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ONSHORE - OFFSHORE Magazine

November 2022



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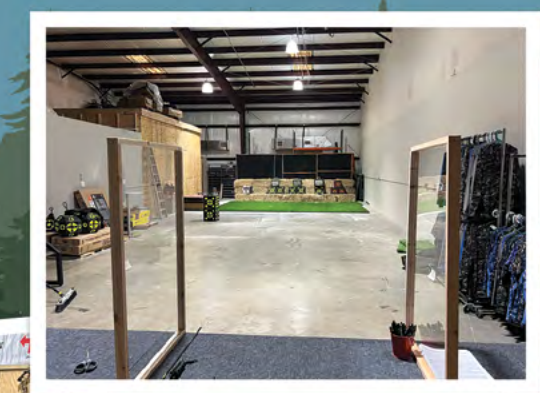
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IT PAYS TO OBEY THE LAW!

I often think that Florida's fishing regulations have become so complicated that it is too much for the average guy or girl to keep up with. We have areas where limits are different, complicated slot limits, restricted areas and much more to be aware of. I always try to be in compliance, but sometimes it's hard to be sure, because regulations change so often.

As a result of our regulations, I decided to look into how other states and countries handle fish related law. After doing just a little research on the internet, I realized that our rules really are not that bad. I will now share a few regulations that are on the books in other places (you know that these must all be true, because the internet said so).

In **Ohio** its illegal to get a fish drunk and it is illegal to fish for whales on Sundays. I can understand the need for insuring the sobriety of our fish population, but I have to wonder how much of a problem whale fishermen were really causing on Sundays. Was Lake Erie simply overrun by whale fishermen? Why Sunday? Did these whale seekers make the boating unsafe for others who wished to use the waters for quieter pastimes like hosting the America's Cup sailing races?

You may not fish while sitting on a camel's back in **Idaho** and it is forbidden to fish while sitting on a giraffe's neck in **Illinois**. I have to wonder why the problem was more serious with Camels in Idaho while Illinois had more issues with Giraffes. I do, at least, know of places where one may ride on a camel, but I have never even heard of anyone riding on a giraffe, so I tend to discount the need for the Illinois law.

In **Minnesota** it is illegal for a human to have sex with a fish. I don't think that I really want to know why they thought that this law was necessary.

It is illegal to use a lasso to catch a fish in **Tennessee**. This one completely defies reason. I can't picture even the most skilled cowboy wanting to ride out and lasso up some catfish or bass.

No person shall take, wound or destroy any fish of **Wyoming** with a firearm of any kind or nature. This seems a bit more reasonable; I can see a cowboy using this approach.

In **Montana**, it is illegal for married women to go fishing alone on Sundays, and illegal for unmarried women to fish alone at all. How unfair it is to single out those who have not found a soul mate and then add insult to injury by restricting their fishing privileges. I would question the constitutionality of this one.

In **Indiana** it is against the law to stupefy fish. The definition of stupefy is make (someone or apparently somefish) unable to think or feel properly. I suppose that this one must go along with Ohio's restriction on getting fish drunk. I guess it could be like contributing to the delinquency of a fish. Is this the source of the expression "drink like a fish"?

And last, but certainly not least, in **Liverpool** It is illegal for a female to be topless in public, unless she is a clerk in a tropical fish shop. Clearly, the public must be protected from boobal nudity in most situations, but it is perfectly reasonable to allow a shopkeeper to expose her breast areas as a purveyor of tropical fish. I imagine that this would allow a shopkeeper to remove her shirt in order to avoid getting it all wet in the process of capturing a wild fish that has been sold or otherwise needs to be taken out for a walk.

Feel free to stop by Belle Harbour Marina in Tarpon Springs if you would like to discuss scheduling a camel back fishing expedition (they are legal here, just not in Idaho) but don't waste my time talking about Giraffe fishing, that is just ridiculous. I can hook you up with camels, but if you would rather go the more conventional route and use a boat, I can help you with that too. You can call me at 727.943.8489 or email at: merle@belleharbourmarina.com.

Be careful out there and always make sure you know your regulations.

Merle



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ON THE COVER: Captain Jimmy Nelson and Luiza Barros with two beautiful and very tasty Wintertime Grouper! Question is...what time you want us over for dinner?

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REEL TALK

by Tom Mohrbach

Everyone has their favorite type of fishing reel; spinning, baitcaster, spincast or fly. The subcategories of each type are mind-boggling. Prior readers of my column know that I am a simple man. Like many Midwesterners, my first fishing reel was a Zebco 202 Spincast. It was your basic inexpensive, no-brainer reel. I was about eight years old when I inherited it from one of my older siblings.

