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Vol. XII • Issue 9



Caveman and Christine with a Blackfin Tuna caught with Capt. Joe Petrucco from Fiesta Key Marina at MM70.

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Volume XII, Issue 9

January 20th, 2010

“UNITED WE FISH” – Fisherman to March on Washington on Feb. 24th . . .

In a historic show of solidarity, recreational and commercial fishermen will gather together on the steps of the Capitol on February 24, 2010 from noon until 3 p.m. in an organized demonstration against the unintended negative impacts of the Magnuson Stevens Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the federal fisheries law which was revised in January of 2007. Coordinating the march under the flag of **United We Fish**, rally organizers are hoping to see a large show of force in defense of coastal communities.

The **Recreational Fishing Alliance** is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. RFA’s Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our nation’s saltwater fisheries.

For more information, call 888-JOIN-RFA.

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Fishing Report

Captain Aaron Brower
 Holiday Isle Marina, Islamorada
www.killerwhite.com
 (305) 522-0374

Capt. Aaron Brower Islamorada Offshore

Hello fisherman! Well, most of us have survived the freeze of 2010 and now the weather is turning back to normal. Unfortunately, not a lot of fish survived, especially in the backcountry. On our return to the dock through the Whale Harbor channel Sunday afternoon there was a steady flow of upside down floating fish, on the outgoing tide. I have heard from the backcountry guys that it is pretty depressing. The cold water even affected the ocean side of things as I heard of floating mutton snapper and grouper.

The offshore fishing is still producing great bites of Sailfish as they have been steadily moving through, which was clearly evident in the Key Largo Sailfish Challenge this weekend. Capt. Brian Cone on the *Contagious* went 17 for 17 on Saturday, which is almost unheard of. Not necessarily the number of fish, but the fact that they didn't lose one

fish they hooked up. The wind changed directions on Sunday and the front started to move in and the bite slowed down. However, they still managed to catch four more fish to stay in the lead. Congratulations to the *Contagious* on their win. Thanks again to Tammy, her crew and sponsors for another well-run tournament.

We have also been catching a few Mahi Mahi moving along the edge of the reef, especially with the push from the hard east and southeast wind that always seems to push a few closer to shore. Usually they are singles, but occasionally you can find small schools of five or more.

The Kingfish bite this week was nonstop action whether you used live bait or dead bait, it seemed everyone was able to obtain their limit. These guys were in the range of 8lb to 40lb fish and are very toothy guys, so you want to use wire. If you start out with heavy wire and notice you're not getting good bites lighten the wire and use smaller hooks and see if that doesn't help things.

The water on the edge of the reef dirtied up with these heavy winds over the week and as the water warms back up it makes the Yellowtail Snapper bite go off. If you get an opportunity to fish this week give those shallow water patch reefs a try. With dirty cloudy water you should see a good variety of fish like Mutton Snapper, Cero Mackerel and Red Grouper along with the Yellowtail and Mangrove Snappers.

Lots of good fishing out there, so get down to the docks, book a charter boat and have fun!

Here's to keeping the rod bent . . .



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Morehead City Fishing Giant Bluefin Hits the Deck After a Long Dry Spell . . .



The fishing has been very slow – there was a nine day period that passed without a bite or a fish caught. Tough to keep positive. We had been sitting for the past five days, with not much to do - hoping a few fish would show up. Then, two days ago Troy on the Maritime gets spooled on a 130! Having him find the fish was very fitting, since he was the first to catch a bluefin this season. Then yesterday a few fish came across the dock. After sitting for so long, that was all it took, just a few fish showing up. We left in the morning and worked our way to the temp break. There was a strong 6 degree break about 25 miles from the inlet. We put our lines in about 6:00am and worked along the break. Everyone was seeing bait - things looked good. We marked one fish with some bait and kept on the bait; on our third pass there he was a stbd rigger bite on a Joe Shute Pink and Crystal. After we cleared our three rods and two planners we were down to a little less than a ¼ spool. It was a good fish (thank you!). We had it alongside in about 45 minutes - the fish rolled and the line was under his peck fin. The rod tip bounced and he was still there. After a few more minutes, we had the dart in him. The fish measured 93' and cored out at 388lbs.

Tight Lines . . . Capt Keith 



Catch and Release Fishing Still Allowed for Snook, Bonefish and Tarpon . . .

While the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently issued an executive order on Jan. 15, which temporarily extends closed harvest seasons for snook statewide and establishes temporary statewide closed harvest seasons for bonefish and tarpon, the FWC advises anglers that catch and release fishing for these important game fish species is still allowed. The FWC appreciates angler support for taking conservation measures that will help protect saltwater fish

Continue >>>




(L) Mike McInerney & (R) Mike Hindman – Bonita & Blackfin Tuna both weighing 12 lbs, caught on Logan Blackburn's boat (*Affinity*) with Capt. Paul Suarez.

Catch and Release . . . cont.

and provide time for the FWC to evaluate the possible impacts to fish populations that may have occurred because of the recent prolonged cold weather event in Florida.

The order, which took effect at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 16, provides that no person may harvest or possess snook in state and federal waters off Florida until September and establishes a temporary prohibition on the harvest and possession of bonefish and tarpon from state and federal waters off Florida through March 31.

The FWC advises anglers that this order only prohibits the harvest or possession of snook, bonefish and tarpon during the closed periods. Anglers may still catch and release these species during these temporary closures, and the FWC encourages everyone to handle and release these fish carefully to help ensure their survival upon release. Information regarding proper handling and release of fish is available online at http://catchandrelease.org/Catch_and_Release_web.pdf.

More information on the FWC's executive order regarding the snook, bonefish and tarpon temporary harvest closures, and information regarding another FWC executive order issued on Jan. 15, which temporarily suspends certain saltwater fishing regulations to allow for the collection and disposal of dead fish killed by cold weather, is available online at MyFWC.com. 

Grouper Fishing to Close in Atlantic and Monroe County State Waters . . .

The recreational and commercial harvest of shallow-water groupers (including gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, and tiger grouper) will close from Jan. 19 through April 30 in all Atlantic Ocean and Monroe County state waters (inside 3 nautical miles from shore).

This closure coincides with a shallow-water grouper closure in effect in Atlantic federal waters adjacent to Florida waters (beyond 3 nautical miles from shore). These closures have been implemented to address overfishing of grouper in the Atlantic.

For more information, including regulations for grouper that apply in Gulf of Mexico waters, go to MyFWC.com/Rules and click on: "Fishing – Saltwater" . . . 

Fishing Report

Capt. Steve Friedman fishes off of Islamorada using primarily fly and light tackle methods. If you would like to fish with Capt. Steve, call (305) 393-3474 or visit www.afishingguide.com steve@afishingguide.com

Capt. Steve Friedman Islamorada

The Florida Bay has certainly taken a big hit with the cold weather. Catfish, Grouper, Snapper, Barracudas, Boxfish, Triggerfish, Eels, Bonefish and Snook have all been adversely affected. Many of these fish can't take the stress of a prolonged deep chill like we recently experienced. The results are apparent daily in the backcountry and even out on the reef. I've personally witnessed a slew of dead Snook, Goliath Grouper, two Tarpon and one Bonefish among scores of baitfish, but not all reports are dire. It seems the Redfish and Black Drum have been spared for the most part. As of this writing, the weather has improved and so has the fishing. While the devastation is evident almost anywhere you travel on the water, there is evidence that the fishery will bounce back quickly, just as it has done in the past.

