

FREE The Original Weekly **Fisher**man

& the Keys Boat Exchange

Key Largo • Islamorada • Marathon • Big Pine • Key West

Vol. XII • Issue 13

Serving the Keys Fishing Community Since 1998



(L-R) William Penn, Islamorada, George Hernandez, Miami; Greg Deddy, Islamorada and Robert Sherman, Miami Shores, enjoyed a great afternoon of successful Yellowtail fishing!

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Stop the Gulf Grouper Giveaway . . .

Amendment 29 gives away 65 percent of Gulf gag and red groupers to the commercial fishing industry through a catch share or IFQ (individual fishing quota) program. Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) has filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Fort Myers, Florida, challenging the adoption and implementation of Amendment 29 to the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Management Plan approved by the United States Secretary of Commerce.

The Gulf grouper catch share debate is not about conservation. It is about the allocation and the access to public resources. CCA is opposed to locking up access to a public resource in a small number of commercials interests. The Gulf recreational grouper fishery has an economic value of 223 million dollars, nearly three times larger than the economic value of the commercial fishery.

Establishing catch share programs will only benefit large operators in the commercial fishery. The recreational fishery will not be allowed to expand because reallocation of grouper take from the commercial IFQ will never occur. In the future, as more people try to fish for grouper, the bag limits and seasons will be even more restrictive until the recreational fishery is no longer viable.

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Fishing Report

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

Capt. Richard Burson Key Largo Backcountry



The weather was a concern mid week as a cold front was pushing its way through the Keys docking most small back country boats. I was able to get out a few times allowing for some productive days on the water. This week the fish were biting out west around Springer Bank. My clients were looking to bend the rod and that is just what we did, finding good sized Mackerel, Ladyfish, Bluefish, Mangrove Snappers, many species of Sharks, Jacks, Blue Runners and over 100 pound Goliath Groupers!

The Goliath Groupers were the highlight this week as we were catching some mammoth ones. In Florida, the largest Goliath Grouper ever caught and recorded weighed 680 pounds. They are the largest members of the sea bass family and are thought to live approximately

50 years. Their habitat consists of shallow, inshore waters to depths of 150 feet. This fish is solitary by nature. The Goliath Grouper's habitat consists of underwater caves, wrecks, mangroves patches and ledges, displaying an open mouth to discourage intruders. Additional warning may be delivered in the form of the Goliath Grouper's ability to produce a distinctly audible rumbling sound generated by contracting muscles in their swim bladder. This sound travels great distances underwater and is also used to locate other Goliath Grouper.

The Goliath Groupers are one of the most difficult to get to the boat because of their instinct to cut your line. As soon the Grouper has been hooked their immediate reaction is to find a structure and wrap the line around it, ultimately cutting it. There is a definite technique in catching these monsters! For bait I use small Jacks and Blue Runners. I cut their tail off, then hook them through the dorsal fin and place them in the water. The vibrations that occur as the Jack attempts to swim will attract the Grouper as well as many species of Sharks, providing for plenty of action beneath the surface. I have my clients use my medium to heavy rods with 30 pound braided line and a 80 pound leader attached to a 8.0 circle hook. I find that free spooling while placing the rod in the rod holder (affectionately called Rodney the Rod Holder) works best for most anglers. This cuts down on the normal reaction of a fisherman to attempt to "Set the Hook".

Setting the hook too early is a major concern when hooking Grouper. Once the Grouper hits the bait give 4 or 5 seconds then shut the bail letting the line become tight. After the line is tight, reel down while pointing the rod towards the water. Finally pull up at the same time you are winding the reel. Remember they will be headed for any structure to cut the line so keep your knees bent and the rod low. Try your very best not to allow the Grouper to wrap the line around anything that may

Cont. on pg. 9

Fishing Report

Brought to you courtesy of
 Capt. Andrew Tipler.
 To fish with Capt. Andrew,
 call (305) 744-9796 or visit
 www.lastcastcharters.com
 scarpa1@bellsouth.net

Capt. Andrew Tipler Lower Keys



Wind and cool weather have been the only constant this past week. We would spend a day hiding out Oceanside one day and then spend the next in the Gulf. This is not necessarily a bad thing this time of year. With a lot going on, on both sides it is fun to break things up.

