

Punta Gorda Isles Fishing Club Newsletter

Volume 20

Issue 12

A man wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, a white hat, and sunglasses is holding a large groupers fish. The fish is silver with dark spots and is being held up by the man's hands. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

Groupers Galore!

Pages 6 & 16-20

Christmas Party

Page 10

PGI Fishing Club Newsletter

FEATURES

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Volume 20, Issue 12

December 2012

Web Site News

Check out the new Photo Gallery pages at
http://pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/?page_id=226.

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NEXT CLUB MEETING

Christmas Party,

Tuesday, December 11, 2012 @ 6:00 p.m.

ON THE COVER—Many great December cover photo candidates, but this one of John Gettinger looking very pleased with his beautiful gag grouper was irresistible.



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facebook

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PGI Fishing Club, join the group.



I'm hoping all you had a really great Thanksgiving. I know I did. My wife made a most delicious meal that we shared with family and friends. What a feast! Now I know how the turkey feels...stuffed!

As we ease our way from Thanksgiving and with the Christmas rush around the corner, I'm hoping there will still be plenty of time to get out on the boat and see what's biting in this cooler weather. I know for certain that something is biting because my fishing buddy just had another lure broken because of the size fish that got away. Not sure what it was but I'd like to go back to that spot and try and find out.

Speaking of finding out things, I just learned that your Fishing partner will never say, **"Not again? We just Fished last week - Is Fishing all You ever think about!"**

There were quite a few of our members who attended the PGICA's Harbor Happening. I'd like to thank all those who showed up. It meant a lot to the people of PGICA who planned and ran this event. So, thank you all for volunteering your time and energy.

In my article of last month, the names of those up for election for 2013 were mentioned and the election was held at our November meeting. It's now my privilege and honor to introduce you to your Fishing Club Board of Directors for 2013:

I'm staying on as your President for one more year.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Vice President: | Tom Lengauer |
| Secretary: | Gary Moerke |
| Treasurer: | Rex Koch |

I know we'll all do our best to keep this club to accommodate each and every one of its members.

While Committee people are not elected, positions do change each year so here's your line up of your Committee. Newsletter Editor: Jim Quorollo; Advertising: Missy Becker; Membership: Donnie Brennan; Sunshine Lady: Donnie Brennan; Programs Director: John Simonieg; Social Director: Sherry Moerke; Fishing Events: John Wolfinger; Fishing Events

Record Keeper: Bob Rand; CCMAC Rep.: Mike Quinn; CCA Rep.: Tom Parsons.

Now, let's hit on what I've learned about what's happening and where. Seems the trout are the in thing during this cold spell. From what I've seen and been told, they've been most active around the 41 bridges and most piers in the harbor. They're hungry and that means some good dinners are waiting for us to catch.

There are some really great articles in this month's newsletter so be sure to read up on what's going on in your club. John Wolfinger tells me there are things really happening with our contest so be sure to read what he has to say. And while you're at it, I'm sure you'll want to read the changes in the stats in our contests. Makes me a proud president to see how many new members are turning in photos of the fish they caught.

Speaking of turning in photos, just in case you're a new member or one who has just started turning in your photos, here is the email address you need to send your photos to:

fishphotos@pgifishingclub.org. If you're unfamiliar with emails, just drop your photo off at the PGICA office. As you walk in the office, there is a credenza to your right. In the bottom drawer on the left you'll find the folders for each club. Drop your photos in the one marked Fishing Club. It's that easy.....just remember, your name, the date you caught your fish, the species and the length of the fish MUST accompany your photo. No info, no input into the contests. We've received photos that had no information and we had to eliminate them since we had no idea when they were caught or by whom or how long they were. With so many great photos, we hate to have to put them aside. So, please, add your info and we'll do the rest.

Now, speaking of resting, it's time to put this article to bed. 'Cause that's where I'm going right now. And on that note, happy fishing.

Aaron
PGIFC President



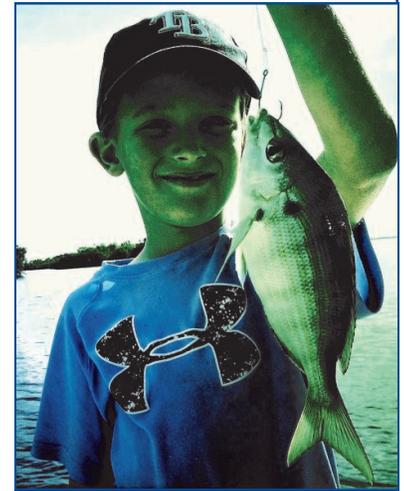
It goes "Ain't but three things in this world that's worth a solitary dime but old dogs and children and watermelon wine." Country music fans will recognize that line written and sung by Tom T. Hall in his Country Classic hit "Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine." Nan and I moved to southwest Florida a couple of years ago, and for me that line should end "old dogs and children and a fish on their line."

Our old Labrador retriever is about to turn thirteen years old, and for a large lab that's pretty old. We found her in an Ozark Mountain shelter when she was 20-months old. She is a real treasure and a delight to be around. Always a loving and playful dog, she seems to get more so every day. Once shiny black over her entire coat, she now has a sliver muzzle, silver "comma" eye brows, silver eyelashes, silver toes and some silver hair in a few other places on the edges...but still as pretty as ever. She can only play a few minutes at a time these days and sleeps a lot, but will sit and let you pet and love on her as long as you will. She knows what you're thinking before you do, and is worth many, many times a solitary dime.

The move to Florida has allowed me to fish fairly often with the grandsons. Of course the opportunity to fish with them, see their ball games and

smiling faces, just watch them grow up, was the main inspiration for us to leave our comfortable surroundings up north and make the move south. And has it ever been worth the effort!

The ball games, overnight stays, swim parties and school events are great, but to see the excitement when a youngster hooks onto a Charlotte Harbor fish of any kind and brings it to the boat, that is a treat you should not miss.



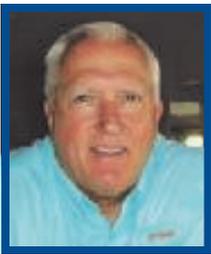
So, if you're looking to experience the things in this world that are "worth a solitary dime," rescue an older dog from the shelter. They're the best. Take a kid fishing. It helps you stay young. And by the way, as I grow older it seems I'm acting more child-like every day, so maybe you'd like to take me fishing if you can't find a handy kid...Joe did recently.

(Speaking of Joe, be sure to read his article of advice for club members who are new to Charlotte Harbor. It is the Local Area Fishing Tips section of this month's Newsletter starting on page 21 .)



Here are some of Bill Guenther's PGI Neighborhood Marine Watch boats helping out November 17th during the PGICA Harbor Happening.





Fishing Events

John Wolfinger

It looks like our rainy season is officially over. It's been a while since we had some rain and that's beginning to show up in our water clarity. If you haven't noticed yet, take a look at the water in the canals and harbor and you'll see that the dark tannin stained color is disappearing and we can now see the bottom much easier. We are also entering the time of the year when we start to see the skinny winter tides. I noticed just this week that we had at least 2 days with negative low tides. That means the depth at low tide is less than the depth you'll read on navigation charts. Why is that important? Well it means than many places you may have been able to access in the summer, may not be accessible during some winter tides. It also means that you better keep your eye on the time if you are fishing in a shallow area with a dropping tide or you may be spending a lot of time there waiting for high tide.

