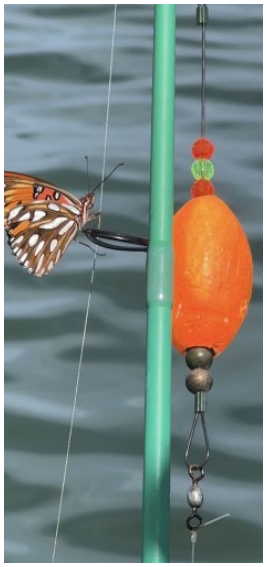
The Acute Angler

October, 2023
Volume 56, Number 10

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

October Hot Shot



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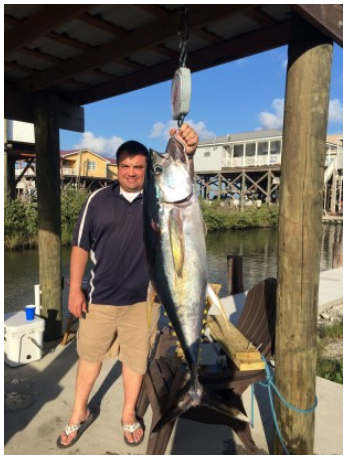

Brrrr… There's a genuine chill in the air as I write this intro! Isn't it great? The sweltering days of summer have finally given way to the golden days of autumn. This is the time of year that makes me happy that I live in the part of Florida that experiences the seasons!

The pinfish will soon disappear from the grass flats and the sea trout and snook will begin to congregate in the rivers. Learning how fish react to seasonal changes is one of the great joys of fishing and the key to making your time on the water productive year-round. There are many great learning resources for this online, but what better way to increase your knowledge than to attend a GOFC function and strike up a conversation with one of your fellow GOFC members? There's a wealth of knowledge in this club and most fishermen are more than happy to give advice and tips. Just don't expect GPS numbers for their favorite spots!

On October 24th we will hold our last General Meeting of the year. This is an important meeting where we will elect board members for 2024 so, please plan on attending, and please give serious consideration to volunteering for the board. The continued existence of this club 100% reliant on having enough members that are willing volunteer their time to help keep it operating. Plus serving on the board is a fun and rewarding experience.

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President's Corner (cont.)

This Sunday, October 22nd, we will hold our Annual Fall Tournament at Sea Hag Marina in Steinhatchee. As many of you know, the town of Steinhatchee was devastated by Hurricane Idalia. Sea Hag Marina was completely inundated, and they are still in the process of rebuilding. Sea Hag Marina has been a supporter of GOFC for many years and when we asked what the best way for the Club to give back to them and the town would be, they said come over here, have fun, and spend money! THAT we can certainly do! It looks like the weather is going to great (5 kts and 1-foot seas!!) and we hope to see everyone in Steinhatchee on the 22nd!

Your 2023 GOFC President,

Ryan Kremser

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From the Editor

Well fishing has been tough for your editor the past couple trips however enjoy getting out with the guys as always. Very disappointed with the shorten season for Gags that ended this past week, Mark, Ed, and I had planned on a last day attempt to get out there however trailer issues forced us to pivot and use another boat and target near shore species. Well as least we saved on gas costs!! Legal fish were hard to find but a great days with friends nevertheless.

I did enjoy a trip to see family in Maryland and took this picture with my bride of 30 years at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton. Neat to see the leaves starting to change and got this image with the sunbeams coming through.

On Tuesday's general meeting we welcome Cliff Braddock from B&S Trailers as our featured speaker. Located in Reddick FL, Cliff and his team have worked on a number of the members trailers including mine and we welcome his 40 plus years of experience to answer your questions about how to keep your trailer on the road!

Also note we now can sign up for next year's membership so look for the instructions later in the newsletter for details on how to do that.

Lastly we welcome Al Clements to the role of President next year and your editor will be pulling extra duty in 2024 as the VP. Please think about what types of speakers you will like to have next year and Al and I will work hard to line those up.