I remember watching enviously as my father flung his line out twice as far with his spinning (or what we called an open-face) reel. He leisurely reeled his cast in compared to my frantic cranking of the Zebco's handle like a jack-in-the-box.

Despite the spinning reel's apparent ease of use, when I would borrow my dad's rod and reel, I would quickly cause a nasty tangle of line resembling Florida forecasters' hurricane projection pat-

terns. I, of course, would return his rod and reel to its usual place and claim ignorance when he finally discovered the mess.

Finally, in my early teens, I conquered the spinning reel. Like my dad, I used a Mitchell 301 for many years, landing many fine Northern Pike and Largemouth Bass. The Abu Garcia Cardinal was also a favorite. As a budget-conscious (ok cheap) fisherman, thirty-five dollars was the most I ever paid for a reel.

Since moving to Florida, I have realized the need to upgrade my gear. I hooked onto something huge a few weeks ago while fishing off the Anclote Pier. My trusty Shimano spinning reel's drag screamed like someone in a haunted house. I watched helplessly as my line emptied from the spool. I never saw what I had hooked but it finally cut my line as my drag was fried.

Determined not to be beaten by inferior equipment ever again, I headed to a local sporting goods store. The variety of reels and their costs were overwhelming. The costlier reels were tethered by cable to the display case like pens on a chain at a bank. I picked up a few of them and cranked away. Holy Moses and Joseph! I had no idea a reel could feel so smooth. And, when I quit reeling, the spool actually spun a few times on its own.

I visibly flinched while checking the price tag but knew I was hooked (pun intended). My Penn Fierce III spinning reel is incredible. It feels rugged, yet smooth. Its Black and Red metal body resembles Spiderman's suit, and the HT 100 carbon fiber drag washers are ready for whatever awaits me. Although I must admit it looks weird on my 12' bamboo rod; poles are another story for another time.

Oh, and if anyone talks to my wife, please don't mention the price of the reel. Yes, I realize most of you serious fisherfolks spend hundreds of dollars on a reel, but as my Grandpa used to say, "I'm on a fixed income." ☑

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 for additional information on all of his books.



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THE RIVERS REPORT

by Captain John Rivers

November is an outstanding time to fish the Tampa Bay Area. The water temperature is perfect and quite frankly, so is the weather!

Let's start with Trout fishing. My clients are enjoying some nice Trout to take home this time of

year and the fish are a good size, which makes for good fishing and good eating. After we get some nice Trout in the ice chest, I switch gears and go Snook fishing and that too, has been outstanding! We've even hooked into a few Redfish along the way. Last month, the Redfish bite was



off the charts with many double hook-ups! So, what will November bring as far as the Redfish bite? It will be good, but not quite as good as October; still enough to keep the rods bent.

Like I stated, Fall is a perfect time to fish Tampa Bay, as the water temps are in the right range for the fish to be active and feed more. They are entering their

staging areas before it gets cooler in late December and January. Cooler temps in the morning make it very comfortable for the boat ride across Tampa Bay to the fishing grounds and you're not having to deal with the heat while fishing like we do in the month of August.



Spanish Mackerel are kind of around but not many and we're really not targeting them much due to the Snook, Redfish and Trout bite being so good. Live bait, like Pilchards, are the bait of choice but I'll still have a few pieces of cut Mullet and Threadfin Herring in the bait cooler; if need be.

As you can see November is a great time to fish Tampa Bay and the surrounding waters.

So if you've not been out in awhile, dust off your fishing rods or hire a professional guide and go enjoy some great fishing that November has to offer on Tampa Bay! 🎣