I was a little surprised the Sailfishing was not better with the cool weather and north winds. Look for the Sailfish to pick up on North wind days. There have been some Tuna, and a few Dolphin offshore. Thick schools of Bonita would find you as soon as a scoop of pilchards went over the side. Kingfish have also been around in good numbers as well as Cero Mackerel. Try using a long shank hook before going to wire leader to keep the Tuna biting. If I do have to rig with wire I like just a short trace of flexible cable.

There were some decent sized Yellowtails on the reef but they were a little shy. When the Tails were not biting we stayed busy by floating back whole ballyhoo for Kings. Grouper became almost a little frustrating while looking for the Muttons.

Flats fishing has been a little difficult with the cool water temps. Even the Cudas have not been around in their usual winter numbers. If we get a little warmer weather things should light up. I keep one Cuda rod and one Permit rod on deck this time of year just in case. Shark fishing was the best bet on the flats this past week. A butterfly bonito will bring plenty into casting range.

Sea trout and Ladyfish have been showing up on gulf side grass flats north of Big Pine. Bucktail jigs tipped with shrimp have made for some fast and fun fishing. If pinfish become a headache try a Berkley gulp to cut down on how much time you spend reaching into your live well. Spanish Mackerel have been showing up in good numbers. Try a top water plug and light spinning outfit for ultimate excitement. Good luck and good fishing.



Fishing Report

Captain Nick Borraccino
Noreaster Sport Fishing
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Capt. Nick Borraccino
Marathon

An active weather pattern has dealt us cold front after cold front for the past few weeks. As a result, the short periods of warmer air have not been enough to really warm up the inshore water, keeping fishing conditions much as the have been since January.

When you do find a break in the weather pattern enough to sneak out and fish (like this past Sunday and Monday), you'll find the water close to shore and in the bay still in the 60's- too low to be productive. As you move offshore you'll find the water change from dirty green, to greenish-blue, this is where the water jumps back up into the 70's, and is where you want to fish. Anywhere in the warmer water from the edge of Hawks Channel to the reef edge you can find good fishing. King fish topping 30 pounds and Cero Mackerel up to 10 pounds maraud this

water out to 100 feet, making for great sport fishing, and with the ceros some great table fare. As a side note, a young girl this week fishing with Capt. Chris Morrison of Marathon landed a Jr. world record Cero Mackerel, I'm still waiting on the details, but congrats to both captain and angler!

There are still Mangrove Snapper posted up on reefs in the 20-40 foot depths, and from what I'm hearing, lots of Grouper. Even though we have to throw those Grouper back, you still can have fun catching them.

The Yellowtails can be found biting too here and there. Capt Jason Long of Best Bet sport fishing reported medium size tails biting great a few days this week in 50 feet. I found them biting shy in 90 feet, but they were jumbos- 3-4 pounds and better. Also very active are the wrecks out beyond the reef in 100-200 feet. The water a little further offshore is still even warmer, and the fish on the bottom are most likely unaware of our chilly air. Amberjack, Mutton Snapper, Grouper, Kingfish, and more can be had dropping live baits and jigs. This is a very active type of fishing which usually produces a good variety, and often some sore arms! I would definitely recommend having a charter captain put you on to some of this action.

Most are still waiting for the big push of Sails to come through with this cool weather. There are some Sails around, and with dedication, you can usually have some success with it, but it still is not red hot. A good idea to up your chances for success is to put a live bait up in a kite while anchored up for Yellowtail, you never know when a hungry Sail is going to swim by.

I don't know of anyone that has ventured offshore yet this week, so there is no report to give. I'm off in search of Swordfish Monday, so stay tuned for the next report! 🐟

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

Fishing offshore of Islamorada this week has been dominated by a continuous cycle of cold fronts. This has once again cooled the water temperatures along the edge of the reef and made for some interesting fishing conditions. We have finally gotten rid of a huge area of green water that had been laying along the reef line for the last ten days and hampering our fishing efforts. The Islamorada Ladies Sailfish Tournament commenced last weekend and despite the challenging conditions a few boats experienced some good fishing. When the dust settled the Killer White team came out on top of the fleet to take home top honors. Congrats to all of the winners!!! This week we wrap up the Sailfish tournament season on Wednesday with the Islamorada Poorgirls Sailfish Tournament. This event historically attracts a big number of

participants from our local area. This one day tournament is a great fundraiser and hopefully will bring with it a huge bite of Sailfish for all of the ladies.

