The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

In this Edition

President's Message	P1
Captain's Log	P3
Crystal River report	P6
Fishing Wisdom	P8
Shark Bite Risk	P9
Charlie's Kitchen	P11
Steinhatchee report	P14
What's in Season	P16
GOFC Merchandise	P18

President's Message

Gosh it is hot out there, of course we are now into a typical summer weather pattern with storms in the afternoons but interestingly enough we are getting lots more in the mornings than I remember in years past. Unfortunately, that caused us to postpone the scalloping "learn-a-ment" we were planning, hopefully better conditions will allow us to consider a later date.

I know many of us are really gearing up for the Gag season which starts on September 1st and is scheduled (for now) for the entire month. My personal hope is to get out at least 4-6 times. One of those trips will be my first time with Sea Hag's Chase Norwood as we chase BIG fish in deep waters I don't get to visit normally. Unfortunately, some bad news is that the Gators play at home 3 of the 4 weeks in September so those Saturdays are out, good news is I am retired so I get to go during the week!!!

This might be one of the best scalloping seasons in recent years so if you are able to dodge the storms, get out there, look for the fleet and clear water. Our Captain Dale Reed reports his last charter got their limit in two hours and that is the same as past President Ryan has reported as well. Early start, look for clear water in 3 to 7 feet, and get back to the ramp by 11 or so.

No fishing reports for me this past month as Kay and I had a marathon two & a half week road trip vacation, driving up the east coast to visit with family and friends, then to Maine, into Canada, back into Maine for a number of days in Acadia National Park (note our GOFC hat on the top of Cadillac Mountain, first place in the US to see the sun rise), on to Montreal for a few days, then dropped into Michigan to see her family. Body is still recovering! Amazing is I think we took our Florida heat on the trip with us; every day at each of the stops it was in the low nineties and of course after we left it dropped…

As noted last month, I attended iCast for the third year in a row. This year I tried to pace myself a bit better and only did two of the three days! Ken Knopf joined me on day one, and then on day three I rode along with member Mel Lauderdale. We saw many friends of the club, established some new contacts, and might have scored a significant score with a potential new relationship with West Marine. At our next meeting I will share that with you all. One connection is a shirt vendor I had discussed working with to get our fishing shirts made from. Unfortunately, I had lost his information, however we reconnected and we have ordered new Performance Long Sleeved Hoodies with a built-in face mask. These will come in three colors, and we should have them available at the next meeting!

On my personal research list; the Dusky this fall will be getting a trolling motor so I can spot lock better on structure and hard bottom. I came away impressed with the Garmin Kraken trolling motor as it has a built-in mount on the Propeller head for a forward scan sonar transducer. That allows the angler to look at shorelines, channel markers, crab buoys, etc. and see if anything is at home. Pricey investment however!

This fall we will have three more general meetings, our fall, grouper, and redfish round-up Tournaments, the Ellett Auction, and maybe even a BBQ social at our good friends at Ultimate Boat and RV storage so plenty of activities to look forward to!

Hope to see you at some of our events and on the water! So, until then, tight lines and following seas to all.

John Ebbs — 2025 to 2026 GOFC President
352-213-4350

The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

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The Acute Angler

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Captain's Log

By Joe Richard

The Right Shoes

One of our young club members hopped out of the boat in June to wade for redfish where oysters are plentiful. Unfortunately, he was wearing a pair of rubber "slide shower sandals" with lots of exposed feet. He soon received a nasty oyster cut, which may have hindered his fishing.

It's best to learn young and I have this thing about wearing proper shoes while fishing. Back in the 9th grade we'd just brought my 12-foot aluminum boat down the bay. It was a chilly boat ride, though sunny, and we were glad to reach the marina. My friend kicked off his shoes and strolled happily across the marina's un-mowed lawn, but then stumbled over a piece of old fashioned, Coke bottle glass. His big toe was in bad shape, part of it missing, and our day went downhill fast and they hauled him off to the hospital. Remembering that day still makes me wince and ever since, I've worn shoes while fishing.

You really want a proven pair of shoes and avoid something borrowed. Twice I've put on loaner shoes for fishing trips and been hurt, in fact my worst two injuries ever.

One incident happened at our jetties in Texas. My friend's dad was a football coach and every May he was left with half a dozen pairs of sport shoes left behind in the lockers. A last-minute summer trip to the rocks in 1978 was in order, so I grabbed a pair of low-sided track shoes popular back then and we headed out. Stepping out to the jetties, my feet slipped on the boat's fiberglass bow and went out from under me. I landed almost face-first on that oyster and barnacle-covered wall, sticking my hands out at the last moment. I sprawled half in the water, my hands chewed up. (If only we'd had gloves back then; today I wear Fish Monkey gloves). I drove the boat and then truck straight the hospital, where I'll spare the details, except they probably heard me screech on the next floor when that oyster was yanked out of my palm. Nice work, but maybe next time numb it first?

