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IF I HAD A BOAT

Lots of you readers out there already have boats. This column is not for you, although you might still learn a little or get a chuckle out of it. This column is intended for those of you out there who are absolutely certain that everything will fall right into place and your life will be complete, if you only had a boat.

The idea of a boat is just so damn romantic. They give you access to the open seas where you can break the bonds of your work-a-day life and really find true freedom, right?? There are so many different types of boats that there is something for everybody, from the smallest dingy to the largest megayacht.

The reality of the boating experience can be pretty close to the heaven described above, or it can come very near to experiencing the fiery pits of hell. It is really pretty much up to you to determine which way your boating experience goes.

The whole experience starts with the choice of the boat. Pick something appropriate for what you want to do and where you want to go. If you have never ever operated or maintained a boat, start small. Small boats are fairly simple, they are easy to get unstuck (if you happen to forget about the tide) and generally, they are cheaper to fix when you do mess up. I have seen far too many people buy a big complicated boat (because they can) and wind up having a hellish time because they exceeded their skill level. New boats can be quite expensive these days, but you do get a dealer who should stand behind them and help with some of the troubles. If a new boat is your choice, look for an established dealer who has been in business for years. Dealers who survived the 2007/2008 economic crash probably offer good service and aren't going anywhere.

If you are going for a used boat, make sure that the major systems are in good order. Get a mechanic to check the compression of the motor and find out the hours, when possible. Most marine motors are capable of running way more hours than you might think, I have almost never seen a worn out boat motor, it is corrosion and improper maintenance and misuse that kills them. Don't worry so much about the little stuff like horn, lights, pumps, etc. They are important for safety, but they are generally easy and cheap to fix.

The most important thing to realize is that, while they may seem to have similarities, a boat is absolutely nothing like your car. Boats are produced by hundreds of relatively small manufacturers, not a handful of mega corporations with billion dollar-automated factories. Boats are much more hand crafted than cars and quality of wiring and other critical systems varies widely between builders. Unlike cars, boats also sit for weeks or months at a time during off-season periods. This is a phenomena that I don't really understand in Florida, but despite year round beautiful weather, many of our friends who came here from the North have retained old habits and they only use their boats during spring and summer. Batteries, fuel systems and electronics, like to be used regularly, when they sit, the gremlins creep in. I can't believe how many of our storage customers show up in April after not seeing their boats for 4 to 6 months and just don't understand why they won't start.

Last, but certainly not least, don't be afraid to admit what you don't know. In our rental fleet, we have very few problems with novice boaters who admit their lack of knowledge and ask for instruction. The boaters who have issues are the ones who think that they know everything and are unwilling to listen and ask questions. A USCG Auxiliary or Power Squadron class is a good place to start and these classes teach you the basics of navigation and safe boating, but they are not really able to offer hands on instruction on the water. There are many well qualified boat Captains who will be glad to go out on your boat and teach you the in's and outs of boating in our area. Don't be afraid to call on them.

Boats can be a lot of fun, but the best advise that I ever saw about having fun on a boat was to go on somebody else's. If you heed this advise, you are almost certain to have a good time, but don't forget, your buddy's boat runs on gas, not thanks, chip in if you want to ever be asked back.

Merle & Flip



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ON THE COVER: A happy, lady angler with an extremely healthy Redfish caught on a recent trip in the Tampa Bay area. Now is the time to get out there and hunt big "reds" in Florida! Catch a trophy? Share it with us on our socials to be possibly featured!

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FALL FISHING THE BAY

by Captain George Hastick



When November rolls around, fishing in Tampa Bay transforms into an exciting adventure. The weather cools down, and so do the waters, making it the perfect time to cast your line. Whether you're a seasoned angler or just starting out, you'll find plenty of opportunities to reel in some fantastic fish during this month.

In November, Tampa Bay is alive with various fish species. Redfish are schooling up, making them a popular target for many fishermen. These beauties are just fun to catch, since they never give up. Speckled Trout are another highlight this month. They

thrive in the cooler waters and can be found near grass flats and shell beds along with the Redfish. Don't forget about Snook, as they can still be caught regularly during November, especially around areas that have good water movement like jetties and bridges.