There is a wide variety of fishing opportunities to exploit this week along the edge of the reef. Sailfish are always a treat but the King Mackerel, Cobia and Snapper fishing has been providing the bulk of the action of late. The Kings are gathered along the deeper ledges of the reef in 150 to 180 feet of water. They have ranged in size between 5 and 45 pounds during the last seven days. Live baits such as Cigar Minnows, Speedos, and Blue runners are all good baits for these speedy predators. I expect fishing for the Kings to continue to be good for the next several weeks. The Cobia fishing has been good ahead of the fronts lately. Several fish in the 25 to 30 pound range and a few to 60 pounds have been landed by the fleet in the past week. February and March are great months for targeting these hard fighting fish and I would expect some more quality Cobias over the next few weeks. The Yellowtail Snapper fishing has been really good lately. These Snappers are starting to stage in their prespawn positions along the reef this time of year. This creates some great fishing opportunities for these fish. They have averaged 1 to 2 pounds but a few larger fish are mixed in with the schoolies too. This fishery will only continue to better as we close out February and move into March. This is a great time of year to be fishing here in the Keys. If I can help you plan a day or two on the water or answer any questions please contact me at the info above.

Have a great week! 🐟



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



Thank goodness for Spanish Mackerel as they were one of the fish you could depend upon with the colder water temperatures we are experiencing in the bay waters. And along with them have been lots of Bluefish. Add the two together and you can experience a lot of action out back as their teeth seem to want to rip up anything coming their way. From in back of Yacht Channel to the East Cape, you will find them willing and able to find your chum quickly and once they do, the action is non-stop. My anglers have been kept busy with constant rod bending action and some great tasting fillets back at the dock.

Throw in a few big Sea trout and plenty of small Sharks that seem to be thicker then mosquitoes this year for whatever the reason. Rigging for these fish is simple. I like to use 12 inches of 50 lb. pink Ande mono as

my leader and to that attach a Mustad 3407 4/0 hook. I prefer the larger hook as it is much easier to remove from the Mackerels mouth and actually becomes a little added weight that has a great sink rate. They seldom bite through the mono leader and the larger hook also keeps the hook shank out of their numerous and always snapping dentures. If the Bluefish and Spanish don't nail it right away, as it sinks, the Sea Trout, Snappers and others find it on its way down. Commercial Trout fisherman of years gone by used larger hooks for their fishing here, sometimes even 5/0,s were common on the skiffs they used out back. Sure, you can use a trace of wire if you prefer but I really think you won't do wrong with the mono rig.

The other day one of my anglers was asking me what I was going to do in retirement. Do fishing guides retire. No one ever told me that as I thought we fished until we smelled like a block of chum only to be pressure washed to get back in the house. Life is too important to give up this way of life. As young guides, growing up paying our dues, learn and modify our techniques to one day be at the top of our game. The Florida Keys without a doubt have some of the finest captains who chose being on the water as their way to make a living. They work from Key Largo to Key West and live each moment with fish running around in their heads. They are worth the fees they charge and give visiting anglers from around the world, the very best they can do without exceptions. What a life we have chosen and were loving every minute of it.

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Capt. Dan on the *Second Nature* caught and realest this 25 cubera snapper last Friday. this fish ate a fresh bonito strip in 100 ft of water off Key West.



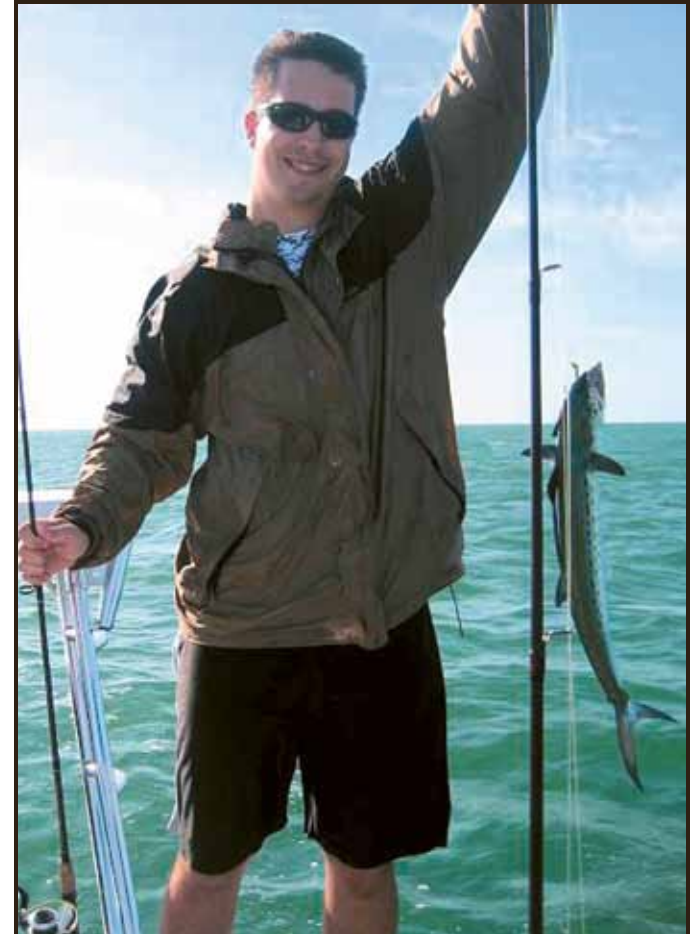
16.5 lb Snook caught by Andy Stepan (North Lima, OH) in the Everglades National Park. Fished with Capt Billy Wert out of Holiday Isle.
12.5 lb, 12 lb and 6 lb Snook followed up this big one.



