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# OFFSHORE Magazine

September 2022



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# I GOT NOTHING

This is the first month in a very long time that I really can't come up with anything to write about. Here in West central Florida it has been too damn hot for me to get out fishing and it seems like not much else is really going on. Usually when I am out of ideas, I can go and search around the Internet and find something interesting to write about, but all I see these days is stuff about the coming election.

I am completely sick and tired of hearing and reading crap that is probably mostly wrong about the candidates and seeing people who formerly were good friends that are unable to maintain a relationship, because their political views have become so polarized. I am truly embarrassed that these candidates are the best and brightest that our great country has to offer?

With all of the name-calling and talk about the lies told by both candidates, perhaps the situation at least bodes well for fishermen. Fishermen are reputed to be expert liars, thus perhaps this can result in a closer bond between angler and whichever candidate wins. Perhaps we should begin a grass roots campaign to elect a fishing party candidate. A survey from 2011 indicated that 33.1 Million people fished that year and another 13.7 Million people hunted. That makes 46.8 Million people who would be likely to support a Fishing Party Candidate. In the last Presidential election 129.1 Million people voted so we could start out with over 36% of the voters already on our side.

This really got me thinking about who should be our standard bearer in the election. After careful consideration, and a few chilled adult beverages, I have determined that Flip the Bird is the ideal candidate. First off, Flip is a girl, so she would have an advantage with with female voters. Secondly, Flip is known to be a bird brain, so she is well prepared to operate on the same level as the other candidates. In addition to these overwhelming advantages, Flip is actually quite photogenic and everyone comments on how attractive she is. Her feathers are always perfectly preened and she definitely does not have a comb over. You can't really say that about the appearance of some other candidates. Flip also is an African Grey Parrot so she should also do well with minority groups and her birth certificate does clearly show that she was born in Sebring, Florida, so there would be no question of meeting the citizenship requirement.

As far as disadvantages go, detractors could say that Flip is a bit flighty and is not well grounded, but compared to some of the other choices, she exudes stability. I approached her this morning regarding throwing her feather in the ring and her response was, "What cha want", so I took that as a yes. I think America needs a change and Flip the Bird might just be the ticket. Since her favorite thing to say is "what cha want", I think that would be the campaign slogan. I can see it now on billboards across the country.

**Flip's platform includes things like:**

- Grapes will become the national currency
- We must maintain a strong defense against the Evil Coffeemaker of Doom
- The Andy Griffith Theme shall become our National Song to Whistle
- If another country should threaten, she would give them the raspberry and poop on them

Stop by and see us at Flip the Bird Election headquarters at Belle Harbour Marina in Tarpon Springs, she will explain all of her positions on the issues and bite your finger if you disagree.

Merle



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**ON THE COVER:** Jim Rodriguez with two beautiful American Red Snapper caught while fishing with Onshore-Offshore Staff Photographer, Captain Jimmy Nelson. Great catches, fellas!

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# ONSHORE - OFFSHORE Magazine

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# FISH FRY

by Tom Mohrbach



I love a fish fry! I'm not going to debate the merits of baked, grilled or fried fish. We all know the first two options are healthier. I enjoy grilled and baked fish, but in my humble opinion, fried fish rules. I especially love fish cooked in beer batter. Fresh Lake Erie Perch is my all-time favorite fried fish, but it is obviously not available here.

We have a fish fry at our annual deer hunting trip to Northern Michigan. Thanks to my cousin's son-in-law sharing his Summer harvest, I get to partake in consuming some delectable Perch each year. A dozen of us gather outside around a campfire drinking ice-cold beers while my cousin and his son-in-law dredge numerous perch filets through a delicious homemade batter before dropping them into a turkey fryer filled with hot oil.

The crackling and popping of the oil while the fillets cook to a crispy brown texture is music to

our ears. Before long, mounds of the perfectly cooked perch are piled high on the picnic table before us. We scarf it down with grunts of pleasure. The thick fresh-cut fries sprinkled generously with salt are the perfect accompaniment. All of it is washed down with copious amounts of cold brew. Ahh, almost heaven.

That's not to say there are not plenty of great fish options here to enjoy. I filled up a Fry Daddy with Canola Oil a couple of weeks ago and cooked up a tasty mixture of Mangrove Snapper and Grunts I caught. The beer batter was perfect, and there wasn't a morsel of fish left.

Due to my lack of fishing success, fish fries at our house are about as common as Christmas day. If any of you successful fisher-folks want to unload some of your grouper or other tasty fish, I'm your man! Fortunately, especially for me, you don't have to be a great fisherman to enjoy fried fish. We are blessed with plenty of fine restaurants in Tampa Bay and the surrounding areas offering a variety of fried fish. And



don't forget those fish fries during Lent. Our favorite is at St. James The Apostle Parish in Port Richey, Florida. Bill, the cook there, does a fantastic job!

I have even been known to stop at Long John Silvers in a pinch to get my fried fish fix. I hear groans and moans from some of you, but I like it.

