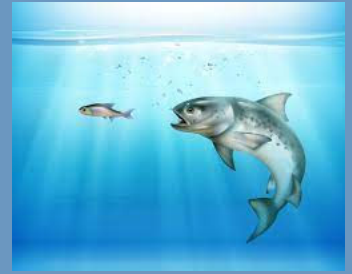


FROM THE HELM

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

APRIL 2025



By **FRED DE MELLA**

The local traffic is slowly getting back to normal but the boat traffic is picking up in the Boca Grande Pass! It's that time of year, the tarpon are here!

Whether it's in the pass, the deeper holes, the reefs or anywhere the bait congregates, there will be boats set up. Remember to give those fishing boats ample space so as not to spook the tarpon or worse yet interfere with a very large fighting fish!

The spring is when the fishing options expand. Many species are available in the river, the harbor and near shore waters. If you are a fisherman, you have to be excited about our local fishery. Joining the PGIFC benefits experienced anglers by expanding fishing goals. If you're not a fisherman but want to become one the benefits are numerous.

We have members who are experienced in catching all kinds of fish including tarpon. 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 and meet new friends.

When PGIFC members aren't fishing or preparing for fishing, we also enjoy various social activities. 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 have fished for before 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. Some club members actually go on fishing trips outside the area.

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. Another way to familiarize yourself with the Fishing Club is to attend our weekly happy hour, currently at The Ice House on Wednesdays at 17:00 to hear about all the catching and non-catching.

Next Meeting: Tuesday April 8, at 6:00 p.m., Followed by social time with drinks and snacks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>APRIL 2025 Club Newsletter</i>	PAGE
COVER - FROM the HELM	- 1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	- 2
FISHING REPORT	- 3
FISH OF THE MONTH - SNOOK	- 5
<i>LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, TIPS, TACKLE AND BAIT</i>	- 6
CLUB & INDIVIDUAL FISHING STATS	
<i>MARCH RESULTS - WINNERS</i>	- 7
<i>MONTH IN REVIEW - WHATS BITE'N</i>	- 8
<i>TROPHY RACE STANDINGS MEN</i>	- 9
<i>TROPHY RACE STANDINGS WOMEN</i>	- 10
<i>LADDER OF ACHIEVEMENT</i>	- 11
<i>MASTER ANGLER SUMMARY</i>	- 12
MEMBERSHIP REPORT—for March 2025	- 13
SUNSHINE LADY	- 14
CLUB LEADERSHIP	- 15
MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS	- 16
CLUB WEB LINKS	- 17
CLUB SPONSORS	
<i>INGMAN MARINE</i>	- 18
<i>PROBLEM SOLVED PEST CONTROL</i>	- 19
<i>TOW BOAT US</i>	- 20
<i>LICENSED TO CHILL SWFL</i>	- 21
<i>CHARLOTTE COUNTY FORD</i>	- 21
<i>MARINE TRADING POST</i>	22
<i>ELENA'S RESTAURANT</i>	- 22
<i>DISCOUNT LIQUORS</i>	- 22
MEMBER CATCHES FOR THE MONTH	- 23

FISHING REPORT For MARCH

By: Fred De Mella

Offshore:

Where have all the grouper gone? On a recent trip trying to repeat our success earlier this year we struck out. Not only did we return without a red grouper, but only had a few shorts all day. Same areas, same techniques but not same results. In 100-120 foot depth the Vermillion Snapper cooperated to ensure a good meal. Remember to have a descending plan for those fish that don't meet the minimum Red Grouper 20 inch size limit for harvest. The best method is to actually descend the fish using one of the descending devices. By law, you must have this equipment on board and use it.

Smaller Amberjack provided for some action; these fish can be caught using live bait, jigs and artificial lures. Amberjack are currently catch and release only. The Lane Snapper bite has been much better in about 80 foot. When in the mood, these fish can provide for some good action and some tasty dinners. Definitely looking forward to next weather break for some more blue water.