Another great catch aboard the Fish Tales out of Whale Harbor Marina with Capt. Ron Allen and Mate Jeremy Pfaffendorf. This is Ian McDonnell from Orland Park, IL. He fished with Chad and Mark Tracy also from Illinois.



Shannon had a Needlefish, and Justin had a Mackerel, all while fishing with Capt. Burson. ▼



Send your photos to: editor@weeklyfisherman.com – **Thanks!**

Please submit your photos with the highest “quality” setting. Photos from camera phones generally are not good enough, or steady enough (too blurry). Please do not Photoshop files.

Please remember to include “who, what, when & where” info!

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




If you have been following this column for the last few weeks, you're probably aware that my reports have been heavy on the reef and light on the backcountry. While the backcountry is my second home, this time of year the bite has been more consistent and better Oceanside than in the backcountry. I've also been fishing a series of sailfish tournaments out of my 22' Pathfinder bay boat. Until the water warms up some more in the shallow flats in and around the Everglades, the fishing out back will continue to be a struggle.

With some effort and patience, however, there are great fish to be found. When I've fished in the Everglades, I've stayed where the water is deep and has strong current flow. Big Tarpon are starting to show up and "roll" or gulp air occasionally which tells me they are moving back

into the bay, gearing up to feed and be a regular feature in the murky backcountry waters. Black Drum remain one of the best bites, mixed in with Redfish and Speckled Sea Trout. The Snook bite is also improving and we managed to catch eleven linesiders in about a 45-minute span. Remember these fish have been very stressed with the cold weather and they are not to be harvested or even removed from the water for a photo. We were able to catch these fish using circle hooks and live shrimp, and released in great shape boat side.

The Gulf of Mexico is getting more productive close to the Sprigger Bank area. On the days when the wind wasn't howling a gale, I snuck out there with plenty of chum to bring in fish like Spanish Mackerel, Mangrove Snapper, various Sharks, large Speckled Sea Trout and a few Cobia. Again, I'm keeping it simple using a Hank Brown Hook-Up lure of about a 1/4-ounce with a live shrimp jigged off the bottom. When the action gets steady, I switch to a 1/0 clouser minnow with an eight-weight fly rod to catch a variety of fish on the long pole.

The Bayboat Billfish Tournament Series concluded last week with some dramatic action offshore. With winds blowing out of the southeast at more than 20 mph, it was sporting enough just to get bait out of the small vessels, let alone actually catch a fish. While I managed to boat one Sailfish in these conditions, other boats were in the zone and caught up to five Sailfish in a single day in some pretty inclement conditions. George Clark Jr. and his ace crew were not only able to take first place in the last event of three total, he took the grand prize by scoring the most points overall.

Look for this great new event to continue next year along with other bay boat tournaments this summer where Dolphin (Mahi Mahi) will be the target species. For more information on upcoming bay boat tournaments contact Capt. Jim Dalrymple at 305-304-9386. 



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12 / 16

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Fishing Reports (cont.)

Burson cont. from pg. 6

be sharp enough to cut your line. This fight will be intense! I have seen so many anglers fight these monsters with the ending result being the disappointed stomp of their feet as they realize the worst has happened, the Grouper got away! If you are one of the skilled anglers and lucky enough to land one of these monsters remember they are a protected species and you may not lift them from the water.

