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ALMOST PARADISE

Most of us who are lucky enough to live and work on the water in the Tampa Bay area start to take it for granted after a while. We get caught up in our busy day-to-day routine and don't take the time to appreciate what a paradise we live in. We complain about the "snowbird" and spring break traffic and we curse the hurricanes. We hate the heat and we bitch about the Winter cold.

I have recently been reminded of how great our backyard really is by the out of town customers who have been using my rental boats and kayaks. Their perspective has really reopened my eyes to the beauty that we have in our own backyards. Without exception, these nice folks return from their outing on the water with great big beaming smiles and stories of all of the great stuff they discovered. Many of them are surprised to find that we have everything here that is available in places typically considered to be more exotic vacation destinations.

This was previously driven home to my wife and I while visiting in Key West. We were staying in a small rental unit near Duval Street with no pool or yard and we had not brought a boat with us on this excursion. We spent a couple of days partying on Duval and ate some good food but then we realized that back home in Tarpon Springs we had a great house and pool on the water, a couple boats to use plus our other toys. We had to ask ourselves, why were we staying in a musty little apartment with no amenities? Needless to say, we packed up and came home where we enjoyed the rest of our vacation right here. This is not to say that the Keys aren't a great place to visit, but so is Tampa Bay.

With gas prices somewhere north of insane and all of the other costs of travel going through the roof, why not plan a staycation this year? It just makes sense to stay close to home and save gas while taking advantage of all that is available nearby and helping local businesses. Maybe if we all did this and bought less gas, the prices would even go down to a level that is only ridiculous.

There is so much to do right here. If you want a really wild experience with animals try **Giraffe Ranch** or **Safari Wilderness** where you can take a real safari and see lots of exotic wildlife in a naturalistic setting. You can even feed Lemurs grapes! If you want to get out on the water, you can come to **Belle Harbour Marina** and rent one of our great rental boats, try a charter with one of the many great captains who advertise or write here in **Onshore-Offshore Magazine** or just take a ride on one of the great tour boats running from the Sponge Docks in Tarpon Springs. If you need a change of scenery, try a few days at a hotel on one of our great beaches; I especially like the **Opal Sands** on Clearwater Beach.

If you like more unusual pastimes here are some fun ways to use some leisure time on your staycation:

- Take a photo safari in your local discount store. You may capture some images of unique wildlife that can even be immortalized on the Internet.
- Dress in stockings and a camisole (particularly if you're a 300 pound man) and go shopping at your local discount store so that others can photograph you, perhaps you'll get immortalized on the Internet.
- Wear an aluminum foil hat to shield your brain from the mind control rays.
- Buy birdseed at your local pet store. Ask the clerk how long it will take the birds to sprout after you plant the seed.
- Take a carton of Depends adult diapers into the changing room at your local department store and put one on over your pants. When you come out ask the attendant where the toilet paper is?

Now that I've gotten you started, I'm sure you can think of lots of other fun ways to pass your vacation time. Have fun and try to appreciate how lucky we are to be so close to so many great places.

Merle can be reached at Belle Harbour Marina, located at 307 Anclote Road in beautiful, historic Tarpon Springs or by phone at 727-943-8489.



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ON THE COVER: A proud angler with a beautiful Redfish caught while fishing with our staff writer, Anthony Gomez in the rustic Florida Everglades. To read more about their epic adventure, turn to page 28 of this issue.

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NORTHEAST MARINE

THE RIVERS TO BAY REPORT

by Captain John Rivers

It's officially Spring in the Tampa Bay area. Snook are all over the place and are feeding well. Water temperatures are right where they should be which puts the fishies in a good mood, which equals bent rods and screaming drags!



Live bait is the best choice, but if you like tossing artificials; no worries, you'll catch your fair share, as well.

Here are a few lures that I like when targeting Snook, Redfish and Trout. Heddon's Spook is my "go-to" for topwater. For Redfish and Trout, I like tossing a 4" Paddletail and my preferred colors are White and Clear with Red metal flake. Snook in Tampa Bay are live bait feeders, but you can still get them to eat artificials. I like an 1/8-ounce Snake-Lock jighead with a Z-Man Paddlerz.

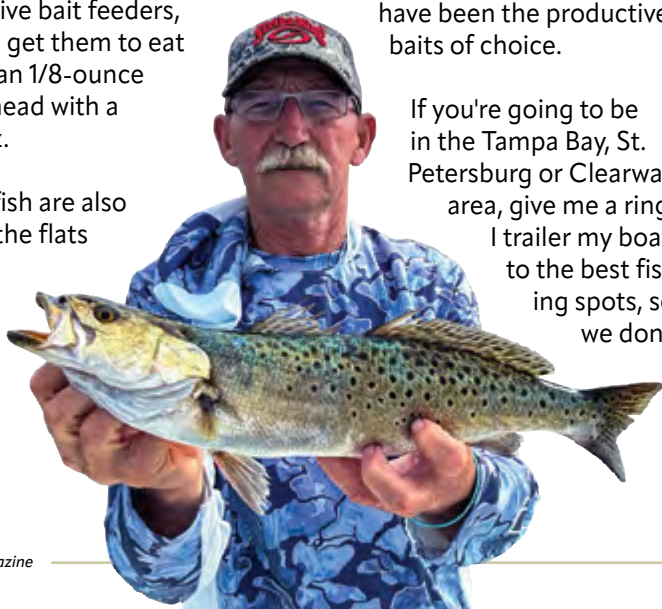
Schools of Redfish are also showing up on the flats in a few areas. These fish are very boat shy, so be quiet and patient and you'll hook a



few. Once again, live or cut bait has been the best way to hook these skittish bronze beauties. Some of the Redfish schools have been beat up pretty bad by locals and guides, so again, be patient and you'll hook a few. They are mostly oversized fish, which means your drag is gonna sing.