Tampa Bay has countless fishing spots, but some are more fruitful in November. The shallow waters near the mangroves can be gold mines for catching Redfish and Snook. The flats

around Weedon Island and the areas near the Sunshine Skyway Bridge also yield good catches. Keep an eye open in your wake when you are running the edges of the flats because you might see some Pompano jumping out of the water. If you do, go back to that area and fan cast some Pompano jigs and you might get rewarded with a tasty meal.

Also keep an eye out for Cobia cruising under manatees, along the bridge pilings, range markers and channel markers. They will readily take a live bait like Pinfish or Threadfin under a cork, along with many artificial baits like a **Saltwater Assassin Artemis** soft plastic swim bait. If you're up for a little adventure, consider heading out to the deeper waters where you might hook a Grouper or Snapper around the channel edges and the bridges. Remember Gag Grouper are catch and release only but they are a fun fight!

November brings a change in the weather, and that can play a big role in your fishing success. The temperatures start to cool down, usually ranging from the mid-60s in the morning to mid to high 70s during the day. This scenario leads fish to become more active as they prepare for the winter months.



Using the right fishing techniques can make a noticeable difference. For Redfish, try sight fishing with lures in shallow waters. Cast past the fish and reel in slowly to avoid spooking them but never reel at them. When targeting Speckled Trout, a twitch retrieve can work wonders or a shrimp under a popping cork. Give your lure or popping cork a few quick jerks and then pause—this imitating wounded bait and the splashing of the cork will attract their attention.

In conclusion, fishing in Tampa Bay during November offers an unforgettable experience, from the thrill of the catch to the stunning views of the bay. With a little preparation and the right mindset, you can enjoy some of the best fishing of the year! 🎣

Captain George Hastick of "Fish Hunter Fishing Charters" in St. Petersburg has been fishing the waters of Tampa for over 35 years & guiding over 20 years. From novice to professional; Captain George will make you feel as if you have been fishing buddies for years. Contact him at 727-525-1005, www.FishTampa.com or email CaptGeorge@TampaBay.rr.com.





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NOVEMBER ON THE GULF COAST

by Captain Justin Searcy

November is one of my favorite months on Florida's Gulf Coast – the waters are cooling down, the fish are active, and the season brings out the best of our community. After the recent storms, there's a renewed energy here, and it's great to see everyone enjoying the Gulf and supporting each other. November is all about what makes our coast special, from the fish we catch to the people who keep our waters thriving.

This November, a few things stand out: the post-storm cleanup efforts with my friends from the Tarpon Springs Rotary, some unforgettable inshore redfishing, and the quality of fishing this season that's making each trip out on the water memorable.

October kicked off stone crab season, and there's no better time to enjoy this Gulf Coast favorite. Fresh stone crab claws are a delicacy here, and knowing they come

straight from our waters makes them even better. Stone crabs are harvested in a way that allows their claws to grow back, keeping this local tradition sustainable and plentiful for years to come. If you're interested in getting your hands on fresh claws or even trying your own traps, you might be lucky enough to find someone like Captain Rick, my good buddy and local fishing guide who makes handcrafted stone crab traps and catches some of the best claws in the area.

Otherwise, if that's not your style, a place to enjoy these local flavors, Rusty Bellies in Tarpon Springs is a top spot. I love pulling up by boat and diving into their menu, filled with fresh Gulf Coast seafood. It's a great way to relax and soak in the heart of our coastal community, and there's something special about knowing



that what's on your plate came right from these waters.

As for the fishing, November is prime time for inshore action. Redfish are schooling up along the grass flats and oyster beds, making for some incredible sight-casting opportunities. A little cut bait or a topwater lure is all it takes to

get their attention, and the results speak for themselves. There's nothing quite like watching these fish tail in the shallows.

Snook are also moving back to the mangroves and river mouths as the water cools. Targeting them around structure with live pilchards or shrimp has been especially productive lately. Speckled Trout are hanging out on the deeper grass flats, and a popping cork with shrimp or soft plastics is a sure-fire setup. November's fishing brings that perfect balance of activity and variety – it's a great time to be on the water.