John Ebbs

2023 Newsletter Editor

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Upcoming Events

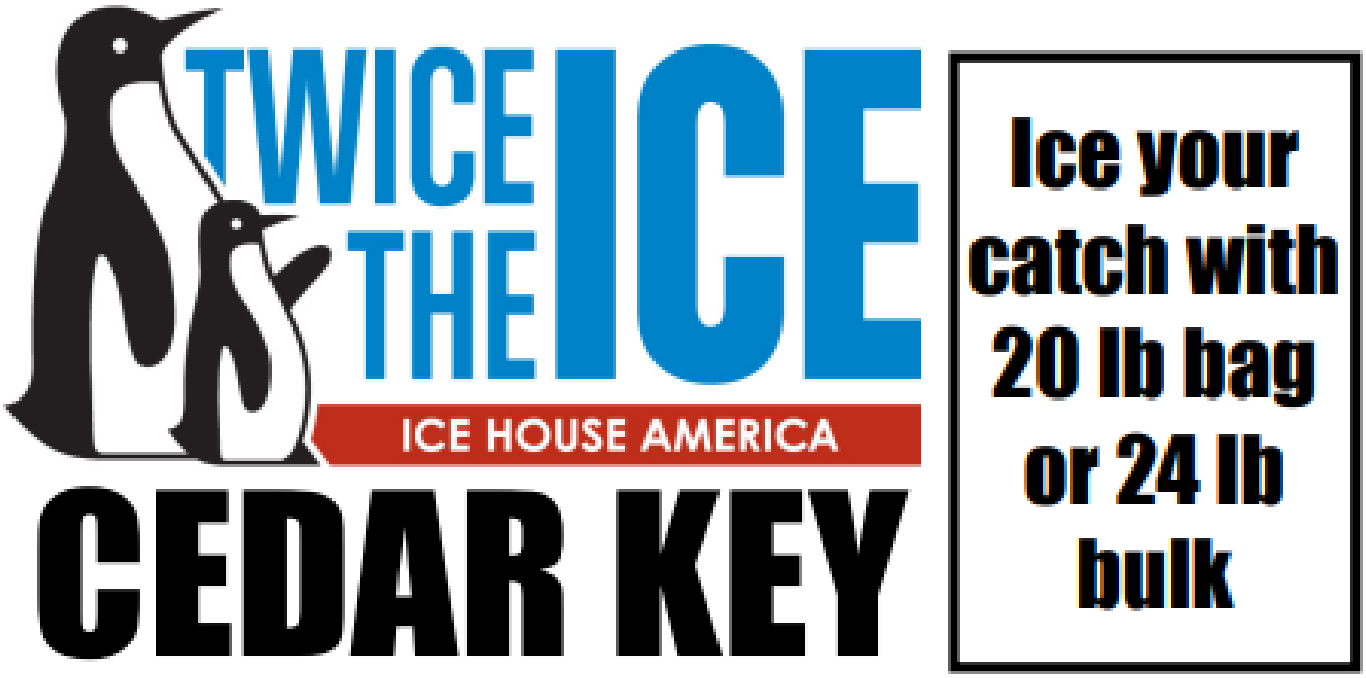
Fall Tournament - October 22nd, Sea Hag Marina. First light start, weigh in from 4 to 5pm.

October Meeting - Tuesday, 10/24/2023 - 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Speaker: Cliff Braddock, owner, B&S Trailers

November Social Event—BBQ at Ultimate Boat and RV Storage. Date: November 3rd, 6:00pm to 9:00pm

GOFC Auction and Seafood Boil —November 17th, 6:00pm to 9:00pm at the Ellett's

Trout-Redfish Tournament out of Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman's Bay:
1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes for heaviest redfish and 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for 3 trout aggregate.
Fun prize for redfish most spots. May add flounder or remove trout; Date : December 2nd



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Captain's Log

By Joe Richard

Self-Inflating PFD Vests

As baby boomers grow older but continue fishing, the popularity of self-inflating PFD vests keeps growing. The little vests are unobtrusive and nothing like old-style orange life jackets that become soggy and limp with age. Or the "bass boat" vests that are too hot to wear. Modern, self-inflating PFDs pack a wallop of CO2 inflation when they hit the water, or they can be inflated manually with a few puffs of air. We've learned to wear them all day while fishing and have become quite used to them, even wearing them around the marina at day's end. Our current favorite is the Onyx A/M 24 – very comfortable for all day and they feature both options.