The other injury was 15 years ago while visiting relatives in Stuart. We were going wade fishing in the bay, so I borrowed their son's worn-out Croc shoes that were smooth on the bottom. We were only wading the bay, right? However, at the gas station, a change of plans: we would cruise along the Atlantic beach up towards Fort Pierce in their small boat, standing up to watch for surface-cruising cobia. It was choppy, the boat got wet, I finally slipped and cracked a rib on the gunnel. Which was a new experience. I gulped down an Aleve pain pill, and we cruised back a dozen miles, where I finally spotted a single cobia cruising the waves. An accurate cast nailed that fish and we actually released it. But the cracked rib left me gasping if we even idled over a neighborhood speed bump back in Gainesville.

Wearing the right stuff

Wading. I've always been fond of High-Top Keds that came out a long time ago, great for wading in all types of bottom. That sturdy canvas is tough and might even turn a stingray barb, along with oysters. They even protect the ankles. Prevent a scratch in the water, and it might save one from a *Vibrio* infection. Good traction, too. They can be hung up to dry time and again, for years.

Jetties. I know for a fact you can swim with those Keds, because that's what we wore on the Sabine jetties, our home turf back in Texas. We much preferred walking the flat-top surface but sometimes the wind came straight down the jetties, so we couldn't throw the anchor onto the jetty itself or the boat would quickly drift into rocks. So, we'd anchor from 10-20 yards out and clutching our baitcaster reels, would yell together and jump overboard, startling nearby boaters. We dog-paddled in 25 feet of water to the rocks, stuck our Keds out in front of us, feeling for footing. Soon we were up and walking that wall (mentioned earlier) that was covered with algae-covered oysters and barnacles, which offered good traction. Firing

Continued on P5

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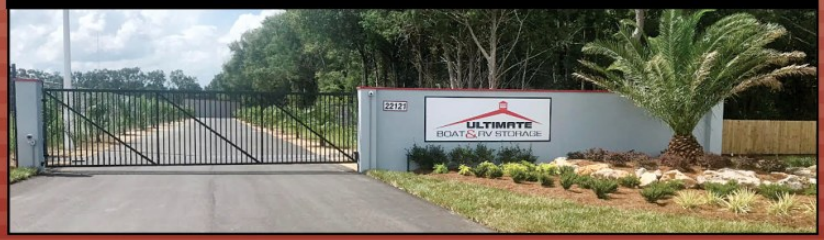

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Captain's Log continued from P3

casts both left and right into the ship channel or Gulf. That wall was high-energy and was awash at high tide, very tricky when a passing crewboat roared past, slamming us with 2-foot wakes that washed away all fish left unstringered. The trout floated, prompting a dog-paddling retrieve, but the mackerel always sank. It was big fun in our 20's, unless someone slipped and fell badly. We didn't even have a Doc-in-the-Box back in town, only a Jack-in-the-Box, but we did have that hospital. Our jetty technique was deadly effective, and we strung countless trout while boaters anchored nearby glumly watched. Redfish were more scarce back then and we released them, always in the 24-28 inch class, drawing verbal dismay from others. For the locals, watching someone release trout and redfish was akin to watching a UFO land in their backyard.

Even with cuts and scrapes we somehow never got a *Vibrio* infection; I suppose we were too young and healthy. In fact, we never heard of *Vibrio*. Today, you seldom see walkers on that jetty, much less guys swimming to the rocks. Boats now cruise silently up and down that jetty wall using electric motors, safe from injury and able to pummel hundreds of yards with all manner of plugs, jigs and spoons without even getting wet. It's certainly not the elemental experience we once had. Today that jetty has subsided some and the wall stays mostly underwater, offering no protection from Gulf waves.

Offshore. Boating and fishing offshore requires a different kind of shoe. Back in the day, many wore salty leather Rockports that offered little padding for constant wave-shock. I wouldn't doubt those shoes gave a few fishing guides sciatica, pain running down the side of their leg. Aboard billfish boats, those shoes were standard and stylish and fine on big boats that weren't slamming down like smaller boats. Aboard our 21-23 footers far offshore, we needed better footwear. In the early 1990s I scored a pair of New Balance shoes, and I soon added additional padding with Dr. Schwab's inserts. That worked great and we'd spend three days and two nights offshore during the big tournaments, standing up all day. There was little leg fatigue and no pain, though at 30 years old you can endure a lot.

I did get fasciitis once and I'm not sure where it came from, but it's a painful deal where your foot tries to curl up. Walking is painful and best cured by rolling a frozen water bottle back and forth under the foot. I remember getting back to a friend's house after a long day offshore in his boat. I stepped out of his car, fortunately at the curb, and fell face-first into his lawn; my foot would carry no weight. I hopped on the other foot into his house. Rolling a bottle under that foot brought soothing relief. Maybe it was caused by too many wave impacts that day, but the condition lasted for weeks.