There's a unique energy on our coast right now, with everyone pitching in and supporting each other. Our recent cleanup efforts with the Tarpon Springs Rotary was a reminder of the community's strength and the pride we all have in our waters. Whether it's picking up fresh seafood, booking a fishing charter, or grabbing supplies from places like my Tarpon Springs go-to, Boat and Motor Superstores, every choice to shop local keeps our coastal lifestyle thriving.

For the latest fishing updates, photos, and tips, follow along on my Instagram @capt_justin_searcy. And if you're ready to add some fresh stone crab claws to your table or set up your own traps, I'm just a message away. Here's to a November filled with great catches, local flavors, and a shared love for our waters. See you out there! 🎣

- Captain Justin Searcy



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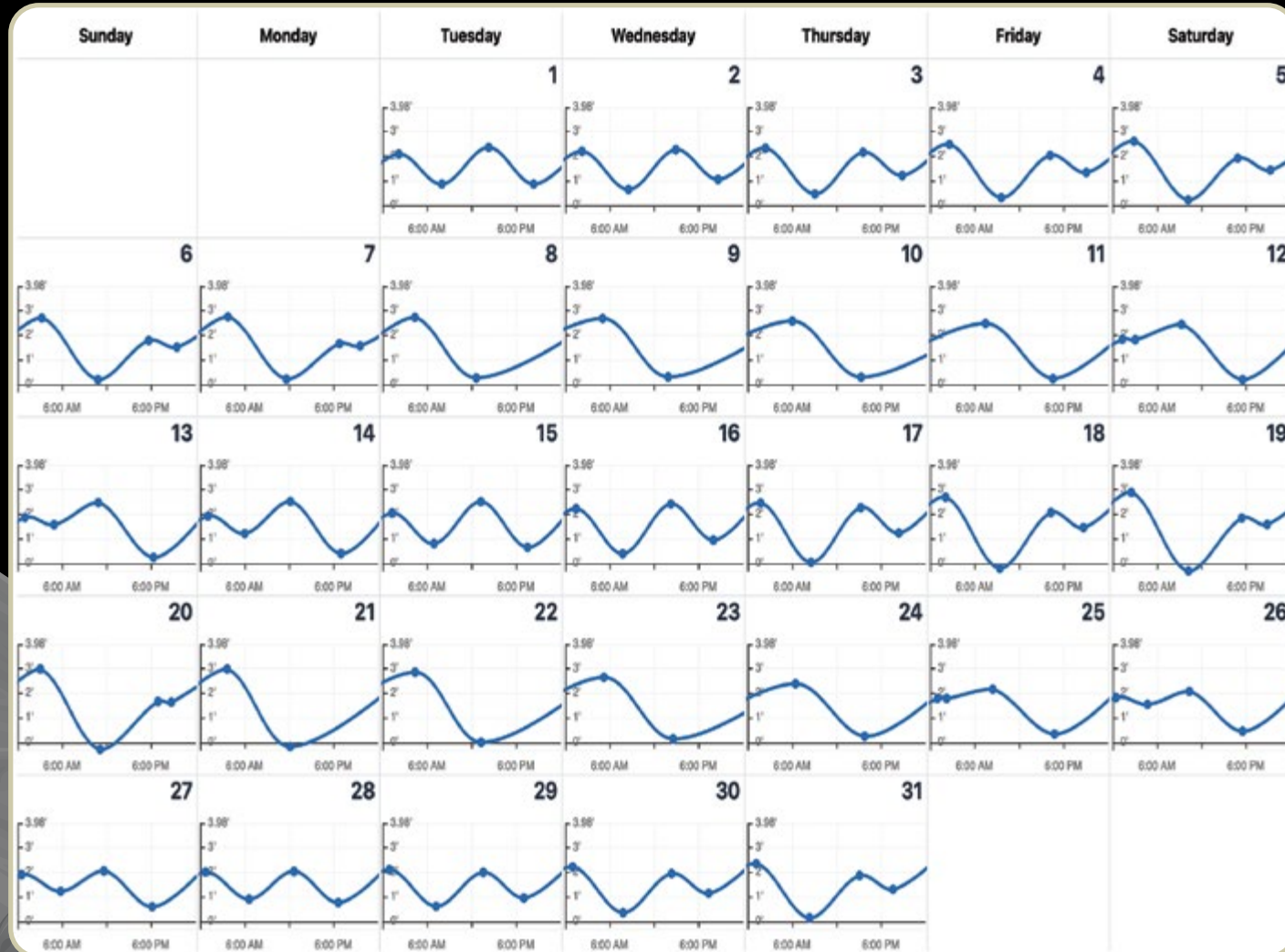
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Conversions for Clearwater Beach Area

