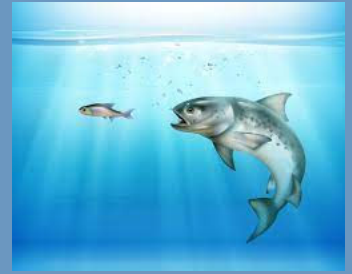


# FROM THE HELM

THE **PGI FISHING CLUB** IS A PART OF THE  
PUNTA GORDA ISLES CIVIC ASSOCIATION (PGICA)

MARCH 2025



By FRED DE MELLA

Things are about to heat up! Spring is in the air and fishing is on our minds!

This time of year anglers can look forward to targeting many different species. Whether it's in the back water flats, the neighborhood canals, the bars or deep holes of Charlotte Harbor, near shore reefs or off shore deep in the Gulf there should be action.

If you are a fisherman, you have to be excited and if you're not a fisherman but want to become one check out the PGI Fishing Club.

We have guys and gals who are experienced in all manners of fishing in this area. By joining, you not only gain access to the expertise of many anglers, but can enjoy the fun and camaraderie of fishing. Many members have boats to get you there and the knowledge to help target species to make your angling experience great.

Becoming a FC member automatically enters you into the Ladder of Achievement. This is a prescribed goal to catch the many different species available in the area along with points for notable size fish. It is a fun way to track your development towards the goal of Grand Master Angler.

PGI fishermen do not live by fishing alone. We have monthly meetings to explore various topics and fishing news. Fish of the month contest is a fun way to target species you may not always fish for and prizes are awarded. There are friendly fishing contests with prizes for designated catches. We also have special events like Holiday parties, picnics, weekly happy hours and other fun gatherings.

We meet the second Tuesday of the month (except July and December) at the PGI Civic Association at 18:00; all are welcome to attend a meeting. You may also choose to attend our weekly happy hour, currently at The Ice House on Wednesdays at 17:00 to see what this club is all about.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday February 11, at 6:00 p.m., Followed by social time with drinks and snacks.**

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# FISHING REPORT For FEBRUARY

By Fred DE MELLA

## Offshore:

Once the wind abated, February was a good Red Grouper month. Multi angler limits were not uncommon with a good quality fish showing up. Most Red Grouper were caught in 100 to 150 feet and beyond; near shore waters are not producing keeper-size fish. Not sure if this is all due to water quality, but this trend has been continuing over the last few years. The lack of fish near shore is likely a combination of factors including over-harvest, fishing pressure and pollution.

**Grouper** were caught on a variety of baits and tactics. Live bait, cut bait, and squid all produced. Many nice fish were tricked by vertical and slow pitch jigs. Remember to have a descending plan. The best method is to actually descend the fish using one of descending devices. By law, you must have this equipment on board and use it.

In addition, we had some good **Snapper** reports although lately these fish seem to be moving closer to shore. Lets hope they don't succumb to the red tide. **Lane, Mangrove** (grey) and **Vermillion** showed in decent numbers. Some **Muttons** and **Red Snapper** were even caught in relatively shallow water. Remember these fish also experience barotrauma and therefor need special handling when released.

*(Continued, next page)*

**Barotrauma** is a pressure-related injury that occurs in fish when they are brought from deep water up to the surface. To help you identify the signs of barotrauma remember B.I.P.S.: Bloated belly, Intestines extruding, Popeye and Stomach protruding out of the mouth. If your fish displays one or more of these symptoms, it is suffering from barotrauma and needs assistance to get back down to proper depth to survive another day.

Florida requires a descending device and/or venting tool be rigged and ready for use when fishing for reef fish from a vessel in state waters (within 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf). <https://myfwc.com/news/all-news/barotrauma-723/>



# FISHING REPORT For FEBRUARY

## Inshore:

Poor water quality has plagued the Charlotte Harbor recently. The fishing has been sub-par. Even the normally cooperative **Spotted Sea Trout** have not been caught in great numbers. The lack of healthy sea grass is evident leaving a shortage of habitat for these fish.