Inshore:

The lower harbor is currently a milky green color. Although movement of some migratory species normally make for some good fishing towards the pass, of late, this has not been the case. It is only a matter of time before the tarpon and other migratory species show there. A large school of Tarpon showed up in Tarpon Cove yesterday; a nice sign!

Spanish Mackerel have been spotty, but they are here in the harbor. Most fish are caught trolling spoons and lures, but casting a spoon makes for some good clean fun. Remember to use a heavy leader or a wire bite leader as Spanish have sharp teeth. When trolling, experiment with speed. I find that between five and seven MPH is optimal; these fish are fast. Look for bait and feeding birds or fish near bottom structure. Hopefully the light cycle will warm the water a bit and the Mackerel will find their way towards the rivers to make for quick trips.

Continued Next Page

FISHING REPORT For MARCH

Snook, Black Drum and Sheepshead are still available in the PGI canals. Sheepshead can be frustrating as they are masters at stealing bait. Sheeps can be caught on a variety of baits; shrimp are easy to get and a small piece will work. Consider using clams or other crustaceans as these baits can also be very effective. Current regulations allow for an 8 fish bag limit at minimum 12 inches. This angler recommends only keeping fish above 16 inches as the filet yield is poor for the smaller fish. Sheepshead are hardy and will survive if handled properly to be caught again.

Jacks are still hit or miss, but there sure have been some big ones! I like tossing hard plastics or spoons into the schools when they show up. Have a rig set up and be ready for some pullage!

Fortunately, red tide does not appear to be a problem right now. Let's pray it stays that way. The water on the east wall is very clear now. Many sharks were visible on a recent trip. The water on the west wall is not as clear.



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

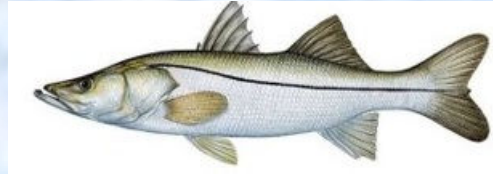


Fine Print: See "Fish of the Month Contest Rules" here: <http://pqifishingclub.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Fish-of-the-Month-Contest-Rules-Rev-7-021220.pdf>

Fish of the Month For APRIL

Location, Description, Tips, Tackle and Bait

SNOOK



Identification: Large Mouth, lower jaw extends to the eye. Split Dorsal Fin, distinctive black lateral line to the tail. Snook is a white meat that is rich, moist and flaky. Not “fishy”. Snook are not permitted to be sold commercially, so you have to go get one yourself to chow down on this local favorite.

Technique: Snook seem to seek bottom structure and shelter. Casting under docks or near the mangrove line with live greenies or other live baits will work. In more open waters, cast your bait or lure up-current from the fish, and let the current carry your bait to them. Hooked, they will jump, make aggressive heads shakes and runs.

Use Canal Fishing Lights. This time of year, many people fish the “lights” at night. By fishing the light, you are really fishing the dark area just outside the lit area and not casting directly into the light. Cast under the dock to the side of the lit area. The Snook don’t seem to bite in the light, but will chase your lure. Etiquette: If you hook someone’s light, be polite and cut the line as opposed to pulling their light out of the water. The club recommends Underwater Fish Lights in Port Charlotte as your source for a durable fishlight.

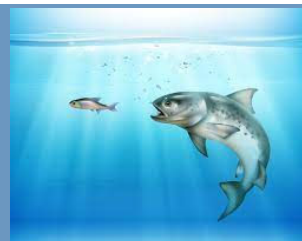
Gear: Folks commonly use 10-15 lb. braided line. You can get by with monofilament, but braided line is much more abrasion-resistant, and snook are going to drag your line over everything they can. Snook have very good eyesight, so you'll need a leader that is both strong and invisible in the water

Bait: Baits that work well include large shrimp, small Rapala Countdown lures, white bait, and small Wild Eyed Storm Shads. To go ‘big’, use big bait, white, ladyfish or mullet.