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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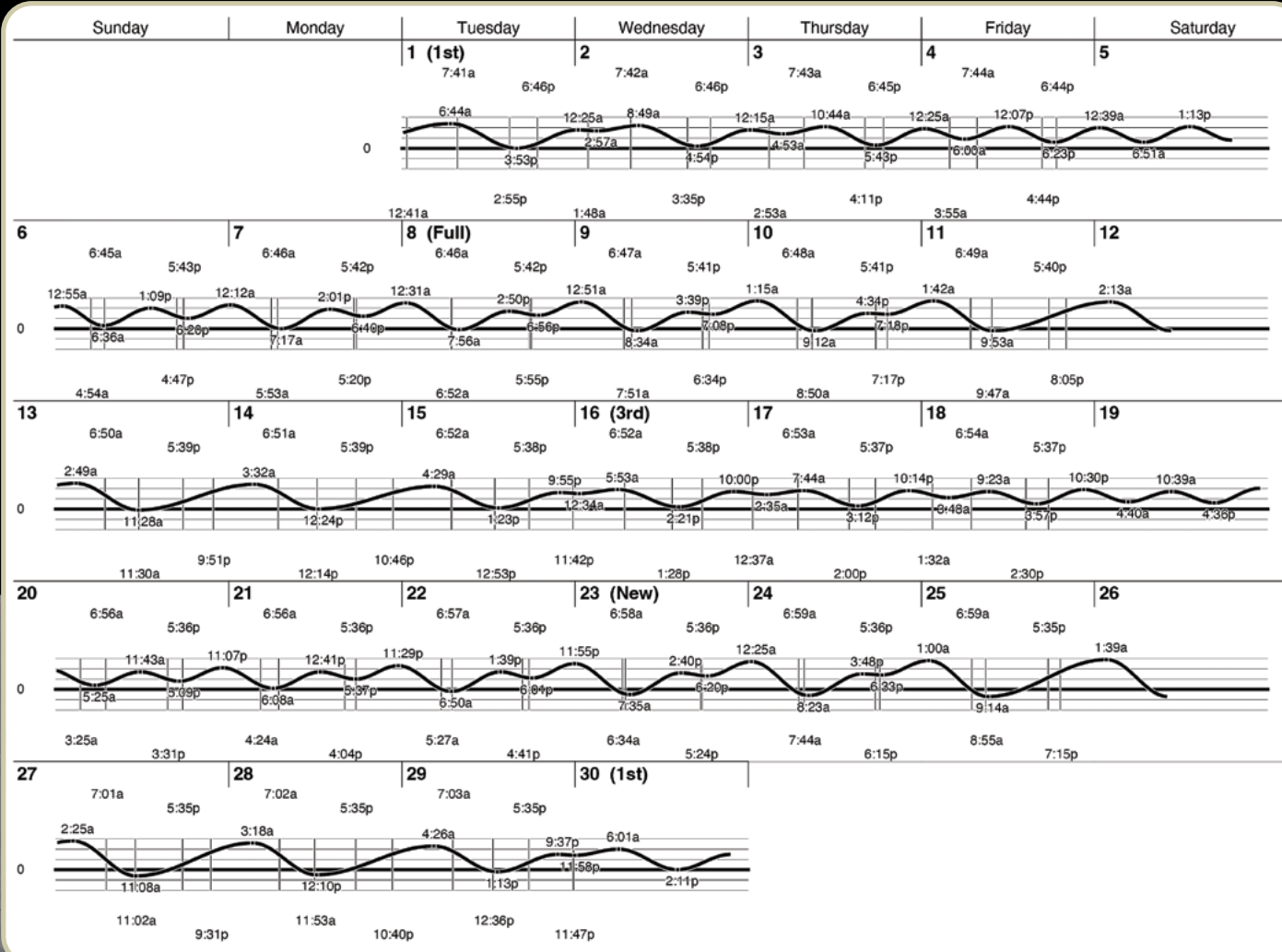
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Conversions for Clearwater Beach Area			Conversions for St. Marks River Area		
High	Low		High	Low	
-0:02	-0:10	Dunedin, St. Joseph Sound	+0:23	+1:18	Everglades City
-0:05	-0:15	Anclote Key, South End	-1:17	-1:03	Cape Romano
+0:42	+0:42	Tarpon Springs, 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
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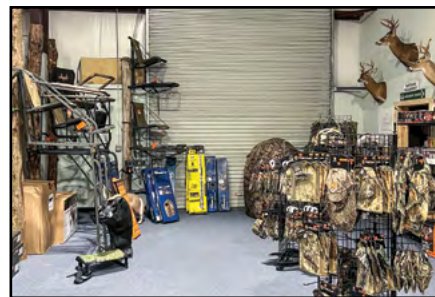
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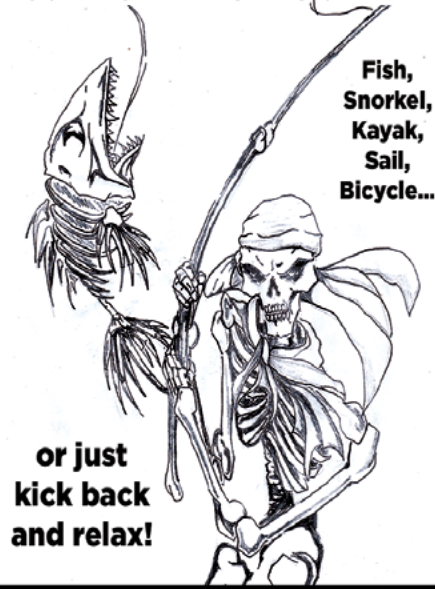


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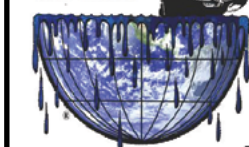
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GET CRACKIN'

STONE CRAB SEASON IS HERE

by Misty Wells



We've all been waiting for it and its finally here. I'm talking about Stone Crab season here in the Sunshine State and the West Coast of Florida has hit the ground running!

