



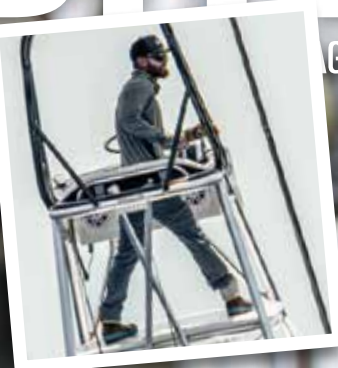
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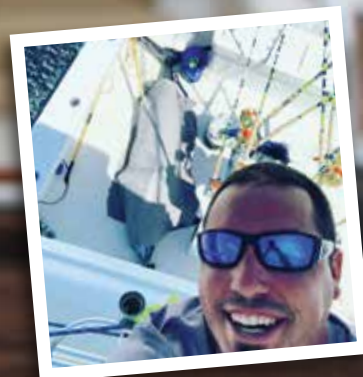
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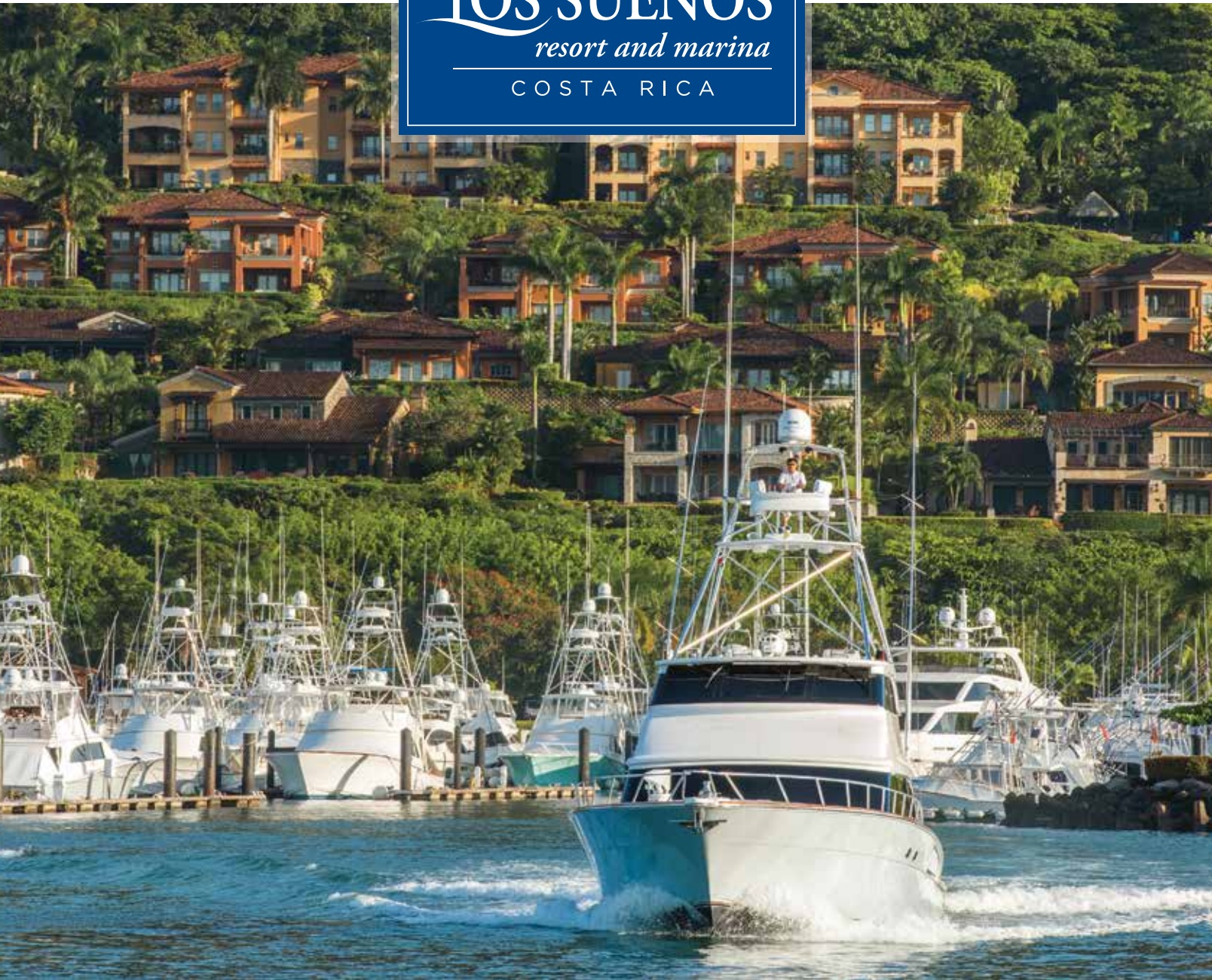


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Our Mission

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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EDITOR'S LETTER

2020



For as long as there has been optometrists, there has been the old saying, "Hind sight is 20/20." Whoever made up this saying was probably trying to express that you sometimes have a better view when looking back at events than you do while watching them in the present. For some, the saying comes up during times of reflection.

This saying is often used when trying to help someone feel better about having screwed something up. After all, you can always see things more clearly when you break down all of the variables to see how things interact to influence their conclusion. When looking back you have all the time in the world to think. Generally speaking, you can take your time to think things through. As you work your way through the present, however, it is not uncommon to have to make decisions rapidly, often without knowing all of the variables involved. So, sure, hind sight is 20/20.

Looking at the calendar, not only is hindsight 20/20 so is this year. I'll be damned if that's not something to think about. Maybe this year is destined to be a philosophical one (or maybe we should have gone on a wild fishing adventure in the last couple of weeks so that I could have written about that). But for now, let's assume that there should be some philosophical undertone—of course one that applies to fishing.

We'll start with a couple of premises:

1. Nobody has ever regretted going fishing. You might have some regrets, but those are more likely to involve the trouble you got into at work or with your wife for bailing on a dinner a party. Don't blame fishing for that!

2. Everyone leads increasingly busy lives.

3. What will you remember when looking back?

What follows is a combination of a New Year's Resolution with some down-home type logic. Hopefully it might be of use when filling out the 2020 fishing calendar. Here goes:

Fishing is a great thing to do. While some might view it as a hobby or pastime, it is a very important activity to many people. If you are reading this, there's a good chance you might be one of such person. While nobody has ever regretted going fishing, the activity can sometimes be put on the back burner. If you get swamped at work or have too many things going on around the house, it can be easy to overlook how many benefits there are to making time for fishing.

If you really think about it, the opportunities these days are endless. There has actually never been a time when getting to the best places in the world to fish was any easier. Zane Grey had to fish Pinas Bay on a sailboat that was brought there on its own bottom! All we have to do is hop on a plane or two.

Why not schedule a trip that you've been meaning to. After a big blue or black, the Azores or Madeira or Cape Verde or the Great Barrier Reef are there for you. Looking for numbers? You can get to Mag Bay or Cabo or Virginia Beach or Guatemala or Costa Rica just as easily. Sure, these things cost money, but with a bit of planning you can most always make something work. (All those terrible home improvement projects you have to do cost money too, ha!)

Hind sight is 20/20, so is this year. There's no sense looking back and realizing that you should have done more fishing.

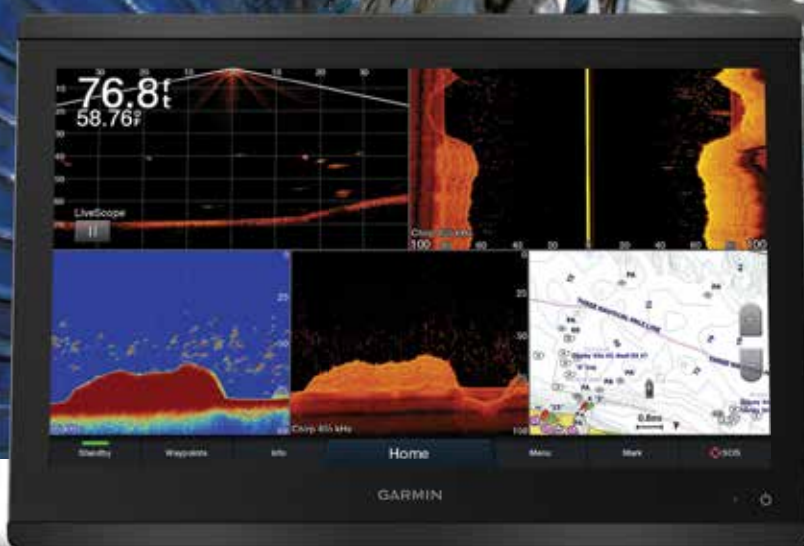
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Common Sense: Safety at the Helm



By Captain
Scott "Fraz" Murie

Safety is not just a word, it's an action. People in our profession sometimes get too comfortable in their routines and forget that disaster can happen in a split second. It probably won't, but what if it *does*? After all, it has happened before. Tragedy *can* happen and unfortunately sometimes it does.

If you're a traveling boat, I think it's necessary for two crew members to be on the bridge at all times when underway. You can keep an eye on one another that way. If there is only one guy on the bridge and he slips, bumps his head and falls overboard, who's going to know? We're all guilty, but that doesn't make it right.

We lost a fellow fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico not too long ago. He was running at night and was on the bridge by himself. When a crew member came up on the bridge to relieve him, he was gone. The last time he had been seen by anyone was a few hours earlier.

Nobody will ever know for sure, but they think he left the bridge to use the head and fell overboard in a choppy sea. Not only was he gone, but the unmanned boat could have hit another boat and killed who knows how many people. If someone else was on the bridge that night, things might have happened differently.

In another instance in the Gulf of Mexico, the captain left the bridge at cruise speed with the helm unattended to do something with a fish in the cockpit. The boat plowed into a shrimp boat almost killing everyone on both boats. If the captain just would have used common sense and stopped his boat when he left the helm, he wouldn't have risked everyone's life. Common sense goes a long way when it comes to safety.


Entering and returning into rough inlets, day or night, with two people on the bridge can make all the difference in the world in preventing accidents. On long crossings, just the company of another person on the bridge can keep you more alert and awake—in foul weather it's a no brainer. We all know

this, many of us even talk about how important it is, but for the most part we just don't do it.

Also stay out of the tower unless it's absolutely necessary. With today's superfast boats, accidents seem to be more and more frequent. Thirty-five knots and five- to eight-foot seas can be pretty violent. Just hanging on is a chore! So, slow the heck down! You're just tearing things up and greatly increasing the chances of something bad happening.

We've all lost several buddies in recent years in ways I believe could have been completely preventable, so keep an eye on one another. Try to use some common sense and chances of a tragic accident will go way down. Make sure all your safety gear is up to date—lights, flares, fire systems, etc. After all, you never know when you might need them! Even with the warning to keep them up to date and in proper function, I hope you never need them!

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



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InTheBite would like to thank the 2020 line up of Captain of the Year Cup sponsors. As the world's preeminent award for tournament sportfishing captains, the Captain of the Year Cup spans five divisions and 95-sanctioned events. The 2020 Captain of the Year Cup is once again presented by Hatteras Yachts. The Gulf Division is presented by Furuno, the East Coast AIRMAR Technology Corporation and Florida by Contender Boats. New for 2020, *InTheBite* would like to welcome Release Marine as the sponsor of the International Division. Thank you to the sponsors.

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Congratulations to Steve Katz, *ITB's* Technical Editor, the New Chairman of the National Marine Electronics Association

InTheBite congratulates our good buddy, and Technical Editor, Capt. Steve Katz. Katz can now add the title of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Marine Electronics Association to an already long, and prestigious list of industry honors. Katz served as vice chairperson for several years and begins his new position in January. Katz succeeds Mike Spyros, who completes his three-year term at the end of December.

Katz owns and operates Steve's Marine Service, in Ocean City, Maryland. He also travels far and wide performing repairs, system installations and consultations on sportfishing and large center console boats. He also holds a Coast Guard 100-ton captain's license. Over the years, Katz has written dozens of feature articles describing boat systems and trends in *InTheBite* Magazine.

"Thank you to the members of the NMEA for your continued confidence and support," says Katz in a statement. "I look forward to serving our members and working with the entire board. I will work hard to grow our successful programs and benefits, along with researching new offerings we, as an association, can provide the marine electronics trade and the boating public."

Also elected to the NMEA board were Brian Kane of GOST as vice chairperson and directors Paul Comyns of Intellian, Peter Braffitt of Gemeco and Brian Swanke of CWR.

2020 Florida Huge Snook Championship Sign Ups Now Open



The Huge Snook Championship is a social-media powered tournament that showcases anglers across the state of Florida in the quest to be crowned the Huge Snook Champion. The tournament targets Florida's most sought after inshore gamefish, pitting anglers from different regions against each other in head to head brackets. Video measurements are posted on social media, the longest snook advances. Prizes are awarded to the tournament champion, the Huge Snook Champion (longest fish measured), and many more. The Huge Snook Championship is open to anglers from across Florida, fishing from boat or land—using live bait or artificial—catch a huge snook and advance!

The Huge Championship is a continuous 12-week long event. The combination of tournament length, social media format, and wide geographic participation provides for a continuous stream of organic content that showcases sponsors, anglers and Florida's world class snook fishery. Fly and conventional divisions available. Lots of prizes and good fun. The first round begins May 14, 2020. For more, please visit: www.releaseruler.com.





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GALATI YACHT SALES

2020 Marks the 50th Anniversary of Galati Yacht Sales

There are many interesting things about Galati Yacht Sales. With a total of 11 locations in three countries, it can be easy to overlook that Galati is a privately held, (extended) family business. Galati's founding dates back to 1970 when Michael Galati Sr. and his wife Anna Maria purchased a hurricane-battered marina in Southwest Florida.

With little experience running or maintaining a marina, the Galatis were passionate about spending time on the water. The marina ultimately provided service for boats and jobs for the family. It also proved to be a great platform, one that would eventually grow into an operation that employs more than 175 people.

The couple's five children—Joe, Carmine, Fran, Michael and Chris—grew up in the marina and each found roles in the business for themselves. With origins in boat service, it was not until 1976 that the Galatis entered the world of yacht brokerage. The company has been full steam ever since.

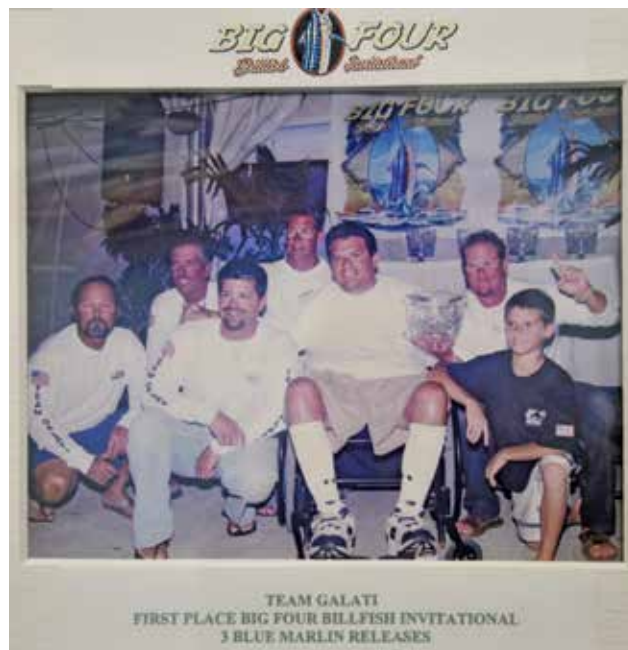
In 1992, with the passing of Michael Sr. ownership passed to the second generation of Galatis. The senior Galati left following generations with the advice, "Play to

your strengths and you will do better than I ever could have." Taking this advice to heart, Galati Yacht Sales recognizes a number of turning points through the years.

Notable milestones include: becoming a Viking/Princess Certified Dealer in 1996, the Cruisers Yachts Dealer certification in 1983, and being recognized by the Marine Industry Dealer Certification Program in 2005. In 2007 and 2008, Galati Yacht Sales was recognized as the Dealer of the Year by the Boating Industry Hall of Fame. In 2009, the company was inducted into the organization's Hall of Fame officially.

"Reflecting back, what remains the most important for us is continued improvement. We really try to not just rest on our experience or rely on new technology to make us better. Our history gave us a great foundation, but also a great work ethic. Most of our team has been here at least half the time we've been in business. We focus on being a better company every day—not just every year," says Carmine Galati.