Limits: The slot for harvesting a Snook is not less than 28” for juvies and not more than 33” for breeders. One keeper per day per person and it must be in clean condition until landed ashore. The Snook season ends on April 30. You need a Snook permit from the Game & Fish Commission.

MARCH RESULTS

Club & Individual Fishing Statistics



REPORTED CATCHES as of 3/31/2025 and FISH OF THE MONTH (FOM) RESULTS

54 total fish turned in (2600 points) by 23 different anglers

FOM (SPANISH MACKEREL)

Women

1st - Beth Watkins, 20.0"

2nd - Cathy Hunt, 19.0"

3rd - Sandy Wierzbanski, 16.0"

Men

1st - Bobby Bretts, 23.0"

2nd - Fred Benson, 21.0"

TIE - Fred De Mella, 21.0"

3rd - Mark Storm, 20.5"

Interesting Tidbits

Spanish Mackerel, our Fish of the Month for March, did not disappoint with 12 reported catches up to a 23" fork length giant caught by Bobby Bretts. The ever-present seatrout amassed a total of 14 catches reported up to a nice 23" fish caught by Carl Cucco. Those able to get offshore when the March winds briefly calmed found 4 reported Red Grouper up to a respectable 33" fire truck wrangled by John Saitta. Our first King Mackerel of the year was also reported by Mark Cummins. In-shore three nice sized snook were reported including Allen Wade's 34.5" beauty. We were happy to have four of our newest members report their first catches and three of them, Ted Flanders, Raymond Iannucci and Craig Setter earned both their Club Hat and their Bronze Pin in the same month. So glad to have these new members so actively pursuing their LOAs!

