August 1st.

As Ryan mentioned we have the fish fry today, looking forward to seeing our members there to enjoy some of the bounty your fellow club members have been catching. The fish fry will be starting at **6:30 PM** at the Knopf's new home in **Alachua** at **21799 NW CR 2054**. Tickets are $10 at the door and if you are able to bring a side dish or desert that would be appreciated.

Make sure you ask Logan about his repower and restoration of the "Chicken Tender". It is a well done work of beauty and hopefully we see an article next month with the step by step effort he put into it!

Red Snapper season started yesterday! We want pics and stories guys and gals!! Can you top the one of your editor above? Of course as you can tell by the lack of gray hair this was a few years ago...

And as always:… Please send in your pictures to the website or contact me to share, we are always looking for great shots of fun times and big fish!

Hopefully we will see many of you at the fish fry and the next general meeting on the 27th.

John Ebbs

2023 Newsletter Editor

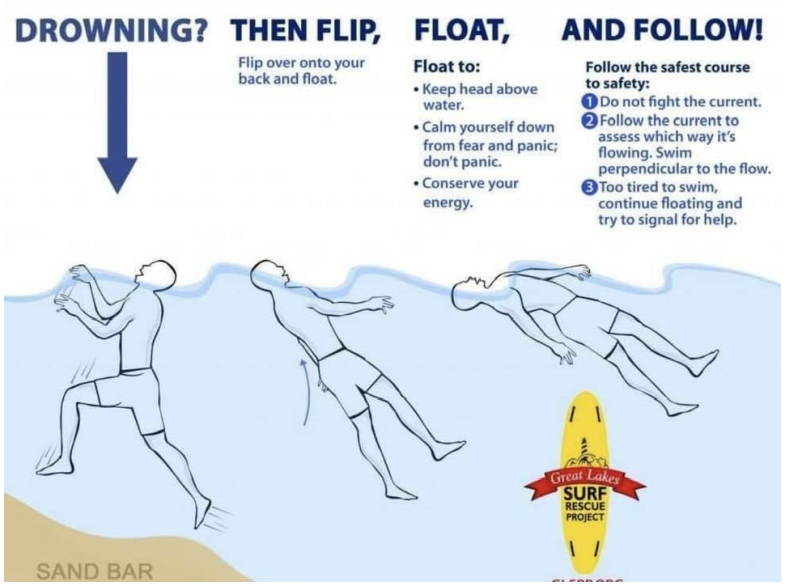
Still time to renew your GOFC Membership!

It's now easier than ever!

Just go to the "Join now!" tab on the GOFC website. (http://www.gofc.us/wp/join-now/)

Then fill out the form online and pay using PayPal.

Upcoming Events



2023 GOFC Fish Fry—Saturday the 17th of June. Ken and Debby Knopf's new boat barn. 21799 NW CR 2054 Alachua, FL

June Meeting—Tuesday, 6/27/2023—7:00pm—9:00pm

July Meeting - Tuesday, 07/25/2023 - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

August Meeting - Tuesday, 08/22/2023 - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

September Meeting - Tuesday, 09/26/2023 - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

October Meeting - Tuesday, 10/24/2023 - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Shrimp-A-Thon out of Suwanee Marina:

Tentative in June or July, depending on the shrimp's arrival.

Fall Tournament at Cedar Key: All 10 species

Date TBD

Trout-Redfish Tournament out of Steinhatchee:

1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes for heaviest redfish and 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for 3 trout aggregate.

First prize for redfish most spots. May add flounder or remove trout; depending on next tournament meeting.
Date TBD

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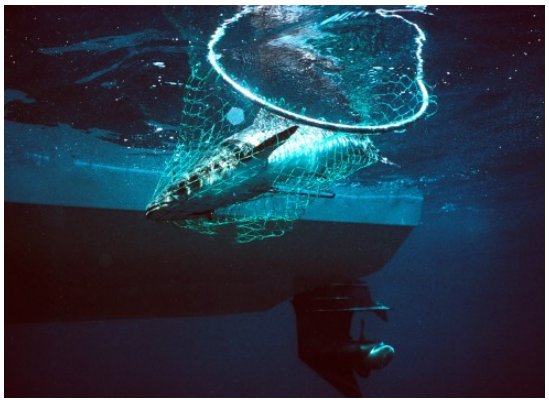
Captain's Log

By Joe Richard

When people ask me about choosing a landing net I tell them, "it's complicated." Factors include what you fish for, and will other boats see the net. Are you a guide or fish tournaments? What sort of fish are you after? Are you worried about landing every keeper fish, or just catch-and-release? Do you really need a net, or will your tackle derrick fish (such as trout) right into the boat? Are you chasing GOFC's top 10 species, and don't want to miss that stray bluefish?



