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**On The Cover:** This 2019 Captain and Owner's Guide is perhaps the most comprehensive sportfishing resource ever published. We hope you enjoy it.

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## Our Mission

InTheBite, founded in 2002, is the source for substance and authentic content for the serious offshore sportfishing community. We are the curator of industry trends, boatbuilding, ownership, lifestyle, crew, employment, tournaments and more. We provide access to the highest level of sportfishing across a variety of media channels – print magazine, website, video and social media platforms. If you like sportfishing, you'll love InTheBite – we guarantee it.

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## Boats are Cool



**W**e write an editor letter every issue. These things usually describe an article or theme within the magazine, or maybe a trip or experience that made writing

it possible. Being that this is a special edition, we thought we'd do the same—describe the captain pay survey or how and why we hope all of the information contained herein is important. Every time we sat down to write that version of the letter, it seemed boring and redundant.

We tried something different—to provide value within context. We thought we'd describe why information on boat ownership and careers in sportfishing is important in practical terms. So here he goes...here's why we are excited about a captain and owner's guide, in its most basic form.

Sportfishing boats are cool. They are supposed to be fun, working on them shouldn't suck. A captain's job, when properly executed, gives the rare opportunity to combine passion and livelihood. Many people hate their jobs, resent what makes their living, and spend their

work lives dreaming of retirement. A career in fishing is (*or at least should be*) different.

Owning and operating a sportfishing boat is similarly amazing. Think about it... When properly directed and organized, a boat becomes a vehicle that makes dreams come true. Fishing how you want, where you want is an amazing thing. Spending quality time with family and friends chasing blue marlin and eating as much lobster and grouper as you feel like catching is something that most can only dream of. Sure, a boat is a hell of an investment, but when it comes to closing a business deal or impressing the client you've been chasing, there aren't many more powerful tools in the arsenal.

Then there's the travel piece. For most people, the only way to cruise around tropical islands is to book a ticket or two on a cruise ship. This isn't all bad, don't get me wrong...between ducking outbreaks of bird flu and trying not to have to play bingo the whole time, how can that be bad. Two hundred years ago, if a young guy wanted adventure he could go west and do something on the frontier. These days, however, opportunities for making an exciting living are few and far between. Unless that is, you work in sportfishing.

Sure, as the saying goes, not all that glitters is gold. Making a career in sportfishing comes with hard work and its share of sacrifices. Likewise, owning a boat is not all unicorns and but-

terflies. There are thousands of moving parts and unexpected expenses are par for the course. When it comes to ownership and employment within the sportfishing space, a serious commitment is required. To make it work, and to justify the required investment of time, money and energy, a certain amount of passion is required. After all, if you were only in it for a fish fry, you'd be better off going to Red Lobster.

Therein lies the reason we have been so excited about making this Captain and Owner's Guide. Boats are cool. Whether you own one, work on one, or just really enjoy being around (or reading about) them, it is our hope that the information in this guide will make the experience better.

How would you gage this as a practical take-away? It is our hope that the compilation of years of knowledge and expertise taken from some of the industry's best can make the sportfishing experience more fulfilling. You know, the whole—Less wishing, more fishing... Less squealing, more reeling... Less nag, more drag... type thing.

Boats are cool.

Elliott Stark  
Editor-in-Chief

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## Double Zero: The Importance of Hiring a Crew



By Captain  
Scott "Fraz" Murie

**D**ouble zero is the term we have used in this business for as long as I can remember. It stands for owner/operator, or boats with no crews. Having a boat without a dedicated crew doesn't make sense. The owners of these boats may think they are saving money by hiring a wash down and wax crew to keep their boats shiny two days a month. Some owner/operators think that's all there is to it!

Some of these owner/operators don't seem to realize just how much more there is to maintaining a fifty, sixty, or seventy-foot sportfish boat. On numerous occasions, I've witnessed double zeros come down to the dock with their friends and guests to use their boat. The boat is clean and shiny, but for some reason it won't crank. Maybe one engine cranks, but the other one won't. Or, the AC is not working, and it's hot as blazes on the inside.

Maybe the pumps have burnt up because the sea strainer has been clogged for days, or the water manifold is leaking because of elec-

trolysis. Maybe the bilge is full of water, bonding wires are broken, or the water maker won't work for lack of maintenance. The ice maker may be tripping the breaker or the windless is frozen from lack of maintenance. You get the picture! (Turns out that keeping a sportfisher in working order can be a full-time job—or full-time jobs for three people!)

These are just a few of the many systems on the boat that need continual maintenance. The sad part is now the owner and all his friends are standing around on the dock in hopes that a crew from another boat can help him get his boat up and running so they can go have fun. All the money he thought he was saving just goes into repairs that could have been avoided if he had a good crew. Maybe he wants to just drive the boat? I say go ahead and drive the boat, but keep a good crew on so when you come down it's drivable. Also, remember one of the top customers for prop shops are owner/operators!

In my opinion, at the very least, you should have one full-time captain on the payroll. That said, it sure makes it tough for one man to be left in charge—especially if

the boat is being moderately used. Using freelance mates is an option; however, there have been several situations I've seen where the owner calls and wants to go fishing or use the boat for business or pleasure, and the captain is left scrambling to find help because everyone is busy. If you are going to operate a boat like this, it is a must to schedule your fishing and boating events well in advance so the captain can book freelance help. Even then that can backfire.

With a good crew on board you will save time and frustration but, of course, that only happens when the crew is "good." That's a whole other story. With a hired crew, you'll catch more fish with less headache for sure. We haven't even talked about the safety issues being an owner/operator. Bottom line is if you can't afford a full-time professional crew, you might want to consider putting your boat up for sale and chartering until things improve. From my perspective, the cost of hiring a full-time crew for a sportfish boat should be considered not a luxury item, but part of the operating cost of the boat itself—like dockage, fuel, and everything else that you *need* for things to work properly.

— *That's my two-minute warning. Fraz*



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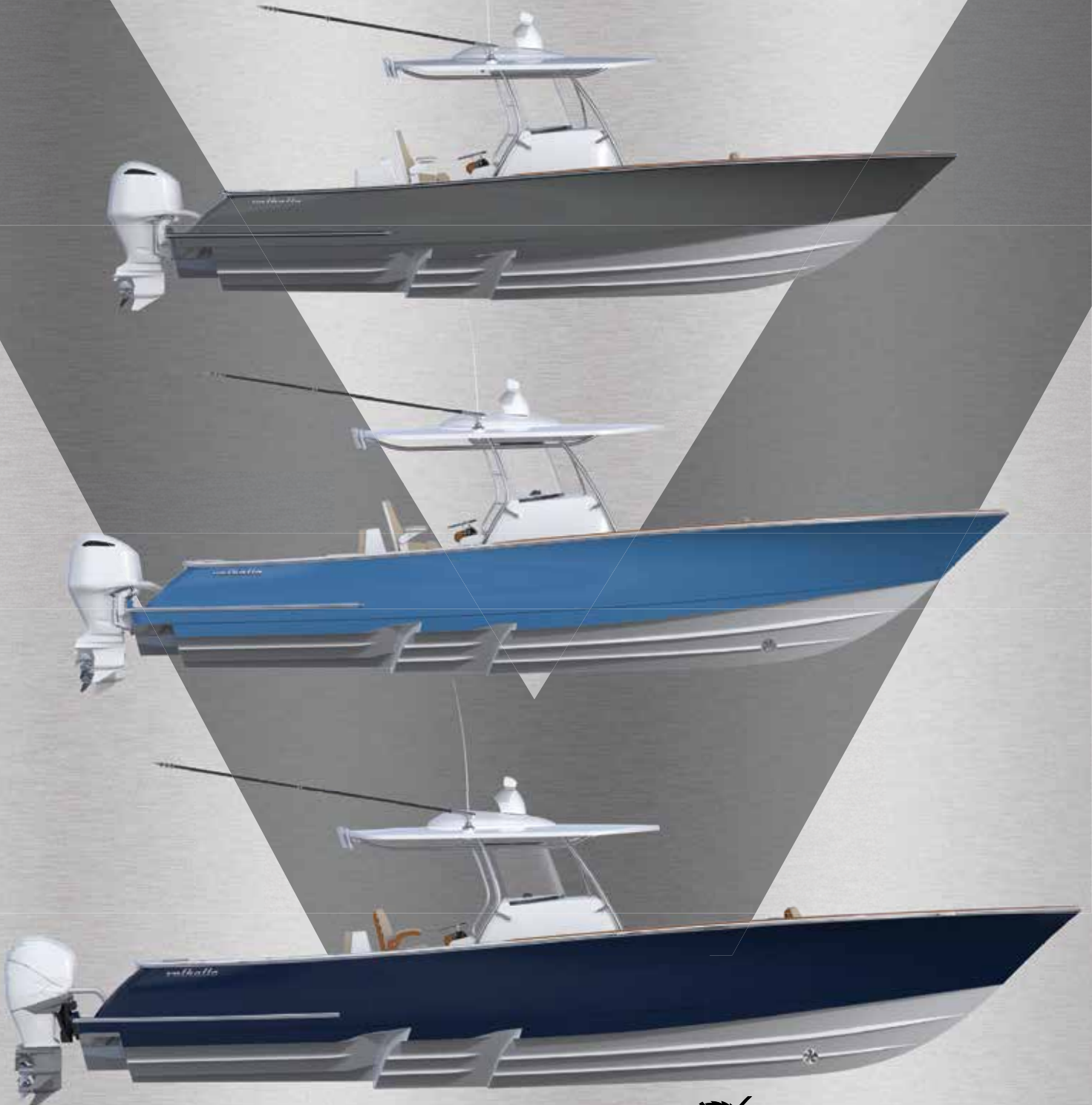
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## Attributes to Look For in a Long Term Business Relationship



By Alexandra Stark  
Licensed Psychotherapist

In order to sustain a long term and healthy business relationship, all the stars must align perfectly. Salary must meet the high end of industry standards and there must be at least two months of paid vacation each year...just joking. Unless you are reading the Millennial Hiring Guide, the expectation that everything will always be perfect at work is unrealistic. While there is rarely perfect alignment or story book professional romances, there are many ways to discern how to a partnership may play out.

For a partnership to be successful, both parties must put in work—at the front end (before signing on the dotted line) and along the way. The boat owner may want to pay close attention to the type of captain he is looking for and the skill and experience level required for the job. An owner who plans extensive travel and high end tournament campaign will have different needs than one who plans to keep the boat behind the house most of the year, with a hand full of fun trips mixed in. While there is no right or

wrong program for you and your boat, understanding your plans will allow you to relay them to captain prospects—and find the best match. The best long term captain/owner relationships generally involve captains and owners who are equally committed to an passionate about the program (as opposed to ones where the captain feels he is travelling more than anticipated or not getting to fish enough).

Both boat owners and captains should also pay attention to compatibility of values personally and professionally. A captain is a person who will be around you and your family, friends and guests and it's important to understand how your captain will operate in a diverse set of situations. The owner is the person who stakes your livelihood—and someone you will inevitably spend quite a bit of time with. Having compatible world views and value sets really goes a long way toward making the relationship enriching and successful.

As a boat captain, you should also be vested in learning as much as possible about the boat owner and the operation that he or she envisions. Receiving clear expectations about travel, salary, benefits, job expectations are the way to go. It is crucial for the captain to understand the owner's

intentions and ensure that the captain is a good fit for that particular boat.

Once the particulars are worked out, there are several ways to nurture the relationship:

**1. Open and authentic communication:** I know what you are thinking... “No way, not going to happen.” I promise, it's not so bad. AND you may find that you like it more than you think. The foundation of any professional relationship is trust. If you can find a way to build that—it will make a world of difference for any barrier that may pop up along the way.

**2. Frequent feedback:** This is where the trust part comes in. If you have a trusting professional relationship with your owner/captain, you will be able to give/get the feedback that you both need to run a successful operation.

**3. Learning from each other:** There is nothing worse than doing the same thing over and over until you retire—or die. Learning new skills or techniques is what keeps professional life interesting and exciting. Part of being able to learn new techniques—in fishing or anything else—is having an environment that encourages practice and experimentation, while allowing for a few tangles along the way.

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## Considering a Career in the Captain's Chair? Know This



By Captain  
Kevin Deerman

**R**unning a sportfishing operation is a great way to make a living doing what we love to do. As captains, we get to fish and travel to new places, making many new friends along the way. As glamorous as this may sound, it also comes with many sacrifices. It can be tough on relationships whether it be with wives or girlfriends or family and friends. We spend a lot of time away from home, and even when we are home, we have no set 9-5 days or weekends off. For anyone out there thinking of pursuing a career as a sportfishing captain, here are a few things that may be helpful to know as you plan your future.

**1. Don't try to jump up on the bridge too quickly.** The more experience you gain as a mate, the better captain you will be. While the electronics we have today, and the many conveniences made possible by modern technology, it may look easy to go pretty much anywhere. When things arise—and they always do, nothing beats experience.

**2. Always work hard.** Even when the owner isn't around, other captains and crews recognize good work ethics. They may be the one recommending you for your next job.

**3. Keep good daily logs.** Good work logs, fish logs and cruising logs not only help you stay organized, but also keep a record for any questions the boss may have. Good logs are also appealing to potential buyers, should the boat be listed for sale at a later time.

**4. Help others out when possible.** Anytime you can help other crews, be it with an extra hand, spare parts, fishing or travel knowledge, etc., doing so is a good idea. Not only will they always be more than happy to reciprocate in the future, but you never know when you might need a hand yourself.

**5. Have good communication with owner.** Staying in touch with the boss keeps everyone on the same page and prevents any surprises from coming up. It's always better to deal directly with the owner versus going through one or two other people.

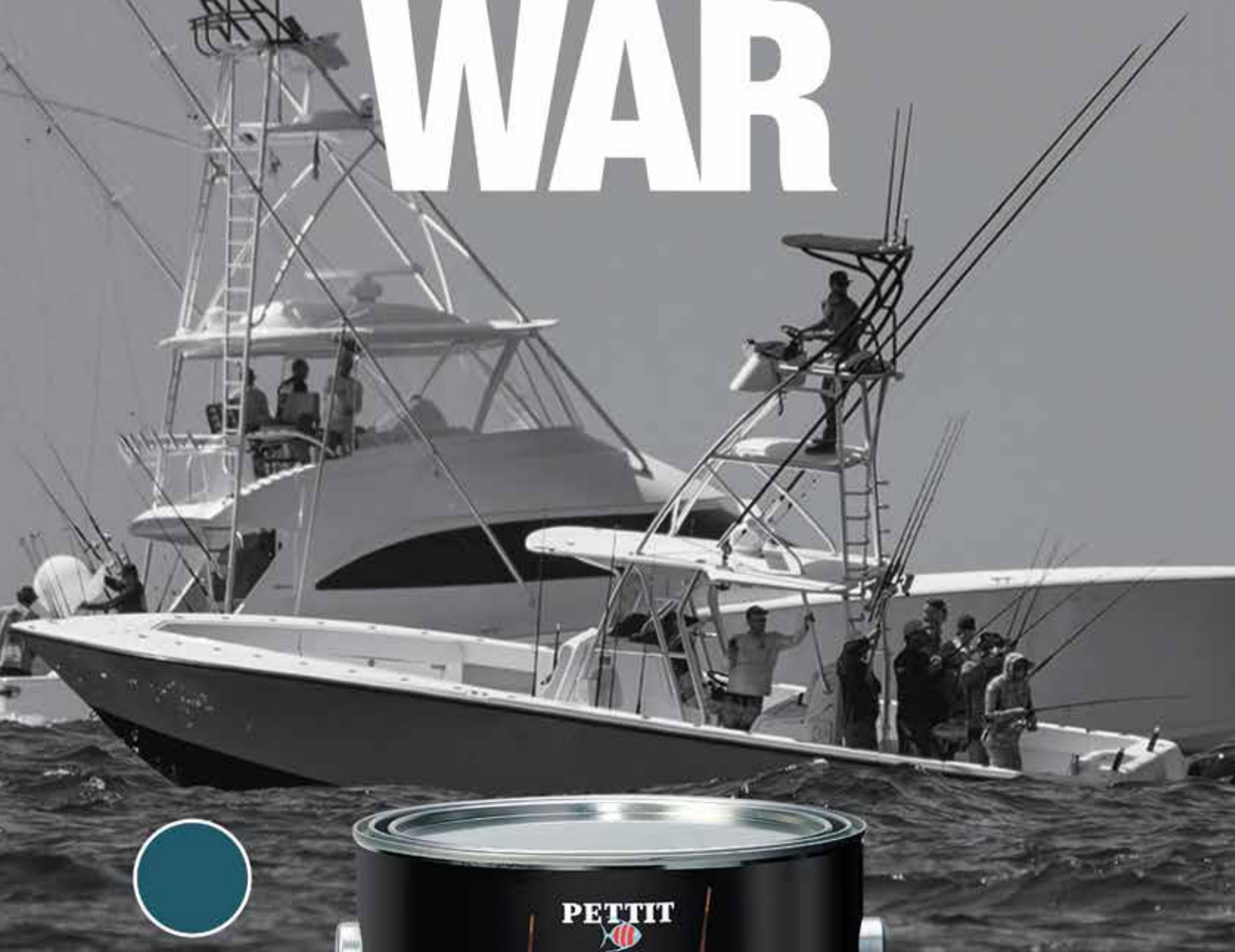
**6. Always stay humble.** There are many great captains and talented fishermen in our business. For those humble enough to ask, these are great sources of perspective who would gladly give advice and answer any questions.

**7. Try not to jump around too much.** If you are interested in a certain program, do plenty of research beforehand and make sure it's something that you will be able to commit to for a reasonable amount of time.

**8. Be safe.** The captain's job comes with a lot of responsibility not only for the safety of a multimillion-dollar boat, but most importantly, your passengers and crew.

— That's the report from Texas!

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# COMPENSATION OF CAPTAIN AND CREW

In spite of the size of the investment and the responsibility of those at the helm, the sportfishing industry all too often lacks the standard compensation packages for captains and crew. Beyond the variability in boat size between operations, there are general differences in compensation between regions. With all of these differences, and

the fact that owner/captain financial arrangements are generally kept between the two parties, how does a captain or crewmember know what is fair? How does an owner or prospective owner, who may be new to the sport, know what amounts to adequate compensation? When it comes to tournament winnings, what is the normal

breakdown of the split to the crew?

To answer these important questions, we have hit the docks and performed the research. The information enclosed in these articles results from speaking directly with experienced captains and owners on the subject. *InTheBite* is the only source for information of this type.

# CAPTAIN'S PAY SURVEY

**I**n 2012, *InTheBite* published a first of its kind survey of trends in captain's pay. Since its publication, this article has been perhaps the most oft-requested in the history of the magazine. Several times per month somebody emails or calls to order the article. The 2012 version was based on dockside surveys of owners at a tournament in the Bahamas.

As perhaps the centerpiece of the 2019 Captain and Owner's Guide, we have revisited the subject more thoroughly than ever. What follows may well be the most comprehensive resource on captain's pay and associated employment variables ever published. We surveyed 51 boat owners with 10 questions designed to provide an accurate representation of how captains are compensated

in relation to boat size, region, amount of travel and other attributes. The survey also provides insights into crew share of tournament winnings, benefits offered, mate hiring policy and other related variables.

We hope that the results from the survey may be useful to captains, owners and mates. In spite of all of that goes into owning and running a sportfishing operation, there is

surprisingly little information available on the subject of captain's compensation. While this is by no means a definitive guide to how much anyone should or should not be paid, the reports provide a point of reference for important information that can be sensitive to ask of others and that is not available in other places.