Out there, anything is better than going barefoot. I've had hooks stuck in my shoes, and hardhead catfish fall into the boat and vault over the top of my shoe after giving a little poke of its poisonous fin. Snapping kingfish (back when they were plentiful) on deck around my feet. Some carried a thrashing 7-inch Rapala trolling plug on their jaw with big rusty treble hooks flailing. Big gaffs close by. Algae-covered concrete boat ramps that sent Amy and me sprawling in 1980; we were still wearing flip-flops while launching the boat. *Whoops!* But we were still young enough to bounce off the concrete.

We clearly took a chance while wade-fishing barefoot in Venezuela. We'd each brought one pair of shoes for the flight, but on their oxbow lakes laden with overhanging trees, there was little room to cast without snagging a limb behind us. And risking a monumental backlash, which soon happened to the camp's foreman. So, we waded out barefoot, unlike our hosts back on shore. Out in waist-deep water, I reeled in a big orange piranha, then several more, but we kept fishing, shuffling along with bare feet because there were ugly, freshwater stingrays there, too. The piranha seemed to avoid healthy targets, however. Later that day we found a released and still floating 7-pound peacock bass the piranha had picked clean, only a head and vertebrae remaining. Bad piranhas! But they behaved well around gringo guests. We were three days camping there in hammocks and never suffered a scratch. The trip of a lifetime.

I still wear a newer pair of rugged Crocs except in winter. We launch the boat at primitive boat ramps closer to the fish and those rubber Crocs work best. We also land and jump ashore to throw the castnet, answer Nature's call, or to push the boat loose as the tide drops out, and the Crocs are great when the bottom is firm. I also have a pair of Huk short boots, and they're good for that same job during winter. The Crocs drain before we can climb back in the truck.

The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

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Fishing Report Crystal River, FL:

By Capt. Andrew Meyer

It's been an interesting month so far! The big story, of course, is that Scallop Season is in full swing, and it has been a very productive season so far. Lots of happy boats have been returning to the docks with coolers full of tasty scallops. I look forward to scallop season, both for the occasional change of pace with scallop trips and because the draw of boats to the scallop grounds naturally relieves some pressure on the fish. It's a win-win no matter what you're doing.

While we are continuing to see high water temperatures, the increase in rain has been good for the bite. However, fish are still very spread out and are moving frequently, so patience and the ability to adapt to daily pattern changes are crucial to consistent success. Just because something worked last time does not mean it will again. Those who can "read the room" quickly and change game plans on the fly will have the most "luck."

Redfish definitely fit into the pattern I just described. The reduction in pressure has been good for the bite, but the fish are still moving around quite a bit. I have found that a flexible strategy has definitely been the way to go. Think of your first several stops not just as attempts to catch fish, but as opportunities to gather information. It can be a lot like playing a few small pots in poker to get a feel for your opponent. Don't get married to a particular spot or even an overall game plan. Just collect and process the data, then build your strategy. If you land right on top of them, great—but if not, no big deal. Take what you learned and apply it to your next move. If it's dead, consider jumping to a different zone with noticeably different defining features. Pay attention to things like bottom composition, water flow, the type and quantity of bait, what defines the zone as a whole, and—if you find fish—where they were positioned and why. The answers will change as conditions change. Learning to ask the right questions and make good observations is what makes you a consistent angler.

Live or cut pinfish, ladyfish, and mullet have been the most effective baits. Be patient on the strike. The reds have been slow to take the bait, often fumbling with it and dropping it several times before fully committing. Circle hooks are a big help in avoiding gut-hooked fish when you "let the fish eat." The goal is not to be so slow on the draw that the bait gets swallowed, but simply to wait for the fish to go from picking the bait up off the bottom to actually moving away with it. Usually, the line will begin to move at that point, and that's your cue to come tight. In the unfortunate event that a fish does swallow a hook, it is best to cut the line as close to the hook as possible rather than tearing up the fish's throat.

Trout continue to be spread out over a very large area. This can be good or bad, depending on how you look at it. The majority of fish are in 4 to 8 feet of water, anywhere from 1 to 8 miles out on the flats. That's a lot of area. It creates multiple zones that are holding fish, but it also leaves a lot of dead water. Generally, checkered or potholed bottom has been more productive than solid, thick grass.

A popping cork with a small live pinfish, shrimp, or Gulp Shrimp on a 1/8- to 1/4-ounce jighead has been the most effective presentation. Make sure to use a long enough leader to position the bait 1 to 2 feet above the grass. Jigs like Lil' Johns and Glow Shads are also working well and are a great way to cover water in search of fish.