The Sheepshead bite is still going strong in Tampa Bay, and the rock piles, jetties and bridges have been producing some nice catches. Live Shrimp, Fiddler and Mud Crabs have been the productive baits of choice.

If you're going to be in the Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg or Clearwater area, give me a ring; I trailer my boat to the best fishing spots, so we don't



have a long boat ride to the fish. With 15 years of guiding under my belt, you'll be in very good hands if you jump aboard my new 2360 Ranger and go on a fishing adventure with me!

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THE SNOOK ARE CHEWING!

by Captain George Hastick

April can be an exciting month for fishing, with all the varieties of fish becoming active from the warming of the water and the arrival of baitfish in numbers on the flats. From Spanish Mackerel out in the bay to Trout on the flats and some Tarpon action still around, it is all starts to happen this month.

One of my favorite fish in April is the "Linesider" or more commonly known as a Snook. This is an ambush predator with very fast speed and crushing topwater strikes! The gill raking headshakes as they breach the water is an absolute adrenalin rush. Sometimes they will come completely out of the water when they hammer a bait or they might jump out of the water during the fight. They are a strong, fast, acrobatic fish, that can put your drag to the test. If you are fishing near structure, you had better have that drag set pretty tight because they will definitely run towards it to break you off. Heck, they didn't get that big by being stupid; they know what they are doing.

On that note, I will give you an example about how keen the Snook can be. During the daylight hours when the sun is up high, if you use too heavy of a leader they will not bite. You can tell this by throwing out live Scaled Sardines as chum and watch them eat every bait, but if you put one on a hook with 40# test leader or too large of a hook, you usually will not get a bite. Snook have very good eyesight to be the predator they are and this trait also lets them see your line and/or hook.

Nighttime fishing is a different story. You can run heavy leaders to get those big Snook out from the bridges and rock jetties since they cannot see the leader as easily, like daytime fishing. You can catch them on mono leader, but you will get more hits with



fluorocarbon leader. Fluorocarbon leader has a lower refractive index than monofilament which means it is almost invisible underwater, which is a plus when fishing for Snook. It will cost a little more, but it will be worth it on the days the fish are being finicky. With the amount of money we spend on fishing poles, reels and lures don't cheap out on the business end of the deal. It could cost you the fish of a lifetime! I use Seaguar Fluorocarbon leader which has a good selection of different grades to meet your price range and style of fishing. If you go to their new revamped website at www.Seaguar.com they have charts that you can compare all of the leader qualities, like knot strength, stretch, abrasion resistance, memory and price. I think the best bang for the buck is the "STS Salmon" leader since it comes in 100-yard spools

at a good price, but their premier line has all the good qualities. You really will not go wrong with either, but there are many more choices than that.

My typical snook setup for flats is a 7'6" Temple Fork Outfitters Professional series, Medium Heavy 8-17lb test rod with a Quantum 4000 Reliance PT reel, spooled with 10# braid and 4 feet of 25# Seagaur fluorocarbon leader.

WHERE TO LOOK?

Look for Snook in areas with good current flow that will bring bait to them. Snook are lazy by nature and a cast 1-foot closer to a fish can make all the difference if you get the hit or not.

Areas to concentrate on are large and small bridges, docks and the Mangrove tree lines that are along the flats and residential canals. Moving water is the key to a good bite with Snook.

Live Scaled Sardines, Threadfins and Pinfish are all good baits and if you like artificials, the "MirrOlure Mirrodine" in the "C-Eye Skin Series CS17" for the flats and for a little deeper water, like 5 feet, the "Heavydine" is hard to beat.



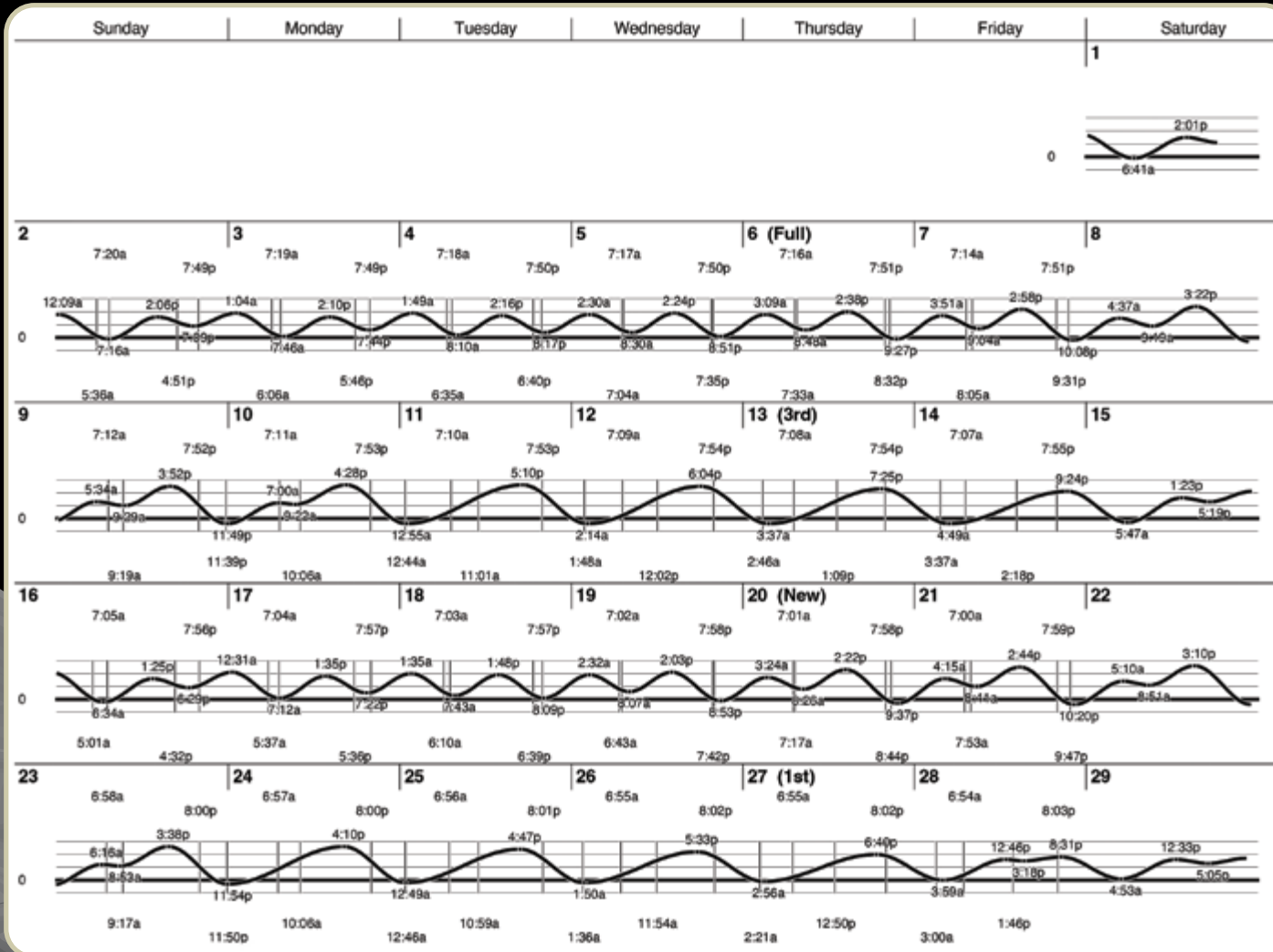
So, don't wait if you want to catch a Snook. April is a great month to target these excellent fighting fish! 🎣