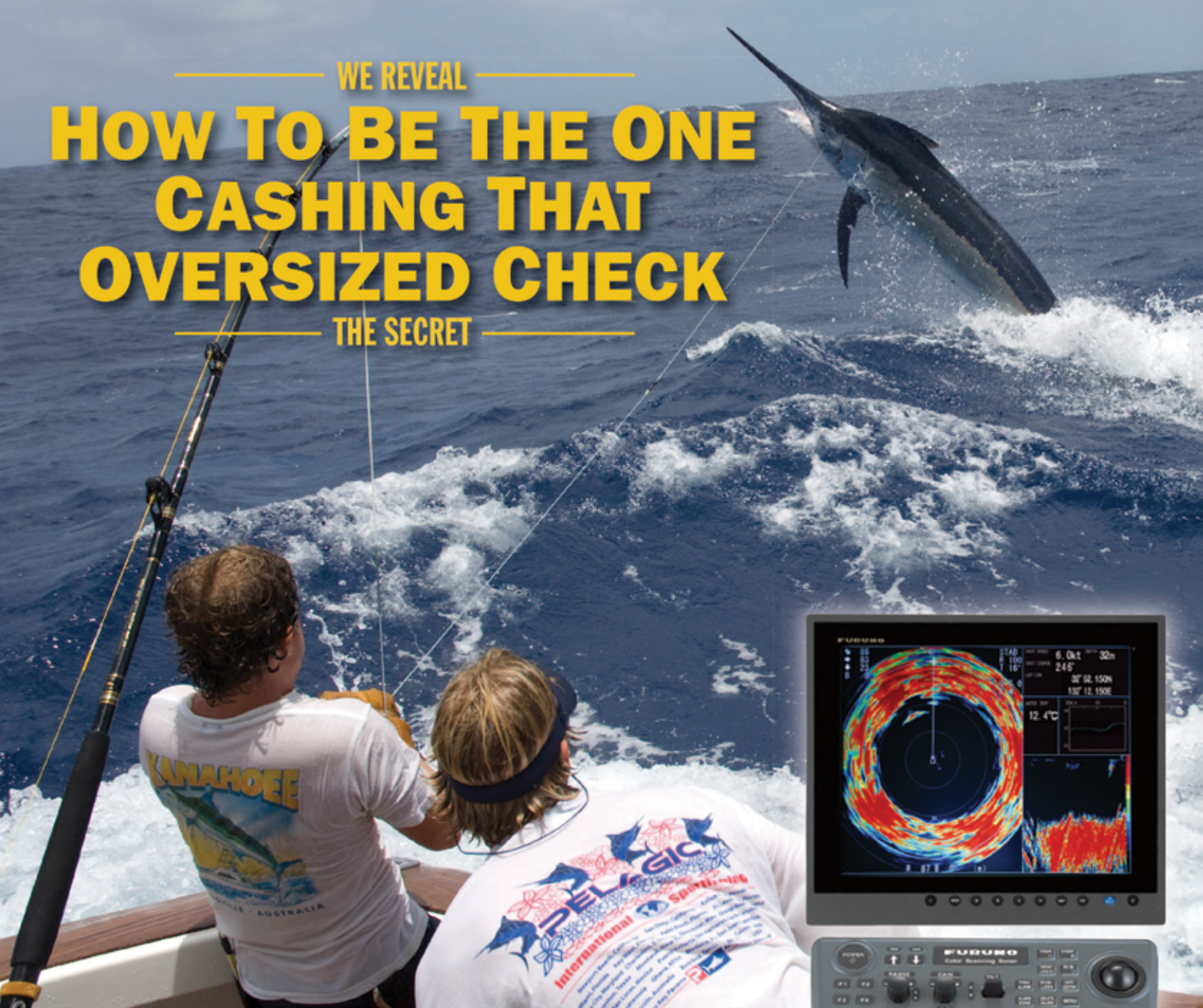
*InTheBite* would like to thank the owners who participated. While the inputs are anonymous (and the survey was designed so that it is not possible to guess who they may be by their responses), only vetted, actual owners of sportfishing operations are included in the input. You can be assured that the responses were not skewed by any keyboard commandos or anyone hoping to drive up the average to leverage themselves a raise.

Without further ado, here's the 2019 *InTheBite* Captain's Pay Survey.

WE REVEAL

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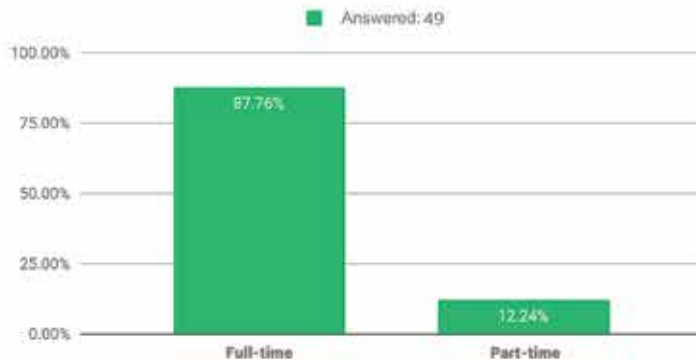
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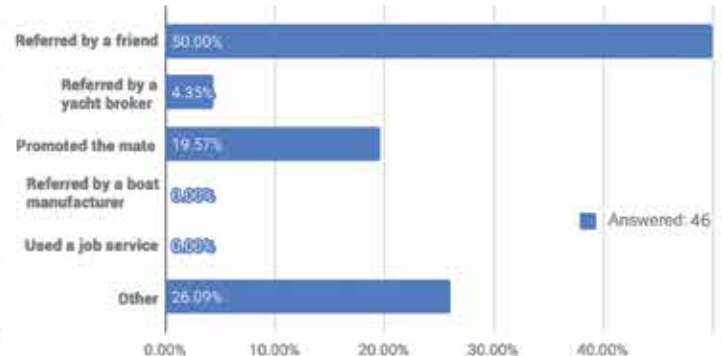
# INTHEBITE 2019 CAPTAIN'S

**InTheBite would like to thank the owners who participated. While the inputs are anonymous (and the survey was designed so that it is not possible to guess who they may be by their responses), only vetted, actual owners of sportfishing operations are included in the input.**

## Is your captain full-time or part-time?



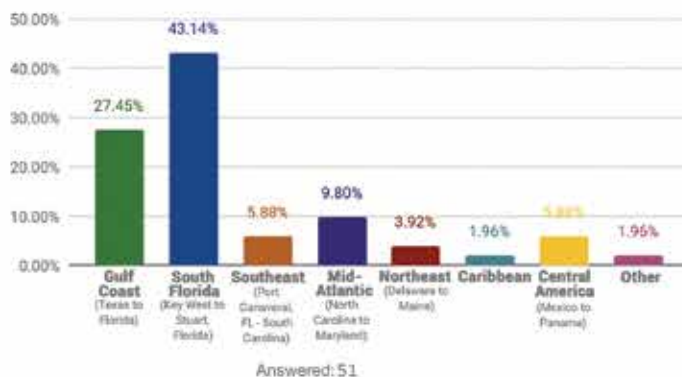
## Where did you find your captain?



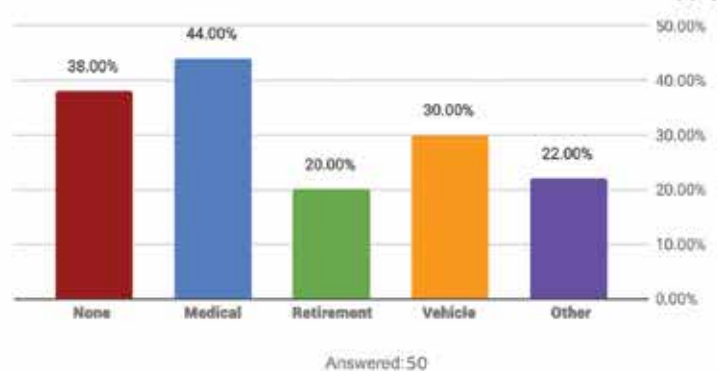
## What is the size of your boat?



## Where is your boat's homeport?



## Do you offer benefits to your captain? (Check all that apply)

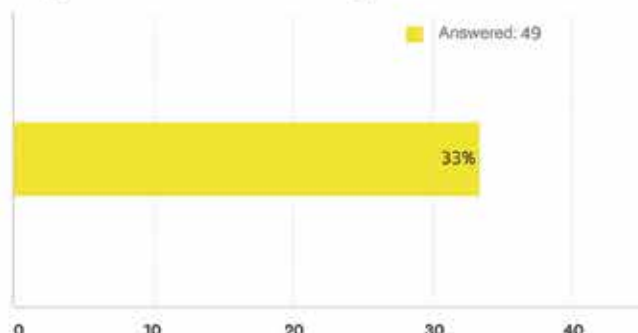


# PAY SURVEY

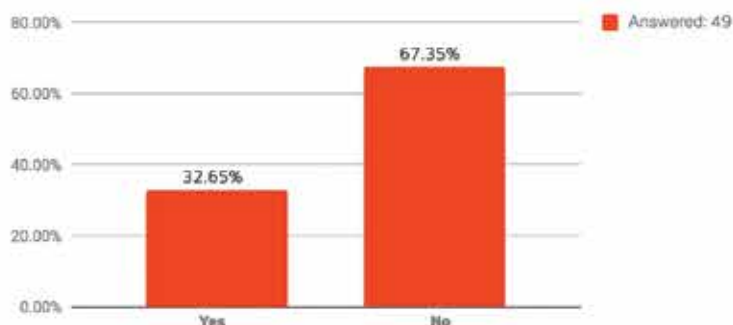
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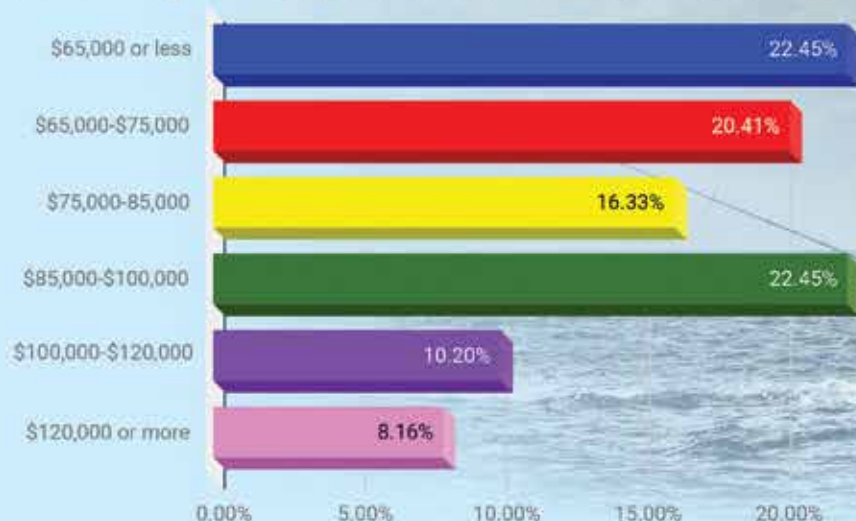
**What percentage of tournament winnings is given to the crew on your boat?**



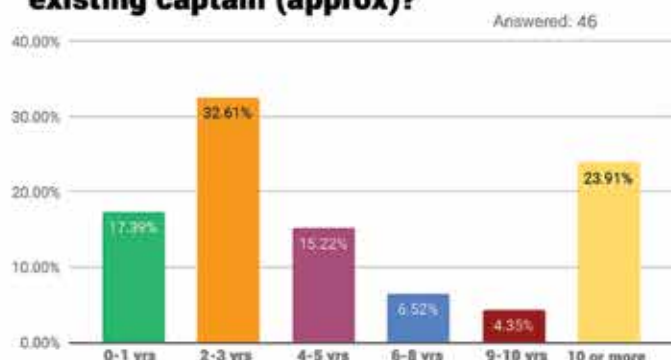
**Do you deduct tournament/boat expenses before allocating the crew's share of tournament winnings?**



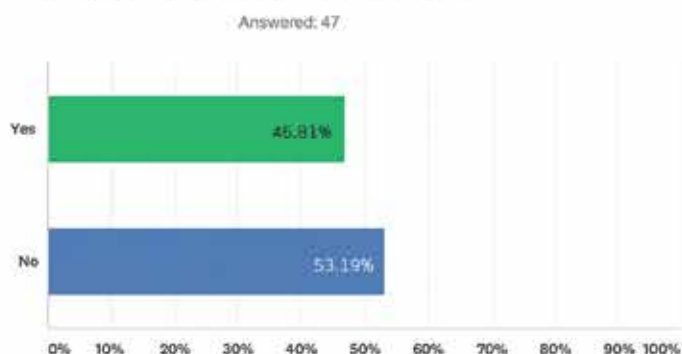
**What is your captain's annual base salary?**



**How long have you employed your existing captain (approx)?**



**Do you have a full-time mate?**





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# THE NUMBERS GAME

## A Crew's Fair Share of Tournament Winnings

Originally published in December 2014

### *InTheBite* Staff Report

**I**t happens every season. At some point, there is always a captain or crewmember who feels they did not receive a fair share of their team's tournament prize money. With that in mind, *InTheBite* performed research on the subject of a crew's percentage. What's fair? What's too little, or too much?

We conducted extensive interviews with some of the sport's top owners and captains and the results were...interesting. For those who compete in tournaments with more than a pickle dish at stake, it's a subject that's near and dear to both hearts and wallets. The percentage of prize money that's awarded to the captain and crew can range from zero to 100 percent. Generally, however, the crew's take falls somewhere in the middle.

Not surprisingly, the owners interviewed for this feature wanted to keep their input off the record. These anonymous owners felt, understandably, that the financial arrangements between themselves and their crews were private matters. To respect their privacy while representing the owner's perspective, this article includes owners' input while not listing their names or the boats they own.

### The Agreement Disagreement

Capt. Rob Stalcup has been around the tournament scene for quite a while. When he jumped on a boat earlier this year, he looked

forward to fishing a few East Coast events. He led the team to a couple high-profile wins but was disappointed to learn that his expectations for tournament pay and those of his owner were quite different when it came to the crew's percentage.

"I've always been paid off the winning number," he says. "So, I was blown away when the owner took out not only the calcutta entry but all the expenses relating to the tournament: bait, fuel, entry money and everything else. In my case, the owner was clear with the percentages, just not which number he was taking the percentages from." And Stalcup certainly isn't alone. This is one of the most common misunderstandings that happens between captains and owners – deciding on what the percentage should be and what, if any, expenses are deducted from any winnings. So, what's a fair percentage?

### Geography Matters

Part of this equation depends on where you happen to be fishing. It's understandable



that fuel is going to be a much larger expense for the guys fishing for three days, 150 miles out in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico. Compare this to those in Stuart, Florida where the hot sailfish bite may be less than ten miles from the dock.

The owner of a high-profile East Coast charterboat who tournament fishes all over the world uses a fairly straightforward method of determining the winning percentage for his crew. "Rather than get things too complicated, we pay 20 percent right off the top of anything we win," he says. "Think of it



Photo courtesy Gary Graham

like a tip in a restaurant: you give 20 percent for good service. This way, the captain and mate know exactly what their winning share would be. If there's \$100,000 in the pool then their split would be \$20,000."

The owner also says he does not deduct the cost of fuel from any winnings. "I want the captain to go where he feels that he needs to in order to be competitive and give us a shot at winning," he says. "We've always had an open policy on fuel – you burn what you need to burn to catch fish." In tournaments with smaller prizes, he says the team chips in for

additional tips for the captain and crew as well.

Over in the Gulf, it's a different ballgame altogether. Teams usually spend several days prepping the boat, loading extra fuel, groceries and supplies and generally getting everything ready to spend several nights at sea. The days are long but the nights even more so with rounds of helm watches and little sleep. Throw in bad weather and it can be a real kick in the groin. Though the work may be hard, the rewards can also be significant: several Gulf Coast tournaments offer prize money that runs deep into the six figures. Even a big

tuna or dolphin can be worth over \$100,000. One smile from Lady Luck can make all the work well worth it for captain and crew.

So how do the Gulf guys work the split? Capt. Jimmy Crochet says his current owner rewards the team with 30 percent off the top. "I've worked for owners who take out expenses, entry fees and calcutta bets in the past, and I'd say that 30 percent after expenses is probably the norm. We are fortunate that we have a terrific owner that takes great care of us," he says. "I think it's very generous, and we are very appreciative

of this.” Crochet splits the money equally among his two mates although he is aware of some captains who take a larger percentage for themselves and split the remaining ten to 15 percent between the mates.

Capt. Myles Colley is another Gulf Coast veteran who’s had a great run in 2014 with several top tournament finishes along the way. He says, “On our boat, the crew gets 30 percent after expenses, which includes the fuel used to travel to and from a tournament plus what we use fishing; the entry and calcutta fees and the slip if we go to another marina. We have a three-man crew: my first mate and I get an equal share and our second mate gets a smaller share.”

### Full Time vs. Walk On

So, what about teams that add additional help for tournaments – what’s a fair percentage to pay a walk-on mate or hired gun in the cockpit or tower? Capt. Tony Carrizosa fishes with a big crew down in Los Sueños, one that frequently includes several extra hands come tournament time. He correctly feels that the full-time guys should have a larger percentage of any winnings, with a smaller share going to the walk-on mates and tower spotters.

“The full-time guys are the ones doing the maintenance and upkeep on the boat, not just showing up in the morning before a tournament and hopping onboard.” When it comes to splitting any winnings, he says, “On the one hand, you have to keep the crew happy and motivated to win, but on the other hand the owner has to be happy as well. He’s the one paying not only for the boat but for all the other big nut expenses like entry fees, fuel and more. I think a 60/40 split after expenses is fair, but every situation is different.”

### The Tax Man Cometh

Many tournament veterans will remember the days when a team’s winnings came in the form of a brown paper bag full of dead presidents. For the most part those days are long gone. Hit a home run today and you’d better believe that Uncle Sam will want his share.

Capt. Scott Murie says that some owners will take the initial hit from the IRS and then will reimburse the crews in an after-tax payment. Others give the crews their share and leave that responsibility up to them. “The tax issue can be a big one,” he says. “We have some tournaments here in the Gulf where the winning tuna can be worth \$180,000, the winning dolphin can be \$150,000 and the biggest blue marlin \$500,000 or more. The IRS is all over it.” Murie feels that for

“I’ve always been paid off the winning number. So, I was blown away when the owner took out not only the calcutta entry but all the expenses relating to the tournament: bait, fuel, entry money and everything else. In my case, the owner was clear with the percentages, just not which number he was taking the percentages from.”

most Gulf Coast teams, 30 percent of the winnings is about average but the big factor is whether the major expenses are deducted from that amount or not. Even if you win cash, you’re supposed to declare that amount on your taxes at the end of the year (and that’s our annual public service announcement).

### More Splits

One owner who fishes a number of high-profile international tournaments feels that it’s fair to take out the cost of the jackpot entry and then give the crew 30 percent of any winnings after that. “Our deal has been the same for years – if we win \$50,000 and the jackpot entry is \$10,000 then I give them 30 percent of the \$40,000 that’s left in the pot. If we’re having a good year, or I feel that the guys are really putting forth some extra effort, then I’ll kick in extra from time to time as well.”

Tony Carrizosa provides details about owners who fish a circuit of tournaments like the Bisbee’s, with multiple events that are literally back to back. “Some owners want to lump all the expenses together and then deduct that from anything you win. You could not place in the first two and then win \$100,000 in the last one and not even break even with expenses.” So, if you’re committed to fishing a series, be sure to understand whether or not each event is treated as an individual expense.

A top South Florida owner with a long track record of tournament fishing success prefers a different methodology when it comes to the split. “When we win money in a tournament and the amount is less than the total tournament expenses, I do not deduct any expenses. I then distribute 85 percent to

the crew and 15 percent to the boat, which is set up as a corporate account. When the winnings are equal to or up to twice the overall expenses, then I deduct the portion of the tournament and/or calcutta entry to which the winnings can be attributed, with 85 percent to the crew and 15 percent to the boat. If we win more than twice the expenses, then I deduct the expenses from the winnings with an 85/15 split.”

This owner states that having a set agreement in place reduces the amount of uncertainty and confusion that can occur. “I’ve been fishing with the same guys for over 25 years and the last thing we want is an argument over money,” he says. “It’s always best to under promise and over deliver.”

### The Money Talk

The key to any understanding is that the terms of the agreement are clear to all parties involved. Many captains, including some of those interviewed for this feature, had been disappointed with past arrangements. Their disappointments were due in large part to not knowing exactly what would or should be fairly deducted from tournament winnings. In a perfect world, this agreement would take the form of a written document signed by the owner, captain and crew.

Too many times, however, captains are reluctant to have an open discussion about tournament winnings with the boss. These captains figure they’ll just cross that bridge when they come to it. At the very least, the captain and owner should compose an email outlining what they feel is a fair plan to disburse any money the team should win. Having something in writing before the event provides everyone involved the opportunity to agree (or disagree) with the arrangement. When it comes to money talk, it’s better to be upfront than to wait until it’s time to split a couple hundred thousand dollars. Avoid the disappointment and resentment: have the talk and put it in writing.