I'm a guide but use a smaller, telescoping Frabill net and have for years. I want my net hidden from other boats, only extending the arm when we have a good fish on. It's net the fish and skim it over the gunnel real quick, then shorten the net's handle and hide it. I don't wave a big net in the air and then do high-fives afterwards; that's a sure way to attract attention from other boaters, who may be desperate for fish. Some days we forego the net entirely when releasing a trophy trout. Or any redfish after Number 3.

Some days you really *do* need a landing net, like when trout keep falling off the hook. One day Amy almost lost her cool, after I'd left the net at home and she had three, consecutive 20-inch trout drop off the spoon when I grabbed the leader and tried to swing them aboard. Some days, the fish just nip at the lures and are barely hooked. That same day, I grabbed the leader on a hair-lipped 4-pound Spanish mackerel and lifted. Somehow the spoon's treble hook broke off the one hook that was holding that fish...there went our much anticipated mackerel dinner. It was apparent we really needed a net, that day.

Then there are the charter days when you *don't* want to lose a customer's prize fish. Like the time I lifted a guy's good-sized pompano up by the leader and it fell off, bounced off the gunnel and was gone. On another, luckier day, this time ready with the net, a nice flounder dropped the hook at boatside and dove out of sight. I took one second to dig elbow-deep underwater with the net, and somehow came up with the day's best fish. That foolish flounder had dove right into the net.

Offshore is generally gaff country, but I see landing nets out there because there are so many fish species available. During one trip a friend had a big, rubberized landing net that came in handy when we ran into two schools of just-undersized cobia. That rubber mesh doesn't tangle hooks much at all and every released cobia swam away. While occasional boats still practice gaff and release, which is a shame, we've managed to land a lot of kingfish without gaff or net. Grab its tail and hang on!

Landing nets that float are best, of course. Last year I spotted something shiny on the horizon while we were motoring back 600 feet upwind for another trout drift. Something shiny turned out to be a landing net, and I grabbed it thinking *Wow, these nets are popular; now I have two*. Then I glanced around the boat and wondered, "Where's *my net*?" We'd recovered my own, that slipped off the stern at some point. At the time, I'd lost three nets in two years. Good thing I use small, inexpensive nets.

There are a few offshore fish deserving of landing nets, but not many. Undersized cobia, as mentioned. They grow up to 135 pounds and the small ones deserve special care before releasing. Tripletail are another candidate; they have a tough hide that can deflect a gaff. How else are you supposed to boat a prime 10- or 20-pound tripletail? If they're too short, it's net and release. Big sheepshead are another spiky species that require a landing net. And you never know when and where a big flounder will show up. Just try grabbing any of those fish. Or swinging one aboard when you don't have a net.

Captain's Log (cont.)

There have been countless stories of humorous attempts at landing fish. My favorite was recorded on cell phone video when friends brought a *nice* tripletail alongside. They had a good net but tried to scoop the fish tail-first and it wouldn't quite fit. Angler put down the rod, bent over the gunnel and grabbed half the net's rim, and both guys tried to scoop up the rest of the fish. The tripletail woke up and bolted out of the net, soon taking the rod with it. Angler screeched and jumped in the Gulf after his rod. He surfaced sputtering without it, and the air was blue with salty language. There was shocked silence from the crew, which soon turned to laughter. Imagine dog-paddling back to the boat without your favorite rod, after losing a trophy tripletail…That's not a good way to end the day.

