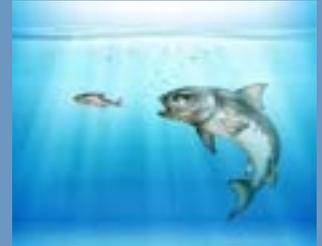


# FROM THE HELM

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

MARCH 2026



By **FRED DEMELLA, President**

Well it seems the wind and cold have abated. The days are getting longer and that means more time for fishing! Warming water temperatures create more fishing opportunities. Even if you are an experienced angler, joining the PGI Fishing Club will help you catch more by learning from local fishermen how to exploit these opportunities.

The variety of species available in this area means that no matter the season something is always biting! Learning the various methods of catching these species is why joining the PGI Fishing Club is a great option. Our membership includes fishermen who are experienced in catching all kinds of fish including inshore and offshore species. By joining, you not only gain access to the expertise of many anglers, but can enjoy the fun and camaraderie of fishing with other members. Don't have a boat? Many members have boats to get you there and the knowledge to help target species to make your angling experience great.

The Fishing Club's Ladder of Achievement is a great way to challenge yourself. The Ladder 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, preparing for fishing, or cleaning up from fishing, we enjoy a variety 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. Trips planned this year include the Florida Keys and Venice, Louisiana.

If any of this piques your interest, please join us. We meet the second Tuesday of the month (except January, July and December in 2026) 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 Elks Lodge Tiki on Wednesdays at 17:00 to hear about all the fishing stories and make plans to fish.

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday March 10th, 6:00 p.m., at the PGICA meeting room, 2001 Shreve Street**

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# FISHING REPORT For FEBRUARY

**By Paul Whiting**

The end of January and beginning of February weather was significantly cold keeping our winds up and temps down with fish often shutting down as well during the passing fronts. It also seemed to chase away our lady anglers with only 2 of the monthly reports coming in from that gender. Those who ventured farther offshore between the fronts found Grouper, our fish of the month, willing to bite with 5 Red Grouper catches up to 32" reported along with a couple of smaller gags. Less affected by the temps were Sheepshead, which boasted 9 catches up to an impressive 25" monster caught by new member Thomas Christl – a fantastic way to earn his Club Hat! Another new member, Richard Romano, posted his first catch with an impressive 32" Red Grouper. A few Trout up to 19", a 35" Amber Jack and a 38" Black Drum rounded out our predominant catches this month. Now that March has finally arrived, everyone is anxious to return to our normal winter days in the 70's and get back on the water again. That extra hour of light we will add on March 8, can also extend our fishing time on the water.

## **RED GROUPEL RESTRICTIONS UPDATE**

**The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recently took final action on Reef Fish Amendment 62, which significantly impacts Red Grouper management:**

**Catch Limits:** The Council approved a substantial increase in catch limits, which will be phased in over three years following positive data from the SEDAR 88 stock assessment.

**Seasonal Changes:** Starting in 2027, the February 1–March 31 recreational closure for shallow-water grouper (seaward of 20 fathoms) will be eliminated. Note that for 2026, this closure remains in effect.

**Sector Allocations:** The update sets a new allocation of 68.2% commercial and 31.8% recreational, while maintaining current buffers for catch targets.