While out on the boat, these inflatable PFD's are great for emergencies when life jackets can't be reached in time, and we all know bad things can happen fast while boating. Who wants to stroke out or pass out from heat exhaustion and fall overboard, hitting the water without flotation? One can also easily fall overboard for different reasons. I had a passenger go overboard while offshore, who was difficult to spot in five-foot whitecaps, by the time I turned the boat around 30 seconds later. I raced the boat back up our wake. Another minute, and our boat's wake would have faded away. She was treading water with nothing more buoyant than her Croc shoes...which didn't help much. Even in summer's warm water it would have been a sketchy swim back to the beach without flotation. And besides, we were 20 miles offshore.

I've had two guys tell me their lives were saved because they wore these inflatable vests. One of them fell off the dock after fishing, it was dark, and there was no ladder. He kept yelling and somebody heard him.

One young guy was wade fishing a shoreline, the wind blew a gust and his boat drifted away; he hadn't dropped anchor but relied on his power pole. He swam after it and drowned in seven feet of water. Wade fishermen, especially in the surf, have drowned without flotation. In the surf, one would use the self-inflator, rather than the auto-inflate that carries a water sensor. During winter, these PFD vests will keep you afloat when legs and arms become lethargic from cold water.

I prefer the auto-inflator model because we fish in open boats. There *is* a chance the vest can inflate in heavy rain or spray on a rough day, but the vest can be shucked or better yet, manually deflated by pushing the hose's air release button. Sail boaters have different concerns and often prefer manually-inflated PFDs because their boats can roll over, trapping them below decks if the vest inflates. That model is great, unless they're knocked unconscious and overboard by a swinging mast. They live a life of double jeopardy. We fishermen drive faster and simpler craft.

While taking out charters, I've carried around quite a few "old guys" in the boat in recent years. Many won't eat during a long day on the water (for other reasons), but they also barely drink water, either too modest or too ungainly to stand up and relieve themselves over the side, which can be hazardous. (See the stats below). Most of the bigger, older guys have bad knees and poor balance, so they simply don't drink fluids. If they're in pain, they can always use one of my buckets, however.

I carry different sizes for various tasks, like holding a few live baits, or cut bait. It's the little things that can save lives, and a one-gallon bucket can ease someone's pain without them toppling overboard. At that age, pulling them back aboard is problematic. Other small life-saving items can be attached to these PFD vests, starting with a plastic whistle and small penlight.

It's been said that fishing is an endless string of misadventures, with the occasional perfect day. But the possibilities for trouble out there are endless, and every year there are sad consequences. We fishing guides are not supposed to have misadventures, so I keep a close eye on my clients. I don't mind pulling over to shore in certain places for a break, and to stretch those legs. Sometimes I'll wade and throw the castnet while clients walk the beach. Or run for the bushes, for that matter. And they can do so without removing their PFD vests.

Grim Statistics

A recent study of 10 years of boating fatalities in Canada revealed that of hundreds of fishing-related drownings, only 10 percent were wearing a life jacket. In a quarter of those incidents there were no life jackets *on board*. (Canada doesn't require boaters wear life jackets, but they're supposed to be stored on the boat). In the remaining fatalities, there were PFDs aboard but not used. The report stated that more fishermen drowned than swimmers. More fishermen died than from powerboats, canoeists, scuba divers, sailors and kayakers combined. Very often they were within 50 yards of shore.

There are of course differences between Canada and Florida fishing. They have very cold water to deal with, so hypothermia is a big factor there, while we often get 90 degree water during summer, warm enough to float around for two days. And Canadians are fond of small, high-sided aluminum boats.

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Another grim statistic: on average, 225 Canadians fell overboard and perished each year *while urinating*.

Stand up and topple out of a boat, and few of us near retirement age have the upper body strength to climb back aboard while wearing wet soggy clothes. Unless the boat has low sides or a stern mount for climbing aboard. For swimmers too big to be hauled aboard by fishing buddies, the only recourse is towing them to shallow water, or calling the Coast Guard. Regardless, it makes sense to wear a PFD vest. And while you're at it, bring a small bucket so anglers can sit and keep a low center of gravity, while communing with nature.

PFD Maintenance

One can't just wear these PFD vests in a harsh climate and expect them to always work when needed; they have to be maintained. The outer coating is canvas-tough, but the inner air bladder is plastic and must be checked for leaks, which can be done by holding it underwater in the bathtub. The auto-inflate device, called a bobbin, is sensitive to water and should be inspected for corrosion. Manually inflated PFDs aren't as complicated because a small hose inflates them.