Snook are being caught around mangrove islands, rocks, oyster bars, and points in the shallows, as well as on offshore structure such as large rocks, ledges, and even wrecks. Snook spawning is at its peak between June and August, when the majority of the larger females have moved out of the super-shallow water and many have moved offshore. This can be a great time to target catch-

Continued on P7

The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

CR Fishing Report continued from P6

and-release trophy fish around bars, channels, and deeper structure, or to take advantage of the smaller, more aggressive fish in the shallows. Bear in mind there are still some large fish hanging shallow, so don't go too light if you want a chance to land that big girl should she strike.

The best summertime baits include live mullet, finger mullet, threadfins, large mud minnows, pinfish, and sometimes cut mullet, ladyfish, or pinfish. Artificials such as topwater plugs, medium- to large-sized swimbaits, twitch baits, and MirrOdines are all effective presentations.

Tarpon are still being caught on the flats, as well as around major channels, rivers, spoil islands, and out in front of sandbars. Live pinfish, threadfins, mullet, small ladyfish, and crabs are excellent bait choices, as are DOA Bait Busters, MirrOlures, Yo-Zuri Minnows, paddle tails, and trolling plugs. Cut bait can also be highly effective in the right circumstances, particularly when the sun is high and fish aren't rising to the surface often.

Smaller mangrove snapper, grunts, and gag grouper are being landed in good numbers in 10 to 25 feet of water, with many larger fish being caught in 30 to 80 feet, where it is also common to catch hogfish, red snapper, amberjack, and red grouper. Live shrimp on 20- to 30-pound fluorocarbon leaders are preferred for smaller snapper, grunts, and hogfish, while larger baitfish and 40- to 100-pound leaders are often required to land the bigger species. Keep in mind there are still cobia around most quality offshore structure.

Black drum continue to be caught north of the Crystal River Channel. These fish are best targeted around channels, rocks, and bars by fishing large shrimp or crabs on the bottom. The larger drum are typically full of worms and are best released, but they are a ton of fun to catch.

Flounder, pompano, whiting, silver trout, jack crevalle, and Spanish mackerel are also in the mix on most grass and sand flats, as well as around many of the major spoil islands. Live shrimp or small jigs usually work best for these species.

I do have some availability coming up in August. If you'd like to get out on a fishing or scalloping charter, you can message me or call me directly at 352-601-8786.

Be safe and good luck out there guys!

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The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Fishing wisdom - Virgil Cooper

Catching Fish
Catching fish can be easy if you learn how and where to fish for them. Typically, fish have seasons; Spring is good for trout, redfish and flounder. Late spring is good for cobia, Spanish and king mackerel. If you can get offshore, amberjack can be caught over structure in 50 ft, but by June they move out deep to 100 ft or more.

In summer, the water is hot – good for catfish and sharks in the shallow depths, so you need to fish in deeper water, where cooler water runs. Fall fishing cranks up with the cooler water coming in. Redfish start showing up in schools of 30 – 70 fish. Cobia are still hanging around structure on the flats. Our trout are small and wormy. By winter, our trout move south for warmer water temperatures, but the trout in the panhandle move to the Big Bend area and they are bigger and don't have worms. Sheepshead start to school up in the creeks and rivers and start moving out to spawn in deep water in December. Under Cedar Key number four bridge is good place for sheepshead in December.

Flounder move out to spawn in December too. A good place to find them is in structure, close to channels. Winter has the lowest tides, and not all flounder move out to deep waters. Bluefish target trout and mullet during the winter and are bigger in the winter compared to ones found in the spring run. Grouper move in shallow in late fall and early winter. Crystal River is known for shallow water grouper and catching them is a blast on spinning tackle, but it needs to be beefy or you'll get your feelings hurt when they rock you up and break off.

If you learn the seasons, when and where, you can put fish in the freezer and on your plate all year long. Six species can be caught within a mile of Cedar Key boat ramp and all species other than amberjack can be caught within state waters, which go out as far as the steel tower.

Shark Fishing
The shark population is up 80% since they stopped finning them commercially. You don't have to go far out, just in the flats where water flows. I've seen nine-foot bull sharks in 3 feet of water. Shallow water shark fishing can be fun and exciting. A friend and I used to fish for them in tournaments and for fun. Plus, blacktips are good to eat if prepared right. We used to go out in small skiffs before dark and catch bait and get set up (anchored). We would put baits out on 4/0 hooks with 60 lb test line – no wimpy stuff. When a shark would take the bait we would let the shark pull the boat around until it got tired then we would kill and gut it. Tail tie it and put it in the water and tie it to a cleat until ready to come in.

One night, we hooked one on spinning tackle and we had to chase it down with the boat three-times just to get line back on the reel. It was a 74 lb black tip and Ralph's Burgers bought it at $1 per pound for fish sandwiches.

