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SHRIMP ON A TREADMILL

Sometimes reality really is stranger than anything that I could make up. In my never ending efforts to keep my readers well informed on matters important to our beloved aquatic resources, I took special interest in a news item that I saw about making shrimp run on a treadmill. Just search for "Shrimp on a Treadmill" and you will find a mesmerizing video of athletic shrimp running to the music that I could best describe as the theme to the Benny Hill show. Be careful, as you can easily spend hours watching it.

Upon my first look at the video, my mind was simply churning with many burning questions about how and why it was made. Just like the National Enquirer, my inquiring mind wanted to know things like:

- Where do you go to purchase a tiny underwater shrimp treadmill?
- Are shrimp naturally athletic or do they have to be taught to run on a treadmill?
- Who paid for the treadmill and the hours it took to get the shrimp to jog?
- Was the shrimp overweight when it started training or did it just want to bulk up?
- Was Benny Hill somehow involved in this effort?

While most answers have proved hard to come by, it did not take much research to determine that a grant from the National Science Foundation provided the money. A total of \$682,570 was spent on a study titled "Taking the Pulse of Marine Life in Stressed Seas". In the study crustaceans were apparently infected by being given injections of disease carrying bacteria like they would encounter in the wild and then they were forced to run on tiny underwater treadmills while their vital functions like blood pressure and heart rate were monitored. I just gotta see the tiny blood pressure cuffs and little heart rate monitors!! This kinda sounds like cruel and unusual punishment and it is probably against the Geneva Convention or at least its seafood equivalent. I also have to wonder what they did with their specimens when the tests were over? A big seafood boil seems kind of barbaric after all of the things that the shrimp were put through.



I am unsure what valuable findings may come out of this effort, but I was also a bit doubtful about the benefit of studying bovine belches on the ozone layer and USDA spent \$700,000 doing that in 2010. Perhaps we will get a new strain of pumped up super shrimp that will be even tastier on the table.

While I was unable to answer most of my other questions, I did verify that Benny Hill continues to be dead (sadly since 1992 so apparently it is a permanent thing) and thus he had nothing to do with the research. I have a feeling that those who posted the video on line may have simply added his theme song because they thought that it had a good beat and you could dance to it.

So...do Flip and I think this study was a huge waste of our taxpayer dollars? Does a shrimp actually poop in the Ocean?

Stop by Belle Harbour Marina in Tarpon Springs to speak with us about shrimp treadmills or other important topics. While you are at Belle Harbour check out our dry storage, boat lifts and great rental boats.

Merle & Flip



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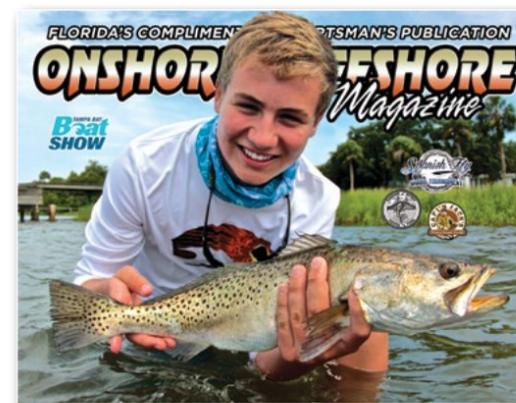


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ON THE COVER:

It's that time of year to target large "gator" Seatrout. This young man landed a beauty while wadefishing near some West Central Florida residential docks. Nice catch!

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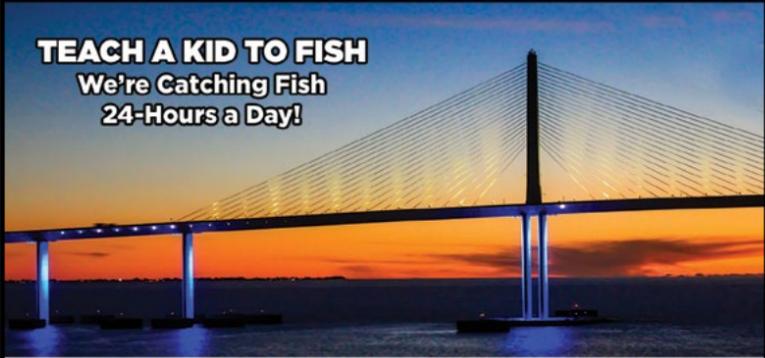
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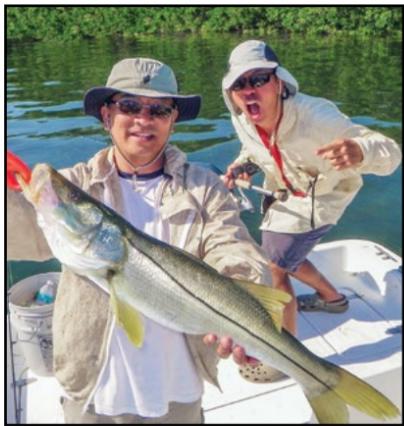
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MORE THAN JUST POWER PLANTS

by Captain George Hastick

Many anglers know that the power plants in wintertime are working hard and putting out a lot of warm water. Species like Snook, Trout, Redfish and more will seek refuge from the cold and follow these warm water trails to the power plants and its nearby waters. There can be some good fishing at various plants like the Big Bend Apollo Beach Plant, St. Pete Bartow Plant and Bayside Electric Plant at Port Sutton. Sometimes they will also attract Tarpon and Cobia which will linger there until the water starts to warm up, once springtime rolls in.



However, there are more places that fish will gravitate to during these colder times. They will head up rivers, creeks, residential canals and places that are out of the wind. Many of the rivers will also attract fish to the mouths of the rivers due to the warmer water from being spring fed and or the fresh-water run-off. Then they will migrate upriver to the docks, bridges and deeper holes to stay warm. For example, Lithia Springs feeds the Alafia River; Crystal Springs and Ulele Springs feed the Hillsborough River.