"Even more than the great family team we have is the customer base. They have become our friends over the years. Our customers always come first with us. We have no plan in place, but rely on them for direction,"



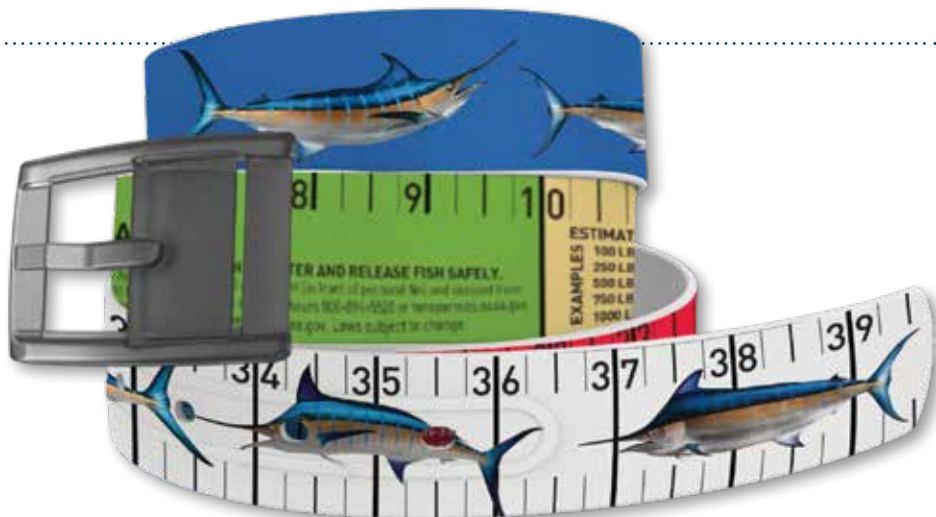
Carmine Sr. says. With a customer-centric focus and a dealership network that includes locations in Florida (Anna Maria, Naples, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, and Destin), Alabama (Orange Beach), Texas (Galveston and Clear Lake), Mexico (Cabo San Lucas and Cancun) and Costa Rica (Los Sueños), Galati Yacht Sales is positioning itself for an optimistic future.

"Looking forward, we're welcoming generation three—all 12 of them are working with the family. It is up to us to blend the experience we have gained with the education and abilities of the next generation with the hope of doing something special."

InTheBite congratulates the whole Galati Yacht Sales team. Here's to the next 50!

New Marlin Ruler Belts for 2020

InTheBite's Publisher Dale Wills created the patented fish weight scale rulers a few years ago to help fishermen more intuitively measure fish. The product line continues to grow today from the original Marlin Release Ruler to over 40 species of fish in decals, pvc and custom tournament rulers. New for 2020, Wills created a line of Release Ruler belts. "I had the idea for belts several years but it wasn't until this year when I discovered a manufacturer who could produce at a high level of quality and scale and be made in the USA. It's a natural product extension for us and another tool to help fisherman and crew enjoy the sport. All of our belts are waterproof, durable, true-to-scale rulers, and the



buckles are non-metal to be boater friendly. We are producing product lines from all our popular rulers. The Marlin Ruler Belt is one of our first belts to offer educational information such as the Lower Jaw Weight Measurement

Formula and biological identification tips for the different species of marlin," says Wills. The Marlin Belt is offered on *InTheBite.com* for \$34.99. Keep an eye out for more creative rulers and belts in 2020.



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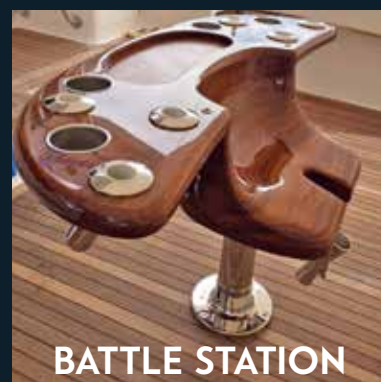
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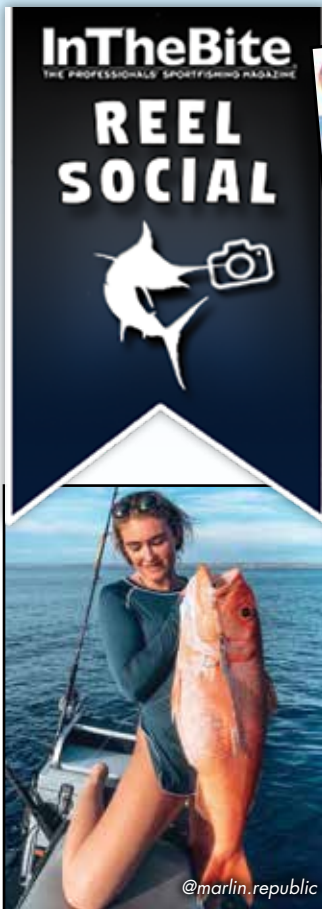


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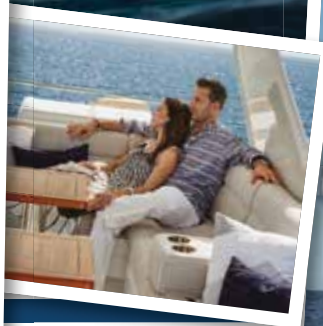
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Captain Ron Rico

When making rigs for swordfishing, leave a long tag end on your hook connection. Depending on your squid size, you will need to measure your hook placement and cut accordingly. Insert your hook, as pictured, and push the tag end of the leader back into the center of the mantle. It's important to keep your hook and leader dead center in the squid to eliminate spinning. Once rigged properly, your squid will fish in a realistic position thru the current.



Bow Lines on for Safety

Captain Kevin Deerman

Like many other sportfish boat owners nowadays, we opted to go without a bow rail. This gives us a cleaner look and we really don't have anyone (except for the mates) going up on the bow. When we are in a situation where we may be anchoring, tying off to a buoy or rig here in the Gulf, we will stretch out a couple of dock lines and run them tight from the handrails at the front of the bridge house to each of the bow cleats. This rigging acts as a safety precaution for anyone to hold on to on the bow, making it safer for everyone even in rough seas.





Mate Brexel is ready to grab the wind-on below the float. The angler can then crank in the line and wind-on as needed as the float is forced against the rod tip and slips.

Live Bait Slip Float Captain/Mate Stephen Brexel

Deckhand Stephen Brexel utilizes a #64 rubber band under his float-sinker-bead set-up on his wind-on leaders when live baiting. The rubber band holds the float in place so you can see it near the top of the wind-on when kite fishing. It also allows the float-sinker-bead to slip down the wind-on when a fish is on. "It lets my anglers wind the line all the way to the five-foot leader swivel. This is helpful for a number of reasons, like when wiring a fish, the angler cranks while I grab the wind-on so we don't have the leader flying around behind me. It also helps when we pick up and run—the float is down to the snap swivel and only the short leader and hook needs to be secured versus the entire wind-on. Plus, this set-up can be used with wire leader for toothy critters," says Brexel.



Red Short Black Long Captain Tucker Colquhoun

Speed is everything when it comes to tournament fishing. One of the easiest and simple ways to ensure your baits are positioned quickly is to mark your lines with a Sharpie marker. Capt. Tucker adds a second marker. One is for the short rigger position, in this case red color, and the long rigger position is black color. Regardless of different rods being rotated through the cockpit positions, each angler can easily position a bait by looking for a specific color.





Captain Adam Peeples runs the *One Shot* Charters out of the Destin, Florida area. In addition to running a first-class operation, Peeples is a combat veteran with two deployments in Iraq and a stint as an instructor at the US Army Sniper School to his credit.



by Capt. Adam Peeples

The ability to keep several large live baits swimming is a must for anyone serious about live bait fishing for marlin, big tunas, and a host of other species that require baits that will not survive in a typical live well. Tuna tubes are the most effective way to accomplish this feat. There are a wide variety of options for tuna tube installation and plumbing on center consoles.

From glassed-in, permanent installs that cost in the tens of thousands of dollars to homemade PVC tubes sourced from the local home improvement store, the options are endless. No matter which setup you choose, ensuring the tubes work properly and keep the baits alive is the most important aspect of it all. The correct installation and plumbing of your tuna tubes is paramount for having a live bait system that works as intended.

According to Steve Katz with Steve's Marine Service Inc., tuna tube water flow should be straight, non-turbulent, and spread across the entire fish's face. The tuna opens his mouth when he wants to breathe, and the water flow shouldn't power wash him in the face with unnecessary force. The unique issue with high performance center consoles, especially stepped hull vessels, is finding the correct place to install the pick-up to draw enough water needed to supply the tubes while underway at high speeds.

Katz has installed a myriad of tuna tubes on everything from large sportfish vessels to high performance center consoles. He states that finding a location for a high-speed pick-up on a stepped hull vessel can be the most difficult part of the process. If the pick-up is not in a location where it can draw constant water at high speeds, the entire system could fail to supply enough clean water to keep the baits alive while underway.

Water Supply Options

From the through-hull pick-up, there are a couple of different options to push the water into the lines that will supply the tubes. Sea chests and pump boxes are the two most effective ways to deliver the water to the tubes, though some captains have had success running the pick-up straight to an inline pump to supply the tubes directly. A simple two tuna tube system would likely be fine running on a single inline pump, but the chance for turbulent water to enter the system or for the pump to get airlocked is much greater than running from a sea chest or pump box. A sea chest is a sealed box that is connected to the thru-hull and vented above the water line. It is typically designed with multiple outputs that can be connected to pumps to supply tuna tubes, live wells, and even raw water washdowns. The chest ensures that all

the pumps have a supply of clean non-turbulent water to satisfy the needs of the system. A pump box is similar in design but contains the pumps inside the box and submerged in water. The box is typically rigged with the however many 1500/2000 GPH bilge pumps it takes to get the job done. Since the pumps are contained inside of the box, a pump box can save significant room on a center console install where space is at a premium.

Water Delivery

Delivering the water from the pumps to the tubes should be straight forward and direct. Avoid 90-degree joints, as these contribute to loss of flow and increase the amount of turbulence and bubbles in the water supply. Katz emphasized the need for flow control devices to moderate the amount of water supplied to the bait. Valves, variable speed pumps, and multiple pumps are all potential solutions to control the flow and keep a variety of baits alive.

Keep in mind that different bait species have varying water flow requirements. Your tuna tube system should have variable flow options to optimize the ability to keep different species and sizes of baits alive. Katz recommends a manifold system so that outgoing seawater can be routed to the necessary live well or tuna tube or combined when additional flow is needed.

It is also worth noting that the shape of the actual tuna tube can affect the longevity of your baits. While a circular tube can keep baits alive, the baits may tend to spin while immersed in a round tube with a high volume of water flow hitting them. Many tuna tube systems now use oval shaped tubes to prevent the bait from spinning, creating a system that can keep baits alive and frisky for extended periods of time.

Ultimately, there is no one size fits all solution for tuna tube systems. Every boat will have unique rigging problems to solve with various solutions to solve them. At the end of the day, the goal is keeping those baits alive and at the ready, and every tuna tube system should be able to accomplish that mission when properly rigged.



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HAWAII DIVISION

Capt. Teddy Hoogs *Bwana*, 1,900 Points

1st Place Release Points:

Skins, 500 Pts.

1st Place Release Points:

Lure Maker, 500 Pts.

3rd Place Release Points:

Marlin Magic, 100 Pts.

2nd Place Release Points:

BIMT, 300 Pts.

1st Place Points:

It's a Wrap, 500 Pts.

There are few places in the world as steeped in the history of sportfishing as Kailua Kona, Hawaii. The use of the very first outriggers and very first artificial trolling lures for marlin to name just two. It also hosts the world-famous Hoogs family of sportfishing pioneers. Capt. Teddy Hoogs, this year's winner of the Sea Genie Captain of the Year award grew up fishing the prolific waters of Kona sitting on the lap of his famous father Peter Hoogs, at the helm of the *Pamela*. "There wasn't any day-care back then, so there's a lot of pictures of me sitting on my Dad's lap while fishing a charter," says Hoogs.

Now all grown up and a legendary force to

THE 2019 CAPTAINS OF THE YEAR

by Dave Ferrell



be reckoned with in his own right, Hoogs, 38, pilots the 46-foot *Gamerfisherman*, *Bwana*, in some of the best blue marlin water in the world. "It was awesome when I found out we were going to get her. She was formerly named *Adios*, and I was drooling over her the whole time she was on *Yacht World*. It's really great to run her here," says Hoogs.

Hoogs works for owner Craig Lindner Jr., and over the last 11 years, the two have put together a good team of anglers and mates that all work on the same page. Carl Shepard's been with me for four or five years now, and we had Keith "KJ" Robinson come along when we run two crew. It's all good vibes with those guys. We are all behind each other 100 percent. We stand behind our choices on the water. We also had Bobby Cherry fill in for a few tournaments this year as well. He's a captain here in Kona as well, and runs a boat called the *Cherry Pit*. He's a good friend and was a good asset for us this year. We made a lot of the right turns this year for sure," says Hoogs.

Hoogs says that they caught the majority of their fish on lures, but that "we caught one on a live bait during the last tournament. Craig is an excellent angler, and he's worked hard on our program. He knows when to

tease a fish, when to back off the drag and when to put it to them. It's like having another crewman on the deck," says Hoogs.

Another thing that Hoogs appreciates about his present owner situation is that he doesn't have to be out fishing every day to make his living. "I grew up fishing a ton of days on the *Pamela*. My Dad had to do a lot of fishing to raise a family. With this job, I don't have to be out there every day now. I've got a couple of kids so fishing just 65 days or so a year, the majority of that with Craig, makes it much easier on the family life. I'm still busy keeping the boat up, and I enjoy the fishing all the tournaments in the summer. This arrangement allows me to be here for the kids while they are growing up," says Hoogs.

Although he's done the majority of his fishing in Kona, Hoogs quickly learned about the benefits of traveling to different spots and learning the ins and outs of big-game fishing from a variety of different perspectives. "I did six seasons on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, went to Madeira with Clay Hensley and fished in Ghana, Africa with Alan Stewart. I've also done a lot of commercial tuna fishing here in Kona for many years. We get to see plenty of big ones right here at home."

"I'm very proud to the get the Captain of the Year award," says Hoogs. "I like catching big marlin and big tuna and I really like tournament fishing...those big fish really get me going. Although, I really don't mind catching a few little blues during the tournaments; we can catch them fast, get some points, and hopefully win some money!"



INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

Capt. Jason Parker *Reel Steel* 1,550 Total Points

Bermuda Billfish Blast:

1st Place, 500 Pts.

Bermuda Big Game Classic:

2nd Place, 300 Pts.

Sea Horse Anglers Club

Tournament: 1st Place, 500 Pts.

Bermuda Triple Crown Champion:
250 Pts.

Everybody loves Bermuda. It's just that Capt. Jason Parker on the 66-foot Hines Farley, *Reel Steel*, has a few more reasons to like it than most. After three straight years of fishing the Bermuda summer tournament season, and doing fairly well, the team exploded in 2019, taking two first place finishes and a second to take home the Bermuda Triple Crown Championship trophy. This impressive performance against some of our sport's toughest competition earned Capt. Jason Parker the Top Captain of the Year in the Los Sueños International Division.

"We had a really good season," says Parker. "I couldn't be any happier. In Bermuda, we were just regular lure fishing. I'd like to say we were doing something different, but we just made the most of our opportunities and



Photo courtesy Michelle Gaylord/Out Your Front Door

luck was on our side. We prefer to bait fish, we are primarily dead bait fishermen, light-tackle guys, but we can adapt to whatever. I used some of my friend's experience and knowledge when I first came to Bermuda. Since it was more of a lure fishing place, I relied on guys like Andy Moyes to help us a bit. But we know to lure fish and we went out there and lure fished and had three good seasons with this last year being the best of it. I had a good crew – Drake Cooper – and a good angler, my owner, Mike Verzaleno. I wish I could say I'm the greatest and all that, but that's just not the case. It was a really cool experience for us though, grinding it out every day and just doing what we know works."

Parker started his sea-going career fishing out of Ocean City, Maryland. "I met Chris Bowie [the young mate who lost his life while wiring a blue marlin] and he kind of showed me the ropes, introduced me to the right people," says Parker. "He also taught me how to act and carry yourself in this business. Work hard, keep a clean head, and do it because you love to do it. That's the number one thing...you really got to love it. Fishing is the reward for all the waxing and cleaning and being away from home. You're not here to have a party every day."