On the reef, the Sailfish bite has been unbelievable. The Florida Keys Outfitters Annual Sailfly tournament managed to break records with 20 boats catching 18 Sailfish on fly in two days of outstanding fishing. Kudos to Tim and Robert Klein of Islamorada for an amazing victory.

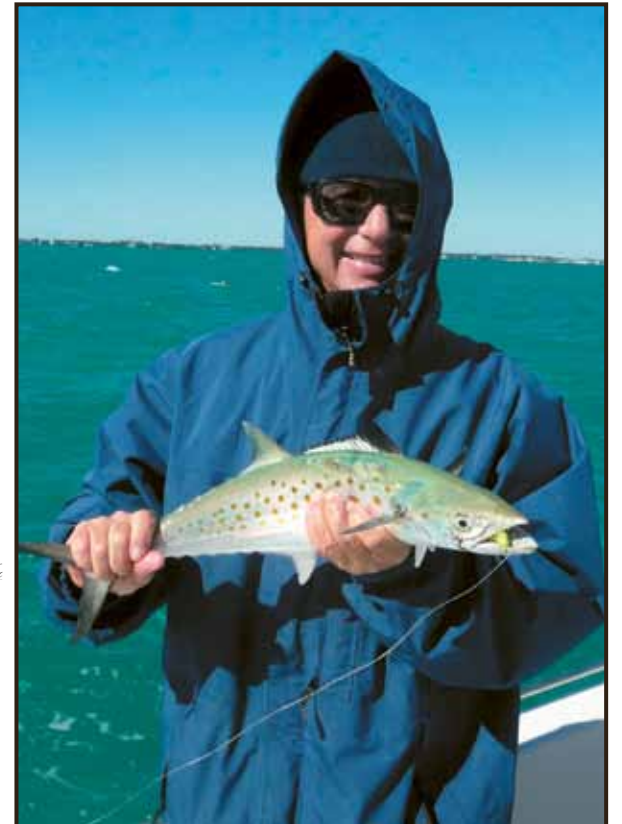
In the backcountry, the action hasn't been quite as furious. At the beginning of the week, the water temperatures were an eye-opening 48 degrees in some areas. When the air temps rose, so did the water back in

the bay, as much as 15 degrees. That's good news for the fish, the bay and for the anglers. While the water becomes more habitable in the deeper channels and runoffs, the flats are still nursing one heck of a hangover. The Sharks, Stingrays and other flats critters are still waiting for the caffeine to kick in before they venture up onto the flats to forage for food. Instead, the fish seem to be holding deep.

You can imagine that with the fish getting lethargic and now probably very hungry, the best methods used were a quarter-ounce jig with a live shrimp bounced slowly off the bottom. When I say slow, I mean that the cast should be made up-current, allowed to sink to the bottom and let it roll along the bottom until the current (or fish) lifts it up off the bottom, then recast. The bites have been very subtle. When you feel a slight tap, don't jerk or set the rod. Increase the speed of the retrieve and come tight. This technique was used to catch some pretty fickle Trout, Redfish and Black Drum this week. The bottom of the tide seemed to be best

until the tide came in and then the bite slowed down again. Sometimes you might have to move the boat slightly or to a totally different region and keep exploring areas where fish should hold. The deeper pockets and channels are holding plenty of fish. Just be sure to cover the area thoroughly and slowly. No bites? Move on. That's what the fish are doing, so should you. 🐟

▶
Light tackle can introduce you to some good-looking fish!



This is a Black Drum caught while fishing with Capt. Steve Friedman.



Ron from Ft. Lauderdale and mate Alex Ross caught this beautiful Sailfish on Sunday off Pickles Reef fishing with Capt. Sanders.

Fishing Report

Capt. Dave Schugar of Sweet Enuf Charters is located at Castaway's Restaurant/Marina in Marathon. If you would like to fish with Capt. Schugar, call (305) 610-4778, or visit: www.sweetenufcharters.com sweetenufcharter@aol.com

Capt. Dave Schugar Marathon

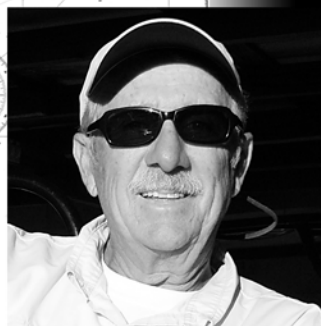


The mercury is climbing up and so are all the anglers. My phone has been ringing off the hook since the weather broke. Massive fish kills all over South Florida. Any fish that didn't make it to deep water died from the temperature change. The water temperature got down to 53 degrees from 70 degrees. There is a temporary closure on most of the inshore species such as snook, tarpon, and bonefish, meaning that you can't fish, possess or take out of the water. Apparently, the Everglades got wiped out to the point that scientists think that almost every fish died. There was a weed line in Hawks Channel a couple of days ago, composed of dead fish stretching as far as I could see. The Keys fishing charters are dependant on those resources. The inshore species have definitely taken a hit, but they will return. Just about every year a red tide hurts the west coast of Florida, but once it clears the fish return.

Fishing Report

This report is brought to you courtesy of Capt. Ron Wagner aboard his boat, the Producer. If you would like to fish with Capt. Ron, please call: (305) 664-2028, or visit: www.captainronwagner.com fishwithcaptron@hotmail.com

Capt. Ron Wagner From the Skiff



There was a lot of conversation going on as I drove in to the Fiesta Key Marina and Campground. The talk of the week here has been the cold temperatures that blew in to our area and seemed to make one think that he was in Canada ice fishing. Coffee sales had to set records.

The loss of inshore fish will be devastating to all of Florida for awhile but nature has a way of coming back, so that in time we will return to a lot of great days on the water. The actual effect of this cold spell has not been determined yet, but the last real bad one to hit the Keys was back in 1977. We were here for that sitting out in front of a tackle shop that we owned watching slight snow flurries hit the ground. Yes, it snowed in Islamorada and although it was barely seen, the temperatures showed 38 in our back yard. Let's hope that with good water quality all will return quite quickly.

On another note the offshore fishing has been on fire. The reef (and beyond) has plenty of fish to bide your time until the shallows heal. The sailfish bite went off this week with many captains getting double digits. The bite has been better up to the east from Tennessee to the west end of Long Key bridge and east of Sombrero Light about two miles. Lots of spraying fish, so those of you with towers take advantage of it, for the rest of us, slow trolling with ballyhoo has been deadly. Big kings and wahoo have also been good, so when live baiting use four to six inches of #5 wire in front of your hook. Don't worry about the sailfish seeing it, they won't. I use an Albright knot from my leader to the wire, but if you don't know how just use a 50-pound swivel. There has been a few big blackfin tuna and one yellowfin tuna from what I heard from a friend. My friend Jay who runs the Sea Scape hotel got himself a nice yellowfin while trolling the edge. This is why fishing can be so much fun, you just never know what's going to bite. Put on some live bait and you can't go wrong.