### The Industry Average Crew Split

Is there an industry standard for tournament percentages? The research revealed that the crew’s percentage is around 30 percent on the average. The big difference from team to team lies in which, if any, expenses are deducted from the total before the split. For some it’s zero expenses and for others it’s everything relating to the tournament (and possibly from previous tournaments as well). While every situation is different, what can be said for sure: the arrangement should be clarified long before lines in.

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# AN OWNER'S GUIDE TO MAKING MONEY WITH YOUR BOAT

Originally published in December 2018

by Elliott Stark

**Y**ou've heard them. You must have... After all, there are just so many... "How do you wind up with a little money in the fishing business? Start with a lot..." "BOAT – bust out another thousand." "If you have to ask how much it costs, you probably can't afford it." The ability of boats to eat money is legendary. It has spawned jokes, t-shirts, and bumper stickers of all kind. Rather than being simply fairy tales made up out of thin air, these sayings reflect a level of truth – boats can certainly be expensive.

There are, however, a select group of individuals who are able to consistently use their boats to generate income. The following is a look at several strategies used successfully by boat owners

to make money with their boats. With apologies to the owner/operator of the charter program, this view looks into a few less commonly practiced scenarios for boat-driven money making.

## **Boat Economics 101 and the Case for Boat Management**

One popular avenue to generate revenue with a boat is to leave the boat at a popular charter destination and enter into a yacht management agreement. Under this scenario, the boat owner hires a third-party company to take care of the boat and book charters on it. The revenue made by chartering the boat can offset the cost of boat



ownership, while allowing owners to fish aboard while they are in town. There are some definite advantages to this approach.

Before you can wrap your mind around how to use your boat to generate income, it helps to understand the expenses associated with keeping and operating a vessel. As owner of Maverick Yachts and a principal of Maverick Costa Rica, Larry Drivon understands the economic variables associated with boat ownership from three separate perspectives. He is a boat owner, he owns a boat building operation and is involved in yacht management as well.

"There are three operating expense cate-

gories. The first are fixed costs. You incur these even if you never leave the dock. These include insurance, crew, dockage, painting, etc. Next there are daily costs that arise when you use the boat. These include fuel, ice, bait, food, drinks and everything related to running the boat. Finally, there are hourly costs," Drivon relates.

For the hourly cost category, Maverick Costa Rica uses two inputs – hours between oil changes and an engine reserve. For a 36' Maverick walk around, the oil change figure comes out to \$2.00 per hour. The engine reserve, which factors the average hourly cost between engine rebuilds, is \$8.75. Therefore,

the factored cost is \$10.75 for every hour that the boat runs.

"People consistently forget reserves for maintenance," Drivon says. Neglecting to include this into the balance sheet can artificially inflate the profit margin – until you get hit with an astronomical repair bill that eats all the money you thought you made by chartering the boat. From Maverick's perspective, the maintenance reserves are a line item in the fixed expense category.

"The charter deal is not as simple as people think it might be," Drivon continues. "First you need to determine whether you are trying to make money or trying to offset expenses. Before you decide on either perspective, you need to know what it's going to cost. That's the first thing."

"Most people who own a charter boat don't plan on being the hands-on manager. That leaves two options. You can work with a management company or can opt for captain and crew management," Drivon says. "At Maverick we charge \$650 per month to manage the boat. That's turn key. It includes all of the work with municipalities, taxes and fees, and proper licenses. Owners get a monthly profit and loss statement and a quarterly balance sheet. Management consists of a booking staff (for charters) and a representative on the dock every morning to make sure to get people on the right boats and to distribute food, etc. We also have a guy on the dock when the boat gets back in the afternoon."

Once you understand what is included in a management agreement and get a handle on the costs of boat ownership, it is time to determine how much a boat needs to work in order to break even. To do this, you simply compute your fixed costs (slip, insurance, crew salary, management fee, fishing tackle expense, and maintenance reserves). Next, determine an average daily expense rate per day of boat use. Then assign an average number of engine hours per day of charter fishing (generally 10 hours) and multiply it by the hourly expense rate. This will give you the daily input for your hourly expense category. Finally, assign the rate that you charge clients for a day of charter fishing – this figure is money coming in (everything else measures money going out).

Once you have the annual fixed cost number, inputs for the average daily cost and average hourly cost and the charter rate, you can begin multiplying everything by number of days chartered. For simplicity's sake, you can see what it would look like if you chartered 75 days, 100 days, 125 days and 150 days. Up until your breakeven point, the profit brought in by charter fishing is outweighed

# INTHEBITE'S BOAT ECONOMICS 101

How to determine when your boat makes money:

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>FIGURE 1</b><br><b>Fixed Costs</b><br>What you'll pay whether you leave the dock or not:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dockage</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Crew salary</li> <li>• Management fee</li> <li>• Tackle expense</li> <li>• Maintenance reserve</li> </ul> | <b>FIGURE 2</b><br><b>Daily Costs</b><br>What you pay in supplies each day you fish:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel</li> <li>• Ice</li> <li>• Bait</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Drinks</li> </ul> | <b>FIGURE 3</b><br><b>Hourly Cost x Average Number of Hours in a Charter Day</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil change</li> <li>• Engine reserve</li> </ul> | <b>FIGURE 4</b><br><b>Daily Charter Rate</b><br>What you charge the client. |
|---|---|--|---|

Determining your break even and beyond:

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>SCENARIO 1</b><br><b>75 Days Chartered</b><br><b>Expenses:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 1} + (\text{Fig. 2} \times 75) + (\text{Fig. 3} \times 75) =$<br><b>Revenue:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 4} \times 75 =$<br><b>Net = Revenue - Expenses</b> | <b>SCENARIO 2</b><br><b>100 Days Chartered</b><br><b>Expenses:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 1} + (\text{Fig. 2} \times 100) + (\text{Fig. 3} \times 100) =$<br><b>Revenue:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 4} \times 100 =$<br><b>Net = Revenue - Expenses</b> | <b>SCENARIO 3</b><br><b>125 Days Chartered</b><br><b>Expenses:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 1} + (\text{Fig. 2} \times 125) + (\text{Fig. 3} \times 125) =$<br><b>Revenue:</b><br>$\text{Fig. 4} \times 125 =$<br><b>Net = Revenue - Expenses</b> |
|---|---|---|

by the fixed costs of boat ownership.

At some point on the curve, there is a break-even – at which time the money you bring in by chartering your boat equals the expenses you shell out paying for all the expenses. From that point on, each day chartered generates income. Once you've got a handle on all of the numbers, think about your objective – making money or offsetting costs.

The breakeven point for the Maverick 36, using the company's management pro forma, is 112 days chartered per year. In 2017, the fleet managed by Maverick Costa Rica chartered an average of 180 trips – the low vessel was 177, the high was 183. Getting a grasp on the costs associated and revenue at different levels of charter activity are central to determining whether yacht management is the right course for you.

## Using Your Boat to Exploit Economic Opportunity

Based in Surfside, Texas, Captain Anthony Lopez is experienced in many types of sport-fishing operation. His next venture is one that is conceptualized to leverage the multiple layers of economic opportunity in the Gulf of Mexico. Lopez is currently building a 46' Mussel Ridge out of Maine. The Down East style boat has a large open deck and forward cabin. It is endowed with a 17' beams and the ability to cruise in the low 20s.

Lopez' vision in bringing this beast from the

Down East to Texas involves a hybrid model comprised of commercial and charter fishing activities. In many ways, Captain Johnny Walker and his 57' Blackwell, the *Kitana*, has blazed the trail for this type of endeavor. "It's a hybrid model that incorporates a little bit of several things that the boat can do – charters, corporate type meetings and three to five day long range trips in the Gulf," Lopez relates.

"Then there is the commercial fishing aspect. Ultimately, we'd like to be able to sell sustainably caught fish directly to restaurants. There is a diversity of opportunity in the Gulf – bottom fishing, reef fish, deepwater pelagics – the boat has a greenstick, day and night time swordfishing. We believe the hybrid model includes all the ingredients for a long term, successful family business."

"A lot of the traditional commercial boats are older and can only do five to 10 knots – they can only slow boat out. This is a converted lobster boat that can cruise at 20 knots, enabling us to take advantage of shorter weather windows," Lopez describes. This is a serious advantage when fishing the spring, fall and winter months in the Gulf. "The boat will be a work horse that folds 1,000 gallons of diesel. With a range of 800-miles and a Seakeeper to provide comfort for charters and safety when commercial fishing, it is a great foundation."

When it comes to making money, Captain Anthony plans for a diversified approach that

is flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. "We anticipate the revenue breakdown will likely be in the rage of 70/30 or 60/40 commercial to charter," he says. "The boat will tournament fish too – either chartered or privately funded entries. Texas and Louisiana tournaments, mainly."

## Selling Your Build Slot

There are some people who are able to make money on boats without ever splashing them. These days many builders are wait-listed for months or years. With more people looking for boats than boats available, those who are in the build process can turn their slot into cash. This scenario occurs most predictably when the demand for boats exceeds the supply and when people are spending money. It is as much a function of the economy as it is the quality and relative scarcity of high end sportfishers available.

Ritchie Howell has been building custom boats in North Carolina for a long time. He has seen a number of these scenarios first hand. "When things were booming, I had four boats going at once. I had a guy sell a slot for \$50,000 just to jump back two slots," Howell describes. "Another time we had just finished a boat and I begged the owner to put it in the boat show because I needed something to show. A guy from Texas came up to him and said he wanted to buy it. He said, 'It's in the boat show, it must be for sale. What will it take?' He wrote a number



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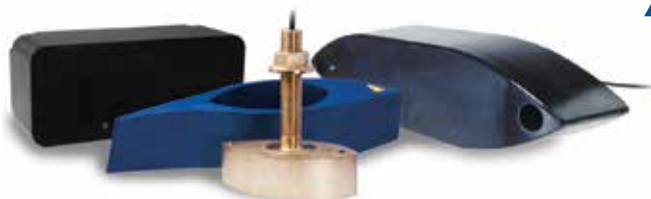
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on a piece of paper and gave it to the owner. It was a big number... and the guy was ready right there with a check. The owner got so mad, he got on a plane and left the boat show that afternoon."

"Most guys that go through the build process could make out pretty good, but they've waited so long they don't want to part with it. You can't mass produce custom boats," Howell says. There is another perhaps more popularly utilized method of turning boats into cash.

## Rehabbing and Flipping

While the term flipping the hull is generally used to describe the step in the build process when the boat first emerges from the shed, there are those who consistently turn a buck (and have a good time) rehabbing boats and flipping them. "When I was charter fishing, I used to buy boats that had been run into the ground. I'd fix them up and turn around and sell them," Howell says. "There is pretty good money in refurbishing something if you do it right."

Howell's latest refit project is a major one. He purchased the hull of the *Waste Knot*, the Buddy Cannady-built boat that famously sank on the show "Wicked Tuna." When the vessel hit something at speed, the collision knocked the rudders through the hull

and it sank 11-miles offshore of Oregon Inlet. Howell purchased the hull after the boat washed up on the beach. Howell has the boat at his shop and puts workers on it as he has time. While he has had offers to purchase the boat, once it is ready to go it will be a charter boat for his son.

While there are many tips and things to consider when actually fixing the boat, what should you look for in a prospective sportfish flipper? "I always looked for boats that perform well any way. Building styles change over time, so a lot of times there are ways to tighten up a boat. I'd look for boats that shove easy and are dry but may have been built with old techniques. I'd do things like put in stiff knees and cut out old frames and just stiffen the boat up," Howell describes.

"BC (Buddy Cannady) used to build a boat and then charter fish with it in the summer and commercial fish with it in the winter. He'd then sell the boat in the spring," Ritchie continues. "I'd do something similar. I'd buy an old boat and charter fish it. I'd fix it up over the winter and sell it. When I was doing it, I was about a boat every two years."

In addition to his background in boat building, Howell's position within the North Carolina charter fishing community helped with these projects. "Most of the time, I'd

know the history of the boat. What it could do and how it could perform," he says. "I'd look at some boats and they would have been too big of projects. You've really got to have a good foundation to work from."

"With the *Waste Knot*, I knew it's history and its performance, but also its weaknesses," he says. "I've cut out busted frames, took out old knees and glassed things back into place." The boat is progressing nicely. "I've actually had quite a few offers to buy it. If it were for anyone else but my son, I'd have sold it," Howell says with a laugh. Curious to see how refitting an older, worn out boat can revitalize a sportfisher? Check out Captain William Howell, who will be fishing the boat formerly known as *Waste Knot* out of Oregon Inlet Fishing Center.

## Conclusion

Have you ever wondered why so many sportfishing boats are named after owners' wives? Perhaps this is another reflection of how expensive boats can be. "She can't divorce me for buying the boat... Afterall, I named it after her!" All jokes, sayings and bumper stickers aside, boats can certainly cost quite a bit of money, but they can also be used to offset the cost of ownership or even make a bit of money.

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# BOAT MAINTENANCE AND BUDGETS

The time was, not too long ago, that the only way to build knowledge of what goes on in boat ownership was through experience. Taking your lumps, without knowing what all you could be in for, can get expensive in a hurry. Boat maintenance is an integral part of the ownership. Not performing maintenance when it is needed can turn small repairs into major catastrophes. Understanding all that goes into owning and operating a vessel is an important component to making sure the experience is fulfilling. Designed to provide insight and perspective, this section includes some of the best editorial on the topic—gleaned through *InTheBite's* 16 years in the business.

“Project Time,” an article by experienced Texas helmsman Captain Kevin Deerman details his yearly boat checklist. Incorporating this, or something like it, into your operation can be a wise move. We’ve also included an article by veteran broker Jamie MacGregor, of MacGregor Yacht Sales, that provides a comprehensive tally of all of the anticipated expenses that come with boat ownership.

Captain Steve Katz, Vice Chairman of Board of Directors of the National Marine Electronics Association and all-around technical guru, provides comprehensive list of spares to take bring when you take your boat off the beaten path in “Traveling Shoes.” Katz also

provides a reference guide that details many of the measurements and weights of many of the things universally found on boats. Do you know how much a gallon of diesel weighs? The “Captain’s Medical Guide” is written by Dr. David “Doc” Conkle, a heart surgeon with a passion for bluewater fishing (and decades of experience running his boats and practicing medicine). The article is a thorough breakdown of how to be prepared for, diagnose and treat a number of medical emergencies that could arise offshore.

We hope this section is informative and interesting. Reading it might even save you money and keep your operation running smoothly. Enjoy.

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# LOOKING PAST YOUR PURCHASE PRICE

## A Quick Look into the Cost of Ownership and Maintenance of a Sportfish Yacht

by **Jamie MacGregor,**  
**MacGregor Yachts**



**T**he cost of ownership in the sportfishing world is a hard topic to tackle. Budgets are in the eyes of the beholder. What do you plan to do with the vessel? How many days, weeks, or months will the boat be in use? Weekend fisherman and private family ventures are going to spend a drastically different amount than a serious tournament circuit participant. Budgets and costs will fluctuate from owner to owner, operation to operation. Keep in mind that the initial investment in your vessel is just the start. A properly maintained boat is a costly annual expense. All boats are unique and have their own characteristics. On average, a custom boat requires more maintenance than a production boat. Varnished teak, paint, teak cockpit areas, and intricate towers all come at a price.

The following breakdown is approximate and based off of a 60-foot vessel with a 300 hour per year usage budget. Fuel cost is not included in this

budget as all engine performances and economies are different. It is easy to predict your month to month fuel costs after one year of ownership.

\*Estimate based on a \$2,000,000 60 ft. vessel averaging 300 hours per year with no major malfunctions

## ENGINE MAINTENANCE

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| ✓ (3) Oil Changes at \$2500 (Every 100 Hours).....   | \$7,500  |
| ✓ Transmission Oil (Every 200 Hours).....  | \$750    |
| ✓ Oil Leaks to be Repaired.....  | \$2,000  |
| ✓ Heat Exchangers and Aftercooler Cleaning (Every 2 Years).....  | \$10,000 |
| ✓ Raw Water Pump Maintenance.....  | \$3,000  |
| ✓ Fuel Injectors Replacement<br>(1000 hours or Every 2 Years – for Non Commonrail Diesel Engines with 12 Cyl)..... | \$28,000 |
| <b>Yearly Engine Maintenance: \$51,250</b>   |          |

## GENERATOR MAINTENANCE

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| ✓ Generator Oil Change .....                 | \$750 |
| ✓ Generator Impellers.....                   | \$250 |
| <b>Yearly Generator Maintenance: \$1,000</b> |       |

## ANNUAL BOAT YARD MAINTENANCE (Quick in and out)

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| ✓ Cutlass Bearings .....                      | \$3,000 |
| ✓ Bottom Paint and Prep – (20 Coats).....     | \$8,000 |
| ✓ Propeller Balancing .....                   | \$3,000 |
| ✓ Full Hull Wax and Detail .....              | \$3,500 |
| <b>Yearly Boat Yard Maintenance: \$17,500</b> |         |

## INSURANCE

|                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ Yearly Basic to High Coverage..... | <b>\$12,000 - \$18,000</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|

## CREW (Depending on experience and level of excellence you expect from crew)

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ✓ Captain Salary .....                          | \$70,000 - \$120,000 |
| ✓ Mate Salary .....                             | \$50,000 - \$70,000  |
| <b>Yearly Crew Costs: \$120,000 - \$190,000</b> |                      |

## DOCKAGE

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| ✓ Year Round (South Florida).....          | \$20,000 - \$23,000 |
| ✓ Electric Cost .....                      | \$2,400 - \$3,600   |
| <b>Yearly Dockage: \$22,400 - \$26,600</b> |                     |

## ELECTRONICS UPGRADES AND YEARLY SUBSCRIPTIONS

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ✓ Sirius XM Radio and Weather.....  | \$600 - \$840        |
| ✓ Satellite TV .....  | \$1200               |
| ✓ Updates and Upgrades (Depending on the level of replacement every 3-5 years)..... | \$45,000 - \$100,000 |
| <b>Yearly Electronics Costs: \$46,800 - \$102,040</b>                               |                      |

## REGISTRATION AND DOCUMENTATION

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| ✓ Registration (State of FL).....                     | \$128 |
| ✓ Coast Guard Documentation .....                     | \$26  |
| <b>Registration and Documentation Renewals: \$154</b> |       |

## MISCELLANEOUS COST (ie. Unexpected failures, fixes, and maintenance)

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| ✓ Watermaker Repairs.....                    | \$2500            |
| ✓ Ice Machine .....                          | \$2500            |
| ✓ Air Conditioning.....                      | \$2,000 - \$6,000 |
| ✓ Fire Suppression System .....              | \$500             |
| <b>Total Misc. Costs: \$7,500 - \$11,500</b> |                   |

**Total Yearly Budget: \$278,604 - \$418,044**

Although boat ownership can be costly, the pleasure and gratification of owning your own sportfish yacht is invaluable. Nothing compares to creating unforgettable memories on the water with your friends and family.