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Charlie's Kitchen

COOKING SEATROUT

Seatrout, both the spotted seatrout (a.k.a. speckled trout) and sand trout, are arguably the most commonly sought after and caught salt-water game fish in Florida's Big Bend region. They are also easy to clean — one swipe down the side of the fish with a sharp knife removes the fillet. Then a quick trim out removes the ribs since there are no feather bones to fuss over. One more pass with a skinning knife and you are ready to cook. Unfortunately the flavor of seatrout is rather bland, so the fillets benefit from recipes that will amp up the taste. The mackerel almandine recipe featured in the May newsletter works well with seatrout, and here are a couple more recipes to try.

Pan-Seared Seatrout with Lemon Butter Sauce

Ingredients:

4 seatrout fillets
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Instructions:

Season the seatrout fillets with salt and pepper.
Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium -high heat.
Once hot, add the fillets to the skillet and cook for 3-4 minutes per side, until golden brown and cooked through.
Remove the fillets from the skillet and set aside.
In the same skillet, add the butter, lemon juice, garlic, and red pepper flakes.
Cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the butter is melted and the sauce is heated through.
Pour the sauce over the seatrout fillets.
Garnish with chopped parsley and serve.

Charlie's Kitchen (cont.)

Spicy Seatrout Cakes

Ingredients:

1 pound seatrout fillets, skin removed and finely chopped
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
1/4 cup chopped green onions
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon hot sauce
Salt and pepper
1/4 cup vegetable oil

Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine the chopped seatrout, breadcrumbs, green onions, mayonnaise, egg, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, salt, and pepper.
Mix well until all ingredients are combined.
Form the mixture into small patties.
Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
Once hot, add the seatrout patties to the skillet and cook for 3-4 minutes per side, until golden brown and crispy.
Serve the seatrout cakes hot with your favorite dipping sauce.

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An Appearance by the "1st Appearance"

Filling in for Prez Ryan at the May general meeting; Tom Jaworski

For the May meeting we were well informed about the Starr Tournament by Leiza Fitzgerald from the CCA, Director of the program for the past nine years since its inception. She is well rounded in the Outdoor Sportsperson's Arena. She regaled about catching pinfish in the Florida Keys using dowels and window screens with her brother. Making a king's ransom at $0.25-$1.00 per pinfish-- about a half century ago! Dates are Memorial Day thru Labor Day, 101 days of fishing. Big prizes will be awarded totaling $500,000.

Many of the members have entered and many have won prizes. Two boats, rods, reels, fish bags. No need to catch a record fish, all legally caught fish, even if out of season, can be entered merely by submitting a photo with the Starr measuring device included in the photo. There is even a trash entry! Need a five gallon bucket filled with ocean debris. Leiza said she personally reviewed all photos last year, over 22,000! One big exception, the elusive tagged Redfish. For when one is caught, immediate action to notify a person at Starr is required. Phone number is on the tag.

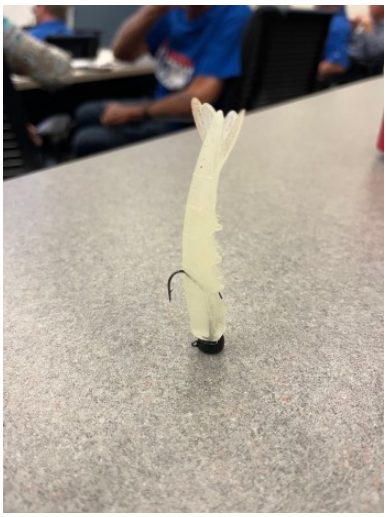
CCA is both a conservation and restoration organization which at its inception, came out against certain types of nets. Not a popular position to take 25 years ago, but it allowed for resurgence of many species that are caught in area waters today. To participate in the Starr tournament, you must join CCA, total is $80. Included in this is a $98 dollar value redfish video from Salt Strong, accessible on the CCA website.

CCA is very active in placing artificial reefs and Lisa shared that another one is being planned for our Big Bend waters! As an added bonus, her secrets on nerds, Pro-Cure Gels, stand-up jig heads, and stank stick lip balm were pure golden tidbits.

And for the last cast of the night, the top raffle prize was a handheld vhs radio.