To the north of Tampa Bay there is the Anclote, Chassahowitzka, Weeki Wachee and Crystal River to name a few that will also stay warmer.

So, the river mouths and creek mouths can really concentrate the fish, especially if it's a mild winter not sending them too far up the river. The mouths can hold a lot of food sources for the fish and then on the warm days the shallow flats adjacent to them will warm up faster. The fish will move into warmer water which will make their metabolism increase causing them to want to feed. Basically, the warm days between cold fronts. Two to three days in a row or more of warm weather and the feed bags go on.

Let's not forget the residential canal systems and the backwaters. These areas with their dark bottoms, deeper water and sometimes less water movement will attract

fish. Places like this, that are close to

shallow flats will work in the same way. At night they will go into these deeper areas to protect themselves from the cold. Also, on the flats, if you find some deep holes they can be loaded with fish, so wading is a great option.



Whether it is rivers, creeks or canals look for structure to hold the fish, like docks, bridge pilings, mangroves and oysters. And, often during the winter months,

the water clarity can be clear, so a stealthy approach is your best bet.

I love to throw artificials this time of year, like Saltwater Assassin's Sea Shad on a 1/8 or 1/4oz jighead in "Chicken on a Chain" color. Your other best bet is live shrimp on a 1/0 hook paired with 20-25lb Seaguar fluorocarbon leader with 10-15lb Fins brand braid. On warm days, Scaled Sardines will definitely entice the Snook. ☑

Captain George Hastick of "Fish Hunter Fishing Charters" in St. Petersburg has been fishing the waters of Tampa for over 35 years. From novice to professional; you'll feel like you have been fishing buddies for years. For more info, contact him at 727-525-1005, www.FishTampa.com.



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WELLS COVE: A PREMIER BOATING COMMUNITY ON THE ST. JOHNS RIVER

For those who measure quality of life by time on the water, Wells Cove offers a rare and thoughtfully designed opportunity. This exclusive waterfront enclave is a premier boating community located along the banks of the St. Johns River, where riverfront living, privacy, and convenience come together in a way seldom found in today's market.

Wells Cove is intentionally intimate, with only seven homesites planned within a gated setting. Rather than a large-scale subdivision, the community was designed for those who value space, serenity, and a true connection to the water. Each residence includes its own private boat slip, allowing homeowners to move seamlessly from home to boat without the complications of shared marinas or off-site storage.



proximately a 15-minute high-speed run to the Atlantic Ocean and the jetties. This makes Wells Cove especially attractive to both freshwater and saltwater fishing enthusiasts, as well as boaters who want quick access to offshore waters while still enjoying the calm and protection of riverfront living.

Beyond its boating advantages, Wells Cove offers a location that balances privacy with everyday convenience. The community is just minutes from Jacksonville's beaches, providing easy access to coastal recreation and dining. Major destinations such as the St. Johns Town Center, River City Marketplace, and Jacksonville International Airport are all nearby, making travel, shopping, and entertainment simple and efficient.

Homes at Wells Cove reflect the community's upscale character,

with quality construction and coastal-inspired design. Select residences offer buyers the opportunity to personalize finishes and design details, allowing each home to reflect individual taste. Immediate occupancy is available, enabling new owners to begin enjoying the waterfront lifestyle without delay.

Pricing at Wells Cove ranges from \$899,000 to \$1,900,000, representing a compelling value for a gated, private-slip boating community of this caliber. With only seven homes in total, availability is limited, reinforcing the community's exclusive nature and long-term appeal.

Wells Cove is more than a place to live — it is a destination for those who appreciate life on the water. From private slips and rapid ocean access to iconic river views and thoughtful design, this premier boating community offers a lifestyle defined by ease, exclusivity, and enduring value. ■

One of Wells Cove's most compelling features is its exceptional access to open water. From the dock, it is ap-

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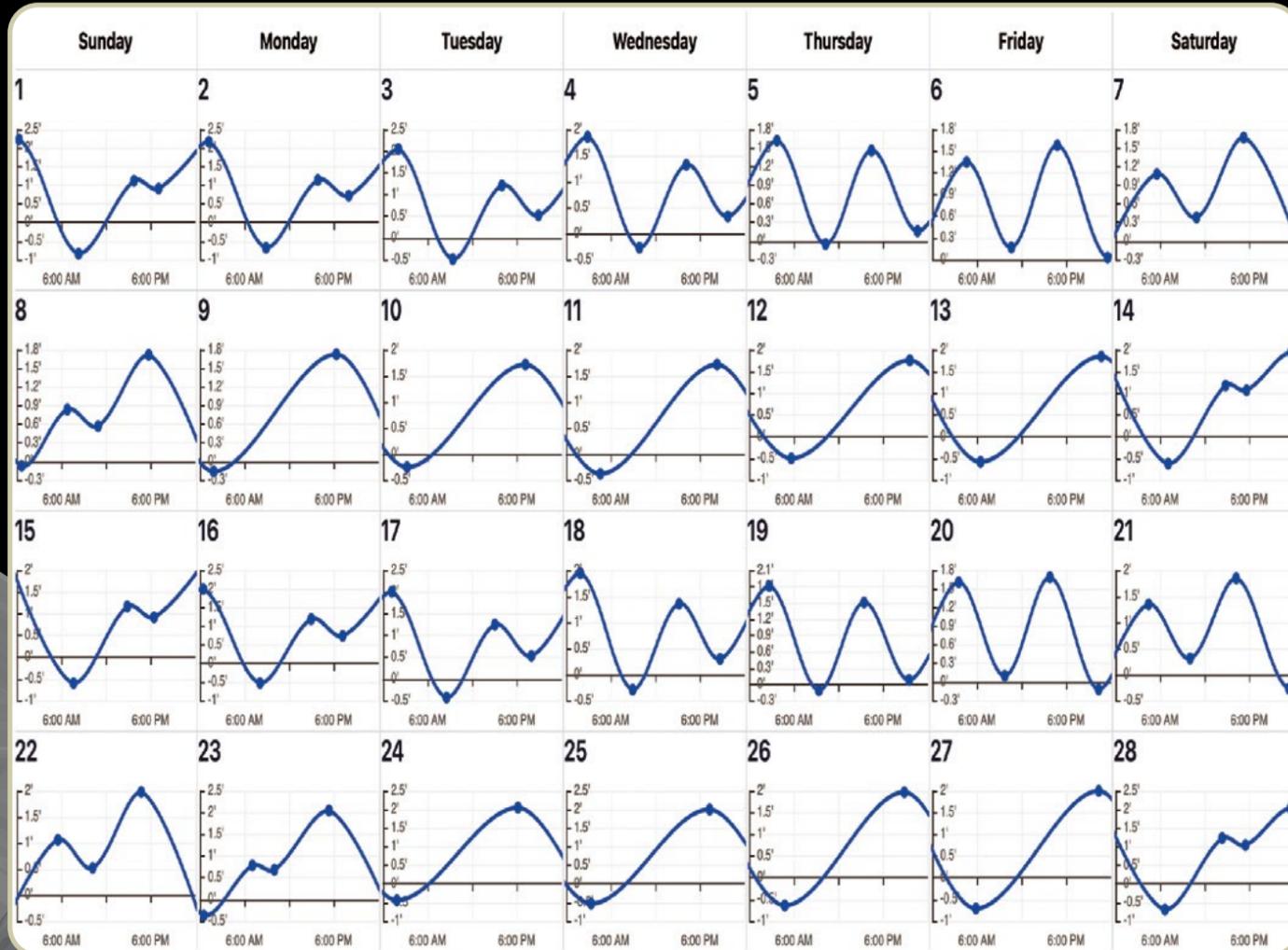
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Conversions for Clearwater Beach Area