I have been wreck fishing this week in between the eight footers, which can get dicey when you're backing up into the sea, but we pulled off nice loads of muttons and amberjacks. I found that most of our mutton bites came from split-tailed ballyhoo laid on the bottom, whereas the AJ's just wouldn't leave the live bait alone. Bait was really tough to get, even pinfish were hard to get. Any spot shallower than 25 feet was barren as was the deep water. We were able to get enough bait for the day after about 2 hours of hunting. When this happens I stay out longer to keep the smiles on my client's faces. Working for so many different Captains and boat owners over the years got me thinking – they always got upset with me when I came in late, but now that I own my own boat, I stay out as long as I want.

Good luck everyone and play safe. 

As we look forward to returning to fish, we will have to adjust the ways we go about it. The patch reefs will be first to get a good bite. For those going to the gulf, a little further out will be needed to find the right quarry you may be after. There is no doubt that you will find Mackerel, Bluefish, Cobia, Trout etc. And I believe there will be some huge Redfish schools weighing up to 40 lbs. right up on the surface in about 20 feet of water. Trout will be there too, as they slowly make their way back to the park waters.

You just cannot fish the way you did for awhile, be patient and creative, fish a little slower with more bait and you could reap some very good catches. Some of the folks at the resort had the heat on long enough in their motor homes and travel trailers and were once again revving up the many boats docked here and heading towards the ocean or gulf. This place on the north side of Long Key has been undergoing a great change to accommodate the many tourists that come to see and fish our waters. The location to the fishing grounds is one of the reasons I love it here. The friendly staff is why the Keys have always had such a great reputation for being one of the great destinations for travel and soon the world's best fishing.

If you are finally thawed out and itching to get back in the action, give me a call, I'm ready too.

Have a great day . . . 



Fishing Report

Capt. Greg Eklund owns and operates the CLOUD NINE in Islamorada out of Bud n Mary's Marina. You can reach him at (305) 360-7476, email: cloudninegreg@bellsouth.net, or visit him at: www.islamoradafishingtrips.com



Capt. Greg Eklund Islamorada Offshore

Finally, we have emerged from the grip of Old Man winter and the unusually long cold snap here in Islamorada. This cold weather has created some unique fishing conditions around town. First and foremost in the minds of all of us who fish offshore is the Sailfish bite.

Last week the Islamorada Invitational Sailfry Tournament experienced just how great the Sailfish bite can be off Islamorada. Of the twenty teams that pursued the Sailfish armed with only flies and fly rods thirteen teams caught at least one Sailfish on fly. When the dust settled two local brothers, Tim and Robert Klein, came out on top with four releases to take the top honors aboard the Gotcha. This was a record year for releases in the tournament and it was great to see so many teams have success.

Over the weekend, the Key Largo Sailfish tournament anglers enjoyed a continuation of great Sailfishing. On Saturday, Capt. Brian Cone and

his crew (*Contagious*) released 17 Sailfish to take a commanding lead on their way to the win by the end of fishing on day two. Congratulations to all of the winners during the past week on a job well done. As the new moon waxes this week and the weather stabilizes, we should continue to see great Sailfishing offshore of Islamorada.

Several other species have been chewing the paint off the boats this past week in addition to the Sailfish. Not wanting to be left out, the Cobia continued to be cooperative for many of the local boats. Nice Cobias in the fifty pound range showed up on the docks almost every day last week. This is due in part to the cold weather we have experienced in the first half of January and the large drop in water temperatures on the Gulf side of the Keys. The Cobias migrated en masse to the ocean side of the Keys in search of food and warmer water. Look for this great opportunity to continue this week as there are still good numbers of these fish around.

The King Mackerel bite has been off the chain. While these fish are not exceptionally large, they are huge in numbers and the action has been full tilt everyday now for a week. The Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail bite has been excellent along the patch reef areas and edge of the reef. The cold water temperatures inshore have helped to aggregate these fish and they are really biting well. Include some great Cero Mackerel action and the arrival of several catch and release Groupers and you have an offshore fishing menu that is impossible to resist.

If I can help you put together a trip to get out on the water and into the idle of all of this great fishing action please give me a call at the number above. Have a great week and get out and fish during your visit to the fabulous Florida Keys. 🦞

FWC Responds to Widespread Cold-Weather Saltwater Fish Kills . . .

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has issued executive orders to protect Florida's snook, bonefish and tarpon fisheries from further harm caused by the recent prolonged cold weather in the state, which has caused widespread saltwater fish kills. The FWC has received numerous reports from the public and is taking action to address the conservation needs of affected marine fisheries. The orders also will allow people to legally dispose of dead fish in the water and on the shore.

One of the executive orders temporarily extends closed fishing seasons for snook statewide until September. It also establishes temporary statewide closed seasons for bonefish and tarpon until April because of the prolonged natural cold weather event that caused significant, widespread mortality of saltwater fish in Florida. The other order temporarily suspends certain saltwater fishing regulations to allow people to collect and dispose of dead fish killed by the cold weather.

"A proactive, precautionary approach is warranted to preserve our valuable snook, bonefish and tarpon resources, which are among Florida's premier game fish species," said FWC Chairman Rodney Barreto. "Extending the snook closed season and temporarily closing bonefish and tarpon fishing will protect surviving snook that spawn in the spring and will give our research scientists time to evaluate the extent of damage that was done to snook, bonefish and tarpon stocks during the unusual cold-weather period we recently experienced in Florida."

Snook season currently is closed in Florida under regular FWC rules, and there are also regular closed snook seasons that occur in the summer.

However, the FWC executive order extends the statewide snook closed seasons continuously through Aug. 31 and provides that no person may harvest or possess snook in state and federal waters off Florida during this period unless the fishery is opened sooner or the closure is extended by subsequent order.

The order also establishes a temporary prohibition on the harvest and possession of bonefish and tarpon from state and federal waters off Florida through March 31, unless these fisheries are opened sooner or the closures are extended by subsequent order. The FWC executive order for the snook, bonefish and tarpon closed seasons takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 16.

The other FWC executive order temporarily removes specific harvest regulations for all dead saltwater fish of any species that have died as a result of prolonged exposure to cold weather in Florida waters. It also modifies general methods of taking dead saltwater fish from Florida's shoreline and from the water to allow the collection of saltwater fish by hand, cast net, dip net or seine.

All people taking dead saltwater fish under the provisions of this order may not sell, trade or consume such fish, and the dead fish must immediately be disposed of in compliance with local safety, health and sanitation requirements for such disposal.

In addition, all people taking dead fish under the provisions of this order are not required to possess a saltwater fishing license, and all fish taken under the provisions of this executive order shall be those that have died as a result of prolonged exposure to cold weather.

