

May 2006
Volume 2, Number 5
Upperkeysfishingclub.com



Upper Keys Fishing Club
P.O. Box 370484
Key Largo, FL 33037
Founded February 16 2005

Dock Talk

The Upper Keys Fishing Club Newsletter

Next meeting – Wednesday May 3, 7:00 PM, Lighthouse Boat Center
Mini-seminar – Single-hook pin rigs, Capt. Doug
May event - All-you-can-eat at Whale Harbor, date TBA



" Spring is here! "

Catch of the month - Ron and Rhonda Ciaccio with a pretty little bull dolphin caught on Easter



Joe Sheriff

Joe Sheriff died last month, and we have all lost a wonderful friend.

Joe and I boated, fished, dove, speared fish, caught lobster, scallops, stone crabs and about any fish that swims around South Florida. We built boats, rebuilt engines, and his skills with wrenches equalled his skills with a fishing rod (that he also built along with the lures we designed).

Back in outboard infancy when rigs were a challenge to keep running all day, you would have to keep an eye on Joe or he would have the engine taken apart and in pieces on the boat ramp. Joe was an airplane mechanic by trade. He would say "The motor doesn't sound right" and the next thing you knew wrenches were turning and parts started flying off the motor. Fishing would become secondary to making the motor "sound right", and soon enough that motor would start purring and we'd be off on our latest adventure. There were many adventures we had over 48 years of fishing together. The best lesson I learned from Joe was that fish were incidental to the success of the trip. The chance to spend time with a friend in a gorgeous setting and doing things that you love to do were most important. The fish are just the frosting on the cake. We will all miss Joe.

Bob Smart

President's message by Capt Doug Jeffrey

The beginning of May is both a sad and a happy time. The last of our members that call the great white north home are packing up and leaving for the summer not to be seen again until the leaves start to turn and the snow starts to fall. We will miss all of you and will be looking forward to your return when the cold fronts start pushing south and our days start to cool. On a good note one of our

favorite summer visitors is starting to show it's self. Its colorful rainbow dance has us all excited and hoping the weather will calm so we can go drag some hoo's and skirts. For those of us that have stayed behind to fight the heat, mosquitos and the dolphin, I hope to see you at the meeting Wednesday evening. I am going to do my best to show you how to make the old stand by dolphin rig. The single hook pin rig for ballyhoo. Later on in the month we can all get together for our second annual club fish fry. For those of you last year that did not block the evening on your calendar (read with a southern accent) you missed one heck of a good time, and the eats were not bad either. With most of the club settled back home in the north and the dolphin and yellowtails so hungry they are just jumping into the boat I expect to see all of you out on the water, and please do not forget to send us a photo, we all want to share in your good days on the water. Have a great month.

Offshore Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

Well when everyone went north it seems that they took all the kingfish with them. The good news is while they tried to take the wahoo as well they missed a few. Whit was dragging some bait and slipped up and hooked one. He told me it was his first wahoo and by the tone of his voice I'll bet he hopes to see more of them. Sally took a boat load of club members out for a day's dolphin fishing. Sally was able to use some insider information from a yet unnamed source that told her the dolphin had moved way offshore over night and to not stop until she was 14 miles past the reef. While her crew wondered why she was dead set on traveling so she kept her hands on the throttles, and it paid off. They crew caught a cooler full of nice dolphin with some of them going into the 20's. There have been some nice Blackfin caught as well up to 25 lbs, the strange thing is they have not been caught on the hump, but rather while out blind trolling for dolphin. There are still a few amberjacks on the hump for those of you than are into pain. Dolphin season is open and I want to see some nice pictures of some rainbow warrior on the web site. Call me with your fishing reports hope to see you offshore.