Until next month, Bon Appetit. ☑

**Tom Mohrbach is a retired police officer. He has published four novels since his retirement. All of his books are available to order on Amazon. Tom recommends that outdoor enthusiasts who like action/adventure stories check out his novel, Northern Nightmare. See his website: [tommohrbach.com](http://tommohrbach.com) for additional information on all of his books.**



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# THE RIVERS REPORT

by Captain John Rivers

**A**ugust 2022 is in the books and I for one am glad as it was a hot month indeed. With water temperatures over 86 degrees, fall can't get here soon enough. So what does September fishing have to offer in Tampa Bay? First, let's talk Mangrove Snapper; these tasty guys are



thick in the bay and if you find the right rock pile or deep bridge piling you'll find yourself with a nice mess of snapper for some ceviche or fish tacos.

I like fishing a slower tide when fishing for mangroves and once the tide picks up I'll head off to find Redfish or Snook to mix things up.

Since I mentioned Redfish, let's talk about these golden beauties for a second; it's still Summer and the reds will be tucked up underneath the mangroves, so make sure you present your baits either right next to the treeline or underneath, and you'll get that bite you're looking for. Be ready to get a workout, because these bruisers like to pull back.



When it comes to Snook in September, they're going to be just like they were in August; a bit lethargic. The water temperature is hot, so they're not as active like they are in Spring. I suggest using cut bait as it's the best way to go. They will hit live bait, but if you want to have a productive

day, get a box of frozen Threadfin or catch some fresh Threadfin and cut them up in chunks. Let them soak on the bottom and trust me, the Snook ought to show up, as will some Redfish.

Lastly, Spanish Mackerel will still be around on the flats and along the channel markers. I recall last year they were running big and I'm expecting no different this year. I like using a 1/0 long shanked hook with a small piece of wire or 50# mono leader when targeting mackerel.

As you can see, I did not mention Speckled Trout at all in this report as I really don't target them much in September. I start targeting them more in mid-October into November, but that's just me. Yes, you can catch them in September but there are other things to target which are more productive and more fun.



So if you've not gone out in a while, dust off the fishing rod, grab yourself some water or a Gatorade and go have a fun day on the water. Tight lines! 🎣

**Captain John Rivers has a lifetime of fishing knowledge and over 20 years of experience fishing the gulf coast. For more information or to book an unforgettable fishing trip, please call 727-313-1781.**



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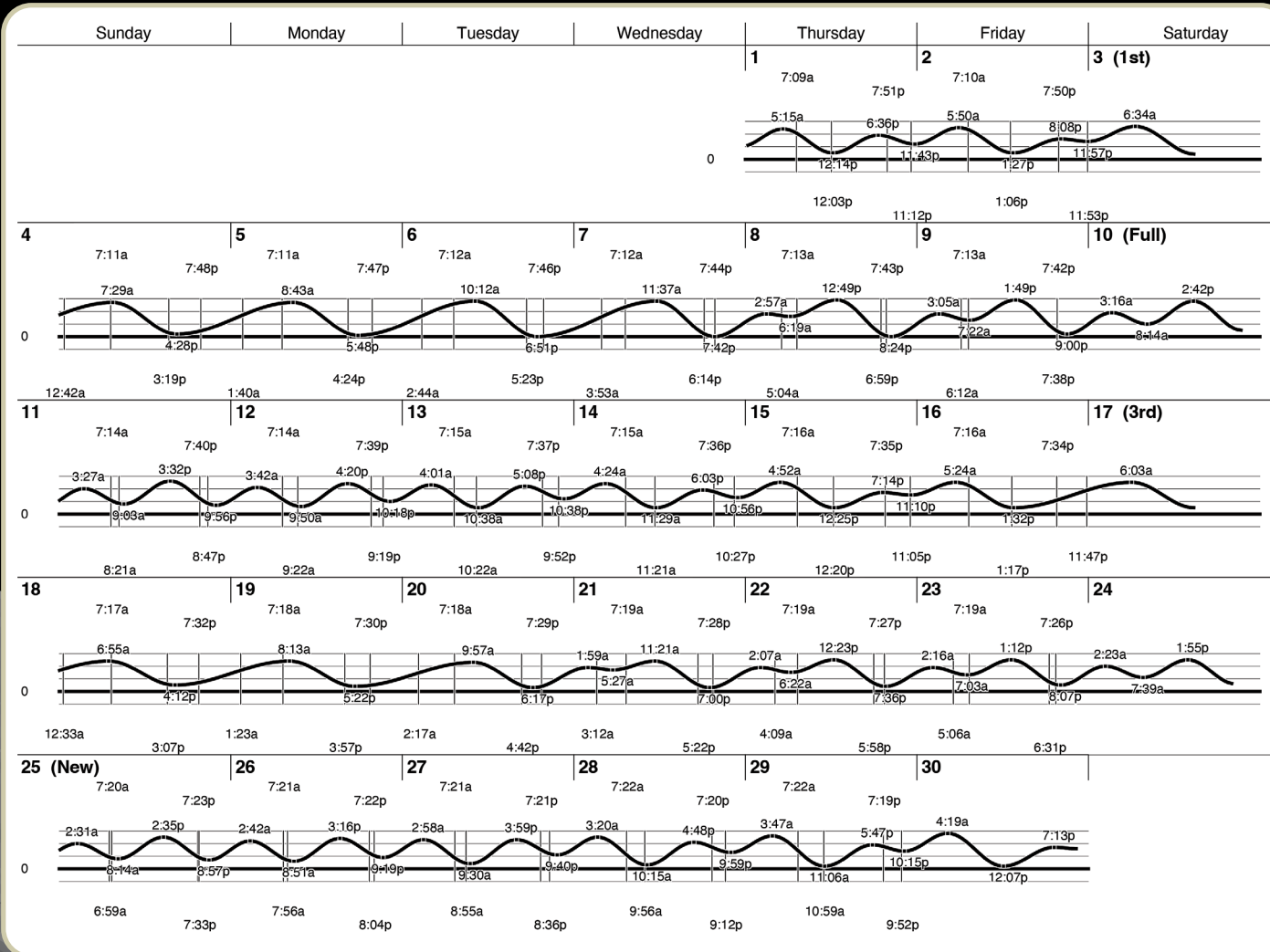


