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I REALLY HATE BOATS

You may think that it is strange for a guy who has spent a big part of his life on or around boats to admit that I hate them, but much of the time I really do. They say that familiarity breeds contempt, perhaps that is why I hate them.

After owning all sizes and types of boats from 12' to 81', living aboard for 10 years, cruising both inland and offshore, owning and operating 2 marinas and designing numerous others, owning fleets of rental boats and currently having between 15 and 20 of the little monsters myself, I am certainly familiar with boats. Based upon my vast pool of experience, I have determined that the problem with boats can be summed up pretty easily. This problem is that boats simply don't behave like my truck. In this day and age, our road vehicles are totally reliable and never miss a beat. I would not hesitate to set out on a 1000-mile trip in my truck, safe in the knowledge that I would arrive on time and without any drama. The same simply can't be said for a boat. Even a brand new boat is going to have some sort of issues.

Part of the problem is that boats are much more individualized than cars and they are built in much smaller and less organized factories. The boat factory typically builds the actual hull and liner, but almost everything else is bought as assemblies from a variety of suppliers and just installed on the hull. Even the motors are strapped on the back (in the case of outboards) or bought in an assembly (like Mercruiser and Volvo inboard/outboard propulsion systems) and installed in an engine room or hatch. This leads to more potential for problems because the components are not specially designed for every application, thus they work better in some boats and worse in others.



The rest of the problem with boats comes from the environment that we use and keep them in and the way that we use them. Those of us who boat in salt water have the worst possible environment in which to store or use the components that make up a boat. Saltwater and salt spray can test many parts of a boat in lots of ways. Everything metal on the boat and motor eventually corrodes, and this corrosion leads to a nearly infinite number of gremlins that create issues. For example, I can check on my boat on Monday to prepare for a fishing trip and everything seems fine and ready to go. I also check critical things, like the baitwell and bilge pumps, before we leave the dock on Wednesday. Unfortunately, after a bumpy ride 30 miles out to the fishing hole, the baitwell pump is no longer fine and will not run. My truck just doesn't leave me hanging like this. Stereo systems in open salt-water boats are completely hopeless. I gave up keeping working stereos on my boat many years ago. You can replace the stereo every 6 months and it still isn't going to work when you want to hear the pontoon boat song or blast "We are the Champions" upon your triumphant return with a tournament winning catch.

The rest of the reason that I often hate boats, results from the ways that ignorant people misuse them. Here in Tarpon Springs, I get a good opportunity to see way too many people misusing their boats and, unfortunately, my rental boats as well. They often find creative ways to misuse boats that can be illegal, dangerous, rude, inconsiderate, silly and just plain stupid. I know that this concept may be unpopular with some boaters, but I just cannot understand why absolutely anyone is allowed to operate a 30 or 40-foot missile sporting 1200 horsepower without any sort of training or experience. It can be very scary out there at times.

Boats also don't drive like a car. They do not necessarily track in a straight line when you hold the wheel straight and they have **NO BRAKES AT ALL!!** I am sometimes asked by rental boat customers, "where are the brakes". My preferred response to this comment is "oh no, I am so sorry, but we have overbooked and have **NO BOAT FOR YOU**" as the soup Nazi would have said on the Seinfeld show.

Despite the fact that I hate them, I will continue to own and use boats for as long as I am able. While I often do not care for the vessel, I dearly love the places they take me, the adventures they play a critical part in and the taste of real freedom that they offer me.

Come see us at Belle Harbour Marina if you want to share boating stories or rent one of our boats to see for yourself.

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ON THE COVER: Captain Sergio and his crew with a beautiful Yellowfin Tuna caught on a recent trip to Costa Rica. Read more about their amazing adventure by turning to page 16 of this issue!