This FWC executive order takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 16 and will expire at 12:01 a.m. on Feb. 1, unless it is repealed sooner or extended by subsequent order. 🦞

Fishing Report

This report is brought to you by
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Captain Hooks Marina
(305) 743-2444
www.captainhooksmarina.com

James Simcic III Spearfishing

As much as I love spearfishing, sometimes you just can't make it work. This past week was a prime example. Winds in the 20's and temps in the 40's just didn't make for ideal conditions. Some of the strong willed pushed on. Travis Moore of Marathon ended up shooting a 35-pound Cobia on a pole spear. His dive buddy, Bucky Wile, told me that they had a very hard time finding any water clear enough to spear in. But, when they did, it was night and day. Their bag included lots of nice Mangroves and Hogfish along with Travis' trophy Cobia!

Most people weren't as lucky either succumbing to the wind or the cold. Of course, all that means is that you have some time to tune your gear up or scour your favorite dive shops for some bargains. I, for example, went through all my spearguns, replacing bands on some of them and shock cords on others. Sometimes a cold snap is what

it takes to keep me out of the water long enough to do the necessary maintenance on my gear.

If you do have a chance to get out this upcoming week make sure you find some warm water. You can find this warm water by locating the blue water. This "blue water," will have better visibility along with higher temps. The blue water along the gulfstream will hopefully be close to the reef bringing in some of that warmth. Look for nice size Mutton Snapper along with Amberjacks, Kingfish, Cero Mackerel, and some bigger Hogs. For the bigger Muttons, Amberjacks and Kingfish coming through you are going to want to shoot a gun with either a reel or a float line. Both of these will ensure that you don't lose your gun and will increase the odds of landing one of these big fish.

Last spring while free diving the *Thunderbolt*, I noticed many reasons why reels and floatlines are such useful tools for the big game hunter. After we warmed up at a shallow spot, we made our way to the steel

hulled shipwreck in 115 feet of water. It was an amazing day! From the surface you could see the super structure 78 feet below'. My first breath hold put me in the middle of a large school of Amberjack. As I passed up the smaller ones at the top of the school, I found myself just above and behind the largest of the school. I lined up the shot and waited for the perfect moment. With a shot from above and approximately 15' behind, I put the 65" Daryl Wong shaft through the middle of his back

Cont. on pg. 14



29th Annual Islamorada Bartenders Sailfish Open . . .

The 29th Annual Bartenders Sailfish Open kicked off on one of the coldest days on record at the Island Grill. Only the heartiest of Bartenders would fish on Monday the 11th of January. With winds from the north at 15 to 20 knots, temperatures soared into the upper 50's. The fish were not happy campers, either. The morning got off to a slow start – no fish hooked up until 12:54pm. The *High Life* captained by Justin Hopper (fishing for Jimmy Johnson's Big Chill) hooked up a double header. Kenly Turchetti released a Sailfish exactly one hour later. The other fish hooked turned out to be a nice Tuna. While Kenly was fighting her fish, Captain Roy Lindback on the *Tiki* (fishing for Safari Lounge) called in a hook-up. Kim Campbell released her sailfish at 1:38 putting Safari Lounge in the lead. At 2:30 Kim hooked another Sail and released it at 2:33. Tim Swann (also fishing aboard the *Tiki*) was not to be left out. At 3:00 the *Tiki* hooked up again and Tim released it at 3:01. He quickly followed up with another release. This gave the Safari Lounge a commanding lead with four fish. The famous Perpetual Trophy will hang proudly for one year at the Safari Lounge!

The next time you're going out for a drink, make sure to stop and congratulate the island's most resilient of fishing bartenders at the Island Grill, Jimmy Johnson's Big Chill, Ocean View, and Safari Lounge. Tournament director Dianne Harbaugh stated, "If I could only predict the weather, we would have postponed the tournament to the following week. It's 20/20 hindsight."



1st Place Bartender - L-R
Captain Roy Lindback,
Tournament Director Dianne
Harbaugh, Kim Campbell,
◀ Spanky and Jack.

1st Place Bar
▼ The Safari Lounge!

2nd place Bartender
L-R Dianne Harbaugh,
Kenly Truchetti,
▼ Justin Hopper.



The Island Grill hosted the tired, shivering anglers for a fabulous awards ceremony. In the end, a good time was had by all who braved the cold. Next year, we know the weather will be better and we look forward to a very special bash for the 30th Annual Event. 🐟



Capt. Dave Schugar (*Sweet e'Nuf Charters*) with a spectacular day dealing with tail dancers.



The love of fishing starts early! Cody Brower (here with Sky Stanley) catches a Barracuda aboard his Dad's charter boat *Killer White*.



30lb Black Grouper caught aboard the *Fin Razer*, by Scott Jacobs visiting from Iowa (Mate Alex Ross).



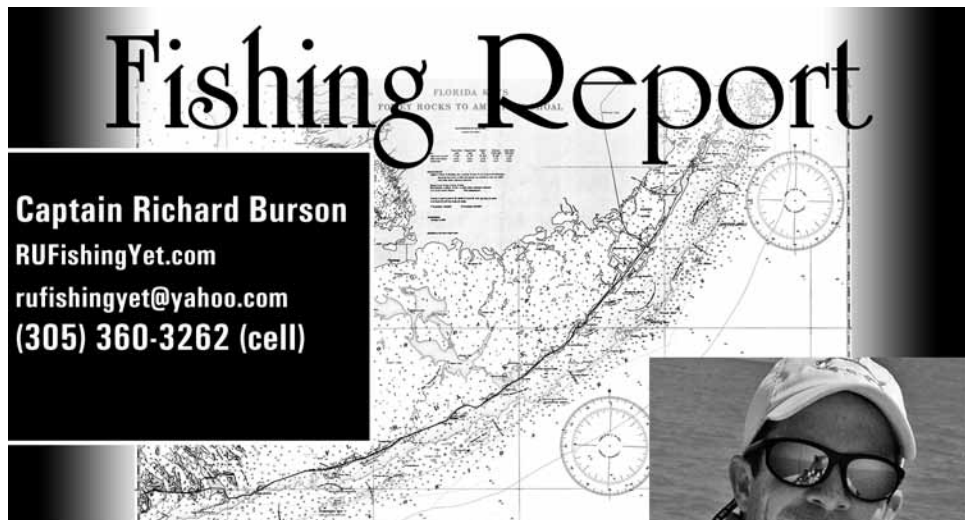
(R) Greg Petty (Kalamazoo, MI) caught the last of a Sailfish 4 hitter while fishing on the *Restless Too* with Capt. Robert Mathias from Whale Harbor Marina. Greg noted it was the largest fish he has ever caught!



Dave Schwartz (Edgewater, MD) who fished with his Dad, Howard Schwartz (Key West) with Capt. Paul D'Antoni (*Seize The Day Charters*) out of Garrison Bight Marina, Key West.



This is Tim and Will Votapka (Kildeer, IL) with another great catch aboard the *Fish Tales* out of Whale Harbor Marina MM 83.