Achievement Categories

Club Hat

Ted Flanders, Don Harter

Raymond Iannucci, Craig Setter

Silver Pin

None

Snook Pin

None

Tarpon Pin

None

GMA Star

None

Bronze Pin

Ted Flanders, Raymond Iannucci

Craig Setter

Gold Pin

None

Redfish Pin

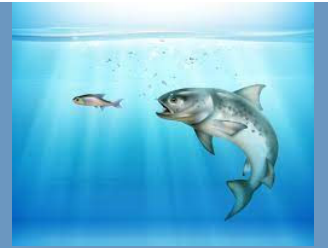
None

GMA

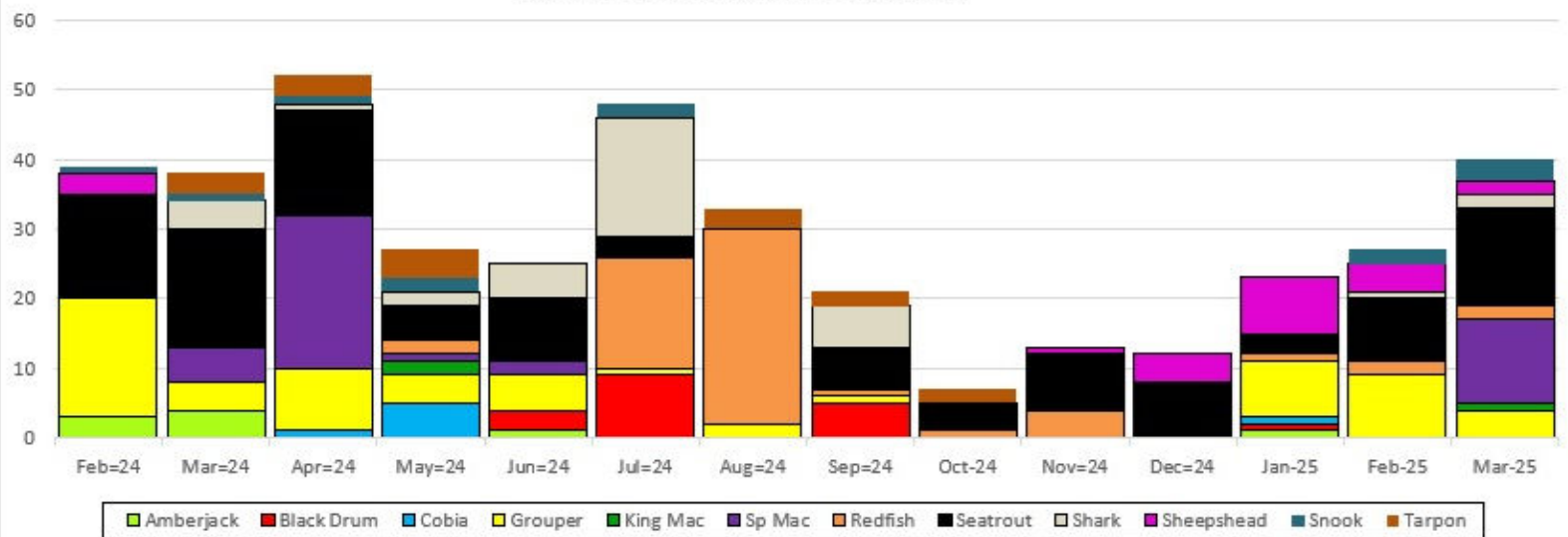
None

ACHIEVEMENTS!

WHAT'S BITE'N



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



Recorder's Data

Monthly Performance

	January	February	March	
Anglers	18	17	23	↑
LOA Awards	0	3	7	↑
Fish Recorded	27	36	54	↑
Points Recorded	2000	3,200	2,600	↓

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	John Saita	33.0	3/25/25	84.6%
X	King Mackerel	John MacLeman	52.0	2012	Mark Cummins	26.0	3/13/25	44.1%
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	23.0	3/14/25	79.3%
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	Allen Wade	34.5	3/18/25	70.4%
X	Spanish Mackerel	Carl Leicher	30.0	2012	Bobby Bretts	23.0	3/19/25	76.7%

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
X	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	Beth Watkins	20.0	3/24/25	71.4%
		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

MARCH 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	★★★★★
Ted Flanders	Richard Embury	Steve Trego	William Neff	Rose Anne McCaffrey	Mark Storm	Mark Dillman	
Chris Gibbons	Gary Frost	Greg Widney	Gary Selzer	Dennis McKenna	Gretch Sunderland	Dick Doster	
Frank Grazier	Tim Gibbons	Sheree Wolfinger	John Simonieg	Gary Moerke	Karen Udvari	Randy Douet	★★★★★
Renee Gibbons	Art Goodell		Ed Verminski	Chip Peterson	Allen Wade	Dave Dyke	