Reef Fishing Report, Capt. Doug

One club member that has chosen to remain name less last week caught 57 Yellowtails between 2 and 2.5 Lbs. So the yellowtails are a bite'n the magic depth is about 110 feet, and they are on fire. The tail's should keep biting from now until about mid July when the water really starts heating up, then they will get a little sluggish, but who cares it will be lobster season anyway. If you are out on the reef keep a rod down for grouper because they have been hungry. Capt Chan had a customer that caught 4 on one trip they weighted in at 43, 28, 18, and 16 Lbs, the angler also caught a mutton not bad for a single angler. Now is the time to be on the reef the tails and grouper will be biting until the warm water slows them down. So send me pictures of your tails and grouper so we can share them with the other club members. I hope to see you on the reef fishing a chum slick yellow with tails.

Back-country Fishing Report, Capt. Tom Frankovich

The back-country has been very productive this past winter and spring, especially for large seatrout. We have a bumper crop of larger fish (20 - 27") extending from traditional haunts in western Florida Bay to the northeast creeks (i.e., Trout Creek). These fish are easily taken on live shrimp, but the schools have been so thick and hungry, the guys (and gals, don't call me a sexist!) with artificials are taking more fish because they can cover more water. Tin Can Channel south of Snake Bight has been hot on the falling tide, while anglers are finding large numbers of hungry trout in the muds in the northeast. The fish in these muds are concentrated on the leading edge of the muds, most often upwind, so if you are anchored or staked off and the fishing slackens, adjust your boat position. The larger migratory tarpon are starting to show in the western bay. They are getting hammered at Tom's Harbor Cut southwest of Long Key. Snook and redfish are solid but the best action is north and west of Cape Sable. This may be too far of a run except for the most ambitious anglers but with gas expensive and nonexistent at Flamingo following Wilma, and the Flamingo boat ramp soon closing for the necessary dredging you better have a trust fund or be a good day trader. On the very windy days, anglers are seeking shelter in the lee of the mangrove keys and are finding the mangrove snapper to 16" very cooperative once you get them going with a little chum. Enjoy the back-country while you can before the dog-days, flies, and mosquitoes of summer arrive. Good Luck and Tight Lines.

Upper Keys Fishing Club News, Whit Van Cott



Rob "Soul Train" Stewart, generous host of the April Weenie Roast.

The April 5th. meeting provided members and guests with lots of pointers on how to catch dolphin .Sally Stribling provided most of the instruction by describing her favorite baits to how she uses outriggers and flat lines . She also showed everyone her home made device for holding hooks with 3 foot leaders for catching schoolies . It was a snelled hook holder cut in half and inserted into each end of about a 3 foot length of pvc pipe . I have made one and it works great . When you catch a fish , put it in the cooler , unhook it from the snap swivel , and grab another hook from the holder , bait it up , and get it in the water . Bob Smart added to the program by showing everyone his guaranteed dolphin bait , a small pink plastic squid with an egg sinker in the head . Bob said while everyone was using there newest fashion in dolphin baits this old favorite has out fished them all . I made some up , made by Boone , sold at Walmart with 40 pound test line to compete with my favorite the purple Billy Bait . We will see what happens . Tom Frankovich ended the program with a demonstration on inserting a bead chain with hook into a ballyhoo . The big question was which is the right way to insert the threading needle , down the throat ,the way Tom did it , or threw the rear end . Please send Tom an email with your recommended preference and why . My friends who attended the program commented on the good job Sally , Tom and Bob did cause a week later they were using there ideas to catch fish .

April 22nd was a perfect evening to have a cook-out at Rob Stewart's house . The sunset was beautiful and about 30 members enjoyed each others company . There was plenty of food and Tom Frankovich cooked the hot dogs and hamburgers . Lot's of fishing reports and stories were shared and everyone had a good time .

Fish of the month – Tripletail - *Lobotes surinamensis*

We devote this month's fish feature to the easily overlooked tripletail. Especially when the big dolphin are arriving, yellowtail are stepping up their metabolism and the migratory tarpon are making their appearance this month, tripletail were probably not on your mind. Being we have given those other fish the attention they deserve in previous issues of Dock Talk, this month we introduce the sometimes small, dark, and ugly tripletail. Tripletail are rarely targeted specifically, except maybe in the Indian River at the Intracoastal markers or maybe in the back-country in the fall in northwest Florida Bay when they are hanging below the crawfish pot bouys just outside the Park.

