



August 2005
Volume 1, Number 5
Upperkeysfishingclub.com

Upper Keys Fishing Club
P.O. Box 370484
Key Largo, FL 33037
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Dock Talk

The Upper Keys Fishing Club Newsletter

Next meeting – Wednesday August 3, 7:00 PM, Yellow Bait House,
Mini-seminar – single-hook pin rig

Other happenings - Surf and turf barbecue at John Pieklo's home Saturday
August 20, 7:00 PM

President's message

Well the time seems to be flying by; it is hard to believe it is already August. The fall is just around the corner. As we move into fall some of our missing club members will start to return, and that is a great thing. They are really missed.

When we formed this club I knew it would be a great thing. One of the things that I often said was that we pass each other on the water but do not really know each other. Boy has that changed! I am bumping into club members everywhere, getting gas, at the bank, at the grocery store, or getting a honk and a wave sitting at a red light, I would like to thank everyone who takes a minute out of their day to just say hi and pass on a fishing story.

I have fished with several club members and taken several club members out fishing and each trip has been special (Yes Mike, even the day with you!). I have learned a lot and had a lot of fun. I have made plans to fish with several more members as they return from the northland (Marty, we have a trip planned and you are not getting out of it).

I have also found that it does not have to be a day fishing to have a great time with club members. In addition to the club get togethers, I have had the privilege of having dinner with close to twenty different new friends. Tom, while your skinny burger was pretty good my cheeseburger in paradise is better. You have not seen anything until you have seen Scott Kallis tear up the buffet at Whale Harbor, and the many times some of us have banded together for a trip to Rosita's.

For mini season, I spent two days on the water with Sally, Paul, and their friend Tess (a new member I hope). I had one of the best times of my life. We chased bugs, laughed, and had two wonderful days on the water. Sally brought the best tasting watermelon I have ever tasted after a half day of diving it was the perfect treat. I also learned that as much of a waterbaby as Sally is, when the water gets a little murky and a little deep she prefers the safety of the boat.

What I am trying to say is this, we have a great membership. We will only get better by spending time together. It could be fishing, going out to dinner, a small dinner party, or out chasing bugs. You people are great company, so do not be afraid to quit talking about doing something and just get out there and do it, you will be glad you did. Unless you really want to do it, I would recommend you not mention it to me because I will break out my calendar and before you know it, we will have it scheduled.

Hope to see you all soon, Capt Doug

KEYS DAYDREAMING Vice-President's report, Mike MacDonald

THINGS I NOW WORRY ABOUT

- 1- Are my storm shutters up?
- 2- Will my coconuts fly off the trees and hit my boat?
- 3- Is the D#!* iguana eating my plants?
- 4- Maybe the weeds won't grow this year
- 5- ANTS!, ANTS!, ANTS!
- 6- Certain people in the keys that don't let me know they are OK

THINGS I NOW DO DIFFERENT

- 1- I put salt in my drinking water-it's as close to the ocean as I can get
- 2- Instead of watching HBO I now watch the Weather Channel
- 3- The only sites on my computer are the National Hurricane Center and The Upper Keys Fishing Club

If perhaps you think I'm nuts, beware, "KEYS DAYDREAMING" is contagious. If you don't have it yet, mark my words you will.

MIKE

Offshore Fishing Report, by Capt Doug Jeffrey

Offshore the fishing has hit the brick wall. There are still some small dolphin out there. With the water getting as warm as it is, a lot of our fish have started to move to the cooler waters of the Northland. The tuna, kingfish and wahoo are in short supply. The fishing offshore should start to fire back up in last September when the water starts to cool a little.

Reef Fishing Report, by Capt Doug Jeffrey

On the reef the fishing has been as hot as I can remember. The yellowtail snapper are everywhere. There are still a few grouper that have not made the move to the cooler deeper water. There are also plenty of good sized hogfish around. There was a short mutton bite after Hurricane Dennis passed by there; several 15 pound muttons were boated. The bite occurred a little later this year than everyone expected. On the full moon there will be a good bite of large mangrove snapper in August. Small pinfish or small pilchards will be the bait to have.

Back-country Fishing Report, by Capt Doug Jeffrey

Back-country the snook and redfish are hanging out in the shallow water and they are ready to feed. The permit are on the flats early morning and later afternoon. In the middle of the day the permit will seek the cooler water in the deeper holes that are close to the flats.