The self-inflators carry a small green tab, which means the PFD is armed with CO2 and ready to inflate. A red tab means the vest can only be manually inflated and needs service for auto inflation. In that case, you'll need a re-arming kit. The small CO2 canister should be inspected for corrosion or leaks. You don't want to wear that PFD for several years, then hit the water and not have it work, which could be just as fatal as a parachute that doesn't open. The PFD should be inspected every two to three months if the vest is worn on a regular basis, especially when boating in a hot and humid environment where corrosion is a factor. These vests have cloth "care instructions" tabs sewn inside the fabric cover that pop out and also provide the part number for the re-arming kit containing the cylinder, bobbin and other replacement parts.

You now can renew your GOFC Membership for 2024!

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.

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Charlie's Kitchen
By Charlie Courtney

More Air Fryer Recipes

Last month I covered the basics of air frying seafood and provided a couple of "starter" recipes. Here are several more recipes for your enjoyment. Many more recipes can be found by using the search terms "Air Fryer Seafood Recipes".

1. Air Fried Crumbed Fish

This simple recipe from allrecipes.com will work with any mild white fish. The fillets are dredged in dry bread crumbs after being lightly moistened with an egg wash instead of battered because a loose, drippy batter does poorly in an air fryer.

Prep Time: 10 mins
Cook Time: 15 mins
Servings: 4

Ingredients

1 cup dry bread crumbs
¼ cup vegetable oil
4 flounder fillets
1 egg, beaten
1 lemon, sliced

Directions

Preheat an air fryer to 350 degrees.

Place bread crumbs and oil into a shallow bowl; stir until mixture becomes loose and crumbly.

Dip the fish fillets into the beaten egg and shake off any excess. Tiger dip the fillets into the bread crumb mixture, taking care to coat evenly and fully.

Lay the coated fillets gently in the air fryer basket and cook in the preheated air fryer until the fish flakes easily with a fork, about 12 minutes.

Garnish with lemon slices; serve.

2. Air Fryer Lemon Pepper Shrimp

This is another easy to make recipe from allrecipes.com. This is a great use for all those shrimp you caught in Palatka this fall — you did get over there to enjoy the best run of St. Johns River white shrimp seen in years? If not, they still may be around through October.

Prep Time: 5 mins
Cook Time: 10 mins
Servings: 2

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 lemon, juiced

1 teaspoon lemon pepper

¼ teaspoon paprika

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

12 ounces uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 lemon, sliced

Directions

Gather all ingredients. Preheat an air fryer to 400 degrees according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Combine oil, lemon juice, lemon pepper, paprika, and garlic powder in a bowl. Add shrimp and toss to coat.

Cook the shrimp in the preheated air fryer until they are bright pink on the outside and the meat is opaque, about 6 to 8 minutes. Serve with lemon slices.

Charlie's Kitchen (cont.)

3. Air Fryer Spicy Bay Scallops

Here is a third recipe from allrecipes.com. Hopefully you gathered a nice supply of bay scallops from our Gulf coastal communities before Hurricane Idalia shut everything down. These spicy scallops are good on their own or can be served in lettuce wraps, tacos, salads, served over rice, pasta, etc. Serve with lemon wedges if desired.

Prep Time: 5 mins
Cook Time: 10 mins
Servings: 4

Ingredients

1 pound bay scallops, rinsed and patted dry

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

2 teaspoons chili powder

2 teaspoons olive oil

1 teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

⅛ teaspoon cayenne red pepper

Directions

Preheat an air fryer to 400 degrees.

Combine the bay scallops, smoked paprika, chili powder, olive oil, garlic powder, pepper, and cayenne pepper in a bowl; stir until evenly combined. Transfer to the air fryer basket.

Air fry until the scallops are cooked through, about 8 minutes, shaking the basket halfway through the cooking time.

_____

"In the hands of an able cook, fish can become an inexhaustible source of perpetual delight."

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

4. Easy Air Fryer Crab Cakes

This recipe by Alyssa Rivers can be found on therecipecritic.com. Air fryer crab cakes are an amazing appetizer that comes together in a snap! Each bite is tender, savory, and packed with all the crab flavor you crave!

