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DECEMBER 2020

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This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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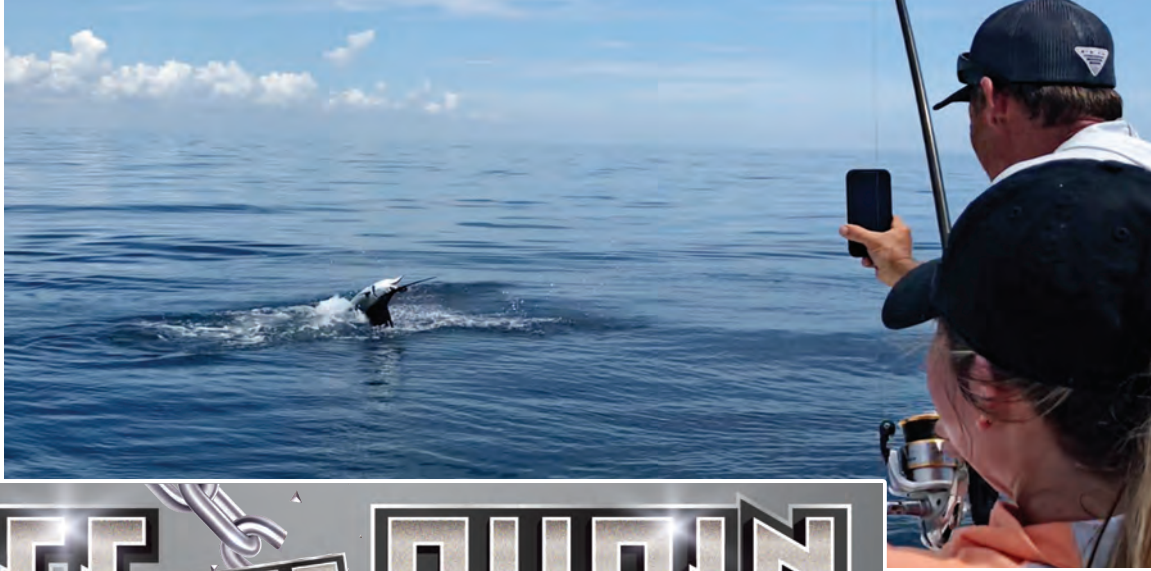
"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."

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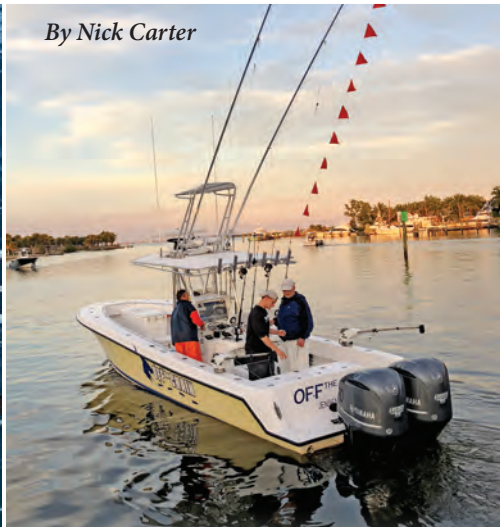


PHOTOS COURTESY OF OFF THE CHAIN



OFF THE CHAIN

IN THE SAILFISH CAPITAL OF THE WORLD



By Nick Carter

Capt. Scott Fawcett didn't hesitate when asked to make a prediction about sailfish season off Florida's Treasure Coast. His outlook is extremely bullish.

"This is going to be one of the best sailfish seasons we've had in a long time," he said. "By the middle of December, I think we're going to see the best sailfishing we've had in the last 10 years."

Fawcett's optimism is based on a number of factors he's followed for more than three decades fishing Florida's Atlantic Coast. December and January is the historic peak season from Vero south to Palm Beach, Fla. The bite is heavily influenced by winter fronts and the proximity of the Gulf Stream, and everyone is eagerly awaiting strong northeast winds to usher sailfish south to their wintering grounds and closer to shore.

Closer to shore isn't far out of Stuart, Fla., where Fawcett's Off the Chain fishing charters is based. In an area known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World," it's typically a short 8-mile ride in his

32' Contender "Off The Chain" to reach the color edges and temperature breaks where sailfish hunt.

In November, Fawcett's attention was tuned to fishing reports some 600 miles to the north off the coast of North Carolina.

"We had a phenomenal sailfish summer," he said, speaking of the action that usually goes down from April to June or July most years. "It seems like that body of fish disappeared offshore for a while and then showed up off Morehead City. Last time that happened, we had a fantastic season. I expect to see good numbers of sailfish in December."

With the relatively flat bottom out of Stuart, blind trolling to cover water along the temperature breaks, color edges and reef lines is the preferred tactic. Fawcett pulls a dredge, an umbrella rig of some 30 or 40 baits and lures, to locate and draw in fish.

"You'll see them come up behind the teaser," Fawcett said. "Then you'll put your hook baits in front of the fish."

It's up to the anglers to manipulate those "hook baits"—usually ballyhoo on a circle hook—in front of the fish.

"On a good day, expect five or six sailfish bites and the same amount of dolphin bites and then some bonito or a big kingfish mixed in," Fawcett said. "Occasionally, we'll also get a blackfin or a big wahoo while trolling or kite fishing."

Kite fishing out of Stuart requires the right conditions. Sometimes when Fawcett finds a good current rip or color change, he'll drop the trolling motor and deploy kites and live baits. Off The Chain's center console allows 360 degrees of fishability, and when kites are flying, it's worth dropping baits to the bottom, as well. While waiting on sailfish, anglers can fill the cooler with whatever's in season. A mixed bag of snapper and grouper species is the norm.

Check out Off the Chain at www.offthechainfishing.com. Call Capt. Scott Fawcett at 772-285-1055.

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Every Region Has Its Season!

By Jim Baugh

Jim Baugh Outdoors TV has had the pleasure of filming in most parts of the East Coast over the last 33 years. However, the bulk of our programming comes from the Mid-Atlantic region. The Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers, and all up and down the Outer Banks has been our mainstay of outdoor storytelling.

Every region in the United States has a species of fish it is known for. From largemouth bass to white marlin, where you are determines what you catch.

While our Mid-Atlantic states offer a large variety of species to fish for, one of the most popular fish—and one that the Chesapeake Bay area is renowned for—is rockfish. Also known as striped bass, these fish are widely sought after because they grow large, put up a decent fight and will make for one of the most delicious holiday meals one will ever have. 'Tis the season for rockfish!

Our favorite rockfish has had its ups and downs over the years. In years past, there have been moratoriums, then come backs, then the fish seem to “disappear” by simply not coming into the bay, then everything seems to rebound again. These fish are pretty closely monitored,

and I do hope all sportsmen will adhere to the regulations. These swings affect a lot of things like tourism dollars and fishing tournaments.

One of the longest-running and best-run rockfish tournaments is the Rockfish Shootout, held at the Oyster Farm on Virginia's Eastern Shore in December. If you are thinking about coming to our area, I highly suggest you try this tourney out. It is always a great event.

If you are coming to the Chesapeake Bay and are new to rockfishing, here is some good advice. As always, contact local tackle shops to get the latest and current info. Hiring an experienced local charter is always a great idea and will introduce you to how the locals catch their fish.

A tried-and-true method is live eeling, simply with a freeline or small sinker. Fish the channels and over the tunnels of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge or the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. These bridges have fantastic “light lines” in the water caused by the highway lights on the bridges. Get yourself some bucktails and soft-plastic shad and cast to the pilings at night. Just be sure to fish the up-current side of the bridge pilings.



Years of rockfish TV Shows are available on Jim Baugh Outdoors TV channels; season 33 is on both Amazon Prime Video and YouTube.

If you want a great Christmas gift for your favorite outdoorsman, check out Jim Baugh's book “HOOKED,” which is available on Amazon.