Tripletail are the sole Atlantic members of the fish family *Lobotidae*. They look like freshwater bluegills on steroids (some reach over 30#, most are 1 - 3#) and receive their name from their large dorsal and anal fins that extend to the caudal fin (tailfin) giving the appearance of having three tails. Tripletail hang out below weedlines, crab pot floats, or along vertical structure. They are often seen lounging on their side in the sargassum weedline. You should always have a rod and rig ready

for these guys when you are cruising the weedlines. A recommended outfit is a 15 - 20# pound spinner with a small (1/2 to 1 oz.) bucktail tipped with either shrimp or squid. Live shrimp are never passed by any red-blooded American tripletail, but it is easier to pack squid or frozen shrimp for the occasional tripletail. Always cast past or away from the fish to avoid spooking them and reel the bait or jig into range. Tripletail are excellent eating, but make sure your filet knife is sharp; their skin is as tough as that of triggerfish.

Bait of the month - Squid - *Loligo* spp. and *Sepioteuthis sepioidea*

Whether you're yellowtailing, scouting the weedlines, deep-dropping for grouper, or drifting the nighttime depths for swords, you shouldn't be without squid. Squid is a versatile bait that can be slow trolled, drifted, jiggged whole, or used as a strip bait. It's cheap (\$3 box), doesn't take up much room, and tastes great if you want to sautee it at the end of the day. The variety of squid preparations, their targeted species, and their associated rigs are listed below.

<u>Preparation</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Rigs</u>
Whole squid	grouper swordfish	Large bullet-head jigs Drift rigs at 200' with cyalume sticks
Mantle strips and tentacles	yellowtail tripletail	Hank Brown 1/16 and 1/4 oz. jigs 1/2 oz bucktail or Nylure jigs

Squids are molluscs belonging to the family *Loliginidae*. The squid species most often used as bait and found in all the supermarkets is the California Market Squid - *Loligo opalescens*. The commercially targeted squid in the north Atlantic is the Atlantic long-fin squid *Loligo pealei*. We have five squid species in Florida but the only squid commonly encountered on South Florida reefs is the Caribbean reef squid - *Sepioteuthis sepioidea*. A real treat is the opportunity to catch live squid. Sometimes squid can be drawn to the lights of your boat at night and you can jig a Yozuri squid snag to entangle these baits when they wrap their tentacles around the jig.

Hotspot of the month - Weedlines

We normally think of hotspots as specific locations that you can plug the lat/longs into and find them every time. Weedlines are different types of hotspots. These hotspots have varying presence, location, and fish-producing capability. Weedlines are mostly thought of in association with dolphin, but these are also prime spots for finding our fish of the month - the tripletail. We commonly encounter three types of weedlines here in the Keys. I'll start with least productive and work to the best. The first type of weedline is comprised of seagrass leaves and originates from the shedding of seagrass leaves from shallow inshore seagrass meadows. Regardless

of whether these weedlines are comprised of turtle grass leaves, shoal grass leaves, or manatee grass leaves, these weedlines are generally unproductive. This may be due to the fact that the shed seagrass leaves are senescent and have started to decay, but the main reason for the scarcity of baitfish in these lines is likely due to the general 2-dimensional structure of the weedlines. The flat blade-like leaves do not have all the nooks and crannies of the pelagic *Sargassum* weeds that hold minute fish, shrimp, and crabs. You will probably encounter these seagrass weedlines first on your way offshore. Unless you see some bird action, it is probably best to keep searching and move on. The second type of weedline is the most commonly encountered weedline and that is the windrow weedline. These weedlines always set up parallel to the wind and are comprised almost entirely of 2 closely related species of *Sargassum* weed *S. natans* and *S. fluitans*. These weedlines can be very productive and are easily followed by trolling directly upwind or downwind. The third weedline is similar to the windrow weedline in being comprised of *Sargassum*, but it has an added feature that greatly improves its fish-holding ability. The added feature is that these weedlines form along current edges separating two different waters. Bait and flotsam and jetsam get trapped in the boundary between the two currents. These weedlines can form perpendicular to the wind, but large winds will cause them to break up and scatter. One obvious feature of a current edge weedline are spinning individual weeds in the weedline. If you see this, stop and fish hard, these are the primo weedlines. A fourth type of weedline similar to the current edge weedline is that formed by ebb tidal jets outflowing from estuaries. These emanate from coastal inlets and form on the edges of the outgoing estuarine water. We do not have this geography in the Keys, so we do not encounter that type of weedline here. If you do venture further north along the Florida Atlantic coast you may fish these features. These inshore weedlines will hold cobia, tripletail, and large jack crevalle (to 35#).