There are a lot of newcomers to Florida this year and I have found many of them don't know much about our Stone Crab season and how it works.

One of the things that is most unique about Stone Crab and harvesting their claws is that it is a sustainable fishery; you are only 'popping claws' meaning you are not killing the crabs.

There are two legal ways of Stone Crabbing: one is recreational and the other is commercial. If you have a valid Florida Fishing License you can legally deploy five Stone Crab traps for the season and a lot of folks don't know that. It is easy to become a Stone Crabber; just visit your local tackle shop and buy traps that are already made or you can buy the kits and make them yourself. My local "go-to" in Pinellas is FISH (Fishermen's Ideal Supply House) located in right off Madeira Beach on the Welch Causeway in St. Pete, Florida.



Commercial Stone Crabbers from the Florida Stone Crab & Seafood Company. (L to R) Pete, Jacob & Brennan.



Once you get your traps built, you will need to bait up and get ready to drop them offshore. I have found having them in about 40 feet of water works quite well and pigs feet are the best producing bait for me. It stays in the trap longer and the crabs seem to like it the best. Make sure whatever bait you are using it is not sticking out of the trap. If so, the crabs will just grab that bait and pull it out and not enter the trap.

Now here is the fun part! You need to mark where you dropped your traps and let them soak for about a week to 10-days depending on weather. If a cold front is coming, pull right before or after. If you are a recreational crabber, you most likely will be hand pulling your traps, and it's not really that hard as you are only pulling a few, plus it's a nice workout.

You will now need to know how to measure your crabs claws. Remember, you are

only taking the claws if they are the correct size; if they are small, the crabs go right back into the water. You need to carefully grab the crabs by their back legs then fold in the arms to their bodies, then take the measuring tool and measure the knuckle to the tip of the claw and it must be 2-7/8 inches, which is an 1/8-inch increase than previous years. When catching stone crabs both claws can be removed if they both measure correctly, also keep in mind that recreation harvesters who are 16 and older are required to complete an online, no-cost recreational stone crab registration.

back, on average, about 20% bigger than the claw taken in the previous year.



Stone crab claws need to be cooked immediately after harvest in order to prevent the meat sticking to the shell. Commercial fishermen usually cook their claws dockside as soon as they unload the bounty. Boil some water, drop the claws in until they are cooked, then put them in an ice-water bath to cool off. Stone crab claws are usually served in the shell, but some folks like them cold and some folks like them hot. Personally, I like both.

We've started a new stone crab business called "Family Jewels Stone Crab & Seafood Company" with our buddies, Tiki and Captain Tommy Laronge at the helm and this season is already starting off great!

There are quite a few ways you can feast on these amazing claws even if you are not inclined to harvest them yourself. A local fresh fish market like Nachman's Seafood Market on Reddington Shores or locally owned restaurants with their own fleet of crabbers like Salt Rock, Frenchy's and Island Way Grill.

If you are feeling adventurous and want a fun way to spend a few hours on your boat with the family, buy a few traps, bait them up and find a good place to soak them. It's a great day on the water out pulling traps and an even better evening crackin claws together! 🍷

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.



Commercial fishermen are able to have hundreds or thousands of traps as long as they purchase the tags to place on the traps and have all the proper licenses.

One of the great things about stone crab claws is not only do they taste delicious, but they are the only renewable resource from our waters. The stone crab's ability to regenerate lost limbs makes it possible to harvest the tasty claws without killing the crab. Claws must be removed carefully, at just the right spot on the arm in order for the regeneration to take place.

Another unique thing about stone crab is once a claw is harvested, they will grow



Holiday Gift Guide



TAMPA BAY SPORTING CLAYS

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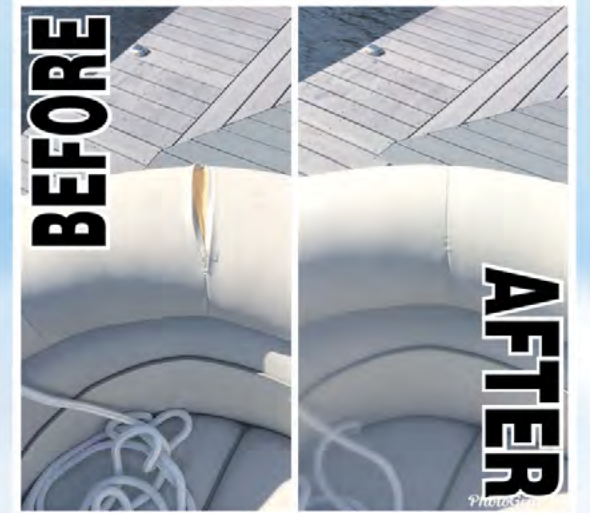
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REEL IN AWESOME IN CRYSTAL RIVER

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.