High	Low	Location
-0:02	-0:10	Dunedin, St. Joseph Sound
-0:05	-0:15	Anclote Key, South End
+0:42	+0:42	Tarpon Springs, Anclote River
-0:07	-0:03	North Anclote Key
+0:41	+0:39	Old Port Tampa
+0:33	+0:53	Gulf Harbors
+0:42	+1:05	Hwy 19 Bridge, Pithlachascotee River
+0:50	+1:35	New Port Richey, Pithlachascotee River
+0:36	+0:43	Hudson, Hudson Creek

Conversions for St. Marks River Area

High	Low	Location
+0:23	+1:18	Everglades City
-1:17	-1:03	Cape Romano
-1:04	-1:08	Marco Island
-1:59	-2:04	Naples
-0:46	-0:09	Indian Bay
-0:59	-0:42	Bayport
-0:25	+0:23	Withlacoochee River

Conversions for Tampa Bay Area

High	Low	Location
+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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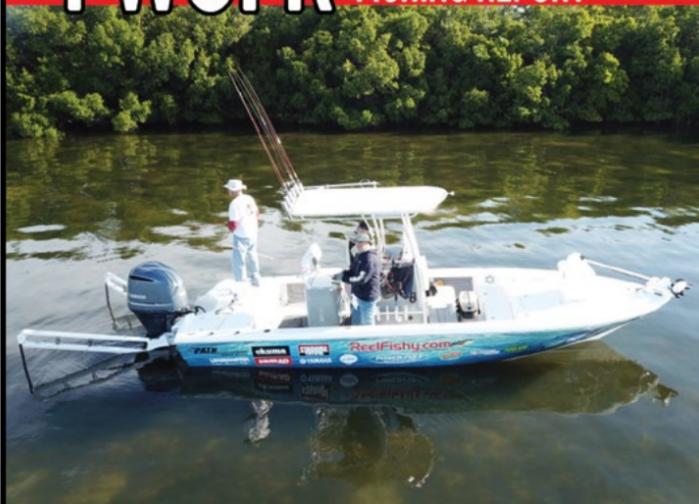

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HOST: Capt. Sergio Atanes • CO-HOST: Capt. George Hastick

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IT'S TIME TO GET WILD IN ALASKA

by Misty Wells

Every year I hear people talk about their "Bucket List Fishing Trip" and I would say most of the time they mention a trip to Alaska. I am one of those people, and last year I was able to check that "dream fishing trip" off my list. I got a call from the owners of the "Wild Strawberry Lodge" in Sitka, Alaska asking me if I wanted to come film an episode for my tv show "Let's Take it Outside", of course my answer was a loud "yes". This is the trip that I had been dreaming about for a long time, and I was very excited to mark a July date on my calendar.

I was headed to an iconic destination in Sitka called the "Wild Strawberry Lodge" a premier, family-owned destination since 1991. Just like every place in Alaska this lodge has a story to tell, and it begins with a pioneering female entrepreneur in the Alaska sportfishing industry, Theresa Weiser. Weiser, who grew up on the Oregon coast, moved to Sitka in 1985 and spent years working as a deckhand and commercial fisher before earning her Captains License in 1990. She established the lodge and its parent company, Alaska Premier Charters, so she could provide all-inclusive fishing trips for dreamers like me. Known for her hands-on leadership and for fostering a welcoming environment for anglers, Weiser remained an active leader of the lodge until late 2023, when she handed the torch to its current owners, Joshua Badder and Justin Karleski. The Wild Strawberry Lodge specializes in all-inclusive saltwater fishing dream vacations. They offer guided charters targeting King Salmon,

Halibut and Lingcod on their fleet of custom-built 31-foot vessels equipped with everything you need, including heaters. One reason I hear from folks why they have not taken their Alaskan trip yet, is because they think it could be difficult to plan and they need guidance. The WSL has you covered all you have to do is book your trip, book your flight to Sitka and they take care of the rest. Upon arrival at the Sitka airport, they are there to greet you and take you right to the lodge to get you checked in. As soon as you arrive at the lodge, the first order of business is to get you 'geared up' with slickers and boots for your Alaskan fishing vacation.