**Sheepshead** made a decent showing earlier in the year in the PGI canal system. These fish can be caught on a variety of crustaceans. Shrimp is the easiest and most ubiquitous bait, but red tide has reduced the availability lately. Frozen shrimp will work though. Additionally, clams, mussels, oysters and crabs will work well for these Prisoners. Fiddler crabs are also an excellent bait for sheep.

Small baits are preferred as these fish are masters at polishing hooks. Remember, set the hook before you feel the bite; once you feel the bite, it's too late!



**Black Drum** are starting to show up in decent numbers. They are great for a good pull close to home. Drum will fall for most any natural bait although crabs tend to be a favorite of most anglers. Don't rule out using clams or other crustaceans as these baits can also be very effective. Drum will also hit artificials with a paddle tail being the lure of choice. Although good to eat, the larger ones tend to have parasites. Catch and release is the norm for these fish. Be prepared with the camera to allow for a quick release of these big fish.





# FEBRUARY 2025 FISHING TOURNAMENT

WE HAD A TWO-SPECIES TOURNAMENT AT THE END OF FEBRUARY!

## ***JACK CREVALLE AND SHEEPSHEAD***

TOURNAMENT DATES WERE FEBRUARY 20TH THROUGH THE 24TH. THERE WERE THREE CLASSES: MEN, WOMEN, AND NEW MEMBERS SINCE 6/23

### **WE WILL AWARD:**

**1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes in each class**

RESULTS TO BE REVEALED AT THE MARCH FISHING CLUB MEETING.

SEE YOU THERE!

TOURNAMENT EVENT COORDINATOR: GREG WIDNEY



# FISH of the MONTH

**JANUARY: SHEEPSHEAD**



**FEBRUARY: GROUPER**



**MARCH: SPANISH MACKEREL**



**APRIL: SNOOK**



**MAY: COBIA**



**JUNE: JACK CREVALLE**



**JULY: SHARK**



**AUGUST: TARPON**



**SEPTEMBER: BLACK DRUM**



**OCTOBER: REDFISH**



**NOVEMBER: MANGROVE SNAPPER**



**DECEMBER: SPOTTED SEA TROUT**



Fine Print: See "Fish of the Month Contest Rules" here: <http://pqifishingclub.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Fish-of-the-Month-Contest-Rules-Rev-7-021220.pdf>

# Fish of the Month For MARCH

## *Location, Description, Tips, Tackle and Bait*

### SPANISH MACKEREL



**Identification:** Greenish back with silver sides and belly; yellow/olive green spots on the sides; forked tail. They have very sharp triangular teeth.

**Location:** Spanish Mackerel move into our area around March as the water temperatures warm. They can be found nearshore, on the beaches, and in the harbor. When targeting them keep an eye out for bait being chased or birds diving. In the harbor they can be found in many locations; Cape Haze, Cape Haze reef, Danger reef, the shoals, and the West Wall. They move into the river as water temperature rises and salinity changes; Skating Rink, Ponce, Grassy Point.

**Technique:** Spanish Mackerel are fast aggressive feeders, found in schools, and respond well to trolling. When offshore use of a diving planer or a heavy spoon at a trolling speed between 4.5 – 7 mph. Watch for twisting of the line when trolling at higher speeds; sometimes barrel swivels help, sometimes they don't. Inshore troll a bit slower ~4.3 – 5.5 mph in 4' – 6' of water. Always vary the trolling speed; especially if you think you are on the fish and not getting any bites. Casting at a school with a fast retrieve can also achieve good results once the school is located. They have also been caught in the deep holes.

**Gear:** Light spinning gear is ideal; something you would use for Snapper or Sheepshead. A heavier leader or metal leader is helpful based on their sharp teeth. Often times a metal leader will result in fewer bites. Keep many lures in you tackle box. Use various spoons (gold, silver, and multi colored), Got Cha plugs, or any trolling lure. Soft plastics also work, but likely won't hold up well due to their sharp teeth. Use of inexpensive lures is a common practice.

Spanish Mackerel are measured to the fork; make note in any fish submittals the measurement is to the fork.