**Timeline:** While the Council has finalized the amendment, federal implementation is expected by mid-2026.



*In Charlotte Harbor, January 2026*

# FISH of the MONTH

**JANUARY: SHEEPSHEAD**



**FEBRUARY: GROUPER**



**MARCH: SPANISH MACKEREL**



**APRIL: SNOOK**



**MAY: COBIA**



**JUNE: JACK CREVALLE**



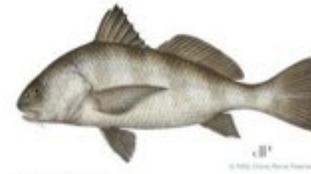
**JULY: SHARK**



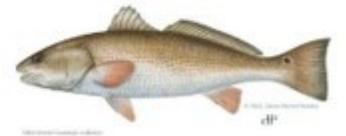
**AUGUST: TARPON**



**SEPTEMBER: BLACK DRUM**



**OCTOBER: REDFISH**



**NOVEMBER: MANGROVE SNAPPER**



**DECEMBER: SPOTTED SEA TROUT**

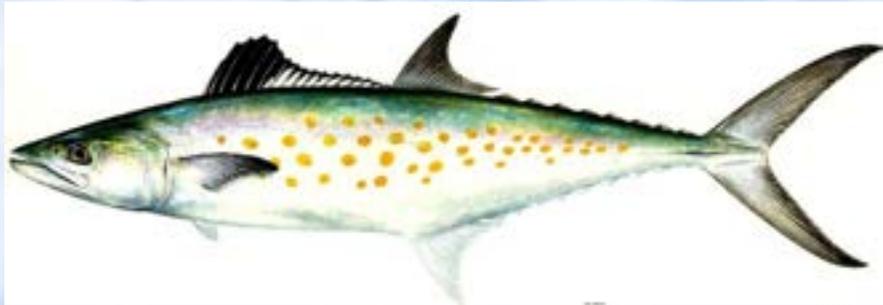


*Fine Print: See "Fish of the Month Contest Rules" here: <http://pgifishingclub.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Fish-of-the-Month-Contest-Rules-Rev-7-021220.pdf>*

# Fish of the Month For MARCH

*Location, Description, Tips, Tackle and Bait*

## SPANISH MACKEREL



### **DESCRIPTION / SPECIES:**

Greenish back with silver sides and belly; yellow/olive green spots on the sides; fork 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. Try a Planer or trolling board. These allow anglers to spread their lines, control the depth of the bait in the water column and present lures at different angles

Spanish Mackerel are measured to the fork; make note in any fish submittals the measurement is to the fork and check FWC regulations for harvesting

# Club & Individual Fishing Statistics



**REPORTED CATCHES as of 2/28/2026 and FISH OF THE MONTH (FOM) RESULTS**  
27 total fish turned in (2100 points) by 13 different anglers