Being away from home makes up a large part big game sportfishing these days and Parker says he owes a lot of his success to his wife. "I really owe a lot to my wife. She's a very trusting person. She takes care of everything at home which allows me to do my job to my best ability. We have been married

now for almost 20 years, and we are a team. She gets the crappy end of the stick because she'll be eating at home alone while we are all out at nice restaurant somewhere. If I had to worry about paying the bills or worrying about her being happy every five minutes, I could not do what I do."

Parker is also lucky in his working life... he says he's never worked for someone that wasn't a really nice guy. "I always believe that if you are a good person, then good things will come to you. I've been lucky to work with some really great owners," says Parker. "Sean Healey, who owned the 84-foot Bayliss, *Orion*, was a dream of a guy who took us all down to fish in Costa Rica. I also worked a season up in Massachusetts giant tuna fishing with Cookie Murray. I passed up a chance to fish in Venezuela to take that job, but I'd still do it again," he says. "Maybe they will open up Venezuela again someday."

Parker says his favorite place to fish is wherever they are biting, but he has a special affinity for Bermuda because "there's a chance to see some really big ones!" Parker also likes fishing around Ocean City and really likes Isla Mujeres, Mexico. "Isla's a lot of fun for us...we are going back in mid-January for six weeks or so. I like a lot of other places too; my list is probably the same as everybody else's."

Parker says he's very reluctant to accept any accolades, but he's grateful for the recognition. "I know that there a lot of really great captains and mates out there who don't fish a lot of tournaments who deserve to be recognized as well," he says.

Capt. Jason Buck *Done Deal* 2,100 Total Points

Cajun Canyons Billfish Classic:

2nd Place, 300 Pts.

Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic:

2nd Place, 300 Pts.

Texas Billfish Classic:

1st Place, 500 Pts.

Lone Star Shootout:

1st Place, 500 Pts.

New Orleans Invitational:

1st Place, 500 Pts.

****This represents Buck's 4th win in the Furuno Gulf Coast Captain of the Year: 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019.***



"We started fishing in tighter as well. I felt we were passing up a lot of fish by fishing way out wide just so that we could be all by ourselves. I threw that strategy out the window and said that if we think it looks good right out front, then that's what we are going to fish. We ran 70 miles offshore, which in the Texas is really close, found good water and caught our fish."

Buck grew up on the Gulf Coast, fishing with his Dad and his friends on a company-owned 46-Hatteras. He often dreamed about those trips and by the time he was teenager, he managed to work a couple of summers on the docks of Orange Beach, Alabama, making the 45-mile trek from his hometown of Fairhope, Alabama to work for free.

"One of the guys I was working for free for was a very professional guy. I could tell he had it together, and I was really impressed with him, so I asked him how I should go about making fishing a career. He said that he'd gone into the Coast Guard and then worked on charter boats during his days off. So that's what I did. I joined the Coast Guard, and my second duty station

was Venice, Louisiana. I got a job running a charter boat catching tunas on my days off and that was that! You get to see a lot of cool stuff happening offshore in Venice!"

Buck's first captain's job was on the 65-foot *Placebo*, which took him to the Turks and Caicos, Costa Rica, and the Panama. While he was in Panama, he started talking to his present owner, Jon Gon-

soulin. After a year of talking, Buck jumped ship and came to work for him. Eleven years later and the team is still together.

"After a brief Central American tour, for the past six years we mostly stayed at home and fished the Gulf tournaments," says Buck. "It's been working out good pretty for us! I think Jon might have been ready to quit in 2017...he was at least thinking about it. But we won the World Cup and a number of others that year, winning something like \$1.5 million or so. So, he was like, maybe we should keep doing this! It's hard work fishing these Gulf tournaments back to back to back...I'm just glad my guys are ate up with blue marlin fishing and the competition!"

Buck attributes a lot of his success to his world-class team of anglers and mates. "Katy Gonsoulin is our main angler. She's also a crew member. A lot of this operation revolves around her. She's caught a 535 after a five-hour fight, and the year before she fought a fish for that was tail wrapped for eight hours. She can catch them plenty quick too, she caught a 740-pounder in an hour and 15 minutes. It's really great to see a cute, 100-pound girl standing next to a giant blue marlin. She's a big inspiration to the little girls around here...she's like the Katy Perry of sportfishing on the Gulf Coast," says Buck.

"Wilkes Hammock is another one of our great anglers who fills in sometimes, and I'd also like to thank my mates Scott Sullivan, Vick Lott and especially Nick Bovell. I can't say enough good things about Nick. We had a good operation before Nick, but his experience, attitude and work ethic just took us to whole new level. There's never any drama with that guy," says Buck.

Well, if you've spent anytime fishing tournaments in the Gulf of Mexico for the last six years or so, the names Jason Buck and *Done Deal* have probably been permanently etched into your brain—and your wallet. Buck and his team are a veritable winning machine; this is Buck's fourth Captain of the Year award since 2014, and he's won the last three years in a row.

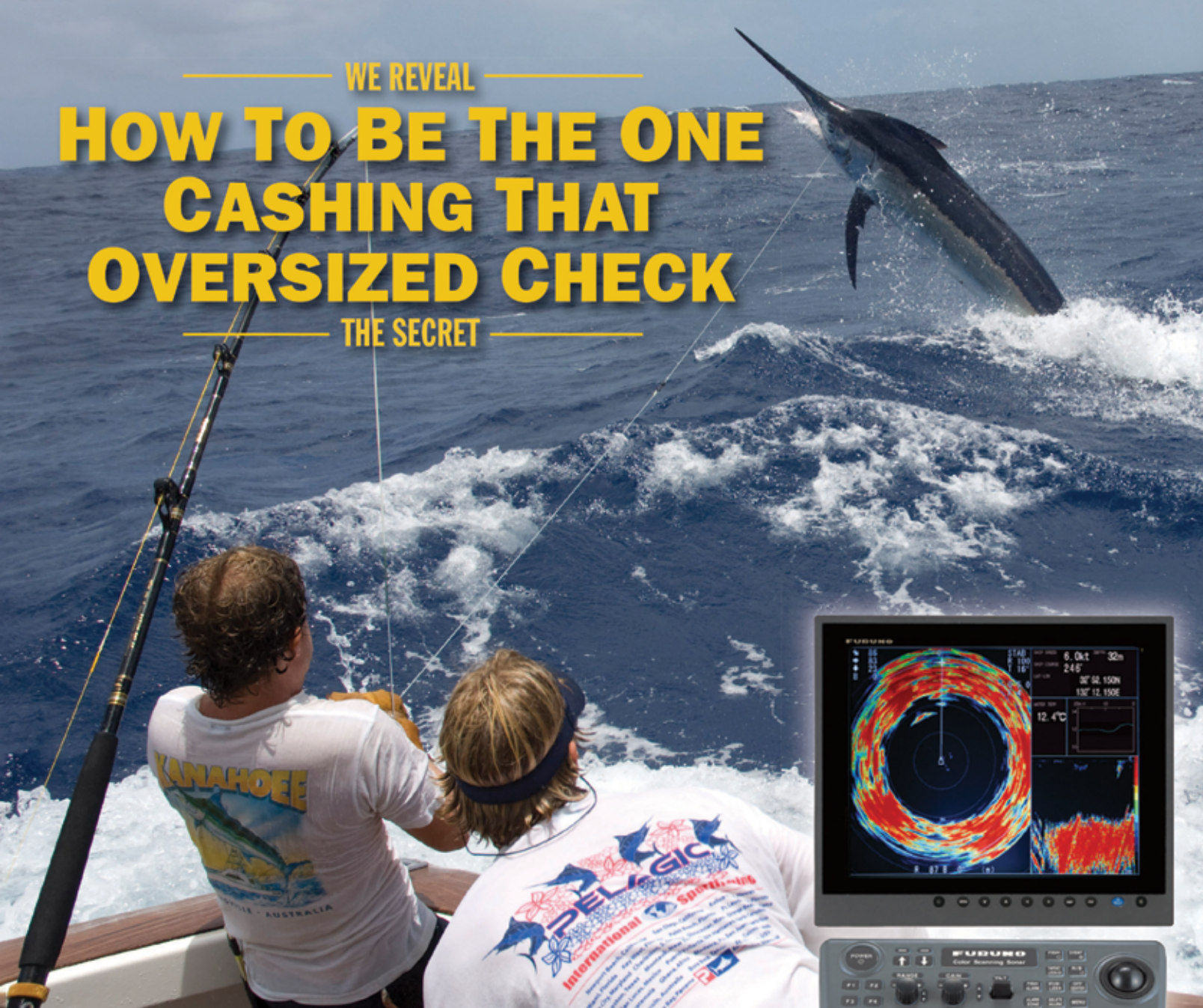
"We've definitely been a roll," says Buck. "Some of it was lucking into good fishing, but a lot of our success comes down to doing your homework and scouting. That was especially true for the Texas Billfish Classic this year. We fished a tournament on the way over there and we caught six blues and white on the way over. We stuck to that to that discipline of scouting, and the last place we ended up we got crushed by a great blue marlin bite and I said, 'All right, I know where I'm going back to!'"



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EAST COAST DIVISION

Capt. Ryan Knapp Top Dog 1,000 Total Points

Hatteras Village Offshore Open:
1st Place, 500 Pts.
Big Rock, Heaviest Marlin:
914-pounds, 500 Pts.



Just a young pup at 29, Capt. Ryan Knapp has packed a lot of experience into his short career. Knapp's grandfather and uncle had offshore boats while he was growing up and he says that, "I was always the one who wanted to go do it! My grandfather really encouraged me, and I was pretty much attached to him at the ankle. I grew up on the western shore of Maryland so we fished a lot of Chesapeake Bay and Ocean City stuff."

Like a lot of aspiring mates, Knapp got his first paying job as mate on Joe Riley's famous headboat, *Muff Diver*. "It was a big pink headboat and you couldn't miss it. It's not an easy job working on a headboat, but you could make it work if you are willing to do whatever it takes to keep the people happy. You really have to love doing it to be successful. When Riley finally retired at the age

of 70, he said to me, Ryan, you are my last protégé, do me proud. I still think about that a lot and try to live up to his expectations."

Knapp earned his AIRMAR East Coast Captain of the Year designation with two impressive first-place wins in the Big Rock and Hatteras Village Open, so you could say that North Carolina has been very good to Knapp and his team. "I definitely got zoned in on where the fish were going to be in North Carolina this year. By the time I left the state, we were 12 for 12 on blue marlin bites and found every one of those fish in 80.5 F water. I got tuned into a few things, but I really just paid attention and did my job," says Knapp.

Success, however, didn't come quick or easy for his team. "I've fished the Big Rock for six years...and before last year, we've had just one bite in six years. It wasn't that we weren't in the zone, we just didn't get the opportunities. You really are hunting unicorns out there sometimes."

"Five years into it and we still hadn't caught one. At the end of the tournament my boss walks up and thanks us for all our hard work and tells us what a great tournament it's been. Now that's the guy you want to work for...a guy who will do what it takes to succeed."

That perseverance paid off in spades this past year. "The Hatteras Village Open was awesome for us. The last day of fishing we saw five blues, caught three and killed one. We saw all the fish just 27 miles from the slip. It was truly an amazing day. All of the fish were 400-plus pounds and it was just amazing to see that many blue marlin in one day so close to home. It seemed like we

would catch one, head up sea for a bit, turn around, catch another one, head up sea and do it again," says Knapp.

Knapp's first mate, Phillip "Moonpie" Williams is only a few years older than he is, but the team has been working together for the same set of owners on the same boat for the last four and half years. "We've been very fortunate to have worked together all this time...it makes for a good atmosphere and we are a very family-oriented team," says Knapp. "The boat is owned by two brothers, Todd and Kyle Dickerson, and since one of them was a police officer, most of our fishing guests consist of fire fighters and police officers. We have a small group of about ten guys that rotate through, so that's a good thing as well. It keeps things fairly consistent."

Knapp says that keeping an upbeat attitude is important for any boat's success, whether fishing in a tournament or just for fun. "I never want to come home from a day's fishing and have someone onboard that's mad or upset about something; that's the exact opposite of what a day's fishing is supposed to bring."

"I would like to thank everyone along the way who made me into what I am today. It's very gratifying to win this award at such a young age. It's really what you do all this for...you want to try to be the best and the one to beat," says Knapp. "When I get to be an old man, I want the guys to head out the grounds and find me already sitting there when they pull up. Then I want them to say, 'Shit! We aren't going to catch anything today... Ryan's going to catch them all!' Bull Tolsen was that guy for me."



Photo courtesy Josh Robinson, Triwork Studios



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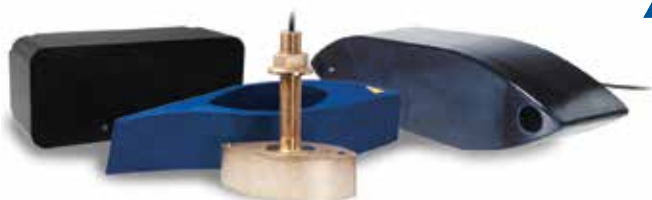
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FLORIDA DIVISION

Capt. Nick Carullo *Showtime* 1,250 Total Points

Final Sail:

1st Place, 500 Pts.

Quest for the Crest Champion:
250 Pts.

Dust 'Em Off Sailfish Warmup:
1st Place, 500 Pts.

Like many of the South Florida tournament headliners, Captain Nick Carullo takes bait fishing and preparation nearly as seriously as he does catching sailfish. Leading a high powered team that cruises around on a boat powered by 1400 horsepower, Carullo details all that goes into creating a successful kite fishing campaign.



Photo courtesy Endless Imagery



Photo courtesy AH360 photography

"A lot goes into bait catching and prep work. Quality bait can be the key to catching one or two more fish than your competition," Carullo says. His preferred arsenal includes goggle eyes, threadfin herring and sardines. "We have our bait pins at the dock. We dip baits into and out of the pin one at a time. Generally, baits will be pinned up anywhere from three to six weeks before the tournament. They are fed every day."

When traveling to fish a tournament in Palm Beach or elsewhere, bait transport is a major undertaking. "For tournaments, we like to have about 150 white baits—threadfin and sardines—per day. For goggle eyes, we try to have about 70 per day. You always want to have more in case of die off. When we travel, we bring 400 herring, 200-300 sardines, and 200 gogs. The boat has three wells, but we bring two 100-gallon wells on deck that are removable. Each of these can hold 150 baits."

"In the average year, we'll spend more time bait fishing than fishing for sailfish," Carullo says. This investment of time, resources and care for the bait has paid off in spades. "For your average tournament, we'll generally fish the weekend before and the two days prior to the tournament. This allows us to scout the area and know what's going on."

How does Carullo's time prefishing tournaments compare to his investment in bait fishing? "We generally spend between four and eight days bait fishing for each tournament. It's a constant struggle to keep the bait perfect."

Given the many moving parts and the sizable nature of the investment of time and resources that goes into keeping every-

thing tournament ready, having a committed group is very important. The *Showtime's* tournament team consists of angler Joe Fernandez (owner), Frankie Villasante, Sarah Melia, and Doug Mientkiewicz. Manning the cockpit are James Clear, Kyle Sherman and Jorge Corzo. The team's tournament line up is rounded out by Jason Spiewak on the camera.

While this is Nick's first year at the helm of the *Showtime*, he has fished with the mates for a long time. "Great chemistry and knowing what everyone is doing in different situations, without having to talk about it is very important. The chemistry comes into play when we are setting up on a free jumper, switching from a kite to a flat line or resetting on a fish with the kites out," Carullo explains.

His approach to catching sailfish with the kites is one that accounts for a variety of variables. "Covering the right depths with the kites, especially as it relates to the wind is important. You want to stagger your kites so that the baits will cover different depths. Some people will deploy their kites so that all their baits are on the same depth profile," says Nick.

Nick's south Florida roots runs deep. He grew up in Miami fishing with his father. After cutting his teeth on his father's small boat snapper fishing, he began crewing for one of South Florida's finest captains. "I worked for Capt. Ray Rosher for three years. It was right after high school and during college. I got my first captain's job right after working for Ray, when I was 23."

