The Acute Angler

November, 2023
Volume 56, Number 11

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

November Hot Shot

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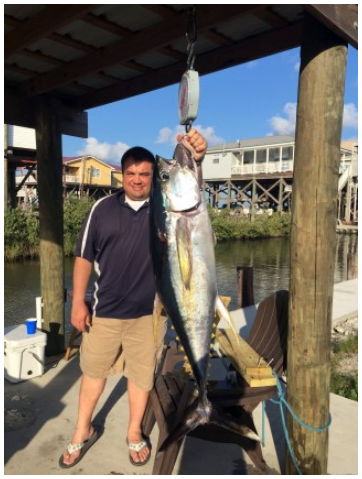

Last Friday night the club held its annual Auction event at the Ellett's lovely home near Payne's Prairie. Virgil's low country boil and clam chowder were amazing as always and this year the menu even featured lobster tails as a special treat! Club members brought yummy deserts and the Ellet's had the hot chocolate and smores station set to go. On top of that we had a fantastic auction with mind boggling deals. I personally scored a beautiful, practically new Abu Garcia reel attached to a medium action St. Croix rod for price so low I'm embarrassed to mention it. If you're not attending the club's annual auctions, you're really missing out!

Special thanks to Russ and Eileen Roy and all those who donated their lightly used gear to make this one of the best hauls in recent memory! The annual auction is an important fundraiser for the club each year plus it's a lot of fun!

Coming up on December 9th, we'll have our last tournament and final club event for 2024, the Redfish and Seatrout Roundup which will be held at the Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman's Bay. The weigh-in will be held at the Marina's Outdoor Tiki Bar/Restaurant from 3:00 – 4:00. There will be prizes for the three largest redfish and the three larges trout, plus a special prize for the redfish with the most spots! We hope to see you there!

Your 2023 GOFC President,

Ryan Kremser

From the Editor

27 and a quarter inch…

Yep, that is the size of the big red in the picture your editor is holding. 1/4" of an inch too big to keep for the Ellett contest. Would have been a contestant to be the top redfish for sure if legal. Was part of a good day on the water with Tim and next month I will be sharing some of the tips and techniques from one of our master anglers for skinny water, fall fishing. Speaking of fall fishing, In this months edition we have next years GOFC President Al Clements sharing his recommendations on how to approach fishing the cooler months along with a update from Chic on finally getting his Kingfish for the contest, just in time before they leave our waters for warmer places.

Speaking of leaving, it is with great sadness our fishing community is saying goodbye to Gary Simpson who after many decades of working at and then running the Tackle Box, is retiring to yes, spend more time fishing. We lose a great local shop that many of us will miss dearly.

Having a place to talk shop, get advice, get rods repaired and reels serviced was priceless and, while we wish Gary fair winds and following seas, he and the services offered will be missed. We will see you on the water Gary!

With the Tackle Box closing, we are also losing our rod and reel repair services. Their rod repairman, Rick Pena, will continue to repair rods and over the short-term plans to use the former Tackle Box store as the drop off/pick up point. He can be reached at 352-317-4426 or rickpena1363@gmail.com. Regrettably, no one has come forward to offer reel repair services thus far. I have used Rick myself and he does great work at a fair price.

Well it is time for thinking about next year and one public service announcement I can share is that our dues are going up in 2024 to $60 a family. We have had the same price for decades now but with increased prices for everything our board made the difficult but necessary decision to raise our dues. The good news is if you renewal before December 31st, you can do so for the old price of $50! Easy to do, just look for the instruction box here in the newsletter that has the link to our website and using PayPal you can fill out the form and renew.

John Ebbs

2023 Newsletter Editor

Last Event for 2023!!

The 2023 GOFC Trout and Redfish Roundup will be held on Saturday, December 9th at the Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman's Bay

The tournament is free and open to all club members in good standing with a current waiver of liability on file with the GOFC. Non-member guests are invited with our standard set of requirements. For full information please refer to the club emails.

Start time is safe light with the weigh in from 3:00pm to 4:00pm.

Weather dates on Sunday the 10th and Saturday the 16th.

To register a guest or for any details not found in the emails contact **John Patrick at 352-464-0825**

Prizes will be awarded by weight. All fish must be of legal size and harvested in accordance with the clubs official rule and FWC regulations.