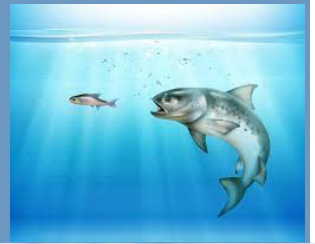
**Regulations for Gulf Waters**  
**Minimum Size Limit:** 12" fork length  
**Daily Bag Limit:** 15 per harvester  
**Season:** Open year-round

(Copied from February 2024)



## FEBRUARY RESULTS

# Club & Individual Fishing Statistics



### REPORTED CATCHES as of 2/28/2025 and FISH OF THE MONTH (FOM) RESULTS

36 total fish turned in (3200 points) by 17 different anglers

#### FOM (GROUPER)

##### Women

1st - Donna Sullivan, 31.0"

2nd - NONE

3rd - NONE

2

##### Men

1st - Fred De Mella, 30.0"

2nd - Jeff Barnhart , 29.5"

3rd- Mark Cummins, 28.0"

TIE - Greg Widney, 28.0"

#### Interesting Tidbits

Red Grouper continued to cooperate in February with 25% of our reported catches being that species up to a respectable 30" size caught by Fred De Mella. Seatrout are also expected catches this time of year and did not disappoint accounting for another 25% of our reported catches for the month including Randy Douet's 21" beauty. Bobby Bretts and Mark Dillman caught a pair of nice sized 28" redfish and Donna Sullivan nailed a 36" snook. Jack Hinnenthal with his 19.5" sheepshead was one of four of those species reported as well. Two new members, Shep Johnson and Kim Selzer earned their Club Hats and Shep also earned his Bronze Pin at the same time. Seven of our GMA anglers are already logging points toward their next GMA Star which requires 2000 points in a calendar year including Jeff Barnhart who already has 700 points thanks to some nice grouper and a 10' shark recently reported. For now, the red tide reported offshore near Sanibel earlier in the month has not interfered with our fishing. Let's hope it stays that way!