While Nick has been a consistent name among the leaderboards of the Quest for the Crest Series for the past few years, 2019 was his first year aboard the *Showtime*. "I've known the Joe (the owner of the *Showtime*) for ten years. Right before the 2019 season, the owner I was working for pulled out. I called Joe and asked him if he'd like to put a team together at the last minute. He said yes and it's really worked out for us."

When asked if there were any moments from the 2019 season that stand out, Nick is circumspect. "The last one... the Dust 'Em Off Tournament was really special. It was that tournament that wound up winning us the Captain of the Year Award. We were in third place going into the last minute (of the last day) of the tournament. We needed a Hail Mary fish. We hooked the winning fish with 30 seconds left in the tournament," Carullo recalls. "That fish won us the award."

"It was a perfect reminder to always fish hard. You really never know how far your can go. If you just always fish hard, and your team is prepared, good things can happen."

2019 CAPTAIN OF THE YEAR WORLD WIDE RANKINGS

A total of 202 captains around the world registered at least 100 points in one of the 95-sanctioned events in 2019. Consisting of five divisions—Florida, East Coast, Gulf, International and Hawaii, the *InTheBite* Captain of the Year award has been an institution in sportfishing since 2003.

The scoring is simple and straight forward. Points are awarded for first (500), second

(300), and third (100) in the release divisions of sanctioned tournaments. In addition, 500 points are awarded for the heaviest weighed marlin if the tournament recognizes this division. A captain who wins a series title (Gulf Coast Triple Crown, Los Sueños, etc.) he wins an additional 250 points. For a tournament to be included in the scoring, it must have a minimum of 12 boats participating.

In 2019, 12 captains tallied more than 1,000 points. This is a significant achievement and is the equivalent of winning two tournaments outright. The winner of the 2019 World Wide Captain Ranking—the man who tallied more tournament points than anyone else in the world in 2019—is the Furuno Gulf Division Champion, Captain Jason Buck with 2,100 points.

2019 World Wide Captain of the Year Rankings

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Capt. Jason Buck, <i>Done Deal</i> ,
2100 Points | 5. Capt. Russell Sinclair, <i>Wave Paver</i> ,
1550 Points | 9. Capt. Ben Horning, <i>Fish Tank</i> ,
1050 Points |
| 2. Capt. Teddy Hoogs, <i>Bwana</i> ,
1900 Points | 6. Capt. Greg DiStefano, <i>El Suertudo</i> ,
1500 Points | 10. Capt. Rob Ellyn, <i>Lightspeed</i> ,
1000 Points |
| 3. Capt. Marlin Parker, <i>Marlin Magic II</i> ,
1600 Points | 7. Capt. Robbie Doggett,
<i>Relentless Pursuit</i> , 1350 Points | 11. Capt. Jeff Shoults, <i>Mollie</i> ,
1000 Points |
| 4. Capt. Jason Parker, <i>Reel Steel</i> ,
1550 Points | 8. Capt. Nick Carullo, <i>Showtime</i> ,
1250 Points | 12. Capt. Ryan Knapp, <i>Top Dog</i> ,
1000 Points |

Heaviest Tournament Caught Marlin in 2019

InTheBite's Captain of the Year also recognizes the captain who catches the heaviest tournament-caught marlin in each division every year. The largest tournament fish in 2019 belongs to Captain Marlin Parker of the *Marlin Magic II* fishing out of Kona, Hawaii. Parker's 1035 won him top honors in the Big Island Marlin Tournament. The second largest tournament marlin belongs to the AIRMAR East Coast Captain of the Year, Capt. Ryan Knapp of the *Big Dog*. Knapp's 914-pound blue won the Big Rock this year.



HAWAII DIVISION

Capt. Marlin Parker, *Marlin Magic II*.
1,035-pounds. Big Island Marlin Tournament



Photo courtesy Carol Lynne



Photo courtesy Michelle Gaylord/Out Your Front Door



Photo courtesy Brian Leiser



EAST COAST DIVISION

Capt. Ryan Knapp, *Big Dog*.
914-pounds. Big Rock



INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

Capt. Peter Rans, *Overproof*.
697-pounds. Bermuda Big Game Classic



GULF COAST DIVISION

Capt. Mike Rowell, *Annie Girl*.
699.2-pounds. MBGFC
Memorial Day Tournament



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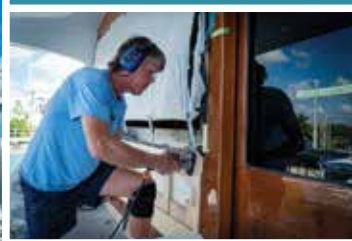
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The Bahamas **POST DORIAN**



by Elliott Stark

Hurricane Dorian was a disaster of monumental proportions. After all, 200 mile per hour sustained winds, hovering over a single island for 36 hours is supposed to be the stuff of science fiction (or Hell)... not a weather report. Stories of the carnage and terror endured by the people living in the Abacos and parts of Grand Bahama Island are horrific. When the storm finally abated, it left a trail of unprecedented destruction in its wake.

What follows is the story about the storm, its aftermath, where things stand now. It is also a description of the long road to recovery for the northwest Bahamas. Telling this story is more complicated than it would at first appear. Despite being within an afternoon's boat ride from Florida, in some ways the islands are a

world away. The same remoteness that endow such charm to the islands makes distribution of resources and recovery efforts very difficult.

The Storm

On September 1, 2019, the eye of Hurricane Dorian made landfall on the Abaco

Islands. The storm brought with it 185 mile per hour sustained winds, with gusts over 220 miles per hour. If the winds themselves were not terrible enough, the storm produced massive, widespread flooding. According to the Bahamas Department of Meteorology, the hurricane's storm tides pushed waters to 20-25 feet.

The disastrous effects of a 25' storm surge are provided context by the geography of the Bahamas. Most of the country's land area, most of its population and some 80% of its economic activity, lie within 5' of elevation from sea level. Many of those who were unable to evacuate simply had no place to go.

Most anyone with any direct knowledge of the event believes the government's official



Photo courtesy Ron Methot

death count to be extremely low (many more people died than have been accounted for). The human stories that emerged from the storm are tragic. It is unlikely that it will ever be known just how many perished. Those who survived face months of rebuilding.

Woody Rice retired to Sugar Loaf Cay, a 63-acre private island on the east side of Marsh Harbour, from West Palm Beach in 2007. Sugar Loaf Cay was ground zero for Dorian. Before the storm, there were nine houses on Sugar Loaf. Now there are three.

A retired general contractor, Rice built his home on the island. “We built a bunker here—concrete, high velocity windows. We rode out the storm here. It was three days of hell. The storm surge was 12’. It was higher in



Photo courtesy Tim Bright

An aerial shot of the devastation at Grand Cay.

Marsh Harbour—16’ water lines everywhere. There is a steel hulled Haitian freighter sitting six blocks into town.”

“Every building on the water in Marsh Harbour was gone. Not knocked down, gone. It will be a long rebuild. There is not one house standing with its roof out of 10. Most are missing walls and the roof. Hopefully when they rebuild it will be to the South Florida Code.”

Woody’s wife, Margaret, has written a first-person account of riding out the storm. While her friends and family were understandably worried, the Rices felt unable to leave their home for fear of looting that follows natural disasters. The account is published at InTheBite.com—it is worth a read.

The Response

Hurricane Dorian wrought destruction seldom seen. The remoteness of the Abacos—whose population exists in small pockets, isolated from one another—is normally part of the region’s charm. In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, this complicates recovery efforts and makes official estimation of loss of life difficult.

Beyond the power and duration of the storm and the damage it leaves in its wake, there was another remarkable aspect to the story: the response. In addition to the “standard” response by the Red Cross and other large disaster relief organizations, millions of dollars and tens of thousands of pounds of relief supplies donated to businesses and smaller organizations for distribution to the Bahamas. Private boats and planes became

the logistical tools for delivery of supplies into and for moving people out of the islands.

Businesses throughout Florida and the East Coast set up drop off points for supplies. Ordinary people, some with little direct connection to the Bahamas, volunteered their services and expertise or connected those who wanted to give with those who were accepting and organizing supplies.

The sportfishing community, in part because of the intimate connection between the Bahamas and the activity itself, stepped up to the occasion in a major way. Multi-million-dollar sportfishers became cargo transport vessels. Center consoles piled high with generators and supplies poured in after the storm. Owners of private planes leased their aircraft, sometimes for the price of fuel, sometimes for no charge, to those making things happen on the ground.

Ron Methot is a pilot for the Tampa Bay Air Charter Company that flies charters out of St. Petersburg, Florida. In a normal season, much of the company’s work involves flying people into and out of the Islands in their Palata PC 12. Since early September 2019, Methot has been into and out of the areas affected by Dorian regularly.

“Immediately post hurricane, we were contacted by a company out of California to bring in a (Navy) SEAL type team to set up base camp for the Red Cross,” Methot describes. Their target for drop off was Sandy Point in the Abacos.

“The first day we couldn’t get in to Sandy Point because the Hurricane was still sitting

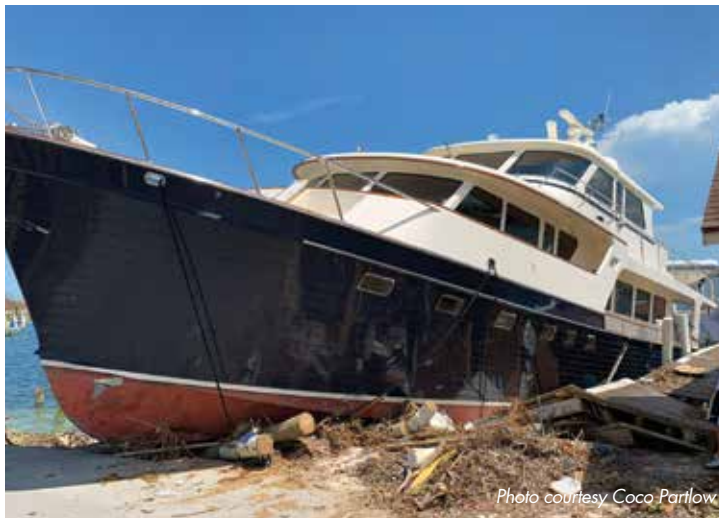


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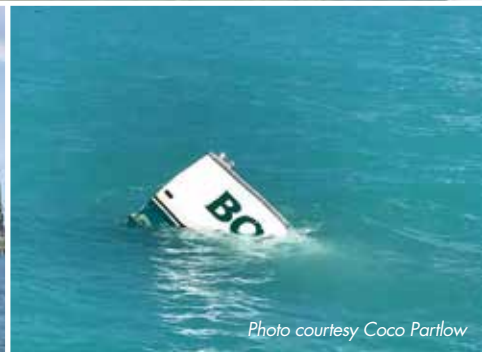


Photo courtesy Coco Parlow

Sunken and beached vessels of all shape and size—a common sight post Dorian.

over it. So, we put them into Nassau and they caught a military helicopter to get the first feet on the ground. The next day they repositioned a 300' boat into Marsh Harbour. Altogether it was a team of 60-70 crisis responders. They were very impressive people.

“Our first attempt was to land in the Abacos,” Methot says. This was while the Hurricane was still near the area, though after it had weakened a bit. “We were hopeful that it would move just far enough away to hit the beaches in Sandy Point. Nassau was experiencing 40-50 knot winds, but no thunderstorms. We got ten miles out of Sandy Point and there were feeder bands sitting right on top. “As you approach a hurricane, winds are predictable. You can see the feeder bands,” Methot provides.

“After we inserted the teams into Nassau and the Abacos, we were contacted by SOL Relief. They used us and other airplanes to organize 100 flights to the Bahamas. We brought in supplies and brought people out. Since then, we’ve been bringing in relief workers and supplies and bringing relief workers out.”

Captain Jamie Hough built his career running sportfishers around the Caribbean, Florida and the Bahamas. These days Hough runs redfish charters out of his home in Charleston, South Carolina. An accomplished chef (he recently made it to final

round of the televised cooking show contest *Master Chef 10* hosted by Gordon Ramsey), Hough also runs the Southeast Rescue and Relief Organization (www.southeastrelief.org). A 501 (c)3 tax exempted organization, Hough describes the group as a “solution-oriented non-profit.”

“We normally focus on rescue during the

storm, this time it’s been relief after,” Hough describes. “We flew down five days after the storm. We had a chef feeding people in Hopetown and Elbow. There were then about 300 people on the island. Each meal we were feeding about half of the town.” As of late November 2019, Hough estimates that the group has prepared around 45,000



Photo courtesy Jamie Hough

Capt. Jamie Hough in action—cooking for and feeding people. Here, it was barbecued mutton—a lunch for 280 people.

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The sportfishing community rallied to the aid of the Bahamas on a scale seldom witnessed.

meals in Elbow. “We sent down a barge with freezers full of turkey the Monday before Thanksgiving.”

“We’ve sent down machinery, meat, tools, \$50,000 worth of lumber and plywood—fuel cans, and 99 cases of Cliff bars. We’ve raised about \$220,000 since the storm. We’ve had hundreds of laptops donated for middle school and high school kids. We’ve had online class-

es donated so the kids don’t have their educations affected (many of the school buildings, like much everything else were destroyed).”

“Since the storm we’ve brought down around 20 planes. We bring chefs and supplies in and bring people out. For the people we bring out, we’ve assisted some with rehousing in the United States and helped others with getting to and from medical ap-

pointments. In the Bahamas, getting health insurance is very expensive and difficult to get... many people didn’t have it. It’s not like it is in the US.”

Hough is quick to point out the scale of the recovery and the scope of those who have been involved in the process. “Chef Josh Feltz of World Central Kitchens has cooked around two million meals in the Bahamas since the storm,” he says. “The Haitian communities have really been central to the work and the manual labor that is happening too. They have really stepped up and been making things happen. In the immediate aftermath of the storm they went from house to house among second homeowners’ homes, drying them out. They tarped the roofs, turned on the generators and dried them out until the second homeowners could return.”

“In Elbow, On The Beach is a grill that was spared. They immediately had a free happy hour for anyone around—to boost morale. In the days after they started charging \$5 per drink. The money they raised went into a fund that Doug (the owner) matched. The money goes to Fire and Rescue.”

It is doubtful that anyone will ever know the entirety of the private response that sprang up after Hurricane Dorian. Beyond the large



Photo courtesy Tim Bright

A view of the Treasure Key Marina in the immediate aftermath of Dorian.



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Red Cross-type responders, there were hundreds of the groups, private and corporate donations, and GoFundMe-type accounts set up funnel aid and support into the Abacos and Grand Bahama. Groups such as SOL Relief, Help for Hopetown, Samaritan's Purse, and Good Samaritan Shipping Ministries (a non-profit that operates a barge that provides shipping for missionary groups and disaster relief services) are joined by all manner of social media groups set up to respond and help coordinate efforts.

Perhaps the most notable of the social media groups is the Abaco Relief Alliance. Described as "A Group of marine industry professionals working toward the common goal of helping our brothers and sisters in the Bahamas," the group has about 9,800 members on Facebook (as of December 2019). The group has been an invaluable resource to the sportfishing community and others, linking those who wanted to help with those who needed it and in providing updates on what services are open and where.

The Current Situation

No matter how you look at it, the areas devastated by Hurricane Dorian face a

long road to recovery. "It's going to be nine months before getting power back in the Out Islands," Jamie Hough estimates. "In the US, there are thousands of linemen just waiting for a storm to pass to fix everything. It's not that way in the Bahamas. Logistics are complicated. It's a dire situation, there is a need for lots of lumber and plywood for residents to rebuild—not just for second home owners."

Another complication to rebuilding the Abacos is the way in which aid is officially distributed throughout the Bahamas—a nation largely dependent on tourism revenue for its economic health. "Whatever amount of GDP your island brings through tourism is the percentage of aid your island will receive," Hough says. While in theory this approach seems reasonable, for sparsely populated islands like the Abacos it does not paint a very rosy picture.

In spite of the many logistical difficulties, costs and scope of the rebuild required, the Abacos and its many sportfishing-related businesses are rebuilding. Captain Ben Brownlee runs the *Game Time*, a 63' Ricky Scarborough. He has spent a good bit of time in the Bahamas and has his finger on

the pulse of what is happening.