Keys Daydreaming - Mike MacDonald

It's only been 6 weeks since Carolyn and I left the "KEYS" and sometimes it feels like it was yesterday and at other times it seems like a year. As I sit here jealous of the fact that some of you are fishing and I'm 'UP NORTH' working I have time to reflect about last winter. I would say I'm in memory overload. Lets start with Wilma, no forget about her. Next was the Tortugas fishing trip. My mutton snapper I had mounted must now be 8 feet long and a least 95 lbs (maybe). Scott had a big shark on for a while and Mikkell lost about \$700 worth of tackle. Next was my oldest son Jason catching his first dolphin. Then my youngest son Jared caught three kings one which was big, all this under the watchful eye of Capt Doug. I then ran into a long dry spell. I'll never forget my boat jumping lesson with Mikkell (ask Scott about it). During my last fishing trip I was with Scott Kallis, together we managed to hook a thresher shark. It got real exciting for 5 minutes. Well I've got to get back to work. I can only "KEY'S DAYDREAM" about half the time the rest of the time its work.

Mike MacDonald board member at-large

Tip Corner – Ciguatera poisoning - Don't get it!

In last month's issue of Dock Talk, I mentioned the possibility of ciguatera in amberjack and I alluded to a lengthier discussion about this rare type of toxic poisoning in this present issue. I came to learn a lot about this illness through my late friend, housemate, and fishing buddy Bill Cook. Bill was a marine AC and diesel mechanic who did a lot of work on fishing boats. Many times the ship's crew would give him a few gallon bags of cleaned fish following a job. One time he was working in the Port of Miami and one of the ship crews gave him some kingfish and we all had a barbecue at Blue Waters Marina in Tavernier that following weekend. He was finishing work on that same fishing boat the next week and got some more supposed kingfish, which he ate by himself at home. Bill became violently ill the night after eating the fish and had to be brought to the hospital. He was quickly diagnosed with ciguatera poisoning. This was just the start. He stayed in the hospital a few nights but then was allowed home. He was too weak to go back to work with muscle and deep bone aches, similar to the flu. Many of his senses were reversed, particularly his sense of temperature. Cold drinks felt scaldingly hot and things that were too hot felt cold. Food also tasted very metallic, not that he could keep much down. He was also very sensitive to light and we had to shutter all the windows in the house. Bill was in this state for about a month and a half and never fully recovered though, he did return to work. During his illness, he stopped taking his acid reflux medication because he thought the acid reflux had stopped. It didn't; he just lost all feeling in his esophagus because of ciguatera. This led to erosion of the esophagus and eventual cancer. Whether this may have happened without ciguatera poisoning, nobody knows. Bill was extremely unlucky; lucky were the rest of us who ate the uncontaminated batch of fish the weekend before.

What is ciguatera? and **how fearful should we be** of it? First, ciguatera is a rare toxic form of fish poisoning. It is caused by eating fish that are contaminated with ciguatoxin. Ciguatoxin is tasteless and is not destroyed by cooking. Ciguatera poisoning is incurable; only the symptoms are treated. The resulting adverse effects, some of which are described above in Bill's case, may last for decades. Ciguatoxin originates in a few species of microscopic single-celled marine algae belonging to the dinoflagellates (the same group of algae responsible for red tide). The predominant dinoflagellate species producing ciguatoxin is *Gambierdiscus toxicus*. This dinoflagellate is epiphytic (i.e., it attaches to algae). It does this by a mucus thread. The ciguatoxin produced by this and other ciguatoxic dinoflagellates is bio-accumulated and concentrated in the fatty tissues of herbivorous fish and the predatory fish that eat the algae-eating herbivores and lower level predatory fish. With each step in the food chain, the toxin becomes more and more concentrated. Fish species that eat a lot of algae (e.g., hogfish) may become highly contaminated during outbreaks of ciguatoxic dinoflagellates. More commonly, the fish having the highest concentrations of ciguatoxin are the top predators, specifically the great barracuda.