The red tide reports as of 11/30 show concentrations along the coast all the way from Tampa to Fort Myers. I haven't heard too much lately about it impacting the fish populations though. Let's hope it doesn't expand further. If you ever want to check on the red tide status, FWC issues reports the results weekly and they can be found at: <http://myfwc.com/research/redtide/events/status/statewide>. Just look for the Southwest Florida section.

Wind was a big deterrent in November and kept many of our members from getting out to catch grouper in November as often as they would have liked. However, there were some decent days here and there that allowed members to get offshore in pursuit of grouper.

Our November Fish of the Month contest was GROUPER and we had numerous entries despite the windy conditions. We received 19 submissions for the November GROUPER contest. For the twelfth consecutive month we had at least 3 winners. Congratulations go out to:

- John Gettinger, 1st place tie (\$35 gift certificate), 33 inch grouper
- Joe Udvari, 1st place tie (\$35 gift certificate), 33 inch grouper
- Mike Peters, 2nd place (\$25 gift certificate), 31 inch grouper

- Bill Bonham, 3rd place (\$15 gift certificate), 30 inch grouper

The prizes for the GROUPER contest will be awarded at the January 2013 club meeting since we will be having our Christmas party in December. We will not be distributing awards the night of the party.

Thanks go out to the members that submitted pictures of their GROUPER catches. If you caught one and didn't submit it, you may have missed out on a great gift certificate. It's easy to submit entries; just e-mail a picture of you with the fish along with your name, date caught, length and type of fish to the club's NEW e-mail address for submissions, fishphotos@pgifishingclub.org or drop off a picture with the same information at the PGICA office.

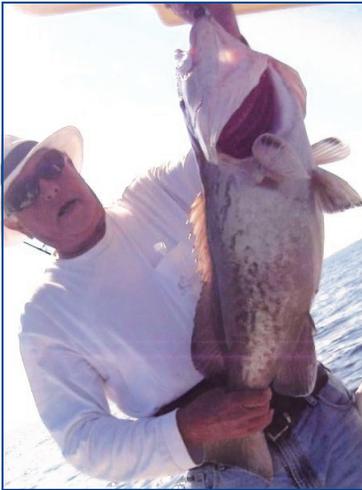
Our December Fish of the Month will be BLACK DRUM. These fish are TOTAL LENGTH; tip of the nose to the tip of the squeezed tail. Black drum can get very big so you may need to break out some heavy tackle. Good baits include shrimp and crabs, and as Robert from Fishin' Franks once told me, frozen shrimp can be more effective than live shrimp. Black drum tend to be bottom feeders and like to hang around structure. Look for them in our canals and around the 41 bridges. It would not be uncommon for you to hook into a 30 pound plus fish so make sure you are prepared. If you catch one of these beasts, take a photo of you with the fish and submit it along with the length and information to fishphotos@pgifishingclub.org. As always, fish caught using a paid in-shore guide do not qualify for this contest.

In closing, for the fifth time this year we have had a club record tied or broken! The latest club record goes to John MacLeman for a 45.5-inch amberjack he caught during the month of November. Congratulations go out to John for a beautiful fish!

Now take advantage of living in one of the best fishing areas in the country and GO FISH!



**November, 2012
Fish of the Month Contest
GROUPER**



John Gettinger, 1st Place Tie (\$35 gift certificate), 33-inch gag grouper.

Joe Udvari, 1st Place Tie (\$35 gift certificate), 33-inch red grouper.



Mike Peters, 2nd Place (\$25 gift certificate), 31-inch gag grouper.

Bill Bonham, 3rd Place (\$15 gift certificate), 30-inch red grouper.



**CONGRATULATIONS to all four of our winners!
There were 19 grouper entries this month, and
many more caught.**

**Fishin' Babe
of the Month
With a December
Fish of the Month**



Fish of the Month 2012 Schedule

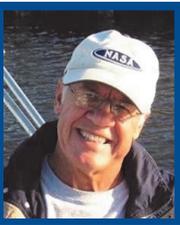
DECEMBER | BLACK DRUM



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Programs

John Simonieg

Our November speaker was local fishing guide Captain Mike Myers who has been guiding in the Charlotte Harbor and Gulf area for twenty years. Mike gave an informative talk on grouper and snook fishing in general, along with some specific recommendations on techniques, lures and locations for catching gag and red grouper during the month of November. Judging by the number of grouper caught this past month, he gave out good advice.



Captain Mike Myers is presented with a PGI Fishing Club Certificate of Appreciation by Aaron Wagner.

Since the December club meeting is our Christmas Party and January will be 2012 awards, there will be no program speaker until February, 2013.



Ladies Liaison

Gena Davis

The Ladies Who Fish - and Also Do Lunch – enjoyed lunch and conversation at Phil’s on 41 in Punta Gorda on November 15.



From the left are: Janice Wiscombe, Bev Rucker, Cathy Engimann, Missy Becker, Margie Hoffman, Gail Morris, Donnie Brennan and Mary Harucki

For the Fishing Ladies’ Night Out on October 24, the Lady Anglers met at Thai Cafe in Port Charlotte.



From the left are: Donnie Brennan, Marie La Rocca, Missy Becker, Bev Rucker, and Mary Harucki

All women in the Fishing Club are invited to join us for our next lunch on Thursday, December 13 at 11:30 AM at Limoncello’s in Punta Gorda. Because of the Holidays, there will not be a Ladies’ Night Out in December. If you plan to attend the lunch, you can sign up by contacting **Cris Scheib**, the new Ladies’ Liaison by emailing her at pastadiva@comcast.net by December 11.

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OMG....can you believe this cold weather? Okay, so maybe not really cold but

cool and windy! While it's really nice having the doors and windows open during the day, I'm still having trouble wrapping my head around the fact that it's going down to the mid 50s at night. We haven't had too many Novembers like this (and yes, I'm writing this just before Thanksgiving).

Another thing I find hard to believe is that I've now been your Membership Director for two years; actually this January will begin my third. Where did the time go? But as the adage says, "Time flies when you're having fun" and I've been having a really great time. Not only have I gotten to know more wonderful people but I've increased our membership considerably.

When I took over this position, we had just under 170 households on our roster. My goal was to increase our membership to 200 households and I've exceeded that by 44. So, word gets around that we have the greatest club in town.

As your Membership Director, not only do I strive to keep our membership happy, but I maintain our rosters. And if you have any questions and aren't sure to whom you should go for answers, I'm the "go to gal". If I don't know the answer, I sure as heck will know who does.

There is one area where you can help me. If you have a new neighbor or a friend who isn't in our club, pass along a brochure or my name and number. I'll be glad to talk to anyone who shows an interest in our group.

Now, let me welcome our new members who joined in November:

FRED & JUDY BUCHAS

TOM & NANCY FLAK

ED & GLORIA PEABODY

HOUGHTY & CAROL WETHERALD

Remember, every new member has a star on his/her badge. Please go out of your way to look for these new members. Make them feel welcome. Strike up a conversation. Take them fishing. Just play nice! We were all new once and we don't just fish, we make friends. That's what we do.