## **FOM (GROUPEr)**

### Women

**1st - Joanne Widney 23.5"**

**2nd / 3rd - None**

### Men

**1st - Richard Romano - 32.0"**

**2nd - Rick Brown - 30.0"**

**3rd - Jeff Barnhart- 25.5"**

## **Achievement Categories**

### Club Hat

**THOMAS CHRISTL, RICHARD ROMANO**

### Silver Pin

None

### Snook Pin

None

### Tarpon Pin

None

### GMA Star

None

### Bronze Pin

None

### Gold Pin

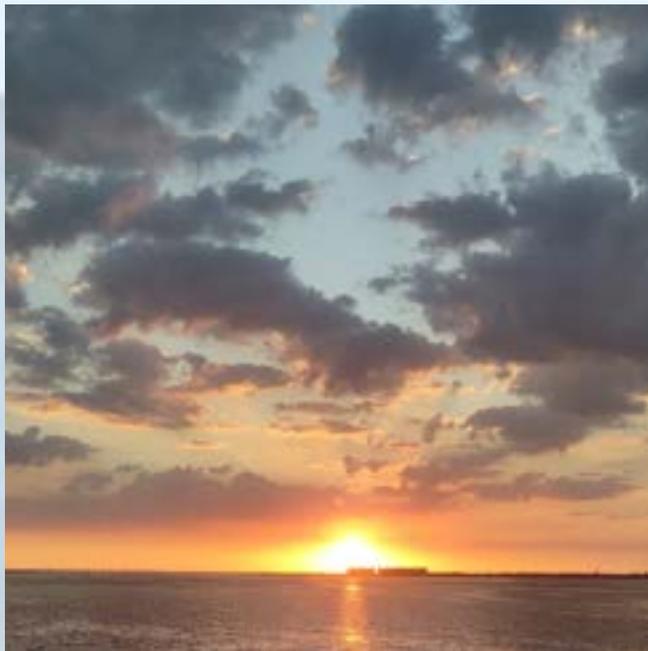
**DON HARTER**

### Redfish Pin

None

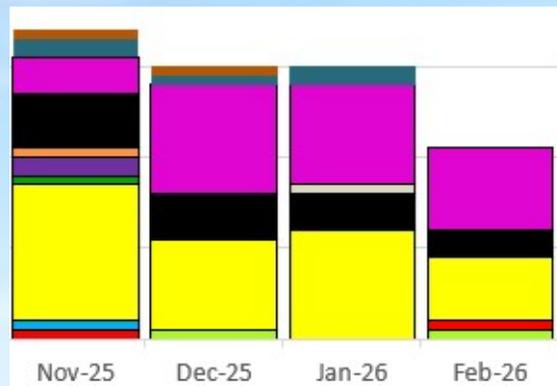
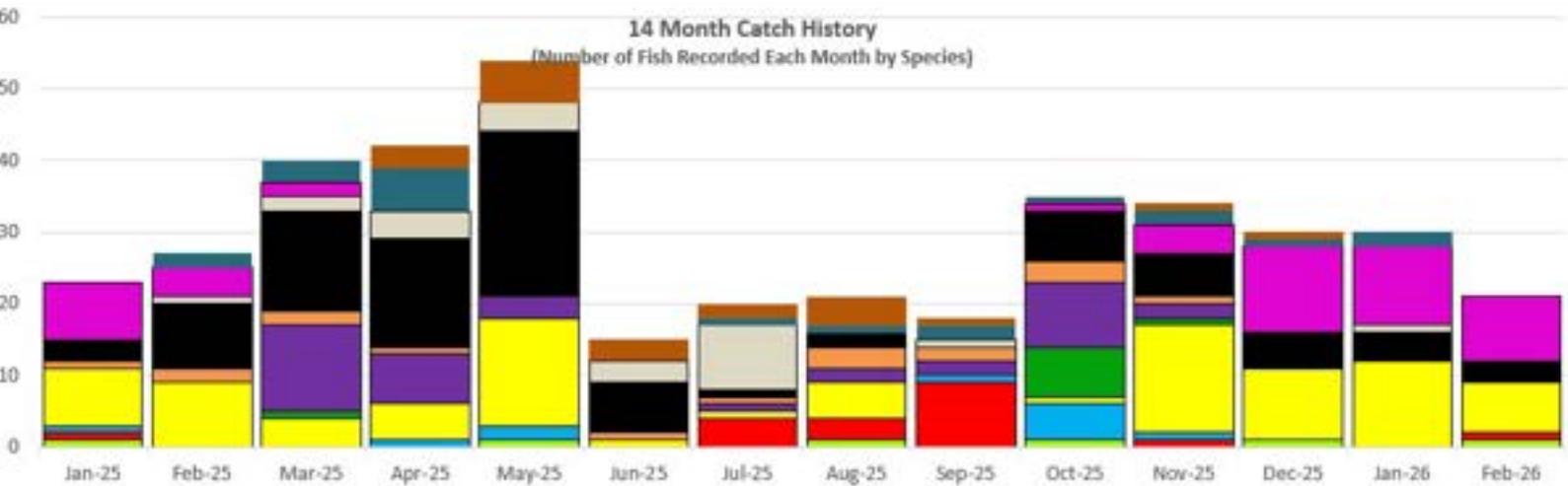
### GMA

None



Upstream on the Peace River, looking west at the SunSeeker Resort

# WHAT'S BITE'N



## Recorder's Data

### Monthly Performance

	December	January	February	
<b>Anglers</b>	18	20	<b>13</b>	↓
<b>LOA Awards</b>	4	1	<b>3</b>	↑
<b>Fish Recorded</b>	38	40	<b>27</b>	↓
<b>Points Recorded</b>	2400	2,000	<b>2,100</b>	↑

