



March 2006
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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 March 1, 7:00 PM, Lighthouse Boat Center
Former location of Scotties, MM 101 bayside
Mini-seminar – Knot Skills



SHRIMP RUN!

Capt. Ed Stell has been doing his homework and studying the tides, moon and weather to catch the shrimp when they are running well. The shrimp shown above were caught in Adams Cut using a dipnet from the boat on February 20. The outgoing current started at dusk and the shrimp ran until about 11. Check out Capt. Ed's shrimping report as the featured article in this month's issue of Dock Talk.

President's message by Capt Doug Jeffrey

Well fellow anglers, a lot has happened in the last month. Our 1st annual chili cook off is in the books. We have a new meeting place - The Lighthouse Boat Center. Please say a Thank you to Michael Cavallaro. The new logo is in the last stages of being finished. Thanks again Pasta Pantaleo. We are ready for club elections. There is a new cast net how to on the web site. Finally several club members manned a club booth at the nautical flea market.

Thanks to Scott and Sara Kallis, Mike and Carolyn Macdonald, Rob Stewart, Tom Frankovich, Barrie Wantz, and Whit van Cott, for their help manning the booth. I would also like to thank everyone that donated or consigned items to be sold at the marine flea market.

Finally Thanks Sally Stribling for all the effort to set up our booth at no cost. Your hard work is greatly appreciated. I know it took lots of phone calls and e-mail to get it set up.

As we enter our second year, now is the time to rededicate your self to helping our club thrive. If you have not renewed you membership please be sure to, we need everyone. Second if you have an idea or are able to help the club in any way please let any club officer know we can use all the help we can get.

If our second year is even close to as successful as the first year we should have a great time. I will see all of you at the meeting on the 1st of March at the Lighthouse Boat Center, at 7:00.

Offshore Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

Well the big news is things are really slow offshore everything seems to be moved into the reef. So if you are going fishing please be sure not to over shoot the fish, by going to far offshore.

Reef Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

This is were all the action is happening, sailfish in 40 to 90 feet of water, kingfish 90 to 180, wahoo 100 to 240 feet, grouper and mutttons scattered all over and dolphin making regular appearances. The only big let down is the yellowtail, while they are every where the bite is slow. It is better to wait for the water to warm up a little before trying the tail's

Inshore Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

Mangrove snapper is the big hitter right now. In 10 to 40 feet of water there are plenty of 5 to 7 pound mangroves falling to small live pilchards and small live pinfish. Be sure to use plenty of chum to pull the fish off of the reef over the sand.

Back-country Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

Red fish seem to be holed up in deep water. Snook are every where and are willing to bite. The black drum are in the creek mouths feeding on crabs. Spanish mackerel will find your chum line and are a hoot on light tackle. When the water warms up later in the morning the bones are on the flats.

Upper Keys Fishing Club News

This past month club members enjoyed a chili cook-off at the last February meeting. Members sampled chilis made from sausage, beef, pork, and venison. Everybody went home with a full belly, a burning sensation on their lips, or both. This past weekend, the Upper Keys Fishing Club hosted an informational booth at the Rotary Club Nautical Flea Market. We exhibited photos from previous club events, present and past issues of Dock Talk and signed up new members. Some members sold boating and fishing equipment with 10% of their proceeds donated to the club treasury. Thanks to Mike and Carolyn MacDonald, Scott and Sara Kallis, Doug Jeffrey, Rob Stewart, Witt van Cott, Barrie Wantz, and others who helped man the booth. Thanks also to Barrie Wantz, Ed Stell, and Witt van Cott for donating portions of their proceeds to the Upper Keys Fishing Club.

At the first Upper Keys Fishing Club meeting to be held March 1st at 7:00 PM at the Lighthouse Boat Center Elections will be held for club officers. At the time of publication, nominated officers are running unopposed. The following nominations were presented to the club:

Doug Jeffrey nominated for President

Tom Frankovich nominated for Vice-president

Witt vanCott nominated for Secretary

Tom Mulligan nominated for Treasurer

Mike MacDonald nominated for remaining board member position.