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# It's Project Time

Originally published in April 2015

by Kevin Deerman

**M**any of the Texas crews are traveling this time of year. Those who have stayed home are waiting for breaks in the weather and the chance to head offshore. Unfortunately, so far this year, these weather breaks have been few and far between. With that being said, it's a good time to take care of any big winter projects and do a thorough inspection of everything on the boat. Here is a list of items we address before our fishing season begins:

## Engine Room

- ✓ Check all hoses for cracks and wear
- ✓ Check all hose clamps; replace if needed
- ✓ Check the belts on the mains and generators; change if needed
- ✓ Change all zincs
- ✓ Check for any oil leaks that need to be addressed
- ✓ Clean all sea strainers
- ✓ Make sure all sea cocks are functioning properly
- ✓ Run all systems and check
- ✓ Check all bilge pumps and float switches
- ✓ Clean and oil AirSeps
- ✓ Clean engine room vent filters
- ✓ Break down Racor filter housings to clean and replace gaskets
- ✓ Check all impellers; replace if needed

- ✓ Have A/C and refrigeration systems checked and flushed out
- ✓ Have fire system inspected
- ✓ Touch up paint where it is needed

## Interior

- ✓ Empty all drawers and cabinets and clean
- ✓ Clean all A/C filters in vents as well as on the condensing units
- ✓ Clean all condensing units and check drains
- ✓ Remove all bedspreads and have dry cleaned
- ✓ Refinish interior varnish if needed
- ✓ Have carpet cleaned if needed
- ✓ Clean refrigerators/freezers and condensing units
- ✓ Discard any outdated food or condiments and replace
- ✓ Clean and repaint in forward bilges if needed
- ✓ Check all bilge pumps and float switches
- ✓ Check inventory of first aid supplies
- ✓ Check inventory in ditch bag and replace batteries in all electronics
- ✓ Have AED inspected and tested
- ✓ Have EPIRB inspected and tested

## Exterior

- ✓ Clean and Scotchguard mezzanine cushions
- ✓ Refinish exterior varnish (2-3 coats)
- ✓ Have any gel coat dings repaired
- ✓ Compound and hand wax all exterior gel coat
- ✓ Remove and polish stainless rub rail if needed
- ✓ Sand teak deck
- ✓ Have life raft inspected
- ✓ Clean out all bridge lockers and under console
- ✓ Check all zippers on bridge enclosure and lubricate
- ✓ Remove any exterior parts that show any signs of corrosion (handrails, light covers, etc.) and paint or powder coat
- ✓ Replace outrigger halyards and clips and check pulleys for wear
- ✓ Clean lazarette and paint where needed
- ✓ Paint steering ram and tillers if needed (we use the Interlux black polyurethane – it looks great and will last for a couple of years)
- ✓ Check hoses and fittings on steering and trim tab systems
- ✓ Have bottom job done
- ✓ Buff hull sides

By taking care of these items now while the weather is bad, we will be ready to get back to fishing when it starts getting nice again.

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# TRAVELING SHOES

Spares to Bring When You Take Your  
Operation off the Beaten Path

Originally published in October/November 2017



by Steve Katz

I am writing this column during peak tournament season in the Mid-Atlantic area. During these tournaments, it seems that there is a service truck for every marine trade in the parking lot or service yard at the tournament marinas. Engine mechanics, propeller companies, fiberglass and paint contractors, electrical and electronics companies – just about all the trades and parts you would need to build a boat are readily available day and night during tournament season.

While this is convenient for captains and crews, it is not the normal way of getting parts or service. Many of us have become accustomed to the abundance of parts and service companies that are available quickly and reasonably to help keep your boat in top condition. This is especially true for those whose home port is South Florida, Oregon Inlet or other popular sportfishing destination. What happens when you travel away from the mainstream areas or off the beaten path?

### Travel Case in Point

A sportfish captain recently returned from a summer fishing trip in the northeast, staying on Nantucket Island for a few weeks. While Nantucket is only 100-miles from Boston, it feels like millions of miles away

when you need parts and supplies. He indicated that getting things like oil absorbent pads by the case and even refueling the boat was difficult and expensive.

Travel farther south, towards the popular fishing destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean and the availability of parts and service becomes much more scattered. Next time you are at a South Florida airport, a quick scan of the parking area will often reveal service trucks of mechanics and trades people flying off to distant location to perform service for their customers.

Importing parts or technicians is not the fastest or least expensive way to keep your boat running when away from your home port. Carrying a good cross selection of spare parts can allow you to make tempo-



rary or permanent repairs while away from your home port. One boat owner who prided himself in his spare parts inventory mentioned that, "Finding a technician was easier than getting the parts needed for the repair."

## Pack It Up!

When heading out for an extended trip, most professional crew prepare the boat with the important fishing supplies and food provisions for the voyage and destination. What about the spare/regularly consumed parts that you may need to maintain the boat while away? What if something critical breaks – do you bring a spare? What spare parts should you bring? What parts can I get at my destination? How can I ship parts to my destination? How fast and how much will it cost? Do you have room to bring all of this with you?

## What to Bring?

Let's skip the typical spares and supplies. Such items as **filters, oil, bulbs, fuses, screws, nuts and bolts, oil pads, bilge pumps and the other expendable supplies** should be a no brainer on your pre-trip shopping list. How do you determine the other parts you should bring on your trip?

The first way to be prepared is to bring parts that your boat has a history of needing. This varies by boat, but the list could include the likes of **shore power cord ends, fuses, hatch lifts, float switch, toilet joker valve, etc.** Review the part numbers, sizes, serial numbers, etc. to be sure you have the correct parts for your systems. What about the parts you do not know you need? One effective approach: you can bring spare parts that could be used in more than one situation.

## Plumbing Spares

Carry a good high capacity air conditioning style seawater pump. This pump could be used for your air conditioning systems as designed, but in an emergency, it could also be used as a live well pump, ice maker seawater pump, water maker low pressure pump, fresh water pump, salt water wash down pump or even an emergency bilge pump. You may need to get creative for the connection and operation of a pump in a nonstandard application.

*Pro Tip:* If you need to reduce the flow from a centrifugal pump, reduce it with a valve on the discharge side. Carrying long lengths of various sized plumbing hose is a good idea. Carrying lots of smaller lengths of different diameter hoses can allow you to use a short piece of hose as an adapter to step-up or step down for a temporary repair.

## Electrical Spares

In addition to the specific components, bring supplies that can serve multiple purposes. For example, you can bring a big spool of 10/3 wire. 10/3 wire could be used for AC or DC power. In terms of alternating current, it has both 115v and 230v applications. Alternatively, two of the three wires in the jacket could be used for DC power such as 12v or 24v. The three individual wires can be removed from the jacket for single wire use or connected together for a long run.

You could double up the number 10 wire, which provides similar capacity to a single number 6 wire. *Note:* Using electrical wire in the above situation is only recommended for a temporary repair or use to keep you going. The wrong wire size and color should not be used for permanent repairs.

*Fuses and circuit breakers* – with so many styles, shapes and capacities, how do you decide what to bring? The popular Carling Technologies toggle breaker (often sold by other companies such as Blue Sea Systems or Paneltronics) is used in many systems on a boat and can easily provide a temporary substitute for most other style circuit breakers and fuses. These Carling Technologies toggle breakers are often rated for both AC and DC use, allowing you to reduce the spare inventory needed. Carrying a few sizes (amp ratings) of these breakers allows them to act as substitutes to replace most other over-current protection devices. If it isn't an exact replacement, you may need to adapt the breakers with new wires or terminals.

Does your boat have an OctoPlex® electrical system? If so, the circuit breakers for the AC and DC are different than each other and not often stocked at traditional marine retailers. Usually these circuit breakers are easiest to buy from a boat builder. Carrying a variety of the OctoPlex® breakers is a necessity when traveling to distant fishing grounds. If you are not familiar with your OctoPlex® system, learn whether or not your system allows for a manual override of a circuit in the event of a problem. Usually there is an emergency switch inside the breaker panel to bypass the problem component. The same ideas apply if you have a CZone electrical system.

## Navigation Electronics

Modern navigation electronics seem to operate as designed on a standalone system. A complex electronics network with mixed brands and lot of accessories, however, could be troublesome if something fails. If a problem occurs, you can reconfigure the naviga-

tion electronics network and simplify your system by temporarily disconnecting a problematic device from the large network.

To accomplish this, you would need some spare parts. Included among the essentials – ethernet cables, NMEA2000 cables, tees and power feed and terminators, along with any proprietary cabling, such as Simrad Simnet. With enough pieces, you could separate out your radar, chart plotter or sounder from a problematic network. This permits you to keep using the good components in your system as independent units.

A NMEA2000 GPS antenna is also a good spare to carry. These antennas can now be placed almost anywhere on the bridge and still get a good GPS signal to your display. The NMEA2000 standard, and its multiband compatibility, allows you to mix brands of electronics in NEMA2000 network. As a result, one brand of antenna could feed most any brand of chart plotter if needed.

## Air Conditioning

Air conditioning systems have a lot of components and often do seem to fail at the worst times. Recently, Dometic (formerly known as Marine Air and Cruisair) introduced a new electronic control circuit board that is "universal" and will work with both Marine Air and Cruisair systems and displays. While you may not know how to replace and upgrade your control board, keeping spares on the boat is a good idea. With spares in hand, a phone call to your marine air conditioning technician can get you going again. Other popular parts for marine air conditioners are the thermostat (display) and temperature sensors.

Many of the systems on a boat use high power AC electric motors, such as pumps and compressors. Most of these motors use capacitors for starting and running. Heavy use and hot temperatures can cause the failure of a capacitor. Capacitors have very specific ratings that have to be matched to the equipment properly, so the best way to have a spare is to review your boats systems and find the specifications for each capacitor and put together a spares list.

Another way to carry spares is to bring some multi-tap capacitors. These are popular in the residential HVAC environment but not often used in the marine environment. The common Turbo®200 and Turbolytic™ capacitors have multiple taps that when wired properly can provide many different combinations of ratings – hopefully one to match your system requirements. Capacitors are also used in motors such as



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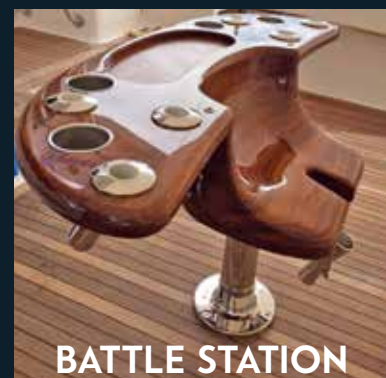
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the watermaker high pressure pump, refrigerators, Eskimo ice systems, refrigerated boxes and many other system on-board.

### Back-Up Systems

Another way to be prepared for a breakdown is to have redundant systems. In concept, this is similar to carrying a spare but the spare part is actually already connected and ready to be put into use if there is a problem. Redundant systems are often found on critical systems such as domestic fresh water pumps and sea water pumps for air conditioning systems.

### Conclusion

The popular, far-flung fishing locations seem to have better support available than in the past. That said, shipping parts to the boat while in foreign countries is never easy, fast or cheap. While there is not enough room for all the spares you would like to carry, carefully selecting the spare parts that match your boat and a little bit of ingenuity is the best way to be prepared. 🐟

Captain Steve Katz is the owner of Steve's Marine Service Inc in Ocean City, Maryland. He is the Vice President of the National Marine Manufacturers Association and holds ABYC Master Technician certification, NMEA AMEI, NMEA2000 certificates along with factory training from many manufacturers. To contact Steve, email [info@inthebite.com](mailto:info@inthebite.com).

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# A CAPTAIN'S MEDICAL GUIDE

Originally published September 2018





Photo courtesy Matthew Spivey



Wrangling sea monsters on the high seas brings its share of medical risks. From the power of the fish and the excitement involved to the millions of bacteria that live in the bait that pokes your hands, there are lots of potentially bad things that can happen. This captain's medical guide provides an introduction to handling a cross section of potential injuries and medical conditions than can occur offshore. It is written by an expert of imminent qualification (our words, not his) – a heart surgeon with a passion for blue water. Dr. David “Doc” Conkle has a medical degree from Yale University and medical career that spans decades. He is also a wonderfully nice man and avid fisherman based in Pensacola. As an owner/operator, Conkle has taken boats throughout the Gulf Coast, Bahamas, DR, Turks and Caicos, and St. Thomas.

by Dr. David M. “Doc” Conkle

**A**ll of us that fish offshore should be prepared to initiate treatment of acute injuries and medical emergencies. The boat should have a first aid manual, basic medical supplies and a crew member that has working knowledge to treat medical problems and administer CPR. Basic supplies should include: sterile bandage material (gauze, steri-strips, band aids, surgical tape), ace wraps, sterile gloves, a tourniquet, malleable splints, and a pin cutter. Medications include: an Epi pen, aspirin, ibuprofen, Tylenol, meclizine, transdermal patches, antiseptic solution, and Benadryl. A portable defibrillator should be considered on travelling boats and for those that spend extended periods offshore.

### Injuries

The most prevalent injuries that can occur involve the hands, legs and arms. The treatment of **hook injuries** depend upon the location of the barb. If buried, the hook should be stabilized, ice applied and medical help sought. If the barb is outside of the skin or can be advanced outside of the skin, the shank can be cut with pin cutters and the hook removed. The wound should then be washed with antiseptic solution, and wrapped with a sterile bandage. Ice should be applied and medical help sought.

For puncture wounds involving a hook, old fillet knife or other potentially rusted metal object, you may consider getting a tetanus shot. Most everyone gets a **tetanus shot** when they are vaccinated as children. While recommendations on frequency of

tetanus booster shots vary, a good rule of thumb is every ten years or so. The doctor who exams your wound or removes the hook may prescribe a tetanus shot if he deems it necessary. If you remove a rusty hook and do not seek medical attention, while there hasn't been a case of tetanus in the US for many years, consider getting a tetanus booster if your last tetanus shot was over ten years ago.

**Lacerations** should be cared for by controlling the bleeding with pressure (sterile gauze and an ace bandage) or a tourniquet. If you use a tourniquet, it should be removed as soon as bleeding is controlled. The wound should then be flooded with antiseptic solution. If the wound is gaping, steri-strips should be used to reapproximate (close) and then the wound should be dressed with a sterile bandage. If

the wound is significant, the person should be taken to the emergency room for closure.

**Fish bites** (not the appetizer, but what happens when you get bitten by a fish) should be washed with bleach and antiseptic solution and covered in a sterile bandage. An ice pack should then be applied. Serious fish bites should be evaluated by a doctor. **Sting ray injuries** usually involve a barb injury to the heel area. The barb should be left as found. Apply antiseptic solution, a sterile bandage and an ice pack to the injury site. The person should be taken to the emergency room for further evaluation and treatment.

**Infections** usually occur in a fisherman's hand. They are best treated by prevention. A 50/50 bleach to fresh water solution kept in a five gallon bucket should be used by crew to wash their hands, knives and tools after handling bait and fish. Bleach will kill all bacteria. If infection does occur, seek medical evaluation. How can you spot the onset of an infection? Symptoms such as redness, skin being hot to the touch, swelling and tenderness might indicate a potential infection. An infection should be treated with antibiotics, which will be prescribed by a doctor if necessary.

**Puncture wounds** should be treated with



Photo courtesy Jason Buck Photography

**A perfectly timed redfish attack illustrates the many dangers of fishing.**

antiseptic solution, a sterile dressing and an ice pack to keep swelling down. If a crew member is **impaled with a bill**, he should be evacuated to the hospital with the bill left as found (if the bill breaks off, do not remove it). If the bill strikes a person but does not break off, treat the wound as you would a puncture wound. Bill rash should be treated as you would a fish bite.

**Sprains or suspected fractures** should be stabilized with an ace bandage or malleable splint. Apply ice and seek medical attention. Ibuprofen and Tylenol together work well for pain.

## Illnesses and Serious Health Conditions

Medical illnesses and emergencies can occur offshore. **Seasickness** is the most common malady that can ruin the day for a fisherman. In a susceptible person, seasickness is best treated the night before with a transdermal patch. If symptoms occur after you are underway – fresh air (keep the person from staying in the cabin), eyes on the horizon and meclizine (a motion sickness drug) are the first line of defense. If nausea and vomiting occur, the person should be returned to the bank. The smell of pine trees cures seasickness. Vomiting is serious when it becomes frequent. These people should be returned to shore as quickly as possible.

Overheating is the first symptom of **heat stroke**. This is best treated with prevention – appropriate clothing and hydration with nonalcoholic and noncaffeinated fluids. Alcohol and caffeine cause dehydration which



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## Options for Medical Evacuation at Sea

No matter how prepared or equipped the boat or the crew is, there could come a time when the only option is to evacuate someone to the hospital. The following is a break down of two options for at sea or international rescue.

**United States Coast Guard:** The following are a few tips provided by the US Coast Guard. They provide some background on what to expect should you need assistance offshore:

1. Have a VHF-FM marine band radio onboard at all times. You can use channel 16 to send distress calls.
2. Have a registered electronic position indicating radio beacon or EPIRB onboard. In case of emergency, it can be activated either manually or automatically to send out your position. You can register your EPIRB for free at [beaconregistration.noaa.gov](http://beaconregistration.noaa.gov).
3. A person locator beacon is also a good tool to have. It can send out emergency distress signals when needed.
4. Download the free Coast Guard app. You can use it to call emergency assistance.
5. You can also file a float plan. A float plan is like a schedule detailing your activities, when you leave and when you get back. You can file it through the Coast Guard app or the Coast Guard Auxiliary website. You should share it with family and friends so for some reason if you don't show back up when it's written, the Coast Guard can be notified and help can be sent.

**Global Rescue:** Global Rescue is a subscription service that provides medical evacuation or security extraction services to travelers – including those on a boat. Global Rescue offers both individual and family plans ranging from seven day windows to annual plans. Individual plans start at \$119. The service provides great peace of mind when you are travelling internationally or ranging far from shore.

Global Rescue's Ann Shannon provides some context about the service. "Global Rescue membership provides members with medical advisory and evacuation services while they are traveling. These services are in effect any time they are more than 100 miles from home while your membership is active, domestically as well as abroad. We will arrange and cover the cost of an emergency evacuation from the point of injury or illness to the nearest well-equipped hospital or facility. If a member requires additional hospitalization, Global Rescue will transport to the member's home country hospital of choice once he or she is stable and fit-to-fly," Shannon relates.

How does it work? The first step for preparedness is setting up a membership. An annual family medical and security package runs \$1,155. Once this is active, if you run into a problem or issue you contact the service. "Global Rescue may be reached 24/7/365 at 617-459-4200 or [memberservices@globalrescue.com](mailto:memberservices@globalrescue.com). Members may contact us at by cell phone, satellite phone, email, or via our mobile application, My Global Rescue," Shannon explains.

"It is important for captains to be aware of the challenges that offshore trips may present, so that they have realistic expectations. Any time a Global Rescue member is more than 100 nautical miles away from the coast, rescue can require the assistance of ships in the area or the local coast guard. While we will exhaust all available resources to provide our services, rescue could involve significant delays. As always, our advisory services would be available 24 hours a day regardless of one's location," she says. "In the event of an emergency, we require two-way communication. Once Global Rescue is contacted by a member, our Operations team will remain in constant communication with that member and the medical team treating that member."



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contributes to heat stroke. Heat stroke can be difficult to diagnose, but if someone is sweating heavily and begins to act strangely they need to be cooled down as quickly as possible. The person should drink cold fluids (avoid beer and caffeine) and get out of the heat. Move into air conditioning if possible and apply ice packs to neck, beneath arms and the groin area (that is where the major arteries carry blood to the legs). You may also apply cold towels to the neck and head.

**Cardiovascular events** are unusual but can occur. They require prompt recognition, treatment and rapid evacuation to an emergency room. If a person experiences the acute onset of chest pain, sweating, pallor (losing color in someone's face) and nausea, treatment for a potential heart attack should be initiated. He or she should be given two aspirin pills to chew (so that it enters the blood stream faster) and swallow with a sip of water. The person should then be placed at rest with his or her feet elevated and monitored continuously. Evacuation should be started immediately. If the person loses consciousness and pulse, CPR should be started immediately and defibrillator attached if avail-

able. The defibrillator's artificial intelligence will talk you through the defibrillation.

A **stroke** is another event that demands early recognition and prompt evacuation. The acronym FAST is used for diagnosis. F- facial drooping, A- arm weakness, S- slurred speech, T- Time is of the essence. The quicker the person can get to the emergency room, the better the chance is for recovery.

The care of **diabetic problems** should start by knowing if anyone on board is a diabetic. These people should be well versed in the care of their chronic disease – if not, they should stay on shore. If someone with diabetes travels offshore he or she should do so with medication and a glucometer. Diabetes requires the management of blood sugar to avoid potentially fatal episodes. How do you recognize a potential problem in one of your diabetic boat guests? What should you do?

The symptoms of low blood sugar include: nervousness/anxiety, weakness, trembling, sweating, rapid heart rate and decreasing consciousness. The treatment is checking one's blood sugar. If it is less than 70 mg/dL, treat with sugar – hard candy, sugar water or sugary soft drinks. The symptoms

of high blood sugar (ketoacidosis) are: excessive thirst/urination, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, hot, flushed skin, and drowsiness leading to sleep. The treatment is to check one's blood sugar. If it's over 300 mg/dL with the above symptoms the person needs to be evacuated ASAP and fluids need to be pushed (drink lots of non-sugar drinks – Gatorade or water).