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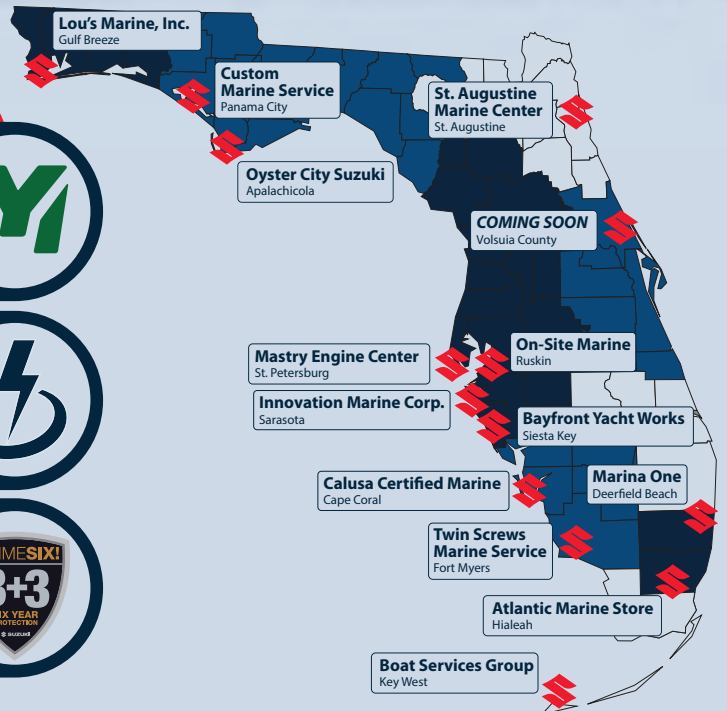
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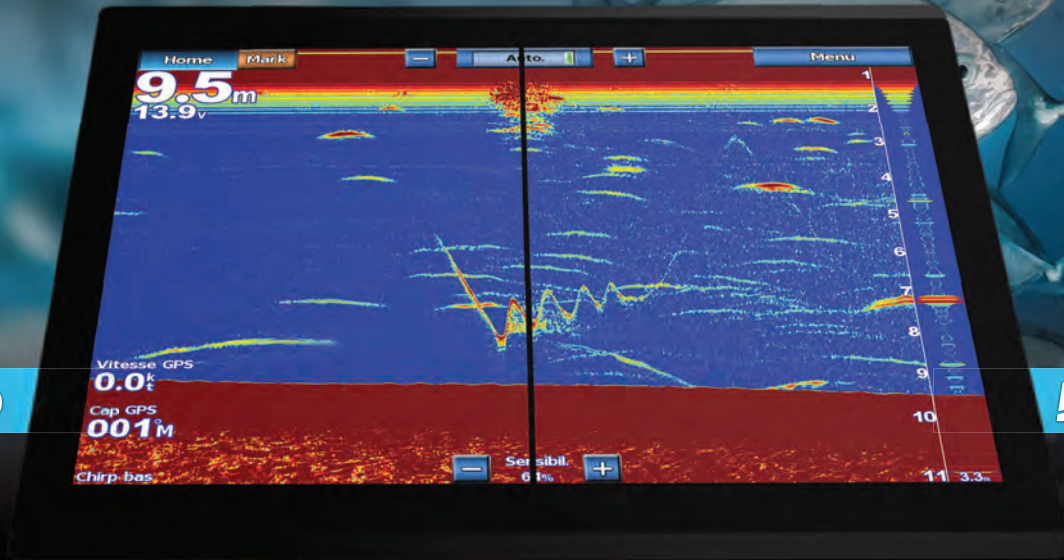
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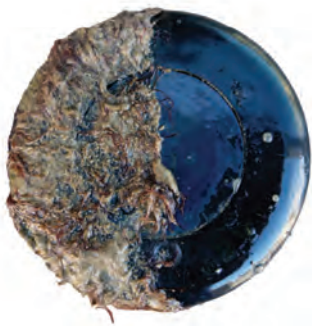
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Kluch, a Boynton Beach business
since 1992, drew its inspiration from their
own backyard and is paying a tribute to
the Boynton Inlet.

Like the rest of the world, Kluch spent
a few months locked down at home this
year, which motivated the inspiration and
appreciation of our local surroundings.

The company's "Boynton bite" design showcases the iconic Boynton
Inlet, which is notorious for its strong current and intimidating for the
inexperienced. The Inlet, just a few miles from the legendary Atlantic Gulf
Stream, is abundant with a wide variety of fish including sailfish. Kluch had
local artists collaborate on a design adding a sailfish "out front" the inlet.

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Gulf Nearshore Heating Up With Hogs & Tripletail

By Capt. Quinlyn Haddon

December on Florida's Gulf Coast presents unique opportunities to nearshore fishermen, as autumn cold fronts push many species closer to shore.

Nearshore fishing is optimal right now, which is great news as weather may prohibit offshore trips. Blackfin tuna will start showing up closer to land than any other time of the year, tripletail will be stacked on crab trap buoys that pepper the beaches, and the hogfish bite is becoming extremely reliable.

Crab trap buoys have been soaking along the beaches since October. They have become residences for one of the most interesting fish in the Gulf. Tripletail are visible as dark to golden blobs hanging just below the buoys. While cruising set traps, you can get relatively close without spooking these fish. Be ready with shrimp or greenbacks, and take your time casting; you may only have one shot at it.

Once a tripletail notices the hook in your bait, it is not likely to go after it again. If you miss the first shot, make the next cast with a different type of bait. If that also fails, it is time to move on to the next trap and the next fish.

Tripletail might also favor different depths on a given day. If you see one, continue along that same line of buoys. Alternatively, if you aren't finding any, try scooting out to a line of traps in deeper water.

Farther offshore, the hogfish are getting fired up. Hogfish fishing grounds can be difficult to locate and might not appear as anything special on your bottom machine. An experienced captain makes finding them a lot easier. If you choose to go it alone, the following tips might help.

Hogball jigs are essentially weighted balls with a tiny chain leading to a hook. This is a great tool for catching hogfish that can be replicated



with other rigs. The idea is to have the bait lying on the bottom for these scavengers to find.

Shrimp is key to catching hogs, and you can be equally successful with giant live ones or small, stinky defrosted ones. If you choose not to use a hogball, a standard setup with a jighead or a small weight with a short leader will work. The bait should sit on bottom with a little slack. The slack gives hogfish a chance to get the hook in their ridiculous mouths. The bite-to-hookup ratio with hogfish isn't great, so be patient and keep sending down shrimp.

You'll want a landing net when targeting hogfish, as they often come unbuttoned at the surface. They also vary in size, and a net ensures the giant ones get into the boat while the undersized ones are handled gently for release.

Capt. Haddon fishes with Reel Lucky Fishing Charters out of St. Petersburg, Fla. Call or text Capt. Joseph Dephillips to book a charter at (727) 557-7829. Contact Capt. Haddon at QuinlynHaddon@gmail.com and check out catch photos at Instagram@CaptainQuinlyn.



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TAMPA BAY FISHING REPORT

BY: CAPT. WOODY GORE



The Tampa Bay area is genuinely blessed with an abundance of residential canals, back-bay fishing and inshore channels and reefs. So, when it comes to fishing in December, the Bay area anglers are lucky, because they never have to go too far when looking for fish.

The fish seem to acclimate to the lower tides and feed all day with little or no weather concern. Fishing around the grass flats begins heating up, with plenty of good sight fishing. Live baits are occasionally unnecessary, especially with all the artificial lures available in today's arsenal of fishing tackle. If you're looking for larger fish during the colder water months, it can help to take along a few dozen large live shrimp.

If snook is your species of choice, the Bay and its tributaries offer plenty of excellent fishing. There are so many areas that hold this prize, it's hard to take the time to find new ones. However, this coming year, I intend to concentrate on learning new unlikely places for snook. Some great snook fishing is located in your own backyard; just take time to learn the areas.

Red fishing should still be OK with some schools found on the flats and in and around the mangroves looking for food. Find a big school of mullet, and they are usually frequented by schooling redfish. You should be able to find a few big fish in the skinny water, but locating them does require a bit of exploration. On both sides of the Bay, start by looking for healthy, shallow grass flats with narrow cuts and larger sandy potholes. This type of flat can be dissected and studied, particularly during low tides. At times, the water is

Holden and Shannon fished Tampa Bay with Capt. Mark Gore having a great trip. They doubled up several times on big redfish



so low you cannot reach the potholes where redfish stage and feed during low tide. Therefore, you need to find their access lanes for getting back to the deeper holes during low tide. Find these access lanes that funnel water onto and off the flat, and you have an avenue back to the potholes. If you cannot use the same access, because it's too shallow, you can set up an ambush point and be ready when the tide turns to come out. The trick is learning exactly where to be and at what time.