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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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KNOW YOUR TURKEY CALLS

by Misty Wells

Wild Turkey is one of the most plentiful game birds in North America and can be hunted in almost every state. They estimate the countries total Turkey population is about 7.4 million and it's made up of five different wild species. Each sub-species looks, sounds and behaves a little bit differently, but if you understand them, you will be able to hunt them better.

Wild Turkey have a well-developed communication system that they use to avoid danger, call mates, be social and establish dominance. Turkey use two main forms of communication: vocal and visual and often use both methods at the same time. An example of both methods being used at the same time is a "Tom" may gobble while also strutting (the act of spreading its tail fan, dragging its wings, and making his body appear as larger as possible).

It's important to know why Turkey are communicating both vocally and visually if you learn what they are saying; it could just help you bag your trophy!

One thing us hunters need to focus on more are our Turkey Calls, what they mean and how they are communicating. Turkey use different sounds to communicate different messages and if you are using the wrong message at the wrong time, it can affect your entire hunt; meaning it might be similar to laughing at a funeral or yelling in a library.

Let's get started with the wide range of sounds Turkey make and why it is important to know what they mean before heading out for the hunt.

First sound we'll cover is the **yelp**. It's the most common heard sound from Turkey; both male and female, and its commonly a locator saying, "I'm over here".

The yelp is also a good call for when a "Hen" is on the lookout for a "Tom". Also a tree yelp is a yelp often used by a roosted "Hen" before she flies down to let everyone know she

is awake and ready for action. A tree call like this is a softer, plainer yelp, but can be key to draw a gobbler off his roost and set him up for a shot.

The **purr** is another sound you may hear a lot from Turkey and it usually means they are content and relaxed, almost like us humming or singing a song. When they are feeding or generally communicating with one another they will often use a purr, which is why a "purr pot" is important to have in your calling collection. You may also hear a tom purr as a sign of aggression. This may occur when one gobbler is invading another gobbler's space and they are trying to force them out of the area.

Cutting is another important sound they make; it is a series of load and fast clucks with usually a few yelps thrown in. When a "Hen" is fired up and wants attention she may start cutting, as this will usually get a "Tom's" attention very quickly. Be careful not to overuse this call as a "Tom" may be close by and by overcalling, may just turn him off.



Let's not forget the **gobble** is the sound all Turkey hunters want to hear; this is a clear indication that a "Tom" or a "Jake" is excited and looking to attract a "Hen". This is also used by a "Tom" to let the other males in the area know he is there and he is trying to deter them from coming in.

When in doubt remember "less is more" when calling. There are some wonderful turkey calls on the market and my favorite brand of calls is **Woodhaven Calls**. The owner, Mike Penetecost, is a genius when it comes to designing them. Mike is an avid Turkey hunter and an expert call designer; he has also teamed up with a few other experts to bring some new items to the line-up. The Black Reactor was designed by 3x Grand National Calling Champion Scott Ellis, the Blue Cutter/

Vyper were designed by Grand National & World calling Champion Bill Yargus and Mike designed the Hyper Ninja and you can either find these at your local Bass Pro or online retailer.



Decoys are especially important and the decoys they are coming out with now are very lifelike, however they can also be expensive. Even if you opt for a more budget friendly decoy, you can still spruce it up with some real turkey feathers, beards or fans and possibly some fishing line for movement to make things more

lifelike. Turkey see in color and have eyesight 3x better than humans, so a decoy can give you a chance to take the focus off the hunter and on the decoy for starters. A decoy is also important for a Turkey to associate the call with. If a Turkey comes in from a call and does not see a decoy, he may get confused. You definitely want to try and have a "Hen" and a "Tom" decoy cause this might help bring in a "Tom" a lot faster. "Toms" want all the "Hens" to themselves so if he sees a Tom with a Hen he may move in fast to get rid of him, then get careless enough to give you a shot. If you can get out and scout the area, sit and listen to the woods, look for some natural blinds on the ground and do an entire 360° turn while scouting.

Make sure you have several shooting lanes if possible, cause you never know which way the turkey are going to come in. We found the perfect place for our natural blind and spent several hours perfecting it for the next day thinking we knew which way they were coming in based on their calls. Well, you guessed it, they came in right behind us that morning instead. Needless to say, we could not turn around to take a shot, so they just looked at us confused and then disappeared into the woods never to be seen again.

Get out and practice. I plan to hit the range and practice my skeet shooting so when the ultimate "Tom" comes by, I might just bag him. ☑

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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FALLING FOR REDFISH

by Captain George Hastick

Redfish are one of the great targeted gamefish in Tampa Bay and the surrounding areas and November is still a good month to get on some schools.