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Conversions for Clearwater Beach Area			Conversions for St. Marks River Area		
High	Low		High	Low	
-0:02	-0:10	Dunedin, St. Joseph Sound	+0:23	+1:18	Everglades City
-0:05	-0:15	Anclote Key, South End	-1:17	-1:03	Cape Romano
+0:42	+0:42	Tarpon Springs, Anclote River	-1:04	-1:08	Marco Island
-0:07	-0:03	North Anclote Key	-1:59	-2:04	Naples
+0:41	+0:39	Old Port Tampa	-0:46	-0:09	Indian Bay
+0:33	+0:53	Gulf Harbors	-0:59	-0:42	Bayport
+0:42	+1:05	Hwy 19 Bridge, Pithlachascotee River	-0:25	+0:23	Withlacoochee River
+0:50	+1:35	New Port Richey, Pithlachascotee River			
+0:36	+0:43	Hudson, Hudson Creek			

### Conversions for Tampa Bay Area

High	Low	
+0:49	+0:58	Gandy Bridge
+1:38	+1:55	Courtney Campbell Cswy.
+1:38	+1:55	Safety Harbor
+0:20	+0:22	Ballast Point
+0:07	+0:26	Hillsborough Bay
+0:21	+0:29	McKay Bay Entrance
+0:41	+0:39	Old Port Tampa
-2:27	-2:24	Egmont Key
-2:53	-2:46	Anna Maria, Bradenton Bch
-2:10	-2:19	Anna Maria, City Pier
-1:24	-0:55	Bradenton, Manatee River
-0:30	+0:14	Redfish Pt., Manatee River
-2:22	-1:58	Mullet Key Channel, Skyway
+0:08	+0:17	Shell Point
-0:22	-0:29	Point Pinellas
-1:34	-1:30	Pass-a-Grille Beach
-1:32	-1:05	Gulfport
-1:18	-0:44	St. Pete Beach Causeway
-2:14	-2:04	John's Pass
-1:40	-1:18	Madeira Beach Causeway
-2:00	-1:25	Cortez, Sarasota Bay
-1:38	-0:58	Sarasota Bay
-2:02	-1:38	Venice Inlet
-0:57	-0:40	Englewood, Lemon Bay
-1:27	-0:59	Placida, Gasparilla Sound
+1:38	+1:56	El Jobean, Myakka River
+1:52	+2:30	Shell Point, Peace River
+1:06	+1:27	Punta Gorda, Charlotte Hbr.
-1:12	-1:56	Boca Grande, Charlotte Hbr.
-0:19	+0:26	Pineland, Pine Island
+0:43	+1:28	Matlacha Pass
-0:55	-1:14	Redfish Pass, Captiva Is.
-0:46	-0:20	Captiva, Pine Island Sound
-2:20	-2:28	Captiva, Gulf Side
-0:25	+0:16	Galt Isle, Pine Island Sound
-0:30	-0:44	St. James City, Pine Island
+2:08	+2:44	Fort Myers
+1:15	+2:02	Cape Coral Bridge
+1:08	+1:40	Iona Shores
+0:51	+0:42	Indian Rocks Beach, ICW



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## SOUTHEASTERN FISHING TACKLE TURNING HEADS WITH STUNNING TRANSFORMATION!

If you haven't been over to Southeastern Fishing Tackle lately, at the corner of North Florida Avenue and Floribraska, just north of downtown Tampa, you should make the trip. The company is under new ownership and the renovations begun months ago are not done yet. Many things inside and out have changed but their commitment to customer service and knowledgeable staff have remained the same. You've got to come in and see the new look.

*"When our regular clients come in, they can't believe they're walking into the same store they've been coming to for decades," said General Manager, Doug Ray.*

*"We're really proud to show off our new look and we're not done with the changes to the property," said Ray.*



The parking lot is going to be redone to add additional parking spots. The entire property is getting a face-lift both inside and outside. St. Petersburg muralist Jenny Pearl has completed two new murals on the walls facing North Florida with a breathtaking view of what's under the water's surface in Tampa Bay.

First opened in 1974, Southeastern is one of the oldest and most established fishing tackle companies in the Tampa Bay area. They can outfit any angler for any species of fish for any season at any budget. All their trusted employees have decades of fishing experience, and they are more than happy to share their knowledge with you.