Fishing Report

Captain Richard Burson
 RUFishingYet.com
 rufishingyet@yahoo.com
 (305) 360-3262 (cell)

Capt. Richard Burson Key Largo Backcountry

Brrrrrr is the only word to describe the last week here in the Florida Keys. South Florida natives were easy to distinguish from the tourists because we were wearing scarves and mittens with a heavy winter jacket! I have lived here all my life and I have never seen it this cold! As I sat in my house I worried about my beloved game fish trying to stay warm. Well I could not bear the wait any longer and ventured out to see for myself. I have to say what I saw was hard to imagine but I know that it could have been much worse!

As I moved closer to the shallow waters there was not much life to be seen. A few fish had not made it but most seem to have taken refuge somewhere warmer. As the days passed it seemed to have gotten colder and I began to receive calls from fellow guides reporting there were

more fish that had not made it through the cold. A large knot started to tighten in my stomach and again my worries set in. My wife tried to calm me as she is well versed about the environment and adaptations animals make for survival. Even through her reassurances I could not take the suspense any longer and again I ventured out to see for myself. The report was a little more somber then my first visit but not as devastating as I was hearing. Yes, fish kill was definitely evident and concerning but there were signs of life and I was able to entice a few redfish to the boat! I got back to my dock at the World Wide Sportsman feeling a bit better.

As days passed the reports were uplifting. In the backcountry Redfish, Black Drum, and Sheep head were biting. In addition, on the reef, Mangrove Snappers and Mackerel were biting also. Thank goodness is all I have to say! I do believe it will get better day by day as the waters warm. It has been a while since the fish have had a good meal so I am sure to be taking my clients soon. I have pushed a few perspective clients off until the waters warmed a few more degrees. I would rather not take them out if I know that their success is diminished by the cooler temperatures. The worst thing guides can do is to take new clients out on the water without informing them that their success is limited due to the record breaking cold.

Next week the report is expected to be much better and I certainly hope you are on the water catching the fish that are believed to be very willing to bite. Keep in close contact with your chosen guide and be flexible with your dates because they will certainly do their very best to inform you of the best time to target your specific game fish. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I will help you choose a great guide for a spectacular day on the water!

Until next time ask yourself this one question . . .

Are you fishing yet? If not, give me a call! 



Fishing Report

Captain Nick Borraccino
 Noreaster Sport Fishing
 NoreasterSportFishing.com
 (508) 769-4189

Capt. Nick Borraccino Marathon

After two weeks I've finally traded in my jeans and sweatshirt for shorts and a t-shirt... and it feels good. We finally have the warm up we've all been waiting for and now it's time to get out and go fishing. I'm sure by now everyone has noticed near shore waters littered with dead and dying fish of all types, so we know things still aren't quite right. The water temp near the beach at one point dropped to the low 50's, and in some cases 40's, which is very unusual and caused the shock and death of all those fish. The good news is that the Gulf Stream has remained relatively close shore here in Marathon, limiting the extent of the cool down. While shallow waters remain cold (although on the rise) the water on the reef and offshore remains warm. There's some good fishing to be had right now, so here's how to make the most of your next fishing trip...

For starters, forget about the Gulf, Flats, and Hawks channel for now. The water in those areas is still too cold to be productive. I'd wait all that out until you see that water back up to near 70. You basically have four options right now: head offshore for Tuna and/or Swordfish (both should be unaffected by the weather), work the reef edge for Sails and Kings, or reef fish for Snapper, Grouper, Mackerel and your usual mixed bag or try some bottom fishing out past 100 feet for Mutton Snapper, Jacks, Grouper, Kings and who knows what else.

It looks as though we're going to get a few real nice days this week, so those of you feigning for blue water will get your chance. I ventured to the Marathon Hump on the last nice day we had. There were plenty of Tuna but it seemed they were all small. That's the way it is out there sometimes- you can get different batches of fish from week to week. Sometimes all small, sometimes all big, but most often there is a mix. That was nearly two weeks ago so I'd say it's definitely worth a shot. And if you're not happy with what's there, you can always make a move and drop for Swordfish, Queen Snapper, Tile Fish and other tasty deep water bottom dwellers.

If you're not thrilled about running way offshore but still want to big game fish, there are plenty of Sails and big Kings out beyond the reef. Be conscious of weed lines and temp breaks that may indicate the gulf stream edge or some other mixing of water bodies. These are always good places to troll your live or rigged ballyhoo. If you're not already, try a wire line, downrigger or planer to get bait below the surface for big Kings and Wahoo, often times there's more around than what's on the surface. And as for ballyhoo, there still seems to be plenty on the reef, just make sure you're in the warmer water.

As far as reef fishing goes, I heard an interesting tidbit from a diver friend about that water temp break. As the cold water pushed out from

Cont. on pg. 16

Fishing Report

This report is brought to you by Captain Susan Sanders. She is available for charters through: Key Largo Fishing Adventures Holiday Inn MM 99.7 (305) 587-4300 www.keyssportfishing.com

Capt. Susan Sanders Key Largo Offshore



In spite of the colder temperatures and many reported fish kills the Key Largo offshore bite has been incredible! The past week with its gusty and record low temperatures created some obstacles and harsh days for the crews out on the water. Still it has also provided some prime opportunity as well.

With that being said, let's talk about Atlantic Sailfish, drawn to the Florida Keys near shore, warm waters. What absolutely stunning creatures! Sailfishing is a thrilling way to spend a magnificent morning here in the Key Largo. These pelagics are spectacular acrobats and love to spend as much, if not more of their time out of the water versus in. These spunky billfish are extraordinarily fast and like to battle their fight at the water's surface. The docks in Key Largo were laden with boats

flying Sailfish flags. Over the weekend our boats alone displayed eleven flags in a 48 hour period. All were from slow trolling live ballyhoo at Conch and Pickles Reef. The guys from Fin Razor reported hooking up with doubles & triples on both Saturday and Sunday.

The fun does not stop there! One of the best features of the Florida Keys is the diverse opportunities when it comes to sportfishing. We are talking Amberjack in the 60-70 lb range being caught on Speedos. Definitely a preferred live bait for fishing the Florida Keys. There has been an exceptional Mutton bite on the bottom as well, and the Kingfish are abundant! The best King catch has been down deep.

While fishing the wreck on a private charter from last week, Ted reeled in a hefty African Pompano. The African Pompano are not only known for their ferocious fight. They have quite a reputation as excellent table fare. The Dolphins are here and there. I saw nine today hanging from the rack and a handful yesterday. Captain Bill Noble of The Soz returned home one afternoon with two nice Yellowfin Jacks ranging 15-20lbs.

It would not be right if I failed to mention the spectacular Grouper bite. Prior to the recent changes in regulations that went into effect on Jan. 1st protecting this species during its primary spawning season, I had the opportunity to enjoy a tasty New Year's Eve dinner of fresh Black Grouper courtesy of our day's charter. Since the start of the four month ban, the Groupers have undeniably increased in numbers. I have heard more than a few fish tales pertaining to some nice size catches of Strawberry, Red and Black Groupers. All followed by releases, of course.

I personally am looking forward to the week ahead with the calmer winds and warmer temps. I am already wishing I was fishing! 🐟

Fishing Report

If you would like to book a charter with Capt Luke Kelly in the Lower Florida Keys for fly or light tackle inshore fishing, please call: (305) 304-3152, or e-mail: KeyFlat@mac.com. Visit www.lowerkeysflatsfishing.com for more information.