If you can get close enough, simply pull up to the bar and start throwing chum. Live and dead baits will work, but you can also catch plenty of

fish on jigs and jerk baits, for the simple reason that you having the ability to cover more water. A good color preference is new penny, camo and white.

Sea trout fishing has been off the wall this year, especially around deeper rocky bottoms and lush grass flats with sandy potholes. Windy, changing weather and overcast days are a favorite time for avid trout anglers. Live greenbacks, shrimp or artificial lures will do the trick. Early in the morning on the grass flats, a MirrOlure Top Dog Jr. or a MirrOline will produce some excellent sized fish--including the occasional snook or redfish.

Cold fronts should bring the traditionally high winds. As the water temps fall with each passing weather front, the near beach kingfish bite should improve. Tons of bait should bring the kings, Spanish mackerel, bluefish and bonito within a mile or so of the beach and inside the Bay.



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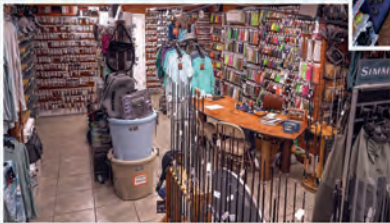
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ST. PETE REPORT

BY: CAPT. ANTHONY CORCELLA



The water temps are dropping and the snook have begun to move to their backwater winter homes. The redfish will get lockjaw after a front, and the trout can be hit or miss on the flats.

You have to adjust your plan, if you want to put a bend in your rod. Luckily, there are options. Some of the biggest negative tides of the year are coming up. This will trap the fish in the potholes and channels. Live shrimp are a best bet and dead bait will work too.

Another best bet is fishing the many residential docks that line the Bay. Sheepshead, black drum, redfish, trout, flounder and snapper will stack up under the docks and can provide nonstop action. The additional bonus is that many of the docks are protected from the harsh northern winds. Again, live shrimp are your best bet. When fishing the docks, pay attention to the direction of the current. Make your presentation in the direction of the flow.

Live shrimp should be free-lined with the addition of a small split shot, if needed.

The final option is targeting sheepshead. As mentioned, they will be found at residential docks, but the hot action will be at area bridges. The Skyway, Dick Misner, Gandy bridges and the St. Pete pier all are famous for both big fish and hot action. Knocker rigged shrimp, both live and dead and cut in pieces, are a popular choice. Fiddler crabs and barnacles also work well. Use the smallest hooks and the lightest line and weights you can get away with. The sheepshead are notorious bait stealers. Sometimes, when you feel the bite, it's too late. That's why they wear stripes. They earned the nickname "convict fish" for a reason.

Just remember, don't let the cold weather keep you at home. If you adjust your game plan, the fishing can be red hot. A good place to buy your tackle is St. Pete fishing outfitters. They have one of the largest selections in the area.

Now it's time to take these tips and get out there and fish!

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TALES FROM THE TUPPERWARE NAVY

BY: BRUCE BUTLER



THE BAIT SNATCHERS

Chug-a-lug... Chug-a-lug. Through the bug makes you want to holler hid-e-ho, Chug-a-lug. God that was awful--almost as bad as being stuck in an elevator with jingle bells by the barking dogs on continuous loop, though not as bad as these last few trying months. Between riots, COVID-19 and elections, this has been almost as much fun as Vietnam! Which, by the way, I didn't enjoy either. I really need to stop writing these things when I've been drinking (writer laughing).

There is a fishing report in here somewhere and, for those of you who didn't figure it out, it's the Chug Bug time of year. Chartreuse and mullet have both been very productive on trout, blues, jacks and, yes, even redfish. This nifty little lure with its familiar glup sound has been my go-to top water for the last few trips to the flats, producing nice size trout and a consistent bite. I've had my best luck with a slow retrieve. I'll give it a good twitch, read a couple of chapters of war and peace, then yank that sucker again. Ok, maybe not that slow, but a slow retrieve seems to be the best. My personal theory is that the trout hear the sound of a fish in distress (the aforementioned glup) and come to see what's for dinner. The slow retrieve gives them time to get there--this ain't rocket science. I'm probably wrong but, as long as it's working, that's my theory and I'm sticking to it.

In our area, I'm seeing lots of sheepies coming in and they can be easily targeted back in the skinny water as they like to feed with their tail up and/or their back out of the water. So, all you have to do is get a shrimp close and wait for the bite. And, as always with sheephead, don't forget to set the hook just before he bites it (just kidding). But, if you've caught sheepies you know they are bait thieves extraordinaire.

The black drum are starting to move back into the creeks and springs, and I look forward to that winter-time bite coming up. Redfish (at least for me) have been spotty. I'm finding them, but the little buggers are making me work for it. Higher tide to the turn of the tide seems to be the best (again at least for me)!

Well, gotta go work on my Christmas list and see if I can get anybody to even check it once. That cologne made from menhaden oil last year wasn't exactly what I was hoping for, but the cat seems to like it! Merry Christmas, and see you next year.

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HERNANDO COUNTY

BY: CAPT. JOEL GANT



Ok fishheads, now that turkey day is over and we all put on at least five pounds, it's time to get back to some serious fishing. Even with the wind and dirty waters, fishing in November was good. December should continue to have some really good fishing. Fish know the winter and cold weather is coming, so they will be doing the same thing we did on Thanksgiving--fattening up. What does this mean for us anglers you ask? Great fishing from inshore to offshore. Anglers will be able to target resident and migrating fish.



fighting fish. We have also been catching some nice Cobia, so always have a quick pitch rod ready.

Inshore fishing is still going strong. The sea trout are moving into the shallow flats. That means, it's one of the best times to catch a big gator trout. Start early in the morning and look for trout in the 3 to 10 feet grass flats with spotty sand patches. I like to drift these flats with a ¼ oz jig and either a 3-inch Gulp shrimp or a live select shrimp. Once you get a bite, try to work that area, trout school up and you can catch many in an area. If the ones you catch are small, move to another area. I have found that trout seem to school in size--move a little and you may up size the school. Look for redfish and snook in the backcountry along the warmer oyster beds, rocky areas and the mangroves. Look for moving water and structure. Both are key to finding these fish.

Gag grouper fishing has been the hottest. With the Gulf temperature cooling off, we have been catching the gags in anywhere from 8 to 30 feet of water. The tackle we use is a very stout rod with at least 60-pound mono, anywhere from a 2 to 6-ounce lead weight and a 7/0 circle hook. The baits of choice are frozen threadfin, cut mullet or live bait like pinfish, grunts or sand perch. Just remember the regulations; two per person and the size has to be at least 24 inches to the end of the tail. On my charters and hearing from other fishermen, a lot of grouper are being missed. I can't explain enough about how to be ready for the hit from a grouper when bottom fishing. You must use circle hooks when reef fishing. So, when you first feel the bite, slowly reel until you feel the fish. When the grouper starts to pull, reel for all you're worth, then lift the rod (if you can) and continue to reel. The first thing a grouper will do when hooked is try to run into the rocks for cover. With that said, you have to be quick on moving the fish off the bottom. Again, reel, do not set the hook bass master style or you'll lose a lot of fish. Also, the season closes December 31st. Even after the season closes, catching and releasing is still a blast with these very hard

I'm always looking for reports and pictures. From the Fishdaddy family to yours, we hope you have a safe, great holiday and better New Year. Thanks for reading my articles for the past six years. And, thanks for this great "free" magazine.

Get out there on the water and make some memories with friends and family!