In summer months it's easy to catch sharks, just make sure you have everything you need. If fishing after dark, lights are most important, along with a good gaff and a killing device. We used to use a gun, which is against the law now. If you ever put a live shark in the boat, you'll only do it once. They bite anything and hold on. Make sure you bleed it out because their blood contains urea. Once filleted, soak in buttermilk overnight. Then shake off and batter and fry or grill the fillets; tastes like grouper if done right.

P.S. You might catch a cobia on late afternoon trips too.

Things that go bump in the night
Gigging at night can be great fun. But before going out at night be familiar with your surroundings on the water and landmarks. The islands off Cedar Key offer a good place to go if the water is clear. In August and September, the water generally starts to get clearer and also the winds die down. You want very light to no wind to see flounder; even a few ripples in the water make them hard to see. Also, when on the water, if you hear the wind whistling, head for the ramp because likely rain is coming and it can get rough on the water.

There are so many different kinds of fish that can be gigged besides flounder; sheepshead, black drum and very large mullet. We use the end of the gig to push pole the bow of the boat in just inches of water. Sometimes it only takes one trip down the shoreline to fill a 90-quart cooler, other times it will take hours. Either way, it's a blast.

Have a hand-held spotlight for safety and to shine on the shoreline. Also, a good set of lights and batteries that will last for several hours is a must have.

Sometimes there will be hundreds of mullet jumping out of the water and sometimes into the boat! It doesn't feel so good to get hit by a 3 lb mullet though… One night out at Seahorse Key, we had 28 mullet jump in the boat and many more jump right over the boat. Most flounder are right up against the bank and there's a knack to spot them. Some are fully exposed, while others are buried in the sand with just the head or a side showing. Sheepshead will be sleeping next to oysters or rocks and sometimes laying sideways. Then on calm nights you can hear drum way before you see them.

Some thoughts on club events
As member of GOFC and volunteer cook this is my opinion of club functions. We have four cookouts per year; the oyster roast, seafood banquet, fish fry and Ellett auction. I agreed to cook as long as other members helped with setting up and cleaning up at the end. These are club events for everyone's enjoyment, but lately fewer members have been helping, which makes more work for the few people that do help.

Just about all clubs work this way; all members participate in helping at least one event. This helps people be more a part of the club. Like I said, this is only my opinion. I enjoy cooking for the club and giving advice on fishing AND catching, but having more volunteers at club events will benefit both the club and members who turn up.

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August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

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SHARK BITE RISK TO SCALLOPERS

Shark attacks on snorkelers seeking scallops in Steinhatchee and the surrounding Taylor County region of Florida are quite rare. Indeed, most Big Bend area shark bites happen to recreational anglers who suffer lacerations to the hands and arms while attempting to unhook a shark. Only two documented incidents have occurred, including a widely publicized attack near Keaton Beach in 2022 and another reported encounter in 2020.

In July 2022, 17-year-old Addison Bethea was seriously injured when a large shark, believed to have been a bull shark, bit her leg while she was scalloping in approximately five feet of water between Steinhatchee and Keaton Beach. The incident is recognized as the first officially recorded shark attack in Taylor County.

Another documented event occurred in August 2020 when Steinhatchee resident Christine Jenkins suffered a laceration to her arm after being bitten by what was suspected to be a blacktip shark while scalloping off the Steinhatchee coastline.

Compared with Florida's Atlantic coast, particularly Volusia County and New Smyrna Beach, where hundreds of unprovoked shark bites have been recorded over the years, the Big Bend region, including Steinhatchee, experiences very few shark-human encounters. Most reported incidents in the area have taken place during the bay scalloping season, which runs from mid-June to September. During this period, large numbers of people seek scallops by snorkeling in the shallow seagrass flats, resulting in a greater chance of occasional interactions with sharks.

Researchers at the University of Florida monitor shark bite incidents throughout the United States and worldwide and publish their findings in an annual report. The 2025 report noted that shark bites declined by approximately 11% compared with 2024 and emphasized that the likelihood of being bitten by a shark remains extremely low.

Historical data compiled by the University of Florida shows that Volusia County has recorded 366 confirmed unprovoked shark bites since 1882, the highest total in Florida. Scientists attribute this to the surf conditions and murky water near Ponce Inlet, which attract both surfers and sharks. In contrast, the relatively clear waters of the Taylor County grass flats likely allow a shark to get a better look at its intended prey, leading to fewer attacks on humans by mistake. Brevard County ranks second in the state, with 158 confirmed shark bite incidents.

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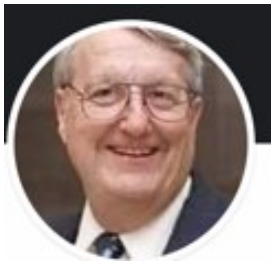
August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Charlie's Kitchen
By Charlie Courtney



LOW COUNTRY BOIL THREE WAYS

The Low Country Boil has roots in the Gullah-Geechee culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Low Country, where it originated as a one-pot meal using local seafood seasoned with spices brought from Africa, France, and Spain. It was subsequently popularized in the 1960s as "Frogmore Stew" by shrimper Richard Gay, when the dish was featured in 1980s on the cover of Gourmet Magazine. Gay was also a National Guardsman, and he had used an old family recipe for a seafood boil to cook for over 100 soldiers. It has since become, in several variations, a communal Southern culinary tradition.