Capt. Luke Kelly Lower Keys Backcountry



Out of the cold weather and picking-up the pieces left behind inshore. Rather than pieces, whole fish are mostly what I have been picking-up lately. The longest stretch of low temperatures we have seen in a long time has certainly impacted the lower Keys inshore fishing. A fish-kill unlike one I have ever witnessed was the ultimate result of this cold-air blast, with hundreds of frigate birds and seagulls happy to clean up the many dead fish left behind. The poor fishing that has now followed in its wake could have been expected. Although I must say I am a bit shocked by the virtually lifeless backcountry water in which I am writing about on Jan 17.

Not only has the cold water temperature killed a large number of fish, but it seems to have displaced a good number of them as well. More

recent water temps I have taken surrounding the lower Keys are suitable for certain species of fish, such as Sea-trout, Barracuda, and Jack species, but they are simply not there right now.

They can't all be dead, and it makes me wonder just how far a fish will go to find warmth during such an extreme weather event. It has proven lethal for so many different species of inshore fish. I have recently seen plenty of Grey Snapper returning to the marinas and nearby mangroves to feed, and I'm sure the rest aren't far behind.

I have not seen any dead Tarpon, Bonefish, or Permit either for that matter, and I still believe those more highly in-tuned fish don't let themselves be caught in such naturally occurring cold weather events.

FWC has issued an executive order prohibiting the harvest and possession of Snook, Tarpon, and Bonefish until March 31st, while also extending the closed Snook season until September. This order states that it is subject to change once more research can be done to assess the mortality rates of these three species. I'm sure this move will have mixed emotions, mainly from the flats fishing guides, and I am waiting to voice mine.

Nature seems to have a mysterious way of working, and I still feel we will see the better side to all of this, it may just take a bit to show. The birds, sharks, crabs, and other crustaceans have made out big this past week, while many inshore fish and sea turtles lost big.

In one way or another, it will all level out again, given time. 🐟

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Treasure Cay Wahoo Report ...

Captain Thomas Neligon

There was a two-day weather window to get out and go fishing between the fronts this week. Unfortunately, OU did not make it out, but the report is pretty good. Kevin and Kenny from the *Uncle Buck* went out fishing on the tender, a 26' everglades CC out of Treasure Cay and put a 106# 'Hoo on the dock. As the story was told to me, lines were wet for only about 20 minutes until it was game on. The fight only lasted about 20 minutes and having nowhere to store such a large fish, they decided to head in. Congratulations again guys – a triple digit Wahoo is a real feat.

Hearing of *Uncle Buck's* good fortune, the next day I decided to do some tackle work for myself and a friend who will be fishing the Hawks Nest Wahoo Tournament, if the weather allows him to travel from Treasure Cay. I decided to go through all my Wahoo Tackle and revisit some of my favorite lures. When I was done putting together a little tournament pack for our friends on *April Fool* I noticed most of my lures were Ray's Blue Water lures. The only exceptions in that trend were a couple of heavy head skirts for bally/combo and another 'Hoo favorite, large Purple and Black YoZuri plugs. The kit consisted of enough lures to last an entire Wahoo season in the Bahamas. Listed below are the contents of a good kit to bring out Wahoo fishing.

- 4 YoZuri Plugs (3' cable leader)
- 4 Rays Blue Water TB2 (4' cable leader)
- 4 Rays Blue Water Woff (4' cable leader)
- 1 Rays Blue Water jet head w/ rubber skirt bad rig. (4' cable leader)
- 6 Billy baits skirted heads on wire
- 4 64oz rigged trolling leads
- 4 48oz rigged trolling leads

- 6 25' shock leaders
- 20' spare cable
- 4 bags of #12 wire

Depending on what part of the Bahamas you are fishing, the number of trolling leads needed could be more or less. Last year I did not lose a single trolling lead to a shark or a Wahoo bite in the Abacos. The year before, based in the out islands, we lost at least 10 rigs over the course of the season. Most of that is to blame on the sharks that sit on the edges of Cat and San Sal. Sharks are less of a menace in the Abacos.





OU Sailfish Update - Getting Back On Track Here in South Florida . . .

Things seem to be getting back on track here, at least to some extent, after the cold streak we've been experiencing.

It's been pretty snotty the last couple days, but the temperatures are back up into the low 80s and the wind is out of the E/SE. The sailfish are starting to respond pretty well. Saturday we had 3 of 5 out of Lauderdale flying the kites on our 45 Cabo on a full day, and Capt. John Oughton called in on his way in from a short morning trip. Both our Evans and Whitticar fished here out of Islamorada on Sunday and from the sounds of it, they each had a decent number of shots and



released 3-5 apiece. John commented that if it wasn't so damn rough they'd probably have had a few more. Bait continues to be tough in the morning, and ballyhoo is the name of the game. Seems like the conditions are right and the rest of the week should be even better.

Tight Lines . . . Capt. Rhyne 

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BC-Back Country • LT-Light Tackle • FL-Flats • OFF-Offshore • GF-Gulf Fishing
WR-Wreck • OVN-Overnight • MD-Multi-Day • TP-Tarpon • FLY-Fly Fishing

Listings in this Directory are available for only \$299 / year (print and web).

Upper Keys

Captain / Charter

Key Largo to Islamorada

Contact Info

Capt. Greg Eklund Cloud Nine Charters	OFF / REEF / WR / FL	(305) 360-7476 www.islamoradafishingtrips.com
Fin Razer Sportfishing	OFF / BC / REEF	(305) 923-9293
Key Largo Fishing Adventures	www.keyssportfishing.com	captgreg@keyssportfishing.com
Capt. Ron Allen	Fish Tales Charters	(305) 664-0050 www.fishtalessportfishing.com
Capt. Jack Falcucci	OFF / REEF 50' Custom Ocean Sportfish	(305) 393-0795
Capt. Ron Wagner	TP/LT/FLY/BC/FL/GF/REEF	(305) 664-2028 fishwithcaptron@hotmail.com
Capt. Aaron Brower	OFF/REEF/WR www.killerwhite.com	(305) 522-0374
Capt. Steve Friedman	FL / BC / FLY	(305) 393-3474 www.afishingguide.com
Capt. Richard Burson www.rufishingyet.com	BC/LT/FL/GF/TP/FLY	(305) 360-3262 rufishingyet@yahoo.com
Capt. Scott Keller Bad Habit Charters	OFF / BC / WR / GF	(305) 664-6678 captscott@badhabitfishingcharters.com
Capt. Z Hooked Up Charters	OFF / REEF / WR	(305) 393-6931 hookedupgladius@aol.com
Capt. Joe Petrucco Killer Instinct 6	OFF / GULF / REEF / TP	(305) 304-4580 joepetrucco@yahoo.com

Simcic. cont from pg. 8

just behind his head. Before I could see if the shot had penetrated his entire body, he had smoked 3/4 of the line off my reel. Ascending as fast as possible, I finally hit the surface and worked the float line. 20 minutes later, after drifting away from the wreck with a Goliath Grouper trailing the Amberjack, I made it back to the boat. As I worked him up from 100+ feet, the bull sharks came in to get a look. Being skeptical I hurried the fight and forgot that I might bend the spear shaft. Luckily, I got him up without any bite marks and with all my gear intact. As I boated the fish, I saw my buddy Jeremy had landed his first ever Amberjack.