They have a full line of rod and reel repair services on every make and model. Their chief technician,



Gary Westphal, can do it all. They make custom rods to your specifications for inshore and offshore fishing. They can also personalize your existing rods and decorate them to your

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Southeastern is proud to be part of this amazing community here in the fishing capital of the world. They are committed to building and maintaining long term relationships with their clients, fishing charter captains, non-profit organizations, and community leaders. Their friendships and partnerships are the bedrock of who they are.

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## INTERNATIONAL SAWFISH DAY OCTOBER 17

International Sawfish Day (ISD) is held annually around the world on October 17th as a day to celebrate sawfish by learning more about these highly threatened and poorly known rays. On ISD, aquariums, zoos, museums, schools, and other institutions hold outreach events and online presentations to educate the public about sawfish, their habitats, and the threats they face. The public is encouraged to attend one of these events or to celebrate in their own way with their friends, family, and coworkers.

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A man with long hair, wearing a blue baseball cap with a white logo, sunglasses, and a light blue long-sleeved shirt, is smiling while holding a large redfish. The fish is held horizontally, with its head on the left and tail on the right. The background shows a body of water and green foliage.

# ROLLIN' THE SPOON

*by Spencer Goodwin*

I'm often asked what my favorite artificial lure for redfish is. Ordinarily my answer would be fairly complex and entertain many variables, but if I had to be stranded on an island with just one lure to use, I would choose a gold spoon. My reasoning is pretty lucid; it's the most simply designed, easy to use, time proven and effective lure for catching redfish.



TampaBayKayakCharters.com



One of the spoons greatest attributes is its ability to cover water – you can't catch 'em if you can't find 'em, and you can't find 'em if you aren't covering water! Spoons cast very well and are retrieved fairly quickly, making it easy to dissect a flat in no time. Spoons

are also very easy to use, simply cast – reel – repeat. For those inexperienced with using artificial lures, it is a great first lure to start throwing and one of my favorites to use with clients.

Depending on the manufacturer, spoons usual come in weight increments of 1/8, 1/4, 1/2 and so on. The weight I use depends on the water depth, but overall my "go to" size is a 1/4 oz. I tie my spoons to 20 lb fluorocarbon leader with a loop knot, which is tied directly to my main line. It is a commonly held belief that you have to use a swivel when using a spoon because of line twist, but in my opinion this is not the case. By using a loop knot to attach your spoon to your leader, you can prevent line twist

so that it is not an issue. Spoons come in a variety of colors, all of which can be effective at times, but the only two colors you will find in my tackle box are silver and gold.

**When using a spoon, pay close attention to the action it has.**

One of the most common mistakes made while using a spoon is not implementing a proper action. You want your spoon to 'wobble', not 'spin'. Keep your rod tip high and slowly retrieve it towards you, varying the speed of your retrieve as needed to compensate for water depth. If you feel you are getting caught in the grass too often, speed up your retrieve a little bit (and remember to keep that rod tip high!). If the bottom allows for it,

sometimes I will stop my retrieve entirely and let my spoon sink to the bottom, I will then give it a slight 'pop' with a jerk from my rod tip, and continue my steady retrieve.

All things considered, there are few baits that can outperform a spoon for redfish. Next time you're out on your favorite redfish flat, pick up that long neglected spoon sitting in the bottom of your tackle box and roll it through the mullet and see what happens. Just remember to keep it rollin'!

**Spencer Goodwin of Tampa Bay Kayak Charters. For info, visit [www.tampabayfishingcharters.com](http://www.tampabayfishingcharters.com)**



**Gabe Gilvary caught his first big ol' giant redfish with his dad, Ken Gilvary, on the right.**



# ANOTHER TRIP IN TIME OF YESTERYEAR

by Captain Sergio Atanes

A fishing trip can be a memorable experience for both young and old. During the shooting of our new TV show we traveled to Yankeetown, a small community just a 2-hour drive North of Tampa. As we entered the quiet little town, I had memories of yesteryear as a young boy living in Ybor City. We all felt like we had traveled back in time at least fifty years.



Gail was our host at a quaint bed and breakfast place called the "Wipplewill Inn", and just down the street within walking distance was the "Isaac Walton Inn". It had once been a bed and breakfast, but now is serving superb appetizers such as baked Escargot and Mushrooms in a covered pastry shell and entrees such as Almond Crusted Flounder. Last best not least is the New York Chocolate Cheesecake. To add to this wonderful dining experience is the ambience of sitting at your dinner table overlooking the river with beautiful majestic oak trees on the bank.

A favorite local hangout for fishermen is Charlie's General Store and serves the best fried chicken money can buy.

We had heard of some great offshore fishing in this area and the best captain around was none other than Captain Ky Lewis, an old friend who grew up fishing offshore around the Clearwater area. Ky had decided to give up the "hustle and bustle" of big city life and settled in Yankeetown years ago.

We met at first light and Capt. Ky had it all worked out – our destination was an offshore spring about 40 miles due West loaded with fish, or so he said. His 32-foot boat with a single diesel engine cruised at 20 knots, and although not the fastest, was quite the fishing machine.

The 2-hour run seemed short, and our camera crew consisting of Phil and Grace from Horizon East Productions made ready the equipment we would need for filming. I never realized how much goes into making a TV show. Zack, our first mate and son of Capt. Ky was preparing the bait and checking all the tackle, as time was near to battle our prey.