Until next time, back from down under, Prez. Ryan will return to tell us about the great white sharks….

Tom J



Marine Medicine Pearls

By Mark Rustemier M.D.

PEARL; Don't Procrastinate; Prepare Your Boating First Aid Kit Now

Like most activities, boating brings with it the risk of injury. Fortunately, these injuries are usually minor and with a little first aid preparation can be handled on the water. More serious accidents may involve a trip to the emergency room or a call to the coast guard, but initial first aid can improve the outcome.

First aid kits are a good inexpensive place to start.

It is interesting that most fisherman will spend days preparing for a fishing trip between the weather, tide, boat, trailer, tackle, bait and waypoint management but ZERO time on first aid preparation. So many are left with treating wounds with bottled water (if lucky) and electrical tape (good captains WILL plan for electrical problems). Fish spine punctures, gill plate abrasions, line cuts and snapper bites can usually be treated with some sterile saline irrigation, pressure, topical antibiotic and a Band-aid. But who has a Band-aid when you need one….

This is just first aid, easier than dealing with your smoking trailer bearings, if you are prepared. What you need in your first aid kit will vary depending on the crews age (elderly or children), medical knowledge, medical conditions and the overall activity level (offshore, scuba, etc.). For example, during a weeklong Bahamas boys' trip aboard a friend's boat, we discussed that one of my buddies was on an anticoagulant "blood thinner" (he wanted me to be ready with a tourniquet if he got nipped by a shark) and another was a diabetic on insulin. This was important information in case of an injury with bleeding or possible infection.

Elastic bandage, 2 inch, is useful for sprains and dressings.

So, get a first aid kit together, stash it in your gear or boat where it will be dry until you need it. You have to start somewhere and here are some basic recommendations.

Items you can get cheaper than 10 gallons of fuel;

Multiple Band-aids of various sizes; generic; for the usual cuts and scrapes.

A few larger dressings (i.e., 4in x 4in gauze); for the wounds with more bleeding.

Topical antibiotic ointment (generic triple antibiotic ointment is fine and less expensive than brand name Neosporin); for abrasions/wounds/punctures.

1 inch clear or cloth wound tape; for dressings, also works great over line cuts to keep edges together and decrease pain.

Elastic bandage 2 inch, self- adhering; great for wrapping a sprained ankle/wrist, but more commonly used for wrapping over a bandage on the arm/leg.

Exam gloves; if potential exposure to someone else's blood.

Sterile saline solution ; generic is fine; for wound irrigation before ointment/dressing…there are some bad bacteria in the marine environment. Personally, I prefer a contact lens sterile saline solution bottle, which is inexpensive, easy to direct into the wound for irrigation and easy for irrigating the eyes if needed for a foreign body or irritating sun screen.

Tylenol (acetaminophen) ; over the counter, generic is fine; for pain control and fever

Seasickness tablets, over the counter adult dosing;

Dramamine (dimenhydrinate) 50-100mg every 4-6 hours, Bonine (meclizine) 25-50mg; generic is fine

Consider **small bolt cutters** if you fish with heavy gauge hooks or large diving plugs; in case someone is hooked with a protruding barb that needs to be cut off before the hook is removed.

You can get all these items a la carte or purchase a basic first aid kit at the pharmacy that includes most items for $10-$20 and then add the others. That may be the easiest and least expensive route. I usually keep one small basic kit in my dry bag in a zip lock together with a bottle of sterile saline and 2-inch elastic bandage, with bolt cutters in the console. So don't procrastinate, just put it on your shopping list. Sooner or later, you will need it.

Sterile saline comes in many types of containers, the eye solution bottle is inexpensive and convenient. Good idea to irrigate any wounds prior to applying a dressing.