Heaviest Sea Trout and Heaviest Red Fish with both have 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes of $100, $75, and $50 each.

Most spots on a Redfish will have a prize of $50.

Interpretation of the tournament rules shall be at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director.

Official Club Rules: https://gofc.us/rules/

Captain's Log

By Joe Richard

Bad Santa

Another holiday season makes me think about gifts received over the years from a well-meaning Santa who was always supportive of my outdoor interests. However, sometimes he didn't quite understand my equipment used or needed. Or how fishing has changed over the years. I'm hoping this letter is found by Mrs. Santa or Marcus, your head elf.

For starters, I don't need more push-button reels or "poles" from Aunt Martha. My last Zebco was yanked overboard in 1968. While they're great for beginners, today I use spin reels (size 4000) and baitcaster reels for those larger inshore species (snook, cobia and tripletail). The fishing rods I'd rather inspect at the store, preferring graphite in the 7-8 foot range. That allows for a good bend when the big ones bite, but with strength. Not too flexible and not too stiff. Just right.

No more stainless steel J-hooks, either. I'm averse to leaving these hooks in fish; stainless lasts for years in salt water and are dangerous for the next fish that eats the first one—or a pelican, osprey, shark or dolphin. For years, my favorite inshore hook has been the brown, 6/0 non-offset circle hook. They have a great record for lip-hooking fish instead of being swallowed. And they begin to rust in a week, if I don't rinse them. That means if they end up in a fish, they degrade quickly.

If you're packing fishing line into that bag of goodies at the North Pole, save the braid line for someone else. One little wind knot, and that reel is done for the day. Maybe that's why tournament guys carry so many rods on the boat.

I still use old-fashioned Ande or Berkley Big Game monofilament, which have caught many world records and consistently deliver fish to the boat.

I can always use a new pair of fishing gloves, but have become picky after trying a number of brands in the past dozen years. Many are made for sun protection and mountain trout streams—not handling lots of fish. Today I use Fish Monkey gloves with their sewed on leather pads and comfortable, stretchy fabric (Size XL).

If you're going to leave needlenose pliers in my stocking, be sure they're an 8-inch model coated with something that will slow down the rust. The 6-inch variety doesn't have enough torque for removing stubborn fish hooks and some brands begin to rust overnight, even when cleaning and oiling them after every trip. Spray-painting only slows the inevitable. I have noticed the better pairs sport bright orange or red stripes, which helps locate them quickly in a pinch, when fish are flopping on deck.

Stingray leggings? Not so much. I've tried wearing them wading and they kept floating up my legs, making it difficult to walk. I'll take my chances with long fishing pants, moving slowly, shuffling feet, and scanning the bottom when possible. Or better yet, staying in a dry boat. It's worked so far. There are many reasons to "never get off the boat."

I *really* don't need a 30-foot cord fish stringer. Bag and size limits have greatly changed and I don't mind releasing fish. Years ago those stringers were needed when we waded more and there were no bag limits on fish. The long cord was also meant to mostly keep sharks away from wading anglers. Mostly. These days, anchored on a shoreline, I use a short cord stringer, about six feet, attached to a boat cleat with the fish swimming alongside. In this way, a 20-inch redfish can be replaced with a 25-inch redfish. Those reds are tough and a released fish always readily swim away. When we're ready to go, I sometimes snip a gill on each fish, which bleeds them before icing them down.

Long sleeve fishing shirts are great, but no more short sleeves, thanks. The skin doctor has carved on me enough. Old-fashioned 100% cotton is by far the best.

Also, no more mushroom anchors under the Christmas tree. They work in lakes but in the Gulf, not so much. In salt water we use fluke anchors with a few feet of galvanized chain that will *hold* bottom and keep your boat from dragging anchor across a choice oyster reef during a hot trout bite…Or while wading, watching the boat float away in afternoon wave chops…Or you find the boat has dragged anchor and wound up on the beach 20 miles from anywhere. If you have a grapnel anchor laying around, about 9 pounds, that's handy for anchoring both ends of the boat.