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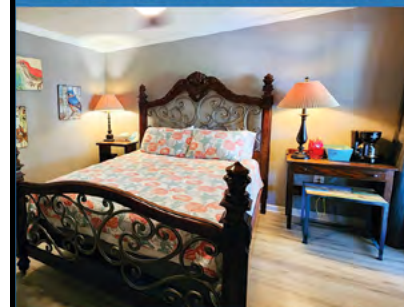


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Onshore-Offshore Publications, LLC
 P.O. Box 861
 Tarpon Springs, FL 34688
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SCALLOP & LOBSTER SEASON IS HERE

by Misty Wells

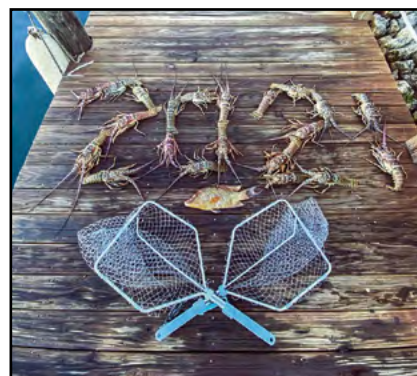
August signals open season for both Spiny Lobster & scallops in Florida. Starting August 6th at 12:01 am, its time to grab your mask, fins, bags and tickle sticks, because yes, I am talking about both scallop and lobster Season has started in the State of Florida.

Let's start with scallop season, which opened in July on the West Coast of Florida and includes three of my favorite things; part snorkeling, part treasure hunting and part eating. The 1st is the opening day of scallop season and if you have not tried it, it is a "bucket list" adventure item. Each year we gather our gear and head offshore to what some call, "Florida's Largest Easter Egg Hunt".

TIP: I suggest getting the items you need purchased long before heading out because shops tend to run out of gear and it might be hard to get last minute items. But, if you are looking to make it easy, book a local charter guide; they'll have the scallops dialed in and you won't have to drive on the water or tow a boat.

One of the remarkable things about scalloping is it can be enjoyed by the entire family, all ages, with mild exercise and it is a wonderful way to spend a day together. In general, when scalloping you will be in about 4 to 6 feet of water, swimming along the top until you see your treasure. Once you know what to look for, it will become easy because Scallops don't move very fast, so they are easy to grab. A good snorkeler can spot scallops usually lying on top of the sea grass or they may be along the grassy, sandy edges just hanging out. I have noticed that they tend to hang in small groups, so before you dive down look for other Scallops in the area and see how many you can get in one dive.

Scallopers can have 2 gallons of scallops (in the shell) each or 10 gallons maximum per vessel. Make sure you have a valid Florida Fishing License if you are required to have one, and you're going to need a 5-gallon bucket to measure your catch. I recommend after harvesting your catch, put them in the livewell if you have one, if not keep a towel over the water



filled bucket to keep them fresh. Another helpful hint for beginners is to wear a long sleeve PFG shirt while in the water. I learned the hard way that your back can get pretty sunburn. Be careful out there, make sure you have your "Diver Down" flag and it is best to have someone stay on board the boat to keep a watch and ward off boaters that may get too close. There have already been some serious incidents and injuries this year caused by careless boaters; don't trust that other boaters know practical boater safety.

Lobster lovers get ready because the "Bug Season" begins on August 6th and goes through March 31st, 2024. Regardless of whether you are a beginner or expert, one of the most important things is location and knowing how to find the sometimes elusive bugs. One of the important things about Florida Spiny Lobster is they are nocturnal, so that does make them easier to catch during the day. Popular lobster hangouts include ledges, patch reefs, holes, big coral heads, sunken boats and just about any type of structure the lobster can hide. A lot of seasoned "pros" have their secret spots and many of these gems can be found in shallow water. I have limited out of lobster in 3 feet of



water in the Key West. A telltale sign to look for is their antennae sticking out as they use these extremely sensitive appendages to detect danger and if touched, they will then start to go deeper into their hiding places. Once you locate a set of antennae take your tickle stick and place it behind the lobster to gently urge them out and slowly walk them into your net. Once they are in your net grab the excess material to quickly close the net or they will do the "tail dance" and be gone. Unlike the scallops, lobster are really fast and can quickly be out of sight in a matter of seconds.

The great news is you can use the same equipment from scalloping to Lobstering, just add a Tickle Stick, Gloves, and a Lobster Bag and you're good to go. There is a great product out there called "Lobster League". I don't know about you, but when I am free diving for lobster, the hardest part for me is keeping them in the net once I catch them. Well, my buddy Vinny has solved the problem with the first-ever "Lobster Flip Close" type net. You can capture a lobster in the net and with the flip of your wrist, you can close the net underwater so they can't escape. Genius! This is one of those inventions where you scratch your head and say, "why didn't I think of this?" I already have mine, but if you are looking to up your game head over to lobsterleague.com and buy one or two...you won't regret it.