As a native of South Carolina, I have always enjoyed this particular one of that state's several signature dishes. However, the basic recipe uses large quantities of ingredients and serves more people than I usually need to cook for, so I developed a couple of variants optimized for serving fewer people and are, in my opinion, simply easier to prepare. Over the years I have used each of the below three variants depending on the number of people I want to feed — the classic Frogmore stew for larger groups and the Low Country Broil or Instant Pot boil for two to four people.

Classic Frogmore Stew

This is the original recipe associated with the small unincorporated community of Frogmore on St. Helena Island in Beaufort County, South Carolina where shrimper Richard Gay had his seafood dock. Despite its name, this stew contains no frogs. It is simply a one-pot meal consisting of shrimp, smoked sausage, corn, and potatoes boiled in a well seasoned broth. The mixture is then drained and, traditionally, laid out onto a newspaper covered table for serving to a crowd.

Ingredients:

1.5 to 2 lbs large fresh shrimp (unpeeled)
1.5 to 2 lbs smoked sausage, cut into 2-inch sections
1.5 lbs small red potatoes
4–6 ears corn on the cob, cut into halves or thirds
½ to ¾ cup Old Bay Seasoning and/or a dry crab boil in a bag
2 bay leaves
1 large onion, quartered
2 lemons, halved

Optional ingredients: Blue crab or stone crab claws

Instructions:

It is important of add the different ingredients at the times listed below, as they each cook at different rates. The potatoes are the slowest to cook. The shrimp are the quickest to cook and will become rubbery if overcooked. The liquid is first brought to a rolling boil, an ingredient is added, and once the pot is at a full boil again, the heat is reduced to a strong simmer. This boil/simmer step is repeated for each ingredient as it is added, especially if the ingredient is cold or frozen.

Fill a large stockpot with roughly 1-2 gallons of water (or a mix of water and a light beer). Add the Old Bay seasoning, bay leaves, onion, and lemon halves and bring to a rolling boil.

Add the red potatoes and cook for about 10 to 15 minutes until they are nearly tender.

Add the smoked sausage pieces and continue to boil for 5 minutes.

Add the corn and boil for another 5 minutes.

Add the unpeeled shrimp and continue to boil until they turn pink and opaque, typically 3 to 4 minutes.

Drain the pot immediately to avoid overcooking the shrimp and spread out the food onto a platter or a table covered with newspaper. Serve with melted butter, cocktail sauce, hot sauce, and plenty of cold drinks.

Low Country Broil

Note the "r". This recipe is not boiled in a pot, rather it is broiled in an aluminum foil pouch on a grill. I developed this variant for cooking on my grill when I needed to feed just a few people although it can feed more if you have a larger grill. This method is quick, simple, makes economical use of the seasonings, and leaves the cook with minimal cleanup — just close the grill's lid, wad up and throw away the foil, and stack any dishes and silverware in the dishwasher.

Ingredients (per single serving):

18 x 18 inch square piece of heavy duty aluminum foil
3 small red potatoes, halved
4 oz. smoked sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 ear of corn (fresh or frozen), cut into thirds
Old Bay seasoning
Garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste
9-12 large or jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined (fresh, thawed, or frozen shrimp)
3 pats of butter

Instructions:

In a bowl, microwave the potatoes on high for 3-4 minutes to get them started cooking, as they take longer to cook than the other ingredients. Place the potatoes, corn, and

Continued on P13

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The Acute Angler

August 2026
Volume 59, Number 8

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Charlie's Kitchen — Continued from P11

sausage in a single layer in the center of the square of foil. Place the shrimp on top of the potatoes and sausage to prevent their over cooking. Place a pat of butter on top of each piece of corn. Sprinkle Old Bay, garlic powder, salt, and pepper on top of everything as desired. Fold the edges of the foil over the to seal the package. Cook on a grill (direct heat) for 10-15 minutes, depending on the heating power of the grill. The food is done when you hear the liquid inside start to sizzle. Remove from the grill, unwrap, and enjoy!

Instant Pot Low Country Boil

The Instant Pot is a multi-cooker device that can cook food in many different ways, but its most compelling function is as a safe and easy to use pressure cooker. First sold in 2010, it had become something everyone raved about by 2014 and was a best seller by 2017. Soon a cult like following developed driven by word of mouth and many on line forums filled with useful recipes. The high pressure is excellent for infusing flavors into seafood boils (sausage, shrimp, potatoes, corn), typically in 0 to 5 minutes. It is amazing how the pressure amps up the flavors of the ingredients.