I'm good on fillet knives, thanks. My Bubba Blade carves up big-boned fish—like redfish or almost any offshore fish—and is sharp enough to make good fillets. My long, thin Dexter fillet knife glides through trout and Spanish mackerel easily and without wasting meat. I also have an assortment of cheap bait knives that are easily sharpened before each trip. With the handles spray-painted orange, so they can be found quickly on a choppy day when knives and loose gear migrate to the back of the boat. You want to spot them quickly when the action is on. Or a knife is bouncing around on the gas hose, for that matter.

While I've always appreciated camping gear, I think those days are mostly behind me. For some reason, it's getting more difficult to sleep on the ground and jump up for my mandatory two cups of black coffee. Especially after a near-sleepless night of bright moonlight or slamming truck doors from nearby campers. Things are different now from camping in our youth with a minimum of equipment. Jumping up on a forested shoreline and mixing Tang with lake water for breakfast. Today, I'd rather stay at some no-tell motel with good earplugs, rather than sleep in a flooded tent with lightning all around. As for backpacking gear, that's definitely out. You got your last klick out of Junior.

No need for more Igloos, my generic term for fish box. I already have five, in all different sizes for different jobs. One even has wheels for castnetting on the beach. The thicker Gott is for long, hot days on the Gulf.

The Igloo is a little longer, for keeping tournament fish straight and flat. The longest box is for offshore work. My biggest cooler ever, a five-foot SSI nicknamed the “kingfish coffin,” was traded years ago to Terrell, who cooks barbecue on Waldo Road. Said he needed a big ice chest for his ribs. I traded it for a few free dinners, freeing up much space in my garage.

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Charlie's Kitchen
By Charlie Courtney

PRESERVING SEAFOOD: SHRIMP

This is the first in a series of articles about how to preserve your seafood, and for this month I will talk about shrimp.

There's nothing quite like the satisfaction of hauling in a bountiful catch of fresh shrimp. Whether you've netted them yourself or acquired them from a local fisherman, the key to preserving the flavor and texture of these succulent crustaceans lies in proper storage. With a few simple steps, you can ensure that your freshly caught shrimp stay fresh, delicious, and ready for culinary adventures.

1. Chill Quickly:

The moment your shrimp are caught, it's crucial to cool them rapidly to maintain their quality. Place them in a cooler or an ice-filled container to slow down bacterial growth and enzymatic reactions that could lead to spoilage. Make sure there's a layer of ice between the shrimp and the container to create a uniform cooling effect.

2 Clean and Devein:

Once you are back home, it's time to clean and devein the shrimp. Rinse them under cold running water to remove any residual seawater, mud, or debris. Use a small knife or shrimp deveiner to carefully remove the digestive tract along the back of each shrimp. This not only enhances the taste but also improves the overall appearance of the dish. Shrimp store best with the head and shell left on. If you either behead or completely shell your shrimp, just be aware that they will not store in the freezer for as long as **intact shrimp.**

3. Package:

For longer-term storage, consider packaging the shrimp in airtight containers or vacuum-sealed bags. This helps prevent freezer burn and keeps the shrimp from absorbing odors from the freezer. Label the packages with the date of capture to keep track of freshness and ensure a first-in, first-out approach to consumption.

4. Freeze:

Freezing is the best way to preserve the freshness of your catch. However, it's important to freeze the shrimp properly. Arrange them in a single layer on a baking sheet and place them in the freezer for a few hours. Once individually frozen, transfer the shrimp to a freezer bag, removing as much air as possible before sealing or use a vacuum sealer. This method prevents the shrimp from clumping together and makes it easier to portion out what you need. Alternatively, if you know your portion sizes, freeze enough in each bag to make one meal for your family.

5. Choose the Right Storage Duration:

Shrimp can be stored in the freezer for up to six months without a significant loss in quality. Beyond this time frame, they may still be safe to eat, but their texture and flavor may deteriorate. For shorter storage periods, refrigeration at temperatures just above freezing is suitable only for a day or two.

6. Thaw with Care:

When you're ready to use your frozen shrimp, opt for gradual thawing in the refrigerator. This process ensures a slow, even thaw and helps maintain the shrimp's texture. Avoid using warm water or the microwave, as rapid thawing can lead to a loss of moisture and compromise the shrimp's taste and tenderness.