An **allergic reaction** can range from swelling and itching of the skin to anaphylactic shock. If a person experiences a minor allergic reaction he or she should be treated with Benadryl and ice packs. If the patient begins to experience significant facial swelling and or difficulty breathing, he or she needs to be injected with an Epi pen and transported to the emergency room as soon as possible.

## Conclusion

I hope this information will help you be better prepared to deal with the unexpected. Preparedness is the mainstay of every successful fishing trip. Best case scenario is that your boat includes all the necessary medical supplies, equipment and training and never needs to use any of it.



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# CAPTAIN'S TECHNICAL REFERENCE GUIDE

by Steven Katz

Keeping track of the thousands of moving parts on a sportfisher (not to mention the teaser bites), can make the job of a captain a mind-boggling affair. After all, you need to have at least passing knowledge about: fuel range, electrical conversions, how and when and where to turn a wrench, plumbing and piping, marine air conditioning, how much anchor line to deploy, how to tune your sonar, and more. Here's a reference guide that incorporates a number of commonly recalled reference points.

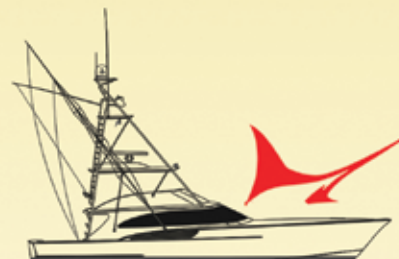
## WEIGHTS, MEASURES, DISTANCE CONVERSIONS

### Weights

- Fresh water 8.34 lbs./gallon
- Salt water 8.6 lbs./gallon
- Diesel fuel 7.1 lbs./gallon
- Engine oil 7 lbs./gallon
- Antifreeze 9.4 lbs./gallon

### Volume of a Tank

To determine the capacity of a rectangular tank in gallons, simply multiply length, width and depth in inches and divide result by 231.



### Distance and Speed

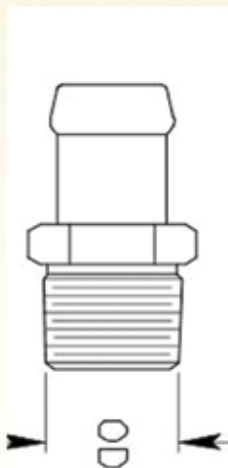
- 1 meter = 3.3 feet (popular USCG rules 12 meters or 39.4' and 20 meters 65.6')
- 1" = 25.4 mm
- 1 fathom = 6 feet
- Nautical mile = 1.151 statute miles
- Knot = 1.151 miles per hour

The horizon is 3 miles away when viewed from 6 feet above the water (and 6 miles away when viewing from 25' above sea level).

## PROPELLER NUT WRENCH SIZE CHART

| Shaft | TPI | Wrench   |
|-------|-----|----------|
| 2     | 6   | 2 3/8"   |
| 2.25  | 5   | 2 11/16" |
| 2.5   | 5   | 2 11/16" |
| 2.75  | 4.5 | 3 1/16"  |
| 3     | 4.5 | 4 7/16"  |

Please note, the little nut against propeller hub could vary with manufacturer. TPI stands for threads per inch.



## Tapered Pipe Fittings Size Chart

| Outer Dimension | NPT Size |
|-----------------|----------|
| 0.54            | 1/8"     |
| 0.675           | 3/8"     |
| 0.84            | 1/2"     |
| 1.05            | 3/4"     |
| 1.315           | 1"       |

Please note, the little nut against propeller hub could vary with manufacturer.

## ELECTRIC CONVERSIONS AND OTHER SYSTEMS

### Wire Ampacity

- 14 gauge 30 amps.
- 10 gauge 51 amps.
- \*These conversions are assessed inside engine spaces not accounting for voltage drop, duplex wire with 105c insulation.
- The green bonding wire minimum size is 8 gauge.
- Standard shore power electrical supply is 120v or 240v, 60 hertz, and available in 15,30, 50 and 100 amps.
- Generator – 12kW is theoretically equivalent to one standard 125/250v 50a shore power cord.
- A fully charged marine battery is 12.6 volts, 50% charged battery is 12.2 volts (double for 24V systems).

### How Does a Transducer Detect Fish?

The transducer can detect fish because it senses the air bladder. Almost every fish has an organ called an air bladder filled with gas that allows the fish to easily adjust to the water pressure at different depths. The amount of gas in the air bladder can be increased or decreased to regulate the buoyancy of the fish. Because the air bladder contains gas, it is a drastically different density than the flesh and bone of the fish as well as the water that surrounds it. This difference in density causes the sound waves from the echosounder to bounce off the fish distinctively. The transducer receives the echoes and the echosounder is able to recognize these differences. The echosounder then displays it as a fish.

### Marine Air Conditioning

- Typical marine air conditioning sea water condenser lines are 5/8" inside diameter.
- Marine air conditioning requires 3 GPM of cooling seawater per ton of air conditioning (12,000 BTU).
- Marine air-conditioning is running normally if the discharge air is 15-20 degrees cooler than the intake air.

### How to Anchor

Anchoring – scope (ratio of line length to depth) preferred 7:1 and shorter if anchorages or confined areas. For a calm lunch stop, a ratio of 5:1 is recommended. For a calm overnight on the hook, 8:1. For windy or rough conditions, 10:1.



### Sonar Transducers

Sonar wide angle sonar transducer of 25 degrees has a coverage diameter of 44 feet at 100 feet depth of water.



AIRMAR transducer typical temperature sensor – 10,000-ohm range at 77 degrees F. degrees.

## ELECTRIC REEL SET-UP

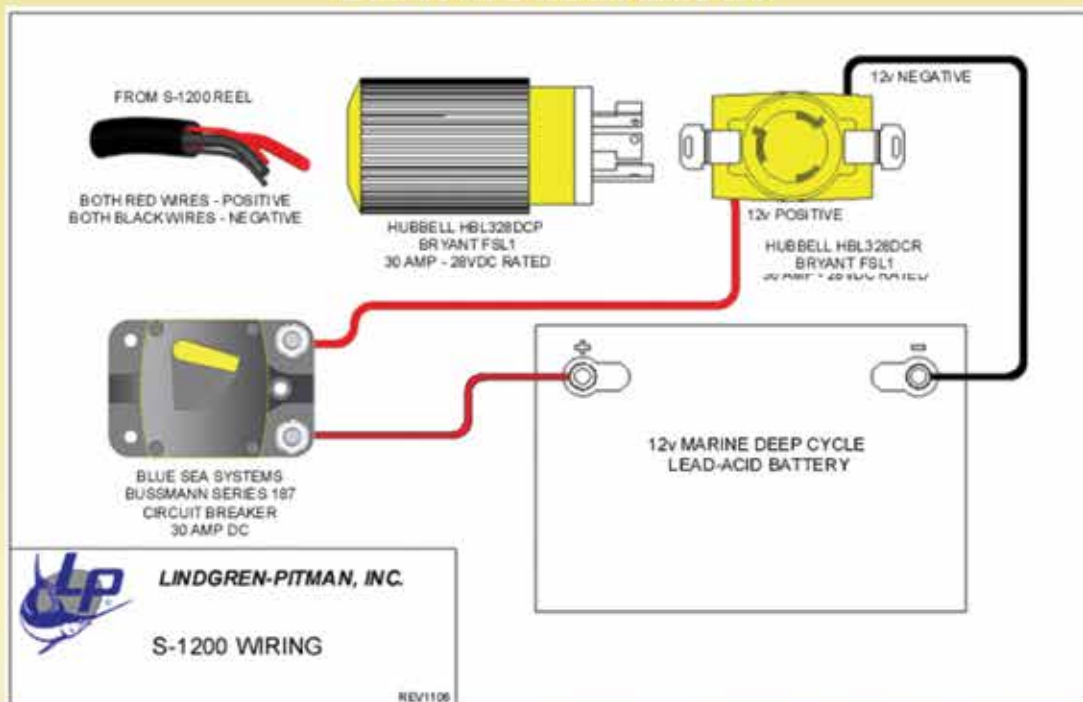
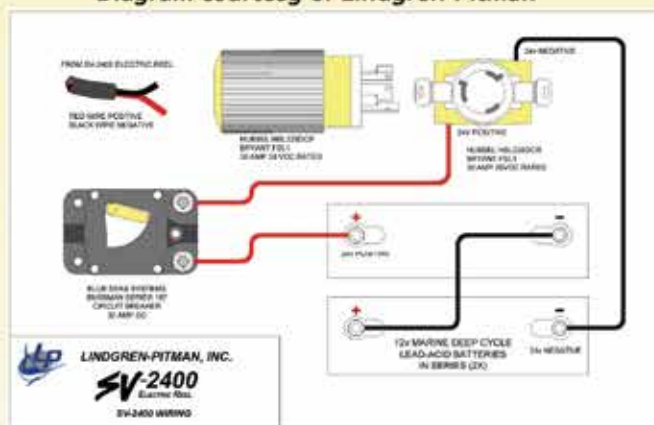


Diagram courtesy of Lindgren-Pitman



### Hose and Pump Facts and Needs

- Typical marine toilet system plumbing hose is 1 ½" inside diameter.
- Most bilge pump hoses are 1 ½" inside diameter.

### Bilge Pump Number and Capacity

As recommended by David Pascoe as a starting point.

| Boat Length | No. Pumps | Total Capacity - GPH |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 16-20       | 2         | 2500                 |
| 21-26       | 2         | 3000- 3500           |
| 27-35       | 3         | 3500 - 4500          |
| 36-42       | 3         | 6000                 |
| 43-49       | 3 to 4    | 8000                 |
| 50-59       | 4 to 5    | 9,000 - 10,000       |
| 60-69       | 4 to 5    | 10,000-plus          |



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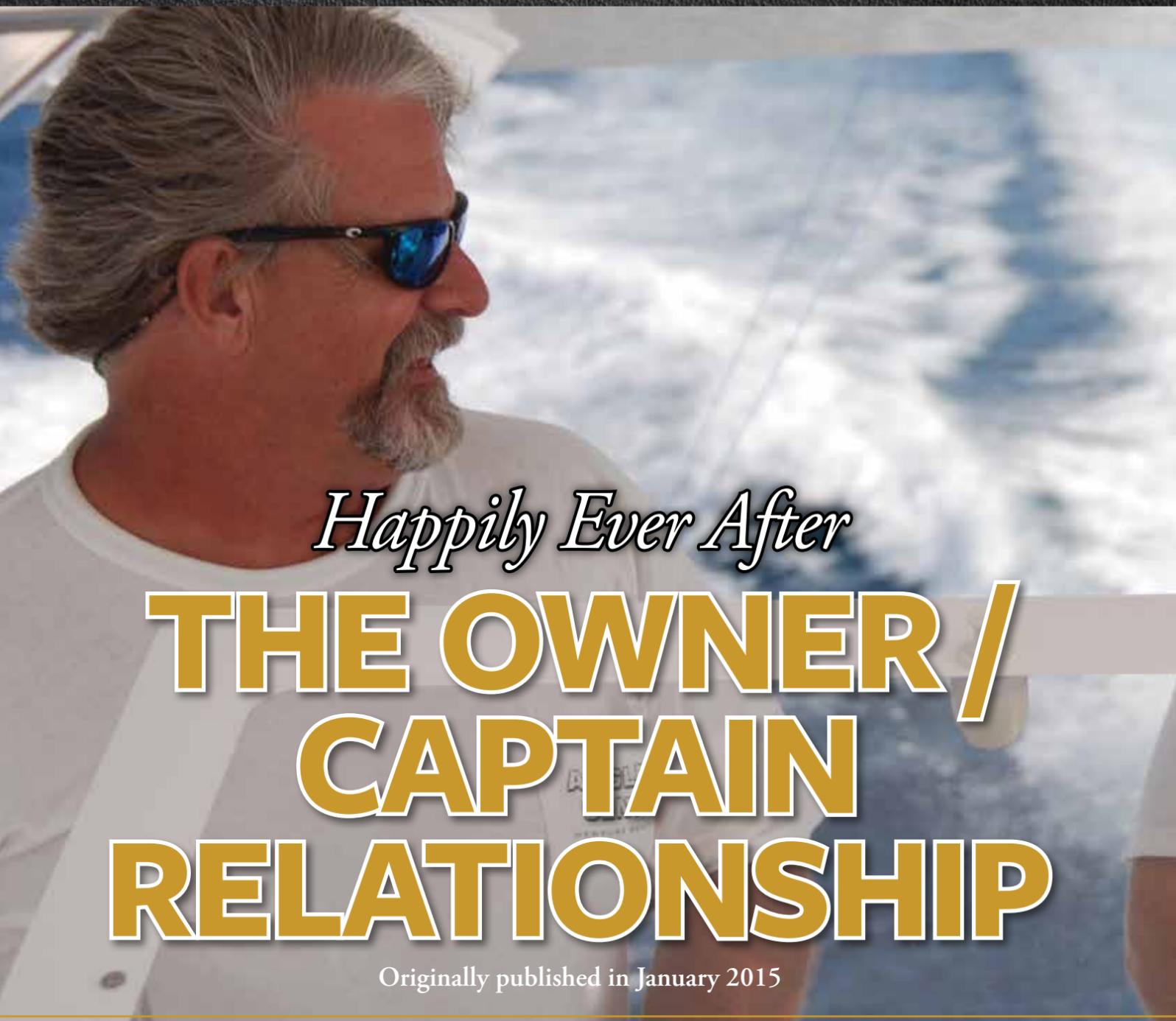
## RELATIONSHIPS WITH OWNER, CAPTAIN AND MATES

Few things are more important to career longevity than the ability to get along with people. Being able to balance professionalism with friendliness and courteousness is extremely important in the sportfishing industry. Communication is a fundamental pillar to relating with people in professional capacity.

What follows is a sportfishing industry-specific breakdown of the do's and don'ts of relating with owners, captains and mates. Contributors include a female sportboat captain, a licensed mental health counselor and more. The goal is to provide a well-rounded guide on how to communicate

and build professional relationships. We've also enclosed guides to using social media correctly and avoiding the pitfalls of heavy alcohol use while on the water.

Whether you are an owner, captain, mate or just someone who really likes fishing, this section has something for everyone.



*Happily Ever After*  
**THE OWNER /  
CAPTAIN  
RELATIONSHIP**

Originally published in January 2015



by Elliott Stark

**J**ust about everybody has a story about a captain who, despite being able to catch fish like a hawk, is passed up time and again for sportfishing jobs – often for guys who by comparison couldn't catch fish in a barrel. Then, there are stories of the eccentric gazillionaire owner with the newest, most amazing boat, the most incredible travel schedule and the latest in electronics who burns through captains like the Cleveland Browns run through quarterbacks. In the end, it comes down to the owner/captain relationship.

### **A Marriage of Sorts**

While there are no nuptials or rings exchanged upon taking a new job, the arrangement between a captain and the owner of a sportfisher can have more in common with a marriage than with the traditional workplace relationship.

Consider the following: In terms of hours, there is nothing 9 to 5 about a professional captain. Each party has quite a bit at stake in the relationship – the owner can easily have several million dollars invested in their floating, fish-catching assets (not to mention an annual budget of several hundred thousand dollars more). The captain's livelihood depends quite directly on the relationship.

The marriage metaphor between captain and owner can be especially true on a traveling boat. On an extended trip, the owner and crew may live together for weeks or even months at a time. During times of extensive travel, the crew may have more interaction with the owner than they do their own families. What starts out as an incredibly spacious, luxuriously appointed sportboat interior can after several months at sea begin to seem like a floating prison inlaid in mahogany.

## The Expert Perspective

What are the secrets to a lasting relationship? We've spoken with some individuals with a great deal of experience on both sides of the checkbook. While each hails from different backgrounds and operates unique fishing and travel programs, there is a great deal in common in the ways they approach sportfishing. Their experiences and insight can be useful for anyone on either side of the owner/captain relationship.

Buddy Schultz owns the *Gotcha*, a 65-foot Robin Smith. Over his tenure as boat owner, Schultz has worked with some great bridge talent including Captains Jimmy Kitchell, Cujo Brinkmeyer and Mike Canino. While stationed in Los Sueños, Schultz and Kitchell won the 2011 Los Sueños Signature Series title. In addition to his time fishing in Costa Rica, Schultz' boats have fished throughout the Gulf Coast and in the Caribbean, up and down the Pacific coast of Central America and off the coast of Africa.

Captain Eddie Wheeler can be found at the helm of the *Marlin Darlin*, a 62-foot Spencer. He's spent his life as a sportfishing professional, and at the age of 43 has never had a job outside the field. Among his list of sportfishing accolades, Wheeler was named

*InTheBite's* Captain of the Year in 2004; his name can be found among the ranks of tournament winners as well. So far this year, his schedule has included the Bahamas Billfish Championship, the Bermuda Triple Crown circuit and will culminate in the sailfish series in South Florida.

Captain Kevin Dunn has worked for Sam and Edwina Friedman since 2002. As captain, he oversees the Friedmans' fleet which has grown to include a 112-foot yacht, the *Cajun Dancer*; a 68-foot sportfisherman called the *Ragin' Cajun*; a center console, a bay boat and a flats boat. As Kevin puts it, he's got a lot of floating fiberglass to take care of. Dunn and the Friedmans spend about 250 days a year together, whether fishing or cruising. When asked about their years at sea and what is important to maintaining a lasting, functional sportfishing team, it didn't take long for some common themes to emerge.

### Building on Common Ground

Kevin Dunn recalls that from the moment of their first interview, there was a connection between himself and his perspective bosses. "The Friedmans and I had a good fit from the get-go," he says. "From the day we met, it was comfortable." Dunn and the Friedmans share similar values, are both from the South and have quite a bit in common.

This is an important point.

From an owner's standpoint, a sportfishing operation is supposed to be fun. A boat can be many things: an outlet for catching fish, winning tournaments, traveling to remote destinations or spending time with family or clients. When it stops being fun, or starts being too difficult to manage, it might be time to change directions or take up golf.

By the same token, few sportfishing professionals become captains by accident. Nobody just wakes up one day with a Coast Guard certificate and the ability to back a 65-footer into a tight slip at a crowded marina. Most captains become captains because they love fishing and spending time on the ocean. For most, the choice between being a captain and an accountant is an easy one. Being a captain can be fun (an accountant, not so much).

A good match in personalities between owner and captain goes a long way to making sure that the boss doesn't turn into a golfer and the captain doesn't take up accounting. Buddy Schultz echoes this sentiment. After a period of time working together, Schultz and his captains become friends. This is easy to do, Buddy says, when you're living and fishing with someone on an extended trip.

When properly matched from the beginning, many longtime captain/owner teams form friendships that sometimes last longer than their time working together.

To make sure that the prospective captains and owners get along, Eddie Wheeler suggests starting every job with an extended trial period. He recommends taking a few trips together to get a sense for how each other handle a variety of situations. "If you take a trip to the Bahamas with a guy and it rains the whole time, you could really like him. The next trip out, it could be great weather and the guy yells at your wife for missing a fish," he says. To avoid getting saddled with a poor arrangement, before making a long-term commitment, start out with a trial. Think of it as dating.

### The Importance of Communication

When it comes to all the moving parts of a traveling sportfish operation – boat maintenance, international logistics, fishing and travel schedules, port entry and visa requirements, tackle rigging and a thousand other details – it is little wonder why communication ranks as perhaps the most important element to a lasting relationship. According to the Wheeler, communication is key. His approach involves making sure that he knows the likes and dislikes of the owner and his guests so that he can plan his trips accordingly. Further, he stresses the importance of being up front and honest in what is happening with the operation. "Sneaking around never works," he says.

Schultz' approach places similar emphasis on communication. "There are two satellite phones on the *Gotcha*," he says. "One is permanently mounted on the bridge and the other is a handheld in the salon."

Any time the boat is in transit, Schultz and his captain put together a plan similar to those used with private jets, which includes scheduled travel times, nightly calls and reports upon arrival. When the boat is in port, there are meetings at least weekly but usually more frequently. "A good line of communication is critical," Schultz explains.

### Trust, Honesty (and Boat Accounting)

All three pros spoke to the importance of honesty. Even if the relationship between owner and captain is well matched from the beginning, it is important to build trust over time. For Kevin Dunn, this involves a direct approach. "I try to be straight forward and honest, no beating around the bush. I like to account for every penny I spend,"

## THE PROFILE OF A SUCCESSFUL CAPTAIN

Catching fish is important but with the amount of money and resources invested, there is a lot more to the job. The following are traits that most successful, longtime captains possess:

**Honesty:** Being upfront with owners and fair with mates is important to sustaining relationships and getting things done.