That said, I'm going to end this now so I can get my family's dinner ready. Yes, in addition to being your Membership Director, I also have a house to run so I'm going to get running right now.

Have a wonderful day and go out and catch those big ones!

Donnie



Donnie providing PGI residents with information about your club at the PGICA Harbor Happening.



Sunshine Lady

Donnie Brennan

I want to send out a special note of thanks to my friend, Jim. He's helping me spread a bit of sunshine to many people.

For instance, a "Get Well" card was sent out to Rose Anne McCaffrey in November. She'd had rotator cuff surgery and is recovering nicely.

Another get well card was sent to Pete Ferguson when he pulled a muscle in his back. I know how painful they can be.

For some reason, it seems that around the holidays, people manage to become ill or have some sort of minor accident, some of which require a visit to the local ER. Believe me, I know. I was hanging a picture frame and didn't realize I'd missed pressing down one metal prong. The frame slipped and my thumb required three sutures. So, yes, accidents happen.

BUT...that's where I come in. People don't need to be seriously ill to get a card saying, "Hope you're feeling better", or "Thinking of you", or just a plain, "What'd you do NOW??" kind of card.

Whatever the card, sympathy, get well, birthday... just let me know and the card will go out to whom-ever you wish. All I need is the name and address. If it's a get well, I'd also like to know the reason. Believe it or not, many people in our club don't realize some of their friends aren't feeling well until someone else tells us. So, please, if you know someone who you'd like to have a bit of sunshine, just let me know. It's that easy.

I'm waiting. Just call (575-8808) or send an email (L3th@comcast.net); give me the name (or names) of someone who needs a little TLC and I'll take care of the rest.

OR..... if you want to just let someone have a little extra birthday wish, I can do that too. It's all part of the "smiley" thing.

I'm the eternal optimist. No smile is too small to share.

((((((((((((((((big hugs))))))))))))))))))

Donnie

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Social Events Sherry Moerke

The Christmas party committee has been working behind the scenes to make the holiday party a special evening. When you arrive at the party please check in and present your ticket. A ticket will be drawn at the end of the evening for a door prize.

Please plan to bring your appetizers and desserts by 6:00. All appetizers and desserts need to be on disposable trays.

Social hour will be from 6:00 until 7:00. The appetizers will be set up in the entry way to be enjoyed at your leisure during this time.

Dinner will be served buffet style beginning at 7:00.

Uptown Express will play for your dancing and listening pleasure from 8:00 to 10:00.

I wish you all a very joyous holiday season and Happy New Year!

Sherry

- 1/4 cup minced green onions and 1 clove of crushed garlic
- 1 whole stick of real salted butter
- 1/2 cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 can cream of asparagus soup (condensed)
- 1 can of French-fried onions
- 2 cans crescent rolls
- 1 bag frozen mixed veggies (the frozen potato, green bean, onion and pepper mixture best choice) defrosted to room temperature (use as much as you like).
- 1 tsp. of corn starch
- Garlic salt, pepper, salt and crushed red pepper

Directions:
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange about 2-3 pounds of cubed redfish (dried with a paper towel and lightly seasoned with garlic salt and crushed red pepper) in the bottom of a well-buttered 10" x 15" baking pan. Drain all the liquid from the veggies in a strainer and pour the dry, room temperature veggies evenly over the fish. In a sauce pan, slowly bring to a simmer the cream, white wine, green minced onions, crushed garlic, corn starch and the condensed can of soup (season to taste). Simmer for 1-2 minutes and pour evenly over the mixture of fish and veggies. Cover the casserole evenly with the whole can of French-fried onions. Melt the stick of butter and drizzle evenly over the French-fried onions and sprinkle the Parmesan cheese over the whole casserole evenly. Then separate the first tube of crescent rolls into squares. Do not separate into triangles, but instead cut into 1" strips. Stretch and arrange squares in a lattice work type pattern across the center of the pie. Separate the second tube of crescent rolls into 8 triangles. Starting from the wide ends, roll up halfway and arrange around the edges of the pie so pointed ends are directed toward the center slightly covering the edges of the lattice pattern. Bake approx. 30-45 minutes, until rolls are golden brown on top and casserole is bubbling. Check every 5 minutes after the first 20 minutes. Remove the pie from the oven and let it rest for approximately 30 minutes before serving.

Notes: Substitute any fresh, thickly-cut fish (grouper, snapper, snook and cobia work very well) for redfish in this recipe. Choose veggies with lower water content for best results.

Recipe of the Month

REDFISH POT PIE

I first saw this recipe on "Fishing the Flats" TV show and tried it. Not as simple as some fish recipes, but it is delicious. Leftovers warmed up are just as good as the first time. I baked it on the gas grill and it worked fine. The below details are from Jimmy Brod at www.woodswater.net. To see a YouTube video for how to do same recipe on the grill, paste this link into your browser: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDbnZTtLJBY> (This video simplifies the directions considerably.)



Ingredients:

- 1 or 2 fresh redfish (fillet fish and cut into 1-1/2" squares until you have about 2-3 pounds of fish.
- 1/2 cup cream and 1/4 cup of white wine

Last Month's Drawing Prize Winners

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|--|
| FIRST PLACE | ~ | Marge Hoffman | Redbone Spinning Rod |
| SECOND PLACE | ~ | Connie Eldridge | Calico Jack Spinning Rod |
| SECOND PLACE | ~ | Ellen Wagner | Okuma 30B Spinning Reel |
| THIRD PLACE | ~ | Keith Eldridge | Fishing tackle bag |
| "EXTRA" PLACE | ~ | Rose Anne McCaffrey | \$25 Gift Certificate to Terminal Tackle |



FIRST PLACE
Marge Hoffman



SECOND PLACE
Connie Eldridge



SECOND PLACE
Ellen Wagner



THIRD PLACE
Keith Eldridge



"EXTRA" PLACE
Rose Anne
McCaffrey

*(I sure hope Margie is
buying Power Ball and
Lottery tickets this
month!)*



50/50 WINNERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FIRST PLACE WINNER Margie Hoffman \$75 | SECOND PLACE WINNER Pete McGregor \$40 | THIRD PLACE WINNER Rich Brennan \$33 |
|---|---|---|



PGI Fishing Club Ladder of Angling Achievement Program

| LEVEL | NUMBER OF SPECIES | SIZE LIMITS | POINTS NEEDED | EARNED AWARD |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| FIRST FISH | 1 | NONE | NONE | CLUB HAT |
| BRONZE | 5 | NONE | NONE | BRONZE PIN |
| SILVER | 5 | LEGAL | 300 | SILVER PIN |
| GOLD | 7 | LEGAL | 700 | GOLD PIN |
| LIFETIME | 9 | LEGAL | 1000 | SNOOK PIN |
| LIFETIME LEVEL II | 13 | LEGAL | 1400 | REDFISH PIN |
| LIFETIME LEVEL III | 18 | LEGAL | 1700 | TARPON PIN |
| GRAND MASTER | 23 | LEGAL | 2000 | CLUB SHIRT W/LOGO |