Once I got settled in my room, I was ready to explore the Island, so we hopped in one of their UTV's and went for a ride. To be honest, there is no way to explain the beauty of Alaska you feel as if you're in a movie the entire time. We spent a few hours out exploring the Island, picking berries, viewing waterfalls, and sprawling river areas surrounded by amazing scenery.

As the day went on it was time to head back to the lodge for a chef prepared dinner and hit the hay, my next day of fishing is coming early.

At 5 a.m. you will get a knock on the door to come down for warm, tasty, breakfast and then it's time to take the short walk to the dock. I was fishing solo, so Josh and Justin teamed me up with the Sarasy family from California for my fishing crew. Wild Strawberry Lodge boats have 6-pack licenses so you



can bring your own crew, or they will match you with fellow anglers. Full of excitement we leave the dock, I am ready to wet-a-line and catch my first King Salmon in Alaska. The technique of fishing called 'mooching' is a bit different than I am used to, whether you are an experienced angler or not it is easy to pick up. Mooching is a hands-on, light tackle technique where the boat is anchored, drifting, or slowly "motor-mooched". The primary tackle set up is a two-hook leader and cut-plug herring bait. The technique is to drop the bait at a desired depth, where the fish are on the fish finder and then slowly jig or reel the bait through the water column. The captain is watching the fish finder and letting you know how deep to drop down to the school. We are using light tackle and each of their reels have a depth counter, so it makes it easy to be at the right depth. I had to get used to the bite because Salmon are light biters, so when you feel the bite, "crank, don't yank" is the key to Salmon success.

The largest and most prized species of Salmon is the King Salmon, typically averaging 15-50 pounds. King Salmon are recognized by their black gum line and spots on both lobes of the tail; they are fun to catch. Throughout the day we also caught other species of Salmon such as Silver (Coho), Pink (Humpback) and Chum (Dog) Salmon, they are all beautiful fish to me. As



the day went on the captain asked if we wanted to change things up and try for other species, we all said a resounding "yes". The crew took us over to some ledges and anchored up while we target a species I had never seen 'Rockfish'. As you can see in the picture these fish are vibrant in color and look a lot like a 'Red Grouper' to me. This style of fishing was bottom fishing, just like we do in Florida, so I had no problems landing my catches. Time flies when you are having fun and fishing, around 2 p.m. it was time to head in and

chill out at the lodge. Coming back to the lodge you feel like you are coming home, except they have snacks and a gourmet dinner waiting for you and you don't have to do the dishes. I could not wait to go to bed, "I was whopped" but also could not wait to have another day out on the water in Alaska.

Next day, I sprung out of bed at 5am, had a hearty breakfast and walked with my new friends, the Sarasy family, down to the boat for another day of exploring and fishing Sitka. We were all excited when the captain asked if we wanted to target Halibut after we caught our limit of Salmon, we all chimed in with an excited "yes." The crew let us know that there was a 'bag limit' of one Halibut per person, you can't keep any Halibut on Thursday's and a keeper is thirty-four inches or smaller or eighty inches or larger. If a Halibut caught is between thirty-four and eighty inches you must release it, and don't forget no Halibut on Thursdays. We had a great morning of Salmon fishing and after lunch on the boat the crew headed towards the 'Halibut Promise Land.' Fishing for Halibut is similar to the bottom fishing in the Gulf so I grabbed a rod and was ready to go. Pretty quickly I got a bite and reeled up my catch to see if it could be a keeper, your not going to believe it but I had landed in the 'sweet spot' of thirty-three inches. I had landed my first Halibut, and it was a keeper, I was over the moon. The only downside was my Halibut fishing was over, but little did I know 'the best was yet to come.' Just a few minutes later Leanne was hooked up, her rod was bent over so far I thought that rod is going to break. The battle was on, there was no doubt that her fish was



well over eighty inches, but in order to keep this fish she would purchase a special tag. We cheered her on as her huge fish fought to keep her on the bottom and her will was wearing thin. I was so proud of Leanne when she finally got that fish to the surface but "it's not over until it's in the boat". Our Captain and mate 'Kailey' are the best there is, they were able to get that fish in the boat within 2 minutes and we were all screaming for joy. On the way back to the dock Kailey started to filet this huge fish on the deck and not only had that fish filleted and cleaned, but all the others as well. I posted a video of her cleaning this beast on Instagram, I highly recommend you take a look.



By the time we made it back to the lodge we were ready to relax by the fire, but first I had to go check out the fish processing facility. This facility is another thing that really sets the WSL apart from any place I have ever fished. They have an entire crew working hard to fillet all your fish, flash freeze it and then vacuum seal it for you to take home. Your personal fish fresh off the boat, professionally packaged into insulated travel boxes that will be waiting at the airport for you to take home. My first trip to Alaska made a lasting impression on me and I can not wait to head back into one of the greatest States in America. The Wild Strawberry Lodge is not just an experience, it's like family. From the moment you arrive at the airport until the time you leave they treat you like their favorite family member. It is 2026 and you are not getting any younger, it is time to for you to "get wild" in Alaska and plan your trip to the Wild Strawberry Lodge; tell them Misty sent you. Watch this exciting episode on any of the networks listed below or subscribe to you my YouTube and watch all 6 Seasons of "Let's Take it Outside".

Misty Wells Producer & Host of Award Winning "Let's Take It Outside" TV show airing to 220 million on Discovery & Discovery GO & Plus & 17 other networks. Bass Pro-Outdoor Pro & Outdoor & Outdoor, Travel Writer. Founder of "A Reel Future" non-profit devoted to teaching the passion of fishing & conservation to foster children, over 4,000 children & counting. Watch at mistywells.com.