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	AM	ft	PM	ft	AM	ft	PM	ft	Rise	Set	Moon
1 Tue	12:46	2.5	4:12	1.4	8:49	-0.4	6:55	1.3	7:03	5:36	☉
2 Wed	1:18	2.5	4:59	1.3	9:27	-0.4	7:18	1.3	7:04	5:36	☉
3 Thu	1:55	2.5			10:10	-0.4			7:04	5:36	☉
4 Fri	2:37	2.4			10:58	-0.4			7:05	5:36	☉
5 Sat	3:26	2.3	7:41	1.3	11:50	-0.3	10:02	1.3	7:06	5:36	☉
6 Sun	4:26	2.1	8:18	1.4	12:45P	-0.2	11:59	1.2	7:06	5:36	☉
7 Mon	5:43	1.9	8:50	1.5		1:41	-0.1	7:07	5:36	☉	
8 Tue	7:22	1.7	9:20	1.7	1:52	1.0	2:34	0.1	7:08	5:37	☉
9 Wed	9:08	1.5	9:49	1.9	3:21	0.7	3:22	0.4	7:09	5:37	☉
10 Thu	10:44	1.5	10:18	2.1	4:31	0.3	4:06	0.6	7:09	5:37	☉
11 Fri	12:06P	1.5	10:50	2.3	5:29	-0.1	4:45	0.8	7:10	5:37	☉
12 Sat	1:20P	1.4	11:23	2.4	6:23	-0.5	5:18	1.0	7:10	5:38	☉
13 Sun			2:28	1.4	7:13	-0.7	5:47	1.1	7:11	5:38	☉
14 Mon	12:00	2.6	3:31	1.3	8:02	-0.9	6:14	1.2	7:12	5:38	☉
15 Tue	12:38	2.6	4:32	1.3	8:50	-0.9	6:41	1.2	7:12	5:39	☉
16 Wed	1:20	2.6			9:37	-0.8			7:13	5:39	☉
17 Thu	2:04	2.5			10:23	-0.7			7:14	5:39	☉
18 Fri	2:50	2.3	6:55	1.2	11:09	-0.5	9:14	1.2	7:14	5:40	☉
19 Sat	3:42	2.1	7:28	1.3	11:54	-0.3	10:49	1.1	7:15	5:40	☉
20 Sun	4:42	1.8	7:58	1.4		12:39	-0.1	7:15	5:41	☉	
21 Mon	5:59	1.5	8:28	1.5	12:37	1.0	1:23	0.1	7:16	5:41	☉
22 Tue	7:40	1.3	8:58	1.6	2:19	0.8	2:07	0.3	7:16	5:42	☉
23 Wed	9:27	1.2	9:26	1.7	3:38	0.5	2:50	0.5	7:17	5:42	☉
24 Thu	11:01	1.1	9:54	1.8	4:38	0.2	3:31	0.7	7:17	5:43	☉
25 Fri	12:18P	1.2	10:22	1.9	5:28	-0.1	4:09	0.9	7:17	5:43	☉
26 Sat	1:23P	1.2	10:51	2.0	6:11	-0.3	4:42	1.0	7:18	5:44	☉
27 Sun	2:19P	1.2	11:21	2.1	6:51	-0.5	5:11	1.1	7:18	5:45	☉
28 Mon	3:06P	1.2	11:54	2.2	7:29	-0.6	5:37	1.1	7:19	5:45	☉
29 Tue			3:46	1.2	8:06	-0.7	6:04	1.1	7:19	5:46	☉
30 Wed	12:30	2.3	4:19	1.2	8:42	-0.7	6:37	1.1	7:19	5:47	☉
31 Thu	1:09	2.3	4:47	1.1	9:20	-0.7	7:10	1.0	7:19	5:47	☉

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Date	High				Low				☀		☾
	AM	ft	PM	ft	AM	ft	PM	ft	Rise	Set	Moon
1 Tue	1:23	2.6	4:49	1.6	9:24	-0.5	8:02	1.4	7:03	5:35	☉
2 Wed	1:56	2.6	5:35	1.5	10:01	-0.5	8:38	1.3	7:03	5:35	☉
3 Thu	2:37	2.6	6:20	1.5	10:42	-0.5	9:22	1.3	7:04	5:35	☉
4 Fri	3:22	2.6	7:07	1.5	11:27	-0.5	10:17	1.3	7:05	5:35	☉
5 Sat	4:14	2.4	7:53	1.4	12:16P	-0.4	11:26	1.2	7:06	5:36	☉
6 Sun	5:13	2.2	8:38	1.4		1:09	-0.4	7:06	5:36	☉	
7 Mon	6:25	1.9	9:19	1.5	12:52	1.1	2:05	-0.3	7:07	5:36	☉
8 Tue	7:57	1.6	9:55	1.6	2:28	0.8	3:01	-0.1	7:08	5:36	☉
9 Wed	9:41	1.4	10:28	1.8	3:57	0.5	3:54	0.1	7:08	5:36	☉
10 Thu	11:17	1.4	10:59	2.0	5:09	0.0	4:42	0.4	7:09	5:37	☉
11 Fri	12:39P	1.4	11:30	2.2	6:09	-0.4	5:23	0.6	7:10	5:37	☉
12 Sat			1:51	1.5	7:02	-0.7	6:00	0.9	7:10	5:37	☉
13 Sun	12:01	2.4	2:57	1.5	7:53	-0.9	6:34	1.1	7:11	5:37	☉
14 Mon	12:36	2.6	3:59	1.4	8:43	-1.0	7:09	1.2	7:12	5:38	☉
15 Tue	1:14	2.7	4:56	1.4	9:32	-0.9	7:47	1.2	7:12	5:38	☉
16 Wed	1:56	2.7	5:46	1.4	10:19	-0.9	8:33	1.2	7:13	5:38	☉
17 Thu	2:42	2.6	6:28	1.3	11:04	-0.8	9:30	1.2	7:13	5:39	☉
18 Fri	3:32	2.4	7:04	1.3	11:47	-0.6	10:36	1.1	7:14	5:39	☉
19 Sat	4:25	2.1	7:39	1.3	12:27P	-0.5	11:50	0.9	7:15	5:40	☉
20 Sun	5:24	1.8	8:14	1.4		1:07	-0.3	7:15	5:40	☉	
21 Mon	6:34	1.5	8:49	1.4	1:13	0.7	1:47	-0.1	7:16	5:41	☉
22 Tue	8:03	1.2	9:24	1.5	2:41	0.5	2:31	0.1	7:16	5:41	☉
23 Wed	9:45	1.0	9:58	1.6	4:03	0.2	3:17	0.3	7:16	5:42	☉
24 Thu	11:21	1.0	10:29	1.7	5:09	-0.1	4:03	0.5	7:17	5:42	☉
25 Fri	12:39P	1.1	10:58	1.9	6:02	-0.4	4:47	0.7	7:17	5:43	☉
26 Sat	1:42P	1.2	11:26	2.0	6:48	-0.6	5:27	0.9	7:18	5:43	☉
27 Sun	2:37P	1.3	11:55	2.1	7:29	-0.7	6:03	1.0	7:18	5:44	☉
28 Mon			3:26	1.3	8:08	-0.8	6:36	1.1	7:18	5:45	☉
29 Tue	12:28	2.2	4:10	1.3	8:45	-0.8	7:11	1.1	7:19	5:45	☉
30 Wed	1:05	2.3	4:49	1.3	9:22	-0.8	7:50	1.1	7:19	5:46	☉
31 Thu	1:47	2.4	5:23	1.3	9:59	-0.8	8:30	1.0	7:19	5:47	☉