Until next time, ask yourself this one question . . .

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Since its inception in 1998, the Leon Shell Memorial Billfish Tournament has raised over \$125,000 for Hospice, including \$25,000 in 2009 alone. Additionally, each year the Leon Shell Tournament raises money for a Youth Division that awards academic scholarships to young anglers.

The non-profit Leon Shell Tournament and the wonderful donations made annually to Hospice, are made possible only with the support of the local citizens and businesses of the Florida Keys.

The Leon Shell Memorial Billfish Tournament, to be held March 5-7, is quickly becoming Marathon's premier sailfish tournament, with 20 boats competing in 2009 for a \$25,000 top cash prize.

With your help and support, we look to continue the success of the event and exceed last year's donation to Hospice and Visiting Nurses of the Florida Keys.

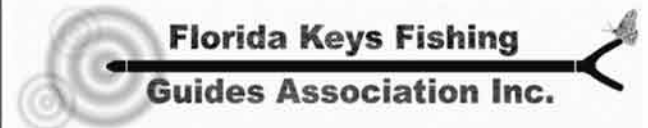
To become a sponsor, or register to compete in the tournament, please call the Key Colony Beach Marina at (305) 289-1310. For questions and additional information visit www.leonshelltournament.com, or email Drew Dinan at ddd@lonestaroh.com.