The word came from the captain that we had arrived



at our destination. Zack responded by lowering the anchor and allowing just enough line to secure the boat and stop us over the spot. Our mics were secured on us and the camera was rolling as the baits went down. The clear waters of this area made fishing even more exciting as you could look down and see not just one fish but dozens of Amberjack swimming under the boat ranging from 10 to 50 pounds just waiting to be caught.

I was ready to catch one of those big Amberjack, but



Capt. Ky said we would be able catch them later. Knowing better than to argue with a Captain that knows his spot, we quickly baited our hooks with dead Spanish Sardines and lowered our lines to the bottom as soon as possible. Not being familiar with the area, I asked Capt. Ky what we were fishing for, but before I could get an answer, I had a tug on my line and the rod doubled over. Looking at Capt. Ky he said with a smile, "just fight the fish and you will see."

The tug of war was on, and out of the corner of eye I could see that Capt. Ky had one of his own that was taking control of him. The camera crew moved around us trying to follow our every move, and Zack made ready to land my fish, a nice Gag Grouper in the 12-pound range with Capt. Ky behind me boating an 18-pounder.

We quickly got our baits back down and tried again. This time the tug seemed different and as I set the hook, I knew this was not a Grouper. It felt like could it be, yes it was one my favorite fish, a Mangrove Snapper and a big one at that. As the fish came aboard, he weighed in at 8 pounds, to be exact. Capt. Ky had another fish, and this was a beautiful true american Red Snapper. Another bait,



and another Snapper. I thought I was in heaven. After a short while, Capt. Ky decided we were ready for a change and needed to work our muscles a bit harder by trying our luck at catching Amberjack. He suggested we change our bait to live Pinfish.

I lowered my 6-inch live Pinfish about 10 feet below the surface, and like a fire house drill thirty or more Amberjack appeared from nowhere and were fighting for my bait. Within seconds the rod bent over, the line screamed out, and the battle continued for 10 minutes or more until finally the exhausted Amberjack, came to the surface.

The time had arrived to head back to the dock. We had a great day of shooting thanks to clear weather, Capt. Ky and his son Zack, our first mate and soon to be captain of his dad's boat, and our camera crew, Phil and Grace.

Phil and Grace gave us the thumbs up for some great show footage, then we headed back home to the "hustle and bustle" of the big city life. It was certainly nice to go back in time, and on our next visit, I will bring the kids and let them enjoy a taste of the good ole' days. ☑

**Captain Sergio Atanes is host of Florida West Coast Fishing Report on Facebook and YouTube every Monday night 7-8 p.m. live. He is also host to Aventuras De Pesca USA on national TV and Radio Show. Email the captain at: atanes@msn.com, call 813-973-7132 or visit: reelfishing.com.**

## REEL IN AWESOME IN CRYSTAL RIVER

Cast your line in Citrus County, Florida for world-class fishing, year-round!

by Christine Steele

Set on Florida's Nature Coast, just a short drive from Orlando, Tampa, Gainesville and Ocala, Discover Crystal River is a true sportsman's paradise. Three spring-fed rivers — the Homosassa, the Chassahowitzka and the Crystal — feed into the Gulf of Mexico and create a rich fishing habitat.

This combination of fresh and salt water fishing, along with the pristine untouched character of the landscape and easy, relaxed pace of life, make Citrus County a world-class fishing destination year-round.

### GO COASTAL OR GO FRESH

Homosassa Bay, with its mangrove shorelines, dense seagrass beds and network of islands, is known for its giant Redfish, but that isn't the only species that will give you reel-burning thrills in this authentic Old Florida destination. You'll also find an abundance of Spotted Seatrout, Cobia and Spanish Mackerel ready to challenge the best of light tackle anglers. The clear, pristine flats are perfect for drifting or trolling along and taking in the scenic beauty all around.

At the mouth of the Crystal River, reel in Tarpon, Cobia, Redfish, Seatrout or venture offshore to deeper waters for Snapper, Grouper and Amberjack. At the river's headwaters, you'll find Bass, Sheepshead, Mullet and Bluegill.

Off the coast, the 19,000-acre Tsala Apopka chain of lakes connect with the Inverness and Floral City pools in Citrus County that are prime for landing largemouth bass. Shellcracker and Bluegills also flourish throughout the chain, making this a quality, year-round freshwater fishing destination.

### FISHING IS A WAY OF LIFE

Fishing goes back generations in Citrus County. Guides with a lifetime of experience on the water can help you find the best honeyholes to access boatloads of fish, both inshore and offshore.

While visiting, be sure to spend some time swapping fish stories with the locals at unique spots like MacRae's or the Monkey Bar in Homosassa, or Peck's Old Port Cove in Ozello. Or, just sit back and watch the boats go by as you relax with a cold one after a successful day on the water.

During the summer months, Citrus County's famous scallop season is in full swing. The waters off Crystal River and Homosassa are two of only a handful of places in Florida where you can gather buckets of fresh, juicy scallops. Dive into this local tradition likened to an underwater easter egg hunt.

### FROM FISH TO FORK

After a fantastic day on the water, pull your boat up to shore and bring your buckets of crabs, cleaned scallops or fish to one of more than a dozen restaurants or seafood shacks where a local chef will cook your catch in this time-honored Florida tradition.