I do a lot of live and cut bait fishing with my clients for Redfish which gives them an advantage to catch a lot of fish, but lures can also be very productive when searching for these strong fighting fish. There are advantages to



all three techniques. With cut bait you can chum pieces out along with larger cut baits on your hooks to draw the Redfish into the area you are fishing. Basically, the fish are finding you instead of you finding the fish. This can come in very handy if there has been a lot of storms and or wind that has the water muddy. So, if you can't sight fish, the scent helps bring the fish to you. The key is to leave the cut bait in one spot and not move it around

once you cast it out, so the scent can build up right where your bait is to attract the fish to it. There are quite a few cut baits that work very well for Redfish and I will name a few but almost any bait that is oily will work; Pinfish, Ladyfish, Mullet, Threadfin Herring and Scaled Sardines all produce fish.

Now, if you are not patient enough to fish with cut bait and wait for a bite, then live chumming with Scaled Sardines is another alternative that can still get the fish to show themselves and bring the fish to you in murky water. When you get to a fishy area or a place where you have caught reds before, start spreading some live Scaled Sardines around the area and watch for the boil. This is the telltale sign of redfish. Since they have a mouth that is low and geared toward bottom feeding, they must come up higher and pounce down on the bite creating a very strong downward motion which looks like a toilet flushing. Sometimes



their eyes will even come out of the water when chasing a bait. When you get large reds boiling on the chum you have thrown out its an exciting thing to see! When this is happening every bait that is casted out will get clobbered and your drags will start screaming. The great thing about Redfish is they seem to never give up all the way to the net.

Lures also have an advantage of being able to make really long casts to cover a lot of area and they can produce sound and flash to attract them from a distance. Fan casting to find fish and then moving a little and fan casting the next spot will cover an area very efficiently and quickly. The other advantage is that you can spot a fish or a school of reds



far away when the water clarity is good and be able to make the distance needed. This is a good advantage in two ways; one, you will not miss the opportunity when it comes your way and two, you can keep your distance as not to spook the school. This will allow you to catch more if they are being spooky that day. One of the tried-and-true old time lures is the gold spoon. It catches Redfish and is relatively easy to use but there is nothing more exciting than a large Redfish blowing up a topwater lure. Mirrolure has a line of lures out called the "C-Eyes Skin Series" which are dynamite. They have made these baits look like the real thing. It is as if they took the skin off the bait and put it on their lures along with realistic looking eyes.

For the topwater bite the "Mirromullet" or the "Pro Dog Mullet" will entice fantastic topwater strikes. Work both with a side to side, walk the dog retrieve. If you are having misses on the strikes, try to wait a second before setting the hook when you see the strike. If you are still having missed strikes you can go to a subsurface lure like one of my favorites, the "Catch Jr. C-Eyes Mullet". This is the same walk-the-dog motion but will be below

the water about a foot, which makes it easier for the fish to get it, And, it allows you to get a better hook set since your not seeing it happen as soon as they strike it, which gives them time to get a better grip on the lure. If the walk the dog style lure is not for you then the "Mirrodine" is a great suspending twitch lure that I have caught plenty of fish on. I use different colors but I am gravitating towards the "C-Eyes Skins" model more just because of how lifelike it looks and it catches fish. So, between those four lures you should have a great time getting on the Redfish.

Well, there is three different styles to choose from, but whatever you choose, get out there and fish cause the Redfish bite is definitely on! 🎣

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 Capt-George@TampaBay.rr.com.

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SHALLOW WATER SNAPPER

by Anthony Gomez

The days of calm sea conditions every weekend have come to an end. Fall season is in full swing and the conditions are getting windier and rougher. These rough waves and high winds are creating mercy waters. To be more specific, the waves stir up all the shallow waters right off the coast. For anglers like me, this is one of the best times to get on a hot Snapper bite in shallow water!

The depth I'm fishing is anywhere from 15-30 feet of water. Yes, I fish that shallow. I basically fish where most people are diving for Lobster and most of the time, the boat is less than a mile off the beach. Many people think of these shallow waters as places with small Yellowtail Snapper and

fish that are not worth fishing for. Well, I can tell you that these shallow reefs have some stud-sized Snapper. Mutton and Mangrove are the target Snapper on these small reefs and dirty water has a huge effect on fooling these smart fish.