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1 Tue	12:04	2.9	1:52	2.4	7:30	-0.5	7:19	1.2	7:04	5:36	☉
2 Wed	12:34	2.9	2:28	2.3	8:03	-0.5	7:53	1.2	7:05	5:36	☉
3 Thu	1:07	2.9	3:05	2.3	8:38	-0.5	8:30	1.2	7:06	5:36	☉
4 Fri	1:44	2.9	3:43	2.2	9:16	-0.4	9:11	1.2	7:06	5:36	☉
5 Sat	2:27	2.8	4:25	2.2	9:58	-0.3	10:00	1.2	7:07	5:36	☉
6 Sun	3:18	2.7	5:12	2.2	10:46	-0.1	10:59	1.1	7:08	5:36	☉
7 Mon	4:21	2.5	6:06	2.2	11:41	0.1			7:09	5:36	☉
8 Tue	5:41	2.2	7:06	2.2	12:14	1.0	12:47	0.3	7:09	5:36	☉
9 Wed	7:21	2.1	8:02	2.4	1:38	0.8	1:58	0.5	7:10	5:36	☉
10 Thu	8:55	2.2	8:53	2.6	2:54	-0.3	3:02	0.7	7:11	5:37	☉
11 Fri	10:12	2.3	9:38	2.8	3:59	-0.1	4:00	0.8	7:11	5:37	☉
12 Sat	11:17	2.4	10:22	3.0	4:56	-0.5	4:53	0.9	7:12	5:37	☉
13 Sun	12:12P	2.5	11:04	3.1	5:48	-0.9	5:41	1.0	7:13	5:38	☉
14 Mon	1:01P	2.5	11:46	3.2	6:36	-1.1	6:26	1.0	7:13	5:38	☉
15 Tue			1:47	2.4	7:20	-1.1	7:08	1.0	7:14	5:38	☉
16 Wed	12:28	3.1	2:30	2.3	8:03	-1.0	7:50	1.0	7:14	5:39	☉
17 Thu	1:10	3.0	3:10	2.2	8:45	-0.8	8:33	1.0	7:15	5:39	☉
18 Fri	1:54	2.9	3:48	2.2	9:25	-0.5	9:19	1.0	7:16	5:40	☉
19 Sat	2:41	2.6	4:24	2.1	10:04	-0.2	10:08	0.9	7:16	5:40	☉
20 Sun	3:32	2.4	5:02	2.1	10:43	0.1	11:04	0.9	7:17	5:40	☉
21 Mon	4:29	2.1	5:46	2.1	11:25	0.4			7:17	5:41	☉
22 Tue	5:41	1.8	6:37	2.1	12:11	0.8	12:16	0.7	7:18	5:41	☉
23 Wed	7:17	1.7	7:33	2.2	1:31	0.7	1:18	0.9	7:18	5:42	☉
24 Thu	8:52	1.7	8:24	2.3	2:49	0.5	2:24	1.0	7:18	5:43	☉
25 Fri	10:07	1.8	9:10	2.4	3:51	0.1	3:23	1.1	7:19	5:43	☉
26 Sat	11:05	1.9	9:51	2.5	4:42	-0.1	4:15	1.1	7:19	5:44	☉
27 Sun	11:51	2.1	10:29	2.6	5:25	-0.4	5:02	1.1	7:20	5:44	☉
28 Mon	12:30P	2.1	11:06	2.7	6:04	-0.6	5:45	1.1	7:20	5:45	☉
29 Tue	1:06P	2.2	11:42	2.8	6:40	-0.7	6:24	1.1	7:20	5:46	☉
30 Wed			1:41	2.2	7:14	-0.8	7:02	1.0	7:21	5:46	☉
31 Thu	12:18	2.8	2:15	2.2	7:49	-0.8	7:37	1.0	7:21	5:47	☉

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Date	High				Low				☀		☾
	AM	ft	PM	ft	AM	ft	PM	ft	Rise	Set	Moon
1 Tue	1:00	3.1	2:48	2.6	9:31	-0.5	9:20	1.2	7:07	5:35	☉
2 Wed	1:30	3.1	3:24	2.5	10:04	-0.5	9:54	1.2	7:08	5:35	☉
3 Thu	2:03	3.2	4:01	2.5	10:39	-0.5	10:31	1.2	7:09	5:35	☉
4 Fri	2:40	3.1	4:39	2.4	11:17	-0.4	11:12	1.2	7:10	5:35	☉
5 Sat	3:23	3.0	5:21	2.4	11:59	-0.3			7:10	5:35	☉
6 Sun	4:14	2.9	6:08	2.3	12:01	1.2	12:47	-0.1	7:11	5:35	☉
7 Mon	5:17	2.7	7:02	2.3	1:00	1.1	1:42	0.1	7:12	5:35	☉
8 Tue	6:37	2.4	8:02	2.4	2:15	1.0	2:48	0.3	7:12	5:35	☉
9 Wed	8:17	2.3	8:58	2.6	3:39	0.8	3:59	0.5	7:13	5:35	☉
10 Thu	9:51	2.3	9:49	2.8	4:55	0.3	5:03	0.7	7:14	5:36	☉
11 Fri	11:08	2.5	10:34	3.0	6:00	-0.1	6:01	0.8	7:14	5:36	☉
12 Sat	12:13P	2.6	11:18	3.2	6:57	-0.5	6:54	0.9	7:15	5:36	☉
13 Sun			1:08	2.7	7:49	-0.9	7:42	1.0	7:16	5:36	☉
14 Mon	12:00	3.3	1:57	2.7	8:37	-1.1	8:27	1.0	7:16	5:37	☉
15 Tue	12:42	3.4	2:43	2.6	9:21	-1.1	9:09	1.0	7:17	5:37	☉
16 Wed	1:24	3.4	3:26	2.5	10:04	-1.0	9:51	1.0	7:18	5:38	☉
17 Thu	2:06	3.3	4:06	2.4	10:46	-0.8	10:34	1.0	7:18	5:38	☉
18 Fri	2:50	3.1	4:44	2.3	11:26	-0.5	11:20	1.0	7:19	5:38	☉
19 Sat	3:37	2.8	5:20	2.3			12:05	-0.2	7:19	5:39	☉
20 Sun	4:28	2.6	5:58	2.2	12:09	0.9	12:44	0.1	7:20	5:39	☉
21 Mon	5:25	2.2	6:42	2.2	1:05	0.9	1:26	0.4	7:20	5:40	☉
22 Tue	6:37	2.0	7:33	2.3	2:12	0.8	2:17	0.7	7:21	5:40	☉
23 Wed	8:13	1.8	8:29	2.3	3:32	0.7	3:19	0.9	7:21	5:41	☉
24 Thu	9:48	1.8	9:20	2.4	4:50	0.5	4:25	1.0	7:22	5:41	☉
25 Fri	11:03	1.9	10:06	2.6	5:52	0.1	5:24	1.1	7:22	5:42	☉
26 Sat	12:01P	2.1	10:47	2.7	6:43	-0.1	6:16	1.1	7:22	5:43	☉
27 Sun	12:47P	2.2	11:25	2.8	7:26	-0.4	7:03	1.1	7:23	5:43	☉
28 Mon			1:26	2.3	8:05	-0.6	7:46	1.1	7:23	5:44	☉
29 Tue	12:02	2.9	2:02	2.3	8:41	-0.7	8:25	1.1	7:24	5:44	☉
30 Wed	12:38	3.0	2:37	2.4	9:15	-0.8	9:03	1.0	7:24	5:45	☉
31 Thu	1:14	3.0	3:11	2.3	9:50	-0.8	9:38	1.0	7:24	5:46	☉

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CAPT. SERGIO'S CORNER:



December is usually the start-up month for one of my favorite winter species to catch, sheephead (Archosargus probatocephalus). An inshore member of the porgy family, sheephead are a common North American species spanning from Cape Cod down to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. After a long summer, like we have had this year, it is a good break from catching snook, redfish and trout. I look forward to catching these thieves, often called convict fish, because they have a knack of stealing your bait before

you even have a chance to feel the bite.

A sheephead's diet consists of shrimp, fiddlers, small crabs, bloodworms, sand fleas and barnacles. Because of this foraging for crustaceans, sheephead can most frequently be found around docks, bridges and other similar structures. Sheephead are great fighters on light tackle, especially the big females that can range upwards to 12 pounds. These big females migrate in from the Gulf of Mexico to spawn. Based on the water temperature, the females will arrive in early to mid-December and leave around early March.

Where and How to Catch Them: Tackle changes depending on where you are fishing for them. Around bridges and docks, use medium spinning tackle, 15-pound test braid line and 25-pound test fluorocarbon leader with

a #1 hook. Fish that hang around these areas tend to be smaller, and most are males in the 1 to 3-pound class. The big females prefer the deeper waters of the Bay, hanging around the ledges, wrecks and rock piles in anywhere from 12 to 30 feet of water. They average in size from 4 to 12 pounds. Here I prefer to use heavier tackle like a 7-foot rod medium heavy action and a larger spinning reel with 20-pound test braid line and 25-pound test fluorocarbon leader tied with a loop knot to a 1/0 hook. I use a Texas rig where the sinker slides on the leader just ahead of the hook. I also use a small glow soft bead, because this keeps the sinker from hitting the knot and the glow beads seem to draw the attention of the larger fish. The weight is based on the depth and tidal movement. I start with 3/8-ounce and may go as heavy as 1-ounce. The lighter the weight, the easier it is to feel the bite. If there is not enough weight used, your bait could drift from the bottom, therefore, making it harder for the sheephead to find it.

Things to Remember:

- Check your hooks often. The sheephead teeth tend to break the circle hooks at the bend or tip.
- Avoid soft tip rods. You need pressure on them to set the hook.
- Keep your rod tip almost touching the water when fishing from a boat
- No slack in the line or you will not feel the bite.
- Avoid large baits--they have small mouths.
- Replace or sharpen the hook often.
- When fishing under a bridge or along seawall, scrape the barnacles. This creates a chum slick, drawing sheephead to the source of food.
- Always have the point of the hook exposed.