Ciguatera is limited to tropical reefs where ciguatoxic dinoflagellates occur. Some fish in more temperate regions have caused ciguatera, but these fish were always migratory fish originating from tropical reefs. Historically, the fish most commonly associated with ciguatera is the barracuda and in Dade County its sale is prohibited. In one South Florida study, barracuda comprised 48% of all ciguatera cases, followed by groupers (12%), hogfish (8%), and amberjack (7%). The remaining occurrences were mostly single cases by single fish species. In 1982 it was estimated that 1300 ciguatera cases occurred annually from Palm Beach to the Keys. The severity of the cases depended on the amount of fish eaten and the degree of contamination within the fish.

What causes ciguatera outbreaks? The quick answer is: we don't know. Ciguatoxic dinoflagellates are always present on our reefs, though in small numbers. It is not known what triggers these algae to become abundant. Some previous outbreaks have occurred the year after large storms. Following the passages of Hurricane David and Allen across the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, fatal outbreaks occurred in the affected areas. Coincidentally, my friend Bill contracted ciguatera in 1993, one year after Hurricane Andrew. Will the storm activities of the past two years in our area produce ciguatera outbreaks? We don't know and I am not sure anyone is looking at that question.

To avoid ciguatera, first don't be stupid and eat large barracuda, or for that matter, the small ones too. We have such a variety of fish to choose to eat, why take a chance with the fish that has exhibited the greatest odds of being contaminated and eaten. You should also be wary when someone, particularly someone who may not know the difference between kingfish and barracuda, offers you cleaned kingfish (though kingfish may also be contaminated). Second, consider targeting smaller fish for the table. The smaller the fish of a particular species, the more likely it is to be younger, and therefore less likely to have accumulated high levels of ciguatoxin over a longer lifetime. Unfortunately, there doesn't appear to be any correlation with time of year, so it would be ineffective to avoid eating fish during a certain season. Try to maintain a healthy liver, this is the organ that does the decontaminating, so don't overload it. Finally, don't worry too much, 1300 cases, mostly mild, in the millions of fish-eating occurrences is still a very small percentage.

Fish Feast – Recipes from the Deep -

"Take-Out style" fish - Brendan McGovern

Like take-out chinese food that has many combinations of similar similar sauces and meats, this recipe can be a little different every time you try it. No special ingredients or French sauce preparations, just stuff you might find in the back of bachelor redneck cupboard. Pre-heat oven to 500F. Paint serving size pieces of your favorite fish with oil, mayo, or milk. Coat with bread crumbs, crushed corn flakes, or instant mashed potatoes. Season with salt and pepper, Old Bay, or your favorite

seasoning. Bake 10 minutes. My favorite combinations are: oil with corn flakes, mayo with bread crumbs and milk with potatoes.

Florida Fishing Regulations

Tripletail - 15", 2 per person.
 Snook season closes May 1.

Subject index for all issues of Dock Talk

Looking for some info. not in this month's Dock Talk? Check the following index. All previous issues of Dock Talk are available at www.upperkeysfishingclub.com.