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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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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LET'S TAKE IT OUTSIDE! ARE YOU READY?

by Misty Wells

The weather in Florida is picture perfect right now, not too hot or too cold and the humidity levels are low. Of course, us Floridians know that this perfect weather will soon turn hot, so now is the best time to make your outdoor plans.

Let me introduce myself, Misty Wells, host of "Let's Take it Outside", one of the fastest growing outdoor television shows on air right now. I have one of the best jobs anyone could ever have; I am blessed to be able to travel Florida & beyond and experience and film exciting experiences in the outdoors. The goal of the show is to introduce you to new places, new experiences and encourage you to get outside and out of your comfort zone.

One thing I am particularly proud of is being the 1st Female Host of an outdoor TV show on Fox Sports. I started 4 seasons ago, and now I currently air on 8 networks nationwide. If you want to binge watch all 3 seasons of "Let's Take it Outside" you can download the free Waypoint app or go to Carbon TV and watch



my show along with many other great shows 24/7.

I would love to share with you some of the awesome adventures I filmed in Season 3 this past year; I can't wait for you to watch them.

One of my favorite episodes is the one I filmed in Bimini, Bahamas, an island just 51 miles off the coast of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. I love the fact that you can hop aboard a fast ferry and get from one country to another in just 2 hours – shore to shore. On the Balearia Ferry you can sit back, relax, enjoy some cold beverages or a snack and watch a cool movie on the big screen while your captain takes care of everything. Once we arrived, we breezed through customs and hopped on the golf cart to Resorts World and their 4-star Hilton.

Now let's talk about all the cool stuff to experience outdoors in Bimini. On day 1, we kayaked through the mangrove forest to the "Healing Hole", a special place where Martin Luther King received some of his

inspiration for his speeches and writings. One of my most favorite things that I experienced while I was there the interactions with the wild stingrays and Nurse Shark on Coconut Beach. As the boat pulls up to the dock, you already see the stingrays start to head over to the boat and shortly thereafter the Nurse Sharks start



to show. It is the craziest thing I have ever seen; these Nurse Sharks curl their fins under their body and raise their heads out of the water to be petted like a cute little dog.

Next stop was Triangle Rock to snorkel with some friendly Blacktip Reef Sharks. Yes, it is my job to share these experiences with you, the viewer, and I am willing to do almost anything. Soon, I am heading back to Bimini to swim in open water with 16 foot Hammerhead Shark. Please wish me luck!

I am not always filming in the tropics. This past May, I headed over to Sumner County, Tennessee; otherwise known as "Heaven on Earth". Sumner County is about 30 minutes outside of Nashville, and an entire world away. Sumner County is famous for Old Hickory Lake and home to many well-known country stars such as the late Johnny & June Cash, Taylor Swift and Kelly Clarkson just to name a few. Old Hickory Lake is one of the best Bass fishing lakes in Tennessee, just ask Bill Dance as he has fished and caught many Bass on that very lake. I had the honor this year to fish the "Luke Combs Blue Otter Bass N' Bash" Tournament, and what a turn out! It seems that any professional Bass angler in the area was set on fishing this

tournament and for good reason, the great payout. Captain Ian and I fished together on the lake and no one knows Old Hickory like Ian. We did pretty good all day and caught quite a few fish, the problem is most of them were not too big. I did land a decent Bass towards the end of the day weighing in at almost 6 lbs. but it was not enough to put us in the lead. I finished in 25th place out of over 90 anglers and I will be honest, I was very happy. I do not freshwater fish a lot and was a bit rusty, so yes, I will take 25th place all day long.

There is so much to do outdoors in Sumner County from hiking, biking, camping and of course, the festival and music scene is just as epic as Nashville. VisitSumnerTN.com to check out all this amazing county has to offer; you won't regret it!