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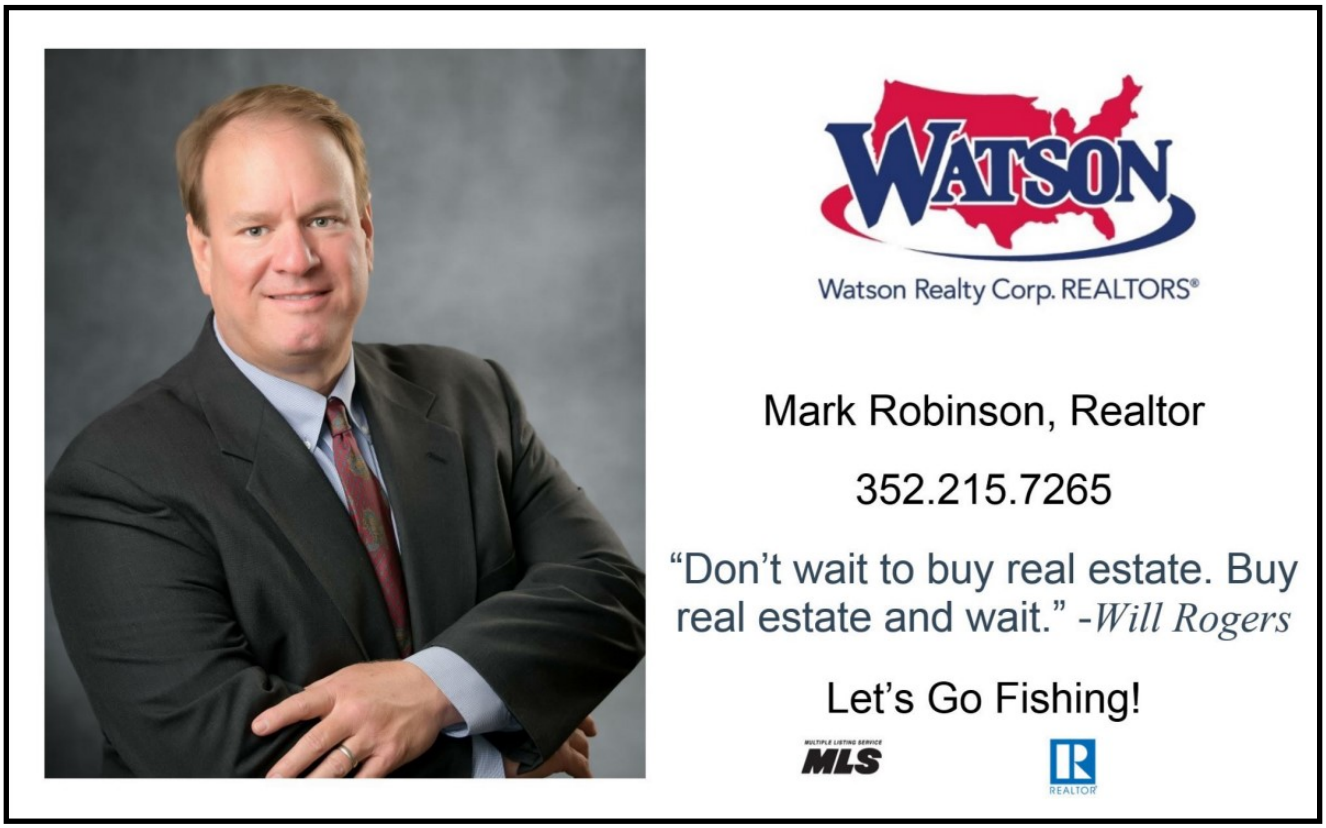
Latest on the Sea Urchin situation:

Here is the latest Keaton Beach urchin update which combines the April and May monitoring. We are hoping to revisit in June but have been benched by frequent high winds. Some quick thoughts on the most recent surveys:

- Urchins seem to be dispersing, we haven't seen any aggregates like we were seeing back in February. Though we have been keeping close to the original survey area due to high winds, so the front could've moved. Hoping for the winds to flatten soon.
- Seagrass seems to be growing back at the established transect.
- The turbidity has not been a big issue in April and May, despite the high winds.
- We started to see a number of *Arbacia punctulata* urchins, which we don't typically see in the seagrass beds at Keaton.
- Incredibly high numbers of dead urchin tests around the area. We are measuring the tests of whole dead urchin tests to keep track of that as well, does not seem limited to just urchins at the end of their lifespan.

Kate Suchanec
Florida Department of Environmental Protection



Understanding the Ellett Contest

With credit to Brian Kiel (seen below!)