Conclusion:

Preserving the exquisite taste and texture of freshly caught shrimp involves a combination of prompt cooling, proper cleaning, efficient packaging, and smart freezing techniques. By following these steps, you can enjoy the fruits of your fishing labor for months to come, bringing the flavors of the sea to your table whenever the mood strikes.

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Marine Medicine Pearls

By Mark Rustemier M.D.

PEARL; **DO NOT HYPERVENTILATE BEFORE DIVING UNDERWATER**

Anyone who swims, dives, or has a pool needs to be aware of the risk of **Underwater Hypoxic Blackout**. You can prevent a death.

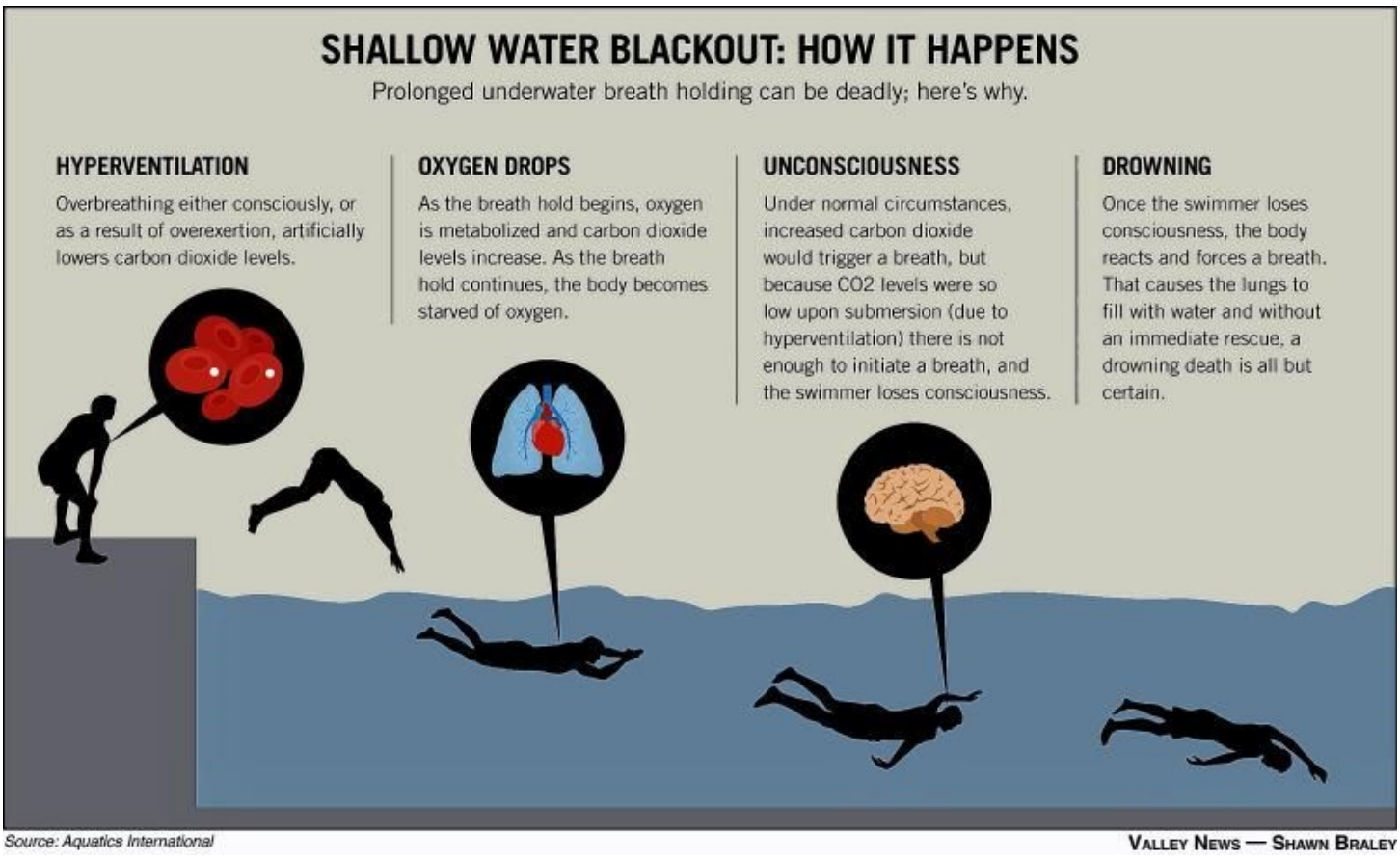
There are two varieties: the more common Shallow Water Blackout and then Deep-Water Blackout (Ascent Blackout). Both end up with the swimmer/diver having lack of oxygen to the brain (i.e., hypoxia) and passing out. Both can happen to someone breath holding underwater independent of fitness.