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes
Servings: 4 crab cakes

Ingredients

1 pound lump crabmeat

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup Panko

1/4 cup flour

1 large egg

2 Tablespoons green onion sliced

1/2 red bell pepper finely diced

1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1 Tablespoon cajun seasoning
juice of half of a lemon

Instructions

In a large bowl add the crabmeat, mayonnaise, Panko, flour, egg, green onion, bell pepper, Worcestershire sauce, cajun seasoning, and the juice of a lemon. Mix together and shape into patties.

Place in the basket of a preheated air fryer. Cook at 360 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.

_____

I hope you enjoyed these recipes. Next month I will talk about ways of preserving your catch with emphasis on vacuum sealing for freezing.

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Marine Medicine Pearls

By Mark Rustemier M.D.

PEARL; Stop the Bleeding

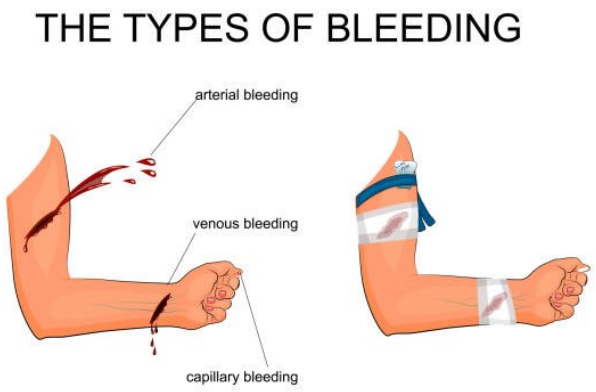
Activities on the water; fishing, diving, water skiing and even scalloping can put a person at risk for an injury with significant bleeding. So, what do you do when the blood is not coming from the fish?

Fillet knives, boat propellors and even sharks present the possibility of serious injury and bleeding. Some people have the added risk of being on prescribed anticoagulant medication or just daily aspirin which can make stopping bleeding more of a challenge.

Most injuries will involve venous bleeding, which is low pressure bleeding and usually responds to pressure. In more severe injuries involving an arterial injury, this blood is under higher pressure and will "pump" out of the wound and is more life threatening.

The first step to control bleeding is to apply a dressing with pressure, starting with the worst injury. This can be gauze from a medical kit or a T-shirt, put over the wound with pressure from the heal of your hand. Wear gloves if available. Hold the pressure until the bleeding stops. Then apply a pressure dressing if available in your medical kit. If the bleeding can not be stopped then a tourniquet should be applied to an extremity injury and EMS/Coast Guard notified.

If a commercial tourniquet is available that is ideal. If not then a triangular bandage from your medical kit can be used. Otherwise, a 1–2-inch bandage, piece of cloth, tie or bandana can be used, but shoelaces are too narrow and not preferred. You also need a windlass (rod) to help twist the tourniquet. This can be a screwdriver, pen, metal utensil or dowel. Tourniquets are painful and the victim should be forewarned. Ever had a blood pressure cuff on too long or an overly tight rubber tourniquet for a blood draw?



Apply the cloth bandage 2-4 inches above the bleeding and not over a joint. Tie with a half knot. Then place the windlass (rod) over the half knot and tie another half knot to hold in place.

Commercial Tourniquet

Then twist the windlass 1-2 times or until the bleeding stops. Secure the windlass so it will stay in place. The current recommendation is to leave the tourniquet on until medical personnel can evaluate and remove it.

Extremities can be saved even when a tourniquet is left on up to 4 hours. MAKE NOTE OF THE TIME THE TOURNIQUET WAS APPLIED; medical personnel will need to know the duration.

What if the injury involves the head, chest or abdomen? Again, start with topical pressure as above and if bleeding persists from a large wound, then the it will need to be packed with dressing. The goal is to apply direct pressure to the area of arterial bleeding with the packing. Maintain pressure once the packing is done.

Just remember;

- Apply dressing to wound with direct pressure until bleeding stops.
- If bleeding persists in an extremity, apply a tourniquet until the bleeding stops and leave on until medical personnel assess and remove it.
- If bleeding persists on the head or trunk, pack the wound with dressing with pressure on the arterial bleeding site.

This is information you hope to never need. However just last June, 2022 a man saved his 17-year-old sisters life by applying a tourniquet to her leg after a serious shark attack while scalloping in Keaton Beach.