Tampa Bay Tarpon History

by Captain Brent Gaskill



Who remembers what a "cracker cast" is? How about a 4/0 reel? A shad? If you're still with me, you are probably considered an old timer and you know a little something about the way tarpon fishing used to be in Tampa Bay. We used to fish with heavy 8-foot rods with a 4/0 Penn reel loaded with 50-pound mono and 125-pound leader or your favorite beach rod may have been built on a 9-foot Harrington blank with a 4/0 Newel reel filled with a floating squid line, a natural cork float and a long 100-pound leader with a hook that had the eye soldered closed and the point sharpened with a



file. Yes, we could all cast those heavy conventional style outfits...a long way. In those days, a crowd out at Egmont meant six or eight of us being there. When we fished the Skyway, we were talking about the old original span, the new bridge wasn't there yet.

That's all just in my personal experience. There are plenty of guys and gals around that go back further than me. You just don't hear much from them. They're not on social media bragging about their catches.

There's no photos being posted, no TV shows, radio, seminars or showing off. They are the ones who quietly slip off to their favorite honey hole to shad fish. It's not glamorous; it's an addiction. It's a fever and the only cure is to hook another big tarpon, then repeat as necessary.



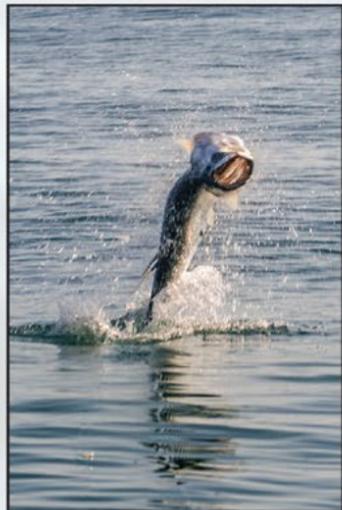
Modern day technology has changed tarpon fishing forever. The invention of braided line, combined with new powerful drags on spinning gear has turned everyone into a tarpon fisherman. Spinning reels never used to have the stopping power of their conventional counterpart. Spinning reels also did not have the capacity to hold enough monofilament line. Technology has brought lighter rods and smaller reels that can be effective for fighting



and landing large tarpon. The bonus that has really changed the tarpon fleet is that everyone can cast a spinning rod. If we all had to only use conventional

gear again, the pack of fishermen would be greatly reduced.

My grandparents used to fish Tampa Bay for tarpon out of a 15-foot wooden rowboat that my grandfather built back in the mid 40's. My grandfather fished the light tackle division with 9-thread line, which is the equivalent of 27-pound test that is still considered light to this day. My grandmother fished the knuckle-buster division, which is a reel that's always in gear and the drag was a leather strap to apply thumb pressure to the spool. As the fish would run, the reel handle would spin backwards thus giving the name knuckle-buster. ▣



Capt. Brent Gaskill is a 4th generation Tampa Bay native and full-time guide both inshore and offshore. He can be reached at 727-510-1009 or e-mail captbrent@summervacationcharters.com View his website at summervacationcharters.com for more information.

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FEBRUARY ON THE GULF COAST

Fishing With Purpose

by Justin Searcy

For me, this month has always felt like a reset. Along Florida's Gulf Coast, winter reminds us that fishing is not always about numbers. It is about how you fish, why you are out there, and what you leave behind when the day is done. Cold fronts still pass through regularly, water temperatures change quickly, and Snook settle into a more deliberate rhythm. February rewards anglers who are patient, observant, and willing to fish with intention.

By February, Snook are firmly locked into their winter behavior. They are no longer spread across summer feeding areas and are rarely interested in chasing fast moving baits. Instead, they position themselves where conditions work in their favor. Protected shorelines, deeper troughs, darker bottom, residential canals, and shallow flats that warm first under the sun become key areas.

This is where slowing down matters most.

Timing also plays a major role this time of year. While tides are always important, sun angle often becomes the deciding factor in February. Late mornings into early afternoons tend to be the most productive,



especially following a cool night. Even a small increase in water temperature can create a short feeding window that pulls fish shallow.

Clear winter water means fish see everything. Boat positioning, noise, shadows, and unnecessary movement all matter. A quiet approach is essential. February is not forgiving, but it is fair. When you do things right, the fish respond.

Windy days and colder weather often limit fishing opportunities, making this an ideal time to focus on boat maintenance and preparation for the spring season. Taking care of routine service, electronics, trolling motors, and general upkeep now helps avoid problems when fishing ramps back up. Local businesses like Boat & Motor Superstores play an important role during this time of year, helping anglers ensure their boats are ready, reliable, and safe before spring arrives.

Cold water also means fish care becomes even more important. Snook are strong, but they can be stressed more easily during the winter months. Limiting air exposure, supporting fish properly, and allowing them time to recover in the water before release helps ensure they swim off strong. These practices are not just about following regulations. They are about protecting the fishery and doing our part to preserve it for the future.

Conservation is not something we talk about only when it is convenient. It is something we practice every day on the water.



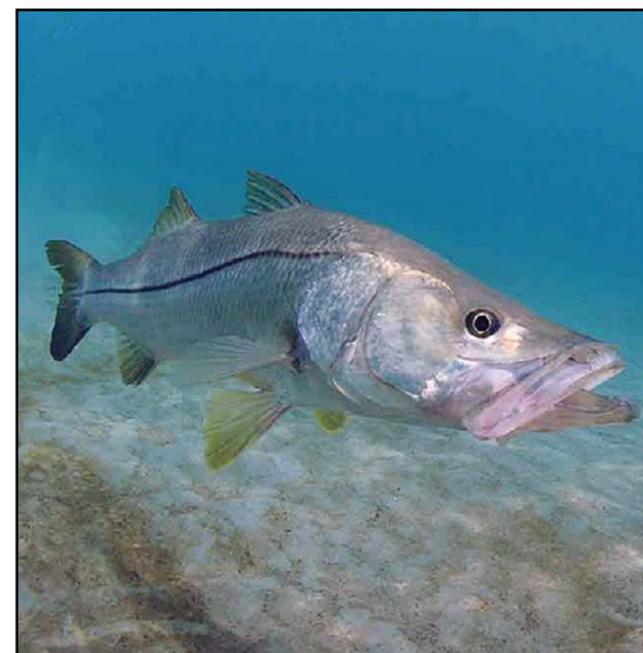
Fishing has given me more than I could ever give back on my own. Time with family and friends, lifelong memories, and a deep appreciation for our local waters are all part of that. That is why giving back to the community and supporting conservation efforts have become such an important part of how I approach this sport.