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BY: CAPT. SERGIO ATANES



Tackle:



- Okuma 7-foot medium and medium heavy spinning rods.
- Okuma Helios 30 saltwater spinning reels.
- Fins braid line 15 and 20-pound test. I prefer green or black line for sheepshead fishing.
- OHERO 25-pound fluorocarbon leader. The leader should be at least 30-inches long.
- OHERO #1 or 1/0 circle hooks. Three most important things to look for in a hook is strength, size and sharpness.

Favorite Baits:

Live shrimp, fresh dead shrimp, fiddler crabs, bloodworms and sand fleas all work. Fiddlers and sand fleas work best, but lack of time on my part to catch them drops them down to second best after live shrimp and bloodworms. Since sheepshead are bait stealers, regular shrimp works best. Do not waste money on medium or large shrimp, it is just more bait for them to steal. If you want to use artificial baits, try Fishbites strips in either sand flea or shrimp flavor.

Fishing for the thieves of Tampa Bay is a fun and rewarding experience. Hooking and fighting an 8 or 10-pound sheepshead will put a big smile on your face. And, if you have kids, they will love the experience.

Captain Sergio Atanes is a native resident of Tampa and has been fishing the water of Tampa Bay and Boca Grande for over 40 years. Host of TV and Radio Show Fishing Adventures USA. Capt. Sergio Atanes can be reached at (813) 973-7132 | atanes@msn.com www.reelfishy.com



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PASCO COUNTY

BY: CAPT. BOBBY CARROLL



This is my favorite time of year to fish! You can't beat the winter negative tides. This time of year, you can consistently target black drum, sheepshead, flounder and mangrove snapper. The reason I mention those species in this article is that they are all legal to keep and take home for a meal! Be sure and check www.myfwc.com for size and bag limits. We have all struggled with having to throw back our three favorite inshore fish with this continued closure. But, now you have a great chance at bringing home some good meat!

Fishing the negative tides can be very rewarding. Whether it's wading, yaking or using the trolling motor on your boat, try to get to the deeper pockets an hour or two before the outgoing tide stops. You will find all these different species set up in the deeper pockets.

I prefer shrimp, cut ladyfish and fiddler crabs for bait. Black drum and sheepshead are my two favorites to go after. If you're in a deeper pocket, use a 1/0 to 2/0 hook with a split shot or two to get your bait down. If the fish are there, it will almost be a guaranteed hit! If the current is moving too fast, just free-line your bait and wait for the bite!

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SKINNY WATER REPORT

BY: DERICK BURGOS & NATALIE MANRIQUE



bass and they are plentiful, even in your own backyard.

Over hanging trees, brush, cattails and structure are the areas we tend to target during this time of year. These areas hold warmth and protection where the bass and fish want to reside most of the day.

Shiners, soft plastics and deeper running lures are great to entice a bass of nominal size to eat. They are lazy and a bit lethargic, so an easy meal is ideal. Baitfish and critters will perform nicely for a slow-moving bass. All you have to do is flip it and twitch it! This will definitely produce a great fishing experience

With the winds gusting and making it tough to get good conditions to be on the water, we've gone back to our roots with good old-fashioned pond hopping for big largemouth bass, mudfish and everything in between.

Pond hopping was something we enjoyed as kids throughout our years living in Florida. Florida has the perfect conditions for catching

riance from any bank of the multitude of ponds, lakes and rivers you can find. So, get out and bring the family for a memorable trip. Good vibes & tight lines always!

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Florida West Coast Fishing Report



SOUTH SHORE TAMPA BAY REPORT

BY: CAPT. CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR



Sheepshead have made their way into Tampa Bay. They are well known for their dominant presence during the winter months and, historically, peak in numbers in February. They can be found at any of the Tampa Bay bridges, docks, seawalls and jetties. I always head to my favorite mangrove snapper spots this time of year to find them. Sheepshead desire the same structure and environment as mangrove snapper. Most of the time, when fishing these areas, you will catch more sheepshead than snapper because of their great numbers during these months.

Choice baits to use are live shrimp and fiddler crabs. These baits should be presented on a size 1/0 hook free-lined, or with a split shot. Or, use your favorite 1/8 to 1/4-ounce jig-head. Where there is one, there are a bunch. Keeping count is important when catching these guys, because you can fill a cooler quick when the bite is right.

Another species to target this month are spotted seatrout. These hungry shallow water predators can be found stacked up anywhere that has a drop in depth adjacent to a sandbar, or sandy patches and potholes on grass flats. Take advantage of the mild water temperatures, as the fish are more active. The baits I use for spotted seatrout are scaled sardines and live shrimp. Both baits are presented on a size 1/0 hook free-lined. You can sight cast or drift fish these baits. Livingston Lures Schoolmaster or Highwater Lures "Get em Shad" are my top choice artificials to use, if you desire to cover a large area in a small amount of time.

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RIVERS TO BAY REPORT

BY: CAPT. JOHN RIVERS



December fishing in Tampa Bay is so much fun because of the diversity of our fishery. You can wade fish the flats stalking redfish and trout or you can head up into the rivers in search of snook.

When I'm red fishing on the flats, I'll use soft plastics such as a four-inch paddle tail. I like a bait called Matrix Shad (www.matrixshad.com) which comes in a variety of colors and rigged on either a 1/8 or 1/4-ounce jig head. Two of my go to colors on the flats are Ultra Violet and Magneto--I've caught many redfish, trout and snook on these two colors. However, I usually bring a couple of darker colors just in case the fish are wanting something different that day.

Bait can be tougher to find in December. Sometimes it's on the markers and sometimes it's not--you just never know. That also goes for the Skyway Bridge, so bringing a live well of frisky shrimp is a must in December in Tampa Bay. I also bring a small bag of frozen cut thread fin for snook and redfish because, during the winter months, snooks' metabolism slows down and they

don't chase down bait as much but, will sometimes ease over and pick up a small piece of cut bait for a quick meal--it's always good to be prepared.

I will typically have a live-well full of frisky shrimp for the sheephead and other species, if I've been having trouble finding the bait. But, I really enjoy tossing artificials, and December is a great time to do that. The nice thing about wintertime fishing is that you don't have to start out at day-light. Sometimes, it's actually better to let the sun heat things up, which is when the fish become more active.

The sheephead love the cooler temps, but just make sure you have moving water. I like the first two hours of either the outgoing or incoming tides. Again, pursue snook up in the rivers. If you bring a live well of pilchards, you'll keep the rod bent all day. Lastly, stop off at a few docks for the reds.

They may be looking for a free meal to get them through the holidays.

Before the year ends, take a few days off from the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and go splash the boat.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Tight Lines.

Captain John Rivers www.tampabayinshoreguides.com
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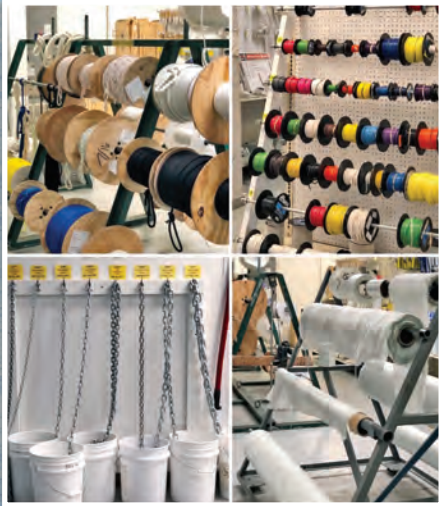
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"Our top priority is to reunite the industry together safely. Our team is committed to creating a live experience where we can safely and effectively conduct business," said Roy Turner, Surf Expo Show Director and SVP.

Bluewater at Surf Expo caters to the waterman's lifestyle and will feature top fishing apparel and accessory brands, including: AFTCO, AVID, Bimini Bay, Fish Hard Gear, What the Fin, Flomotion, Hook & Tackle, Weekender, Kanga and more. As the Premier Watersports & Beach Lifestyle Marketplace serving manufacturers and buyers in the watersports, beach and resort industries since 1976, Surf Expo's January event has cemented its reputation as the one-stop-shop to preview and get a first-hand look at the latest and greatest fishing apparel and accessories that will lead the industry in 2021.