Another important reminder is to have your measure gauge attached to your tickle stick for lobster, as they must be measured in the water. The lobster's carapace must be larger than 3 inches, which means the lobster is at least 2 or 3 years old and has reproduced at least one season. To measure the lobster, place the end of your gauge between the horns and the other at the end of the carapace; if it is under 3 inches release and keep looking. Again, use a dive flag, put it up when diving and take it down when underway. Divers must stay within 300 feet of their dive flag and 100 feet if you are diving in a channel, however I don't recommend swimming in channels. Know your limits, each Lobster hunter only gets (6) Lobster per day, so please do not double trip during the day. Be sure to have your fishing license and your lobster stamp, so you don't get a fine or ticket, go to myfwc.com and you can get it online and fast.

Lobster and scalloping are a lot of fun and can be great memories with your family and friends, but only if you come home safe. Be sure to check your safety equipment on your boat before you go, keep a lookout on the vessel while swimmers are in the water and make sure the person in operation of the vessel is the designated driver for the day. I hope to see you out on the water and remember Florida is the best place to "Take it Outside", especially this Summer! 🍷

Misty Wells Producer & Host of "Let's Take It Outside" TV show airing to 374 million on Discovery Channel, Bally Sun Sports, Waypoint TV, World Fishing Network, 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.

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SWITCH GEARS TO STAY ON A BITE

by Captain George Hastick

During the hot August days there are a variety of fish to be caught in Tampa Bay. This is a very active month to catch many species, especially if you are willing to shift gears during the day and try different tactics. As the day heats up or the tide goes slack where you are fishing, changing how, where and what you are fishing for during the day can be very beneficial to having a successful day on the water during the hot August days. To name a few of the species this month that can be caught are Snook, Trout, Redfish, Tarpon, Mackerel, Black Seabass, Black Drum, Mangrove Snapper, Grouper, Sharks, Bluefish, Jack Crevalle and more!



In the morning before the water really warms the inshore flats and backwaters would be a good place to start. Moving water will be the key at that time as to how good your bite will be. Also, look at your Solunar Charts to see when the major and minor periods are going to be and make sure you are fishing during that time and not travelling. Combining moving water with a solunar period really ups

your chances of catching more fish especially if this is during or within a half an hour of sunrise. The species that you can find on the inshore flats and backwaters might surprise you. Of course, you would expect to find the big three: Snook, Trout and Redfish, but there can also be Black Drum, Mangrove Snapper and even some Tarpon mixed in. All of these fish will hit live Scaled Sardines and lures that mimic them, like Salt-water Assassins Sea Shad in Snow Storm or Sugar & Spice, but for the Black Drum, a Shrimp or Blue Crab would be a good choice.

Once the tide slows down, the water heats up and your bite slows down on the inshore scene it is now time to move out into the open bay. This is where the water will still be moving for a little while longer before total slack tide hits and it will also be a little cooler. You can target rock piles in the 10-18 foot range for bottom dwellers, you can also look for shoals in the 6-8 foot range with shell and grass bottom mix or turn to your bridges to get out of the direct sunlight

and cool off like the fish that are under it. All these spots can hold many of the same inshore species that we talked about and also have some Grouper, Black Seabass and Mackerel action. The difference is that by changing where you are fishing it will lower the water temperature, increase the water flow



and add a few more species to target, which can extend your bite for the day. With that said, don't be afraid to shift gears! 🎣