Florida's Space Coast is another place I had not explored that much and with it only being a 3-hour drive from my hometown Clearwater, Florida, I was excited to get the chance. The surf on Cocoa Beach is so fun and you do not need to be Kelly Slater to 'Hang-10' and enjoy a ride. Now, if you are new to surfing or like me very new to the sport, no need to worry, we signed up for a 1/2 day of lessons with "School of Surf" and they made sure we caught some waves.

Another attraction is the Brevard Zoo, and as far as I know, it is the only Zoo that you can kayak through and experience the animal residents from the water in their habitat. If kayaking isn't your style, you can also Zipline from station to station flying high above exotic and local animals all the while.

If you want to experience some of the most amazing Bioluminescent kayaking in the world you have to hit up BK Adventures. We launched out of Haulover Canal Beach right as the sun was going to set and started to paddle off the beach. Within minutes we were in the midst of Dolphins, Manatees, and a few Sharks. As soon as the sun set the water turned electric! That is really the only way to describe it. All the colors of the rainbow, but in the water. Everything, including the fish, were lit up like they had been dipped in neon paint. I have never in my life seen anything so exciting and vibrant as we did that night in the bay with the Bioluminescent kayaking. Visit SpaceCoast.com for everything you will need and more to plan your "one of a kind" experience in the outdoors.

So, yes, I would say I do have one of the most fun and exciting jobs in the world and I love almost every minute of it. Sometime I am battling huge mosquitoes, dodging gators and trying to avoid jellyfish stings but for the most part I love it.

I hope this will inspire you to get outside and try something new or possibly help you become a little better at something you already know. This month I am beginning to film and launch into Season 4 of the TV series that will air this Summer. Before you view Season 4 on TV make sure to catch-up online with Season 1 – 3, on these free digital chan-

nels: Waypoint TV, Carbon TV, Hunt Channel and Discover Florida Channel. I promise you will enjoy all the great ways to experience Florida and beyond and learn about a new destination or experience.

Until next time, remember to "Take it Outside" whenever you can in the great State of Florida and beyond. ☑

Misty Wells Producer & Host of "Let's Take it Outside" TV show airing to 120 million on Bally Sun Sports, World Fishing Network, Waypoint TV, Hunt Channel, MOTV, TCT, 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 3,800 children & counting. Visit www.mistywells.com.

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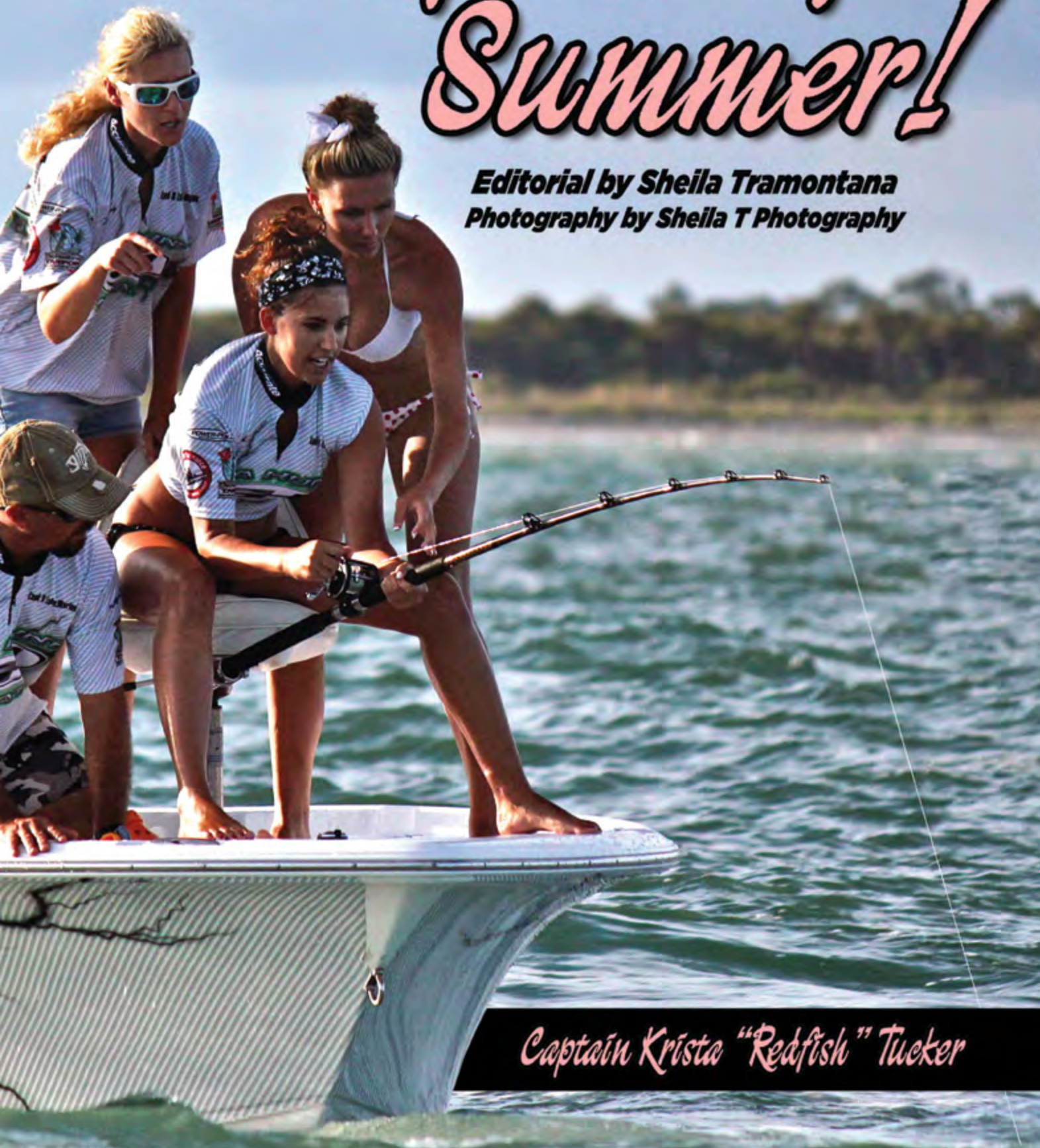
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The Girls of Summer!