He had landed his with just a floatline, which worked well. But, because I always shoot my gun with a reel, I just add float line to the set-up. If you were to go just with a reel, you might run into a problem such as getting spooled on your spinning rod when you can't stop the fish. So, If you have to go with just one, I would go with the floatline. In my opinion, the reel is a more helpful tool for marking your spot on the deeper reefs when your shaft is under a ledge or in a hole. The float would work in this scenario but it's constant drag causes divers to choose the reel over it in these cases. They both have their purpose, but it's up to you to decide to go with one or the other. Or... in my case use both. Do make sure to bring a thick wetsuit and your best dive buddy. They will help you with your your gear as it gets tangled, along with increasing your safety tremendously! Remember when your freediving to use the one-up/one-down system. This will ensure that you are always watching your partner throughout the entirety of his/her dive. Take this into consideration and have a great week on the water!

Middle Keys

Captain / Charter

Long Key to Marathon

Contact Info

Capt. Nick Borraccino	OFF / REEF / WR	(508) 769-4189 www.noreastersportfishing.com
Capt. David Schugar Sweet e' Nuf Charters	OFF / REEF	(305) 610-4778 www.sweetenufcharters.com

Lower Keys

Captain / Charter

Big Pine Key to Key West

Contact Info

Capt. Chris Lembo	OFF / REEF	(305) 292-0067 incognitocharters@comcast.net
Capt. Andrew Tipler Last Cast Charters	BC / FL / OFF / REEF	(305) 744-9796 www.lastcastcharters.com
Capt. Luke Kelly keyflat@mac.com	FL / FLY / LT / BC / TP	(305) 304-3152 www.lowerkeysflatsfishing.com

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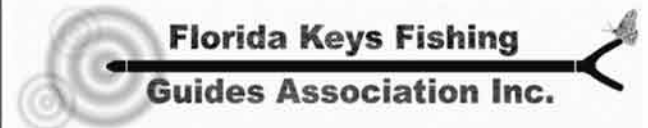
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KEY LARGO (Ocean Reef - 25.3100° N, 80.2800° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed		05:13 / 0.12 ft	11:23 / 2.10 ft	17:37 / -0.02 ft	23:51 / 2.01 ft
Jan 21	Thu		05:53 / 0.27 ft	11:59 / 2.01 ft	18:19 / -0.02 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	00:38 / 1.96 ft	06:39 / 0.41 ft	12:41 / 1.93 ft	19:08 / -0.04 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	01:31 / 1.93 ft	07:34 / 0.52 ft	13:29 / 1.88 ft	20:05 / -0.08 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	02:32 / 1.93 ft	08:38 / 0.57 ft	14:29 / 1.87 ft	21:09 / -0.19 ft	
Jan 25	Mon	03:40 / 1.98 ft	09:45 / 0.51 ft	15:38 / 1.91 ft	22:14 / -0.38 ft	
Jan 26	Tue	04:46 / 2.11 ft	10:50 / 0.34 ft	16:47 / 2.03 ft	23:15 / -0.61 ft	
Jan 27	Wed	05:47 / 2.28 ft	11:50 / 0.07 ft	17:51 / 2.21 ft		

BIG PINE (Pine Channel - 24.6900° N, 81.3833° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed	00:41 / 0.70 ft	08:14 / 0.03 ft	13:12 / 0.66 ft	20:37 / 0.06 ft	
Jan 21	Thu	01:27 / 0.61 ft	08:43 / 0.07 ft	13:45 / 0.68 ft	21:34 / 0.04 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	02:21 / 0.51 ft	09:15 / 0.11 ft	14:23 / 0.70 ft	22:41 / 0.01 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	03:32 / 0.41 ft	09:54 / 0.14 ft	15:09 / 0.72 ft	23:56 / -0.03 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	05:06 / 0.35 ft	10:45 / 0.17 ft	16:07 / 0.76 ft		
Jan 25	Mon		01:11 / -0.08 ft	06:42 / 0.33 ft	11:49 / 0.18 ft	17:16 / 0.81 ft
Jan 26	Tue		02:18 / -0.14 ft	07:51 / 0.35 ft	12:58 / 0.16 ft	18:27 / 0.88 ft
Jan 27	Wed		03:15 / -0.20 ft	08:41 / 0.39 ft	14:04 / 0.13 ft	19:33 / 0.96 ft

ISLAMORADA (Whale Harbor - 24.9400° N, 80.6083° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed		05:47 / 0.03 ft	11:38 / 1.34 ft	18:11 / -0.00 ft	
Jan 21	Thu	00:06 / 1.28 ft	06:27 / 0.06 ft	12:14 / 1.28 ft	18:53 / -0.00 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	00:53 / 1.25 ft	07:13 / 0.10 ft	12:56 / 1.23 ft	19:42 / -0.01 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	01:46 / 1.23 ft	08:08 / 0.13 ft	13:44 / 1.20 ft	20:39 / -0.02 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	02:47 / 1.23 ft	09:12 / 0.14 ft	14:44 / 1.19 ft	21:43 / -0.05 ft	
Jan 25	Mon	03:55 / 1.26 ft	10:19 / 0.12 ft	15:53 / 1.22 ft	22:48 / -0.09 ft	
Jan 26	Tue	05:01 / 1.34 ft	11:24 / 0.08 ft	17:02 / 1.30 ft	23:49 / -0.15 ft	
Jan 27	Wed	06:02 / 1.46 ft	12:24 / 0.02 ft	18:06 / 1.41 ft		

CUDJOE KEY (Pirates Cove - 24.6600° N, 81.4917° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed		07:03 / 0.05 ft	12:13 / 1.11 ft	19:26 / 0.10 ft	
Jan 21	Thu	00:28 / 1.02 ft	07:32 / 0.12 ft	12:46 / 1.14 ft	20:23 / 0.07 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	01:22 / 0.85 ft	08:04 / 0.18 ft	13:24 / 1.17 ft	21:30 / 0.02 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	02:33 / 0.69 ft	08:43 / 0.24 ft	14:10 / 1.21 ft	22:45 / -0.05 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	04:07 / 0.59 ft	09:34 / 0.28 ft	15:08 / 1.26 ft		
Jan 25	Mon		00:00 / -0.14 ft	05:43 / 0.56 ft	10:38 / 0.30 ft	16:17 / 1.35 ft
Jan 26	Tue		01:07 / -0.24 ft	06:52 / 0.59 ft	11:47 / 0.28 ft	17:28 / 1.47 ft
Jan 27	Wed		02:04 / -0.34 ft	07:42 / 0.65 ft	12:53 / 0.21 ft	18:34 / 1.61 ft