#### Achievement Categories

##### Club Hat

Shep Johnson, Kim Selzer

##### Silver Pin

None

##### Snook Pin

None

##### Tarpon Pin

None

##### GMA Star

None

##### Bronze Pin

Shep Johnson

##### Gold Pin

None

##### Redfish Pin

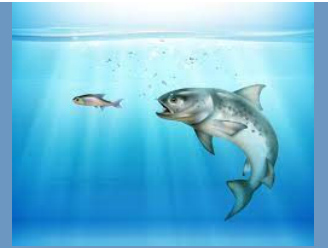
None

##### GMA

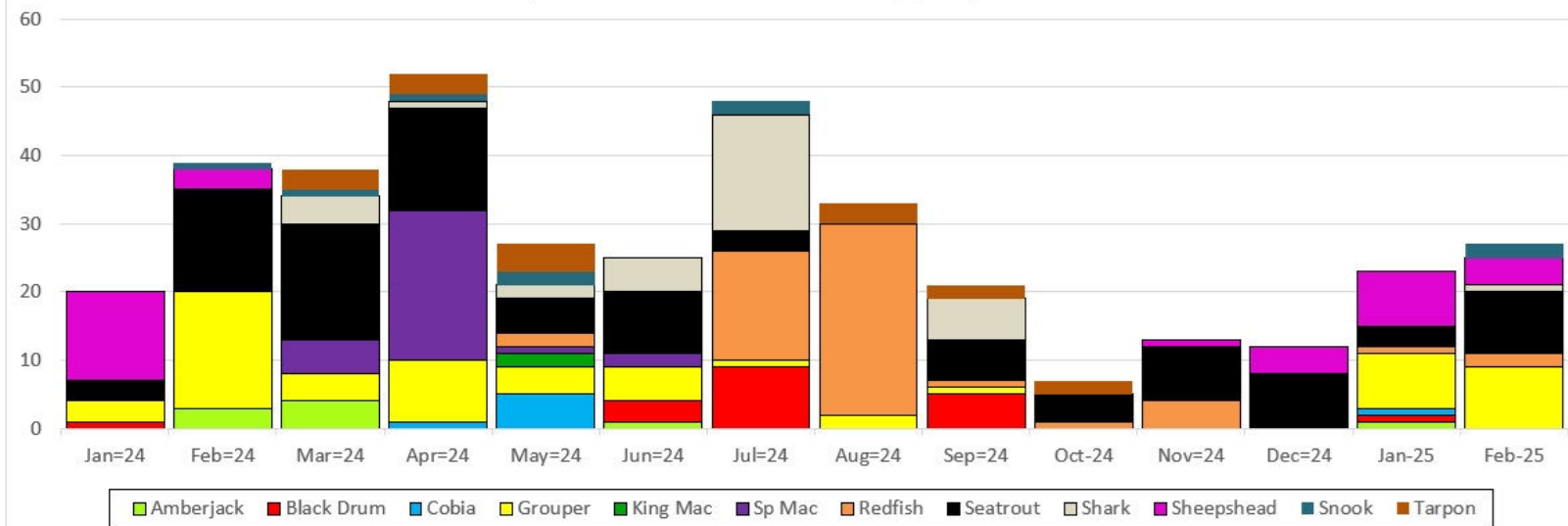
None

**ACHIEVEMENTS!**

# WHAT'S BITE'N



**14 Month Catch History**  
(Number of Fish Recorded Each Month by Species)



## Recorder's Data

### Monthly Performance

	December	January	February	
Anglers	10	18	17	↓
LOA Awards	2	0	3	↑
Fish Recorded	15	27	36	↑
Points Recorded	1400	2,000	3,200	↑

# TROPHY RACE (Men)

OVERALL CLUB RECORD	SPECIES NAME	MEMBER NAME	RECORD LENGTH in INCH-ES	DATE CAUGHT	MEMBER NAME	2025 LENGTH in INCH-ES	DATE CAUGHT	% OF RECORD
X	Amber Jack	Joe Udvari	53.5	2019	Fred De Mella	30.0	1/29/25	56.1%
	Black Drum	Mike White	51.5	2019	Mike Dougherty	15.5	1/28/25	30.1%
X	Cobia	Rich Kale	66.0	2022	Allen Wade	32.0	1/16/25	48.5%
X	Grouper	Tom Hamilton	39.0	2003	Jim Kunard	31.0	1/29/25	79.5%
X	King Mackerel	John MacLeman	52.0	2012				0.0%
X	Redfish	Mike White	47.0	2020	Bobby Bretts Mark Dillman	28.0	2/18/25 2/18/25	59.6%
X	Seatrout	Rich Brennan Aaron Wagner	29.0 29.0	2009 2012	Carl Cucco	22.0	1/27/25	75.9%
X	Sheeps-head	Mike White	26.0	2022	Jim Gregory Carl Leicher	19.0	1/28/25 1/29/25	73.1%
X	Snook	Mike White	49.0	2023	Tim Locke	23.0	2/12/25	46.9%
X	Spanish Mackerel	Carl Leicher	30.0	2012				0.0%

**This Year's Leaders in BLUE**

★★ Denotes New Club Record

New Entries This Month are in RED



# TROPHY RACE (Women)

OVERALL CLUB REC-ORD	SPECIES NAME	MEMBER NAME	RECORD LENGTH in INCHES	DATE CAUGHT	MEMBER NAME	2024 LENGTH in INCHES	DATE CAUGHT	% OF REC-ORD
	Amberjack	Darlene Madsen	40.0	2017				0
<b>X</b>	Black Drum	Christine Fontaine White	52.0	2022				0
	Cobia	Joanne Landaker	50.0	2008				0
		Marilyn McGregor	50.0	2013				
	Grouper	Dianne Bukowski	37.0	2018	Donna Sullivan	31.0	2/2/25	83.8%
	King Mackerel	Nancy Pearson	40.0	2022				0
	Redfish	Donnie Brennan	38.0	2008	Beth Watkins	15.0	1/5/25	39.5%
		Missy Becker	38.0	2008				
	Seatrout	Joanne Landaker	26.5	2011	Elaine Bretts	20.0	2/6/25	75.5%
	Sheepshead	Dianne Bukowski	22.5	2021	Elaine Bretts	13.0	1/30/25	57.8%
	Snook	Missy Becker	42.0	2013	Donna Sullivan	36.0	2/22/25	85.7%
	Spanish Mackerel	Missy Becker	28.0	2007				0
		Lynn Reeves	28.0	2019				