Editorial by Sheila Tramontana
Photography by Sheila T Photography



Captain Krista "Redfish" Tucker

From the looks of things, it is obvious that women are becoming more and more involved in all aspects of fishing. Tournament fishing, which previously belonged to the men, has now opened up opportunities for women to compete with each other as well as against the men in both freshwater and saltwater for both inshore and offshore events. Young women who were introduced to fishing by grandfathers, dads, brothers and uncles are becoming more active in the sport as anglers, captains, fishing guides and tournament competitors. We recently spoke with a few of our top lady anglers in the area about their reasons for being involved in Florida's number one outdoor sport.

CAPTAIN KRISTA "REDFISH" TUCKER

Krista Tucker was introduced to fishing before she can even remember. Her mom and her uncle were taking her fishing when she was still in diapers and it was just a way of life for her. Tucker learned to tie a clinch knot before she could even tie her shoes. She grew up catching Bass, Snook, and Tarpon in the Everglades in Chokoloskee and the Ten Thousand Islands, but really fell in love with the sport when she moved to Charlotte Harbor. She was on the boat every chance she got and just couldn't get enough. At 18 years old, she got her Captains license following the inspiration that fishing was her calling. Tucker loves the competitive side of fishing and credits her dad with instilling that drive to succeed in her by not allowing her to beat him easily at childhood board games. She was good at fishing and while others in high school were medaling in Track & Field and Softball, she was entering Xtreme Redfish tournaments and fishing the Flatmasters Redfish series.

Tucker's favorite fish to target is Redfish. At first it was the hardest fish for her to figure out and now she feels like she is one with them, hence the adopted middle name. While she pre-fished for upcoming tournaments, she would often just go out and watch, not casting a line, just watching what the tide was doing, paying attention to where the fish were, and when the water started moving, she would see where the fish would go. She noticed that the fish had a route they'd follow every day and at nearly the same time every year, the school would come back to the same spot at nearly the same time. She studied their interesting habits for countless hours and really has a true appreciation for them. Tucker says, "they are a gorgeous fish to catch and I love the fight of a nice bull." She also enjoys the reward of being able to do so.

CAPTAIN LORI DEATON

Capt Lori Deaton, a longtime lady angler, was always quite the tomboy growing up and enjoyed just about any outdoor activity, but the very first time she cast her line and hooked a Snook, she knew she was born to fish. Deaton says that fishing and being on the water brings her peace and provides relaxation, even when she is catching Tarpon! Tarpon are known as the Silver King to many who appreciate their beautiful silver color, their powerful fighting spirit

and their dominance as the King of all sport fish. "I love everything about them, says Deaton. I think they are the most amazing creatures on earth and I live to catch them."

When Deaton is not catching tarpon, she is raising money for her charity fishing tournament, Hooked on Hope, which she established to fight breast cancer. Because Deaton has seen more women enjoying the sport of fishing over the years, she thought it would be a great idea to combine their love of fishing with a cause close to her heart. Although the tournament has many male anglers who support her registered non-profit foundation, there are a lot of teams that consist of lady anglers who wear pink wigs, have pink fishing rods and dress all in pink for the occasion which takes place in early October every year. Her tournament also invites cancer survivors and those battling the disease to the event for a day of pampering. Deaton is not only a lady angler and a licensed fishing Captain, but she has a heart of gold that is obvious from the moment you meet her. Deaton welcomes young women and girls into the sport and says that the fishing industry has much more to offer now than it did when she got her start. "Your options are endless" she says.



Captain Lori Deaton

ALYSHA ARATARI

Alysha Aratari started fishing at just five years old, when her dad entered her in a tournament. She was so upset that she had not caught anything all day until the last minute when she hooked up and caught her first fish. She fell in love with fishing from that moment on and has fished ever since. Aratari says there is something about being in the outdoors with the sun beating down, the song of the



Alysha Aratari

whistling fishing line in the wind and the fight for the fish on the other end of a pole that she loves about fishing. Like others, Aratari says that fishing is therapeutic for her and that she is most at peace in the tranquil quietness on the water.

Aratari loves being an angler and encourages other lady anglers not to be intimidated by the once male dominated sport. "Women in fishing is on the rise," she says.

Aratari is passionate about Tarpon fishing. She loves to compete and also fishes recreationally for the explosive sport fish any chance she gets. "There is nothing like it to me, she says with a smile, for anyone who has experienced the thrill of tarpon fishing, you know exactly what I'm talking about!"

MELISSA TRAMONTANA

For Melissa Tramontana, fishing is an adrenaline rush. The excitement of not knowing what is lurking on the other end of your rod is what keeps her on the water every chance she gets. For Tramontana, fishing has always been a family affair. She grew up in a home on a lake fishing for Bass almost every day with her two older brothers. As they got older, they discovered the fish were a lot bigger in salt water and the trio never looked back. Learning everything she could from her brothers, who always let her tag along, she fishes with them often and even mates for her older brother who is a licensed Charter Guide.

Her love of the sport is tied to the many good memories she has made through fishing and she wouldn't trade them for the world.