MARATHON (Boot Key Harbor - 24.7067° N, 81.0967° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed		05:37 / 0.10 ft	11:48 / 1.44 ft	18:02 / 0.18 ft	
Jan 21	Thu	00:04 / 1.31 ft	05:58 / 0.23 ft	12:23 / 1.51 ft	19:01 / 0.15 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	00:55 / 1.11 ft	06:22 / 0.35 ft	13:03 / 1.57 ft	20:15 / 0.10 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	01:56 / 0.92 ft	06:51 / 0.46 ft	13:49 / 1.64 ft	21:33 / -0.00 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	03:17 / 0.77 ft	07:37 / 0.54 ft	14:45 / 1.73 ft	22:46 / -0.15 ft	
Jan 25	Mon	05:09 / 0.71 ft	08:55 / 0.58 ft	15:51 / 1.84 ft	23:49 / -0.32 ft	
Jan 26	Tue	06:37 / 0.75 ft	10:19 / 0.55 ft	17:01 / 1.97 ft		
Jan 27	Wed		00:43 / -0.48 ft	07:27 / 0.83 ft	11:29 / 0.43 ft	18:08 / 2.12 ft

KEY WEST (Hawk Channel - 24.5450° N, 81.7833° W)

		High	Low	High	Low	High
Date	Day	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height	Time / Height
Jan 20	Wed		05:49 / 0.05 ft	11:56 / 1.37 ft	18:13 / 0.12 ft	
Jan 21	Thu	00:11 / 1.24 ft	06:17 / 0.16 ft	12:29 / 1.42 ft	19:10 / 0.10 ft	
Jan 22	Fri	01:04 / 1.05 ft	06:47 / 0.26 ft	13:06 / 1.48 ft	20:18 / 0.06 ft	
Jan 23	Sat	02:13 / 0.87 ft	07:24 / 0.35 ft	13:52 / 1.55 ft	21:35 / -0.00 ft	
Jan 24	Sun	03:48 / 0.74 ft	08:14 / 0.42 ft	14:50 / 1.63 ft	22:51 / -0.12 ft	
Jan 25	Mon	05:30 / 0.72 ft	09:20 / 0.45 ft	15:59 / 1.74 ft	23:58 / -0.25 ft	
Jan 26	Tue	06:40 / 0.77 ft	10:34 / 0.42 ft	17:12 / 1.88 ft		
Jan 27	Wed		00:55 / -0.38 ft	07:29 / 0.84 ft	11:42 / 0.33 ft	18:18 / 2.03 ft

Moon Phases

First Quarter: 01/24/10 • Full: 01/30/10
Last Quarter: 02/05/10 • New: 02/13/10

Tide predictions may not be accurate. The Weekly Fisherman accepts no liabilities associated with any referenced use of the above-listed tidal information. Remember that weather conditions affect tidal ranges and current speeds, sometimes very strongly.



TOURNAMENTS

We want to hear about your tournament!
Have it listed here for FREE by calling
Jess at (305) 852-FISH (3474), or via
e-mail: editor@weeklyfisherman.com.

Jan. 21-23: Cheeca Lodge Presidential Sailfish Tournament.

Islamorada. In this all-release tournament, anglers fish for the mighty sailfish in waters surrounding the region known as the Sportfishing Capital of the World. The tournament is an official event of the World Billfish Series, Southeast Division. Contact Liz Hill at (305) 451-5094, e-mail presidentialsailfishtournament@cheeca.com, visit cheeca.com or write to Cheeca Lodge, P.O. Box 527, Islamorada FL 33036.

Jan. 22-24: Key West Harbour King Mackerel Tournament. Key West. Anglers use fast boats to target the voracious king mackerel, also known as kingfish, for cash prizes. Contact Lee Murray at (305) 296-0364, e-mail lee@murraymarine.com or write to Murray Marine, 5710 U.S. 1, Mile Marker 5, Key West FL 33040.

Jan. 25-26: Captain Al Flutie Over the Hill Sailfish Tournament. Islamorada. Anglers ages 50 and over are challenged to catch and release the most sailfish. Contact Bill Kelly at (305) 394-5333 or write to 130 Tequesta St., Tavernier, FL 33070; or contact Gary Ellis at (305) 664-2002, e-mail redboneinc@aol.com, visit redbone.org or write to P.O. Box 273, Islamorada FL 33036.

Jan. 27-28: Islamorada Fishing Club Sailfish Tournament. Islamorada. The historic fishing club offers a \$30,000 winner-take-all cash prize in this sailfish challenge. The tournament is limited to 30 boats. Contact Dianne Harbaugh at (305) 852-2102 or (305) 664-4725, e-mail fishing@theislamoradafishingclub.com or visit theislamoradafishingclub.com.

Jan. 29-30: Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association Swamp Guides Ball. Islamorada. This all-release event offers fishing for bonefish, redfish and snook in the shallows of the Florida Keys and the saltwater fringes of the Everglades. Contact Captain Rusty and Terry Albury at (305) 664-5142, e-mail talbury@aol.com or write to P.O. Box 303, Islamorada FL 33036.

Feb. 4-6: Billfish Bowl. Key Largo. An all-release sailfish tournament hosted by NFL legends Jimmy Johnson and Mike Ditka to raise money for the nonprofit group Gridiron Greats. The event will take place at the Big Chill Bar and Restaurant in Key Largo. Contact Tammie Gurgiolo at (866) 203-2720 or visit billfishbowl.com.

Feb. 12-14: Islamorada Women's Sailfish Tournament. Islamorada. This light-tackle challenge has female anglers facing off against the famous tail-dancers for trophies and prizes. Contact Tammie Gurgiolo at (305) 852-9337, e-mail fishnbully@msn.com or write to 124 Tavern Drive, Tavernier FL 33070.

Feb. 16-17: Poor Girls Sailfish Tournament. Key Largo and Islamorada. This popular Keys tournament typically draws more than 200 anglers. Contact Sharon Mahoney Ellenwood at (305) 664-2012 or e-mail sharellen@netzero.net.

Feb. 26-27: Backcountry Fly Championship. Islamorada. This new fly-fishing competition will target snook and redfish in that region of the Keys famous for them. Contact Charlotte Ambrogio at (305) 664-2444, e-mail csasun@aol.com or write P.O. Box 1063, Islamorada, FL 33036.

Borraccino cont. from pg. 10

shore, so did most of the fish. Just on the warm side of the temp break were huge numbers of Snapper, Grouper, bait fish, and even Cobia, so keep that in mind when you're picking a spot to anchor up. Keep the chum flowing and bring some live shrimp and pinfish, and if ballyhoo show up, try to catch some of them with a cast net or sabiki. Keep a heavy spinner handy in case a Sail or Cobia decides to join the party.

As mentioned, when cold fronts like this chill the water, fish will also head out beyond the reef and congregate on wrecks. Capt. Jimmy Gagliardini of High Caliber charters reports some excellent bottom fishing this week, catching big Mutton Snappers, Grouper, Jacks, and Kings. If you're visiting the area chances are you don't know where to go for this type of fishing, so give me call and I'll get you set up with a middle keys guide that will keep that rod bent all day for you!

Enjoy our Florida weather – it's back! 



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