Captain George Hastick of "Fish Hunter Fishing Charters" in St. Petersburg has been fishing the waters of Tampa 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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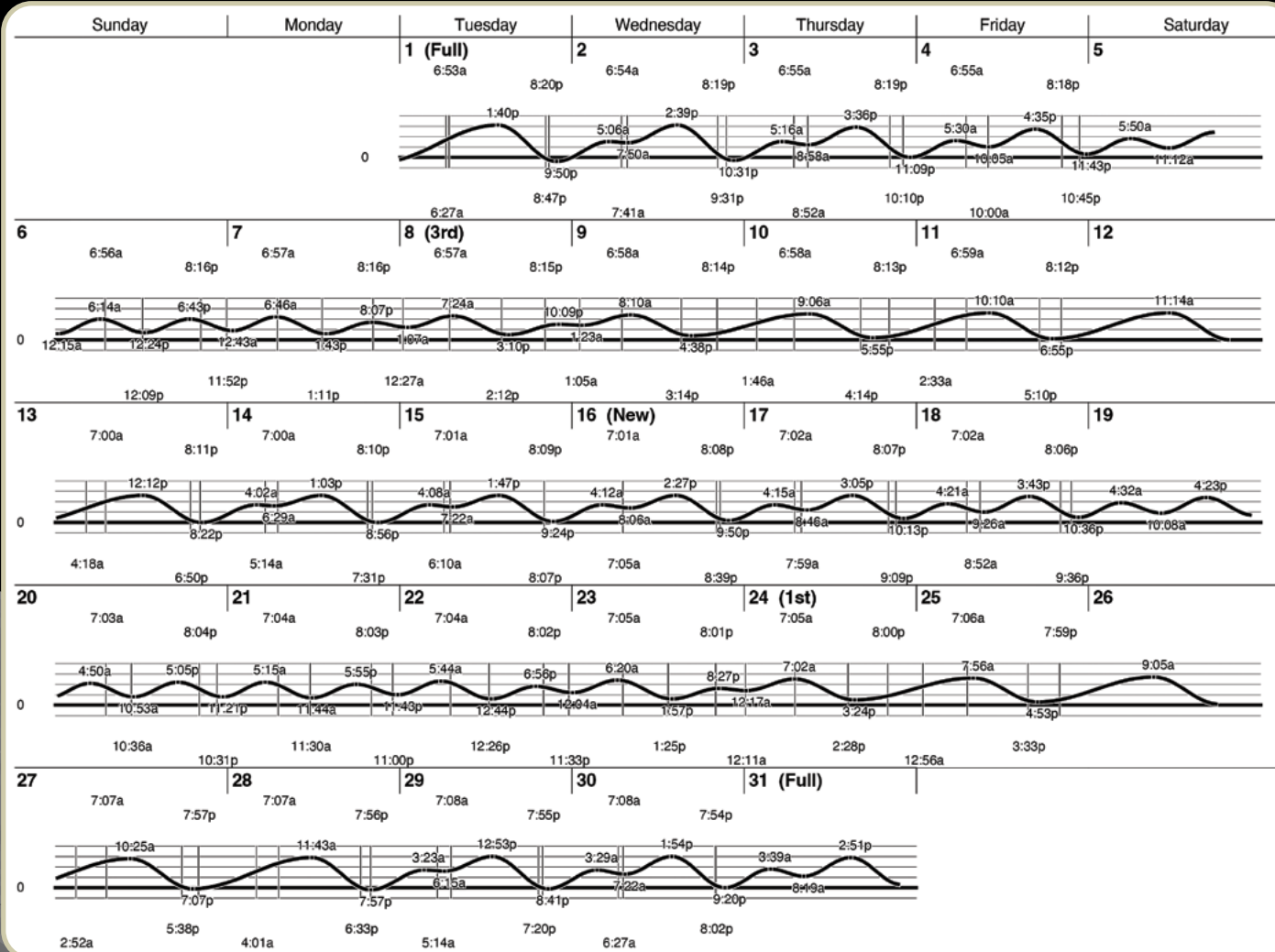
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Conversions for Clearwater Beach Area			Conversions for St. Marks River Area		
High	Low		High	Low	
-0:02	-0:10	Dunedin, St. Joseph Sound	+0:23	+1:18	Everglades City
-0:05	-0:15	Anclote Key, South End	-1:17	-1:03	Cape Romano
+0:42	+0:42	Tarpon Springs, 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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mesh bag, snorkel set and head out to the grassy, shallow areas of the Gulf during scallop season from July 1 through August 6 for an underwater Easter egg hunt Florida-style!

If you're more of an adrenaline seeker, we have dozens of choices for you and your family. Choose from high-flying adventure at Skydive City, one of the top drop zones in the United States, or test your skills at Treehoppers Aerial Adventure Park's zip line course. Get up close and personal to exotic animals at the 45-acre Giraffe Ranch in Dade City or show off your snow skills at the Snowcat Ridge Snow Park.