Ingredients:

1 ½ pound of small-medium red potatoes
13-oz. package of smoked sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
3 ears of corn (fresh or frozen), cut into thirds
1 tablespoon of liquid shrimp & crab boil seasoning
4 teaspoons of Old Bay seasoning, divided – 3½ teaspoons and ½ teaspoon
½ teaspoon of garlic powder
6-8 sprigs of fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
1 pound of large or jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined (thawed or frozen shrimp)
½ cup of butter, melted
4 cups of water

Optionally: crawfish, crab, crab claws, lobster, mussels, or clams,

Instructions:

Place the potatoes, sausage, and corn in the Instant Pot's stainless steel inner pot.
Add the 4 cups of water into the inner pot.
Add the liquid shrimp & crab boil seasoning, thyme, bay leaf, and 3 ½ teaspoons of Old Bay seasoning.
Make sure the potatoes are submerged in the water.
Close the Instant Pot lid (make sure the vent is in the sealing position) and pressure cook on high for 8 minutes.
When the 8 minutes is up, open the Instant Pot lid with a manual/quick release of the remaining pressure.
Remove the lid and add the shrimp. If needed, you can take the corn out to make room for the shrimp.
Sprinkle the remaining ½ teaspoon of Old Bay seasoning on the shrimp and stir in the shrimp.
Replace the Instant Pot lid and keep the Instant Pot on the 'keep warm' setting.
Let the residual heat inside the pot cook the shrimp for about 5 minutes.

Serve the low country boil directly from the Instant Pot's inner pot, but you can also use a large spoon to transfer to a large serving bowl or dish to enjoy!

Notes:

It is important that you use a waxy type potato, preferably a small red skinned or gold fleshed potato. Starchy potatoes, such as russets (baking potatoes) and most white potatoes having light tan skins, will turn to mush under in heat and pressure of the Instant Pot.

If adding crawfish, crab, crab claws, lobster, or other shellfish like mussels or clams, you can take the corn out to make room and pressure cook on high for an additional 2 minutes.

You may add onion wedges to this recipe for increased flavor.

Condiments

Although a Low Country Boil is heavily seasoned in the pot, it is usually served with a selection of condiments.

Garlic Butter

This is the most commonly used condiment for a low country boil. To prepare, microwave butter and garlic powder for about 45 seconds in a microwave-safe bowl or until the butter melts.

Pour the melted garlic butter over the shrimp boil, or use it on the side for dipping!

Cocktail Sauce

You can use any of several store bought brands of cocktail sauce or create your own simply by mixing 2 tablespoons of prepared horseradish with 1 cup of ketchup, a tablespoon of lemon juice, and 1 or 2 dashes each of Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce.

Hot Sauce

There are far too many commercial brands available for you to mess with making your own. Simply go to Publix and buy some Tabasco sauce or any of the many other brands available there.

Lemon

You may include lemon wedges on the side, as they're always good pallet cleansers and fingertip cleaners when enjoying seafood and a seafood boil!

Continued on P14

The Acute Angler

August 2026
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Steinhatchee Report: Capt. Bobbi Brady

Scalloping remains excellent. Please take the time to sort through them and release the smaller ones for next years population! There are plenty of large scallops, move around, and change depths. And as we get further into the season, they will get even bigger. Redfish are feeding early along shallow shorelines, while trout are holding over deeper grass. Plastics with jigheads are the main option with all floating grass right now. With the high temps be sure to fish early.

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Florida Friendly Angler (FFA) is a free, online, do-at-your-own pace educational program designed for any angler who wants to learn more about sustainable fishing and boating practices while interacting with Florida's aquatic environments.

Florida is the fishing capital of the world with **over 4 million unique fishing license holders!** Annually, recreational, and commercial fisheries provide our state with a combined $17 billion of economic impact and support tens-of-thousands of jobs. With all this pressure, and significance fishing has on this state's economy, environment, and culture, **it's up to all of us** to educate both Floridians and visitors to make sure we're able to enjoy our natural resources and environment for years to come!

Florida Friendly Angler (FFA) is a free, narrated, online, short, do-at your-own-pace educational program that informs users about our state's aquatic environments, best practices when fishing and the inner workings of fisheries management. By teaching the how and why behind topics that anglers encounter while fishing in Florida, the program reinforces practices that can reduce our impact while fishing, ensuring the creation of great future fishing stories!