Shallow Water Blackout typically occurs in water less than 15 feet but may happen deeper. Commonly taking place in a pool while swimming underwater laps or during shallow water free diving. To prevent this, it helps to understand the physiologic cause.

Our bodies use Oxygen during exercise and give off Carbon Dioxide which is exchanged in the lungs. During breath holding it is the rising level of pCO2 (partial pressure of CO2 in the blood) that triggers the urge to breath, NOT the p02 (partial pressure of 02).

This is the basis of the whole problem. Low 02 does not stimulate breathing. It seems we were not designed or evolved to hold our breaths underwater for extended periods.

So, when a person hyperventilates before breath holding underwater, they blow off significant CO2 lowering pC02 while only gaining minimal to no p02. Then while swimming underwater the pC02 rises, while the p02 falls. Your brain needs oxygen, but your breathing is stimulated only by high pC02. The reality is, hyperventilation is a set up for passing out while holding your breath underwater. The 02 gets used up BEFORE the now lowered pC02 rises enough to stimulate breathing and you blackout. Victims can die unnoticed in a shallow pool with people standing poolside or a solo free diver can disappear in the ocean. In Shallow Water Blackout, hyperventilation is often the culprit…don't do it.



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The related Deep-Water Blackout is a type of Hypoxic Blackout as well but usually happens in free dives over 30 feet when the victim passes out on ascent, hence Ascent Blackout. The physiologic mechanism is different than Shallow Water Blackout. In this case, the free diver is returning to the surface when they get a precipitous fall in p02. Several factors are in play. The diver has dropping 02 just being at end of a dive. The 02 concentration in the lungs drops further due to decreasing water pressure on ascension expanding the lung volume, decreasing oxygen concentration. There is also redistribution of arterial blood from the core to the extremities. All three factors cause hypoxia of the brain and Hypoxic Blackout just before the diver surfaces.

Death occurs in these cases by the victim breathing in water and "drowning" or from frank suffocation due to "no breathing".

Treatment is to start Basic Life Support/CPR and Advanced Life Support if needed. If CPR is successful in restoring consciousness in drowning victims, 95% recover completely. Start BLS ASAP. Prognosis is better with shorter duration of hypoxia and cooler water temperatures.

There are strategies for prevention.

No hyperventilation before breath holding under water, Single breath only.