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2023 SCALLOPING SEASON | JULY 1 - AUGUST 6



NOSARA COSTARRICA

A Fishing Expedition with Captain Sergio Atanes

Every other year we get the calling to travel outside the country to film for our TV Show Fishing Adventures Florida and the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica seems to be where we find peace and fish. Nicoya being one of the last locations with large areas of unpaved roads in Costa Rica although in the last five years we have seen big improvements on the roads. The growth from foreigners is changing the area I wouldn't be surprised if in the next 10 years it will be a mica for tourist changes is coming sad to say but at least we have sometime to enjoy for now. Nosara is one of the oldest communities in the country with a healthy fish population. You can catch anything from tunas, marlin, sailfish, snapper all in a day's fishing trip. It's a family-oriented community who protects the land and its nature, they are hard workers always with a smile and willingness to help.



Playa Guiones, meaning Surfer's Paradise, is one of the few places in the world where you can surf with consistent waves all day, every day. The sandy bottom plays an important role in creating an ideal situation for any surfer from the

beginner to the more advanced. According to economists from the University of Sydney, Australia Nosara is the fastest-growing surf town in the world.

Traveling down the small road that leads from Nosara Paradise Rentals (our favorite place to stay) to Playa Guiones you will find surf shops, street vendors peddling their home-made souvenirs and tasty snacks.



Nosara's population is somewhere around 6000 residents and grows during the winter months. The area is surrounded by the Nosara Biological Reserve and the zoning protects it from any sort of development. There are two airports close to Nosara one is a small plane airport which can take you to San Jose or Liberia Airport which is the one we normally fly into and take a three-hour drive to Nosara.



Now the fun begins; when I do many of what I like to call, expedition fishing trips, where I have friends & clients tag along to fish and explore. On my fishing trips outside of Florida, I always prefer to visit places that are not highly advertised or heavy with tourists, but rather laidback and out of the normal beaten path where you can see and enjoy the real beauty of the area.

Our trip this year in June could not have worked any better, as the weather was accommodating with light winds & partly cloudy skies and the fish were biting!

Our morning starts with a super breakfast cooked by the staff at Nosara Paradise Rentals that includes fresh Watermelon or Pineapple Juice, Eggs, good strong Coffee, Pancakes, Rice & Beans and Toast; all home-made and extremely delicious.

Our van arrives every morning at 6:45 a.m. taking us to our pickup point where we board 32 foot cabin boats with twin Yamaha Outboards.

Day one started with a tuna hunt, so we made our way about eight miles offshore in search of Spinner Dolphin and diving birds, a sure indication of Yellowfin Tuna. All around, you could hear the chatter on the VHF radio and as one of the captains say, "I found them, come on boys!" So, out comes the heavy spinning tackle with these huge plugs and you cast into the area of action and just pull and reel as fast as you can and eventually you will get what looks like a bomb going off on the plug and hang on for life as the tuna makes its run away and down as much as 300 foot what seems like an hour or more of fight but really 10 to 30 minutes you start to see color as this beautiful fish makes it way up towards the surface realizing its losing the battle and sometimes its true an others times when we think we won with one final tug it breaks off to fight another day.





On day two our goal was to catch Marlin and Sailfish and we did; no Marlin, but some husky sails did turn on and we managed to do something rare; hooking and landing two sails at the same time and bringing them both to the boat. Day two was a success!



On day three we wanted to do some bottom fishing and tried to make this adventure into three different shows and again luck was with us as I was able to get a 48 pound Cubera Snapper to the boat. We lost about three more, but what a day for us!

My clients had three wonderful days of fishing catching plenty of Yellowfin Tuna, Snapper and even a Marlin.