"Harbour Island is mostly open. Spanish Cay, the fuel dock is open. The marina is being rebuilt. On Treasure Cay the fuel dock is open and the marina and condos are being rebuilt. The Abaco Beach Resort is being rebuilt, with the goal of opening in April in time for the tournaments. Green Turtle is being rebuilt," Brownlee accounts.

"In Hopetown, the Abaco Inn just reopened. Fire Fly is reopening March 1. On Guana Cay, Nippers is rebuilding, Grabbers will reopen. Bakers Bay is closed for a while. The Sea Spray Resort and Marina was a complete loss. Man O War is rebuilding. West End is fully open."

Captain Chris Kaulen runs the *Marlin Darlin*, a Spencer owned by Bobby Jacobsen. Much of the time the operation is based from Jacobsen's residence in Treasure Cay. Kaulen has spent much of the time since the storm on the ground in Treasure Cay rebuilding. He provides an update.

"Most of those struggling now are those without means. You can get fuel everywhere—it costs around \$5 per gallon. They are rebuilding the grocery store in Treasure Cay. The Treasure Cay Airport is gone. There is a mobile command center—a pull behind



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Photo courtesy Jamie Hough

Southeast Rescue and Relief has been serving an average of 12,000 meals per week in the Abacos. The team began five days after the storm.

trailer, that is doing the customs. The marina is in rough shape. There is no place to tie up. Most of the boats in the marina sank, all of the slips are gone. We lost our dock and a roof.”

Kaulen continues, “You can kind of make shift tie up to the fuel dock. They are still removing boats and debris—roofs and all kinds of things—out of the marina. The only wa-

ter on Treasure Cay right now is well water or from a water maker. Municipal water and power are out and from reports they are not sure of the timeframe on their return.”

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Moving Forward

The Bahamas depend on the tourism industry for the bulk of its economy. Many of the resorts, marinas and hotels that were impacted by Dorian are rebuilding as rapidly as possible. The Abaco Beach Resort, for instance, has published its goal of reopening by April 20 in time for the tournament season. Many others have posted similar updates.

While the Bahamas and the businesses located in the Abacos depend on tourists visiting, there is a fine line when it comes to this sort of thing. A visit, and the money it injects into the economy, is the lifeblood of the Bahamian economy. Tourism supports the jobs that make the rebuild possible. So, go to the Bahamas early and often, as soon as the services you need are available. That said, there are still parts of the Abacos that need a bit of time before they can support a heavy influx of visitors.

For the foreseeable future, visits to the Abacos—either by boat or plane will require a bit of extra planning. Facebook groups, such as the Abaco Relief Alliance, can connect you with answers as to what is open—when and where. Make sure the services you require for your visit are available—that the airport is open and customs can accommodate you. Plans and

schedules are always subject to change during rebuilds of this scale, so please do your research before you go (this article is a guide, not an exact report...)

If you are traveling there by boat, there are some additional considerations. Not only are slip availability and fuel things to think about,

but you would be wise not to trust your charts. Storms move shoals, channels may be silted in. That's not to mention all of the debris (roofs, sunken boats, etc.) that can ruin your day. It's a wise idea to call ahead and ask around, take it a bit slower than you might otherwise, and not run at night. 🦋



Photo courtesy Jamie Hough



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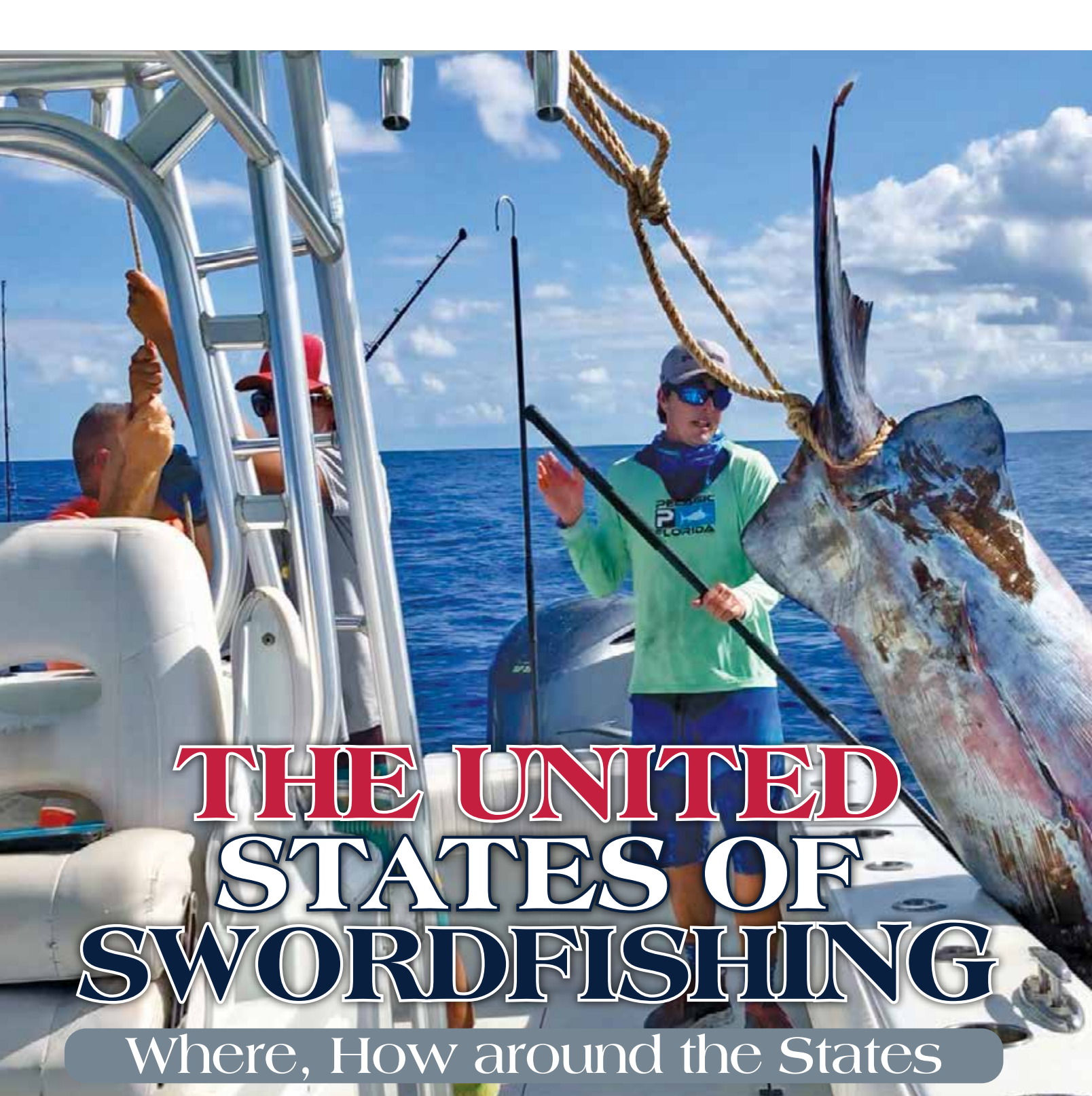


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THE UNITED STATES OF SWORDFISHING

Where, How around the States

by Ric Burnley

Somewhere in southeast Asia, who knows how long ago, an angler in a canoe dangled a bait from a kite and kite fishing was invented. Centuries later, an angler in Japan installed a 30-foot-tall pole in his boat to suspend lures for tuna. The pole was painted green. Across the world, probably Latin or Central America, a captain ordered his crew to deploy 36 teasers on a metal frame to attract marlin.

Each of these discoveries proved to be so effective, word spread around the world. Today, kites, greensticks and dredges are used everywhere their target species swim. As the tactic spread, anglers have refined and improved the tackle and techniques.

More recently, an angler in South Florida dropped a bait 1500-feet and pulled up a swordfish. Word spread, and within a decade, anglers all over the world are copying their success and adapting it to their local conditions.



Captain Nick Stanczyk **Broad Minded** **Islamorada, Florida**

Modern deep drop, daytime swordfishing is attributed to the Stanczyk team fishing out of Bud and Mary's Marina in Islamorada, Florida. Captain Nick Stanczyk inherited the techniques from his father and uncle. "They caught the first swordfish in 2003, I didn't see my first one till 2006."

Since then, Stanczyk has focused on



Captain Nick Stanczyk and his family are largely credited with popularizing daytime swordfishing in the US.

swordfishing developing methods that have traveled around the world. He explains his addiction, "Swordfish have a mystique, they're elusive." He also says daytime fishing provides reliable action.

Stanczyk finds the fish in 1400- to 1800-feet of water along the steep canyons and large flats of the continental shelf. "The most important factor is bait," he says. He looks for marks on his depth finder indicating life below the boat.

The standard rig for daytime swords starts with a heavy-duty, 50- to 80-pound rod and reel combo packed with 65-pound braided line. Stanczyk uses a 150-foot-long, 200-pound-test wind-on leader with a six-foot section of 300-pound test monofilament connected to a 9/0 to 11/0 J-hook. The eight- to 12-pound weight is attached to the leader with a floss loop a few feet from the mainline.

"I hate squid," Stanczyk says. Instead he prefers strip baits such as dolphin belly or bonita strips. He usually fishes two lines. A shallow bait dangles 900 feet from a buoy stationed 200 feet from the boat. This basic set-up, and its success on swordfish, have spread around the world. As word spread, crews adapted the techniques to their home waters.

Captain Jeff Wilson **Titan Up** **Galveston, Texas**

Five years ago, Captain Jeff Wilson learned to daytime swordfish in Ft. Lauderdale. When he moved to Galveston, Texas, he took the lessons with him. "We couldn't fish like we did in Fort Lauderdale," he remembers.

The Gulf Coast canyons, holes and crevices mimic the structure found off south Florida but the current doesn't move as fast. Wilson admits, "We ended up with a tangled mess." To match conditions in the Gulf, he developed a "C" pattern for running the boat while dropping the bait, driving in an eighth-mile half-circle while dropping the rig.

They designed a unique rig, too. "We developed a direct-drop method," Wilson explains. He starts with 80-pound braided mainline, they've cut the 250-pound wind-on leader to 65 feet to a six-foot leader of 300-pound test.

Unlike Nick Stanczyk, Captain Wilson loves squid. For the best results, he stitches the squid to the Pakula 40 DHX hook. "The hook has a longer barb and a beak point," he explains. Using 70-pound floss, he stitches the squid's mantle to the head and uses a cop-



Capt. Jeff Wilson has caught a pile of swordfish, in the Gulf and beyond. Here he is with a nice one—635.

per tube to keep the body from scrunching up on the hook. “It looks like Frankenstein,” he laughs, then insists he’s caught as many as three swords on one squid.

In another departure, Wilson clips a seven-pound sash weight directly to the hook with utility wire. “Drop it to the bottom and bring it up quickly to knock the weight off,” Wilson says. A smaller, cannonball weight, attached to the wind-on a few feet from the mainline connection, keeps the rig from spinning and tangling.

Wilson looks for bait and fish marks in 1300- to 1800-feet of water. “1500 feet is optimal,” he says. Then, Wilson admits, “We had two spots that produced half of our fish.”

He prefers to fish a week leading up to the full moon. “The bite seems to drop off for five days following the full moon,” he adds.

Wilson also fishes two lines, with one bait 1000- to 1200-feet below a buoy and the other a few hundred feet from the bottom. “If I mark a DSL on the fishfinder, I’ll drop the buoy to that depth,” he adds, describing the deep scattering layer, a layer of small creatures that congregates between 1000- and 1500-feet deep.

He’s learned valuable lessons about hooking and fighting a swordfish. When Wilson gets a bite, he comes tight on the line then drives the boat ahead to drive the hook home. “If the fish is going to come off, I want

it to come off right away,” he explains.

Adapting the South Florida technique to Gulf Coast, Wilson has scored more than 500 swordfish in five years. “We used to get a lot of bites,” he says. Recently, he’s noticed more anglers targeting day time swords and adds. “Now we have to work for it,” he says.

Captain Michael Maddox SoCal Deep Drop Southern California

From South Florida to the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico, swordfishing is spreading like wildfire. Most recently, the fishery has flared up off of the coast of Southern California. Los Angeles angler, Mike Maddox has been commercial fishing for swordfish for the past couple years. But recently, “there has been a big pick up in recreational fishing,” he says.

According to Maddox, recreational sword-



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fishing has picked up in the past few months around Anacapa, Catalina and Channel Islands. "For two weeks people have been catching them a few miles off Newport Beach," he says.

We're fishing in 1200- to 1400-feet of water. He fishes one rod a couple hundred feet off the bottom and a buoy rod at 900-feet. "I look for bait and thermocline on the meter," he says, adding there isn't much current so anglers just drop and fish.


The uptick in swordfish mania has inspired Maddox to sell rigged squid. "I took what I've learned commercial fishing and turned it to prepping baits for recreational anglers." He starts with an 18- to 24-inch squid and runs an 18/0 Mustad circle hook in through the tip of the mantle and out below the fins. To keep the bait in place, he simply zip ties it to the hook. "I can use the same bait for two or three days," he says.

He attaches the bait to a six-foot section of 400-pound leader connected with a swivel to the 300-pound wind on leader running to 100-pound braided line. His ideal rod and reel combo would be a bent-butt 80. "The fishery is so new people are catching swords with whatever rods they have," he marvels.

Maddox has developed his own technique for hooking swordfish in deep water. "When I see the rod tip bounce, I tell people to open a beer," he laughs. Maddox will wait for several minutes watching the rod tip bounce while the swordfish eats the bait.



Capt. Michael Maddox has his finger firmly on the pulse of the burgeoning So Cal deep drop fishing scene.




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When the line starts to plane out behind the boat, he knows the fish is hooked. He keeps the drag light and runs the boat forward to bring the fish to the surface. When the weight comes to the boat, he leaves it on the line while leadering the fish. "If the fish takes another run, I let it take the weight to wear it down." Maddox continues to let the fish fight itself out. "Don't put a lot of pressure on it," he stresses.

Maddox is amazed how fast daytime swordfishing has picked up in Southern California. "People are just discovering the possibilities," he says. As anglers explore the canyons and cliffs, they are finding new places and new ways to catch swordfish.

Captain Randy Butler *Rebel* Virginia Beach, Virginia

While daytime swordfishing is sweeping the world, it all started at night. To prove the point, last summer Virginia Beach charter captain Randy Butler and crew on *Rebel* set a new Virginia State Record with a 466-pound swordfish caught after dark.

Butler says the night time challenge is greater. "During the day the swordfish seem



Capt. Randy Butler with the Virginia state record swordfish. When you can catch 50 whites in a day, you do your swordfishing at night!

to be concentrated on the bottom, at night they spread out in the water column." To cover his bets, Butler fishes baits under floats at 20 and 60 fathoms and off the rod tip at 10 fathoms placing the deepest bait farthest from the boat.

He fishes the baits on a 10/0 to 11/0 hook crimped directly to the 200-foot, 200-pound wind-on. For bait, he likes what he finds locally. Butler often catches bullet tuna, tinker mackerel and squid in the lights under his boat. "I like tinker mackerel, best," he admits.




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In fact, Butler's state record was caught on a tinker mackerel fished at 20 fathoms. Butler's secret: he rigs the bait so the tail is up. "Swordfish swallow the bait head first, so I get a better hook-up ratio" he says.

He attaches a strobe five fathoms above the bait and fishes lights under the boat.

Butler focuses his fishing from 200 to 60 fathoms. "I've caught swords as shallow as 40 fathoms." He likes a north to south drift to carry him along the edge of the continental shelf. When he discovers a productive depth, he'll focus his drift on that area.

Where ever anglers target swordfish, they adapt these techniques and baits to the water and fish in their area. Whether anglers have spent decades targeting swordfish or months, they admit they have much to learn and more fish to catch. 

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Nobody in the history of fishing has ever been disappointed to catch a swordfish. After all, they grow to gigantic proportions, fight hard, and taste great. We caught up with two chefs and a high-end swordfish sportfish captain to find out how to best turn your swordfish from broadbill into dinner. Bon appetite!



CHEF'S TAKE: Making the Most of Swordfish

by Nichole Osinski, *InTheBite* Digital Editor

There's something unforgettable about the taste of fresh swordfish pulled from the water and grilled to perfection. For Cosmo Goss, chef, California native and seafood expert, preparing swordfish as a meal can mean everything from having the option to eat it raw or pulling out all of the stops and grilling a whole 150-pound swordfish, head and all, for hours. To accomplish this Goss first wrapped the fish in chicken wire, before serving it at a festival in the form of swordfish and pork belly tacos!