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.

Ellett Contest standings as of Mid October

Men's Division

Ellett, Ed	142.9
Jaworski, Tom	140.8
Hinton, Chic	135.53
Reed, Dale	134.45
Dumas, Mike	131.2
Vining, Carl	112.61
Horn, Phil	83.18
Richard, Joe	75.14
Byatt, John	70.93
Ebbs, John	58.72

Ladies Division

1	Cross, Dawn	85.06
2	Vining, Staci	72.79
3	Czerwien, Susan	30.58
4	Richard, Amy	25
5	Tavarez, Miriam	25
6	Cutwright,Melvina	25

GET READY FOR FALL INSHORE FISHING

By Al Clements

Fall is here! The fish are moving and feeding much different than they did in the heat of the summer. Many anglers think that fish seek back water in the fall due to water temperature. Actually, the fish move as a result of the hours of sunlight in a 24 hour period.

Being a kayak fisherman, I get real excited about the fall fishing season. I find that the fish are more aggressive in their feeding habits. October is a good time to fish the mouth of creeks and also the creek itself. I look for creeks that have a lot of different water depths. Creeks that have good drop offs and shallow banks are ideal feeding paths for Trout and Redfish. The reason for this is that the bait is moving in those areas. Where the bait is, the fish are.

October baits are large, so I choose the five -to-six-inch soft plastics. Color will depend on the clarity of the water. The best action I have found is to allow the bait to hit the bottom and then give it jerk or two with the rod and allow it to rest back on the bottom. I slow my presentation down in the fall and when winter comes, I fish extremely slow.

Kayak fishing allows me to go all the way to the end of a creek. Many of these creeks have rocks, so fishing from a gas motor can be hazardous. Also, when the late fall sets in we run into much lower tides.

Not unusual to hear of fisherman finding themselves stuck in the mud waiting for the high tide to float them to safety. I know this firsthand!

I personally like to fish Steinhatchee because of the many creeks that are close together and all are totally different in water depth. Some are no more than 3 feet deep, while one hundred yards away the creek is 18 feet deep. You don't need a boat that runs 50 mph when fishing inshore for large fish. Knowing where the bait is, and the pattern of the targeting fish will produce a great day on the water.

As the days get shorter, I go from soft plastics to topwater or Paul Browns. In the late fall through winter, I fish topwater all day. It is a myth that topwater baits should only be used during early morning or overcast skies. I catch my largest fish in the fall and winter using topwater bait with the blue bird skies above.

This week I will start my first cast just before sunlight about 200 yards off the mouth of Sink Creek in Steinhatchee. My choice of lure will be a large topwater bait five inches in length. At sunlight I will start to slowly move toward the mouth while using a large soft plastic as my search bait. An hour of fishing around or in the mouth I will start moving in the creek searching for bait. I don't throw anything in the creek until I see bait. If I don't see bait, I get out of that creek and fish the mouth again looking for drop offs. I will take about two hours of fishing in this creek until I move to my next spot.

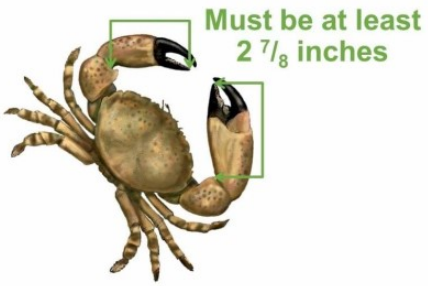
Inshore fishing requires you to look on Google Earth to plan your day. Nothing is more fun than to have a plan that goes exactly right.

Don't make the mistake of fishing in the fall the same way you fished last summer. Fish feed where the bait is. Understanding how the bait reacts to conditions is to know where you are most likely to find the fish.

Items of Interest—Stone Crab Regulations

Minimum Size Limit: 2 7/8 inches; only claws may be harvested.