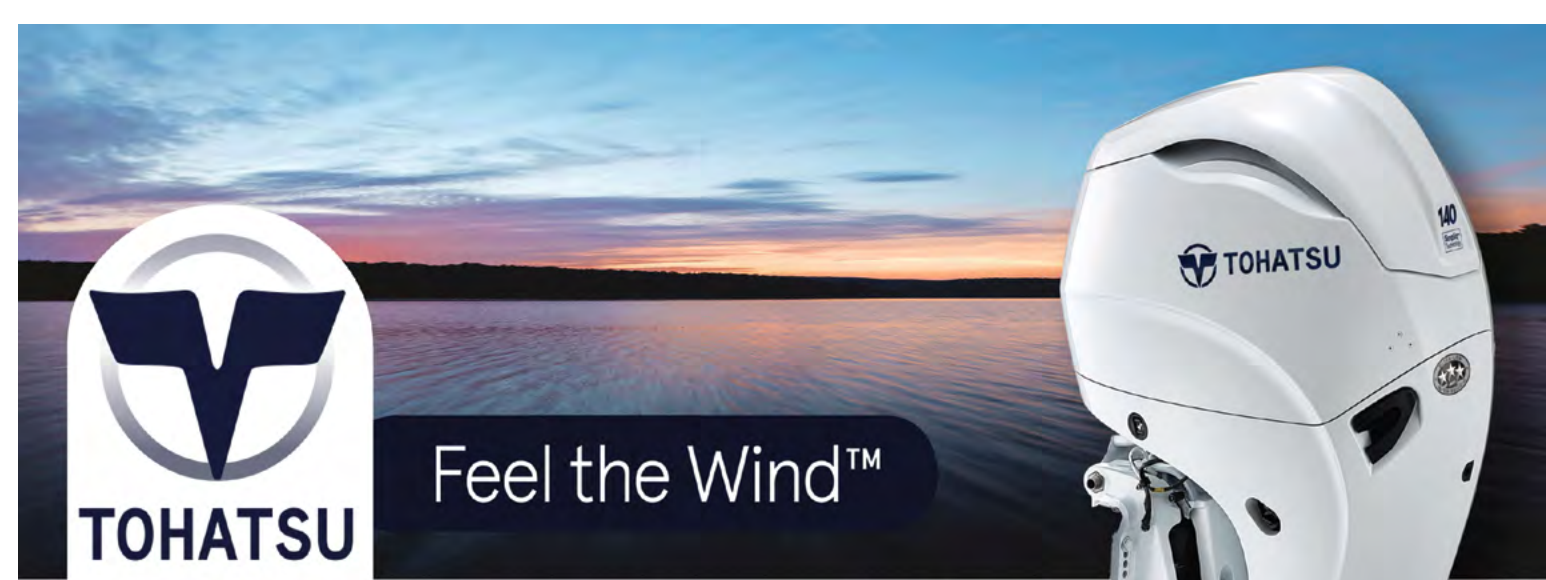
In between fishing we did the tourist thing horseback riding in the mountains, Snook fishing in the river no luck that day and snorkeling around the shallow reef. The best thing about Nosara is the small local restaurants that cook your catch and add the local side dishes. We had tuna six different ways, and one place deep fried it like chicken strips one night and in chunk style another night. Looking forward to next year! Pura Vida everyone! 🍷



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Captain Sergio Atanes is a native resident of Tampa Bay, Florida and has been fishing the area waters for over 45 years. He is the

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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 interested 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

Typical summer pattern; hot and muggy with afternoon showers. Early bird gets the worm. Best bites will be early hours so topwater plugs like the **MirrOlure 75MR SHE-PUP** or **Skin Series CS85MR Mullet** are my top choices. Nothing like watching a plug get hit with full force as those hungry fish attack trying to feed before the sun breaks the horizon. Instead of catching bait, you can bag your first fish and be home in time for an early lunch. Find running water around creeks breaks in the mangroves or potholes in the flat; they will be there but only till the sun comes up. Quitting time for me is 10:00 am.

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.



Captain George Hastick

August is hot which will raise water temperatures that the fish and bait react to. If you fish live Scaled Sardines, cut back on how many you put in the livewell since the water will have less oxygen in it from the heat. Snook & Redfish will tuck under the mangroves to get out of the direct heat from the sun, so good casts next-to or under the mangroves will get you more hits. Trout will be on the deeper grass flats, especially where the depth drops from 4 to 6 or 7 feet. When the water stops moving and really heats up, move out to deeper water in the bay in 10-18 feet and target Mackerel and Snapper over rock piles and reefs.