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

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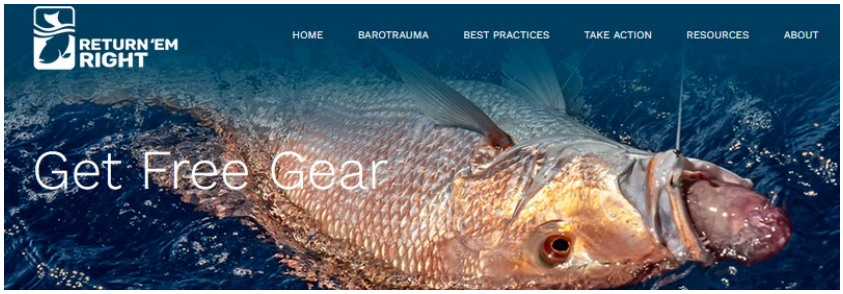


Most of us have reeled up a fish from depth with the stomach forced outside by an expanding bladder. We have also experienced the heartache of watching it float away on surface unable to dive after being released because it is undersize or out of season.

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.

Recent message from the FWC:

Dear Florida Reef Angler,
Thank you for your participation in Florida's recreational fishing data collection program by signing up for the State Reef Fish Survey. With the summer fishing season in full swing, we wanted to remind you about a recent rule change that took effect on April 1, 2023. **This rule change requires anglers to have a venting tool or descending device rigged and ready for use when targeting reef fish from a vessel, including catch and release, in state waters.** State waters extend from shore to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic coast and from shore to 9 nautical miles on the Gulf coast. In state waters, reef fish species include groupers, snappers, amberjacks, gray triggerfish, red porgy, sea bass, hogfish and tilefish.
The goal of this rule is to help increase the survivability of reef fish species that commonly experience, **barotrauma;** a pressure related injury. The signs of these injuries include the stomach protruding out of the mouth, bulging eyes, bloated belly, distended intestines and inability to swim down independently.
If you will be targeting these species from a vessel, please remember to have either a descending device or venting tool rigged and ready to go. As a friendly reminder, **these tools are also required in adjacent federal waters when fishing for reef fish**. In the Gulf, a descending device or venting tool must be rigged and ready to use on board a vessel. In the Atlantic, a descending device must be on board and readily available.
We hope that you find this information useful as you prepare for your time on the water.
For more information about this rule change and other required reef fish gear you can visit MyFWC.com/ReefFishGear. Please feel free to reach out to us at Marine@MyFWC.com if you have any questions.