"You get to know within the first two bites whether you did a good job or not, or if we did a good job as a team," Goss says, adding that it also requires multiple attempts to perfect recipes.

Goss pulls his expertise from a variety of experiences—his Italian grandmother's recipes; culinary school; working on a dive boat at 18 where he cooked breakfast, lunch and dinner for 30 to 40 people. Of course, experiences like eating scallops freshly plucked from the ocean floor while aboard his father's 42' Riviera. Fishing experience and time on the ocean, provide culinary inspiration that's hard to find elsewhere.

"I just never turned back, that's all I know now," Goss says. Through it all, Goss focuses on being an innovative player within the open playing field that is cooking. Cosmo's innovation extends to swordfish, a fish Goss describes as fairly forgiving and more "meaty" than "fishy."

Cosmo's preference would be a west coast, "pumpkin swordfish." The orangish hue of the meat of a pumpkin swordfish results from a diet of crustaceans—it also imparts a special flavor. During the cooking process, he aims to have swordfish that is medium-well and juicy but with a whisper of pink inside.

Though his favorite swordfish is caught in the Pacific, his preferred method of preparing it is Mediterranean in origin—Acqua Pazza. It's an Italian term meaning crazy water and consists of a spicy pepper stew-based swordfish that Goss has made for years. "Swordfish has that texture of fish cheek: meaty unctuous, rich," Goss says. "I don't think there's a meatier fish in the ocean than swordfish."



Chef Cosmo Goss is an international culinary headliner. He is also a fisherman and a hell of a nice guy.

Goss has also found inspiration with the changes in the year, using what is in season to guide his swordfish recipes. For example, during autumn, he'll incorporate roasted squash with pomegranate sauce on the side, any fall fruits and vegetables, noting that "if it grows together, if it's in season together, it usually is going to work together."

And pairing swordfish with a drink? With acqua pazza, a crisp white wine. However, a chenin blanc with spicy swordfish is particularly good. But on a boat, nothing beats an ice-cold beer.

"It depends where you are," Goss says while adding that there is also an equal enjoyment from a meal with loved ones, drinks or not. "I think it's really important to spend time with your friends and family. I love cooking meals for my wife...every day it's something I look forward to."

While you can find plenty of acqua pazza recipes online, it can be hard to whip up a swordfish stew on a boat. Cosmo also provided his take on a go-to classic: grilled swordfish. He even breaks down some sauce and bread options, if you want to go all out.

Grilled Swordfish with Spicy Tomato, Grilled Bread & Salsa Verde

Serves 4

- 4ea 5-6 oz. swordfish filets
- 1/3 cup Hellmann's mayonnaise
- 1 recipe tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1 pint grilled bread croutons
- 1/4 cup salsa verde
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Rice bran oil (or other high heat oil)
- Salt

How to Make It: Preheat your grill, Cosmo notes that he prefers wood but "if you're on a boat that's a bad idea for obvious reasons." Lightly coat each fillet with a mayonnaise and season with salt. Grill the fish over medium high heat. Cook for 2-4 minutes per side, turning the fillets a quarter turn in the middle of cooking each side. You want to cook the fish to medium well, so still a little pink inside.

While the swordfish is on the grill, place high rimmed saute pan on the stove over medium heat. Add the tomato sauce and chicken stock and bring the mixture up to a simmer, about 2-3 minutes. Add the butter and croutons and mix well making sure not to break up the croutons. Taste the sauce and season with salt as needed. Take the swordfish from the grill and place on a serving platter. Pour the tomato-bread sauce on and



around the fish. Garnish with salsa verde.

If you're really feeling your oats and you want to go all out, Chef Cosmo breaks down how to make your sides from scratch too. This might come in handy if you're trying to impress someone...

Tomato Sauce

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 (28oz) can tomatoes
- 1 chile flake
- 3 cups water
- 1/3 cup basil leaves
- 1qt tuscan kale (chopped and stems removed)
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

Place a medium sauce pot on the stove over medium heat. Add the olive oil and garlic and cook until the garlic is very fragrant, about two minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, water and chile flake. Bring the liquid to a simmer and cook until about four cups remain, about 30-40 minutes. Add the basil and season with salt. Add the kale and chicken stock and cook for another 10 minutes. Season with the vinegar and let cool.

Grilled Bread Croutons

- 1 small loaf sourdough (cut in half, crust removed)
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- Salt

Take the bread and coat with olive oil and season with a little salt. Grill the pieces on all sides until very charred all over. Remove and rub evenly with the garlic clove. Tear the two large chunks into bite size pieces and let sit out for at least 2 hours before using. Letting them sit out overnight works well too.

Salsa Verde Base

Makes about 1 cup

- 4 shallots, minced
- 2 tablespoons capers, rinsed and chopped
- 5 brown anchovy fillets, rinsed, patted dry, and chopped
- 1/4 cup champagne vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoons honey
- 1 small jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, and ribs removed, minced
- Salt

Mix the shallots, capers, anchovies, vinegar, oil, honey, jalapeño, and salt in a bowl. The salsa will keep, covered, in the fridge for about a week. *When serving the salsa verde mix in 2 tablespoons chopped parsley and 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro to each 1/4 cup of salsa verde base

Chef Cosmo's Pan Roasted Swordfish

Serves 4

- 4ea 5-6oz filets swordfish
- 2 cups guacamole
- 2 cups pico de gallo
- 8-12 flour or corn tortillas
- 2 limes (cut in wedges)
- Salt
- 2t chile powder
- 2t garlic powder
- Rice bran oil (or other high heat oil)

"This one is simple and is great to make on the boat," Cosmo explains. Store bought salsa and guacamole can be used, or you can make your own. Season the fish with salt, chile powder and garlic powder. Place a large high rimmed sauté pan on a burner or the stove over high heat and add a thin layer of rice bran oil.

Once the oil is almost smoking, add the swordfish filets to the pan gently agitating the pan so the fish doesn't stick. Cook until the first side of the fillets are golden brown, about 3-4 minutes. Flip the fish and turn the heat down to medium and cook for another 3-6 minutes until the fish is cooked 3/4 or medium well. Remove and serve with the guacamole, salsa, limes & tortillas. You can add any other favorite taco toppings to the mix as well.

An East Coast Head Liner on Cooking Swordfish

On the Atlantic side of the country, Jim Koch, head chef at New Jersey's Beach Creek Oyster Bar & Grill, can be found in the kitchen cooking up new seafood specials that would delight any foodie. Thanks to being on the water, with a plentiful supply of fish com-



Chef Jim Koch and the Beach Creek Oyster Bar and Grill—Garden State seafood masters.

ing from the Atlantic, Koch's team is able to serve dishes, from tuna to swordfish, fresh.

"We're lucky enough that it comes in fresh off the local boats," Koch said. "It's caught yesterday, on the table today; it makes a big difference." With the fish in the kitchen, Koch then gets to work bringing some creativity to the recipes, something he's enjoyed since his early days as a chef.

He was first introduced to the world of cooking as a high schooler in Atlantic City where his father ran a hotel. Koch filled in wherever he was needed—from dishwasher to cook. It was bouncing between the hotel's dining rooms, and speaking to the chefs, that he began to absorb everything going on. Describing himself as "enthralled and impressed" with what went on in the kitchens, Koch soon found himself pouring through food magazines and watching cooking shows.

After graduating college, he worked in the hotel industry but continued to cook as his second job. It was not long before he realized he was most passionate about cooking, and, around the age of 30, he headed to culinary school. "I really had to start all over again, start at the bottom as a fry cook in the Jersey Shore area," Koch said.

A chance to cook in Bermuda opened a new door and paved the way for becoming an expert in seafood cooking techniques that he would later bring back to the US. It was upon his return home that he created his claim to fame and a springboard to making more experimental seafood: a strawberry barbecue salmon.

"It's always changing, you're always learning, there's always something new, something different" Koch says. "I always try to keep an open atmosphere in the kitchen." That open-

ness extends to swordfish. Koch likes to pair broadbill with various sauces, such as rum glaze, while enhancing the flavor with farm-fresh tomatoes or red pepper.

However, in regards to cooking this specific seafood, the biggest rule to follow is to not overcook it. Though Koch says swordfish works great blackened or seared, his favorite method of preparing it is grilling and using only a light marinade. "You want to keep it simple when you have fresh fish," Koch said. "You want to keep the flavor."

Koch usually starts by cutting out steaks and brushing them with olive oil, salt, pepper and lemon juice. He then cooks the fish on an already piping hot grill for about three minutes on each side, just enough to start seeing the cracks of the meat open.

It's a method that not only works well in the kitchen but for the guests at the restaurant, especially when they're tourists vacationing in the area. "It fits a lot of different palates," Koch said. "It's not an overly fishy flavor and has a light meat texture, sort of like tuna."

Chef Jim Koch's Grilled Swordfish BLT

Makes 1 Sandwich

- 2-3oz swordfish steaks
- Olive oil
- Salt & black pepper
- Pesto mayonnaise. (If you don't have pesto mayonnaise, add pesto to your favorite mayonnaise to taste)
- Salad spinach
- Roasted red peppers
- 2 slices thick cut bacon
- 1 bread roll (I like to use a ciabatta roll)

Pat dry and lightly season swordfish steaks with salt and pepper. Brush them lightly with olive oil. Place in a pre-heated grill pan over medium high heat. Cook on each side for 2-3

minutes. Cut your roll in ½, and slather each side with pesto mayonnaise. Add swordfish medallions and layer with spinach, roasted peppers and bacon slices. This sandwich can be served either hot or chilled.

Beach Creek's Swordfish Puttanesca

- 2-6oz swordfish steaks
- 2T olive oil
- ½ green bell pepper sliced into strips
- ½ red bell pepper sliced into thin strips
- 1 small yellow onion sliced into half moon strips
- 2 garlic cloves thinly sliced
- 6 white mushrooms quartered
- 4oz white wine
- 4oz chicken stock
- 1-28oz can of Italian whole peeled tomatoes
- 10-12 olives
(I like to use mixed pitted olives)
- Fresh basil and parsley
- Salt
- Black pepper



Pat dry and lightly season swordfish steaks with salt and pepper. Preheat a large sauté pan over medium high heat with olive oil. Add swordfish steaks and lightly brown on both sides, then remove from pan and set aside. Add peppers, onions, garlic and mushrooms to the pan and sauté until softened.

Add the white wine to the pan and raise the heat to high. Let the wine reduce by half. Add the chicken stock to the pan and let it reduce by half. Reduce the temperature to medium and hand crush the tomatoes as you add them to the pan and add the remaining liquids from the can.

Toss in the olives, bring to a simmer, then lower the heat to medium low heat. Let the sauce gently simmer until slightly thickened

(approximately 30 minutes). Return the swordfish to the pan and let gently simmer in the sauce for 5 minutes. Taste the sauce and season with salt and pepper to taste. Finish with chopped fresh basil and parsley.

Koch says he likes “to serve this over grilled polenta but it also goes well with your favorite pasta or white rice.”

Swordfish Steaks in the Lone Star State

Down south on the Gulf of Mexico, cooking swordfish is all about what sauce you add. For Captain Jeff Wilson, who runs the 64' *Titan Up* out of Galveston, Texas, this saltwater gourmet item is especially good when it's fresh-caught and cooking on the grill. And he should know—he's been a fisherman for more than 40 years, previously running the *Booby Trap*, and cooking for 15-plus years.

Because of how much time he's spent out on boats, Wilson explains he's had to learn how to cook for himself and his crew. But he's caught enough swordfish throughout his fishing career that he knows what works, and what doesn't, when it comes to preparing them.

Wilson notes that every person should find what cooking method fits best for their indi-

vidual taste. “What I recommend is Googling swordfish recipes and finding one that works for you,” Wilson says. “Some people don't like one thing or another.”

For Wilson, grilling is the way to go (after all the man lives in Texas). Here's his recipe, which can be made on the grill or in the oven, for a mouth-watering swordfish:

Captain Jeff Wilson's Grilled Swordfish

You'll need one thick swordfish steak, strong horseradish, creamy horseradish, one stick of salted butter, parmesan cheese and Cajun seasoning.

- Mix horseradish, cheese
- Melt butter, add horseradish and cheese, stir until fully blended, set aside
- Spice one side of the steak with a Creole spice

Place the swordfish steak with the spiced side onto the grill. Grill until it is cooked—it should start to look opaque, then flip. Once flipped, spread butter, horseradish and cheese mixture over the steaks. Once the mixture is covering the top of the steak, remove and



serve. If the steaks are being made in the oven, the mixture should start to caramelize

Wilson recommends using any leftover sauce use as dipping sauce for your meal.

“Slice into the swordfish if you're worried about overcooking, it becomes dry if you overcook it,” Wilson adds, noting, “it should just barely be pink in the middle, if it's too pink, keep cooking.” For sides, Wilson is a fan of asparagus, but in the end, at least when swordfish is on the menu, it's “whatever you're in the mood for.”



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Peter B. The One and Only

by Capt. Charles Perry

In this very magazine, there is a yearly contest for the Captain of the Year award. I think it is a great idea for giving recognition to captains who achieve quite a lot during the year. I would like to go one step further, however, and give recognition to someone I think should be Captain of the Century—Peter B. Wright.

While most anyone reading this magazine will know who Capt. Peter B. Wright is, there may be those who don't know all that he's accomplished in his fishing career. And yes, there are some readers who may not agree with Peter on all subjects. I may at times slip in that category myself. A thoughtful man, Peter not only blazed many trails in sportfishing, but has never been one to shy from telling others what he believes.

While I have been known to find myself on the other side of the fence from Peter B. on various topics from time to time, I have often found that after a bit of reflection, I just might find the grass to be a bit greener on Peter's side. Whether we agree or disagree with Peter on his many opinions, his career accomplishments are beyond refute. Were Peter B. to create a fishing resume, it might look a bit like this... and it's impressive.

Accomplishments

I dare say that very few, if any, people have fished 40 consecutive seasons on the Great Barrier Reef, Australia (by season I mean September, October and November). Most fishermen would give anything to fish one or two seasons there. One of the many great things about fishing the Great Barrier Reef is that you have to catch your own bait, process it yourself, and then target a species of fish that is generally large in size. The faster you caught enough bait, the sooner you could fish for the blacks outside the reef. Peter was very good at catching bait and was quite often the first boat out on the edge.

Once equipped with bait, Peter B. knew well what to do next. To my knowledge, Peter B. is the only captain in history to have weighed in three granders in one day. Most big game fishing enthusiasts would be more than thrilled to have captured one grander in their lifetimes. If three granders in a day were not enough, Peter B's career total for weighed grander black marlin is 76 fish. That is not likely to ever be equaled.

Peter was also an accomplished and knowledgeable free diver with an undergraduate degree in marine biology. Fishing on the GBR with him was a continuous education on the incredible natural setting that makes up the reef—the many different fish that inhabit it, the tides and current, the coral, and its overall composition. It was like fishing with a marine professor of nature. His knowledge base was furthered by his global fishing travel. Peter B. went everywhere—to places like Madeira and

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On one of those days with Peter driving the boat, angler Stewart Campbell caught 73 bluefin. That's catching a bluefin tuna every 9 ½ minutes for 11 ½ hours. These fish were from 250-400 pounds with the odd 500-pounder mixed in.

Cape Verde when their fisheries were just developing.

Peter had exceptional boat handling skills. Many of the large blacks that we captured over the 1000-pound mark had gaffs in them in less than five minutes. If the fish stayed on the surface and got outside of the long rigger distance, Peter would spin the boat around and run the fish down. When the fish slowed down to get a second wind (our term), we were usually right there with the gaffs. Most fishermen will just have to imagine what it was like to have a 1000-pound-plus fish on the gaffs five minutes after the bite. Incredibly exciting to say the least!

Upon the coaxing from one of his anglers, Peter went back to school and got an MBA degree in finance. After the following season on the Reef, Peter took \$4500 of his money and \$500 of his deckhands' money and went to Brisbane to talk a bank manager into lending him enough money to buy a block of land in Cairns and build a set of flats. He was successful in acquiring the money he needed and proceeded to build the apartments. Peter was quite successful in most anything he set out to accomplish. Once a friend of his was asked by a stranger if Peter Wright had any degrees. His response, "Peter Wright? Hell, he has more degrees than a rectal thermometer!"