Bob Giffin	Jim Gregory		TWierzbowski	John Saitta	Rich Willingmyre	John Fitzgerald	
Sheryl Hatch	Randy Hall			Paul Whiting		Christine Fontaine	★
David Hatch	Roz Hickey		RED = Awards	Joseph Zurad		Bob Gariepy	★★
Tom Hay	Jack Hinnenthal		This Month			John Gettinger	★★★
Scott Hutchins	Larry Hofmeister						
Ray Iannucci	Dave Joe					Mike Gilger	★★
Shep Johnson	Lisa Kellythorne					Tom Hickey	★
Jack Jonaitis	Mike Knipe					Jim Hoffman	★
Dennis Jones	Ron Kruse					Margie Hoffman	
Fran Krausman	Denys LaChance					Jan Holm	
Buddy Krauss	Kevin LaPointe					Cathy Hunt	★★★★★
Jim Kunard	John McFarland					Bud Johnston	
Patti Kunard	Mike Nalipi					Cindi Johnston	
Richard Larson	Wayn Nelson					Rich Kale	★★★★★
Tim Locke	Randy Page					Dennis Krausman	★★★★★
Bob Mueller	Kim Pflaum					Kel Krotzer	★★★
Patricia Nalipi	Paul Robinson					Carl Leicher	
Ann Northen	Hezzie Samons					Joe Maillet	
Connie Nowicki	Mike Sandling					Pete McGregor	★★
Tony Nowicki	Deb Sarkisian					Jude Panetta	★★★★
Chuck Pearson	Tom Schmitt					Tom Parsons	★★
Bruce Peterson	Gary Skillicorn					Gary Reeves	
Chris Pflaum	Lynne Stockinger					Rick Sarkisian	★★★★★★★★
Chris Pollinger	Don Taylor					John Stockinger	★
Doug Salminen	Mike Trost					Donna Sullivan	★★
Mark Schruer	Roxie Trost					Ron Topper	★★★★★
Alan Schulman	Mike Wagner					Joe Udvari	★★★★★★★★★
Jess Searle	Stella Wagner					Aaron Wagner	
Craig Setter	Greg Widney					Mike White	★★★★★
Miriam Taylor	S Wierzbowski					Jeff Wilson	★
Patti Topper	Tom Youngblood					John Wolfinger	
Beth Watkins	Lenny Zimka						
Joanne Widney	Wanda Zimka						
Wanda Zimka							