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TAKE A KID FISHING!

by Captain Charlie Howell

With summertime in full swing, the kids are having a blast fishing! When I first started guiding I really didn't know how to handle having young children on the boat.

For one thing, their attention span is short so I felt a need to keep them on fish as much as possible. After running a few charters with kids I realized that they really don't care too much about that at all. The little ones normally entertain themselves playing with the bait in the livewell, while the older kids and adults catch fish. Sometimes they want you to just run the boat FAST.

So, here are a few tips and tricks to keep the kids entertained. If you know where the Redfish and Snook will be, I would try



to hit them early while it is still cool and the water temps have not crept up (if the tide allows you to). Targeting Mangrove Snapper and Mackerel is another great way to keep the rods

bent. Fish the channel edges & structure for Snapper and you are sure to find some Mackerel following the schools of Threadfins throughout the bay. Let's not forget about those Speckled



Trout and Ladyfish on the grass flats too!

If you are fishing from any of our fishing piers or bridges and the fishing is not going as planned, you can always tie on a few gold hooks (or a sabiki rig) and tip them with some

squid or shrimp and have the kids catch you some pinfish for bait. This will keep them occupied, while doing a solid for you by catching some bait!

All in all, fishing is a great way to get the kids outside and away from their everyday mundane routine. If we can make it enjoyable for them, hopefully they will get hooked on fishing and want to spend some time with "Mother Nature" more often. ☑

Captain Charlie Howell
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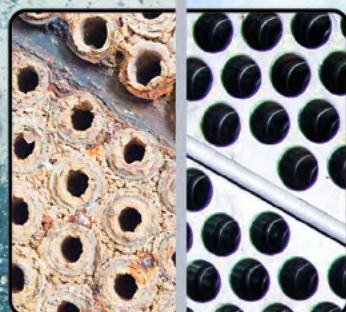
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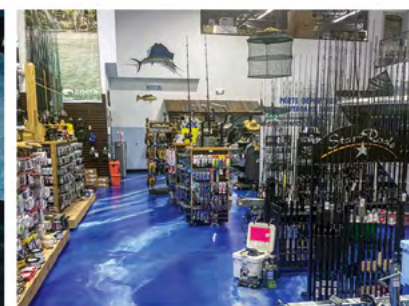
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MY BIGGEST CATCH

by Captain Sergio Atanes

The future of fishing lays on the shoulders of the younger generation, which we hope sometime in their future they can become great anglers and boaters. Not every child can be athletic, but every child can be an angler with just a little help and guidance.



Last year I was able to start a "Kids Fishing Clinic" out of Picnic Island Park with the help of many of my local sponsors and the support of Mayor Jane Castor, which helped us get started. This year with the support, once again, from the



Mayor and the RISE Foundation we were able to make it better and bigger than before. We helped over 150 kids



to learn how to fish. Each child received a rod & reel and tackle tray with tackle to help them get started. First, we had 15 volunteer captains who donated their time; 14 police volunteers, CCA, FWC, a Police Dive team, some parents and, of course, 158 eager kids. Our goal was to get the kids involved with the great outdoors this area has to

offer and hopefully make a bond with their parents. It truly was a great time and many thanks to the Mayor and the Police helicopter, who did a fly over and the Tampa Fire boat for putting on a great show for the kids.



Here is how it all came down. We had 158 kids learn how to fish from some of the best captains in the area. CCA (Coastal Conservation Association) taught them about conservation and their program for scholarships, the FWC taught about all the different species

available in the area to catch plus proper ways to handle and release them. Special thanks to Dylan Hubbard, who for the second year, helped us with the offshore species section of the program. And a very special thanks to all the parents, who without them, the kids wouldn't be there and finally for giving me the BIGGEST CATCH OF THE YEAR, new future anglers!

AUGUST FISHING REPORT

August could be a hit or miss month. It will depend on the amount of rain and water temperatures. The "Dog days Summer" has its largest impact this month. I like to fish under bridges for Snapper, Snook, Black Drum and "overslot" Redfish. First, it's cool under the bridges and second, a great gathering place for the big boys. The water temp seems to be just a few degrees cooler due to the current flow and the bridge pillars hold an abundance of food. The only problem is other species also like the area, so yes, you are going to have to put up with some trash fish, but on the long run--its worth it.