Melissa Tramontana

Growing up in a fishing and hunting family, Tramontana loves to cook her catch and enjoys a fresh fillet of fish

on her plate after a good day on the water. Tramontana fishes competitively in both inshore and offshore tournaments where Grouper usually becomes the main course afterwards. She tells friends how spoiled she is knowing there's always fresh fish in her house. Despite her love of a fresh catch, her favorite fish to tangle with is definitely the Tarpon. "They fight hard and jump high which makes it an adrenaline rush as well as a workout", she says. "It always makes me feel like I have accomplished something when I can get one of the Silver Kings to the boat." Tramontana looks forward to targeting other sport fish on her "list" and hopes to continue pursuing different species she has yet to land. Tramontana, at 23, hunts, fishes and scuba dives passionately. She encourages other women not to be afraid to get into the sport. "Everyone I know thinks it's awesome when I tell them that I fish, and more often than not, I out-fish the guys," she jokes. Fishing is definitely a big part of her life spending much of her down time on the water and providing her family with an activity to enjoy together.

MELISSA BLAKEY

Lady Angler Melissa Blakey not only loves to fish, she is also a graduate with a degree in Environmental Science and cares about the future of fishing and the preservation of wildlife. When on the water, she learns something new and amazing on every trip. "I love the different species of fish, birds, aquatic vegetation, mammals and reptiles", she says. "I want future generations to be able to enjoy the pristine Florida outdoors as I have been able to do." Blakey is also a competitive tournament angler.

Always hooking more fish than most of the guys on her boat, she believes that woman have more patience and better instincts so they are naturally better anglers. Blakey fishes almost every week and supports the DNA research being done for the tarpon fishery. Collecting several samples already this season from fish she has landed, she has provided them to the Florida Wildlife Commission for their Tarpon studies, a science of great interest to her.



Melissa Blakey

Growing up a tomboy but still a Daddy's girl, Blakey spent her childhood camping and Bream fishing on the Hillsborough River from her dad's jon boat. She always loved just being on the water. She had never been exposed to saltwater fishing until five years ago when she met a young Captain who took her flats fishing for the first time and she was hooked. She seemed to have a knack for it and her ease at casting and hooking fish seemed to come naturally. She learned as much as she could and fished every opportunity she had. After eluding her on several attempts, the Snook has become her favorite fish to catch. Casting in the perfect spot in the Mangroves where they lay is challenging and when she gets one to chase her bait, it's very rewarding. "I love to watch them jump" Blakey says. She adds that fishing has been a predominantly male sport, but women will find it to be relaxing, enjoyable and exciting and she hopes that more women will venture into the sport.

ALYSHA LANDRY

Hanging out at small freshwater lakes when she was still in a stroller, lady angler Alysha Landry was introduced to fishing by her uncle who would take her along as he passionately fished for hours. Landry says the complete tranquility she feels when she has rod and reel in hand is her favorite part of fishing. Being relaxed yet getting an intense work out from a giant Tarpon, which is her favorite fish to catch, is an adrenaline rush. "Tarpon are gorgeous,

prehistoric fish that put up a fight like you wouldn't believe!" says Landry. "Guys are always so shocked when girls reel in a 200 pound fish by themselves."

Landry hopes that other young women will give fishing a try because the second they hook their first fish, they are hooked for life! The outdoor sport of fishing is amazing and she encourages women to get out there and learn all they can. Landry lives near the water and fishes for many types of fish that reside in her area. She is also a competitive angler and has made many great friends in tournament competition.



Alysha Landry

CAPTAIN JILL SAPP

Growing up in Ormond Beach, Captain Jill Sapp's Grandpa and Uncle started her fishing and blue crabbing for fun when she was just seven years old. Since they didn't have a boat, they fished in the surf, from bridges, on piers or from the shoreline. She has been in love with fishing ever since. She credits her husband, Captain Troy Sapp with teaching her everything she knows about the kind of fishing they do together today. Sapp says she would never be able to do any of it without him. "I have been fortunate to fish from the Panhandle to the Florida Keys on all types of tackle to see firsthand what outstanding fishing opportunities Florida has to offer."



Capt. Jill Sapp

and sport fishing for Tarpon and Billfish because of their beauty and power. Sapp, who is an accomplished angler, is also well informed and knowledgeable about Florida fishing laws, regulations and pending issues. Her words of wisdom for young women who are interested in the sport is to "watch, listen and learn all you can. Ask experienced anglers for advice, attend outdoor expos, read some of the

many fishing books and magazines and tune in to various fishing shows for information. Most importantly, know the laws! Know the legal size, quantity, season and take limits for each species of fish or any game you plan to harvest." Sapp stays informed on all state fish and game regulations and issues through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Florida Wildlife Commission websites and often attends hearing meetings. Sapp is adamant about taking care of our precious resources for future generations and advises everyone to educate themselves about the sport.

SO MOVE OVER FELLAS, THE GIRLS OF SUMMER ARE HERE TO STAY!

Important caring male figures were key factors in introducing the sport of fishing to all our featured lady anglers at a young age. The benefits to exposing young girls to outdoor sports such as fishing and hunting are many. Accomplishing anything builds self-esteem. Fishing is a sport that allows multiple repeated success with each catch. A feeling of confidence in the ability to use tools such as rod and reel, firearm or bow to become successful at the sport starts with being comfortable using them. Women are not only becoming more prominent in the sport as successful competitors, anglers and business women today but are often more compassionate about the conservation of wildlife and the environments which create stability for future generations. Won't it be great when our daughters are being taught the techniques of fishing and hunting and an appreciation for the outdoors not only by their dads, brothers and uncles but by their moms, sisters and aunts as well! 🐟

Sheila Tramontana is a photographer and outdoor enthusiast who is a native Floridian. Introduced to fishing by a long heritage of family who enjoyed the sport, it was one of her favorite outdoor activities as a child. Sheila now photographs professional fishing tournaments, as well as other outdoor sports and her portfolio contains Florida scenery and wildlife photography for home and office. For more information, you can visit her website at www.sheilatphotography.com or find her on Facebook and Pinterest.