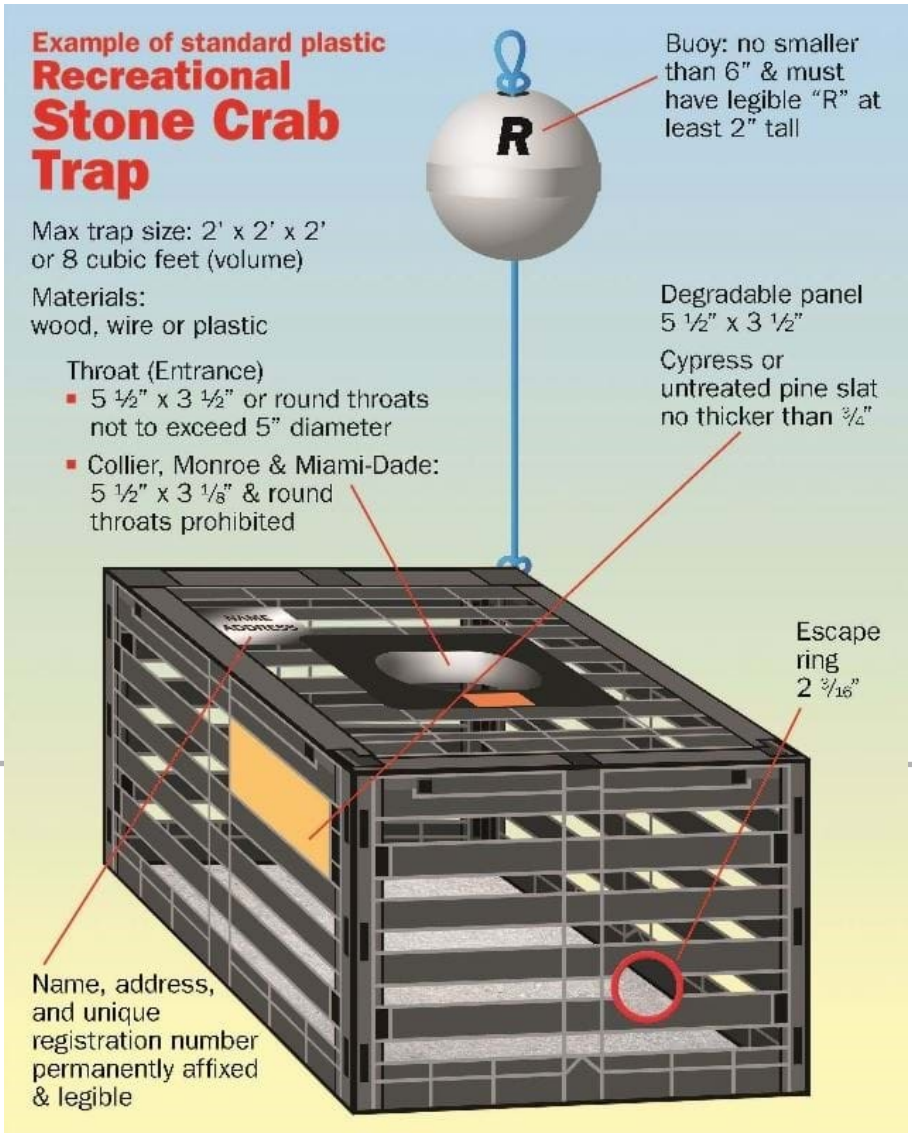
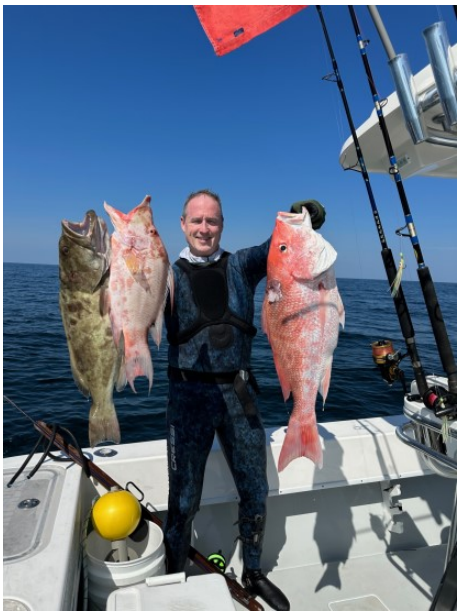
Daily Bag Limit: 1 gallon of claws per person or 2 gallons per vessel, whichever is less.



Harvest from egg-bearing crabs prohibited.

State Waters Harvest Seasons: Open Oct. 15 - May 1 (closed on May 2)

Traps may be placed in the water 10 days prior to the opening of the season, but once placed, you may not tend to the traps until the start of the season



Parting Pics