Features of the show will include the Bluewater Lounge, plus fashion shows, live seminars, the Surf Expo Industry Party and happy hours.

Surf Expo has in place a comprehensive preparedness, prevention and response plan, based on guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and federal, state, and local governments. More information can be found on surfexpo.com.

Registration is free for qualified retailers. For more information contact steven.fisher@surfexpo.com or visit www.surfexpo.com.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF CONTROLLED DESCENT LURES

Targeting Trophy Seatrout

By Capt. Michael Okruhlik

Do trophy seatrout excite you? They definitely excite me, and I will go over the events that led to the catch and release of the 8-pound trout in this photo. Perhaps something in the approach will help you hook-up with more true trophies.

On this particular December trip, I set out specifically target large trout. To consistently catch trout over 7 pounds, you must target them. They don't behave like schooling-size trout, and you need to fish a little differently and have patience.

This trip was a few days after a cold front, and the air and water had begun to warm. Being late fall, the tide had not dropped drastically, as it does when winter takes grip on the bay and chills and lowers the water significantly. This area was a soft bottom covered with grass and scattered potholes. My feet would sink half way up my foot and occasionally ankle deep. The water was very clear, and the wind was blowing into the shore. The mud bottom combined with clear shallow water made this the ideal location for the water to be a few degrees warmer than the surrounding area. The entire area was not more than 1 1/2 to 2 feet deep.

This shore also had the key ingredient, active bait in the form of mullet. Due to the depth of the water and the abundance of sea grass, my lure needed to be weedless. This ruled out big trout lures with treble hooks. Even a modified dangling single hook would foul with a few cranks of the reel. There was also floating grass to contend with, and my single-hook topwaters were not enticing strikes, despite all the fishy signs being there.

Since the water temp was cool and the fish somewhat lethargic, I slowed my approach and presentation. Rigging a slow-sinking soft-plastic paddletail on a 1/16-ounce weedless weighted hook gave the desired presentation. The action I utilized was as simple as it gets, and one that is frequently overlooked.

Long casts were key due to the clear water and wary eyes of larger trout. Fan casting to cover 180 degrees ensured I did not miss any opportunities. This also allowed me to bring my lure through the cover at differing angles in relation to the wind, current and sun angle. The retrieve was a simple reel and pause. A few cranks of the reel handle fluttered the paddletail; a pause allowed the lure to slowly descend from a few inches under the surface to the top of the grass or sand if it was over a pothole. All of the fish that day struck the lure on the pause.

When it comes to tricking a trophy, sometimes it requires a different approach. The angler willing to think outside the box and concentrate on big trout will be rewarded.

Capt. Michael Okruhlik is the inventor of Knockin Tail Lures with the built-in tail rattle, Controlled Descent Lures and owner of www.MyCoastOutdoors.com



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THE HIGHER THE SUN, THE DEEPER THE BITE

TIM BAREFOOT



We've all experienced the mid-day slowdown, when a hot morning bite tapers off into nothing more than a boat ride.

There's a pretty simple explanation for this lull after the early morning feeding period. It's right above our heads; it's the sun! Fish don't have Maui Jims... or even eyelids. Anything with a big eye, like wahoo or tuna, uses water depth to regulate the amount of light that reaches them.

The fish haven't stopped feeding. They've retreated to depths where they are more comfortable. It's the reason why the planer rod is many times the only rod working during the middle of the day. That rod is attached to the only bait you've got down deep.

There's no rule that says you have to use ballyhoo and/or keep the trolling speed at 6 or 7 knots. Here's a little tip I learned from another captain that has proven deadly during the mid-day lull.

Try this on for size:

Slow down significantly and put a couple big natural baits down on a downrigger. Ballyhoo are the trolling bait of choice for good reason. Ballyhoo are responsible for more trolling fish than all other baits combined. They are not, however, a naturally occurring baitfish everywhere. You know what is a natural forage item everywhere?

Squid! It is the bait that is down deep where the fish are, and it is a bait they eat. I've said it many times, "Don't go to a Chinese restaurant and order a pizza." Well, squid are like General Tso's chicken when fish dive to escape the glaring sun.

On the downrigger with release clips, set one squid at 50 feet and another at 100 feet deep. One or both of them are all but certain to get a bite. Catching fish while all the other boats are just riding is



PHOTO BY JED RECORD

fun, and another thing I like about this style of fishing is it lightens up the tackle considerably. Instead of winching a wahoo to the boat on the planer rod, you can use your stand-up tackle very effectively.

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See more from Tim Barefoot as well as the Squid on a Chin Weight video at BAREFOOTCATSANDTACKLE.COM

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LIFE IS A BEACH

By Richard Matteson

Surf Casting Against The Wind

One factor to consider when surf casting is the wind. Recent tropical storms and weather conditions have made fishing on the beach difficult. The winter months at the beach are notoriously windy; so what do you do?

There are a couple strategies. If there's an easterly wind, with the wind in your face, it makes casting harder, so you need heavier weight. I usually use a 3/8-ounce jig or a 3/4-ounce spoon, but against a strong wind I'll add weight and go with a 1/2-ounce to 3/4-ounce jig or a 2-ounce Crocodile spoon.

If the breakers are 150 yards out and the water is churning, you need to reach the cut where the fish are. On low tide, sometimes you need to get in the water and get wet. The fish are not able to feed in the trough near the shore, and you need to get your lure out to them. In rough water, I favor a slow, steady retrieve because the fish have a hard time finding your lure in the churning froth. Unless you see bait and feeding fish, keep the lure near the bottom and work it slowly.

Remember, no matter the weather, fish are there and they are feeding... maybe just a little farther from the first cut. Here on the Treasure Coast, there are always plenty of snook on the beach, and they get shallow no matter the weather. Until the water temperature drops to the mid-70s there will be snook action. The coldwater fish like bluefish, pompano, mackerel and jack are active all winter long and can be taken on jigs in the surf. Pompano like deeper water, so casting for them in the ocean is impractical. Fishing the bridges in the Indian River Lagoon is much easier.

Around the inlets (Ft. Pierce; St. Lucie; Jupiter) there are places you can fish where you don't have to cast directly into the wind. When you go around the bend at Bathtub Beach, you can get the wind out of your face and have it on your left side and eventually at your back as you go around the bend.

Remember, the lagoon is accessible in heavy wind, and any 20 mph wind, whether east or west, can be fished by fishing the side with the wind at your back. There are also protected areas like bridges and coves. You can fish these when there's a mostly north or south wind.

Put on your waders and fish the side of the lagoon with the wind mostly to your back. As always, fish the rising and falling tides and find places in the lagoon where the wind isn't so strong.

Don't let the wind keep you off the water. Tighten up your hat and go fishing!

For more information about the Stuart Rod and Reel Club,
visit stuartrodandreelclub.com or call (336) 414-3440.

FLORIDA SEATROUT SEASONS

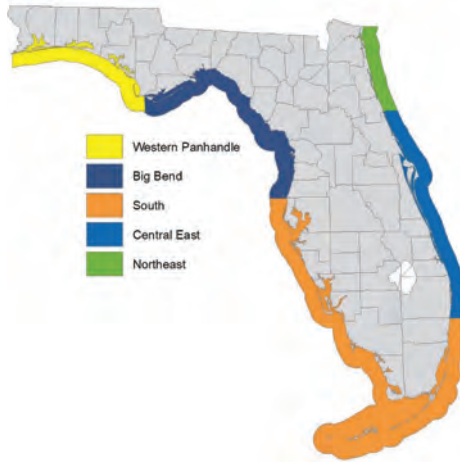
Some recreational harvest closures for spotted seatrout are coming up over the next few months in Florida.

In the Central East Zone, harvest closed in November and will remain closed through December. This includes all state and federal waters from Palm Beach through Volusia counties.

In the Western Panhandle Zone, from Escambia County through portions of Gulf County, harvest will close for the month of February 2021.

Spotted seatrout, red drum and snook remain catch-and-release only through May 31, 2021 in waters from the Hernando/Pasco county line south through Gordon Pass in Collier County. This is a proactive change to conserve spotted seatrout impacted by red tide in southwest Florida. While the red tide has subsided, the fishery needs time to recover.