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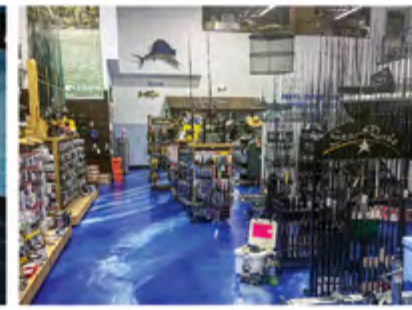


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ONSHORE - OFFSHORE Magazine

CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN THE MANATEE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Discover How Conservation Efforts in the Crystal River Area Impact Fish, Wildlife and More!
by Josh Johnson

As the Manatee Capital of the World, Crystal River takes great pride in being at the forefront of manatee and local ecosystem conservation. These continued efforts help ensure these gentle giants have adequate food sources and a safe refuge yearly from November to early April.

Healthy ecosystems in the Crystal River area greatly benefit us all. Here are two ways you can help take part.



Practice Responsible Boating

A recent study by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission shows that only 4% of observed adult manatees show no sign of watercraft-related scars. As you can tell by this staggering statistic, boats pose one of the single largest dangers to manatees' health and safety.



When posted regulations and signage are not followed, this can physically harm both manatees and their feeding

grounds. For these reasons, it's essential to follow all posted signs and listed regulations and ensure responsible boating is practiced at all times.

Other responsible boating practices include wearing polarized sunglasses during boat operations and observing all manatee speed zones and caution areas.

So whether you're enjoying a sunny day on the water or hunting for your next catch before the sun rises, please remember to practice your manatee manners!

Catch and Release

Unsustainable fishing practices threaten local ecosystems and their resiliency in a few ways. Primarily this happens through overfishing and, in turn, habitat de-

struction. Habitat destruction not only impacts the quality of fishing but also directly impacts manatees and their ability to thrive here.

Groups in the Crystal River area, like Save Crystal River, have spent time and resources breathing new life into the local ecosystem by planting fresh eelgrass and combating harmful invasive species. And because of this, habitats in the area continue to grow and thrive! Now it's up to all of us to keep them that way.

Besides curbing potential habitat destruction, catch-and-release fishing also improves native fish populations. How? Because it ensures that more fish remain and reproduce in the ecosystem. This practice allows anglers to enjoy the bounty of fish in the Crystal River area while increasing their chances of successfully catching fish.

Practicing catch and release of native fish also ensures that the opportunity to enjoy this national pastime and recreational opportunity will be around for many years!

Conservation in the Crystal River Area

As you can see, there are many ways for you to engage in conservation efforts. If you're reinterested in discovering more about the continued progress being made by conservationists and eco-tourists alike, we have created a Conservation Hub filled with more information. Topics include how to be involved, from the comfort of your home to a deep dive into the invasive aquatic species that threaten the local ecosystem. There's a wealth of knowledge ready for you! 📌

Learn more at DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com/Manatee-Conservation.



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As the manatee capital of the world we take conservation seriously. Learn how you can play an active role in our efforts at DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com/Manatee-Conservation.



Captain Sergio Atanes

At last, April is upon us and with it comes some of the best fishing Tampa Bay has to offer. Anglers from Double Branch in the North to Bishop Harbor in the South are treated to some of the best inshore fishing anywhere in the state. Snook start their migration from the creeks and rivers to the flats and eventually to the passes to spawn by the first full moon of May. Redfish and Trout that call the flats home all Summer long start bulking up on the "Greenback" Sardines. This live bait treat starts the ball rolling in the Spring and lasts until the first cold snap in the Fall. So, look for the bait along the mangroves, and not far from there, you'll find the fish.



Captain George Hastick

April has always been a great Snook month along with many other fish. It is a good transitional period that is not too hot or cold. This makes the fish usually very active and you can keep a bunch of bait alive in your livewell, since the water is not too hot. The inshore scene will be good as long as the winds keep the red tide out of the bay. Look for Snook to be under the mangroves waiting for the current to bring bait near them that they can ambush. Redfish will also be under the mangroves but can be found in 3-5 feet of water around oyster beds and grass flats with plenty of sand holes. Some Trout can be found on the 5-to-3 foot dropoffs on the edge of grass flats.

ABOUT THE CAPTAINS

Captain Sergio and Captain George Hastick fish the Florida waters, specializing in and around the West Coast of Florida and Tampa Bay. Their show, Fishing Adventures Florida, is about two captains sharing their knowledge and experience of the local waters. Encouraging others to share in their love of what the outdoors has to offer. Their goal is to educate, entertain and share the experience of fishing opportunities the state has to offer.

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FISHING THE EVERGLADES

by Anthony Gomez

The Florida Everglades are one of the coolest places on Earth where vast areas of wetlands and life go on for miles. There are tons of wildlife such as alligator, turtles, and snakes that live in this wet environment. Along the edges of the Everglades, where it meets the Gulf of Mexico, there is a tremendous amount of mangrove islands that form creeks and channels with tons of oyster banks all over the place. All this structure creates a great habitat for a variety of saltwater species.

My dad, uncle, cousin, and I take a 3-day trip every year in the Winter to Everglades City. Its on the North-eastern side of the Everglades and its a great access point to fish these amazing waters. We leave the house very early to make it to the ramp at around sunrise. We fished the first day and checked into our room later that evening. It isn't the fanciest place you could stay at but, that is part of the experience. Its small mobile homes that you can stay at for days on end. Some people also bring RVs and stay in those at the local campgrounds.