Shrimping 101 by Ed Stell

Last Winter I was introduced to shrimping. I had some really good days, some fair and other nights were a waste of time. I wanted to have more success and started asking questions. When do shrimp run? How do you know when to go? I also did a lot of internet surfing. When you boil it all down the response I got was "It's a great mystery that no one can figure out!". Like any kind of hunting or fishing there is no

“sure thing” but there are some things that if you know them will add to your bag. The thing I did find is that the “folks in the know” guard their information better than “The Priory of Sion Guards the Da Vinci Code. I got a lot of information, most of it I believe to be old wives tales and I did a lot of observation. Short of being in a good area every night from dawn to dusk you can narrow the odds.

Where to go. Most canals or cuts that flow off grass flats have shrimp runs. The winter months (Late December to Mid March) is when shrimping is done. Adams Cut, Dusenbury Creek, Grouper creek at the opening to Little Buttonwood and Tavernier creek. You can also take shrimp at any of the fishing bridges but they usually require the big nets you can drop from the bridge. **THE KEY is a good current flowing off the flats. It's what moves and concentrates the shrimp in creeks and channels.** At Adams that's an outgoing tide. At Dusenbury it's incoming. However, some nights with a light outgoing the shrimp will go against the current at Dusenbury. At Adams , no current , no shrimp.

When to go. Here is where you got lots of theories. Two (2) days either side of the full moon are the best times because the full moon provides strong tidal flow. In reality the new moon gives stronger tides. The full moon is probably a help in seeing the shrimp. Cold fronts are good because shrimp move off the flats to seek warmer water. I have never really seen any correlation here. Shrimp migrate to the ocean in Winter. If that was true the flats would be devoid of shrimp in the summer and there would also be a return migration to the flats. You see all size shrimp from 1” to small lobsters. Water temperature is probably a factor, that's why you see them during the winter months. One thing I'm sure of is that the shrimp do hide during the day and only move under the cover of darkness. **Go after dark when there is good flow off the flats.** Any of the other factors can't hurt and maybe are a bonus. But, by themselves they are meaningless.

Equipment. Net and some kind of light to see the shrimp. You can use up to a 4X4 foot net to pull behind the boat or to leave in the current. My observation's of these is they catch as much grass as shrimp. Long handled dip nets work best. I've seen all kind of lights including a range of colors. I don't believe the light attract shrimp and in some cases may spook them. I like the high powered light on a hat or helmet. It shines the light where you are looking and it lets you cover more water. For a few bucks and a little garage sale hunting and you put one together. See this issue's Tip of the Month. Another good idea is to make a small pocket in the bottom of your net with a piece of strong mono. After you net one, shake it into the pocket and than go after another. You will save time and you will lose fewer. Empty when it's full or things slow down. Shrimp are fast and can really move. Try to anticipate the drift and place the net in front of the shrimp and quickly left when the shrimp is over the net. It's hard to chase them. They are faster than you.

Predicting the tide. Most people realize that tides change as you move along the coast. However the timing of High and Lows changes even more drastically as you move in shore. Things like wind will also impact tide timing and strength. I know guys who will go at 2:00 AM because that's when the tide is best. UGH! My preference is a good flow from about 7:00 to 10:00 PM. Give's you time to clean the catch and get to bed. (so you can go fishing in the morning.) Another thing to factor in, is that the current you see **is not** what is moving the shrimp off the flats. At the start of an outgoing tide the flats are more active than the channel. You may not see much current but the shrimp are showing up. At the other end of the flow you may see good current but no shrimp. It's stopped out on the flats. Unfortunately you can't get tide data for the mouth of Adams. I've spent time watching it, as I'm sure others who know when to go have. To compute the high and low at Adams at the Blackwater side. Look up the tide of any chart for KEY LARGO, Apply the adjustments for Largo Sound. Add 2.35 to the high and 3.05 to the low. This information is on the Yellow bait house charts. **Here's the kicker add another 2 hours for Adams.**