High	Low	Location
-0:02	-0:10	Dunedin, St. Joseph Sound
-0:05	-0:15	Anclote Key, South End
+0:42	+0:42	Tarpon Springs, Anclote River
-0:07	-0:03	North Anclote Key
+0:41	+0:39	Old Port Tampa
+0:33	+0:53	Gulf Harbors
+0:42	+1:05	Hwy 19 Bridge, Pithlachascotee River
+0:50	+1:35	New Port Richey, Pithlachascotee River
+0:36	+0:43	Hudson, Hudson Creek

Conversions for St. Marks River Area

High	Low	Location
+0:23	+1:18	Everglades City
-1:17	-1:03	Cape Romano
-1:04	-1:08	Marco Island
-1:59	-2:04	Naples
-0:46	-0:09	Indian Bay
-0:59	-0:42	Bayport
-0:25	+0:23	Withlacoochee River

Conversions for Tampa Bay Area

High	Low	Location
+0:49	+0:58	Gandy Bridge
+1:38	+1:55	Courtney Campbell Cswy.
+1:38	+1:55	Safety Harbor
+0:20	+0:22	Ballast Point
+0:07	+0:26	Hillsborough Bay
+0:21	+0:29	McKay Bay Entrance
+0:41	+0:39	Old Port Tampa
-2:27	-2:24	Egmont Key
-2:53	-2:46	Anna Maria, Bradenton Bch
-2:10	-2:19	Anna Maria, City Pier
-1:24	-0:55	Bradenton, Manatee River
-0:30	+0:14	Redfish Pt., Manatee River
-2:22	-1:58	Mullet Key Channel, Skyway
+0:08	+0:17	Shell Point
-0:22	-0:29	Point Pinellas
-1:34	-1:30	Pass-a-Grille Beach
-1:32	-1:05	Gulfport
-1:18	-0:44	St. Pete Beach Causeway
-2:14	-2:04	John's Pass
-1:40	-1:18	Madeira Beach Causeway
-2:00	-1:25	Cortez, Sarasota Bay
-1:38	-0:58	Sarasota Bay
-2:02	-1:38	Venice Inlet
-0:57	-0:40	Englewood, Lemon Bay
-1:27	-0:59	Placida, Gasparilla Sound
+1:38	+1:56	El Jobean, Myakka River
+1:52	+2:30	Shell Point, Peace River
+1:06	+1:27	Punta Gorda, Charlotte Hbr.
-1:12	-1:56	Boca Grande, Charlotte Hbr.
-0:19	+0:26	Pineland, Pine Island
+0:43	+1:28	Matlacha Pass
-0:55	-1:14	Redfish Pass, Captiva Is.
-0:46	-0:20	Captiva, Pine Island Sound
-2:20	-2:28	Captiva, Gulf Side
-0:25	+0:16	Galt Isle, Pine Island Sound
-0:30	-0:44	St. James City, Pine Island
+2:08	+2:44	Fort Myers
+1:15	+2:02	Cape Coral Bridge
+1:08	+1:40	Iona Shores
+0:51	+0:42	Indian Rocks Beach, ICW

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IT'S PRIMETIME FOR WHITETAIL

by Misty Wells

November is said to be the best month of the year to hunt Whitetail Deer and it can be your best time to land a mature buck. In some areas the bucks are on the tail end of the pre-rut and will be starting to hunt down the does. Now is the time to look for scrapes, rubs and signs that big bucks are in the area. Bucks use scrapes to make their declaration of dominance by leaving scent from his nasal, preorbital and forehead glands. When the scraping work is done, the buck will paw the ground and urinate to excite and draw in does and try to deter any bucks from his claimed area. The size of the tree can help



determine the size of the buck; pretty much all bucks will rub a tree that is 1-3 inches in diameter, however, larger trees generally will be rubbed by a buck that is three years old or older.