On calm summer days when the water is clear, the fish can see you the same way you can see them in the shallows. Those conditions make it difficult to entice the fish to bite. With lower water clarity and rougher weather, it makes those finicky fish a lot easier to catch. There are a few key components and steps to effectively fish the shallows. In the morning, I'll usually start by searching for some live bait. I like to get a livewell full of 3-6-inch Pilchards and Threadfins. I'll throw around my 10 foot cast net at multiple spots before heading out. If I don't find any live bait, its not the end of the world. The best part about fishing in the shallows is that these don't see much pressure or much baitfish. I like to bring a couple bags of frozen "chummies" like Glass Minnows or very small white bait. These baits are used to hand chum and fire-up the fish. I also bring some bigger baits that I have in the freezer like Threadfin, Sardines or Mullet. These are not as effective as live bait, but a nice sized cut bait can still entice those big Muttons and Mangroves to bite.

With or without live bait, I head out the inlet usually right as that sun is coming over the horizon. Usually, with my fingers crossed that its not too rough for the 22 foot Sportsman. The boat can handle the big swell, but sometimes the waves are too close together and it creates problems. This is a main reason why I like to get out there as the sun is coming

up. The morning hours usually have lighter winds compared to the afternoon. Once I have made it out the inlet, I'll head North or South depending on what spots I want to hit. After arriving at the first spot, I like to drive around a little to see if I can find a school of fish on my sonar. When I find a good spot to start, I'll drop the trolling motor and spot lock. This



is a key part in fishing the shallow waters because dropping the anchor can spook the fish before you even start fishing. Spot lock is also safer for anchoring in rough conditions and helps prevent taking waves over the bow of the boat.

As soon as I have spot locked, I begin to chum. I'll throw handfuls of those "chummies" into the water to get the fish in a feeding mode. I also like to throw some of the smaller live baits, as well, to spice up my chum. I'll continuously chum the entire time while I am fishing to keep those fish fired-up. After chumming for a few minutes, I drop down my first bait. The rig I like to use is either a light jighead or a hook and small split shot. An 1/8 or 1/4 oz jighead is perfect because there is basically no current in the shallows. I'll

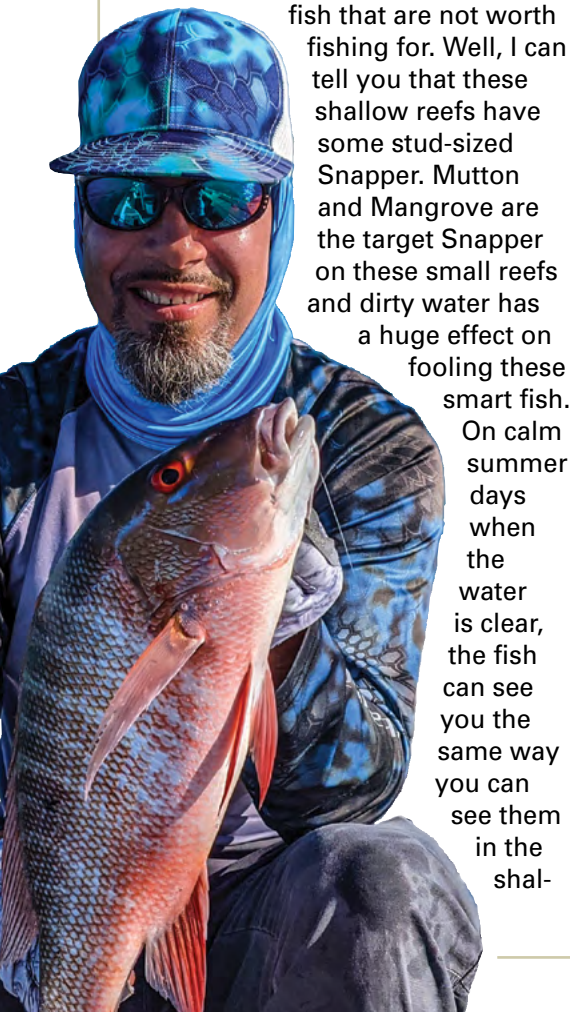
also use a 1/0 hook with a 1/4 oz split shot about a foot or two away from the bait. Sometimes the wind becomes a problem by dragging your line around so thats when I prefer using the hook and split shot combo. I can add and take off weights whenever I need to without having to re-tie my line. With the dirty water, I like to use a 30-40 lbs. of fluorocarbon leader. It is the perfect line to be able to pull a big Snapper away from the reef while also creating a finesse presentation. A 4000-6000 size reel with a medium-heavy rod is sufficient. It may seem a little big, but you need something with some "beef" to stop those bigger Muttons and Mangroves. There is also the possibility to hook a decent Grouper, as well, and I can tell you that I don't want to lose that fish because I was under gunned. These big fish are very smart and will try to break you off any way possible along the reef. The natural reefs have many sharp coral heads and structures that will shred your leader. You got to be ready to put the brakes on those fish or you will lose them.



