The Acute Angler

July, 2023
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The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

July Hot Shot

Fish Fry at Ken and Debbie's

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President's Corner

If you haven't already noticed, It's hot out there folks! That means it's a great time of year to go do some scalloping to cool off. The scallops have been plentiful around Steinhatchee this year with many boats heading north out of the river to nine-mile reef. Flood waters from recent heavy rains have stained the water brown in some areas, but lots clear water can still be found. Low tide is generally considered the best time to look because the scallops are easier to reach. Wind tends to churn up the sediments creating a snow globe effect that can impair visibility. A calm day with a low tide around midday is perfect. If you're new to scalloping, make sure you and your crew have a fishing license, snorkeling gear, and a mesh bag for the scallops, and a dive flag for the boat. If you don't know where to go, head out the Steinhatchee river and head north until you see a large concentration of boats. That's where you'll find scallops. There are lots of videos on YouTube that will show you how to clean and prepare the scallops you find. If you've never gone scalloping before, give it a try. It's lots of fun!

President's Corner (cont.)

This month's meeting will be on Tuesday, July 25th at our normal location at the UF Vet School.

Thanks to Ken and Debbie for hosting the annual fish fry at their house last month. Thanks to Virgil, Tim, Mark, and all those who helped with the food preparation. We had a great evening with lots of delicious food and great camaraderie. Look forward to more club social events once the weather starts to cool down a bit. We're planning a social event at Ultimate Boat Storage in September or October, and we'll have our Annual GOFC Auction in November.

I hope everyone is having a safe and enjoyable summer and I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Your 2023 GOFC President,

Ryan Kremser

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After July dues are reduced to $25 for the rest of the year!

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From the Editor

Busy month for many of our members. Ken and Debbie are getting back from an trip to British Columbia and Alaska so make sure to ask them about the fishing and the sightseeing! Ryan went even further for his fun and spend 3 weeks down under in Australia!! Ask him about the amazing sights and animals encountered.

Your editor had a busy month as well, had a tree fall on a house, youngest daughter broke her fibula and is having surgery the week of this writing, but I did get to go fishing twice! Fun trip with Perry, I tended the boat while he and daughter Cassie free drove for Red Snapper and Permit and doing some fishing as the nice Mangrove in the picture will attest to. Also had a wet and somewhat rough day on Logan's newly restored/ repowered boat, the Chicken Tender! We dodged big rainstorms and somewhat confused seas and had lots of fun catching a wide variety of species. Logans boat was beautifully redone and the repower to the Yamaha 250's was a great choice. I must say I now am a big fan of the beanbag! I was a bit concerned about the pounding on a sore back with the weather conditions we fished in but came away pain free!! Great to fish with Wahoo Steve and their friend Will as well.

We are excited to welcome a new sponsor, Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman's Bay! If you have not visited the new marina in Steinhatchee you are missing out! Great facilities, awesome tackle shop on the second floor, boat rentals and storage, fishing charters, and just overall plenty of amenities for the fishing and scalloping boater. Please if you get a chance to visit, thanks the folks there for being a GOFC newsletter sponsor! We are looking forward to meeting there for the Redfish/Trout Tournament later this fall.

John Ebbs, 2023 Newsletter Editor

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Upcoming Events

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 August, depending on the shrimp's arrival.

Fall Tournament at Cedar Key: All 10 species

Date: October 21st, 2023

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.

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Captain's Log

By Joe Richard

Catching Your Own

A recent dinner party led to discussions about where to buy fish and it reminded me, yet again, of the checkered options available in restaurants and seafood markets for those who don't catch their own fish.

Mislabeling seafood has been practiced for decades (or perhaps centuries), and the word "truthless" comes to mind when describing some elements of the seafood industry. It's the reason I've resisted buying seafood for the past 50 years. But as one friend pointed out, that's easy for me to say, as I've fished for many years, some would say obsessively. And not always from boats. We were Zebco pier fishermen once, and young.

Today, there is quality seafood to be bought for those who don't fish. Some markets (like Northwest Seafood here in Gainesville) have worked hard to earn a good reputation. But finding fresh seafood isn't easy. A general rule: If the fish's eyes are cloudy and recessed, or if they no longer have eyes at all, walk away quickly).