THE FOLLOWING FISH AND POINTS EARNED (BASED ON LENGTH OF ENTRY) QUALIFY

| | POINTS: 100 | 200 | 300 | | POINTS: 100 | 200 | 300 |
|---------------|-------------|-------|-----|---------------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| AMBERJACK | 32-39 | 40-45 | 46+ | LADYFISH | No points | | |
| BARACUDA | No points | | | PERMIT | No points | | |
| BLACK DRUM | No points | | | POMPANO | No points | | |
| BLUEFISH | No points | | | REDFISH | 28-29 | 30-35 | 36+ |
| BLUE RUNNER | No points | | | STINGRAY | No points | | |
| BONITA | No points | | | SEATROUT | 21-22 | 23-24 | 24+ |
| CATFISH (ALL) | No points | | | SHARK (Any species) | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60+ |
| COBIA | 38-39 | 40-43 | 44+ | SHEEPSHEAD | No points | | |
| CROAKER | No points | | | SNAPPER | No points | | |
| FLOUNDER | No points | | | SNOOK | 29-33 | 34-39 | 40+ |
| *GROUPE | 24-27 | 28-31 | 32+ | SPANISH MACKEREL | 21-22 | 23-24 | 25+ |
| GRUNT | No points | | | TARPON (any size) | | X | |
| JACK CREVELLE | No points | | | TRIPLETAIL | No points | | |
| KING MACKEREL | 32-35 | 36-39 | 40+ | WHITING | No points | | |
| | | | | YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER | No points | | |

*The Grouper classification is restricted to Black, Gag and Red Grouper.
Goliath Grouper may not be used as a "Species" catch for Grouper.

LADDER OF ACHIEVEMENT GOALS REACHED

| | |
|--|--|
| BRONZE/PIN: | Cunningham, Bruce; desEnfants Tom; Dyrstad, Joanel; Lodge, Karen; Neiberline, Dick; Poe, Jessica; Pricco, Darryl; Stafford, Ron; Tassia, Joe; Will, Roger; Wolfinger, Sheree; Moerke, Sherry; Moerke, Gary; Stringer, Bill; Kline, Mark; Brunner, Barbara; Caputo, Richard; Lachance, Deny; Lamon, Fred; Mayes, Bob; Morehouse, John; Wiscombe, Janice; Land, Paul; Schulman, Alan; Hall, Randy; Lengauer, Tom; Zink, Walt; Topper, Ron; Gilger, Mike |
| SILVER/PIN: | D'Ambrosio, Marie; desEnfants, Kathy; Dyrstad, Marv; Ferguson, Pete; Gulvezan, Mike; Jordan, Christine; Okray, Larry; Sandling, Mike; Remick, George; McKinnon, Ron; Bensen, Fred; Quorollo, Jim; Storm, Mark; Moerke, Gary; McKinnon, Ron |
| GOLD: | D'Ambrosio, Mattie; Guenther, Bill; Longo, Joe; Simonieg, John; Wagner, Aaron; Brunner, Ray; Bonham, Bill; Udvari, Karen; |
| LIFETIME/Snook Pin: | Lodge, Tom; Verminski, Ed; LaRocca, Jim; LaRocca, Marie; Doster, Dick; Leicher, Carl; Macleman, John |
| LIFETIME LEVEL II: with Redfish Pin | McCaffrey, Marty; Rand, Bob; Becker, Missy; McCaffrey, Rose Anne; Udvari, Joe |
| LIFETIME LEVEL III: with Tarpon Pin | Spies, Jack; Gettinger, John; Solinger, Pam; Hickey, Tom |
| GRAND MASTER: | Brennan, Donnie; Brennan, Rich; Busler, Bob; Hoffman, Jim; Hoffman, Margie; Krotzer, Kel; Landaker, Joanne; Landaker, Steve; Maillet, with club shirt Joe; McGregor, Pete; Quinn, Mike; Rucker, Bev; Solinger, John; Wolfinger, John; Parsons, Tom |

Club Hat for First Fish:
Peters, Mike

Red = Awards this month

Master Angler Tournament 2012 Standings

(If you see an error, please contact the Fishing Events Director at fishing@pgifishingclub.org or Newsletter Editor at editor@pgifishingclub.org)

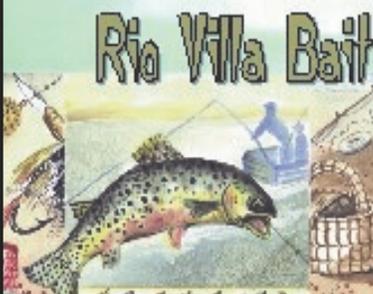
| <u>Grouper</u> | <u>Seatrout</u> | <u>Redfish</u> | <u>Cobia</u> | <u>Snook</u> | <u>Spanish Mackerel</u> | <u>King Mackerel</u> |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <u>FIRST PLACE</u> MARTY McCAFFREY 33.5 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> AARON WAGNER 29.0 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> BOB BUSLER 36.0 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> ROSE ANNE McCAFFREY 43.5 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> JIM QUROLLO 44.5 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> CARL LEICHER 30.0 INCHES | <u>FIRST PLACE</u> JOHN MACLEMAN 52.0 INCHES |
| <u>SECOND PLACE</u> JOHN GETTINGER & JOE UDWARI 33.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> RICH BRENNAN 28.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> JOHN SOLINGER 35.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> JOE MAILLET 43.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> PETE McGREGOR & BOB BUSLER 37.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> JOHN MACLEMAN 27.0 INCHES | <u>SECOND PLACE</u> GARY MOERKE 33.0 INCHES |
| <u>THIRD PLACE</u> JIM HOFFMAN & RAY BRUNER 32.0 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> PETE McGREGOR 26.0 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> PAM SOLINGER 33.5 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> ED VERMINSKI 42.0 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> KAREN UDWARI 36.0 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> WALT ZINK 22.5 INCHES | <u>THIRD PLACE</u> JIM HOFFMAN 31.0 INCHES |

Certificate Award — Three awards will be given for each fish species. The first will be the first place angler with the longest length fish in species. The second award will be for the next longest and third place for the angler with the third longest.

Important Note: Only pictures of the caught fish are accepted for entry into the Master Angler or Ladder of Angling Achievement competition.

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Entering our fishing programs is simple. Just email a photo of you and your fish along with your name, date caught, fish species, and length to fishphotos@pgifishingclub.org, or drop off a photo with this information printed on the back at the PGICA office (they will place it in the Club's mailbox).