One project especially close to my heart is helping bring back the **Peter T. Assimack Memorial Fishing Tournament**, a long standing Tarpon Springs tradition that was last held in the spring of 2019. We are proud to be working toward its return in the spring of 2027. This tournament represents more than competition. It honors legacy, supports conservation, and brings people together around the waters that connect our community.

February on the gulf coast reminds us why we fish in the first place. It reminds us to slow down, take care of the fish, appreciate the quiet moments between bites, and give back to the waters and communities that give us so much.

See you on the water! 🎣

-Justin Searcy



TALES FROM THE OLD GUY

by David Mallory

In 1949, I was living in Burlington, Vermont with Mom, Dad and my little sister Maureen. My father's brother, Howard, invited us down to Clearwater, Florida to visit. Dad said yes which included me, but we left my sister with Mom's parents in Burlington. We had three flights to Florida, all prop planes! The first to New York was a DC3, then to Washington on a L1011 and to Florida on a DC8. That was quite a trip for the three of us and the three flights took us all day!

IT WAS HOT when we arrived in Florida. We got in my uncles car to ride to their house. The car was a convertible and I had never been in a car with no top! It was kind of different, at best. I wanted a roof on the car so we could stay safe!

We, at least me, got up early the next day, to look around and see water in front (the gulf) and back (the intercoastal waterway). That was pretty exciting. I could see us fishing a lot and catching many new kinds of saltwater fish. After breakfast, the three of us went out to fish. We had white grubs for bait and the fish liked them. We were catching Pinfish and Speckled Trout but not like the trout in Vermont (these were bigger). We caught some Catfish and a few other funny looking fish that we didn't keep. After we fished for a little while, I had to go back in to go with everybody to see the city. That was boring for me, but not my parents.

In the afternoon, Dad went fishing with my uncle and caught two Tarpon. One of them weighed over 100 pounds and the other was about 60 pounds. Big fish, I thought! The next day, we went out in my uncles 16 foot motor boat and caught many different kinds of fish including Ladyfish and Jacks. I saw a big fin come out of the water and yelled, "It's a shark!!" I was told it was a dolphin, not a shark, but I didn't believe them, can't fool me! We caught some fish for dinner (a Redfish and some more Trout) and headed back home. We felt we had done well.

The next few days were spent doing adult stuff and I was left at home with my three cousins. Sometimes getting into a bit of mischief.

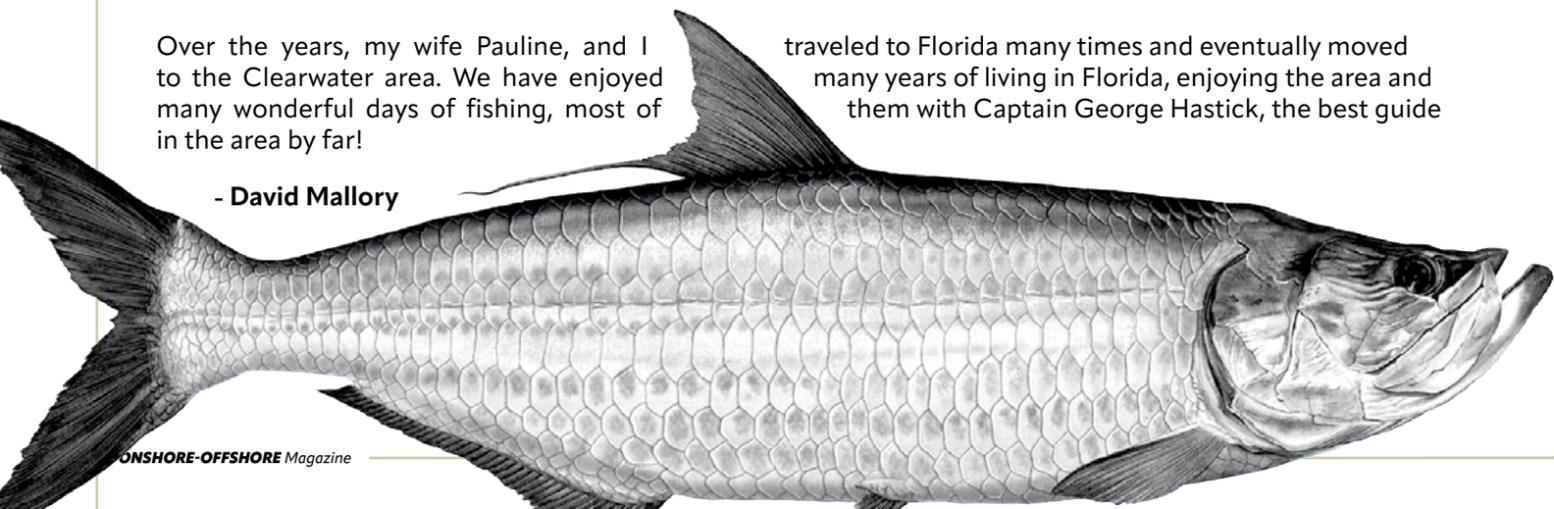
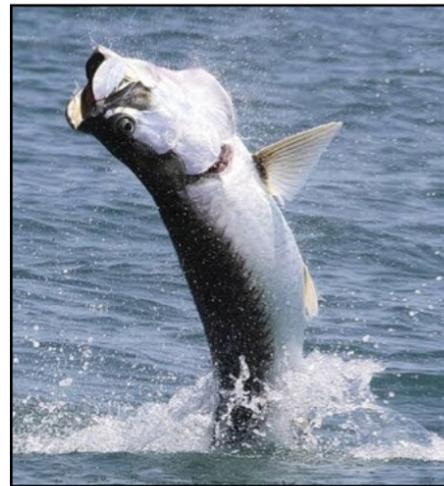
Before we went back to Vermont, we went out in the boat again and caught many kinds of fish, including a big Catfish which gave us a good fight.