# TROPHY RACE (Men)

OVERALL CLUB RECORD	SPECIES NAME	MEMBER NAME	RECORD LENGTH in INCHES	DATE CAUGHT	MEMBER NAME	2026 LENGTH in INCHES	2026 DATE CAUGHT	% OF RECORD
X	Amber Jack	Joe Udvari	53.5	2019	Glenn Ranfos	35.0	Feb 4	65.4%
	Black Drum	Mike White	51.5	2019	Allen Wade	38.0	Feb 15	73.8%
X	Cobia	Rich Kale	66.0	2022				
X	Grouper	Tom Hamilton	39.0	2003	Richard Romano	32.0	Feb 11	82.1%
X	King Mackerel	John MacLeman	52.0	2012				
X	Redfish	Mike White	47.0	2020				
X	Seatrout	Rich Brennan	29.0	2009	Fred De Mella	19.0	Jan 15	65.5%
		Aaron Wagner	29.0	2012	Allen Wade		Jan 13	
X	Sheepshead	Mike White	26.0	2022	Thomas Christl	25.0	Feb 27	96.2%
X	Snook	Mike White	49.0	2023	Tim Locke	23.0	Jan 30	46.9%
X	Spanish Mackerel	Carl Leicher	30.0	2012				

This Year's Leaders in BLUE

XX Denotes New Club Record

New Entries This Month are in RED

# TROPHY RACE (Women)

OVERALL CLUB RECORD	SPECIES NAME	MEMBER NAME	RECORD LENGTH in INCHES	DATE CAUGHT	MEMBER NAME	2025 LENGTH in INCHES	DATE CAUGHT	% OF RECORD
	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	Jan 7	83.8%
	King Mackerel	Nancy Pearson	40.0	2022				0%
	Redfish	Donnie Brennan	38.0	2008				0%
		Missy Becker	38.0	2008				
	Seatrout	Joanne Landaker	26.5	2011	Jan Holm	18.0	Jan 7	67.9%
	Sheepshead	Dianne Bukowski	22.5	2021	Donna Sullivan Jan Holm	12.0	Jan 6	53.3%
	Snook	Missy Becker	42.0	2013	Joanne Widney	22.0	Jan 9	52.4%
	Spanish Mackerel	Missy Becker	28.0	2007				0%
		Lynn Reeves	28.0	2019				

This Year's LEADER in BLUE

XX Denotes New Club Record

New Entries This Month are in RED

2009	Rich Brennan, Christine Jordan	2018	Joe Udvari, Dianne Bukowski
2010	Kel Krotzer, Margie Hofman	2019	Joe Udvari, Lynn Reeves
2011	Greg Chestnut, Joanne Landacre	2020	Mike White, Dianne Bukowski
2012	Jim Quorollo, Rose Ann McCaffrey	2021	Rich Kale / Tim Gibbons, Dianne Bukowski
2013	Steve Landacre, Missy Becker	2022	Rich Kale, Christine White
2014	Vinnie Madsen, Margie Hofman	2023	Mike White, Wanda Zimka
2015	Bob Mays, Karen Lodge	2024	Mike White, Cathy Hunt
2016	Gary Reeves, Rose Ann McCaffrey	2025	Mike White, Elaine Bretts, Donna Sullivan
2017	Rich Kale, Darlene Madsen		