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ISLES TROPHY 2012



PGI FISHING CLUB'S ANNUAL ISLES TROPHY STANDINGS

MEN'S DIVISION

| OVERALL CLUB RECORD | SPECIES NAME | MEMBER NAME | RECORD LENGTH IN INCHES | DATE CAUGHT | 2012 MEMBER NAME | 2012 LENGTH IN INCHES | DATE CAUGHT | % OF RECORD |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Amberjack | RICH BRENNAN | 44 | 2008 | John MacLeman | 45.5 | 11/13/12 | 103.41% |
| | Cobia | BOB BUSLER | 54 | 2007 | Joe Maillet | 43.0 | 04/17/12 | 79.63% |
| | Grouper | TOM HAMILTON | 39 | 2003 | Marty McCaffrey | 33.5 | 07/13/12 | 85.89% |
| | King Mackerel | TOM LODGE | 50 | 2009 | John MacLeman | 52.0 | 09/20/12 | 104.00% |
| | Redfish | BOB BUSLER | 42 | 2005 | Bob Busler | 36.0 | 01/25/12 | 85.71% |
| | Sea trout | RICH BRENNAN | 29 | 2009 | Aaron Wagner | 29.0 | 04/03/12 | 100.00% |
| | Snook | KEL KROTZER | 42 | 2007 | Jim Qurollo | 44.5 | 02/21/12 | 105.95% |
| | Spanish Mackerel | GREG CHESNUT | 29 | 2009 | Carl Leicher | 30.0 | 04/01/12 | 103.45% |

WOMEN'S DIVISION

| OVERALL CLUB RECORD | SPECIES NAME | MEMBER NAME | RECORD LENGTH IN INCHES | DATE CAUGHT | 2012 MEMBER NAME | 2012 LENGTH IN INCHES | DATE CAUGHT | % OF RECORD |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Amberjack | MARGIE HOFFMAN | 33 | 2010 | | | | 0.00% |
| | Cobia | JOANNE LANDAKER | 50 | 2008 | Rose Anne McCaffrey | 43.5 | 06/12/12 | 87.00% |
| | Grouper | MARGIE HOFFMAN | 31 | 2006 | Rose Anne McCaffrey | 30.5 | 10/18/12 | 98.39% |
| | | BEV RUCKER | 31 | 2008 | | | | 0.00% |
| | King Mackerel | MARGIE HOFFMAN | 37 | 2007 | | | | 0.00% |
| | Redfish | DONNIE BRENNAN | 38 | 2008 | Pam Solinger | 33.5 | 06/06/12 | 88.16% |
| | | MISSY BECKER | 38 | 2008 | | | | 0.00% |
| | Sea trout | JOANNE LANDAKER | 26.5 | 2011 | Missy Becker | 24.5 | 06/03/12 | 92.45% |
| | Snook | MISSY BECKER | 41 | 2006 | Karen Udvari | 36.0 | 10/16/12 | 87.80% |
| | Spanish Mackerel | MISSY BECKER | 28 | 2007 | Missy Becker | 22.0 | 04/28/12 | 78.57% |

*PGIFC MEN'S and WOMEN'S records are based on eight of the "measured" points scoring fish in the Ladder of Achievement.

ISLES TROPHY RACE LEADERS FOR 2012

MEN

Jim Qurollo

WOMEN

Rose Anne McCaffrey

GOOD THINGS SOMEBODY SAID

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.

- Victor Borge

Member Catches



This impressive photo of Bob Busler with his Master Angler Tournament new first place 36-inch redfish really needed its own page in the Newsletter!

Member Catches



Bill Guenther, Rich Brennan, Jim Hoffman and Bill Bonham with what looks like another red grouper limit.



Joannell Dyrstad and a 21-inch tarpon.



Bill Guenther and his 27-inch red grouper caught while fishing from Jim Hoffman's boat.

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Member Catches



It really looks like Jim Hoffman should start his own fishing charter business!



Jim Hoffman and a 29-inch red grouper.



Joe Udvari and a "barely legal" 27-inch redfish.



John Morehouse and a great eating 13-inch sheepshead. They're becoming more plentiful in the Harbor now.



Here's Rich Brennan with another red grouper caught in November, a 28.5-inch grouper sandwich special.



Marv Dyrstad with a baby tarpon. This one was 12-inches, and I'll bet it was fun to catch.

Member Catches



See, Bill Guenther can catch more than fat red groupers. This is a grunt.



Here's Joannell Dyrstad again. This time with a 21-inch redfish to go along with her 21-in tarpon.



And Marv Dyrstad beat out Joannell's redfish with this 24-inch red, but couldn't match her tarpon.



Fred Benson with the only cobia photo submitted this month, a nice 33.5-inches-to-the-fork keeper.



Bill Bonham with a pretty 29-inch red grouper. Only an inch shorter than his 3rd place fish of the month winner.

Member Catches



Even our Fishing Events Director gets to fish once in a while. Here's John Wolfinger with a 25-inch gag grouper.



Looks like Margie Hoffman can do more than win prize drawings. Out fished Jim on this trip with three red groupers to 27-inches.



Joe Udvari with a fairly rare catch for this area, a 14-inch black sea bass.



...and another red from Joannell Dyrstad, this one 23-inches.



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Member Catches



Joe Udvari with a pair of 29-inch red groupers caught from Jim Hoffman's boat the "Island Sun."



John Solinger and a 19-inch gag grouper. Looks like this one was caught in-shore.



Jim Qurollo with another "in-shore" caught gag of 22-inches.



George Remick with a nice 22-inch seatrout. Expect to see more of these in the next few months.

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PUMP OUTS
FUEL DOCK OPEN DAILY

CLEAN MARINA

VALVTECT
MARINE FUEL

Charlotte Harbor Newcomer Fishing Guidance from a Rookie

by Joe Udvari

INTRODUCTION

I was recently fishing with our club's newsletter editor Jim Qurollo and he suggested I write another article. Getting more of our experienced anglers in the club to put their knowledge down on paper to help out the newbies has been a challenge for the Board. I'm sure it's not because they don't have pens, paper or PCs, but instead because they're always busy fishing to perpetually hone their skills. Can't hardly blame them with paradise all around us. So I thought that by taking a crack at documenting what I (a rookie) learned from my first year of fishing here might be of some use to newcomers. This article might enrage our experts sufficiently enough to drop their gear for a bit and start writing to: 1) set me straight on what really works and is useful; and 2) provide expert advice on any number of relevant topics for both newcomers to our club and those of us in need of more guidance to improve our productivity on the water (catching instead of just fishing).

I made an outline of key fishing/boating things I wanted to know when I first arrived in PGI. The list is not all inclusive and my knowledge is still limited in many areas. That's my disclaimer, so proceed at your own risk using common sense with safety instead of just fun at the forefront. There are no guarantees expressed or implied herein, but it's a stab at what you may find useful in coming up the learning curve of saltwater fishing in our area a bit quicker than I did.

OVERVIEW

Lots of us have fished freshwater, or have saltwater fishing experience from elsewhere. Some of this experience is transferable, but much is not. The same can be said for the gear we already own, but instead of running out and getting all new stuff, you may wish to use what you have for a while and supplement it as your experience and interest progresses. Just make sure you gently rinse it with fresh water after every use and thoroughly clean and lubricate it at least twice a year. Also minimize the gear stored on your boat, since the corrosive marine environment will quickly rust most metals and the

predominantly hot and humid weather will colonize your toys with fuzzy mold and/or mildew.

The focus of this guidance is aimed at fishing Charlotte Harbor (the Harbor) and its readily accessible tidal tributaries from a power boat. There are numerous wading, kayak, pier and shore fishing opportunities as well, and freshwater lakes, ponds and streams. These and offshore fishing in the Gulf of Mexico could be the subject of future articles in our newsletter (hint-hint).