That was the end of my fishing this time in Florida, but Dad and my uncle went two more times and had a lot of fun catching many fish including a big Cobia, which gave Dad a great battle.

Over the years, my wife Pauline, and I to the Clearwater area. We have enjoyed many wonderful days of fishing, most of in the area by far!

- David Mallory

traveled to Florida many times and eventually moved many years of living in Florida, enjoying the area and them with Captain George Hastick, the best guide



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FISHING FORECAST

THIS MONTH'S OUTLOOK WITH CAPTAIN SERGIO ATANES



Cold fronts create colder water temperatures driving the fish into deep holes, the edges of channels, up river and into the "old standby"; the warm waters of the power plants. Sea walls can heat the water around it a few degrees as the sun rises and can make a difference. Residential canals that are deeper can and will produce good catches of trout, redfish and sheepshead.

A jig head like a "Flashing Assassin" paired with a live shrimp worked along the bottom under docks can produce flounder and redfish. Best time for wintertime fishing for me starts around 9:00 am or later on cloudy days. One last thing start on the west side of the bay as they get the first rays of the sun.

ABOUT THE CAPTAIN

Captain Sergio Atanes fishes the Florida waters, specializing in and around the West Coast of Florida and Tampa Bay. His 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 in the area.

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The Jose Wejbe Spanish Fly Memorial
Foundation's Work with Veterans

The ocean has long been a source of healing, connection, and adventure. For many veterans, it represents a place of solace and renewal after the challenges of military service. The Jose Wejbe Spanish Fly Memorial Foundation has embraced this transformative power, creating opportunities for veterans to rediscover joy, camaraderie, and purpose through fishing.



A LEGACY OF PASSION & GIVING

The Foundation's story begins with the incredible legacy of Jose Wejbe, the legendary fishing captain and host of the beloved TV show Spanish Fly. Known for his infectious passion for fishing and the ocean, Jose spent years sharing his love of the sport with audiences worldwide. But beyond the cameras, Jose was deeply committed to helping others, often going out of his way to mentor and inspire those around him.



After Jose's untimely passing in 2012, his daughter Krissy founded the Jose Wejbe Spanish Fly Memorial Foundation to honor his spirit and continue his work. The Foundation embodies Jose's ethos of generosity and adventure by focusing on creating meaningful experiences for those who need it most. Among its key initiatives is its work with veterans, a cause that holds special significance to the Foundation.

FISHING AS HEALING FOR VETERANS

Transitioning from military service to civilian life can be a profound challenge for many veterans. The physical and emotional toll of service often leaves scars that take time and support to heal. Recognizing this, the Foundation has made it a mission to give back to those who have served by connecting them with the therapeutic benefits of fishing.

Through guided fishing trips and mentorship opportunities, the Foundation provides veterans with a chance to escape the stresses of daily life and reconnect with nature. These experiences go beyond catching fish; they offer a unique environment for building relationships, finding inner peace, and rediscovering a sense of purpose.

For many veterans, a day on the water isn't just a recreational activity—it's a pathway to healing. The calm rhythm of the waves, the thrill of a catch, and the shared stories among fellow anglers create an atmosphere of support and understanding.



UPCOMING TRIPS: SUPPORTING 13 VETERANS THIS DECEMBER

This December, the Foundation is thrilled to welcome 13 veterans for a series of fishing trips in the beautiful waters of the Florida Keys. These trips are designed to create unforgettable moments, whether it's the excitement of landing a trophy fish, the peace of being surrounded by nature, or the camaraderie of being part of a supportive community.

For these veterans, the ocean will be more than just a fishing destination—it will be a place to reflect, reconnect, and rejuvenate. This opportunity wouldn't be possible without the generosity of supporters and the dedication of our volunteers and captains who give their time & expertise to make these trips so special.



expertise to donors and sponsors who believe in the mission, every contribution plays a role in creating these life-changing experiences.

If you're a veteran who could benefit from the program or know someone who might, the Foundation encourages you to reach out. And for those who want to help make these fishing dreams come true, there are plenty of ways to get involved, from volunteering to donating or sponsoring a trip.



STORIES OF IMPACT

One veteran shared how their trip with the Foundation changed their outlook on life:

"I hadn't felt that kind of peace in years. Being on the water, feeling connected to something bigger than myself, and sharing laughs with people who understood—it was exactly what I needed to start healing."

These moments of connection and joy underscore the Foundation's commitment to making a difference, one fishing trip at a time.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

The Foundation's work with veterans wouldn't be possible without the support of its incredible community. From local captains volunteering their time and

CONTINUING JOSE'S LEGACY

At its core, the Jose Wejebe Spanish Fly Memorial Foundation's work with veterans is about much more than fishing. It's about creating moments of connection, resilience, and hope—values that Jose himself championed throughout his life.