The inshore fishing in these Everglades can be amazing in the wintertime. Many species such as Redfish, Trout, Black Drum, and Sheepshead roam these waters looking for food. There are also tons of ways to targets these fish up in the Everglades. One of the main ways we fish for these species is on the oyster banks. Using satellite charts and searching around on low tide, we find big



areas of oysters that fish will stack on once the tide comes up. Most of the fish seek heat along the oysters and hunt small crabs and crustaceans up on them. We usually toss around some live or cut pieces of Shrimp on a small jighead and let them sit in the oyster beds. If you're not up on those oysters, you'll end up getting a bunch of Catfish instead. We even throw a variety of artificial Shrimp lures and small paddletails that entice some of the Redfish and Trout.

We also like to target these fish by finding deep mangrove islands that have some water flow. Throwing the Shrimp and lures gets the job done



on the Redfish that cruise up and down those mangroves. You must be ready because sometimes you run into a stud Snook or small Goliath Grouper that will put the work on your light tackle. We even go out into the open water to find deeper holes that will hold schools of Trout and Sheepshead inside of them. Usually, we look for those holes when the tide is super low, and the oyster banks are too shallow for fish to be pushed up on.

Colder water temperatures seem to be better for us and, helps us get more of the Drum and Sheepshead. Our gear is normally a light spinning rod with a 3000-size reel. Some light 20# braid helps with casting light baits easier and further up into the structures. We attach a couple of feet of 20-30# fluorocarbon to our braided line. The water is usually very murky, but we still like to keep our presentation very stealthy. Lastly, we tie on our jighead or lure and are ready to catch some fish.

Sometimes on the deeper mangroves, I like to fish a knocker rig with a small cut bait. This is a tactic I've used to catch Goliath & Gag Grouper, and even Redfish. Its just a small egg weight directly on top of a hook with a piece of cut Mullet, Jack or Ladyfish. It tends to produce a lot of small Goliath Grouper but will sometimes get me a nice Gag Grouper or Redfish. The Goliaths can get annoying sometimes, but they are such a great fight on light tackle. They pull tons of drag and give you a run for your money.



The Everglades has become our yearly trip and is always a fun time. We enjoy getting out in an area with very little people and tons of wildlife. Even when the fishing is bad, its still awesome to be in such a beautiful place and see the life that surrounds us. We also have very little cell service which forces us to stay off our phones and enjoy the time together. To have some more fun, we like to cook our catch with a small grill that we bring with us. It just adds to our experience and makes the trip so much better. It even forces us to fish a little bit harder, so we make sure that we don't go hungry. Coming back to the dock and cooking fresh fish is amazing and makes for a fulfilling trip.

The Everglades is a cool place to take a trip to and have a blast catching fish while enjoying all the beautiful wildlife. ☑

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CATCHING MACKEREL & COBIA

by Captain Sergio Atanes

April is the start-up month for some of the best fishing Tampa Bay has to offer and this month's topic is about two unsung heroes; the Spanish Mackerel and the Cobia.

Spanish Mackerel and Cobia show up this month to follow the bait inside the Skyway Bridge. The bigger baits will hang around tripods, artificial reefs and rocky bottom that abound from Channel A, just inside the Skyway Bridge to the Howard Franklin Bridge to the North. I find Spanish Mackerel fishing exciting and most productive for my clients, so I make it a point to start my morning by searching for a school of big mackerel to get the adrenalin going. After boating 30 or 40 mackerel, it's time to move on and start another hunt.



My method for fishing Spanish Mackerel is very simple. Look for the diving birds; they will guide you to a good spot. If there is bait, Spanish Mackerel will likely be there feeding. Once you've found the bait, anchor and start a chumline to keep the mackerel feeding behind the boat. Cut "Greenbacks" will work great or a 10-pound box of frozen chum also does the trick.

Be sure to use a good chum bag that can dispense not only the store bought, but cut, fresh, Scaled Sardines, which is my preference. Why pay for it when you already have in your baitwell? I've tried all types of chum bags over the years, and I've found one that really works great called the "Chummy Hoop" self-cleaning chum hoop.



Using light action tackle such as a 7.6-foot Medium action Okuma rod, paired with a Okuma Helios 3000 Spinning reel with plenty of 15-pound test braided line. With their razor-sharp teeth, mackerel bite off a fair share of hooks so I prefer a #1 or 1/0 XX long shank hook with 30-pound test fluorocarbon leader. About 36 inches long works well. My favorite line to leader knot is a Surgeons Knot; small and easy to tie. No swivels here as swivels create small air bubbles. When a mackerel takes your bait, they are going at full speed and the bubbles created by the swivel fool other mackerel into thinking they are small baits and can cause many cutoffs at the swivel. The XX long hook also eliminates the need to use wire leader and increases your bites.

Hillsborough County has 6 artificial reefs that produce great quantities of Spanish Mackerel every year. The information with GPS location can be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and they can even mail you their brochure upon request. If you have kids, mackerel can entertain them all morning long.

Cobia fishing "flats style" is where many anglers spend hours chasing them from one buoy to another.



stir up the bottom and food. The Cobia are basically there to simply help themselves.

Keep one rod ready for action with a live Pinfish; a favorite or a large Sardine with a 3/0 circle hook tied to 40-pound fluorocarbon leader and a medium spinner like an OKUMA Salina 4000HA Spinning reel with 30-pound braided line and a medium heavy rod.

The rest is history, as I have been able to pull in several nice Cobia with this method while keeping my clients happy catching other species while we wait for the Cobia to show. You might have to move if the rays don't show up sometimes it takes making more than one stop but it's worth the trouble if you can land one on the flats. ☑

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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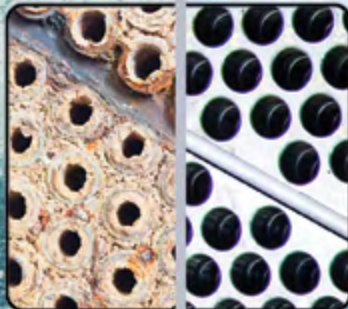
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