Call ahead and let them know you're coming, then have a seat and let them serve it up to you with all the fixin's, fresh from the water and onto your plate.

With so much to see and do, plan your next fishing trip to Citrus County and discover authentically awesome fishing and more in the soul of Florida. ☑

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# WHITETAIL SEASON IS HERE!

by Misty Wells

The wait is over. It's time to get ready to hit the woods and start getting reacquainted with your local Whitetail. For the September issue I wanted to put together some hunting tips to make that transition into the woods a bit easier and help you get some quality Venison in the freezer. A lot of us hunters don't have access to private land so we are hunting on public land, or if you have a lease most of us have zero time to prep for season. Let's get ready by going over some refresher hunting tips and reminders for getting back in the woods and being successful this season.

## SCENT CONTROL

First golden rule of Deer hunting is use scent control. Make sure to use your scent control anytime you are in the woods, when you are scouting, hanging cameras, putting up or moving stands, cutting shooting lanes, planting food plots or filling feeders. Step 1: Don't put on your hunting



clothes until you reach your destination; your truck has a lot of odors. Put your hunting clothes in a non-scented plastic bag or something similar and dress outside when you arrive. Step 2: Spray from your boots up then be sure to spray and cover your head. Step 3: Remove your hunting clothes after leaving the woods and put them in a non-scented bag or hang outside in the open air until the next day. Think about it, we don't get much time to hunt, on average we get about 6 to 10 days a year, so doesn't it make sense to do everything you can to be successful? Something as simple as scent control can make a difference between going home successful or with nothing.

## GAME TRAILS & CAMERAS

First, try not to enter the woods to scout during dusk or dawn as this is when the Whitetail are moving the most. Don't break their pattern and alert them to your presence. Once you get into the woods look for some heavily used game trails with fresh tracks and scat, study the tracks to see if it is mainly Buck or Doe. A key thing to remember is if the Doe are there the Bucks will follow, kind of like \$5 drinks for ladies night. Great camera locations are trails, food plots, water sources, salt licks or over bait if it's legal. And be sure to check your camera angles. Your target area is at least 5 to 10 yards away, so you have a clear

line of sight. Make sure to format your memory card, re-check your settings on the game camera, and use scent control when hanging your cameras. So many hunters forget to use scent control when prepping and they ruin a great location.



*Tip: If you are hunting public land be sure to bring a ladder to put your game camera's up high out of arms reach so they don't get stolen.*

## SCRAPES & RUBS

A great sign, but don't judge a Buck by the size of his scrapes or rubs. Bucks use scrapes to make their declaration of dominance by leaving scent from his nasal, preorbital and forehead glands. When the scraping work is done, the Buck will paw the ground and urinate to excite and draw in Does while trying to deter any Bucks from his claimed area. Keep in mind, Doe look for these areas and urinate in the Bucks scrapes and paw areas to let the Bucks know what stage of the breeding process she is in. The size of the tree can help determine the size of the Buck, pretty much all Bucks will rub a tree that is 1-3 inches in diameter, however, larger trees generally will be rubbed by Bucks 3 years old or older. Rub lines reveal routes, note the side of the tree they are on and note they can also show the way to crucial bed-to-feed travel patterns.

*Tip: Take note of the direction of the scrape, if all the scrapes are*

*on the south side of the tree the buck most likely is traveling north for his pattern.*

## DEER STANDS & BLINDS

Some of the best stand locations will be along heavy traveled corridors like game trails, ditches, ridges and draws between primary bedding and feeding areas. Try not to "over trim", by cutting away brush and limbs around your stands or blinds; giving away your location and cover. Sit in your stand or blind and draw your bow or shoulder your gun in all directions to be sure you have a clear line of fire when the critical time comes.

*Tip: Give your stands and blinds the "silent treatment" because there is nothing worse than a squeaky, creaky stand that alerts the deer at the worst possible moment.*

## SAFETY

Practice firearm safety, wear the right clothes, and let someone know where you are hunting and when you will be back. If you are hunting in a tree stand, do not leave the ground unless you properly have

on your safety harness. My buddy Brad can tell you all about this rule from his wheelchair; he did not have on a safety harness, fell and broke his back and his whole life was changed in an instant. Never carry equipment up and down the tree, use a haul line to raise and lower your gear. Do not modify your stand, wear gripping boots, and take your time moving 10 to 12 inches at a time.

Using these tips should help get you in the right place to safely harvest your deer and spend some time unplugging in the woods. Just like you I am ready to kiss Summer good-bye, get off the water for a bit and into the woods. Stay safe, shoot straight and let's go hunting! 🎯

**Misty Wells Producer & Host of "Let's Take It Outside" TV show airing to 38 million on Bally Sports, World Fishing Network, Waypoint TV, Hunt Channel, MOTV, Discover Florida Network & Carbon TV. Bass Pro-Outdoor Pro & Outdoor & Travel Writer. Founder of "A Reel Future" non-profit devoted to teaching the passion of fishing & conservation to foster children, over 3,500 children & counting.**

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# THE ALLURE OF THE SHARK

by Captain George Hastick

I get many clients that come to Florida to fish with me and many of them want to catch a shark. One of the coolest looking sharks I have ever caught and released was a juvenile Scalloped Hammerhead. In just the Tampa Bay area the variety of sharks we have is plentiful.