Many years during the 70s and 80s, after finishing the season on the GBR, Peter would return to the east coast of the U.S. and take a boat to Bimini or Cat Cay and fish the season (April-May) for the giant bluefin tuna. This type of fishing is a favorite for many of the captains and deckhands who ever fished it. The crew would spend the entire day in the tower looking for schools of large bluefin tuna traveling north with the current and seas.

These tuna were not interested in feeding... spotting them was only a small part of the task. Once you found them, you had to position the boat in front of the school without causing the fish to sound out of sight. The captain would decide when to throw the bait (which had to swim as perfect as when it was alive to tempt the tuna to bite). Unfortunately, the local barracuda recognized this as a buffet line and ate way more baits than the tuna ever did. This was definitely one of Peter B.'s favorite types of fishing and he mastered it.

In the winter of 1995, when Peter found out that there were lots of bluefin tuna on the wrecks off of Hatteras, North Carolina, he brought a friend's forty-foot boat up from Florida and proceeded to catch lots of them. In 16 days of fishing, he caught 347 bluefin. On one of those days with Peter driving the boat, angler Stewart Campbell caught 73 bluefin. That's catching a bluefin tuna every 9 ½ minutes for 11 ½ hours. These fish were from 250-400 pounds with the odd 500-pounder mixed in. I doubt

this record number of bluefin caught in one day will ever be topped—after all, they don't usually bite all day long and there are seldom that many fish in 20 fathoms of water.

One year, Peter got a set of plans for what was considered to be an ideal tuna fishing boat for the Bahamas and took them to a boat builder, Frank Woodnut, in Innisvale, Australia. He oversaw the building of a 40' sportfisherman which he ran in 1974. The first fish caught on that boat was a black marlin world record on 20-pound test line. I fished on the deck for Peter that year and we caught 136 blacks. We weighed six over the mark and seven over nine hundred in 69 days fishing.

Peter B's many mythical fishing achievements have resulted in widespread recognition. He is the only person to be inducted into the IGFA Hall of Fame and also in the IGFA Captains and Crews Hall of Fame. Peter B. is more than his many granders or tuna records... he is more than 40 consecutive years on the reef... he is more than a wealth of fishing knowledge and accomplishment. If you ask me, my friend Captain Peter B. Wright should be the Captain of the Century.



Stuart Campbell (pictured in the chair) signed this photo captioning it the "Reel" Dream Team. On March 20, 1995 in North Carolina with Stuart Campbell on the rod and Peter B. at the helm, the team caught 73 bluefin. Peter B. is pictured in the lower right. From right to left are Charles Perry, Gary Stuve, John Rafter, and Charlie "Split Tail Charlie" Hayden.

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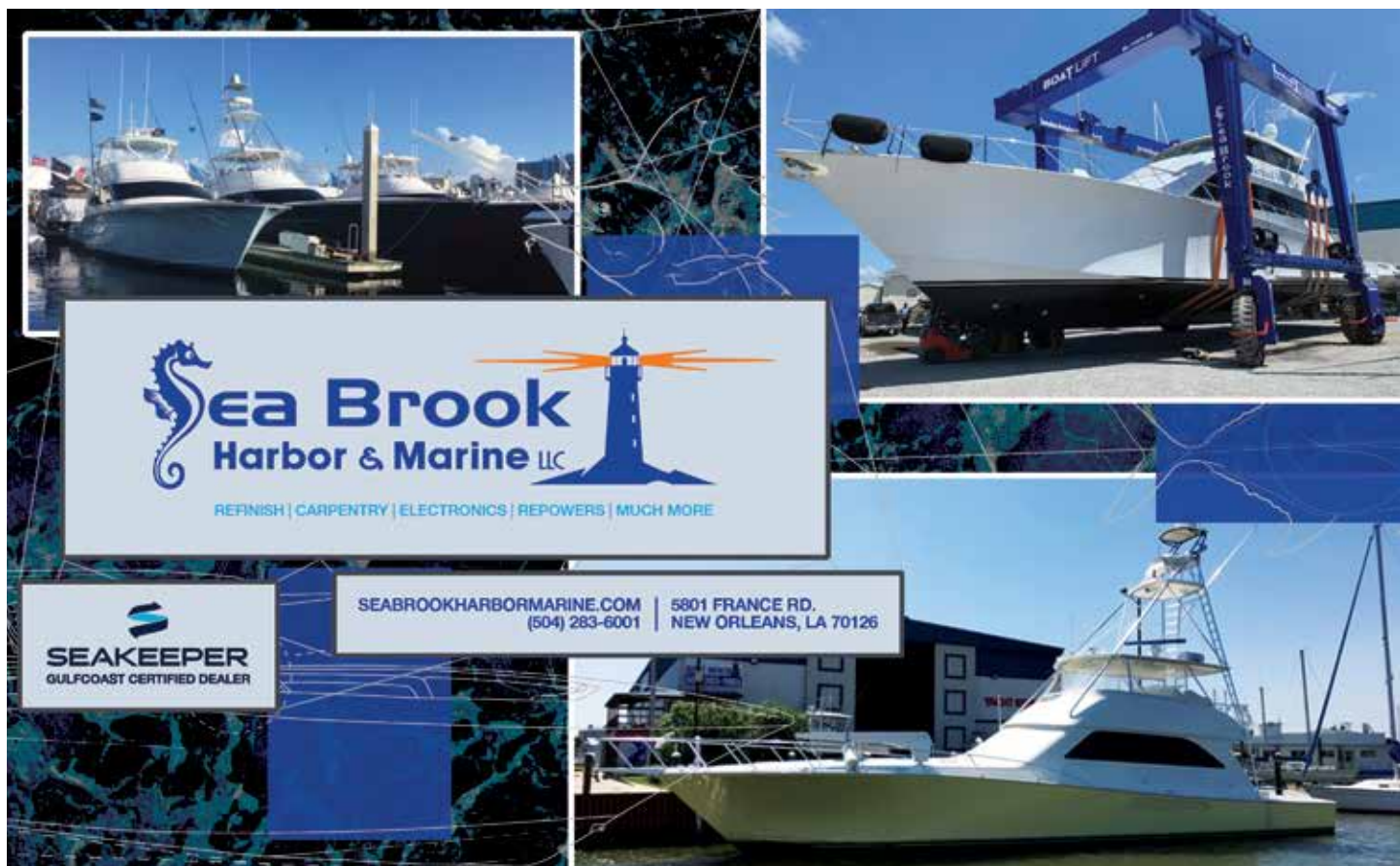


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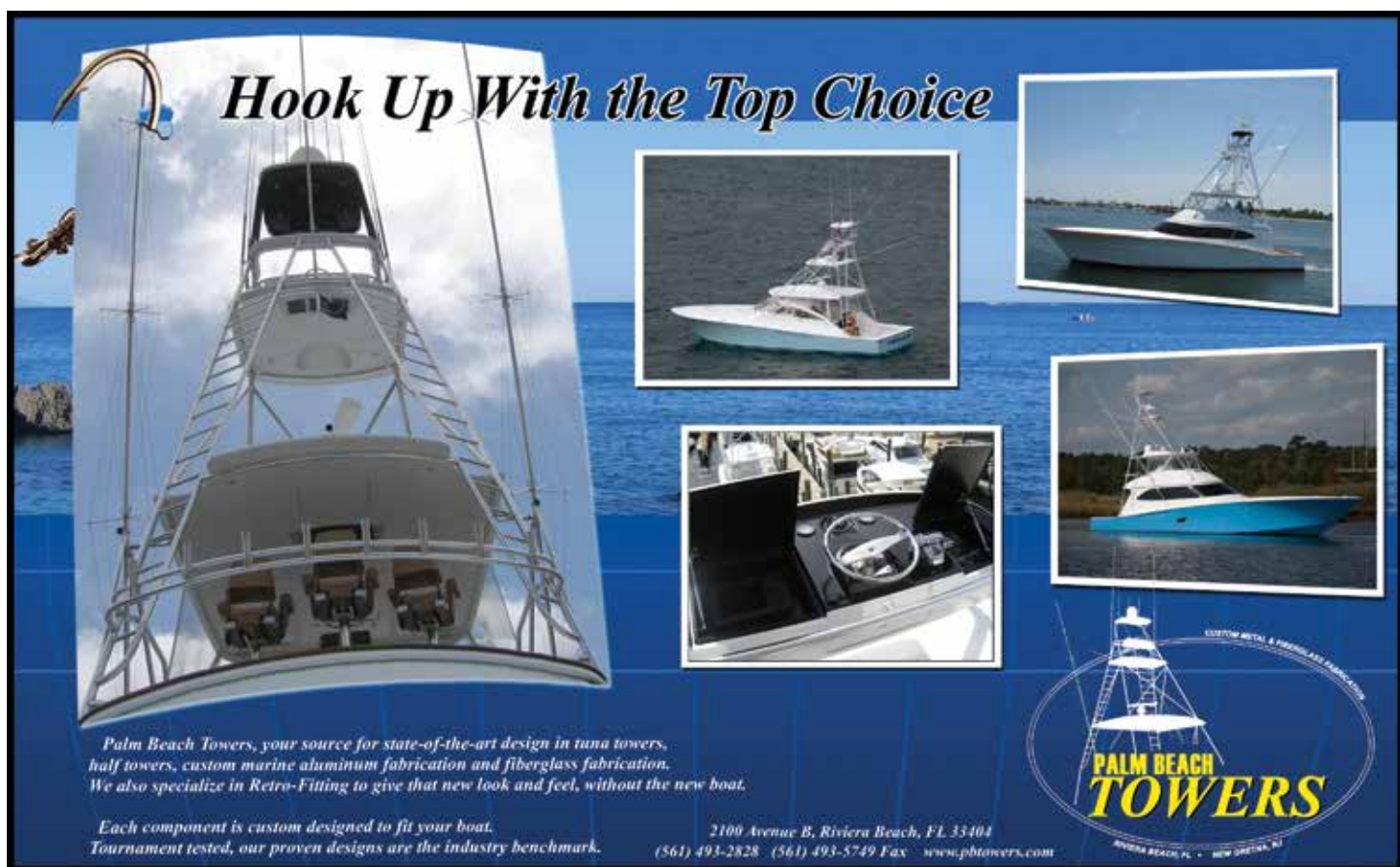
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When it comes to firsts, it's hard to beat getting your first deer. Zachary Wills (publisher's son) harvested this nice Florida doe this season.



Aiden and Luke Coleman caught their first yellowfin tuna on July 2, 2019 off the Norfolk Canyon while fishing aboard the *Sniper*. If these smiles are any indication, it won't be their last!



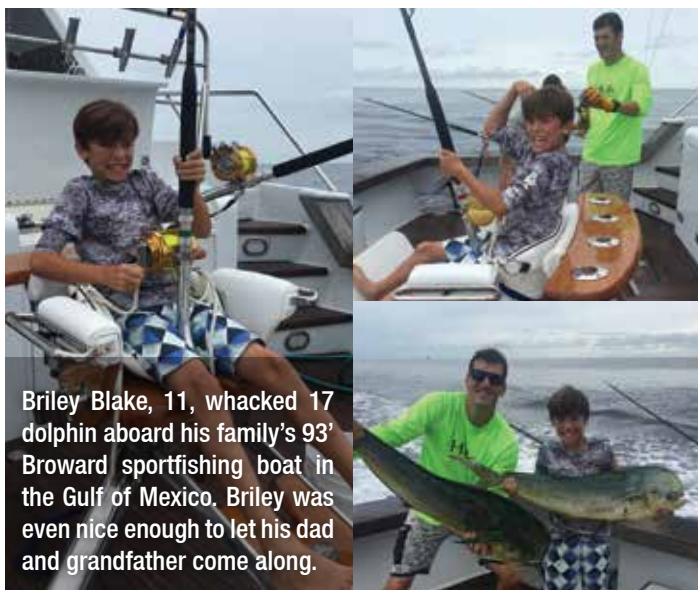
Emme O'Neill, and her buddies Lucas and Nicholas Murphy with some trophy cero mackerel caught in Harbour Island, Bahamas in June from Emme's family's 60' Viking, *Anchor Check*.



At 9 years old, Robert Smack is already a master dolphin catcher. Pictured with his first mahi, Robert landed a total of six that day on his own. Robert and his father Brian were fishing aboard the *Four Eights* off Ocean City, Maryland.



Not to let big sister be outdone, two-year-old Colin O'Neil helps keep the *Anchor Check* on the fish. A captain's work is never done, big guy!



Briley Blake, 11, whacked 17 dolphin aboard his family's 93' Broward sportfishing boat in the Gulf of Mexico. Briley was even nice enough to let his dad and grandfather come along.



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When it comes to taking pictures with fish, Ronnie and Kylie Roska have got it dialed in! The brother and sister combo caught this one ten miles offshore of Palm Beach on the family's 23' Mako with their father, Ronnie.



Helms Cisne raising the flag after releasing his first white marlin, fishing aboard the *Glazed*. Something tells us this picture is framed somewhere around Helms' house... Nice work, buddy!



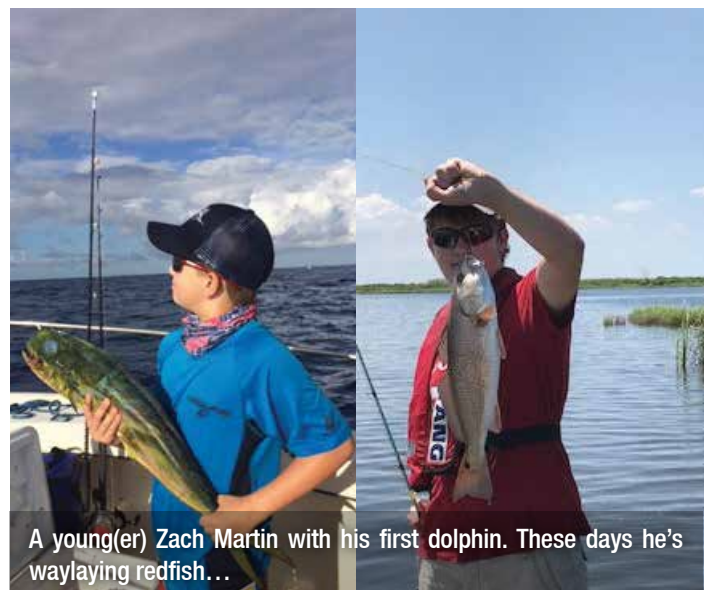
As he grew up, a young Captain Ryan Greiner's father made it a point to take him fishing on every boat he worked on. Ryan makes the same commitment to his daughter, Lola.



Jeb (7) and Gus (3) Staples with proof of that growing up around a family owned charter boat (the 52-foot G&S, *100 Proof*) in Destin, Florida is an awesome thing to do. The white was Jeb's first...Gus makes a great puffer fish!



Here's a picture of Billy Winkel when he was just getting started. Now, at 9, he's still at it!



A young(er) Zach Martin with his first dolphin. These days he's waylating redfish...

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Captain Trey Williams

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Captain John Henry

Trinidad Tobago Game Fish Tournament
1,006 lb Blue Marlin - Trinidad Tobago Record
Team Predator - Captain Brendan Farfan

2016 XV Salinas Yacht Club Marlin
Winner - Team Amiramara
Captain Ken Ross

2016 Hemingway International
Winners Blue Marlin - Team Unbelievable
Captain Mark Blankenship

2016 Grander Horta Azores
1254 lbs - Team Habitat
Captain Lulu Folk

Samoa Grander - All Tackle Record
1,025 lb Blue Marlin - Team Southern Destiny
Captain Chris Donato

Ngor Marlin Cup Senegal
Winner 1,181 lb Blue Marlin
Team Desire - Captain Jacques

2016 White Marlin Open
Winner Blue 790 lbs - Team Get Reel
Captain Brian Arri

2016 Hawaiian Lure Masters Challenge
Winner Blue Marlin - Team El Jodean
Captain Robbie Brown

Continental USA Record Blue Marlin
Pirates Cove Winner - Team Mimi
Captain Mike King - Angler Trey Irving
1,228.5 lbs Blue Marlin

2016 Bermuda Sea Horse Open
Winner Blue Marlin - Team Es Mucho
Captain Allen Desilva

2015 JIBT Japan International Billfish
Winners - Team Apache
Angler - Yoshinori Hamamoto

2016 Masters El Golfo Tournament
Largest Blue Marlin - Team Makaira
Captain John Cochrane

2016 Grander La Gomeria Canary Islands
1160 lbs Blue Marlin - Team Sea Sprint
Captain Mark Lee

2016 Old Salt Loop Billfish
Winners - Team On Cause
Captain Bill Curry

2016 XV Salinas Yacht Club Billfish
Winners - Team Amiramara
Captain Ken Ross

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Capt. Nick Carullo

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Endless Imagery

Fish Heads of Stuart "The Quickie"
December 2-4, 2019
Stuart, Florida



First Place:
Floridian
Capt. Glenn Cameron

Pirate's Cove Sailfish Classic
December 4-8, 2019
Stuart, Florida



First Place:
Showtime!
Capt. Jon Meade

Islamorada Sailfish Tournament
December 5-8, 2019
Islamorada, Florida



First Place:
Caribsea
Capt. KC Spaulding

Photo courtesy
Tim Rahn Photography

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION



**El Salvador International
Billfish Tournament**
November 14-17, 2019
Bahia del Sol

First Place:
King & I
Capt. Victor Cevallos

Stuart Sailfish Club Light Tackle Tournament
December 11-14, 2019 • Stuart, Florida



First Place:
Intents
Capt. Rhett Bailey

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So, You Want to be a Captain?