Tight Lines,

Outreach and Education, Division of Marine Fisheries Management

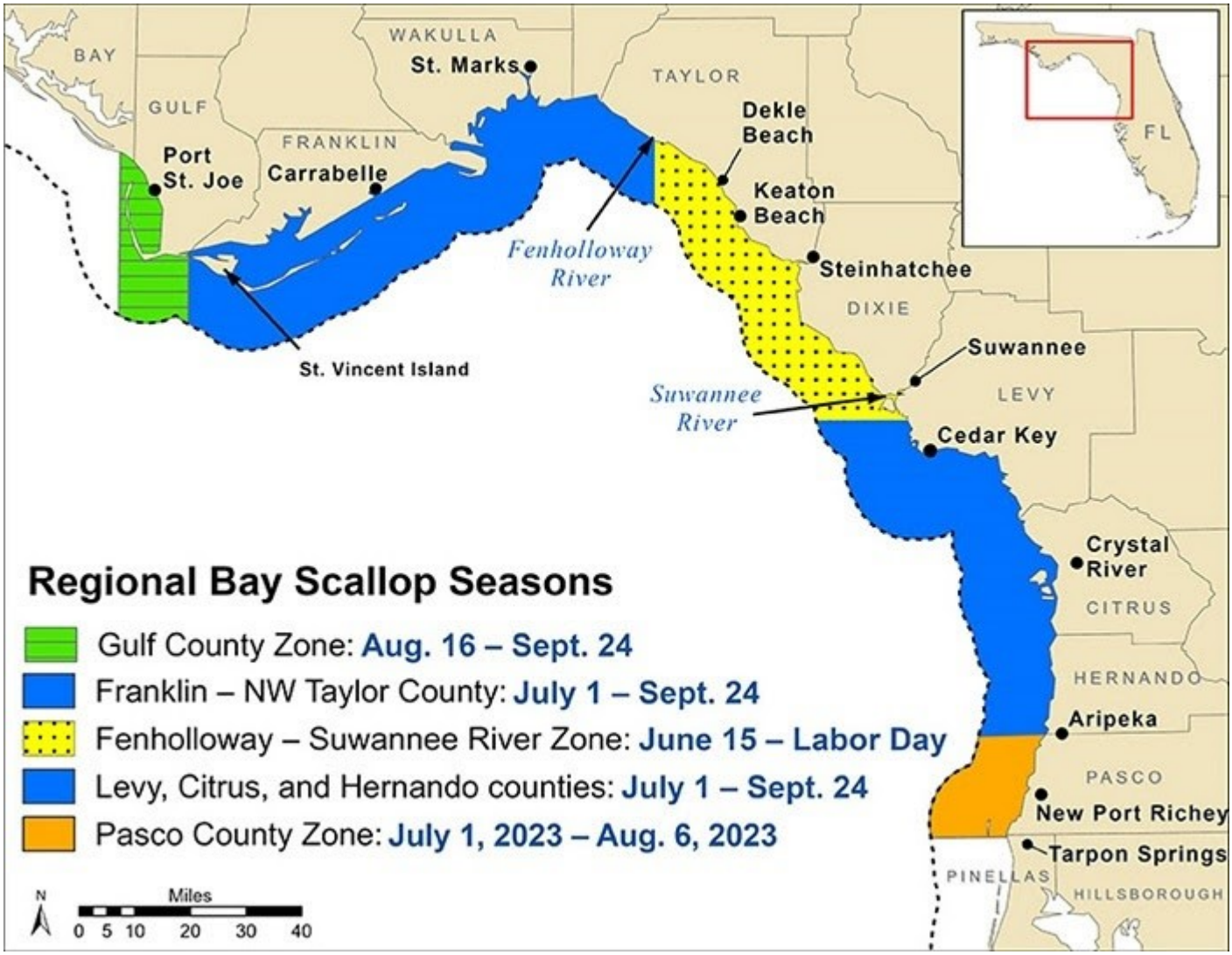
Bay scallop season opens June 15 in the Fenholloway and Suwannee River Zone

The 2023 recreational bay scallop season in the Fenholloway River through the Suwannee River Zone opens June 15 and will remain open through Labor Day (Sept. 4). This includes all state waters in Dixie County, a portion of Taylor County, the towns of Keaton Beach and Steinhatchee and a small portion of Levy County.

The daily bag limit from June 15-30 in this area is 1 gallon of whole bay scallops in the shell or 1 cup shucked bay scallop meat per person, with a maximum of 5 gallons whole or 2 pints (4 cups) shucked bay scallop meat per vessel.

From July 1 through Labor Day in this area, and for the duration of the open season in other areas, regular bag and vessel limits apply. Regular season limits are 2 gallons of whole bay scallops in the shell or 1 pint of bay scallop meat per person, with a maximum of 10 gallons of whole bay scallops in the shell or 1/2 gallon (4 pints) shucked bay scallop meat per vessel.

Throughout the season and region-wide, vessel limits do not allow an individual to exceed their personal bag limit.



Scalloping Trip List

Mask, snorkel, fins, footies, in mesh bag for each in party

Big mesh diving bag

Waterproof container with fishing license, money, DL, CC, boat registration

Small hand nets for kids

Handheld radio charged with back-up batteries & charger

Handheld GPS

Bathing suits on prior to trip

Shorts and t-shirts to wear over

Cooler, ice jugs

Bags of loose ice

5-gallon buckets for the scallops (remember the bag limits!)

Hats

Sunscreen

Sunglasses

Bottled water & Gatorade aplenty

Sandwiches, snacks, fruit

Underwater camera

Gloves

Ziploc baggies

Knives & case

Towels for each in party

Life vests for each in party, if you have kids on board remember to have the right sizes

Binoculars

First Aid kit

Parting Pics