This Year's LEADER in BLUE

★★ Denotes New Club Record

New Entries This Month are in RED

## PAST WINNERS OF ISLES TROPHY RACE

2009	Rich Brennan, Christine Jordan	2017	Rich Kale, Darlene Madsen
2010	Kel Krotzer, Margie Hofman	2018	Joe Udvari, Dianne Bukowski
2011	Greg Chestnut, Joanne Landacre	2019	Joe Udvari, Lynn Reeves
2012	Jim Quorollo, Rose Ann McCaffrey	2020	Mike White, Dianne Bukowski
2013	Steve Landacre, Missy Becker	2021	Rich Kale / Tim Gibbons, Dianne Bukowski
2014	Vinnie Madsen, Margie Hofman	2022	Rich Kale, Christine White
2015	Bob Mays, Karen Lodge	2023	Mike White, Wanda Zimka
2016	Gary Reeves, Rose Ann McCaffrey	2024	Mike White, Cathy Hunt

# JANUARY RESULTS—LADDER OF ACHIEVEMENT

BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	LIFETIME LEVEL I SNOOK	LIFETIME LEV- EL II REDFISH	LIFETIME LEV- EL III TARPON	GRAND MASTER ANGLER GMA	TOTAL STARS
Andy Athens	Jeff Bellairs	Gary Adams	Paula Arnold	Doug Arnold	Frank Barrett	Jeff Barnhart	★★★★
Sherry Barrett	Joanna Boeckl	Jack Botbyl	Carl Cucco	Mark Cummins	Rick Brown	Ron Baxter	
Trudi Baxter	Marc Boeckl	Steve Fritz	Mark Cummins	Mike Dougherty	Dick Conant	Fred Benson	
Tori Brown	Todd Brooks	Ken Garden	Mary Heins	Doug Du Fresne	Marv Dyrstad	Larry Benz	★
Bob Critchfield	Anne Careau	Dale Hall	Chuck Henry	Jenny Goodell	Theresa FitzGerald	Rich Brennan	★★★★★★★★★ ★★
Colleen De Mella	Don Cummins	Bill Hess	Tom Hunt	Bill Guenther	Ed Girzi	Donnie Bren- nan	★
Ron Deroche	Ron Deroche	Karen Lodge	Larry Kissner	Ken Hardesty	Bob Mays	Bob Bretts	★★★★★★★★★
Tom desEnfants	Yvette Du Fresne	Joe Lombardi	Michael Knipe	Jack Howarth	Diana McKenna	Elaine Bretts	★★★★★★★★★
Sharon Dyke	Kathy desEnfants	Sonia Nelson	Jim LaRocca	Julie Kale	Bill Muir	Dianne Bukowski	★
Mike Endres	Tony Destefano	Cheryl Panetta	Marie LaRocca	Jonathan Landon	Nancy Pearson	Joe Bukowski	★★
Richard Farmer	Tamara Dillman	Glenn Ranfos	Tom Lodge	Mark Lee	Lynn Reeves	Jim Crawley	★
Steve Fritz	Joanell Dyrstad	Gary Selzer	Sherry Moerke	Marty McCaffrey	Jack Spies	Fred De Mella	★★★★★
Chris Gibbons	Richard Embury	Steve Trego	William Neff	Rose Anne McCaffrey	Mark Storm	Mark Dillman	
Frank Grazier	Gary Frost	Greg Widney	Gary Selzer	Dennis McKenna	Gretch Sunderland	Dick Doster	
Renee Gibbons	Tim Gibbons	Sheree Wolfinger	John Simonieg	Gary Moerke	Karen Udvari	Randy Douet	★★★★★
Bob Giffin	Art Goodell		Ed Verminski	Chip Peterson	Allen Wade	Dave Dyke	
Sheryl Hatch	Jim Gregory		TWierzbowski	John Saitta	Rich Willingmyre	John Fitzgerald	
David Hatch	Randy Hall			Paul Whiting		Christine Fontaine	★
Tom Hay	Roz Hickey			Joseph Zurad		Bob Gariepy	★★
Scott Hutchins	Jack Hinnenthal					John Gettinger	★★★
<b>Shep Johnson</b>	Larry Hofmeister						
Jack Jonaitis	Dave Joe						
Dennis Jones	Lisa Kellythorne					Mike Gilger	★★
Fran Krausman	Mike Knipe					Tom Hickey	★
Buddy Krauss	Ron Kruse					Jim Hoffman	★
Jim Kunard	Denys LaChance					Margie Hoffman	
Patti Kunard	Kevin LaPointe					Jan Holm	
Richard Larson	John McFarland					Cathy Hunt	★★★★★
Tim Locke	Mike Nalipi					Bud Johnston	
Bob Mueller	Wayn Nelson					Cindi Johnston	
Patricia Nalipi	Randy Page					Rich Kale	★★★★★
Ann Northen	Kim Pflaum					Dennis Krausman	★★★★★
Connie Nowicki	Paul Robinson					Kel Krotzer	★★★
Tony Nowicki	Hezzie Samons					Carl Leicher	
Chuck Pearson	Mike Sandling					Joe Maillet	
Bruce Peterson	Deb Sarkisian					Pete McGregor	★★
Chris Pflaum	Tom Schmitt					Jude Panetta	★★★★
Chris Pollinger	Gary Skillicorn					Tom Parsons	★★
Doug Salminen	Lynne Stockinger					Gary Reeves	
Mark Schruer	Don Taylor					Rick Sarkisian	★★★★★★★★★
Alan Schulman	Mike Trost					John Stockinger	★
Jess Searle	Roxie Trost					Donna Sullivan	★★
Miriam Taylor	Mike Wagner					Ron Topper	★★★★★
Patti Topper	Stella Wagner					Joe Udvari	★★★★★★★★★
Beth Watkins	Greg Widney					Aaron Wagner	
Joanne Widney	S Wierzbowski					Mike White	★★★★★
Wanda Zimka	Tom Youngblood					Jeff Wilson	★
	Lenny Zimka					John Wolfinger	
	Wanda Zimka						