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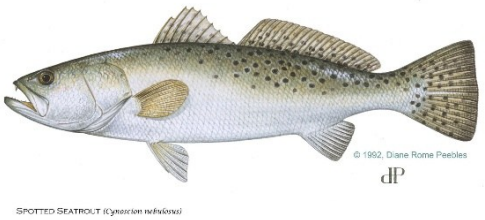
What's in season, size and bag limits



SPOTTED SEATROUT (*Cynoscion nebulosus*)

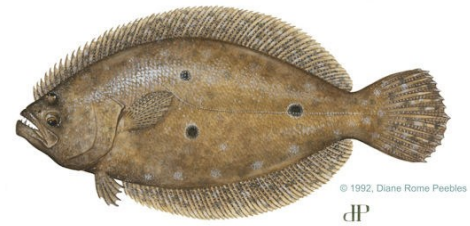
Seatrout (Big Bend Area)

Slot size - Not less than 15" or greater than 19" total length. May possess one over 19 inches per vessel or, if fishing from shore, one over 19 inches per person, included in the bag limit.
Bag limit - 5 per person
Season - Open year-round

RED DRUM (*Sciaenops ocellatus*)

Redfish

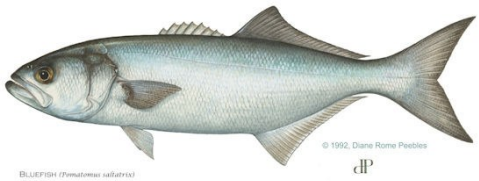
Slot size - 18 to 27 inches total length
Bag Limit - 1 fish per person, with a 4-fish vessel limit.
Season - Open year-round



GULF FLOUNDER (*Paralichthys albigutta*)

Flounder

Minimum Size - 14 inches total length
Bag Limit - 5 fish per person, daily
Season - Closed October 15 – November 30
Applies To - Gulf, Southern, Summer, and Fringed Flounder.



BLUEFISH (*Pomatomus saltatrix*)

Bluefish

Minimum Size - 12 inches, fork length
Bag Limit - 3 per person
Season - Open year-round

SHEEPSHEAD (*Archosargus probatocephalus*)

Sheepshead

Minimum Size - 12 inches total length
Bag Limit - 8 fish per person, daily
Vessel Limit (March & April) - 50 fish per vessel
Season - Open year-round in Gulf state waters.

RED GROUPER (*Epinephelus morio*)

Red Grouper

Minimum Size – 20 inches total length
Daily Bag Limit - 2 per person within the 4 grouper aggregate
Season - **State:** Open year-round
Federal: Closed Feb. 1-March 31 seaward of 120 feet

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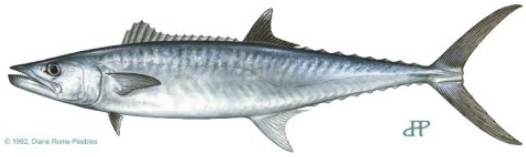
Spanish Mackerel

Minimum Size - 12 inches, fork length
Bag Limit - 15 per person
Season - Open year-round
Gear Restrictions - No multiple hooks (e.g., treble hooks) when using live or dead natural bait



King Mackerel

Minimum Size – 24 inches, fork length
Bag Limit - 3 per person
Season - Open year-round

Cobia

Minimum Size - 36 inches, fork length
Bag/Vessel Limit -1 cobia per person, or 2 per vessel (whichever is less)
Season - Open year-round
Waters - These rules apply in both Florida State waters and Federal waters in the Gulf.

Gag Grouper

Minimum Size – 24 inches total length (assuming no change from 2025)
Daily Bag Limit - 2 per person within the 4 grouper aggregate (assuming no change from 2025)
Season - Open on **September 1, 2026** and will close at 12:01 a.m. on **October 1, 2026**

Greater Amberjack

Minimum Size – 34 inches fork length
Daily Bag Limit - 1 per person per day
Season - Open on **September 1, 2026** and closing at 12:01 a.m. on **October 14, 2026**

Black Sea Bass

Minimum Size - 10 inches total length
Bag Limit - 100 pounds per person, per day
Season - Open year-round

Mangrove Snapper

Minimum Size - State: 10 inches total length**. Federal:** 12 inches total length.
Daily Bag Limit - State: 5 per person within the 10 snapper aggregate bag limit**. Federal:** 10 per person within 10 snapper aggregate bag limit
Season - Open year-round

Hogfish

Minimum Size - 14 inches fork length
Bag Limit – 5 per person, per day
Season - Open year-round

Gray Triggerfish

Minimum Size - 15-inch minimum fork length
Bag Limit - 1 per person
Season - Likely rules for 2026: Opens March 1, closes May 31; reopens Aug 1, closes Dec 31.

Shirts and Hats are Here!

It has been since before the pandemic that the club has offered shirts and hats with our logo on it. Well the wait is over! At our General meetings we will be offering long sleeve performance hoodies, heavy weight hoodies, long and short sleeve cotton shirts, vented and canvas backed hats for sale at a reasonable cost. We will have Medium, Large, and X-Large shirts. If you pre-ordered a small, or XXXL shirt please see Mark Rustemier or John Ebbs at the meeting.

Also don't forget we have window stickers available, ask Dawn for them at the meeting, 1 for $2 or 3 for $5 to help cover our costs to provide them.