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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
Feb 17	Wed		04:10 / -0.13 ft	10:17 / 2.18 ft	16:27 / -0.31 ft	22:43 / 2.18 ft
Feb 18	Thu		04:44 / -0.00 ft	10:51 / 2.11 ft	17:02 / -0.30 ft	23:23 / 2.12 ft
Feb 19	Fri		05:22 / 0.15 ft	11:26 / 2.03 ft	17:43 / -0.26 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	00:07 / 2.05 ft	06:06 / 0.30 ft	12:07 / 1.96 ft	18:32 / -0.22 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	01:00 / 1.99 ft	07:00 / 0.45 ft	12:57 / 1.91 ft	19:31 / -0.18 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	02:01 / 1.96 ft	08:05 / 0.53 ft	14:00 / 1.89 ft	20:39 / -0.20 ft	
Feb 23	Tue	03:11 / 1.99 ft	09:18 / 0.48 ft	15:15 / 1.93 ft	21:50 / -0.31 ft	
Feb 24	Wed	04:21 / 2.10 ft	10:27 / 0.28 ft	16:29 / 2.07 ft	22:56 / -0.50 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
Feb 17	Wed		07:02 / 0.00 ft	11:55 / 0.71 ft	19:27 / -0.06 ft	
Feb 18	Thu	00:26 / 0.63 ft	07:28 / 0.04 ft	12:23 / 0.73 ft	20:11 / -0.07 ft	
Feb 19	Fri	01:10 / 0.54 ft	07:55 / 0.07 ft	12:54 / 0.74 ft	21:03 / -0.07 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	02:02 / 0.45 ft	08:27 / 0.10 ft	13:31 / 0.75 ft	22:06 / -0.07 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	03:10 / 0.36 ft	09:06 / 0.14 ft	14:21 / 0.75 ft	23:21 / -0.08 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	04:45 / 0.31 ft	09:59 / 0.16 ft	15:27 / 0.77 ft		
Feb 23	Tue		00:43 / -0.09 ft	06:24 / 0.31 ft	11:16 / 0.18 ft	16:51 / 0.80 ft
Feb 24	Wed		01:55 / -0.13 ft	07:29 / 0.35 ft	12:40 / 0.16 ft	18:16 / 0.86 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
Feb 17	Wed		04:44 / -0.03 ft	10:32 / 1.39 ft	17:01 / -0.07 ft	22:58 / 1.39 ft
Feb 18	Thu		05:18 / -0.00 ft	11:06 / 1.35 ft	17:36 / -0.07 ft	23:38 / 1.35 ft
Feb 19	Fri		05:56 / 0.04 ft	11:41 / 1.30 ft	18:17 / -0.06 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	00:22 / 1.31 ft	06:40 / 0.07 ft	12:22 / 1.25 ft	19:06 / -0.05 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	01:15 / 1.27 ft	07:34 / 0.11 ft	13:12 / 1.22 ft	20:05 / -0.04 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	02:16 / 1.25 ft	08:39 / 0.13 ft	14:15 / 1.20 ft	21:13 / -0.05 ft	
Feb 23	Tue	03:26 / 1.27 ft	09:52 / 0.12 ft	15:30 / 1.23 ft	22:24 / -0.07 ft	
Feb 24	Wed	04:36 / 1.34 ft	11:01 / 0.07 ft	16:44 / 1.32 ft	23:30 / -0.12 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
Feb 17	Wed		05:51 / 0.01 ft	10:56 / 1.19 ft	18:16 / -0.10 ft	23:27 / 1.06 ft
Feb 18	Thu		06:17 / 0.06 ft	11:24 / 1.22 ft	19:00 / -0.12 ft	
Feb 19	Fri	00:11 / 0.91 ft	06:44 / 0.12 ft	11:55 / 1.24 ft	19:52 / -0.13 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	01:03 / 0.75 ft	07:16 / 0.18 ft	12:32 / 1.25 ft	20:55 / -0.12 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	02:11 / 0.60 ft	07:55 / 0.23 ft	13:22 / 1.26 ft	22:10 / -0.13 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	03:46 / 0.51 ft	08:48 / 0.28 ft	14:28 / 1.29 ft	23:32 / -0.16 ft	
Feb 23	Tue	05:25 / 0.52 ft	10:05 / 0.30 ft	15:52 / 1.34 ft		
Feb 24	Wed		00:44 / -0.21 ft	06:30 / 0.59 ft	11:29 / 0.27 ft	17:17 / 1.44 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
Feb 17	Wed		04:26 / 0.01 ft	10:34 / 1.54 ft	16:52 / -0.13 ft	23:04 / 1.35 ft
Feb 18	Thu		04:46 / 0.12 ft	11:05 / 1.60 ft	17:36 / -0.14 ft	23:47 / 1.18 ft
Feb 19	Fri		05:06 / 0.23 ft	11:39 / 1.65 ft	18:29 / -0.13 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	00:35 / 0.99 ft	05:29 / 0.33 ft	12:18 / 1.69 ft	19:36 / -0.11 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	01:34 / 0.80 ft	05:56 / 0.42 ft	13:07 / 1.72 ft	20:58 / -0.13 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	02:54 / 0.66 ft	06:37 / 0.50 ft	14:08 / 1.75 ft	22:19 / -0.20 ft	
Feb 23	Tue	04:55 / 0.63 ft	08:11 / 0.55 ft	15:23 / 1.79 ft	23:26 / -0.31 ft	
Feb 24	Wed	06:18 / 0.72 ft	10:04 / 0.49 ft	16:45 / 1.87 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
Feb 17	Wed		04:39 / -0.02 ft	10:41 / 1.46 ft	17:05 / -0.14 ft	23:12 / 1.29 ft
Feb 18	Thu		05:03 / 0.07 ft	11:09 / 1.52 ft	17:49 / -0.15 ft	23:55 / 1.11 ft
Feb 19	Fri		05:30 / 0.16 ft	11:40 / 1.56 ft	18:40 / -0.14 ft	
Feb 20	Sat	00:46 / 0.93 ft	06:00 / 0.25 ft	12:16 / 1.60 ft	19:43 / -0.12 ft	
Feb 21	Sun	01:52 / 0.76 ft	06:35 / 0.33 ft	13:05 / 1.63 ft	21:00 / -0.12 ft	
Feb 22	Mon	03:28 / 0.64 ft	07:26 / 0.39 ft	14:10 / 1.65 ft	22:23 / -0.16 ft	
Feb 23	Tue	05:13 / 0.64 ft	08:45 / 0.43 ft	15:32 / 1.70 ft	23:35 / -0.24 ft	
Feb 24	Wed	06:18 / 0.73 ft	10:16 / 0.38 ft	16:58 / 1.79 ft		

Moon Phases

First Quarter: 02/21/10 • Full: 02/28/10
Last Quarter: 03/07/10 • New: 03/15/10

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.

KEYS CAPTAIN & GUIDE DIRECTORY



This Directory is a comprehensive list of the best shallow water flats guides & offshore charter skippers from Key Largo to Key West. Flats species of fish include: Bonefish, Permit, Tarpon, Redfish, Snook & Trout. Offshore species of fish include: Dolphin, Sailfish, Wahoo, Kingfish, Tuna, Snapper & Grouper. Gulf species of fish include: Kingfish, Grouper, Snapper, Cobia & Tarpon.