RED = Awards  
This Month

Club Hats

**Shep Johnson**  
**Kim Selzer**

(BOLD star = earned this year)

# FEBRUARY RESULTS

## MASTER ANGLER

### MASTER ANGLERS TOURNAMENT, 2025 STANDINGS

PLACE	AMBER JACK	BLACK DRUM	COBIA	GROUP-ER	KING MACK-EREL	RED-FISH	SEA-TROUT	SHEEPS-HEAD	SNOOK	SPANISH MACK-EREL
1st	FRED DE MELLA 30.0	MIKE DOUGHERTY 15.5	ALLEN WADE 32.0	JIM KUNARD 31.0		BOB BRETT 28.0	CARL CUCCO 22.0	JIM GREGORY 19.0	DONNA SULLIVAN 36.0	
				DONNA SULLIVAN 31.0		MARK DILLMAN 28.0		CARL LEICHER 19.0		
2nd				FRED DE MELLA 30.0		ALLEN WADE 21.0	RANDY DOUET 21.0	BOB GARIEPY 18.5	TIM LOCKE 23.0	
3rd				JEFF BARNHART 29.5		BETH WATKINS 15.0	ELAINE BRETT 20.0	BOBBY BRETT 18.0	SHEP JOHNSON 20.0	

New this month are shown in Red





# Membership Report For FEBRUARY 2025



We are gaining new members and last years members are renewing. We still have some of the 2024 members who have not renewed. I sent a reminder after the last general meeting and received some renewals and some regrets like Ron who moved out of the area. I plan to do a follow-up after the next general meeting so get your renewals in to avoid the reminder email.



The household cost is \$30 per year and you get all the benefits, tournaments, ladder of achievement, fishing contest, great social activities and education at our general meetings.