Tackle & Bait Suggestions

If you are looking to catch the big ones, you need a large reel like the OKUMA Azores 8000 Spinning reel and a 40-80# rod unless you are into conventional reel outfits. Depending on the tide movement you will need anywhere for 1/2oz to 1oz lead, 65-pound test braided line; it cuts through the water better and that means less weight is needed. Use 50# fluorocarbon leader at least 36 inches long tied to a 3/0 circle hook. I personally prefer using a jig head with a 3/0 hook. Regarding bait; a live blue crab, medium-sized, cut



in half is the best bet. Fresh dead will work in most cases but frozen crab fall apart too easy for me. It's a waste of money and it pays to pay a little more to buy them alive. Also, keep in mind that Black Drum can be

seen on your sonar, so don't waste any time. Just drive around the pillars until the sonar turns dark due to the fact that they are big and in large numbers.

Also, the big Redfish consider fresh blue crab as their candy, so if there any are around hanging with the Black Drum, you could be in for a surprise!

Best Spots in Tampa Bay

Gandy Bridge, Howard Frankland, and the big span of the Courtney Campbell Causeway bridge; just to name a few. The Skyway Bridge also has them, along with some leftover Tarpon. ☑

Captain Sergio Atanes is a native resident of Tampa and has been fishing the water of Tampa Bay and Boca Grande for over 45 years. He is owner and operator of "S & I Charters" which is one of the largest charter booking services in the West Coast of Florida with 55 professional captains on staff. Capt. Sergio Atanes can be reached at (813) 973-7132 or www.reelfishy.com.





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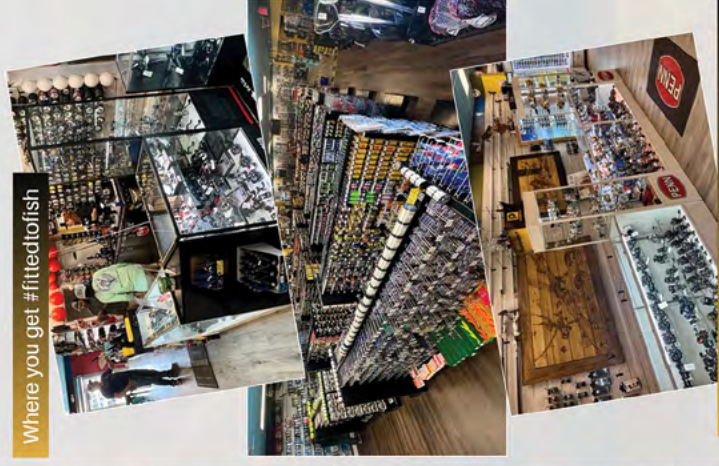
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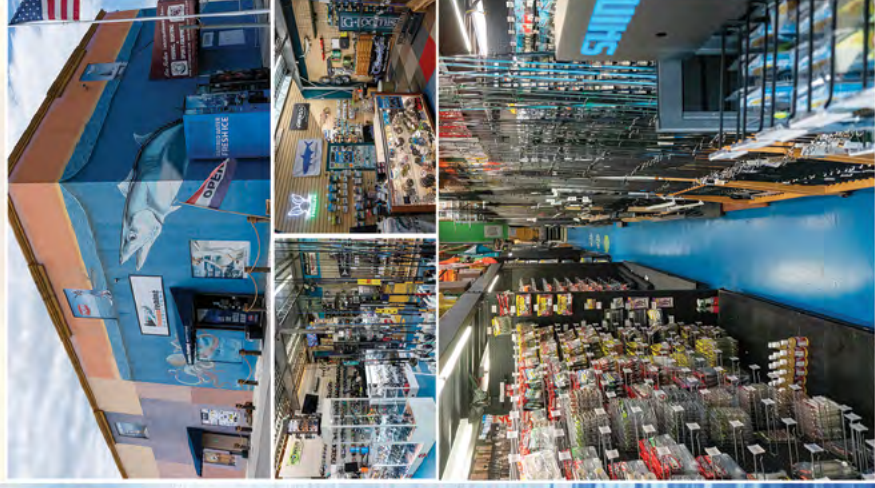
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