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		Key Largo to Islamorada
Captain / Charter		Contact Info
Capt. Greg Eklund	OFF / REEF / WR / FL	(305) 360-7476
Cloud Nine Charters		www.islamoradafishingtrips.com
Fin Razer Sportfishing	OFF / BC / REEF	(305) 923-9293
Key Largo Fishing Adventures	www.keyssportfishing.com	captgreg@keyssportfishing.com
Challenger Charters	BC / OFF / PACKAGES	(305) 395-1691
		www.challengercharters.com
Capt. Ron Allen	Fish Tales Charters	(305) 664-0050
		www.fishtalessportfishing.com
Capt. Jack Falcucci	OFF / REEF	(305) 393-0795
	50' Custom Ocean Sportfish	
Capt. Ron Wagner	TP/LT/FLY/BC/FL/GF/REEF	(305) 664-2028
		fishwithcaptron@hotmail.com
Capt. Aaron Brower	OFF/REEF/WR	(305) 522-0374
	www.killerwhite.com	
Capt. Steve Friedman	FL / BC / FLY	(305) 393-3474
		www.afishingguide.com
Capt. Richard Burson	BC/LT/FL/GF/TP/FLY	(305) 360-3262
www.rufishingyet.com		rufishingyet@yahoo.com
Capt. Scott Keller	OFF / BC / WR / GF	(305) 664-6678
Bad Habit Charters		captscott@badhabitfishingcharters.com
Capt. Z	OFF / REEF / WR	(305) 393-6931
Hooked Up Charters		hookedupgladius@aol.com
Capt. Joe Petrucco	OFF / GULF / REEF / TP	(305) 304-4580
Killer Instinct 6		joepetrucco@yahoo.com
Capt. Frank Drudi	OFF/REEF/WR	(866) 431-2277
Chelsea Charters	www.thefloridakeyscharterfishing.com	floridakeyscharterfishing@yahoo.com
Capt. Chris Barth	OFF/REEF	(305) 797-6442
The Hunter Charters		www.thehuntercharters.com

Middle Keys		Long Key to Marathon
Captain / Charter		Contact Info
Capt. Nick Borraccino	OFF / REEF / WR	(508) 769-4189
		www.noreastersportfishing.com
Capt. David Schugar	OFF / REEF	(305) 610-4778
Sweet e' Nuf Charters		www.sweetenufcharters.com

Lower Keys		Big Pine Key to Key West
Captain / Charter		Contact Info
Capt. Chris Lembo	OFF / REEF	(305) 292-0067
		incognitocharters@comcast.net
Capt. Andrew Tipler	BC / FL / OFF / REEF	(305) 744-9796
Last Cast Charters		www.lastcastcharters.com
Capt. Luke Kelly	FL / FLY / LT / BC / TP	(305) 304-3152
keyflat@mac.com		www.lowerkeysflatsfishing.com



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.

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.

March 5-6: Backbone Lures “Fish ‘Til You Lose It.” Islamorada. Anglers compete to catch the finned denizens of the flats and backcountry, fishing with one lure or one fly until they lose it. Contact Paul Tejera by e-mailing captbackbone@gmail.com or visit backbonelures.com.

March 5-7: Captain Leon Shell Memorial Billfish Tournament. Key Colony Beach. Anglers pursue sailfish in honor of the late lure maker who made the Middle Florida Keys his home. The tournament benefits Hospice of the Florida Keys. Contact Terry Fisher at (305) 289-1310, e-mail kcbmarina@bellsouth.net, visit leonshelltournament.com or write to P.O. Box 510910, Key Colony Beach FL 33051-0910.

March 11-14: Florida Keys Survivor. Islamorada. In this backcountry elimination draw tournament, the winner is the sole survivor. Contact Sharon Mahoney Ellenwood at (305) 664-2012 or (305) 393-6174, or e-mail sharellen@netzero.net.

March 12-14: Key West Fishing Tournament Kick-Off. Targeting multiple species, this annual challenge starts a season-long tournament that awards certificates for outstanding catches and prizes in a host of categories. Contact Doris Harris at (305) 295-6601, e-mail director@keywestfishingtournament.com, visit keywestfishingtournament.com or write to P.O. Box 2154, Key West, FL 33045.

March 13 - Nov. 30: Key West Fishing Tournament, Inc. Key West & Lower Keys. This popular 8.5-month-long competition targets more than 40 species of fish. Contact Doris Harris at (305) 295-6601 or (800) 970-9056, e-mail director@keywestfishingtournament.com, visit keywestfishingtournament.com or write to P.O. Box 2154, Key West, FL 33045.