We took three gallons on 2/20 between 7:00 and 9:00 with one netter. The chart High read 12:29, adding 2:35 and than 2:00 gives you a high at 5:04 PM. Chart Low 6:57 add 3:05, add 2:00 and you get a low at 12:02AM. We got there at 6:30 there was very little flow at 7:00 is was just starting to move but we saw lots of shrimp, current continued to build but was slowing by 9. But at 9 we were not seeing many shrimp. The best shrimping came between the adjusted high 5:00 and adjusted low at 12:00 . Each location is going to have it's own adjustments. It's not black magic but very predictable once you know the adjustment.

Publix shrimp \$6.00 a pound. Netting your own... \$25 a pound but lots of satisfaction. Plus they taste great with the \$50 per pound Yellow Tail you caught yesterday.

Anyone having anything to add, other productive areas, etc post it on the message board at www.upperkeysfishingclub.com or e-mail me.

Catch of the month - Ron Murphy - 35# Gag grouper



This catch puts Ron in the lead in the grouper category for the winter club tournament. He was fishing with Capt. Dick Meade aboard the Go Aweigh on Feb. 1 at Dixie Shoals. Congratulations Ron!

www.upperkeysfishingclub.com

Ed recently took a series of pictures of Capt. Doug throwing a cast net. These pictures may help if are trying to learn the art of the cast net. You can look at it on the WEB site and there is a .pdf (acrobat) file you can download and print. Also check out the bulletin board for postings of current fishing happenings and links to other fishing and weather sites. All past issues of Dock Talk are also available.

UKFC Winter Fishing Tournament

Winter tournament is open in all categories – kingfish, wahoo, grouper. Many fish caught but few weighed in. Be sure to weigh your fish in at the Yellow Bait House and fill out the entry form available at the bait shop or online at www.upperkeysfishingclub.com. Any questions contact Paul Andrews at 305-202-7560 or 305-245-4777.

Kingfish –	Open -	Your name here!
	Light tackle -	Your name here!

	Ladies -	Your name here!
	Junior angler -	Your name here!
Wahoo –	all categories open	
Grouper –	Open -	Ron Murphy 35# 8 oz.

Fish of the month – Blackfin tuna - *Thunnus atlanticus*



This month, the blackfins should be thick on the offshore seamounts. They are the most readily available of the edible tunas in the Keys. Because of their shape, blackfins are also known as footballs. They are easily distinguished from the other tunas common to the Keys (i.e., little tunny or bonito, skipjack, and yellowfin). Distinguishing characters are their dark back, long pectoral fins, and large eyes. Most range in size from a few to 15 pounds; 20 - 25 pounders are a nice catch and 30+ pounders are trophies. The blackfins like small baits trolled fast and far behind the boat. A common trolling lure are the smallest Japanese feathers in blue and white to imitate small flying fish. The blackfins can also be caught by chumming with live pilchards. Because of the shoaling nature of the small baitfish, a school of the chummed pilchards will hang with the one carrying the hook. Trolled long black worms, which resemble eels, are also becoming popular baits. Blackfins also make excellent sashimi, just remember to bleed them.

Bait of the month - Threadfin herring - *Opisthonema oglinum*

Threadfins are also known locally as "greenies" because of their green back. Threadfins, like the pilchards and sardines, belong to the Herring family - Family *Clupeidae* and have the characteristic saw-belly common to all of the herrings. They are easily distinguished from the other herrings by the long thread-like ray they extends back to the tailfin from the dorsal fin. Threadfins can reach a foot in length, but most are a few inches. They can be caught in a chum slick using sabiki rigs or a cast net. These baitfish can be abundant forming acre-size schools that are hard to miss, just look for the birds and the marauding mackerel. These baitfish are most often found oceanside in the spring and summer months. Threadfins can be slow trolled for summer kings or used as live pitch baits for dolphin.