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

**RED** = Awards  
This Month

Club Hats  
**Thomas Christ**  
**Richard Romano**

**LADDER**  
**OF**  
**ACHIEVEMENTS**  
**FEBRUARY**  
**2026**

**(BOLD star = earned this year)**

# FEBRUARY RESULTS

## MASTER ANGLER

### MASTER ANGLERS TOURNAMENT, 2026 STANDINGS

PLACE	AMBER JACK	BLACK DRUM	COBIA	GROUP-ER	KING MACKEREL	RED-FISH	SEA-TROUT	SHEEPS-HEAD	SNOOK	SPANISH MACKEREL
1st	<b>Glen Ranfos</b> 35.0	<b>Allen Wade</b> 39.0		<b>Richard Romano</b> 32.0			Fred De Mella 19.0 Allen Wade 19.0	<b>Thomas Christl</b> 25.0	Tim Locke 23.0	
2nd				Donna Sullivan 21.0			Jan Holm 18.0	Fred DeMills 19.5	Joanne Vidreg 22.0	
3rd				Greg Vidreg 30.5			David Morgan 16.0	<b>Mike White</b> 19.0		

**New this month are shown in Red**



# SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

## MARCH 2026

### **WELCOME MARCH!**

*What do we love besides fishing....*

*warmer weather !!*

#### **HAPPY HOUR**

**EVERY WEDNESDAY, 5PM**

**AT THE ELKS CLUB**

#### **GENERAL MEETINGS**

**General meetings are held on the**

**second Tuesday of each month**

*Mark your calendar*

**(Except NO July or December Meeting)**

**HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE**

**MARCH GENERAL MEETING ON**

**THE 10th!**

**AT PGICA**



# Meeting Notes From February 2026

## PGI Fishing Club February 10, 2026

### General Meeting Minutes

**Location:** PGICA Auditorium

**Start time:** 6:08 p.m.

**President:** Fred De Mella

**Members in attendance:** 66

**Speaker:** *None – Awards night*

#### **Meeting Content:**

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Identified and Greeted our New Members.
- The Membership Report, Financial Report and Social Information were included in the Power-Point Slide Presentation.
- Awards for the Master Anglers Tournament, December Tournament, Fish of the Month and the Annual Trophy Race Accomplishments were presented by Greg Wideny. President Fred De Mella congratulated all of the 34 winners.
- Mike White provided a report on the boating conditions and species caught for January.

**Door Prize:** \$50.00 gift card to Fishin' Franks was awarded

**Name that Species awarded.**

**50/50 Winners:** First ticket: \$86; second ticket: \$56. Club fund: \$143

Meeting adjourned: 6:40 p.m.

Submitted for Patti Kunard

# Membership Report For February 2026



We are gaining new members over the last several months. The snowbirds are returning. So if you are at a Fishing Club gathering and see a new face, please welcome the new folks and introduce them to the seasoned members. The member benefits from the club tournaments and Ladder of Achievement and fishing knowledge gained from the monthly technical meetings and social gatherings.

Remember it is time to renew your Fishing Club membership at \$30 per household. We have about 106 members from 2025 who have not renewed their 2026 PGI Fishing Club Dues. Remember PGI Civic Association dues renewal does not include PGI Fishing Club dues

We have brought the PGICA Club Express into the PGI Fishing Club so now you can renew membership with a credit card by logging into the PGICA website. You can reset your password if you have forgotten your previous one. Members can also renew by check or cash at a Fishing Club meeting or by dropping off payment at the PGICA Club House at 2001 Shreeve.

If you owe payments to any PGICA club or event, then a red \$ will appear at login. Click the red \$ and pay the dues you might owe. Please let me know if you think there might be an error.



Our membership count is down from previous years as you can see in the above. The numbers from 2024 and 2025 are end of the year values while 2026 is year to date. So renewal rate seems to be ahead of last year. I plan to send a reminder email to past members who have not renewed yet. Please let me know if you have already paid 2026 Fishing Club dues and get a renewal reminder.

The household cost is \$30 per year and membership has benefits, including: tournaments, Ladder of Achievement, fishing contests, great social activities and education at our general meetings.

**Questions or corrections? Contact: Tim Locke, Membership director, [membership@pgifishingclub.org](mailto:membership@pgifishingclub.org)**

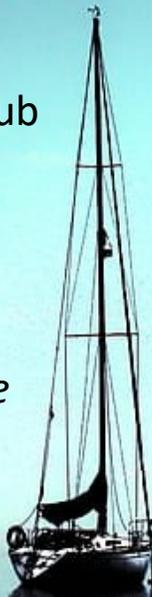
# MEMBER WELFARE

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 reach-out for any reason, please let the Board know.