Upper Keys Fishing Club News

At our our July 6 meeting, Capt. Denis Doome demonstrated the Australian braid as an alternative to the Bimini twist. Members also quickly became proficient in the offshore swivel knot that offers many advantages over other double-line to swivel knots. At our July 20 meeting, Sally Stribling and Sharon Spangler gave a Powerpoint presentation on lobstering. Also a surf and turf lobster boil and barbecue was proposed for Saturday August 20 7:00 PM at John Pieklo's home (directions forthcoming). Members are asked to bring a side-dish, beverage and either lobster or meat to boil or grill.

Bragging Rights Fishing Tournament - Results

The Upper Keys Fishing Club celebrated the birth of our great nation with a bragging-rights only fishing tournament held on July 2 and 3. What a great way to celebrate by attempting to slay some fish. A few members fished (not necessarily caught – i.e. – Rob Stewart) and had a great time afterwards at Rob Stewart's home in Pirate's Cove. The following is a listing of members who have bragging rights until next July. No weights are provided at the request of the anglers for fear of embarrassment. The big news of the tournament was that Rob Stewart, the self-proclaimed 3:1 favorite (latest odds provided by Rob at lines-in) to catch the biggest dolphin failed to place. Maybe next year Rob.

Dolphin – Sharon Spangler

Mangrove Snapper – Sally Stribling

Yellowtail Snapper – Doug Jeffrey

Blackfin tuna – Tom Frankovich

www.upperkeysfishingclub.com

Besides Capt. Ed Stell, the Upper Keys Fishing Club website is dependent upon you. In order to keep things fresh and new, Ed needs stories and pictures to keep the site interesting. Unfortunately we are still showing pictures from the spring. Capt. Ed is doing a great job posting our newsletter, membership forms and tournament entry forms, but he needs help from all of us. Please email Capt. Ed at ejstell@a-zwww.com with your pictures and any other contributions.

UKFC Fishing Tournament by Capt John Ohlsson

The UKFC summer fishing tournament is just getting going. The standings as of August 1 are listed below. The three summer tournament species are yellowtail snapper, dolphin, and mangrove snapper. Awards go to the angler catching the largest fish in four divisions – Open, ladies, light tackle (12# test and under), and junior angler (under 16). We got two more months (August and September) to weigh-in fish for the summer tourney.