1. Objective

First you need to define your objective and identify what's important to you. Simply stated, mine is to have fun by catching many species in and around the Harbor, and then letting them go. I'm not particularly looking for table fare, but mostly fish for the sport. I fall into the 90% fishing/10% pleasure boating category. My experience until last year was mostly fresh water fishing for bass, pike, walleye and musky. I occasionally fished saltwater for bluefish, stripers, sea bass, sailfish and salmon on charter boats and head boats. Therefore, I had amassed a variety of gear ranging from ultra-light spinning gear to heavier rods equipped with bait casting reels, with a few fly rods in the mix (don't tell my wife about all of this hardware). I left my 17 foot aluminum 'bass tracker' in storage up north since I believed it was not a good match for the Harbor (I was right). Besides, it gives me an excuse to make an annual northerly trip to check on my boat and chase Muskies.

So I needed a boat down here, and lots of knowledge as to where and when to fish, what to use, and of course, a fishing license. Carefully check out the Florida Saltwater Recreational Fishing Regulations which are published biannually by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and updated/revised periodically on their website. Do this frequently, especially if you keep fish, since changes to limits and open seasons sometimes occur for no apparent reason.

2. Boats

Type and Motor - When I first inquired, I was half-jokingly told I needed 3 types of boats to thoroughly

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

fish this area; a flats boat, a bay boat and a deep V offshore boat. I believe the most common fishing boats in the Isles are 20 to 24 foot bay boats, since they let you target all of the species most of the time throughout the year (I have no statistics to prove this). After lots of research and consultation (i.e., bargaining and pleading with my wife), I picked a new 22 foot bay boat with an 8.5 foot beam and a draft of about a foot. My understanding is that boats drafting more than 14" severely limit one's opportunity to fish the flats. It is also equipped with a jack plate, trim tabs, shallow water anchor, trolling motor, global positioning unit (GPS)/charting device and VHF/DSC radio. This allows me to get into and out of shallow water (i.e., on the flats or up the river) most of the time (I keep a paddle onboard just in case), get a reasonably comfortable and dry ride in the usually somewhat choppy Harbor, and in the future, hopefully get a little bit offshore when the weather allows. Before I wrote the check for my boat, I spoke with a well respected local guide who fishes out of a 24' boat of the same make and hull design as mine (Skeeter ZX22Bay). His boat performance description was spot on, including his comment that when the wind is blowing more than 20 mph, it's best to stay home.

Although I was leaning towards a 4 stroke 150 horsepower (hp) outboard since I didn't have a major yearning for speed, I wound up with a 4-stroke Yamaha 200 hp V-6 SHO instead, and am glad I did. I had read online that some boat owners regretted being underpowered, by saving a little money up front. Although a bit less fuel efficient (i.e., about 3+ vs. 4+ miles per gallon), the extra power gets me on plane quickly in shallow water when I'm carrying a heavy load and lets me outrun bad weather more often. With my 4-blade 14.25x17 Stiletto Bay Pro III prop, I get on plane in about 3 seconds and achieve a top speed of 50 mph at 5300 rpm. I typically cruise at 37-40 mph.

I stress that I wanted mostly an inshore fishing boat, and not so much a sightseeing boat for visitors. Although I got a Bimini top for the latter use, I keep it off the boat when fishing since I find it's mostly in the way. A T-top would be nice for some shade/shelter, extra storage and the mounting of spreader lights/antennas, but I've become accustomed to unobstructed casting. For more information on selecting boats, refer to an archived article on our club's

website.

Launching and Storage - I'm fortunate to live on a canal with a boat lift so that's where my boat rests. Very few in PGI keep their boat in the garage, although that is an option, and launch for free at Ponce de Leon Park or Laishley Marina. Several storage yards exist in or near Punta Gorda for storing boats and/or boat trailers. Unused docks and vacant lifts at private residences in PGI represent other options for boat storage.

Fueling and Maintenance - It was recommended to me to use 90 octane non-ethanol (i.e., Rec 90 fuel) gasoline, although Yamaha says I can use unleaded 87 octane regular gas with no more than 10% ethanol. Because of reports I read and stories I heard of problems with fuel tanks, fuel lines and injectors when using gas containing ethanol, I opted to run only non-ethanol gas. The affinity of ethanol gas to attracting moisture in the fuel tank and possible phase separation, if not properly treated with additives, led me to this decision. Mixing of ethanol and non-ethanol gas is also never recommended by mechanics with whom I spoke. I also understand that due to its higher energy content, the higher cost of Rec 90 fuel may be somewhat offset by slightly better mileage performance compared to 87 octane regular gasoline treated with additives. I'm also no expert on this, so do your homework and decide for yourself what's best for your boat and wallet, since there seems to be no consensus on this subject in the boating community.

Although the marinas on Alligator Creek, at Fishermen's Village, Laishley Park and Burnt Store sell non-ethanol gasoline, I prefer to haul my gas from land based gas stations in Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte for cost savings of about 10 to 20%. Since I typically use less than 18 gallons per trip, it's not a big hassle for me to refill my tank. Another option for bulk sales includes pumper truck delivery to one's home.

Some maintenance service is available on the water at one's home, obviating the need for a trailer to bring the boat to the shop. Alternatively, service shops can pick up your boat from a marina if you don't have a trailer.

Canal Etiquette and Rules - Operate your boat at

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

idle speed to keep your wake to a minimum, which usually is 900 to 1200 rpm, depending on the boat and tidal flow. Don't worry, people will come running out of their homes to let you know when you're 'speeding'. Read the warning signs leading into the canals, since idle speed begins at differing distances from shore at various entrances. For example, at Bass Inlet you can be on plane until the last channel marker, whereas at Ponce Inlet you must idle on in from the first channel marker. Also watch out for unattended fishing lines hanging off docks in the canals. Although not allowed, it happens occasionally. Don't cast net for bait in the canals, and don't fish off other people's snook lights. I understand this used to be forbidden, but is now legal (albeit undesired by owners of the lights).

3. Harbor Features

Charlotte Harbor covers an area of about 270 square miles with many hundreds of miles of shoreline. Its average depth is likely less than 8 feet, and lots of fishing occurs in 3 feet or less of water, plus or minus 2 feet for tidal influence. Depending on wind direction, water can also be pushed out of or into shallow areas, so be cognizant of the actual vs. reported water depth in a given area. So if you want to fish from your boat inside the bars on the flats, around the islands (i.e., keys), or in feeder streams for snook, redfish, seatrout, snapper and a number of other fish, you need to have the ability to get shallow. You must propel your boat quietly with a push pole or trolling motor in shallow water so as not to spook weary fish or damage sea grasses. Much of the Harbor is designated by Florida as Aquatic Preserves, for the protection and preservation of this valuable natural resource.

Fortunately, much of the Harbor bottom is sandy, so damage to your hull or outboard is most often avoided if you get too shallow and run aground. However, there are oyster bars which are not as forgiving. Therefore, you need a good chart and GPS, and proceed with caution until you have a feel (no pun intended) for the area.