And sometimes visual cues are not enough: In Miami last year, we stopped at a market in Little Havana on a Sunday afternoon, where lady customers in church attire and high heels were hand-picking fresh snappers and hogfish, carrying them around by the tails to be filleted on the spot. It was grab and clean, local fish for supper. Well, if not local, fresh enough from the Keys and Bahamas. When buying those hogfish, we studied the specimens carefully. Their gills were still red and eyes clear, so we bought several to make

fish tacos. Upon cooking hours later, the smell told us they had "turned." That was fast!

In some coastal regions, we watch for restaurants that have their own commercial boats, where one can buy whole fish easily identified that are fresh and filleted on the spot. The one restaurant in Horseshoe Beach has its own shrimpboat and their Po-Boy sandwiches are so much better than anything found in big-city restaurants.

Captain's Log (cont.)

Occasionally, food safety and labeling is enforced. Some restaurants have actually been busted for mislabeling their fish dinners (several in St Pete, for instance). A longtime scam had their "grouper sandwich" for $9.95 with the curious texture of…tilapia. One would hope their tilapia were wild-caught by castnet from South Florida lakes, but most of these fish originate from Asia, where they're fed almost anything, including farm waste. They're harvested from crowded ponds and packed off to American restaurants, some of them located right on the bay. Restaurant tip: don't ask the wait staff what the "fish of the day" is, and where it came from. If they tell you the truth, they could lose their job.

The same is true for shellfish and farm-raised catfish. Forty years ago, few people realized that 75 percent of shrimp consumed in America came from faraway lands, mostly Asia. During that same period, most freshwater catfish were raised in Mississippi grow-out ponds. Today, nearly all catfish are from Asia, raised in pens, often in water quality that doesn't even qualify for "sketchy." Check out the YouTube video on farm-raised catfish from the crowded Mekong River.

There have been stories for many years of restaurants selling saltwater hardhead catfish marked as freshwater channel catfish, fed to tourists. A friend confirmed this when he saw a production line of four guys hauling hardhead cats onto a marina's dock next to a fish-cleaning table, cleaning hundreds of fish while they were still thrashing. That's some hazardous work!

Recent news about commercial salmon stocks have also raised eyebrows. Wild-caught salmon are one thing, but pen-raised "ocean salmon" from Norwegian fiords are fed food pellets made with ground-up fish and eels from the Baltic Sea, which sounds harmless. However, bordered by nine countries, the Baltic almost qualifies as a saltwater lake, exchanging water with the Atlantic Ocean every 30 *years*, according to one excellent documentary. Lab tests for toxins in local salmon fillets showed traces of many chemicals, but the PCBs (a serious cancer causing agent) spiked to the top of the chart.

Captain's Log (cont.)

Something to think about, the next time you see a big fine salmon fillet in the store. *Note: Experts suggest that Pacific salmon are safer to eat, as they are primarily wild-caught, while nearly all Atlantic salmon are now farm-raised*.

With so many challenges in finding fresh seafood, it makes one grateful to have a boat of any kind, to fish uncrowded waters. And to catch and cook our own harvest. Cleaning, cooking and eating fish we've caught and properly prepared makes them doubly tasty on the table. As the Italians say, *buon appetito.*

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Charlie's Kitchen

FOILED AGAIN!

Many seafood recipes call for cooking in aluminum foil. This is especially advantageous when grilling seafood that is either small in size (bay scallops, small shrimp) or likely to break apart during cooking (thin skinless fillets) but be aware that the foil will block any smoke flavor from developing. Of course, you can always cheat a little and use hickory smoked salt in place of regular salt if you really want the smoke flavor.

Cooking in foil works mainly because liquids trapped in the foil packet turn into steam, which gently cooks the seafood. The trick to this is making a proper foil pouch that will not leak. That means using about 3 times the width of your food and roughly half again the length. Place the food in the center of the piece of foil and fold in the foil along the long edges. Where the folded edges meet in the middle, fold them together twice. Then fold each end in twice, leaving the folded ends flat on top of the packet to prevent leakage. Do not make the package very tight as it may unfold or split during cooking.

15 MINUTE FOIL BAKED GARLIC BUTTER FISH

This recipe will work with any mild, white-fleshed fish as opposed to an oily fish like mackerel. Cooking times will vary depending on the thickness and size of your fish. So keep checking the fish while baking to make sure it's to your desired texture, rather than follow an exact cooking time. This recipe makes two servings.