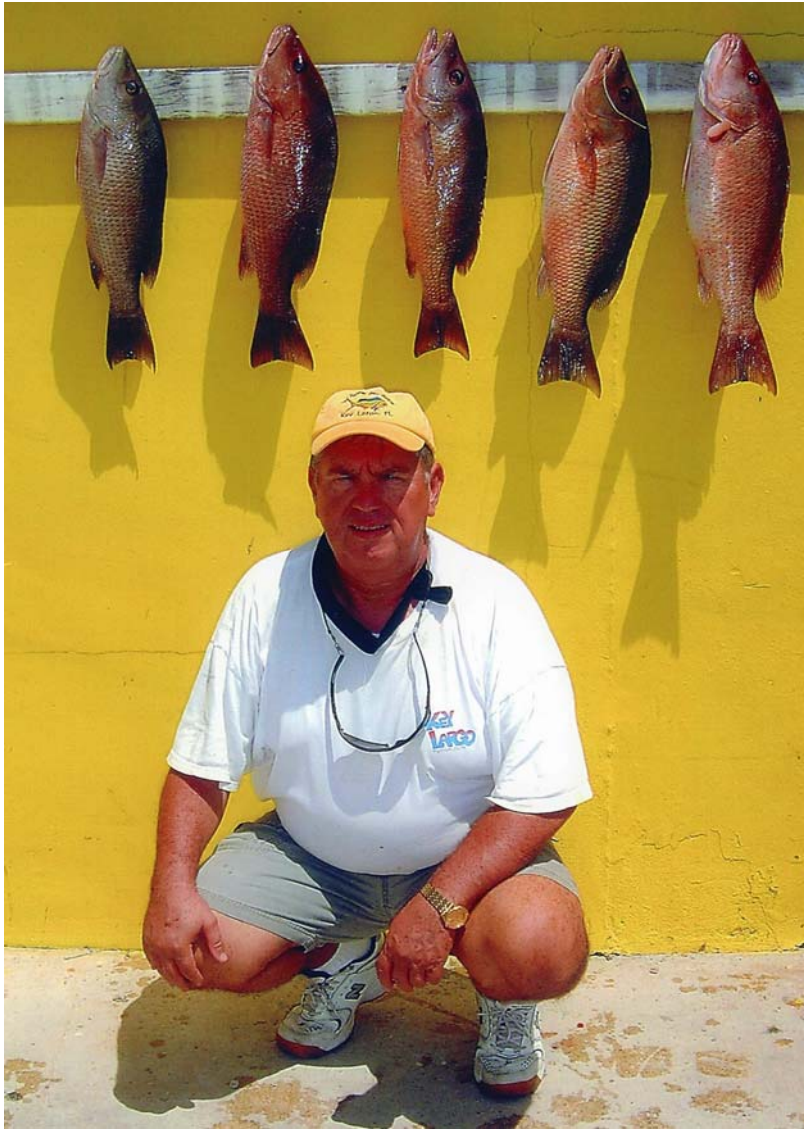
Present standings

Yellowtail –	Open -	Capt. Doug Jeffrey	4# 3 oz. – 5/27
	Light tackle -	Capt. Doug Jeffrey	4# 3 oz. – 5/27
	Ladies -	Beverly Rowe	3# 2 oz. – 6/22
Dolphin –	Open -	Sally Stribling	24#5 oz. – 6/18
	Light tackle -	Open	
	Ladies -	Sally Stribling	24#5 oz. – 6/18
Mangrove snapper –	Open -	Gary Stills	7#5 oz. – 7/6
	Light tackle –	Open	
	Ladies -	Open	

Junior angler – all categories open

Keep those weigh-in slips coming in and remember all fish must be weighed in at the Yellow Bait House and turned in at the next meeting.

Catches of the month – Gary Stills – Mangrove Snapper



Gary had a great day during the mangrove snapper spawn. He caught a 30 pound five fish limit on July 6, including the current tournament leading fish at 7# 5 oz. He was fishing balllyhoo plugs on a chum slick in 50 foot of water on the reef. Gary and Barbara are soon retiring. They have generously offered the Yellow Bait House as the venue for the Upper Keys Fishing Club meetings. Thank you Gary and Barbara! We will miss you when you go. Best of Luck!

More catches of the month – Spiny lobster



Paul Andrews, Sally Stribling, Capt Doug and friend Tess with their first day's limit of lobster on opening day of the mini-season.

Fish of the month – Redfish- *Sciaenops ocellatus*

This month's fish centerfold is the red drum, also more popularly known here in Florida as the redfish. Redfish belong to the drum family *Sciaenidae* known for the drumming sound they produce using muscles on the wall of their swim bladder. The drums also include the croaker, Florida whiting (southern kingfish), black drum and seatrouts. Redfish are one of the most often sought-after game and food fish on the flats outside of Flamingo, where they are often sight-fished from a flats boat. Redfish pursued by anglers range from the few pound "puppy drum" up to the 30+ pound breeding females that gather in the east coast inlets on their way to offshore spawning grounds. At any size, these fish are bruisers with big shoulders. Redfish receive their common name from the reddish copper color along the backs of these fish. Chasing after large schools of these fish on the flats has been referred to a "magic red carpet ride". They receive their species name "*ocellatus*" from the presence of one to many spots in front of their tail. Redfish are generally bottom feeders as evidenced by their down-turned mouth and can be seen tailing or mudding on the flats in search of crustaceans (e.g., shrimp, crabs) and possibly worms. They can also be caught on top-water plugs, but probably the best artificial lures is the gold spoon which is swept and fluttered either blind-casting or in front of schooling reds. One of the best still-fishing baits is a half-cut blue crab body cast at the drop-off of tidal flats. This is especially effective at the mouths of the west coast Everglades rivers (i.e. Harney, Broad, and Lostman's).

Bait of the month – Blue crab – *Callinectes sapidus*

Besides being excellent, though messy, table-fare, blue crabs are also excellent baits. Blue crabs are one of the swimming crabs belonging to the crab Family *Portunidae*. Their paddle shaped rear legs give them their swimming ability and allows them to travel long distances by swimming in the water column. As mentioned in the June 2005 UKFC newsletter (vol. 1: 3) whole live blue crabs are one of the popular baits for tarpon. They are hooked once through the carapace at the base of the spine using a 5/0 live bait hook and drifted back with the current. They are also one of the best cut dead baits for redfish. To make a redfish crab bait, remove the carapace the same as you would when cleaning crabs for a meal by popping the shell off of the body, removing the claws, and splitting the body down the center giving you two baits per crab. Gently crush the crab half to ooze out some scent. Hook the crab half with a 3/0 – 5/0 bait holder hook through the muscle and bottom shell. Blue crabs can be caught using the baited Maryland style crab pots or they can be netted using baited hand lines. The western shores of Barnes Sound are good areas to catch blue crabs.