March 18-21: 45th Annual Ft. Lauderdale Billfish Tournament. Ft. Lauderdale. Contact: Nicole Metzger (954) 523-1004 or e-mail Nicole@billfishtournament.com, or visit www.fortlauderdalebillfish.com.

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



Here we go again, the cold has started leaking into the Keys giving us 50-degree temperatures. Thinking back all the years I have lived here, I have never witnessed the degree of winter temperatures as we have seen the past two years. The notion of global warming just makes me mad as it has been very clear that whatever research that has been done, has been done wrong. You tell me, records are falling all over the northern hemisphere, as these guys are still defending their inaccurate work they call their research. I have had many calls for the early Dolphin run that we used to get during March and April, but I really have to say that we won't see it this year. Last year was the beginning of this cold trend, and the Dolphin didn't have a good run till the very end of April. But I do believe we will keep our excellent Sailfish season into April and if you fish further offshore, good Sailfishing should continue into May.

This week was a bit rough, which limited the amount of people that should have been out there. Fishing in 4-6 foot seas on the reef and wrecks I was able to keep my clients thinking about their next bite instead of their stomachs. The wrecks were very active with Muttons, Groupers, and Amberjacks. Using vertical jigs and live bait you were very likely to stay very busy with multiple double headers and line screaming off of the fifty pound spinners I use for dropping. I find that most people are more comfortable with spinners and you can let beginners who are enthusiastic about fishing get experience with a fishing combo that is user friendly. I had a charter this week where catching Blue Runners became a challenge for them, but after filling the well with Blue Runners they were able to try for the big ones on a little bit bigger tackle. After bouncing around out there we lost two anglers to seasickness, but the other two caught some slob Amberjacks on a lighter combo. Women especially, find lighter tackle easier even though it might take longer to land a big fish, you need to have some common sense to understand that most women are not as strong as men and to use heavy tackle with strong drags is just not going to happen. So next time when

you are out there dropping for Amberjacks and other bottom fish, give the lady a spinner and make her day.

The reef has been ok. Yellowtails have been biting somewhat, but the lack of current has really affected the bite. They have been hitting softly and closer to the bottom due to the dirty water and lack of current. Yellowtails are funny sometimes, but it makes complete sense. If the water is dirty the Yellowtail will not come up high in the water column for the one reason, they need to see the bottom. If they have a hard time seeing the bottom they will hold deeper in the water column. Sometimes when they are really hungry they will come up and go down, never staying on top. When your school of Yellowtail won't come up, you will lose more fish due to their ability to find something to wrap your line around since they are so close to the bottom. They can be smart by swimming towards the boat but diving deeper as they find something to hang you up on. The other reason when the Yellowtails get hard to get to the boat, they are deeper in the water column because the threat of being eaten by Sharks and Kingfish increases with every ten feet down. As the fish struggles on the line the Kings and Sharks are able to pick these fish out and eat them with ease. Even dolphin (flipper) will take their fair share of your fish while you're out there Yellowtailing.

Sailfishing has been ok, with some captains getting 3-7 releases, and capturing some big Kings in the 20-30 pound range. Lots of schooling Kings from 8-12 pounds have been swarming around some of the wrecks in 130-180 feet of water. Using vertical jigs, live bait and dead bait has been working really well. You can also get out off the edge of the reef and troll with down riggers or weights and have a blast catching Kingfish. They might not be very good to eat, but I do enjoy catching them. They are one of our sport fish that most people overlook. If you use the right tackle these toothy critters are sure to pull hard and test your tackle, especially if you're using light tackle. Fishing for Kings in the kite is so much fun. This is by far some of the most exciting ways to Kingfish as they skyrocket twenty feet into the air with the bait in their mouth. If you have ever bass fished using top-water plugs, the excitement you get when the fish busts your floating lure, making a big splash and surprising you at the same time, is what drives these fisherman to stick with it. The same thing with kite fishing for Kings, the surprise aerial attacks and their strikes are the number one reason for fishing this way.

Have a great week, get out there and have some fun. Try something new this week, like kite fishing for Kings, while we have this weather!



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Patrick Stevens (Yellowtail) and Jeremy Wheaton (Amberjack and Kingfish) to go along with their sailfish and other mixed bag on a Noreaster trip this week with Capt. Nick Borraccino.




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