Now is the time to setup your ground blind or tree stand in staging areas near game trails, bedding areas, pinch-points or established travel patterns. When you go in the woods to setup your game cameras or your blinds please remember to use scent control. A lot of hunters only use scent control when they are going in the woods to hunt, not realizing you already ruined your hunting area by spreading human scent.

A few tips on scent control that are helpful every year:

Step 1: Don't put on your hunting clothes until you reach your destination. Your truck has a lot of odors. Put your hunting clothes in a non-scented plastic bag or something similar and dress outside when you arrive.

Step 2: Spray from your boots up then be sure to spray and cover your head.



Step 3: Remove your hunting clothes after leaving the woods and put them in a non-scent bag or hang outside in the open air until the next day.

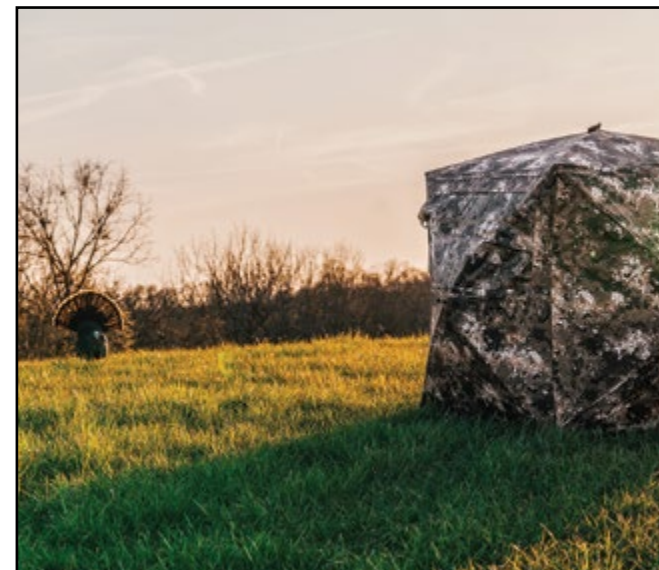
Think about it. We don't get much time to hunt; on average we get about 6 to 10 days a year. Doesn't it make sense to do everything you can to be successful? Something as simple as scent control can make a difference between going home successful or with nothing.

In a perfect world you have been able to setup your game cameras and been able to collect data for months; however, in the real world, probably not. A lot of us hunters don't have access to private lands and we are hunting on public land or if you have a lease, most of us have zero time to prep for season. If you can setup some game cameras try not to enter the woods to set them up or scout during dusk or dawn, this is usually when the Whitetail are moving the most. Once you get in the woods, look for some heavily used game trails, hopefully with fresh tracks or scat. Place your cameras in that area. Great camera locations are trails, food plots, water sources, salt licks or over bait, if it's legal. And check your camera angles. Be sure your target area is at least 5 to 10 yards away; be sure you have a clear line of sight and that you have pre-checked your camera settings. Make sure to format your memory card, re-check your settings on the camera, and use scent control when hanging your cameras. If you are hunting public land, bring a ladder to put your game cameras up high out of arms reach which may help prevent it from getting stolen.

Use the "Silent Treatment" to make sure your ground blinds, stools, chairs, and climbers a clear from noise when they move. There is almost nothing worse than getting ready to take that shot, you move slightly and your chair or climber makes a noise that alerts the target and they leave. One thing to think about also when you are choosing your outer wear is to walk around in it. Does it make noise when you walk and move around? If so, you may not want to purchase that item. When you are setting up your blinds or stands some of the best locations will be along heavy traveled corridors like game trails, ditches, ridges and draws between primary bedding and feeding areas. Try not to "over trim", by cutting away brush and limbs around your stands or blinds thus giving away your location and cover. Sit in your stand or blind and draw your bow or shoulder your gun in all directions to be sure you have a clear line of fire when the critical time comes.