Trash Talk

While Sally and Sharon gave the club members a great lobster seminar, maybe Sally should follow some of her own advice. It comes from a very reliable source that more than one of Sally's lobster nets developed rather large holes on the first attempt to net a bug. What was that you said Sally? "Don't be cheap, with all the time and money you spend to go, spend the couple of extra bucks and make sure that your nets are not rotten." It is rumored that a full 60% of Sally's nets failed to hold up to day one of mini-season. So if anybody wishes to donate money to Sally so she can afford some new nets without any holes, please see her at the next meeting.

Fish Feast – Recipes from the Deep

Poor Man's Lobster – provided by Marty Miller

This recipe is so simple but is so good and very fast. Marty recommends preparing this appetizer or small meal just after you return to the dock and are cleaning fish (hopefully) and scrubbing the boat. Send someone into the kitchen with some of your catch cut into small bite-size chunks. Boil a pot of water and melt some butter in a saucepan. When the water is boiling, add fish chunks. When fish is white entirely through (just a few minutes), it is done. Drain water from chunks and serve with a bowl of the melted butter to dip the fish into.

This recipe is especially good for dolphin cheeks. These are the areas just behind and above the eyes that is often discarded. After the fish are fileted, these areas can be removed with the knife yielding a good 1- 3 inch chunk of good meat.

A dozen dolphin produces 24 chunks that go good with the leftover beer in the cooler that you need to finish before the born-on date is too old.

For Sale

21.6 Ft Cobia Runabout with a walk through windsheild
351 Ford I/O newly rebuilt less that 1 hr on motor,
Float-on trailer, Bimini top and full canvas
\$10,500 OBO, call Capt Doug 305 451 1225

For Rent

Buttonwood Bay condo – 2 Bedroom/ 1.5 Bath, available year-round or seasonal.
Contact Dick and Bette Mead for prices and details at thegoaweigh@juno.com or
631-734-6787

If any club members have items for sale that would be of interest to fellow anglers, we are seeking item descriptions. Please send these to Tom at frankovich@virginia.edu for future inclusion.

Tip Corner

This month's tip concerns finding seatrout in the backcountry. Summer is one of the best times for trout fishing in the backcountry.

Seatrout are generally found within the seagrass beds. In western Florida Bay, the seagrass is very dense, often forming continuous underwater meadows that can extend as far as the eye can see. With this much high quality habitat and the associated high density of prey items, the seatrout are larger here, but the individual fish and small schools may also be spread further apart. To locate some of these fish, look for birds (even Frigate birds), the same as you would offshore or concentrate your efforts in channels on a falling tide that funnel prey items to awaiting seatrout predators. Another strategy is to locate and fish the "fish muds", small patches of very turbid water often white or brown in color resulting from resuspended sediment. Many of these muds are formed by feeding mullet that suck mud off the bottom and expel it, minus any food items, out their gills. Seatrout often gather within these muds either to feed on the mullet themselves, or more likely, to munch on shrimp and other crustaceans dislodged by the feeding mullet. Don't worry about the lack of visibility within these muds, seatrout are excellent at locating prey by vibrations that they sense through their lateral line. If there are bottlenose dolphins within the mud, move on; the seatrout will be more concerned about being prey themselves than finding it.

In eastern Florida Bay the seagrass beds are much sparser due to reduced exchange with the Gulf of Mexico waters and the resulting scarcity of nutrients. The

seatrout in eastern Florida Bay are often concentrated on just a few isolated but dense seagrass patches, so you need to find these productive seagrass patches. Locate these beds when the water is clear. These dense beds form in depressions in the bay bottom that accumulate sediment allowing the denser growth of seagrass. Some patches hold trout, some do not. You may need to drift and fish over many patches, but once you find one that does hold trout, and as long as the seagrass remains healthy, these patches often remain good spots year after year. As a general rule, most of these trout on eastern Florida Bay grass beds are small throwbacks and are often called “smout”, (i.e., small trout), but they can be very concentrated, with a few hundred, maybe more, on an isolated seagrass patch.

Special Thanks to our members and friends that have supported our activities

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