There is one main disadvantage to fishing in the shallows. Since the spots are small and there isn't an immense school of fish, the bite tends to shut off very quickly. The Snapper will get smart after a while and moving spots is the only next option. So, it's important to have multiple areas to bounce around to and try.

Shallow waters off the coast are areas that are overlooked by most anglers as a spot for big Snapper. Having the correct gear and properly fishing these spots can result in some solid fish. There are plenty of areas of solid bottom to catch these nice snappers and can hold some unexpected fish like Cobia or Kingfish.

Taking advantage of surprise fish can only make your day better. Especially this time of year, schools of Spanish Mackerel tend to surround the boat after chumming some live baits and can be a great way to help fill up the cooler when the Snapper bite is slow. These waters hold more fish than most people think and are a great way to still fish offshore on these rough fall days. ☑



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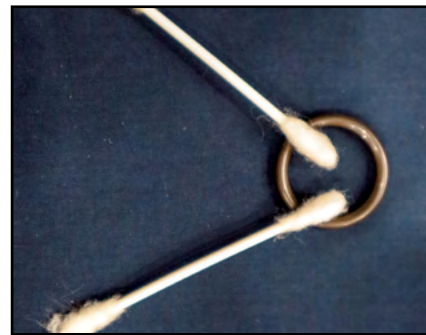
FALL TACKLE TIPS

by Captain Sergio Atanes

November is the month I pick to get my tackle in shape for the fall and the start of my favorite month for fishing. Preparing your fishing tackle for fall fishing is a must; update your tackle to different colors on your artificial & medium running baits and switch to lighter leader material and hook sizes.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS:

- Give your reels a good cleaning by loosening the drags and lubricating the gears. If you don't feel comfortable doing this there are several good tackle dealers in Tampa who can service your reels at a reasonable price.



- Check your line guides on the rods for any scratches or nicks. Use cotton swabs or borrow a pantyhose from your wife when she's not looking and cut it into small strips. It will last a long time, so don't worry, she won't miss just one.

Now run the cotton swab or piece of pantyhose through the guide. If the pantyhose clings or the cotton sticks to the guide, replace the guide or risk losing a fish later. A slight scratch or cut on the guide will cut your line under pressure from a pulling fish.



- At the end of the day, never put your hook on the guide if your rod doesn't have a built-in hook holder as this can and will scratch the guide. Instead, take an electrical nylon tie with a screw hole built in and place it just above the top grip on the rod. This allows a place for the hook to sit.

- Most anglers take too much tackle on a fishing trip. Remember the last time you went on a vacation with your wife,

and she brought half the closet along? There are many new small soft-sided tackle boxes that can handle all your needs. I suggest you leave most of your tackle at home and replenish your tackle box as needed. In addition, small medicine bottles work great for hooks and small sinkers to keep on the console of the boat and use a needed.



Hopefully the "honey do's" are done and your tackle is ready for fishing. Remember, the fishing heats up as the water temperature drops. And, November will bring lower water temperatures and an increase in fish activity. Look for Snook cruising the mangrove shorelines of creeks and rivers; live shrimp or fresh cut Ladyfish are one of their favorites in the fall. Flounder will hit jigs tipped with Shrimp bounced on

the bottom under docks and bigger Trout move into the channels and deeper cuts around the mangroves.

Redfish will start their move under docks and around bridges looking for food. Live Shrimp are one of the best baits, just before change of tide.



Sheepshead, the "bait stealers" of Tampa Bay, start their migration looking for mates and can be found around rocky bottom, bridges and docks. This is the start of the season to fish for them until late February when they move back out to the gulf waters. Live Shrimp, dead Shrimp or Fiddler Crabs are the best baits for these convicts.

Grouper action gears up as the bigger gags move closer to shore and make their appearance around the Skyway Bridge and the shipping channel. Cut bait with a small strip of Squid will almost always increase the bite. 📌

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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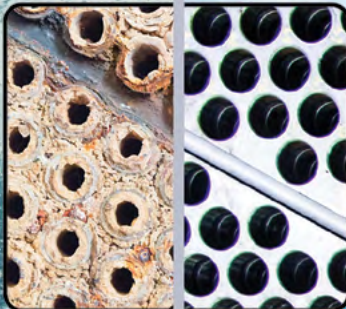




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Visit www.STARBRITE.com to learn more.



Star brite
MARINE DESCALING FLUID
READY TO USE
Safely removes scale, salt, deposits and more from raw water cooled systems.
Net 1 Gallon | 128 oz | 3.78 l

Star brite
MARINE DESCALING FLUID
CONCENTRATE
Safely removes scale, calcium, corrosion, salt, deposits and more from raw water cooled systems.
DANGER: CORROSIVE. IRRITANT. HARMFUL TO AQUATIC LIFE.
Net 1 Gallon | 128 oz | 3.78 l