Some of the most common ones we catch on the flats are Bonnethead and Blacktip, but there are about a dozen shark species that are common in Tampa Bay. The most common shark species in the bay are the Blacktip, Bonnethead, Great Hammerhead, Bull, Lemon, Nurse and Tiger Sharks. Tampa Bay is a nursery for juvenile sharks so sharks inhabit the bay all year but as the water warms between the Spring and Summer months, the bay becomes a nursery for juvenile sharks due to its food sources and protected areas from larger predators.

Bonnethead Sharks are very common on the flats and are a blast for people to catch. They are probably the nicest of the sharks in Tampa Bay, even though they are related to the

Hammerhead Shark. If you're wade fishing, they will usually just swim away from you and are considered harmless, but I wouldn't get your hand anywhere near it's mouth. It's still a shark. They usually average about 3-4 feet in length, so it's a manageable shark that kids (and adults) can have fun catching.

Blacktip Sharks are fun. They are fast and have a range in size depending on where you are fishing. In the shallow back bay waters, they are 2-3 feet long but in larger water areas, like the bay, they can get 5-6 feet long. They are simply a blast on light tackle.

The Great Hammerhead Shark is the largest of the Hammerheads and have been known to reach lengths of 20 feet. The Skyway Bridge was known for having a huge Hammerhead that would love to eat Tarpon and went by the name of "Old Hitler".

The Lemon shark can grow to an average length of 4 to 7 feet. They



are common in the bay and gulf waters. Normally they are not aggressive but can be with the speed they possess.

The Tiger Shark is a very cool looking species with dark vertical stripes, hence the name. They are one of the more aggressive sharks and have a reputation as a shark for people to avoid. They can grow to 10 to 14 feet. I hooked a 13 footer on my Tarpon set up for a little while until he parted ways. I got a very good look at him before I set the hook and the dark eyes were almost eerie and mesmerizing at the same time. He was only 3 feet below the water and right next to the boat, so I got a good look from my tiny 18' boat.

The Bull Shark is the jerk of the shark family being very aggressive and territorial. They can be caught on shorelines and around bridges, but can also be found on our inland flats and inter-

coastal waterways. We have had attacks on humans in our area from this predator which is considered to be one of the most aggressive sharks in the world. They can grow to a length of 8 to 11 feet.

The Nurse Shark is probably one of the nicest sharks in our area. Its an easy-going, slow-moving bottom feeder. Not aggressive at all and can grow to lengths averaging 7 to 9 feet.

The tackle and techniques can vary widely for catching these sharks. Most of the time I am fishing the flats and encounter Bonnethead and small Blacktip Sharks that we catch on any inshore set up with 10-15lb braid and 25-30lb fluorocarbon leader tipped with a short 4" length of 30lb wire and a 1/0-2/0 hook depending on bait size. For the larger sharks that you would get from the piers or fishing deeper water from a boat, I like conventional tackle like a 4/0 senator from a boat and as big as a 10/0-12/0 from land for the big ones. Ask the tackle shops in your area or the pier you are fishing from for information, and I am sure they will help you out with the techniques they are using for that general area.



Check all local rules before you go to make sure you do not break the law and download the Fish Rules App for the most up to date regulations that goes by your gps coordinates from your phone to give you area specific laws. ☑

Captain George Hastick of "Fish Hunter Fishing Charters" in St. Petersburg has been fishing the waters of Tampa Bay for over 35 years & guiding over 20 years. From novice to professional; Capt. George will make you feel as if you have been fishing buddies for years. Contact 727-525-1005, www.FishTampa.com or CaptGeorge@TampaBay.rr.com.

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# "WE'RE GOING DOWN" (TALE OF TERROR IN THE GULF)

by Captain Sergio Atanes

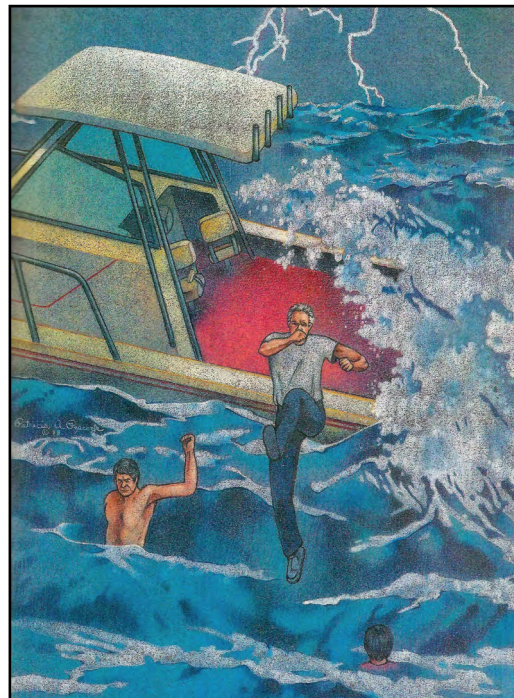
September 10, 1987, 25 years ago my life changed during an ordeal most and I hope none of my readers go through; the sinking of my boat 35 miles offshore.