Outside the sandbars flanking most of the Harbor shoreline, there are several deep holes, as well as a few artificial reefs. All of these areas outside the sandbars are readily fishable from deeper draft boats. Ladyfish, snapper, grouper, Spanish mackerel, cobia, shark and tarpon are some of the species that

can be caught at these locations. Water depths up to 22 feet occur in these areas, and depths up to about 50 feet occur in Boca Grande Pass. Several other species of fish can be caught in the Harbor, which always makes it exiting when headed out for a trip. In addition to fish, enjoy the bountiful wildlife including but not limited to porpoises, sea turtles, bald eagles, ospreys, pelicans, alligators and manatees. When boating in shallow water, always watch out for manatees, and report any boat strikes or injured manatees to FWC. When boating above the Route 41 bridge, a manatee zone extends 1000 feet from shore within which idle speed is required.

4. Resources

As mentioned above, a good chart and GPS is essential for aiding in the safe navigation of the Harbor. I rely mainly on 3 charts made by Waterproof Charts, Inc.: #01E (Charlotte Harbor and Pine Island Sound); #04E (Peace River/Myakka River); and #01F (Charlotte Harbor/Lemon Bay). Because stuff happens, I also recommend having a membership with a towing service for those days when you're distracted or a bit too aggressive and get grounded, or just plain break down.

Boat U.S. and Sea Tow both cover the area adequately, and offer an extra month of coverage for a yearly membership to fishing club members. The membership fee is well worth it, since without it, you could spend ten times the annual fee for one emergency assistance call (that's what my friends tell me anyway). As the saying goes, you haven't fished the Harbor until you've run aground, since bars and mounds continually shift with severe storms. Therefore, since it's a "when" and not "if" situation, I usually fish with family members or good friends, so when I do get stuck, they can get out and push and save me the embarrassment of hailing SeaTow.

There are four free publications available at the bait and tackle shops around town that I regularly peruse for information. They provide interesting and mostly timely information on locations, equipment, techniques and meteorological data, and are written by local guides or experts in their respective fields. These are Waterline (a weekly section of the Sun newspaper), and 3 monthlies: Water Life for Charlotte Harbor and Lemon Bay (published by the Charlotte Harbor Reef Association); Coastal Angler Magazine - Fort Myers Edition; and Onshore-

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)
Offshore Magazine.

Very detailed and specific information can be obtained from the staff of local bait and tackle shops such as Fishin' Frank's, Laishley Marine and Rio Villa Bait and Tackle. Fishin' Frank's in Port Charlotte also maintains a detailed website listing numerous fishing spots and select annotated maps and aerial photographs, recent catch reports and all around fishing tips. They also offer a monthly free seminar that is very well attended, especially by newcomers to the area. I've found these seminars to be extremely helpful, as well as the staff's willingness to offer one-on-one consultation needed for catching a particular species.

I also rely on several smart phone Apps for tidal, weather and overall fishing efficiency data. There are many available, and some are free. In addition, I take several other FWC resources on boating and fish identification with me. These are: The Florida Boater's Guide (a handbook of boating laws and responsibilities including an abridged fish ID guide); Fishing Lines (an angler's guide to Florida's marine resources and fisheries including great color photos of numerous species); and A Boating and Angling Guide to Charlotte Harbor (a waterproof map of the Harbor with fishing and boating annotations and listings of important phone numbers, boat ramps, marinas, and reef coordinates).

Members of the club and club activities have helped me immensely in learning about fishing Charlotte Harbor. Most will share their knowledge willingly, except for perhaps their last resort go-to honey holes. You better have something of great value to offer up in trade to get that kind of information. Getting an opportunity to fish with the club's gurus on your boat or theirs is even better, so you can actually see them in action. Just be willing to split their expenses and/or offer up some other incentive to make this happen (perhaps an all expense paid Caribbean cruise might work).

Guest speakers mostly consisting of local guides and charter boat captains also provide useful tips during our monthly meetings, as do conversations with all members at these meetings and at the Friday breakfast.

The Master Anglers of our club (teal shirted guys and gals) really know their stuff, and have proven themselves by catching at least 23 species and collecting at least 2000 points by catching quality/trophy fish during their Ladder of Achievement process. However, there are many other members who also know their stuff, but for various reasons (e.g., don't take pictures of their catch, forget to submit pictures to the club, etc.) don't yet have that title. What I'm saying is there are lots of people in the club that can be of help. You just have to reach out to them.

5. Fishing

If you're still reading, here's the fun part. You know of course that this could become a book or a 6 week seminar session. I actually took such a course at our civic center taught by Captain Ralph Allen who runs the Kingfisher sightseeing and charter fleet at Fishermen's Village, and is a regular author of articles in Waterline. Well worth the \$40, and highly recommended. So it goes without saying, that I need to hit the highlights and be cryptic to get all this in our newsletter.

Gear - All around, I believe the most popular combo is a 7 foot spinning rod (medium to heavy power with a fast action tip), paired with a 3000 to 4000 series spinning reel, spooled with 15 to 20 pound test monofilament (mono) or braided line. This is typically tipped with a 3 foot long 25 to 40 pound test fluorocarbon or mono leader depending on where you fish (lighter on the flats and heavier in the mangroves or barnacle encrusted piers and pilings). Terminal tackle is kept to a minimum. Although our water is stained with tannic acid from decomposing vegetation, it is mostly clear and therefore most fish are tackle shy. Obviously, depending on the species you're after and the challenge you want, you can go with 'lighter' or 'heavier' combos and line, but the above recommendation will work well for many of the fish in the Harbor (e.g., redfish, snook, trout, juvenile tarpon, cobia, tripletail, flounder, jacks, pompano, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, ladyfish, catfish, and smaller rays and shark). These combos will allow you to cast both artificial lures and live bait. Not many people use bait casting rods and reels here. Although I do use them for improved casting accuracy when I throw lures, they are not that useful for casting live bait, however.

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

For larger tarpon, shark and other bigger fish, heavier gear is typically used, with longer and heavier test leaders (60 to 100 pound test) and also steel leaders for those large toothy predators. Eight foot heavy power fast action spinning rods with 8000 to 9000 series spinning reels are typically used, as well as conventional level wind or bait casting reels spooled with 50 to 80 pound test line. This is primarily needed to more quickly land these larger fish in a timely manner without exhausting them in the usually warm water, thereby increasing their survival rate upon release.

Sometimes swivels are needed to minimize line twist, especially when fishing with bait in fast moving water. Barrel swivels between the line and leader material work well here, and also provide a stop for egg sinkers when weight is needed to reach the desired depth in the deeper holes or next to big bridge piers. Snap swivels are generally not used to attach lures or hooks to the leader. Most often loop knots are used for this purpose (refer to an archived article on our club's website for tying a loop knot).

Other knots most commonly used for attaching lures are the improved or double clinch knot. A uni to uni knot or triple surgeon's knot are widely used to attach the mono or fluorocarbon leader to the fishing line, and a haywire twist is useful for attaching single strand wire leader material to barrel swivels and hooks. Multi-strand wire leader material is mostly attached to hooks and swivels with crimps.