**A Strong Work Ethic:** Captains not only put in long hours but they must be knowledgeable about everything from boat systems to accounting procedures. Performing proper maintenance and the ability to diagnose and resolve problems as they occur can be the difference between a great day on the water and a catastrophe.

**Organization:** From logbooks and maintenance reports to keeping track of upcoming trips, organization is a trait possessed by nearly all successful captains.

he reports. To Dunn the relationship is like family, where trust is a critical component. While he and the Friedmans enjoy a great relationship, he offers sage advice on the subject, saying, “You have to remember that the captain works for the owners and not the other way around.”

“For me, the best captains are the guys that treat it like it’s their own boat from an expense perspective,” adds Buddy Schultz. “Running a boat is expensive, and the best captains are those that treat the boss’s money like it was their own.” When it comes to maintenance or time in the boat yard, little things can add up to big bills in a hurry. Captains who enjoy long careers with the same owners have a knack for keeping an organized, well-maintained boat. Preventative maintenance and keeping the best interests of the operation in mind goes a long way in building trust on both sides of the equation.

### Other Things to Consider

The lives and jobs of professional captains and crews must balance time on the boat with time at home. When the owner/captain relationship works well, both sides benefit. Eddie Wheeler speaks to the importance

## COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES


All three of our pros listed communication as a critical element to building successful relationships. With this in mind, developing communication skills can be a career booster for most anyone. The resources available online or in the bookstore for communication skills are numerous. While this may not be the first thing that comes to mind when considering a career on the water, adding some communication insight to your reading list will pay dividends in the long run.

of planning and staying on top of all the captain’s responsibilities. He will work with the owner to schedule trips ahead of time and will know when guests are coming and going. Before taking personal time, he will take care of all of the maintenance needs for the next trip before leaving. “That way, in case the plans change and our guests

come in four days early, we aren’t stuck at the dock doing oil changes.” Once a break is scheduled, Wheeler keeps in communication with the owner and his mates to make sure the operation is in good hands while he’s gone.

“Incorporating family time is very important,” Dunn adds, “Sam and Edwina are very good about this.” With a schedule that involves around 250 days a year, Dunn and the Friedmans have worked out a good arrangement. “Some owners are great about this, others not so much,” he says. When it comes to building a captain/owner relationship that lasts, it makes a lot of sense for both sides to consider how to handle time away from the boat.

### The Way It’s Supposed to Work

The unemployed captain who catches fish but can’t get along with anyone? The owner of the great boat who can’t keep a captain? To hell with those stories. Everybody prefers to hear the one about the captain and owner who work together for twenty years, catching fish, hunting together and growing into old friends. It’s not an easy story to recreate, but it is nearly impossible without hard work, honesty, communication and compromise. 



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# 10 COURTESIES

## Every Captain Can Give His Mate

Originally published in December 2010



by Capt. Dale Wills

**B**eing the big skipper – riding high in the captain's chair – is the goal of many professional sportfishermen. After several years in the cockpit learning the ropes, honing your skills and mastering everything there is to know about sportfishing boats, getting the call to take over can be the logical progression for many mates. Once at the wheel, the helm chair can lead some to memory loss about what it was like to work in the cockpit. Everyone appreciates a bit of professional courtesy in the workplace. Mates are no different. What follows are ten basic courtesies that a captain can do to make his mate's job and life that much easier – and more fulfilled.

### A Call to the Bridge

Overwhelmingly, the number one courtesy every mate agreed was that a captain should never yell at them from the bridge. "It's not

only extremely childish, but it also shows bad manners, especially when guests are onboard. It makes them feel uncomfortable and puts everyone on edge. If you are going

to reprimand a mate, call them up to the bridge face-to-face and don't raise your voice. Be a professional and act accordingly," says Captain John LaGrone. When it comes to a captain's etiquette, LaGrone is an expert – he fishes Costa Rica and boasts more than 30-years' experience as a mate and captain.

### In On the Action

How many captains are so controlling that they don't even let a capable mate tie his own style of knot to the hooks or wind-on leaders? Some captains micro manage to such an extent that the mate cannot do anything without the captain looking over his shoulder. When it comes to fishing, it really makes a big difference if the captain lets the mate have one choice of bait or lure in the spread. Allowing mates to work and take part



in decisions is important to keeping them in good spirits, making them feel like part of the team and keeping them from getting discouraged – and ultimately jumping ship for a nicer job someplace else.

### Saying Good Job

What stands out to most mates are the simple things: courtesy itself, respect, appreciation, and teamwork. This may sound obvious, but it isn't always! Catching lots of fish and winning tournaments consistently requires a solid team. Having a solid team doesn't happen by accident – it takes effort and dedication. Team members should not only support each other, but help out whenever possible and commit to keeping the team's attitude where it needs to be in order to succeed.

There are small things that the captain can

do to keep morale up. Things as simple as just saying “Good job today everyone” at the end of the day or picking up the chamois to dry off the bridge and tower (rather than staring at the crew while they do their thing) – can do wonders to keeping the team's attitude upbeat and on focus.

### Pounding the Guests

The captain rarely spends time in the salon when the boat is running at cruising speed. When the seas get a little sporty, holding onto the wheel while pounding through a head sea can be a little different than what it actually feels like down below. When the conditions turn rough, the considerate captain will slow down to make the ride as comfortable for the crew as possible. Try switching places from time to time, so that you can remember what the ride in feels like without the wheel in your hand. Running like you ain't got a dime in her is no way to treat your crew.

### Rough Lunch

When it comes time for lunch and your mate becomes Chef Boyardee, keep the sea conditions in mind. Plan enough time for a down sea tack and take into consideration how many guests are onboard. Just because you, the captain, have your lunch doesn't mean the mate is finished. If you do keep your mate in a trough while making lunch, next time you may find that the cheese on your ham and cheese is still in the plastic wrapper.

### Pee Bottle in the Bridge

At the end of the day when you as the captain are preparing your final descent, have the common courtesy to throw away your own pee bottle. There are few things more degrading than a mate grabbing your pee bottle with the lid not completely sealed. It's also a good idea to pick up your own trash. Some captains go as far as closing and zipping up the bridge curtains, turning off all electronics, unsnapping the seat cushions and taking the trash down from up top. All this so the mate can easily rinse the bridge. Remember your mate is not your personal maid!

### Engine Room

The saying, “You drive, you dive,” doesn't hold as much weight as it once did. Years ago, if a captain ran over a rope or a dredge for example, it was considered his fault and therefore his duty to dive into the water and cut it free. These days, however, it is the youthful mate who is more than likely to jump in and take care of the situation. When

it comes to the engine room, it's still the captain's responsibility to check the oil each day and perform maintenance on the engines. If your mate happens to be an engine room rat, lucky you, but teach by example and be hands on.

### Know When to Turn

So many things can be happening on the bridge that many captains fail to realize when a mate is checking or switching out baits. An attentive, considerate captain, who makes a slight turn while a mate is putting out a fresh bait, keeping it from crossing under or over another bait already in position, is a great help to the mate. As a captain, if you do see some bait, birds or need to change course to get back on your numbers, at least check the pit and communicate. Catching fish is top priority and working together will increase your chances.

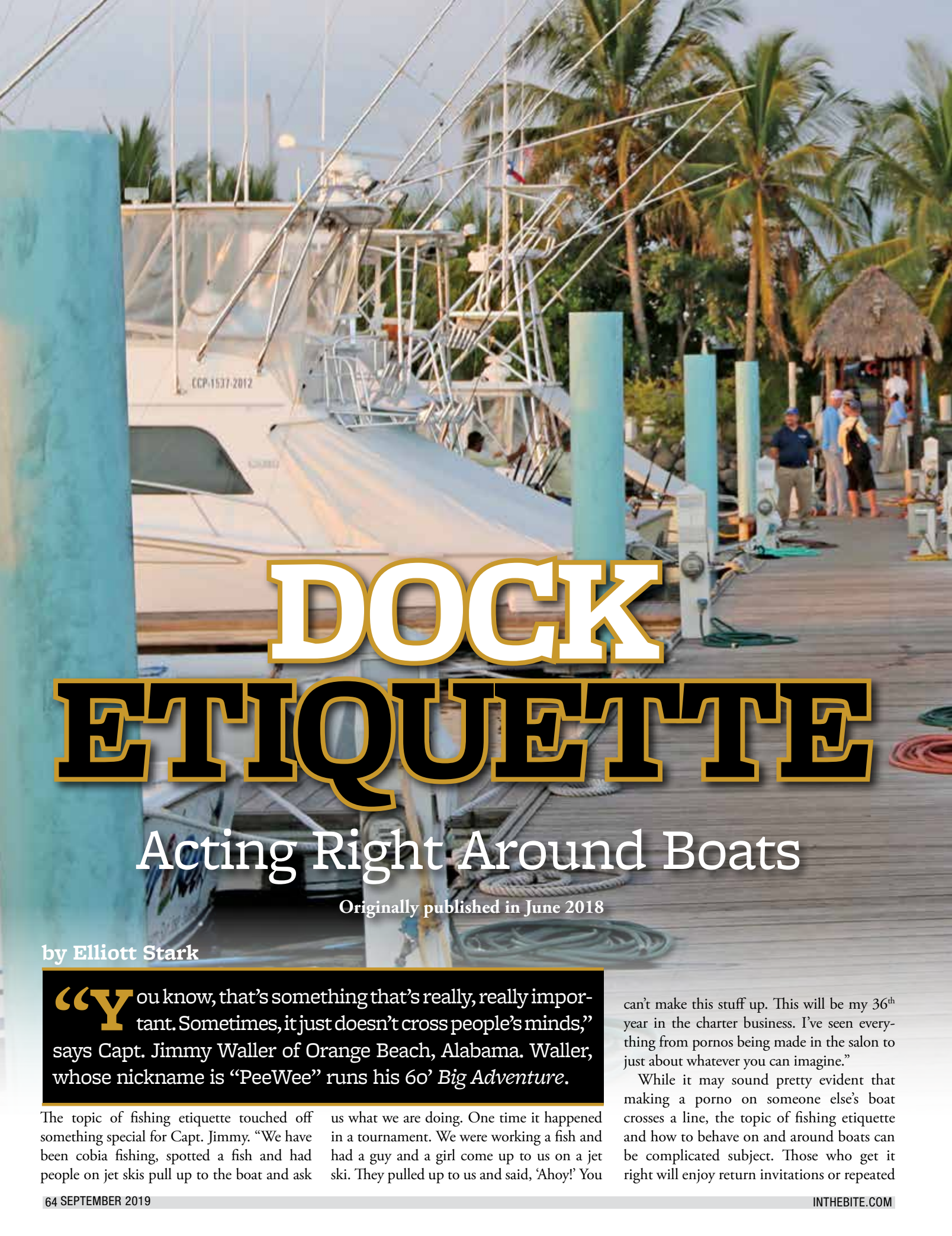
### Rushing to Leave

It's important to communicate with your mate about your schedule and the time you wish to leave the dock. Suddenly wanting to leave the dock a little earlier can put the mate into a hurry-up frenzy. “Especially if it's rough and the mate needs to rig a few more baits. Nothing can be more uncomfortable than rigging baits while getting showered with salty ocean spray on the way out. Ten or fifteen more minutes at the dock can make a big difference for your mate. If you can't spare the time, at least let your mate know well in advance of your intentions,” says freelance mate Michael Latham.

### Work as a Team

It's no coincidence that the letters in “team” can also spell “mate.” The aforementioned courtesies and signs of respect between mates and captains just touch the surface. Each crew and team has circumstances and procedures which are unique to their boat. What do these courtesies have in common? Communication and teamwork are the foundation for everything on a boat.

We all know that there is no perfect captain, mate, boat or owner. That said, making the best of your situation is generally up to you and those you work with. Try to put yourself in the other person's deck shoes and act accordingly. One of the universal things about sportfishing is the fact that behind every good team is a good captain and behind every good captain is a great mate. Just as a great mate can make a captain look good, a courteous, professional captain can build his mate's confidence, skill level and ability.



# DOCK ETIQUETTE

## Acting Right Around Boats

Originally published in June 2018

by Elliott Stark

**“Y**ou know, that’s something that’s really, really important. Sometimes, it just doesn’t cross people’s minds,” says Capt. Jimmy Waller of Orange Beach, Alabama. Waller, whose nickname is “PeeWee” runs his 60’ *Big Adventure*.

The topic of fishing etiquette touched off something special for Capt. Jimmy. “We have been cobia fishing, spotted a fish and had people on jet skis pull up to the boat and ask

us what we are doing. One time it happened in a tournament. We were working a fish and had a guy and a girl come up to us on a jet ski. They pulled up to us and said, ‘Ahoy!’ You

can’t make this stuff up. This will be my 36<sup>th</sup> year in the charter business. I’ve seen everything from pornos being made in the salon to just about whatever you can imagine.”

While it may sound pretty evident that making a porno on someone else’s boat crosses a line, the topic of fishing etiquette and how to behave on and around boats can be a complicated subject. Those who get it right will enjoy return invitations or repeated



free lance stints, those who don't understand might wind up wade fishing. To determine the expectations of behavior aboard boats, we have surveyed experts from across the sport-fishing landscape.

## Social Media and Winning with Class

Captains Jeff Shoults and Johnny Dorland have decades of experience tournament fish-

ing in the Gulf. Shoults and his Destin, Florida-based crew on the *Mollie* won the 2017 Gulf Coast Triple Crown. Dorland is the owner and captain of the *Cotton Patch* and the director of the Orange Beach Billfish Classic. When asked of the rudest or strangest behavior aboard his boat, Dorland's two examples were clear. "I had a Tampax put down the toilet once... that wasn't good. One time we had a guy get completely naked and jump off the

tower. We were trolling for marlin 100-miles offshore. He had an inoperable brain tumor... and still does. That was 15-years ago and he's still not right," Johnny says with a laugh.

Shoults has expectations for behavior as well. "Mates are not allowed to post anything on social media. They're also not to discuss what we do aboard the *Mollie* with other people. The *Mollie* is like Las Vegas, what happens aboard stays here," he says. He also expects a

certain manner of behavior on the dock – especially when enjoying tournament success.

“We keep the stereos turned down and act like we’ve won before. Don’t show your ass when you win. It’s like Bear Bryant said when a kid scored a touchdown and jumped all over the place. ‘Do you plan on ever scoring another touchdown? Well, then act like it.’ We also keep the boat looking nice, no matter

how much we’ve been fishing. Even if you’ve been fishing hard, the boat shouldn’t show it.”

Dorland shares the social media sentiment. “I once had a mate post everything on social media. When I got back the dock, everybody was telling me how big the fish I caught was and how many ducks I shot. I told him that we don’t put things on Facebook on this boat. He told me that he posted

to Facebook on his time, so I told him he could work on his own time too.” Dorland’s approach is pragmatic. “If you don’t act right on the boat, you don’t come back. If you get really drunk, you don’t come back.”

### A Lesson in Kentucky Manners

Captain Jen Copeland is a wonderful conversationalist, a great captain and she grew up in Kentucky – folks from Kentucky have a natural understanding of the whole manners thing. Copeland, the captain of the *Three C’s*, an Ocean Reef, Florida-based Viking, delivers her perspective charmingly. For fishermen (mates or captains) working on someone else’s boat, Copeland recommends, “If you’re invited to fish on another boat, always leave it in better shape than you found it. And always offer to help clean and shammy the boat. If you know how, you should be helping!”

For angling guests, charters or the boss’ friends, Copeland suggests the following, “Learn to use the head – don’t leave anybody any gifts. Rods off the teak. Remember, when fishing is slow, don’t keep asking when we’re going to catch something. Nobody wants to catch fish more than the crew,” she says. “If you’re a guest, always bring beer.”

“If you’re sick, the rule is ‘Any side but



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inside! Mates don't care. They've all been puked on before. I'd rather you puke in my boot – and I've *had* my boot puked in – than have to clean up after you inside.” Copeland's ascription of rules comes from unique experience. When asked about the rudest thing she has endured on a boat, Jen didn't hesitate. “Puking in the sink. His excuse was that he was taking a .... (bowel movement) and got sick. My mate had to go clean it up because the guy was too sick to go back inside.”

“Also, don't assume that everyone operates with an open checkbook. Let's not throw away the 15' fluoro leader with three inches of chafing on the end. Tournament fishing is one thing, but when fun fishing, why not reuse the sailfishing hooks for mutton fishing the next day? And don't slam the hatches. As my friend Brad Goodrich would say, ‘We have to use that tomorrow.’”

### The Importance of Being Respectful: A Mate's Key to Career Success

*In The Bite's* 2016 Gulf Coast Captain of the Year Devin Potts runs the *Sea Mixer*, a 61-foot Spencer, out of Orange Beach. Devin is blessed with the ability to catch big blue marlin consistently in tournaments and the

capacity to state things clearly and directly. “What bothers me is genuine complaining. A captain needs to be a part time psychiatrist to keep a crew together anyway, a mate complaining doesn't help. We are very upfront with the schedule in our operation. The boss is liable to want to fish at any time – it could be the day after the tournament and he could decide he wants to fish. To me, his desire to want to fish is what keeps us employed. I've never had it happen to me, but I really don't like to hear mates complaining about having to go fishing or saying ‘I don't get paid enough for this.’ You don't get paid enough for what? Even if it is warranted, shut up and do your job. That's the way I look at it,” Potts relays.

Another topper on the list of Devin's irritating mate behaviors is one that came up many times. “You hire a guy and he says, this is how we did it...” Captain Joey Birbeck on the *You Never Know* reaffirms this sentiment. “We bring one two extra mates for tournament season. We have a style of fishing that has been successful. Don't come on someone else's boat and tell the mate or the captain how to do their jobs. You have two ears and one mouth for a reason and you're here to help. I never quit learning, but please don't try to change our program.”

How does Capt. Jen Copeland feel about unsolicited advice from mates? “If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you,” she jokes. “The worst thing I experienced from a mate was back talking from the cockpit. If you've got something to say, come tell me on the bridge. I can't have that happen in front of the boss and his family or friends and my regular crew.”

Year in, year out Capt. Patrick Ivie and the *Breathe Easy* find themselves on the leaderboard across the Gulf circuit. “These days, it's hard to find somebody that's proactive and wants to do the job. Not many young guys grew up fishing like we did. I like guys that are eager to learn and excited. Finding someone who is eager to learn is important.” How should a new mate or a mate working on a new boat approach the job? Ivie describes, “You want to be as helpful as possible and ready for any work – from scrubbing toilets to gaffing fish.” Captain Peter B. Wright often advises young mates or those who are just starting on a new job to volunteer for the worst jobs. The crew will take notice and this kind of help goes a long way.

### Etiquette While Fishing

Conducting yourself properly while on the water is also an important consideration that



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sometimes has serious consequences. Devin Potts describes one of the more consequential sides to Alabama cobia fishing. “When it comes to cobia fishing around here, it is serious. Talking about the public pier, if you’re in a boat and you get close to the pier – the bigger the boat, the bigger the target. They will sling giant bank sinkers at you. They have those long spinning rods and will nick the line (so that line breaks when they cast) and rear back and catapult them at you. If one hit you, it would kill you. I always thought Steve-O from Jackass should put on full football pads and run a boat past them...”

The live baiting for blue marlin around the rigs in the Gulf has reinforced a sense of cooperation by the captains who fish them. As Devin Potts puts it, “You’re better off working together than trying to conquer the world by yourself.” Patrick Ivie describes it similarly, with one exception. “If you’re live baiting the rigs, everybody wants to fish their zone – you take your turn and clear out when someone hooks up. I’ve hooked up and had boats not move – especially supply boats. I’ve hailed a supply boat on every channel on the radio asking one to move. I wish they’d read this article.” For a great story about hailing a work boat while hooked up to a blue marlin, check out the “Old Salts Rule” feature.

## Boat Guests, Expectations for Charters

Adam LaRosa owns the New Jersey-based Canyon Runner Charters. In 2017, his operation ran 112 canyon trips. It suffices to say that few people have a better perspective on etiquette for would-be charter guests than LaRosa. “The thing that gets me is when a charter gets on the boat and immediately questions the captain. Charter fishing is an odd situation. Generally, in business the customer is always right – but not when you’re 100-miles offshore at night. Safety is the most important thing and the captain and crew are charged with keeping everyone safe,” LaRosa relates.