Fish Feast – Recipes from the Deep - Shrimp chowder - Sally Stribling

1 large red onion chopped
1 bunch of green scallions chopped
4 tbs Olive Oil
½ cup chopped garlic(this is a lot of garlic so adjust to taste if necessary)
5 peeled and cubed white potatoes
1 bunch celery chopped
1 bunch fresh cilantro chopped
1 bunch fresh Italian parsley chopped
3 large carrots chopped
1 large bag of frozen sweet corn
1 large can chopped canned tomatoes
1 can of Rotel tomatoes with green chilies
1 large can tomato paste
2 tbs dried chopped Italian season
2 tbs chopped bay leaves
2 tbs of all season or salt and pepper
Thai Chili sauce to taste or other hot sauce of your choice
1 large can of chicken broth
1-2 bottles of clam juice (optional but delicious)
Add a little water if needed
3 lbs of shrimp

Sauté the onion celery and garlic in oil until aroma fills the kitchen. Throw in all of the other ingredients and cook in a slow cooker on low, all day or overnight. Simmer on the low heat for up to 10 hrs. Add the shrimp during the last 30 minutes of cooking and cook through until the fish is opaque. Serve with a side of crusty French bread and hot sauce to sprinkle.

Good with beer and also good with a hearty Zinfandel. This is a heart-healthy recipe also good for the waistline! Lots of lycopene, vitamins, and fibre . Very low fat!

Fish can be substituted!!

For Sale

Danforth Hi-tensile galvanized anchor 13# with 30 feet 5/16 chain \$100

11# Bruce anchor \$60

Contact Barrie Wantz at 852-4286

Tip Corner – Shrimping headlamps - Capt. Ed Stell



Shrimping light gear with switch.

Do you remember the 6 Ps (i.e., Proper Preparation Prevents P\$#%-Poor Performance) discussed in last May's issue of Dock Talk (volume 1, no. 2)? That article was about boat safety and required equipment. The same statement can also be applied to the seemingly low-tech activity of dipping pink shrimp during their winter runs from Florida Bay. To maximize your catch on any given night requires the right equipment. The most important of which is the net. Secondly is having good lights to spot the shrimp. The head gear depicted above is the state-of-the-art in lighting. The most important feature of the hard-hat lighting headgear is that it allows both hands to be free while spotting and netting the shrimp. How many times have you fumbled with a hand held spot while trying to net? The headgear also allows for the light to be shining where you are looking. Also notice the toggle switch wired into the rear of the hard-hat. The switch allows you to turn off the light and avoid blinding your buddies on your way to the beer cooler. To make your own custom rig for the remaining shrimp runs in March or for next year, you will need the following:

- Hard hat (adjustable ones are best)
- Alligator clips or ring wire terminals with wing nuts
- 2-way toggle switch
- 15' of 2-wire 16 guage cable
- 50 watt 12V narrow flood bulb (Westinghouse model # MR16 EXZ)
- piece of sheet aluminum for light mount base
- car , boat, or motorcycle battery

The switch, clips or terminals, wire and battery can be purchased at your auto parts store. The light bulb is available at Ace Hardware in Tavernier or at Interlight (1-800-743-0005). Mount light base to helmet using nuts and bolts. Drill hole and mount switch in rear. Solder wire to switch, lamp and battery terminals. Go shrimping! Good Luck!

Florida Fishing Regulations

Many of you have been asking what changes have been made regarding red grouper. As of January 1 2006, red grouper has been limited to one fish per day per angler in the Gulf of Mexico (both state and federal waters). The 20" total length red grouper minimum size and the five per person per day aggregate grouper bag limit remain unchanged. Rules have not changed for the Atlantic fishery, they are still 20" total length and up to five per person per day as part of aggregate grouper bag limit of five fish.

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

<p>"The Yellow Bait House" Charters Guide Service Live Bait & Tackle</p> <p>MM 101.7 Key Largo, FL 33037 yellowbaithouse@bellsouth.net</p> <p>Gary & Barbara Stills 305-451-0921 Fax 453-3724</p>	<p>Ludington Charter Service</p>  <p>Lake Michigan</p>
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