Many lures are available on the market, and most are better at catching anglers than fish. Believe me, I know from personal experience. In my opinion, only a handful are needed for catching fish in a variety of conditions:

Topwater lure such as a Rapala Skitter Walk or Heddon Zara Spook

Floating or suspending hard or soft twitch bait such as a MirrOlure MirrOdine, Sabile Stick Shad or D.O.A. shrimp

Lipped crank bait such as a Rapala X-Rap or Maverick

Gold or silver spoon such as a Johnson Sprite or Red King

Small assortment of soft scented plastics such as D.O.A. jerk baits, MirrOlure Lil John or

Berkley Gulp! baits, attached to a 1/8 to 1/4 ounce jig head or rigged weed less on a 4/0 to 5/0 hook (weighted or un-weighted).

Lure sizes from 3 to 5 inches work well, and dark and light color patterns are best for dark and bright conditions, respectively. My favorite lure colors are black before and after sunrise, and chartreuse during the day.

If you plan on catching whitebait or mullet yourself, you also need a cast net and chum. I once again refer you to the club's website of archived articles for detailed information on this.

Finally you need some tools for landing and handling the fish to minimize hurting the fish and yourself. I was in the emergency room in less than a month of fishing here, by trying to unhook a puny little and squiggly ladyfish from my twitch bait without proper tools; a \$750 mistake. A landing net, a Boga or other lip grabbing tool, a long handled pair of needle nose pliers (or two), a hook removal tool, wire/hook cutters, a knife, scissors, gloves, a tape measure, a camera, a first aid kit and a flashlight. If you go offshore, you also need a venting tool. Trust me, I now use most of these tools regularly, except perhaps the tape measure and camera.

Bait - When bait fishing with live shrimp, white bait (i.e., a variety of minnows such as threadfins, greenbacks and sardines), crabs, small non-game fish species (i.e., pinfish, sand trout, finger mullet, etc.) and cut bait, you need an assortment of hook sizes and styles. Be careful not to use live or cut fish for bait that have FWC size and creel limits since it's illegal. Refer to the archived 'Cut Bait Fishing' article on our club's website for more information.

The key is matching the hook size to the bait size and fish you're after, and deciding if you want to set the hook (J hook or Kahle style), or not (Circle hook or Kahle style). When fishing for table fare classified as reef fish, you are required to use circle hooks to greatly minimize gut hooking and killing fish that don't meet the size limits. I mostly use number 1 through 4/0 hooks for inshore fishing. For bigger fish like Tarpon and Shark, I typically use hook sizes up to 8/0, especially when using live 8" plus size ladyfish, finger mullet, jacks or catfish, or just

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big chunks of cut bait (refer to the club's website for an archived article on shark fishing). You also need a variety of split shot weights and bobbers or poppers to compliment your style of bait fishing. While free lining bait is common, fishing at controlled depths in the water column can sometimes be more productive. Frozen bait can be bought year round, while live shrimp are more readily available during the cooler weather months and white bait is more readily catchable in the harbor during warm weather months.

When, Where and How - This is the toughest nut to crack, but even visually impaired squirrels find a nut every now and then. Tide probably trumps everything, with moving water being critically important to trigger most fish into feeding or attracting them to you via a chum slick or plume. Add a bit of wind blowing in the opposing direction, and it can get quite difficult to properly present your offering. But if you're not out there with a line in the water, you've got no chance at all. So do your best and hope some luck is also on your side.

Sunup and sunset are also good times to fish, especially when it coincides with good tides and sufficient water depth where you want to fish. Night fishing at bridge piers and abutments can also be productive since these represent good ambush points, especially during full and new moon phases. Solunar tables and the Fishing Calendar App by SIS Software can help you figure out the most productive fishing days and times, and work fairly well. But be careful if you're out at dark, since crab pots often litter the Harbor and some boats anchor off without appropriate lighting (navigational hazards to say the least).

At high tide and/or sunny weather, fish tend to hide among the Mangrove roots under overhanging branches, so you have to draw them out with chum or cast into deep cover. That's when heavier line and leaders are needed to either get unstuck or reel out the hooked fish without breaking off. As the tide moves out, so do the fish. That's when the potholes and troughs on the flats can be your best bet. Potholes are lighter colored circular shaped features of several feet to tens of yards in diameter, that are a little deeper than the surrounding generally darker grassy covered bottom. Remember, since you're

fishing in shallow water, a 6 inch depression may represent about 20% of the total water column, which is a substantial drop. Its effect on holding fish is much greater than a 6" drop in a 30 foot deep northern lake bottom.

As the tide moves out further, so should you, unless you want to make your soon to be ex-friend get out and push or begrudgingly call Sea Tow (if they can even get to you). During lower tides, fish outside the bars, the reefs, the deep holes or at main channel markers. If you're lonely and want company, you can always fish Marker 6, since one of our die-hard fishing members Mike Gilger is usually camped out there catching all sorts of fish.

When all else fails and you just can't find a place to get away from a nasty chop and howling wind, try the PGI canals, especially those directly off the Harbor, or the perimeter (rim) canal. Other spots in the Harbor for targeting certain species are identified on Chart #01F referenced earlier, and on Fishin' Frank's website.

Casting lures and drifting or soaking bait are generally effective methods for catching most species. Although trolling is another technique, it is more commonly used offshore and around reefs. For casting, retrieval speed is generally regarded as the most important factor. Many articles talk about slowing it down, especially during colder and hotter water temperatures. I've heard that below 70 degrees Fahrenheit, go very slow. Shrimp is an especially good live bait during colder water temperatures. Above 80 degrees, also go slow. Soaking cut bait is a good choice when fish are lethargic due to high water temperatures. In between, use a faster lure retrieval rate and/or cadence, or bait fish, since your quarry is more likely to be active and ready to chase down your offering.

CONCLUSION

There's a lot to learn in adapting your skills to fishing the Harbor, but it can be great fun and a rewarding experience. Give it time and make wise use of all available resources, and help support the local shops that provide us with valuable fishing information on a continuing basis. In addition to catching more fish, you'll make new friends and better appreciate living in PGI. Good luck, stay safe and welcome to the club.

Members Fishing Together and Sharing Expenses

(Club members willing to take other members fishing on their boat)

IN-SHORE:

John Gettinger
941.505.8186
22' CC

Mike Gilger
610.996.5375
22.5' CC

Hans Gross
973.222.2211
22' CC

Bob Lunsden
706.817.0703
19' CC Bay Boat

Jim Quorllo
941.347.8467
22' CC Bay Boat

OFF-SHORE:

Hans Gross
973.222.2211
22' CC

Jim Hoffman
941.575.7867
33' Rampage
Twin Diesels—Stand-up Head

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PGI NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

The Punta Gorda Isles Neighborhood "Marine" Watch program
Is looking for a few good men and/or women.



YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE MARINE WATCH PROGRAM IS ONLY 2-HOURS EACH MONTH, AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CHOOSE FROM A SPREAD OF DAYS TO PERFORM YOUR PATROL. I WILL GO OUT WITH YOU ON YOUR INITIAL PATROL. YOU CAN ALSO ACT AS "CREW" DURING ANY OTHER MEMBERS PATROL.

If you are interested in volunteering a couple hours each month to this worthwhile program, contact: **Bill Guenther** — Neighborhood Marine Watch program coordinator — Home Phone: 941.505.5099 Cell Phone: 941.661.9702, or email at: radioman3029@comcast.net

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