“Another thing is mistreating the boat. People sometimes think that because they charter for one day, they can do whatever they want. They don’t understand how expensive things are. A guy asks if he can light up a cigarette on the bridge while we’re running 30-knots. He doesn’t realize that the cushion he’s sitting on costs \$5,000.”

To avoid confusion, and preserve his sanity, LaRosa sends out a rules list to all would-be charters. The list is great. Each item it contains has a story that prompted it. It is also a good lesson for most any would-be

boat guest. It outlines when the captain will know the weather and be able to predict time of departure, leaving the black soled shoes at home, no liquor or wine offshore, and the restriction on bringing reels that are completely spooled with braid. He also prohibits glass – which can break and cut people and destroy pumps.

Capt. Patrick Ivie appreciates guests who help the crew with little things – especially during double over nighter tournaments in the Gulf. “Cleaning the boat is a team effort. Having guests who will help with cooking and cleaning when we’re fishing all day goes a long way.” Joey Birbeck seconds this. “Your mom doesn’t work here, so nothing goes in the sink.” Guests can also help be vigilant while offshore, “If you see or smell something that is out of place, please tell us.”

## Life’s too Short to Be Rude

Generally speaking, people go fishing to have a good time. Being around nice, respectful people really helps this cause. A bit of consideration for the boat, the captain and the crew goes a long way. Don’t puke in the salon and if you’re fishing in Orange Beach, don’t run your boat within a quarter mile of a pier.

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| Trinidad Tobago Game Fish Tournament<br>1,006 lb Blue Marlin - Trinidad Tobago Record<br>Team Predator - Captain Brendan Farfan            | 2016 XV Salinas Yacht Club Marlin<br>Winner - Team Amiramir<br>Captain Ken Ross                 | 2016 Hemingway International<br>Winners Blue Marlin - Team Unbelievable<br>Captain Mark Blank       | 2016 Grander Horta Azores<br>1,254 lbs - Team Habitat<br>Captain Luke Folk                          |
| Samoa Grander - All Tackle Record<br>1,025 lb Blue Marlin - Team Southern Destiny<br>Captain Chris Donato                                  | Ngor Marlin Cup Senegal<br>Winner 1,181 lb Blue Marlin<br>Team Desire - Captain Jacques         | 2016 White Marlin Open<br>Winner Blue 750 lbs - Team Get Real<br>Captain Brian Arni                 | 2016 Hawaiian Lure Masters Challenge<br>Winner Blue Marlin - Team El Jobean<br>Captain Robbie Brown |
| Continental USA Record Blue Marlin<br>Pirates Cove Winner - Team Mimi<br>Captain Mike King - Angler Trey Irving<br>1,228.5 lbs Blue Marlin | 2016 Bermuda Sea Horse Open<br>Winner Blue Marlin - Team Es Mucho<br>Captain Allen Desilva      | 2015 JBT Japan International Billfish<br>Winners - Team Apache<br>Angler - Yoshinori Hamamoto       |   |
|  | 2016 Masters El Golfo Tournament<br>Largest Blue Marlin - Team Makaira<br>Captain John Cochrane | 2016 Grander La Gomera Canary Islands<br>1160 lbs Blue Marlin - Team Sea Sprint<br>Captain Mark Lee |   |
|  | 2016 Old Salt Loop Billfish<br>Winners - Team On Cause<br>Captain Bill Curry                    | 2016 XV Salinas Yacht Club Billfish<br>Winners - Team Amiramir<br>Captain Ken Ross                  |   |

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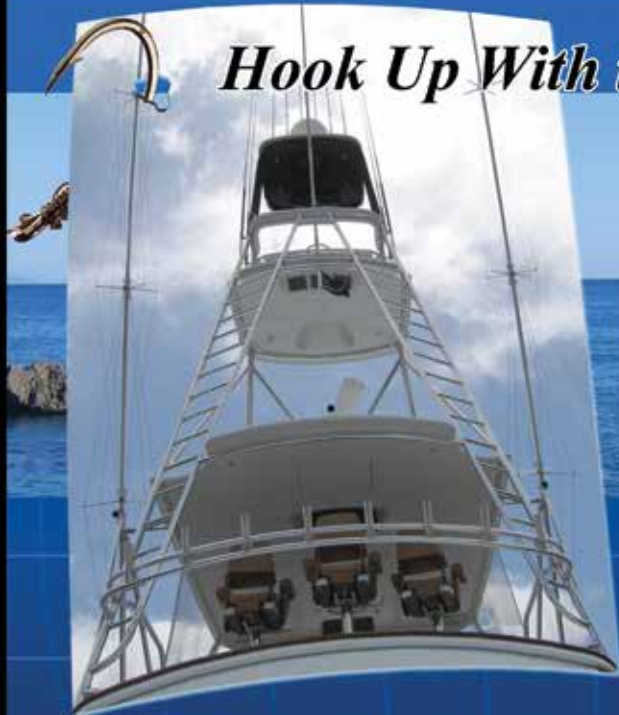
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## **STARTING WITH THE BASICS:**

1. **Treat every boat**—even if it's a longliner built in the 1940s—like the *Queen Mary II*. Remove your shoes and ask for permission before stepping aboard. Once on board, treat the boat and its crew with respect— if you take something out, put it back up.
2. **Don't assume anything.** Things are done differently on different boats. You can't go wrong asking the captain and crew what you can do and how you can help. In some cases, crews will prefer less help (like when docking or tying up the boat) than more.
3. **If you're fishing on someone else's boat**, ask what you can bring. If they say they have it covered, **don't bring your special rod.**
4. **If you're visiting a boat in a remote, international destination**, ask if you can pack anything down for them. When they're fishing in BFE, it's a lot easier for you to pick up some chin weights than it is for them to source. And don't forget the latest issue of *InTheBite*.
5. You can be late to work. You can be late for dinner. You can be late for church. **But you can't be late for fishing.**
6. **Nobody has ever not been invited back for helping clean the boat.** If you disappear as soon as the boat hits the dock, you'll probably not be coming back.
7. **All crews and all boats have their own way of doing things**, they probably don't want to hear about how you've done it somewhere else.
8. **There is a difference between asking for the purpose of learning** and asking for the purpose of questioning someone. Get this wrong—have fun fishing on the pier.
9. **Booze in moderation.**

10. **Unless they ask**, nobody wants to see charts and satellite imagery you brought on your phone (especially when it's paired with the question, "Why aren't we fishing here?")

11. **When docking or while a fish is hooked up**, don't sit or stand in a place that obscures the captain's view.

12. **Don't slam the drink box door.**

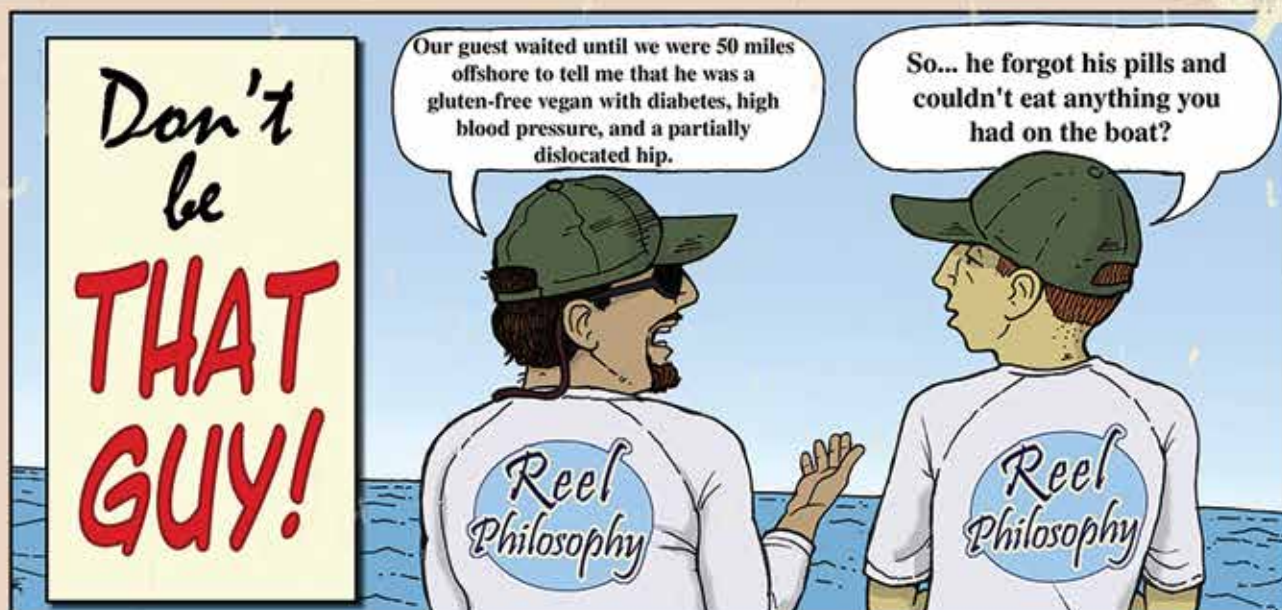
13. **Make sure that cabinets, the refrigerator and the freezer are locked in place** when you close them.

14. **If you're a guest**, always bring beer.

15. **Match the outlook of the people on the boat.** If you're fishing with a boat load of easy going people, leave captain serious at the dock. If everyone is dialed in, they probably don't want to hear you dancing.

## **MEDICAL, DIETARY AND "OTHER" CONDITIONS:**

1. **Inform captain and crew of your medical conditions— before your 50 miles offshore.** If you have a special medicine that you need or a situation that could arise (heart problems, diabetes, asthma, etc.), let someone on the boat know so that they may be prepared. Medications can react with dehydration from seasickness—to create big problems.
2. **Food conditions—allergies— let someone know so that preparations may be made.** If your allergy is severe, bring your epi pen and tell the crew where to find it if needed.
3. **Try not to show up to the dock like Keith Richards after a four day bender.** Please be respectful to those you will be fishing with and have the courtesy not to show up super hungover or under the influence.



### THE HEAD:

1. **Urination**—If there's a lady on board, you can't go wrong by peeing inside. That said, keep it off the floors and the wall. To quote Capt. Jen Copeland, "If it's rough, would it be beneath you to sit down?!"
2. **Heavy lifting in the head (Number 2 Rules).** Courtesy flush. If you leave skid marks, please wipe them off. Some boats can flush toilet paper, some only flush turds—in either case, don't put anything else in the toilet. If you have a question, ask the mate. It's also a good idea to make sure you know how to operate the flush mechanism before you deposit a bowl full.
3. **If you're going to be sick, don't be embarrassed, just puke outside.** As Capt. Jen Copeland puts it, when it comes to puking "The rule is any side but inside!"

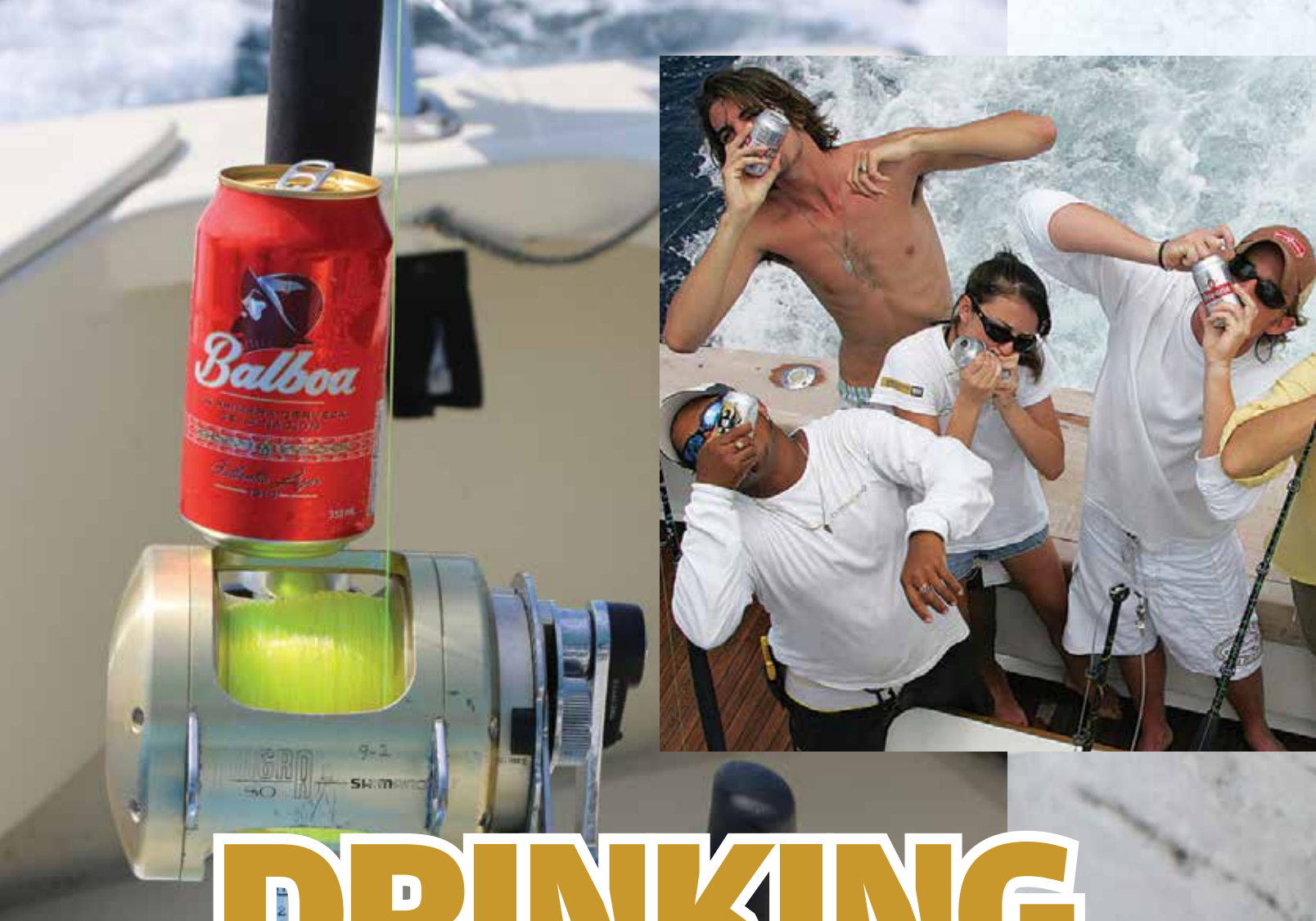


### THINGS TO AVOID:

1. **Spray on sunscreen** can make a real mess—some will discolor upholstery. **If you have it, don't spray it on in the salon.**
2. **Avoid pants or shorts with zippered seat pockets.** These can tear upholstery.
3. **Avoid flip flops with bottle openers on the bottom.** These can scratch gel coat and tower legs.
4. **Unless you have spoken about it previously, assume the boat is no smoking.** And leave the weed at home, Snoop Dogg.
5. **Be careful for new or old shoes.** New shoes can bleed when wet. Old shoes can mark up the deck or track dirt aboard. Avoid black soled shoes, too.
6. **No wet shoes inside.** Also, if your clothes are wet ask for a towel before sitting on the couch.
7. **Everybody gets excited when a fish is hooked up,** but don't be more vocal than the captain.
8. **Varnish is expensive to repair.** Even though it's a hardy vessel, it's a fragile environment. Beware of belt buckles, metal buttons on jeans and watch bands that might scratch varnish.
9. **Newspapers have ink on them—they bleed when wet—especially on cushions.**

### FOOD RULES:

1. **Unless you own the boat, don't eat food in the staterooms.**
2. **Don't leave open containers, beverages, or knives on the counter while underway.**
3. **After using the sink, be sure to turn the water all the way off.**
4. **Fried chicken crumbs will leave spots on a teak deck.** If you spill them, hose them off.
5. **Your momma doesn't work here, so please don't leave anything in the sink.** 🐟



# DRINKING AND FISHING

Originally published in June 2016

by Alexandra Stark

**S**ince the days of the swash buckling pirates, drinking and boating seem to be connected in a magical kind of way. You don't have to be Blackbeard to appreciate a cheers with your buddy after the big catch, a round of shots in celebration of a tournament victory, or indulging in a good luck drink before a big day out on the water. With the cool ocean breeze blowing in your face and the hot sun beating down on your shoulders – there are times when not a thing in the world beats a cold beer.

Just like many other things in life, drinking alcohol can be safe and can make your day that much more entertaining. The safety and entertainment aspects of drinking are generally associated with moderate, responsible consumption. Drinking alcohol is something that may be included in your day, but it does not have to be included on your to-do list.

Just as guzzling booze responsibly can enrich your time on the water, drinking too much or too often can ruin your day, your career, or your life. While most people can have a glass of wine at dinner without a problem, there are others who simply cannot survive



without alcohol—and lots of it—each and every day. For those confronted with this scenario—physical dependency on alcohol—whether or not to have a drink or two every day is less a choice than an obligation. Physical dependency is associated with alcoholism.

The term alcoholic describes someone whose body becomes physically dependent on alcohol. They must have alcohol in their system to avoid the detrimental effects of withdrawal which can be life threatening. This disease affects people from all walks of life, all ages, genders, races and socioeconomic classes. This article is intended to be a brief overview of alcoholism in general, its diagnosis, treatment and how it specifically affects those in the sportfishing industry.

### Drinking on Boats

A logical first step in understanding the relationship between drinking and boating is to delve into the culture that makes the two activities seem as logical a pairing as gin and tonic, pinot grigio and mahi mahi or jack and coke.

Carrie Caston, a native of South Florida

who grew up in Panama City, Panama, has been surrounded by or on boats since the time she was born. She has also worked for a large mothership operation in Panama and reports that, "Drinking is such a big part of the boating life that I would not even think about going boating with someone who would not have alcohol on the boat." She also mentions that she and her friends say, "Boats are for drinking and killing [fish]."

She gives me a brief introduction to her life on the water and how much of a part of her life it has been since she was a young child. "I knew my parents were drinking something that I wasn't allowed to have, but I just wasn't sure exactly what it was," she explains. "Once I was old enough, and in Panama that's pretty young, my friends and I drank on the boat too."

This situation is a part of life that many people have grown accustomed to. Those who have grown up on the water have a kind of unwritten rule about drinking on the boat. It's not just accepted, it's encouraged. It's not about if you are going to have that drink, but when and how much.

Chris Checke is a licensed psychotherapist

who operates a private practice in Fort Lauderdale. Chris grew up on the water on the West Coast of Florida near Charlotte Harbor. Checke's boating influence was such that he was a swimmer before he could walk. Checke's perspective about the cultural crossover between drinking and boating results from personal experience and his professional background. Recalling his childhood, Checke reminisces that his mother — who doesn't even drink (on land), but put her on the boat and she, "Always had a cold one." "To my family beer and boating went hand in hand." Chris went on to explain the cultural norms in boating and drinking.

### Responsibility in Context

Just like in any other setting, if done responsibly and legally, drinking on a boat is fun and entertaining. A boat has become an entertainment platform — an extension of one's home or backyard. Boats are so comfortable, in fact, that can be easy to forget that when out on the water a person must still practice responsible drinking just like if a person were driving a car or flying a plane.

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## What is Alcoholism?

According to the Mayo Clinic, alcoholism is a chronic disease characterized by uncontrollable drinking and preoccupation with alcohol. It is the inability to control drinking due to the physical and emotional dependence on alcohol. Symptoms include repeated alcohol consumption despite legal and health issues. People may experience blackouts, dizziness, shakiness, craving or sweating. Behavioral symptoms may include aggression, agitation, compulsive behavior, or lack of restraint. Mood related symptoms include anxiety or euphoria. Treatment includes counseling, a detoxification center if necessary and medication.

had a few drinks before takeoff? Probably not so good. There are laws and regulations for drinking and boating. These laws and regulations are enforceable by the United States Coast Guard who patrol the water daily. You may be one of the lucky ones who never gets caught or perhaps you have a DD for the day, but the USCG is no joke and they have the right to stop your boat. If they do and determine that the driver of the boat is boating under the influence, there may be legal ramifications, fines, revocation of a license and even possible jail time.