*Your family of friends care about you.*



# CLUB LEADERSHIP



## OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT	<b>FRED DEMELLA</b>	president@pgifishingclub.org
ACTING VICE PRESIDENT	<b>GLENN RANFOS</b>	vicepresident@pgifishingclub.org
TREASURER	<b>LISA ROSS</b>	treasurer@pgifishingclub.org
SECRETARY	<b>PATTI KUNARD</b>	pattijmk@comcast.net

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

ADVERTISING	<i>Vacant</i>	advertising@pgifishingclub.org
COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSN	<b>BOB MAYES</b>	cca.cmac@pgifishingclub.org
FISHING EVENTS	<i>Vacant</i>	fishingevents@pgifishingclub.org
GREETERS	<i>Vacant</i>	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	<i>Vacant</i>	socialdirector@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)**



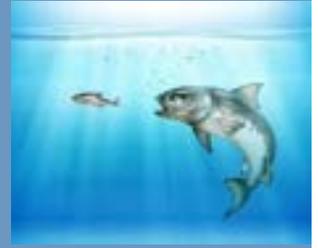
Contact them through email to arrange a trip.

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

# ADVERTISEMENTS



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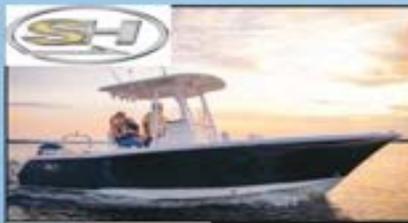
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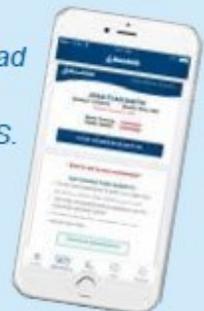
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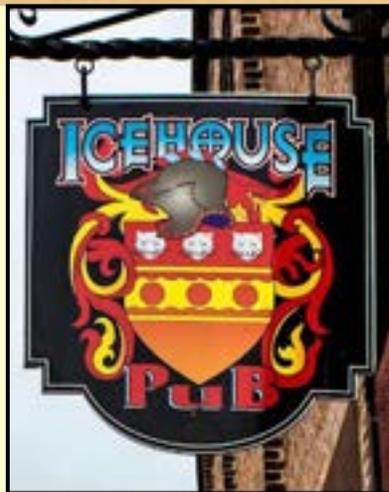
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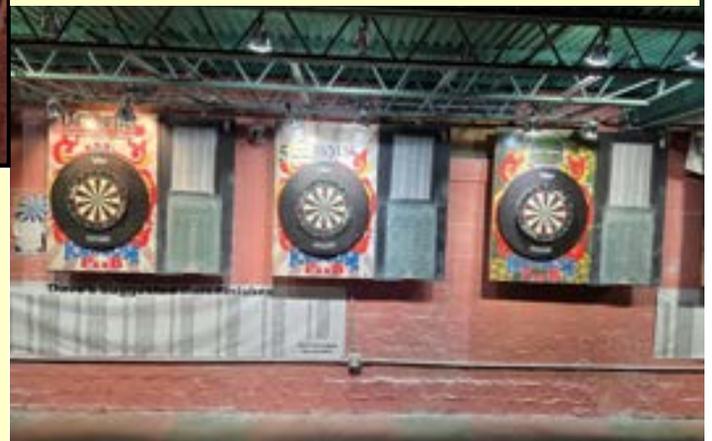
Built in the 1890s, the structure was used as an ice plant for the fishing industry. Hurricane Charley all but destroyed the building when it tore the roof off and the south wall collapsed, but the building's owner's refused to demolish this South Florida landmark pledging to rebuild it and-they-did.



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