Entry	Issue	Page #
Amberjack	April 2006	7
Ballyhoo	May 2005	3 - 4
Blue crab	August 2005	7
Blue runner	April 2006	7 - 8
Bonefish	October 2005	5
Cigar minnow	July 2005	7
Ciguatera	May 2006	8 - 9
Dolphin	May 2005	3
	June 2005	8
Drift fishing	April 2006	10
Dry Tortugas	January 2006	1, 3 - 5
	February 2006	1 - 2
Fish Fry	June 2005	3
Freddy the one-eyed alligator	October 2005	4
Goggle-eyes	February 2006	9
Islamorada Hump	April 2006	8
Kolek, Frank	September 2005	2 - 3
Mullet		
Striped	June 2005	5
Black	June 2005	5
Pilchards	September 2005	7
Recipes		
Ceviche	July 2005	7
Grilled lobster	September 2005	7 - 8
Grilled tuna	April 2005	6
Mojo dolphin	May 2005	6 - 7
Poor man's lobster	August 2005	7 - 8
Seafood kabobs	January 2006	11
Shrimp chowder	March 2006	8
Smoked amberjack	April 2006	9
Smoky salmon	February 2006	9
Snapper Vera Cruz	June 2005	7
Take-out style fish	May 2006	9 - 10
Redfish	August 2005	6
Sailfish	February 2006	8
Seatrout	August 2005	8 - 9

Sheriff, Joe	May 2006	2
Shrimp	October 2005	5
	March 2006	3 - 5, 9 -10
Silversides	April 2005	4 - 5
Six P's	May 2005	7 - 8
Snapper		
Mangrove	July 2005	6
Mutton	January 2006	10
Yellowtail	April 2005	4
Snook	September 2005	6 - 7
Speedos (not the swim suit!)	January 2006	10 - 11
Squid	May 2006	6
Tarpon	June 2005	4 - 5
Tournament results		
Independence Day 2005	August 2005	3
Independence Day 2006		
Summer 2005	October 2005	4
Winter 2005	April 2006	7
Trailerling	January 2006	11 - 14
	February 2006	10
Triggerfish	April 2005	6
Tripletail	October 2005	6
	May 2006	5 - 6
Trolling	July 2005	8
	September 2005	8
Tuna		
Blackfin	March 2006	7
Weedlines	May 2006	6 - 7
Weenie roast	May 2006	4 - 5
Yellowtail trip	April 2005	3 - 4

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

"The Yellow Bait House"
 Charters
 Guide Service
 Live Bait & Tackle



MM 101.7
 Key Largo, FL 33037
 yellowbaithouse@bellsouth.net

Gary & Barbara Sills
 305-451-0921
 Fax 453-3724

Ludington Charter Service



Lake Michigan

Ballyhood
 Big Game Trolling Lures



Berrell Primrose

714-545-0196
 2261 S. Ritchey St.
 Santa Ana, CA 92705

fax 714-545-0197
www.ballyhood.com
 bsilva@ballyhood.com

Reel Life Art



3023 Wilson Street
 Hollywood, FL 33020

Pasta Pasta Pasta
 Marina Artist

954-290-4262

www.ReelLifeArt.com PastaPastaPasta.com

SHARON SMITH
 ASSISTANT BRANCH MANAGER
 TRADEWINDS



101433 OVERSEAS HWY. • KEY LARGO, FL 33037
 (305) 451-3033 • FAX (305) 455-7808
 EMAIL sharons@firststatebank.com



LIGHTHOUSE
 BOAT CENTER INC.
 WORLD WIDE BOAT SALES

Michael R. Cavallaro
 President

Mile Marker 101
 Key Largo, FL 33037
 305 451 0068 • Fax 305 451 0490
mrc@bellsouth.net

FLORIDA • TEXAS • CALIFORNIA
 GEORGIA • SOUTH CAROLINA • VIRGINIA

www.lighthouseboatcenter.com

Gulfstream Party Fishing
 Snapper • Kingfish • Grouper • Dolphin • Wahoo



Capt. Dean Warner

Tel: 305-451-5788
 Email: Gulfstream1@aol.com
Fishforakeys.com/Gulfstream

Doran Bay Marina
 Key Largo, FL 33037

COLDWELL BANKER

SCHMITT
 REAL ESTATE CO.

**SALLY STRIBLING
 REALTOR®**

(305) 451-4422 BUS.
 (877) 289-0035 TOLL FREE
 (305) 283-2002 CELL
 (305) 451-1220 FAX
miamiaj@bellsouth.net EMAIL

100430 Overseas Highway, Suite 106
 Key Largo, FL 33037



Andy Griffiths Charters
 Key West, Marquesas Keys, & Dry Tortugas