For more information on how to support or participate in the Foundation's veteran programs, visit josewejebefoundation.org. Together, we can help more veterans experience the healing power of the ocean and the joy of fishing. 🎣



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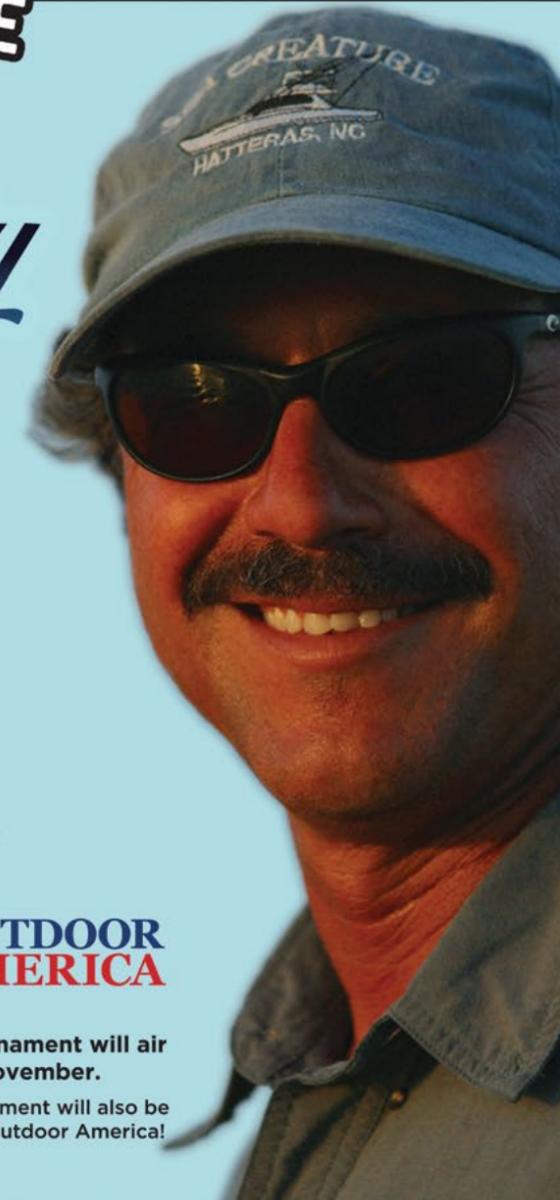
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TAMPA BAY AS I KNEW IT (PART II)

by Captain Sergio Atanes

Growing up in Tampa Bay in the 50s and 60s had so much to offer when it came to fishing. When we were not going to Boca Grande for the weekends, we spent a lot of time exploring new spots and there were plenty of places to find. During that time in history, the mindset was to fish offshore and very little attention was given to the inshore areas. Last month, I covered the upper part of the bay and this month I have some stories about how it was in lower Tampa Bay in that timeframe.



Bayside Power Station on Port Sutton Road. We called it Black Docks, and the Winter fishing was terrific. The colder it got, the hotter the bite. In those days we were allowed to fish from the bank or run your boat right up to the hot water runoff. The bank would have elbow to elbow fishermen catching Pompano, Redfish, Snook, Trout, Sharks, Sheepshead and yes, sometime a school of Catfish would move in and mess up the bite. I can't remember the year, but I do remember the story of an angler falling into the water from the bank and drowning. After

that, all fishing from shore was stopped and no trespassing signs quickly went up.

There's a **railroad crossing on Bullfrog Creek** that I remember well. Before there was a catch limit or size on Redfish, we would sit next to the crossing and load up on 12-inch Redfish all morning long using Fiddler Crabs or Shrimp. The last time I stopped by was 10 years ago and an old lady with her cane pole was fishing at the same spot we used to and had several undersize redfish on a

stringer. I walked the area and saw several large Redfish and Sheepshead hanging around the pilling, so I guess the fishing was still pretty good at the old crossing.

The **Little Manatee River** is an area that we didn't fish in the area much since it was a long run for us from the old boat ramp on 22nd Street Causeway next to the Seabreeze Restaurant. But, when we did, one of our favorite spots was the broken-down bridge area and the mouth of the river. Winter was our most productive time, as

in the Summer months, we were too busy fishing Boca Grande or the Courtney Campbell Causeway.



In the 40s through the mid 50s there was the "Bee-Line Ferry" that went from **Piney Point to Pinellas Point**, the original site of O'Neal's Bait Shop. It was a 69-mile drive through US Highway 41, and this took about 55 minutes to get across and it saved a long drive if you wanted to go from Pinellas to Manatee County. The Skyway Bridge



did not open until 1955 and that was the downfall of the "Bee-Line Ferry". This fishing around the docks was fantastic all year round with some of the biggest Snook and Redfish for residents. Still, today in the Spring, it's one of the best places for large Snook, if you can get them out of what remains of the old pylons left from the loading dock of the ferry landing.

There used to be a small boat ramp off the old 41 Hwy Road that took you to the Skyway Bridge, and from that ramp we could access the fertile grounds of **Bishop Harbor** in our little boat. **Mariposa Key** at the entrance to the harbor was a home base for Mullet fishermen in the 30s and to this day there still exists some of the remains of their cabin and part of the dock.

I look forward to hearing from my readers about any fishing stories they have from fishing in Tampa Bay in the early years. Thanks to my uncle who took the time to teach me how to fish and make me the angler I am today.

For more information you can visit FISHING ADVENTURES FLORIDA on YouTube with weekly local fishing information and our "how-to" segment Capt. Sergio Fishing Academy teaching new techniques and tackle to help you catch more fish. ☑

Captain Sergio Atanes is the host of Fishing Adventures Florida and Captain Sergio Fishing Chronicles on YouTube, Waypoint TV, Carbon TV, Outdoor Action TV and Angling TV. For info call 813-973-7132 or email: atanes@msn.com.

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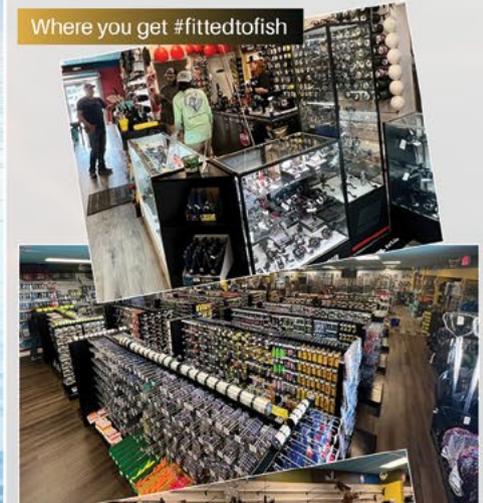
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