Even if you are a person who has never had a run in with the law, you may be faced with other challenges due to drinking. Job performance issues are not the least of these challenges. There may be times when a captain, mate, deckhand or stew have noticed their skills on the job decrease due to alcohol use. The leniency of bosses varies by operation, but the general consensus is that consistent drunkenness (or problems associated with drinking) leads to unemployment and bad reputations.

### The Evolution of a Problem

Not every person with a problem with alcohol started out that way. In the sportfishing context, consider the following. A private boat captain may fish 220 days per year. The ritual cold beer on the ride home is commonplace on the bridges of many operations. Owners and guests are passed icy rum drinks and the captain may indulge a 12 ounce lager. This is celebration, it's ritual, it's part and parcel of what you do on a boat. One beer, how can that be bad?

After six months of drinking a beer on the ride home with no incident, it becomes even more matter of fact. One beer turns into a couple, mixed with the occasional cocktail. Then there is the wash down. The two ride-home-beers tasted so good, why not wash them down with a six pack as the mate cleans and washes the boat. After all, the time it takes to down a 12 pack is about the same length of time it takes to plan the next day's fishing. Before you know drinking heavily is incorporated into your daily routine, soon becoming habit.

### How many beers did it take to make that sound like a good idea?

From a young mate's perspective, introduction into the sportfishing lifestyle and profession can include heavy drinking from a young age. A first job for a travelling mate might include three or four months on some remote, desolate island without too much else to do aside from fish... and drink. After drinking the nightly allotment

## Need Help with Alcohol Use?

There is no shame in asking for assistance. If you or someone you know needs help dealing with alcohol use, there are many great resources to assist. For private counseling service, please contact Chris Checke. He's the best in the business and will make you feel comfortable with his genuine caring nature and knowledge of the topic. His office is centrally located in Fort Lauderdale and he also offers a free consultation! Check out his website [www.chrischecke.com](http://www.chrischecke.com) or give him a call at (954) 240-6323.


of boat washing cocktails, it's then time to head out for some after-hours entertainment with other heavy drinking mates. In certain circles, during certain times, it's perfectly acceptable (sometimes expected) that mates might drink to the point of blacking out—sometimes two or three nights a week.

Alcohol not only has physiological effects (intoxication and hangovers), but inhibits judgment and rational thinking. It is these secondary effects—making judgment less rational—that can damage reputations, cause loss of employment, create criminal records, and worse. Habitual heavy drinking can lead to poor financial choices (it's hard to save money if you're paying for the bar tabs of your 15 closest friends). Regardless of skill, a mate or captain who is not dependable will not have a job very long. Walk the docks most anywhere in the sportfishing world and it doesn't take long to hear a story or two of a captain or mate whose life has been derailed by problems with the bottle.

### Alcoholism: Prevalence and Treatment

Most of the people who report drinking socially (and that is a lot of people) do not have and never develop a problem. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 87.6% of people 18+ reported drinking alcohol sometime in their life. Of this same age group, 6.8% have alcohol use dependence.

This 6.8% is comprised of many different kinds of people, from the high school teacher next door to the high-powered attorney in the \$10 million mansion. Included in that mix are those in the boating industry. While there is no research on the subject, a career on the open water does lend itself heavily to many of the risk factors associated with developing a drinking problem. These risk factors relate directly to the accessibility, acceptance and cultural norms of drinking and boating.

If you do find yourself in a situation where it seems that the drinking has gotten to be too much, you do have options. You may want to try making a commitment to yourself to cut back on the times per day or week that you have a drink. There may also be other people around who you can lean on for support or encouragement who have gone through the same thing. There are also plenty of resources online to gather any necessary information as well. If self-help methods are not working, or are not really your thing, you can reach out to trained professionals in the community who can help. 



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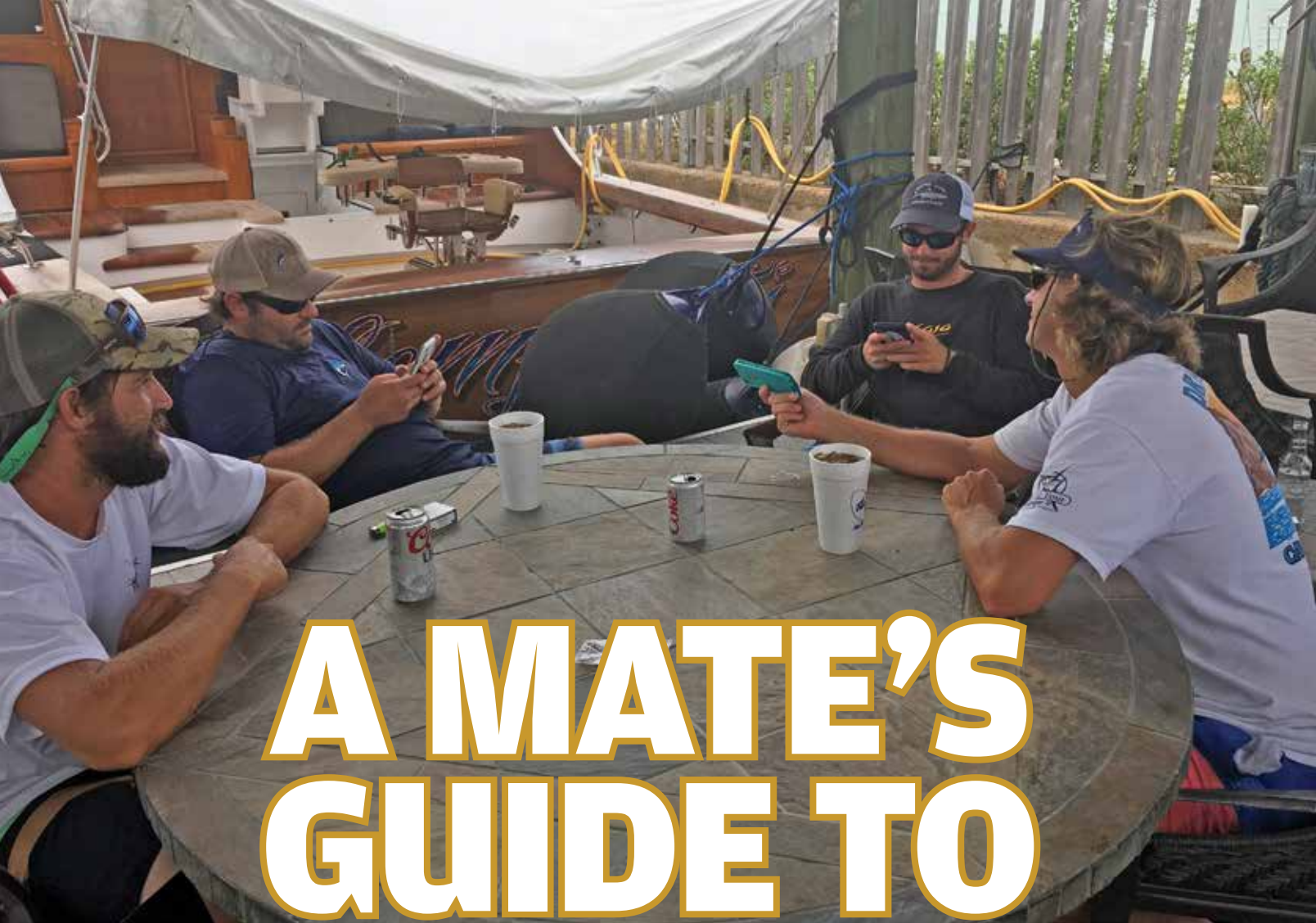


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# A MATE'S GUIDE TO

# SOCIAL MEDIA

**How it may impact your sportfishing career**

Originally published in June 2016

by Capt. Jen Copeland

**I**n many ways social media is defining the world around us. While skillfully maneuvering the Instagrams and Facebooks of the world can raise the professional profile of your career, posting things inappropriately can ruin your reputation, change the way people look at you, and even get you fired. Captain Jen Copeland provides a thoughtful, insightful breakdown of how sportfishing mates should approach the use of social media. It's a good read for anyone, if you plan to make your career in sportfishing it is a must read. — *ITB*

## The Good

Social media provides a unique look inside the world of sportfishing and the many interesting men and women who make up the sportfishing industry. Social media posts show us what is biting where and allow us to preview new products. Social media—and the information it provides—has dramatically shortened the time necessary to make decisions.

Many participants in the sportfishing industry – top teams, small lure makers, tournaments, and brokerages – capitalize on the “perceived free advertising” Instagram and Facebook provide. Top teams use it for a real-time fishing reports and to track the success of their competitors. What once took captains hours, or even days to hear via the coconut telegraph, now takes only minutes. Most everyone is connected by social media one way or another and it has proven to be a real asset.

“Staying in touch with family and friends while you’re travelling enables more people to be involved in the sport, and everyone gets excited to see fish being caught,” says Captain Jimmy Werling of the *Plane Simple*. Werling, whose team is a regular on tournament lead-

erboards, keeps a watchful eye on his competition through social media. “Although I may not be competing with *so-and-so* this week, I may be the next week. I’m able to track the teams I need to watch out for.”

Of all the professionals surveyed about the subject, not one of them said social media was “bad” for the fishing business itself. In fact, they all agreed it provides a wealth of knowledge and information that is both informative and instantly accessible. But, there must be a down side, right?

## The Bad

While there is no doubt the sportfishing industry has become “instafamous” in the past few years, let’s not forget the possible repercussions from your “professional” posts. What you post can impact your immediate situation and even follow you into the future. Just as social media had made information available at the touch of app, it can also wreak havoc on your career should it not be used responsibly.

Kona Captain Bryan Toney of *Marlin Magic* says he has only used social media on a professional level for the last year. “I don’t post anything personal, I’ve strayed from

that,” Toney says. “It (SM) is a great way to get yourself out there. But if you’re looking to further your career, my advice is to keep it completely professional.” Solid advice from a man who says, “I learned it the hard way.”

Anytime you post, comment or like something, it is a direct reflection on you and your character. Though you may not realize it, this can affect the way people think about you. Six degrees of separation? Possibly. According to Captain Doug Covin of Hatteras team *Copper Leader*, “I have used several different mates over the last few years, so I’ve used social media many times to do a ‘background check’ to see what type of fishing a mate is doing or to see who his friends are.” Covin continues by saying “if a mate posts a lot of pictures of himself at the sandbar, or drinking with his buddies, then that’s very telling.” Very telling, but not in a good, professional way.

“It’s your resume you’re putting out there,” another captain points out. “Everyday out on the dock is a real-time interview to see how you carry yourself, how your boat looks. With social media, you don’t know who is watching you. It could be your captain, your owner, a future employer – one screw



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up could ruin your job, or your future – and that's worth remembering."

### The Ugly

Living in the moment is one thing that makes the charm of sportfishing so alluring. If sportfishing is your chosen career, however, it's wise to think of your future. In ten years, how do you want to be seen? Impressions do matter and no one is irreplaceable. As Captain Bryan Toney says, "Good mates don't stay mates, they turn into responsible, respectable captains. And well, good mates with bad habits stay mates – if they're lucky."

### The Bottom Line: "Could a mate's indiscretions in social media content affect his career?"

Both Covin and Toney think it could, at least in the short term. Captain Jimmy Werling answered with a definitive, "100% yes." He explains, "Once it's out there, it's always out there. To me, this means when you go to apply for another job, inappropriate posts will come back to haunt you," he goes on to say. "If your social media profile makes you look like an idiot, then you are an idiot. It can define you, so be aware of what you put out there



– it's there to stay and for all to see." Werling went on to tell me that his boss' company has a very strict social media policy for the boat. If he goes to hire a new mate, the company will search the new hire's social media profile(s) to help determine what type of person they are.

According to another top, competitive tournament captain (who prefers to remain anonymous), "Any future employer has the right to judge you on your social media habits. Most have been usually right when it comes to determining a personality based on your

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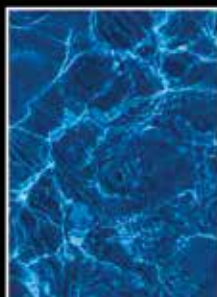


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posts. It's just another network. You must use common sense, and in this business, if you don't have that, find another career."

This estimation may sound harsh, but it is a harsh reality. The fact that others may make judgments on your skills or character by what you post on social media should not be a surprise. When it comes to your social media accounts, you put it there, so it's an open invitation for anyone to "check you out" – private or public.

## To Post or Not to Post?

What is inappropriate? That is a personal decision and one a responsible, mature mate should be able to easily make. Off the high of a stellar fishing day, you may be tempted to post the highlights ASAP. But there are a few factors you may want to consider prior to clicking the share button:

### 1. Respect the boss's wishes and privacy:

Having worked for the same family for over 13 years, I can tell you that on more than one occasion the boss has called me to express his annoyance with how my mate had posted our day's activities. He simply does not want to the general public (i.e. his com-

pany employees) knowing his personal business, how he spends his off-time, and more importantly, his toy collection. This is understandable—many private owners want to be private, off the social media grid or incognito. Part of your job is to respect his privacy. Respect him and he will respect you. When in doubt, the man with the gold rules, so it's best to ask first. Either way you look at it, it's wise to get your owner's take on the matter.

### 2. Put yourself in your captain's shoes:

It's hard enough to keep his secrets "secret." Having his hard work plastered all over your page enlightening your 2,000 followers that all your blue marlin came up on the purple dredge or green squid chain isn't helping and is hardly acceptable. While many captains have their own social media agendas, they may prefer to make that decision on their own. Is it your place to make that decision for him? How do you want your mates sharing boat business when it's time for you to make all the decisions? I thought so.

**3. The future of your career:** Choose your posts wisely, with as much common sense as you can muster. Even a private account can

easily be shared, so be advised. Posting your Saturday afternoon of dunk-a-roos or pre-tournament rounds of Fireball shots at 6:00am isn't exactly making you look professional. Broadcasting such activities out there for the world to see certainly isn't good for your resume. Remember, what happens on the boat, stays on the boat. Anything posted on the interwebs is there forever, and rest assured your next boss is going to have a look at your social media footprint and habits – he'd be a fool not to. Having any individual responsible for his multi-million-dollar operation, not to mention his friends and family, deserves a little past-delving...don't you agree?

The bottom line is this, *and top captains agree*: thinking twice always makes you see things differently the second time. If you are committed to this fishing career of yours, regardless whether or not you are part of a private or charter program, it's always best to err on the side of caution. The days of using social media to make yourself known and speak your mind are over. This "thing" has morphed into a permanent, real life window to your world, so be sure you are ready to have your current, or future employer peering into it.



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# How to Build and Maintain a Positive Relationship with your Boss

Originally published in September 2016

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by Alexandra Stark

**R**elationships are an important part of life. There are many different types of relationships — ranging from romantic, to casual, to friendships — you may even have a special relationship with your dog. One of the most important types of relationship, however, is that between a person and his or her boss. This relationship can easily make or break your week, your month or even your professional career. A positive and mutually beneficial working relationship with your boss does not happen by accident. A healthy working relationship with the boss must be built and nurtured from the ground up, and given the same care and maintenance you would provide the main engines. Try some of these simple steps to foster healthy comradery.

**1. Lay the groundwork—Expectations are key:** This is step one in any employee/employer relationship. Make sure to get a job description and a thorough understanding of your tasks and responsibilities. Ensure that you take the initiative to ask questions regarding the job and your boss' expectations of you. This is also prime time to discuss the expectations that you have of your boss. It's always ok to suggest minor changes in the expectations as long as they are for good reason. The more you know about what is expected of you, the better. *Case in point:* Want a job that fishes 80% of the time? Your first interview with a prospective boss is a good time to make sure that his operation is not a sailboat.

**2. Be clear and concise with questions:** "How many baits should I rig for tomorrow?" or "How long will we be away during the next trip?" are both examples of clear and concise questions that the boss can answer simply and

quickly. You and the boss are both busy and cannot be bothered with round-about questioning. This usually ends up with one or both parties being frustrated. Writing down all of your questions to be prepared when talking to your boss is also a great way to stay organized at work.

**3. Be specific about your needs while being sure to consider your boss' expectations:** "Yes boss, I understand that you're offering two weeks of paid vacation per year. That's great but, I would much rather have ten weeks off and the private use of your boat when you are not using it," said no good employee ever. It is important to advocate for yourself and your needs in your employment while taking the needs of your boss and his operation into account. If you ask for too much without thinking of where your boss is coming from, you can appear entitled and off putting. If you are off putting and en-

titled you will likely be fired (or at least have lots of varnishing and waxing in your future).

**4. When money is an issue, be very careful:** So, it's that time— you want a raise. Be mindful and considerate when you ask for money. Make sure that you deserve it, make sure you can show clear evidence that you have improved the operation or saved it money and make absolutely sure that you are asking for a fair increase. Just because you caught a few fish and didn't sink any boats does not mean you deserve a 20% pay increase.

Is this everything that you need to build a long term, healthy relationship with your employer? No. Is this list fool proof and to be printed and hung in the galley? Probably not. This list is, however, a damn good start to forming the type of relationship with your boss that will encourage open communication, mutual respect and a positive work environment. 🐟

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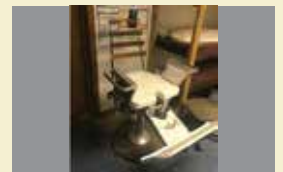
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**Last issue's photo and winning caption...**

**Mate, please fetch me a raspberry  
White Claw! – @dickieboy85**

## Runners Up:

Going to the Flavor Flav concert and hoping to pick up some girls. – Ben Mahler

Some boat shows increase security. – David Blair

Can I get some Novocain please? – Matt Irwin

Will fish for food. – Scott Hitch

Sit there and watch me land a grander! – Ian Piccione

Ass, gas or grass, nobody rides for free! – Paul Tagliavia

Call me. – Mark Ransford

Wishful thinking. – Bob Stephens

Waiting for the captain to come back with the passports eahhh! – Kai Flo

You wear the sign when you do the crime. – Jamie Resor

Does that include the Coast Guard, too?

– @ashorething\_fishingg

Coast Guard can't get us now! – @skylardemuth

Is billfishing included in this appointment?

– @pelagicfishman

Yes, I am the dumbass that brought a banana on the boat.

– @skcancook

Shoe shine! Opens at 7:30am. – @sanman298

Fuel, no fun, no free fishin! – @mamalu0101



## Last issue's monkey winner!

Congratulations to Joe Bettinger who identified the monkey in Pisa, Italy.



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2015 Viking 92 EB | \$7,495,000  
Chris 813.503.8398



2010 Viking 82 C | \$3,995,000  
Michael 941.725.2782



2016 Viking 80 C | \$6,895,000  
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2010 Donzi 80 C | \$3,950,000 | Nick 941.720.1321  
2001 Donzi 80 EB | \$1,789,000 | Tony 941.527.1273



2005 Garlington 78 | \$2,399,000  
Nick 941.720.1321



2008 Mark Willis 76 Custom | \$4,995,000  
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2005 Viking 74 EB | \$2,449,000 | Mike 941.725.2782  
2005 Viking 74 EB | \$1,950,000 | Artie 850.259.7807



2017 Viking 72 C | \$6,549,000 | Carmine Jr. 941.725.0587  
2017 Viking 72 C | \$6,149,000 | Stan 850.596.3645



2016 Viking 70 EB | \$5,495,000 | Tony 941.527.1273  
2014 Viking 70 C | \$4,195,000 | Nick 941.720.1321



2011 Spencer 70 EB | \$2,695,000  
Pep 813.299.5884



2019 Viking 68 C | \$3,295,000  
Jim 850.259.3246



2017 Viking 66 C | \$4,595,000 | Randy 713.816.2185  
2015 Viking 66 C | \$2,980,000 | Jeff 259.691.8100  
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2008 Viking 61 C | \$1,149,000 | Michael 941.725.2782  
2002 Viking 61 EB | \$699,000 | Nick 941.720.1321



2012 Viking 60 EB | \$2,349,000 | Andrew 508.364.2010  
2009 Viking 60 C | \$1,595,000 | Tony 941.527.1273  
2008 Viking 60 C | \$1,595,000 | Tony 941.527.1273



2010 Spencer 57 C | \$1,599,000  
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2006 Viking 56 C | \$895,000 | Stan 850.596.3645  
2005 Viking 56 C | \$865,000 | Jim 850.259.3246



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2004 Viking 56 C | \$729,000 | Randy 713.816.2185



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2013 Viking 55 C | \$2,299,000 | Chris 202.550.3788



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