Questions or corrections? Contact

the Fishing Club Membership

Director: Tim Locke

[Membership@pgifishingclub.org](mailto:Membership@pgifishingclub.org),

Cell 816-392-9889

- Great meeting topics about fishing our inshore and off shore estuary
- Snacks, drinks and storytelling after the meetings.
- Fishing Club tournaments
- Ladder of Achievement growth
- Weekly social event on Wednesdays
- Bunco events
- Club Socials

# SUNSHINE LADY

THE PGI FISHING CLUB IS A CLUB OF THE PUNTA GORDA  
ISLES CIVIC ASSOCIATION



We care! If you become aware of someone in the club that needs a card for any reason, please let me know. I can also provide a meal for or visit someone who is in need. Please call or email me

Paula Arnold

724-504-5347

1207swanct@gmail.com



# CLUB LEADERSHIP



## OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT	<i>Vacant</i>	
VICE PRESIDENT	<i>Vacant</i>	
PAST PRESIDENT	<b>BILL MUIR</b>	president@pgifishingclub.org
TREASURER	<b>LISA ROSS</b>	treasurer@pgifishingclub.org
SECRETARY	<i>Vacant</i>	secretary@pgifishingclub.org

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

ADVERTISING	<b>FRED DE MELLA</b>	advertising@pgifishingclub.org
COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSN	<b>BOB MAYES</b>	cca.cmac@pgifishingclub.org
FISHING EVENTS	<b>GREG WIDNEY</b>	fishingevents@pgifishingclub.org
GREETERS	<b>YVETTE DUFRESNE</b>	greeters@pgifishingclub.org
MEMBERSHIP	<b>TIM LOCKE</b>	membership@pgifishingclub.org
NEWSLETTER	<b>JIM KUNARD</b>	pattijmk@comcast.net
RECORD KEEPER	<b>PAUL WHITING</b>	recordkeeper@pgifishingclub.org
SOCIAL EVENTS	<b>JENNIFER HUEY</b>	socialdirector@pgifishingclub.org
SUNSHINE LADY	<b>PAULA ARNOLD</b>	sunshine@pgifishingclub.org
WEBMASTER	<b>RICHARD EMBURY</b>	website@pgifishingclub.org



# MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS



It's fun to succeed! **One of the great things about our club are the members we have who are willing to take new members out for a day of fishing to help them learn our waters.** Below is a list of members that are willing to host you for a fishing trip in our local waters:

- **Gary Burgess (Harbor Only), [g2873477@hotmail.com](mailto:g2873477@hotmail.com)**
- **Gretchen Sunderland (Harbor Only, especially for beginner women), [gretchensun2@gmail.com](mailto:gretchensun2@gmail.com)**
- **Fred De Mella (Inshore or Offshore) [fdemella@gmail.com](mailto:fdemella@gmail.com)**



Contact them through email to arrange a trip.

***Members, if you want to take another member out on your boat, please send your contact information to: [editor@pgifishingclub.org](mailto:editor@pgifishingclub.org)***

# CLUB LINKS

THE PGI FISHING CLUB IS A CLUB OF THE PUNTA GORDA  
ISLES CIVIC ASSOCIATION



**CLUB WEBSITE:** <http://pgifishingclub.org>

**CLUB FACEBOOK:** <http://facebook.com>, then  
search for pgi fishing club

**FISHING CONTEST RULES:** [http://  
pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/?page\\_id=30](http://pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/?page_id=30)

**GENERAL INFORMATION:** [http://  
pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/?pageid=101](http://pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/?pageid=101)



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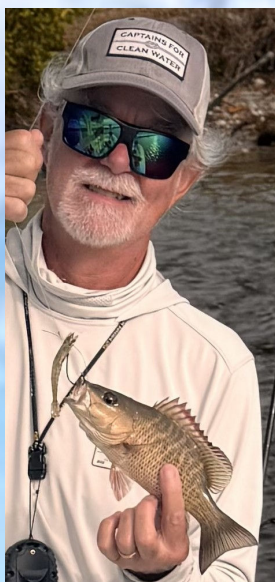


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