I had purchased what I thought was going to be my pride and joy; a new 27 ft. cuddy cabin vessel with twin 175 Evinrudes. She was beautiful, so I named her Irene's Dream, after my wife. It started out like any fishing trip offshore, we talked about it all week and were really itching to get going. We all met at my house at 4:30 a.m.; best friend Larry Lavin, my uncle Manuel Valdes and his friend, Pedro Labrador. We were going after Grouper as we did every weekend in those days and it was a perfect time of the year to catch the big Grouper within 40 miles of shore.

I launched at Nick's Marina in Port Richey the closest spot to our planned destination. From there we ran to one of the markers to catch our live bait, but we already had 10 pounds of fresh frozen Spanish Sardines in our cooler as a backup just in case live bait was hard to get. We found bait and the livewell was full along with a cooler, equally heavy, weighing down the stern of the boat. Under normal conditions, this would not be a problem, but we soon experiencing conditions far from normal.

I was turning 4200 rpm on the engines, making good headway toward our fishing spot about 35

miles offshore with 3-foot rollers and a 20-knot breeze. Shortly though, it started to rain and the wind picked up to about 30-knots and gusting to 40, the seas were piling up to about 8 feet. The aforementioned weight of the cooler packed with ice, bait and drinks plus the added weight of



70-gallon baitwell had lowered the transom of the boat about water level. About that time, I looked aft and was horrified to see a "huge" wave break over the stern. In no time, we were standing in ankle-deep water. The splash well was working in reverse! Instead of releasing water, it was retaining water in the stern, setting it deeper in the water.

Another wave broke over the stern. The engines couldn't take

another submerging and quit. Driving rain and 2 feet of water covering the deck was too much. I was able to get one motor started knowing we must get on plane and get the water out or we are going down. I gave it full throttle but it only lasted about a minute and shut down. Just then, another big wave broke over the stern and I knew this was the beginning of the end for us.

"Get out! Get out! Larry shouted. "We're going down! Batteries were dead, and no mayday call had been sent. As the boat capsized, we saw the cooler float free from the sinking boat. Life jackets were in a duffel bag, still in the cabin of the boat. "Larry," I said, "you're the strongest of the group, try and swim into the cabin before the boat sinks and grab the life jackets. After several tries Larry managed to get the duffel bag and within minutes we saw the boat sink.

The only thing keeping us alive was the cooler with 10 pounds of frozen bait, a 6 pack of soda and thanks to Larry, the life jackets. The boat sank somewhere around 8:30 a.m. Larry looked at his watch; it was now 11 p.m. "Hey, we are losing it fast!" Larry said. "It was a struggle to keep our minds clear."

At one point, I shouted, "Who kicked me! Stop it!" I was horrified to see a 4-foot-long shark. Larry started slapping the water hard, then he struck the nose of the shark with his fist. It swam

through Pedro's legs and disappeared. We didn't worry about sharks again, even after all of that. We were worried about our families, about our insurance, wills; how will our kids and wives do when we're gone? We were dying and it hurt.

About 2 a.m. a wave of jellyfish wrapped around our bodies. I remember the pain it felt like being stuck with thousands of needles. Then, it didn't matter. The stings came and went-and came again. 4 a.m. arrived and we were hungry and thirsty, so we had decided to share one can of soda every 4 hours to make them last as long as possible not knowing when and if we were going to get rescued.

At dawn, Larry, the tallest, stretched and saw a ship on the horizon. At first, he didn't say anything because he didn't want to give false hope. Yet, as the ship drew nearer, he took the yellow slicker and pushed himself on top of the cooler. Larry waved as the ship drew nearer, only to watch it come within a mile, then sail on by. Larry waved harder, tears streaking his checks. He saw a speck of a man standing on the stern of the vessel. Did he see a slight change in course? Yes! He waved more, then we all started shouting and waving. The ship did turn! It drew closer. Larry continued to wave while we screamed, laughed, cried and pounded each other on the back.

The ship was close now, its rails lined with shouting men; and Larry continued to wave, even as the Jacobs ladder dropped down the side of the boat. Someone shouted, "We've got you!" We struggled up the ladder and collapsed on the deck of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration ship, the Oregon II. It was about 9 a.m. on Sunday morning, just about the time the Coast Guard was starting its search.

After a ship-to-shore phone call home we were delivered to a Coast Guard vessel from the Sand Key Station. And, to the shouts of children, wives, relatives and friends, four men slowly departed down the gangplank to waiting tears, hugs, laughter, kisses and our families. The ordeal was over. The crew of Irene's Dream was home. ■

**Captain Sergio Atanes is host of Florida West Coast Fishing Report on Facebook and YouTube every Monday night 7-8 p.m. live. He is also host to Aventuras De Pesca USA on national TV and Radio Show. Email the captain at: atanes@msn.com, call 813-973-7132 or visit: reelfishing.com.**

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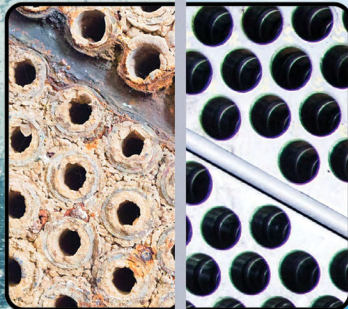




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