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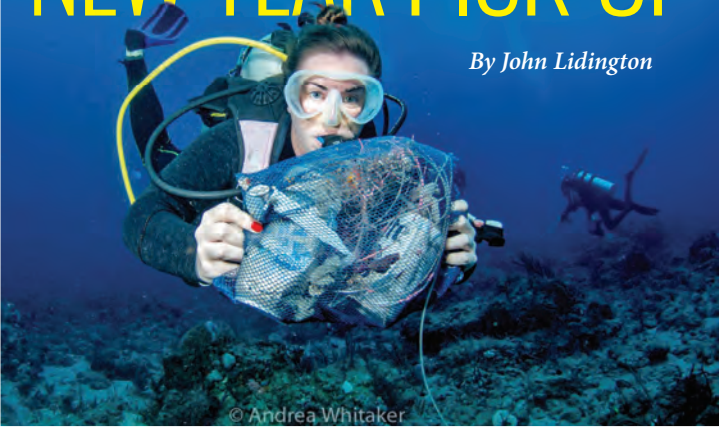
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NEW YEAR PICK-UP

By John Lidington



© Andrea Whitaker

The year is winding down. Holiday season is here—a time for giving gifts and making resolutions. It would be great to tap into this spirit and close out this covid-marred year on a high note. I'd like to offer a suggestion to all you divers out there about how to do just that.

Since mid-year, as covid restrictions began to ease, the South Florida dive industry has been working hard toward recovery. Many changes have been made to address health concerns, and most dive operators are up and running. If you live near good diving, a resolution to “dive local” will certainly speed their recovery.

As you familiarize yourself with local sites, consider making a second resolution. Try adding a volunteer “citizen science” component to your diving! There are many ways you can do this, but what could be better than channeling your efforts into improving your diving environment?

Since 2011, Project Aware has been running its noteworthy Dive against Debris program. Eight million tons of trash enter the ocean each

year, with upwards of 70 percent of that ending up on the bottom. Out of sight, out of mind. But that's where most SCUBA divers spend their time, so who better to enlist as volunteers in addressing the problem?

This unique program not only runs underwater clean-ups, but also carefully catalogs the “what, when and where” of everything collected. Its results are impressive. Although the covid outbreak has disrupted both the collection and recording of data, the program is currently closing in on 2-million pieces of debris retrieved globally—quite a feat for an all-volunteer effort.

The heavy emphasis on collecting data—amount, category, type, location and date—is essential in helping get the problem under control. Identifying patterns at sites over time helps identify potential sources of the offending material—a necessary step in ultimately eliminating, or at least controlling them.

To be useful for scientific analysis, the data must be carefully collected and reported in a consistent manner. Dive Against Debris' website (www.projectaware.org/diveagainstdebris) provides a host of information on what is required.

In Palm Beach County, Pura Vida Divers bundles this helpful information into the PADI Dive Against Debris specialty course. You will learn how to conduct a Dive Against Debris survey and how to identify, report and dispose of what you collect. Then, use that knowledge on more dives! The course even counts toward your Advanced Open Water certification.

To join an upcoming Dive Against Debris class, contact Pura Vida Divers at 561-840-8750 or email reservations@puravidadivers.com.

Even if you don't take the course, Pura Vida Divers commitment to help clean up the ocean can help you with yours. They are the Adopt-A-Park sponsors for Phil Foster Park through Palm Beach County and have adopted the Blue Heron Bridge through Project AWARE. They will loan you gloves, mesh bags and grabbers to do individual clean-ups at the Bridge or on their charters.

For more on the Dive Against Debris program, go to www.projectaware.org/diveagainstdebris.



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Photos by Carol Cassels

Here's what you can do to prevent a torturous death for a pelican that returns to its roost at night, entangled in fishing line.

1. Reel the bird in as you would a trophy fish and lift the pelican with the use of a net or simply grab its beak (they only weigh 4-6 pounds)
2. Put a towel or shirt over its head to keep it calm. Hold the beak, keeping the beak slightly open so it can breathe.
3. Push the hook through its skin until you can see the barb. Cut off the barb and then back the hook out. Be sure to remove all the line and then release the bird.

Sponsored by **Friends of the Pelican, Inc.** More information can be found on Facebook at **Friends of the Pelicans.**



Juvenile Pelicans have a lot to learn in their first year of life. Somewhere around 9-12 weeks, juveniles leave their nest with their first flight. Although adults continue to feed young for some time after they leave the colony, they start learning how to catch fish and hunt on their own. Because of their inexperience, they are likely to fly into fishing line and get hooked or take a hooked bait. Unfortunately, studies show only 30% of all young pelicans will survive their first year and only 2% will live to reach the age of ten years.

Fishing line entanglement is the number one cause of death of Brown Pelicans, but it also kills Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, White Ibis, Little Blue Herons, Double-crested Cormorants and many more. As a fisherman, you will likely come across a tangled bird or accidentally hook one.



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A native of Tangier Island, Va., J.O. Strigle brought the seafood spice blend he created in his kitchen on the island to Maryland.

Jane McPhaul, J.O.'s daughter took over operations of the family business in the late eighties while her son, Don Ports, was serving in the Marine Corps. In 1990 Don joined his mother in the family business with a vision to expand.

In the summer of 1991 Don met his spice girl, Ginger, with the pick up line, "you're destined to be mine; you're named for a spice," said J.O. Spice Company president Don Ports to wife Ginger Ports the moment they met.

Twenty eight years later, Don and Ginger- alongside their children Brittany, Tyler and Bethany, are continuing the family traditions of quality seasonings, spices, and more at reasonable prices at their Halethorpe based J.O. Spice Company.

"We can provide crab houses everything they need for the crab eating experience, minus the crabs", Don says.

The company added crab boxes, crab paper, bushel baskets, crab knives, crab mallets and a variety of other items to their offerings.

"We purchased our first laser engraver and that opened the door to the retail gift world and personalized options," Don says.

J.O. specializes in custom blended seasonings for pizza companies, pit beef stands, butchers, potato chip companies and more. We are more than seafood seasonings.

"My children, the fourth generation, and our amazing team work side-by-side to make all of this happen," Ginger says. "At J.O., we are all family who enjoy working with so many other family businesses. We are blessed."

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BLUE CAT CRUSHES GEORGIA RECORD

A Florida man fishing Georgia's Chattahoochee River caught a 110-pound, 6-ounce blue catfish Oct. 17. The monster blue cat crushed the existing state record by more than 17 pounds.

Tim Trone, of Havana, Fla., was fishing the Chatt Kat tournament out of Florence Marina on the upper end of Lake Eufaula when he caught the monster fish. He had run way up the river south of Columbus, Ga., and dropped baits in about 50 feet of water when the giant catfish picked up a piece of cut bream Trone was using for bait.

Surprisingly, the fish didn't put up much of a fight.

"I reeled it up like a 100-pound log," Trone told a reporter from the Tallahassee Democrat. "It was just a little bump. It took about three minutes to reel it in."

Trone's blue catfish bested the previous record of 93 pounds, which has stood since 2017. That fish was caught on the Altamaha River in southeast Georgia.

The current IGFA all-tackle world record weighed 143 pounds. It was caught on Virginia's Kerr Lake.

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250 Lumen Pop-Up Lantern

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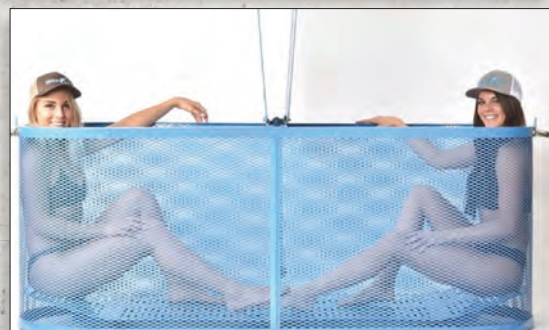
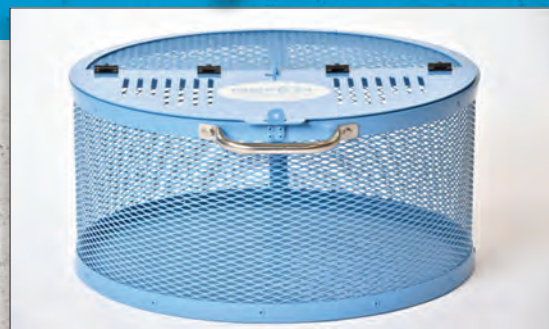
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