INGREDIENTS

Two 6-ounce fillets of any white fish (12 oz. total)
6-8 asparagus sprigs cut into thirds
1 medium zucchini (or other summer squash) sliced
Kosher salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 Tablespoons butter melted
2 cloves garlic minced
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon dried or fresh thyme or oregano or mix of both
1/2 teaspoon dried dill or 1 teaspoon fresh chopped dill, optional
1 medium lemon, cut into wedges
Fresh minced parsley, for topping

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat an oven to 450°F or preheat your grill. (If using a grill, set it up for indirect cooking.) Place each fish filet in the center of a sheet of heavy-duty foil and then divide the veggies *(asparagus & squash*) between each foil pack. Season with salt and pepper.

In a bowl, whisk together the melted butter, garlic, lemon juice, dried thyme/oregano, and optional dill. Spread the garlic butter over the two fish packets.

Fold the foil over to almost completely cover the fish and veggies. Leave a small opening on top to release steam. Place on a baking sheet pan in oven, on a grill, or on a griddle and, and cook fish until cooked through. Depending on the species and the thickness of your fish this likely will take some 15-20 minutes. When a fork easily cuts through the fish flakes, it's cooked! Serve warm with parsley sprinkled on top and with lemon wedges.

Charlie's Kitchen (cont.)

SHRIMP IN A FOIL

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 cup chopped fresh parsley
½ cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 pinch red pepper flakes, or to taste
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1-pound uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 sheet heavy-duty aluminum foil
1 lemon, juiced
½ lemon, sliced into wedges

Instructions

Combine parsley, olive oil, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, and black pepper in a large bowl. Add shrimp and mix well. Allow to marinate for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat an outdoor grill for high heat.

Lay 1 sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil on a flat surface: fold in half. Fold up edges to create a pouch in the middle. Spread marinated shrimp in the pouch and drizzle with lemon juice. Lightly close to make a packet.

Cook packet on the preheated grill until shrimp are bright pink on the outside and the meat is opaque, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.

GRILLED SCALLOPS AND MUSHROOMS IN FOIL PACKETS

Serves 2-4

Ingredients

1 lb scallops
8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
1⁄4 cup butter, sliced
4 tablespoons parsley, minced
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning

Instructions

Place the scallops on a sheet of foil. Cover with mushrooms, butter, parsley, and garlic. Sprinkle with lemon pepper seasoning. Double fold heavy duty aluminum foil and seal ends. Grill on low-medium heat about 12 minutes or until done.

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Marine Medicine Pearls

By Mark Rustemier M.D.

PEARL; Treat jellyfish stings with a salt-water rinse then topical vinegar

A preschooler exploring the beach ahead of his parents can pick up a “purple balloon”, and receive a severe sting from a Portuguese Man-of-War. What was a pleasant family day in the Florida sand and surf ends up a scary trip to the local emergency room. I have seen it happen. While I was in private practice as a family physician in Melbourne, Florida, my office was within walking distance of the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway, where people spent a lot of their leisure time on the water. I would see various marine related injuries, some of the most common being jellyfish stings, especially among the unsuspecting tourists. For anyone who enjoys the marine environment; salt water fishing, swimming, diving, windsurfing, or just taking a stroll on the beach, the risk of getting “stung” is always present.

DEAD PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR FOUND ON SATELLITE BEACH

You may have been stung in the past and not even realized that a jellyfish was the culprit. A stinging sensation on your hand after reeling in some fishing line, a painful rash on your cheek after scuba diving, a small red irritated area on the skin after getting out of the surf, can all be explained by contact with a jellyfish. All that is needed is a jellyfish tentacle, dead or alive, with thousands of its stinging cells (i.e. nematocysts), brushing against your skin. Here in Florida we have many varieties of jellyfish, some of which can cause significant pain including the Portuguese man-of-war (although not a true jellyfish). However, unlike the box jellyfish (sea wasp) of Australia, ours are rarely lethal.

If you are unfortunate enough to come into contact with a stinging variety, the most common symptoms are burning pain and rash. More significant stings can cause nerve tingling, nausea, vomiting, headache, chills and less commonly severe allergic reactions.

Children, due to their physiology and small size, are at a higher risk for complications. Most stings are self limited, lasting several days. However, knowing what to do initially can make a big difference to the person in pain.

PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR AND TENTACLES

Photo courtesy of Eddie Dziura

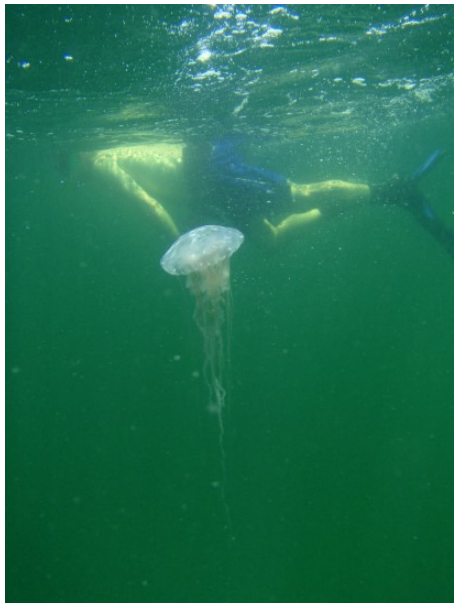
First, if the person is in the water, get them out and rinse the area with SALT WATER, NOT FRESH WATER! The fresh water can activate the microscopic cells to sting, further aggravating the condition. DO NOT RUB THE TENTACLES OFF OR APPLY ICE DIRECTLY TO THE SKIN! This too may activate further stinging. Secondly, the area needs to be continuously rinsed or covered with a soaked compress of either white vinegar (5% acetic acid), or rubbing alcohol (40-70% isopropyl alcohol) for 30 minutes or until pain resolves. This helps to neutralize the stinging cells. Although not a concern in Florida waters, only vinegar should be used for Australia’s box jellyfish stings. If you can remember just these two steps; 1) rinse with salt water then 2) soak in vinegar, you have done yourself or your friend a great service. You may then remove any remaining tentacles without touching them directly, using gloves, forceps, or even pliers. Remember, a lot of the stinging nematocysts have been “knocked out” by the vinegar! Next, the residual stinging cells can be removed by using shaving cream or baking soda paste applied to the area and shaving it off with a razor or other blade. If needed a sand or mud salt water mixture can be applied and removed with any firm edge.

Pearls (cont.)

Then reapply the vinegar or rubbing alcohol for another10-20 minutes to further neutralize any remaining stinging cells. Over the counter, 1% hydrocortisone cream can then be applied twice a day as needed, and benadryl can be taken orally if swelling or itching is present. Antibiotics are generally not needed, as symptoms usually resolve within a few days. If pain is significant and persists beyond 1-2 hours, or there are more serious problems including; shortness of breath, vomiting, or light headedness, then evaluation with a physician would be recommended, and oral steroid therapy may be needed.

The key as with most accidents is prevention, and with jellyfish stings it is no different. Give jellyfish a wide margin as their tentacles can be deceptively long under the water's surface. Avoid DEAD jellyfish on the beach as well, since the tentacles can still do damage. Keep your skin covered when jellyfish are in the area, and wear a full wet suit when scuba diving. Effective products preventing stings are limited, but "Safe Sea" Jellyfish Sting Protection Lotion claims to be effective and has formulations for children and also products incorporating sunscreen. It is based on the slime coat of Clown Fish and has a peer reviewed study in 2006 concluding it prevents >80% of jellyfish stings under real-world conditions. I have no financial stake in the sales of this product!

So what is THE TAKE TO THE WATER MESSAGE here? If you can remember nothing else, **rinse the area of rash asap with saltwater water (NOT FRESH) then irrigate with vinegar**.



JELLYFISH AND SCALLOPER IN CRYSTAL RIVER AREA

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Summertime sort of near shore fun

John Ebbs, Newsletter Editor

Years ago I was part of an on-line fishing club, and we would fish together quite a bit including weekend get togethers for our families. Great group and lots of fishing stories shared in the forum. Here is one that an old salt shared with me after my constant pestering about what to do in more near shore waters suitable for my deep V boat.

Here is the story, and as I have shared before, ***thanks to all "Old Salts" who take the time to share their experiences with the younger generation of fishers…***

"I'm not sure catching a bunch of fish near shore is practical right now but if you can do the 10-mile run to the 15-foot humps that stretch all up and down the coast, fish with light line and heavy jigs and adapt your presentation to the deeper water, you should do very well. Here is the last trip we took:

We hit the almost deserted public ramp about 7:45 or so, right at low tide. We had to take the main channel out because of the low water and headed for an area SW of the double poles that usually produces some fish. Before we got there, we encountered huge schools of bait (probably herring) in shallow water and made some casts to them with no action at all. When we finally got to our spot, on our second cast we had a double with a nice 14-inch flounder and a 14-inch trout on a popping cork. Good start!