Club Hats
Ted Flanders
Don Harter
Ray Iannucci
Craig Setter

(BOLD star = earned this year)

MARCH 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 DOUGH-ERTY 15.5	ALLEN WADE 32.0	JOHN SAITTA 33.0	MARK CUMMINS 26.0	BOB BRETTTS 28.0 MARK DILLMAN 28.0	CARL CUCCO 23.0	JIM GREGORY 19.0 CARL LEICHER 19.0	DONNA SULLIVAN 36.0	BOB BRETTTS 23.0
2nd				DONNA SULLIVAN 31.0 JIM KUNARD 31.0		ALLEN WADE 25.0	RANDY DOUET 22.5	BOB GARIEPY 18.5	ALLEN WADE 34.5	FRED BENSON 21.0 FRED DE MELLA 21.0
3rd				FRED DE MELLA 30.0		BETH WATKINS 15.0	ELAINE BRETTTS 20.0	BOBBY BRETTTS 18.0	SHEP JOHNSON 20.0	MARK STORM 20.5

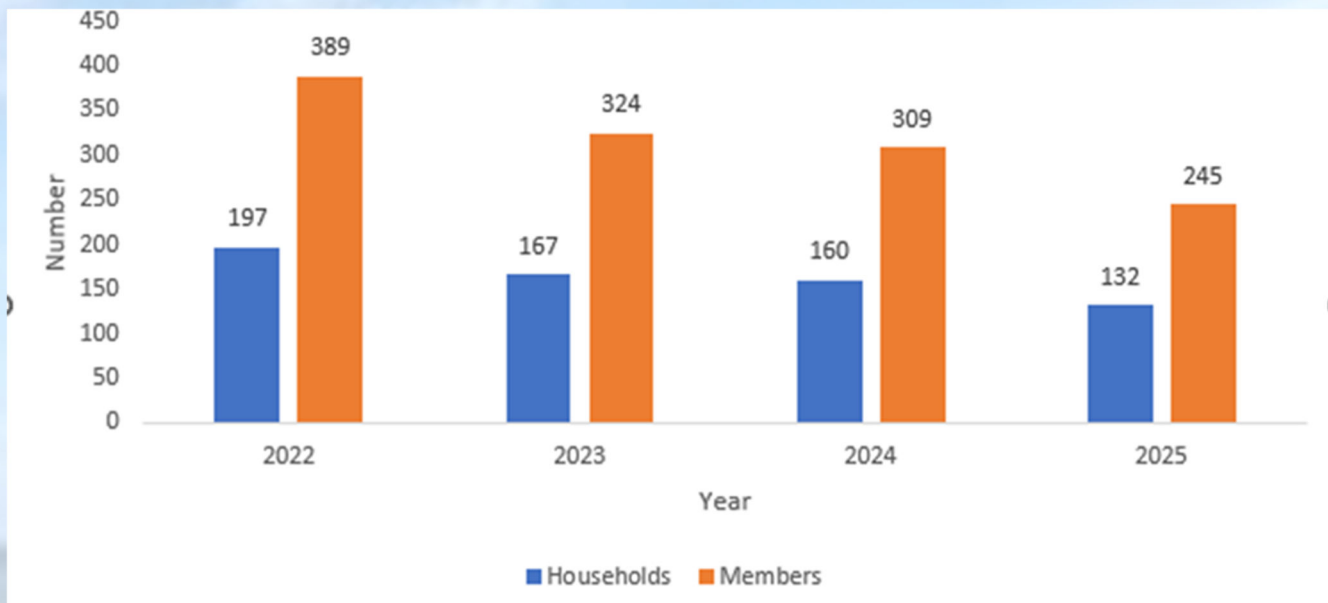
New this month are shown in Red



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. A reminder was sent after the March general meeting, and we received some renewals and some regrets. I plan to do a follow-up after the next general meeting so get your renewals in to avoid the reminder email. Six members participated in a PGICA event for PGI residents who are not yet PGICA members. The gathering lasted 6 hours and was well attended. We had 4 new memberships and 5 new PGICA members who said they would join the PGI Fishing club.

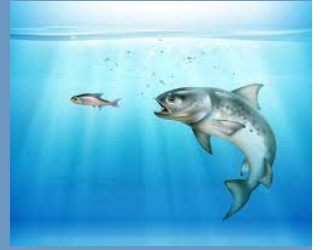


The household cost is \$30 per year and you get all the benefits, tournaments, ladder of achievement, fishing contest, great social activities and education at our general meetings.

Questions or corrections? Contact the Fishing Club Membership Director: **Tim Locke**
Membership@pgifishingclub.org, Cell 816-392-9889

SUNSHINE LADY

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



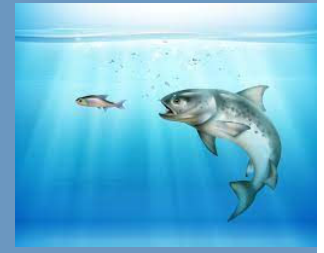
We care! If you become aware of someone in the club that needs a card for any reason, please let me know. I can also provide a meal for or visit someone who is in need. Please call or email me

Paula Arnold

724-504-5347

1207swanct@gmail.com

CLUB LEADERSHIP



OFFICERS:

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

ADVERTISING	FRED DE MELLA	advertising@pgifishingclub.org
COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSN	BOB MAYES	cca.cmac@pgifishingclub.org
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SOCIAL EVENTS	JENNIFER HUEY	socialdirector@pgifishingclub.org
SUNSHINE LADY	PAULA ARNOLD	sunshine@pgifishingclub.org
WEBMASTER	RICHARD EMBURY	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**
- **Gretchen Sunderland (Harbor Only, especially for beginner women), gretchensun2@gmail.com**
- **Fred De Mella (Inshore or Offshore) 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

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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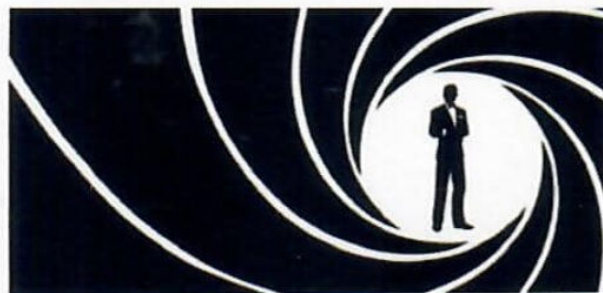
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