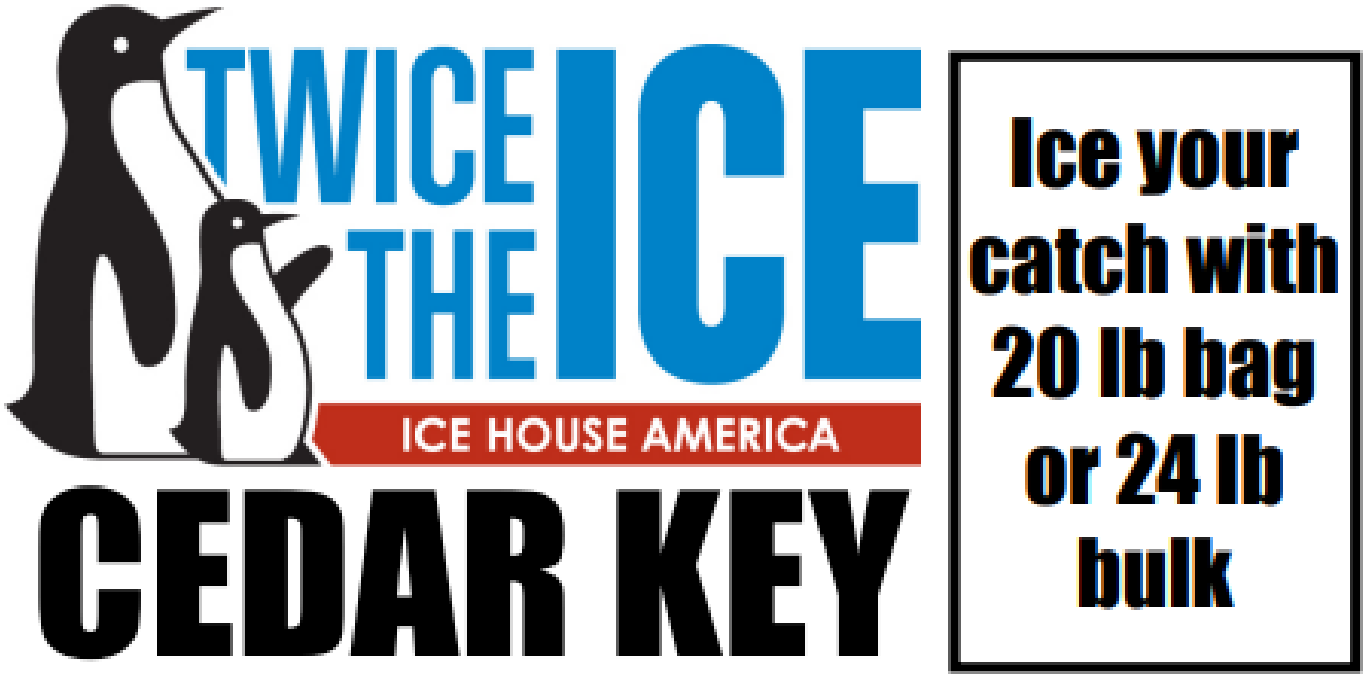
Free dive with a buddy; one up, one down

If anxious, relaxation techniques before breath holding.

Rest and breath normally for 30-60 seconds between dives to equilibrate C02.

Teach young swimmers to avoid hyperventilation!

You never know when you might save someone. While living in Michigan but on vacation in Florida, my father a high school teacher, pulled a teenage boy off the bottom of the hotel pool and started CPR. The boy recovered immediately and looking back most likely had Shallow Water Blackout. The boy was fine and my dad got a free drink from the bar.



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FALL INSHORE FISHING

Al Clements
2024 GOFC President Elect

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

Being a kayak fisherman, I get really 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 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.

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Let's Go Fishing!

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Chic and his King

It's the last week of October and I have been trying to catch Kingfish since April with no success. all I need is a king and a blue fish to complete my goal to catch all Ten species this year. Catching a king and bluefish would also enhance my chances to place in the top three in the Elliot point system.

Gary Bowden and I launched at Cedar Key and headed to seahorse reef to catch a few Spanish and some live bait and then head 3 mile north to the Kingfish area. We troll jigs and spoons on the reef and caught Spanish Mackerel up to 3 pounds, and several ladyfish and a few pinfish.

The weather was perfect for my Carolina Skiff. The seas were 1 foot or less when we arrived at the Kingfish area, and we locked my iPilot over a rock pile and then put out one of my homemade chum blocks. The chum block was made from a Bonita I caught on a previous trip and battled it for 20 minutes thinking and hoping it was a king.

I rigged a 19-inch ladyfish with a 7/0 circle hook in its lips and a number 4 treble stinger hook stuck in its side under a sliding cork set 8 foot deep attached to a heavy-duty spinning rod.

After watching the cork for over an hour it disappeared, the reel started smoking, and it was game on. We had two other rods out and Gary reeled in one and I told him I was about to get spooled, so he started the motor to gain some line only to discover that the other line was wrapped in the prop. I had the remote control for the iPilot around my neck and was able to head toward the king fish and gain back some line.

I had Gary get the gaff out and he said he had never gaffed a fish before. I told him I hoped he was a fast learner. After the king made six trips by the boat allowing us to see how large it was, Gary was able to easily Gaff it on the first try and after a little struggle pulled it in the boat. We both agreed it was mission accomplished and time to return to the ramp with a nice 27-pound Kingfish!

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