An hour later, nothing. Not even any pinfish hits on the popping cork! The water was stained but pretty clear, we could see the bottom as the tide started in but there were no bait fish and nothing eating either.

Rather than mess around we took off and ran about 230 degrees for about 8 or 9 miles (10 from the shoreline) until we came to our deep water, summer trout spot. There the bottom rises in humps to about 15 feet from 20 and the grass that grows there attracts loads of fish. We stayed there for the rest of the day, moving from hump to hump as needed, anchoring on some and drifting others. We saw no bait other than lots of needlefish but there were free jumping porpoises around and the fish were thick.

We fished exclusively with lead head 3/8 oz jig heads with 3-inch Gulp! shrimp bodies. When we fished with non-gulp bodies, we still caught fish but at a much slower rate. Once the water cleared up to where we could see the grass clearly, we caught fish almost every time we cast. We caught tons of ladyfish, too many to count. We caught or snagged pinfish and pigfish. We caught several small porgies (one was double hooked with a black sea bass on the same jig!) and one small remora. We caught about a dozen small sharp-nosed sharks. We caught 4 puffers. We brought home 9 keeper sea bass (released probably 60 more.)

We brought home 14 or 15 sand trout (released another dozen or so as too small to mess with.) And, when we could get the bait past the ladyfish and seabass, 9 or 10 speckled trout to 18-1/2 inches. We left for home at about 3:15 having gone through a ton of Gulp, one broken rod, one reel with something serious wrong with it and lots of pleasant memories.

Water temperature was about 82 degrees, there was almost no chop and only a very slight swell, but a nice breeze blew all day and kept things pretty cool. There were 6 osprey fishing at the edge of the shell bar near the ramp in the morning and tons of bait in the canal.

The spot we have been fishing is on a line from HSB to Horseshoe Reef. About a 270 off the end of Horseshoe channel. You can't miss it cause the depth will jump up from 20 to 14-15 feet and if the water is clear you will be able to see the grass.

I have never seen any of that kind of bottom off Steinhatchee. I think that the area where we fish is probably a northward extension of the Spotty Bottom structure off Suwannee.

There is also some live bottom in 35 feet of water out a little deeper that swarms with fish including grouper just a little bit north of Horseshoe Reef".

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).

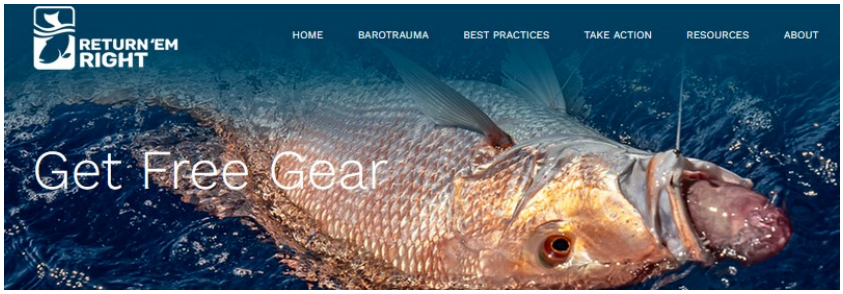
To win the contest you don't have to catch the largest fish, just catch as many of the 10 species as you can (hopefully a couple will be heavy fish). Participation in club events also helps as points are awarded for participation in club Tournaments (2 pts.) and Funaments (1 pt.). Writing an article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

Items of Interest—Free Descending Device

"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.

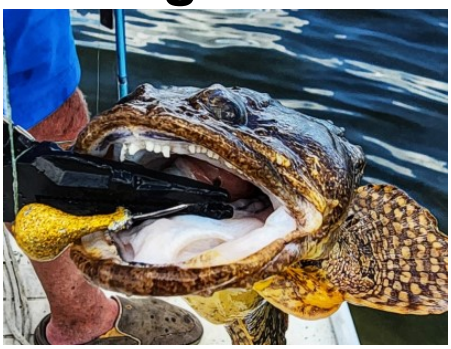
It's now a legal requirement (the DESCEND act) for anyone bottom fishing in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico to have a venting tool or descending device.

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.

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

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