By Alexandra Stark
Licensed Psychotherapist

These days it seems like everyone wants to be a captain. Given the “glitz and glamour” (not to mention all of the great fishing pictures on Instagram) that comes with being a captain, lots of people want to rush to the top. With the hunger for recognition, it can be easy to overlook the sizeable commitment, not to mention the dedication and skill, required to forge a successful career as a sportfish captain. It can be easy to “forget” to consider the many years of training, experience, and learning that today’s successful captains invested before rising to the top.

The purpose of this article is not to provide instructions on how to be a captain from a skills or fishing standpoint. Rather it is to provide some perspective to crew or mates who are considering taking their first fishing job or choosing to make it a career. A job in sportfishing can be a wonderful vocation, but like anything else it deserves a great deal of thought. And there is certainly more to it than the number of Instagram likes your blue marlin posts are sure to get...

Were you to speak to a career counselor or corporate human resource professional (the people that make hiring decisions) about “normal,” nonfishing jobs, they might provide a career blueprint. Were you to create such a blueprint for a career in fishing, it might look something like this...

1. Learn, learn as much as you can: Sure, you could skip the apprenticeship period of being a mate or crew. You could just study and pass the captain’s exam with as little boat time as possible. Given all that goes into running and maintaining a boat, that is not a good idea. If you are considering investing years of your life to being a captain, spending time in the cockpit learning from an experienced captain is a great move. Electricians, plumbers, contractors and other professions all require such time before being licensed.

2. Get the correct type of license: The type of captain’s license that you get will dictate the type of boat that you are legally licensed to drive. There are plenty of resources online to help you know what is required where you live and what you’ll be driving. It is also wise to consider whether or not you should carry liability insurance (call ITB contributor and maritime lawyer Winslow Taylor).

3. Be sure to have the experience and be knowledge you need before you take the job: After all, boat handling, docking, night crossings, keeping all of the boat systems running, keeping the dredges out of the wheels, etc. are made to look deceptively easy when done by a skilled professional.

4. Understand the possibility of travel: Many boat captain jobs require a large amount of travel throughout the year, sometimes with little notice. Typically, to beautiful places, but extensive travel may be difficult for some depending on their circumstances. This is a good consideration before signing on the line.

5. Research the salary: Sportfishing compensation is not something found on Google. Check out the survey in the 2019 Captain’s Guide and speak with captains and crew that you know.

There’s a lot more to it than that, but hopefully this provides a good place to start thinking.

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Wide Open at the Flower Gardens: A Great Story



By Captain
Kevin Deerman

The only way that I could possibly describe the fishing in the Gulf of Mexico these past couple of months is crazy... maybe even ridiculous. All across the northern Gulf, conditions began to look really, really good in November and December. During a time of year that can be often rough and unfishable, crews in the eastern Gulf experienced an epic late season blue marlin bite.

Meanwhile in Texas, Captain Jeff Wilson and the crew on the *Titan Up*, based out of Galveston, headed out toward the end of November in search of a blue or two to add some points to their Houston Big Game Fishing Club annual tournament standings. Without any luck on the blues, they decided to hit the Flower Garden Banks on their way back to see if any preseason wahoo may have shown up.

Our Texas wahoo season normally doesn't get going until around the first of the year but recently it seems like they are arriving earlier every year. Shortly after they put the lines in, they realized they had made the right move.

Jeff and company were not picking away at a few stragglers, they were whacking 'em. The fish were coming in doubles, triples and quads throughout the morning.

"We had a quad on. When we slowed down to fight the fish, a big school of sardines came up to the surface...the wahoo started skyrocketing on the sardines. It was a sight to see," says Jeff. They ended up with a total of 17 wahoo in the boat—after feeding others to the numerous sharks and 'cudas. This was all before one in the afternoon.

A couple of weeks after this report, my



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old mate Capt. Cameron Plaag grabbed some of the same crew and went back out to the West Gardens on his 33 L&H *Tackle Box*. They ended up with 12 wahoo out of 25 bites. A number of their fish were lost to the tax man as well. Then we get to the crazy part...

Later that same day, Captain Billy Love had jumped on his old boss' boat *Dragon Lady*. Billy headed out the East Gardens to try his luck over there. They started fishing around 11am and trolled till dark without a single bite... don't worry, this is not the crazy part. The next day started just as slow, but at 11am it started to get interesting.

First it was a quad bite... three 'hoos and a 600-pound blue marlin (which broke the wire leader at the hook). You wouldn't have blamed Billy and company for packing it up and heading home. After all, you

can't do that again... right? But then again, the fishing has been ridiculous.

Their next bite was a triple... two wahoo and a 500-pound blue (which broke the hook off the leader)! That would have been an incredible report in and of itself, but it kept rolling. Next came a double consisting of a wahoo and a 400-pound blue (which broke off after a couple minutes). Then another double wahoo and 300-pound blue (which pulled the hook). They put the rods back out and had another good bite... that ended up being a 400-pound lemon shark to end their day. They wound up catching all of the wahoo, which were in the 30- 40-pound range, and took home some awesome memories of an epic blue marlin bite at the Flower Gardens.

— That's the report from Texas!



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31' Jupiter Cuddy Cabin 2006 – Twin Mercury 275hp. Ready to fish! Cabin sleeps 2 adults, upgrades and service records available, updated electronics, FL/Bahamas nav chips included. Contact Chris Downey, Downey Yachts: 843-847-1760 or Chris@DowneyYachts.com.



Harkers Island 20-foot center console – The boat was built by Alan Rose, the hull is juniper planked, 115 Yamaha 4 stroke, jack plate, 50 gallon aluminum fuel tank and a trailer. Asking \$10,000. Please contact petezab1@hotmail.com, 321-427-5836.



2018 73' Rybovich No Agenda – Mezzanine w/ an extra 2' of cockpit, 4 Staterooms 4 Heads, C32 Acert CAT 1925 H.P. (366hrs) 2x Cummins Onan 29kW Generators, Garmin/Furuno package w/ 2 radars. Dometic Chiller AC, Redundant Pumps, 2 FCI Water Makers and the list goes on. \$7.25M. Contact John Blumenthal: 772-215-2571, john@unitedyacht.com.



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2016 368 Edgewater – 400hr triple Yam 300's under warranty. Loaded center console with super electronics - thruster - really nice cabin for comfort. Great helm with seating and tackle center. Loaded boat. This is a super running boat with dry ride & speed. \$349k call Thomas Wynne 853-729-588.



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2018 42 Yellowfin – Why buy new? Yamaha power only 400hrs with warranty. Family usage & captain maintained. Loaded boat with great electronics and all you'd expect - super clean and even a trailer included for \$595,000. Call Thomas Wynne @ 843-729-5808.



2004 54' Ricky Scarborough Express Farmer – Twin C18 Cats, Cat Controls, Furuno and NorthStar Electronics, excellent visibility, dream ride. For sale by owner. \$700,000. Contact Thomas H. Betts for more info: farmer54@icloud.com, 609-820-3575.



2004 61 Viking - Upgraded 1520 MTU's, Viking factory mezzanine added and painted 2014, nice Garmin electronic package w/KVH Sat TV, Bluewater chairs, incredible Denon/JL Audio AV system, full time captain & it shows! \$1,099,000 Contact Preston Stofor @ Tournament Yacht Sales 361-230-0418 or captstofor@yahoo.com.



2007 27 Aubrey - Major Refit 2018-19, new interior paint, new upholstery, new gauges, Suzuki 225's, new 18" Simrad plotter, Radar, AP, new Rupp carbon fiber outriggers, ready for her next owner. Contact Preston Stofor @ Tournament Yacht Sales 361-230-0418 or captstofor@yahoo.com.



48' Graves 1984 Flybridge – Big Dog went through a full re-power in 2018 at Bayliss Boatyard & received new MANi6 800hp motors, new Phasor 20 kw & full paint job in the engine room. Cruises at 29 knots while only burning 60 gph & 34 knots at WOT. Full Garmin electronics upgrade in 2017 to include autopilot, FLIR, new screens & more. Contact Chris Downey 843-847-1760.



31' Cabo Express – Cockpit includes a bait-prep center, transom fish-box, dual wash-downs & transom door with a gate. Bridge deck lifts hydraulically to reveal twin CAT 350hp diesels, cruise at 26 kts. Fresh bottom job, new prop-speed, freshly painted engine room, exhaust work, new teak & holly sole deck in cabin, fresh hull detail & more. Contact Chris Downey 843-847-1760.



1997 50 Hatteras – Super clean, updated and upgraded. Recent: C 18 Cats 1400hrs - 27.5kts cruise @ 68gph, exterior paint, hardtop, electronics. Super nice in & out. \$395K, call Thomas R. Wynne 843-729-5808.



2002 52' Viking Sportfish – 1050 Mans 1200 hrs SMOH, continually updated and maintained by Captain, new carpet, ceiling LED Lighting throughout vessel. Vessel is turn key and owner is serious to sell, to move up to larger S/F. \$595,000 Call to schedule an appointment, contact John Blumenthal, 772-215-2571, john@unitedyacht.com.



2002 44 Garlington – 715 hp twin 2006 inboard diesel's, Cummins QSM 11's. A true custom boat! \$825k. Contact Craig @ 561-310-3715. Captcbaldwin@aol.com.



2006 45 Heritage Express – Cummins power for 28kt cruise @ 40gph. 2019 Garmin Electronics -Full tower - nice interior. Super dry ride, pleasure to fish in a quality Carolina build. \$399k call Thomas Wynne @ 843-729-5808.



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Eskimo Ice Machine I E 600 – Rebuilt in 2018, runs great. The oil seal on the auger motor has started to leak & owner decided to buy a new one. It's still on the boat so you can see & hear it run. \$2500 OBO. Contact Capt. Carl 727-946-0480.



New 29kw Onan Marine Generator – This is a new Onan 29kw generator. Boat was sold prior to installing this unit. Asking \$16,500. Contact Bob with any questions, motivated to move this unit. Ph: 561-722-2628.



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Bluewater Fighting Chair with 4 Rod Rocket Launcher – Good condition, comes with a 4 Rod Rocket Launcher by Scopinich (with drawer), extra pedestal, ladder back rest for fighting chair, fighting chair with pedestal & cushions for both rocket launcher & fighting chair. \$1700. Contact 8knotsllc@gmail.com or 561-301-3841.



Murray Fighting Chair – Good condition. New chair costs \$13,000. Selling for only \$4500. Please contact 361-946-8859 for more info.



1979 Pompanette #180 Class Fighting Chair – Wood refinished, original chrome, includes baseplate and bolts. \$1795. Please contact Frank, 302-420-1894.

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Acme Props – Pair Acme 29.5 / 36 2.5 bore in good shape. \$2500. Contact Mike for more info: 910-279-0128, mk-mking@aol.com.



HyTorq Props – The props were removed from a 57' Ocean Sportfish six months after overhaul. HyTorq 31 x 37.8, 5 blade with 3-inch bore. Complete prop scan report by Treasure Coast Propellers available upon request. \$6,000. Email pj@globaljetsales.com for more info.



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Mate for 72 Viking – Looking for a mate to work March-June 2020 in the Bahamas aboard a 72 Viking. This will be a position working with our full-time mate maintaining the vessel and have the fishing gear ready to go. Looking for a hard-working person with saltwater offshore experience and takes pride in caring for the upkeep of our vessel. The fishing will primarily be chasing billfish throughout the southern Bahamas and experience level will be a consideration for the position.

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Last issue's photo and winning caption...
Proof why women live longer than men.
– Robert Allain

Runners Up:

Stay fishing my friend. – Vin McCarthy

Gotta top that pelican story somehow.

– Michael Needham

Fish hard or die. – David Puls

Pff...doctor said I can't go fishing, said I can't
drink either. Proved him wrong, twice.

– @thescratchersfishing

When you win the daily the day before but still gotta
finish out the tournament. – @itsskylieeee

InTheBite Passenger of the Year. – @afishinado1

Till death do us part. – @dan_s8

The morning after teasers. – @aprilleigh08

It's day three, boys...let's go! – @tmc264

But Babe, the doctor said I needed therapy.

– @michael_barrera2

Hold my beer...watch this. – @richarddeblaker

Broke out of the hospital to go fishing.

– @philippfederle

Meanwhile at The Tug is the Drug Rehabilitation
Center. – @jayxbay518

We don't call it a drinking problem,
it's a stopping problem! – @willy_vac

'Merica! – @seaworthybait

Topping up with fish finder fluid. – @loos.matt

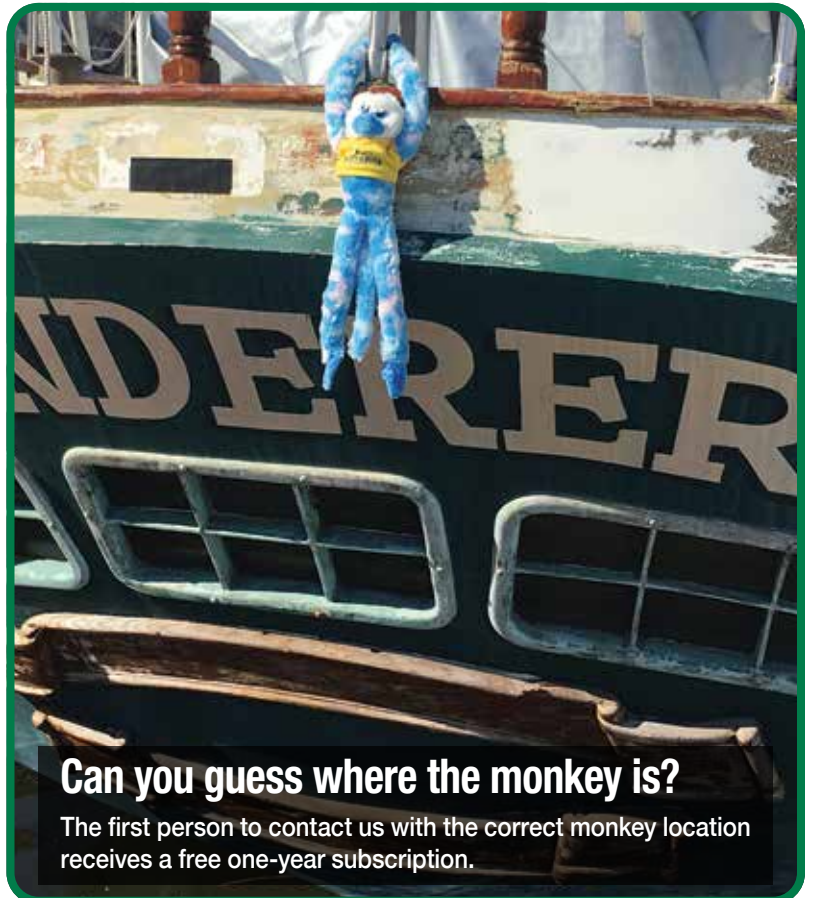
Hey Donny, your ankle bracelet is blinking!

– @tunatails91

Trying out Baitmaster's new human brine.

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Saline life. – @srotagphoto



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