I should not have to tell you, but please practice hunter safety this year by wearing the right clothes and please let someone

know where you are hunting and when you will be back. If you are hunting in a tree stand, do NOT leave the ground unless you properly have on your safety harness! EVER! Never carry equipment up and down the tree; use a haul line to raise and lower your gear. Do not modify your stand, wear gripping boots, and take your time moving 10 to 12 inches at a time. I prefer a ground blind myself because they are easy to put where ever you want and most of them are pretty lightweight to carry in. When hunting in a ground blind you can use some local limbs and foliage to put around and on your blind to make it look more natural. They have new technology now that has a 1-way screen so when you are moving behind the scenes in your blind you can see out, but they can't see in. I am excited to try some new brands this year for ground blinds, so once I get a chance to be in the woods I will let you know how it goes.



Now more than ever it is important for us to get outside, take some time from real life and our everyday problems and take it outside. I am looking to bag a few deer this year the freezer is getting empty, but if for some reason I don't I am going to enjoy every moment in the woods. ▣

Misty Wells is producer & Host of "Let's Take It Outside" TV show airing to over 320 million on Discovery Channel, Waypoint TV, Bally Sun Sports, H2O, Pursuit Up, Hunt Channel, MOTV, TCT, Discover Florida Network & Carbon TV. Bass Pro-Outdoor Pro & Outdoor & Travel Writer. Founder of "A Reel Future" non-profit devoted to teaching the passion of fishing & conservation to foster children, over 3,800 children & counting. www.mistywells.com



WANDER THIS WORLD

Written by Mike Henderson

Costa Rica



I love to wander; to travel this unbelievably amazing planet that we all share, just to see what there is to see. Regardless of your personal GPS waypoint, Mother Earth has something in store, perfectly staged to produce a hyperemotional reaction in all of us. All that you have to do is wander around and look for it. Unfortunately, wandering is a pastime that has become increasingly tedious and difficult in recent times. Gone are the days of “get a passport, pack sunscreen and your favorite tackle, buy a ticket and go!” As inmates of a Covid captive society, the longing for an adventure overwhelmed my wife and I in January and we made the decision to throw caution to the wind and break out of our mainstream media driven panic prison.

Costa Rica, here we come!

My wife chose a lovely resort on the northern Pacific coast, Dreams Las Marias. Check them out online at: www.amrcollection.com/en/resorts-hotels/dreams/costa-rica/las-mareas-costa-rica.

As I evaluated the website, I made it as far as the fishing charter page. Wait, a 4-star resort in Costa Rica AND they do fishing charters? I AM IN! For those of you who have not had the distinct pleasure of visiting Costa Rica, you must treat yourselves!

Costa Rica is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world and it contains about 5% of the world's species. The lush wild natural environment can be experienced all throughout the country and is easily accessible for the curious visitor. Costa Rica is a safe paradise. Unlike many other countries, Costa Rica enjoys a very stable political climate, providing visitors with a tranquil setting for their stay. The country and its people have a peaceful disposi-



Costa Rica - Pura Vida! The term "Pura Vida" has been present in Costa Rica's vocabulary for over 50 years. Its English translation means "pure life" or "simple life", it's more than just a phrase - it is a way of life.



tion, which makes for the perfect place to enjoy an unforgettable vacation. It offers dreamlike landscapes, kind people who are willing to share their culture and a safe country filled with natural wonders. Costa Rica provides the perfect combination of relaxation, adventure, culture, fine cuisine and wildlife. This Central American country is an adventure seekers paradise, set in the most beautiful natural environment. Essential Costa Rica is all about organic ingredients, unspoiled nature and authentic experiences. It is one of the world's most unique places and the fishing? Well it is definitely worth the trip!

Costa Rica became a popular international fishing destination decades ago, thanks to the incredible billfishing on the Pacific Coast and the world class Tarpon fishing on the Caribbean Coast. For many anglers, inshore fishing was something you could do on a half-day or with wives

and kids that didn't want to spend a full day trolling offshore, but it wasn't a priority. That has since changed and today just as many anglers are asking specifically for light tackle inshore trips as for big game offshore fishing. Marlin and Sailfish are still considered bucket-list catches by most saltwater anglers, but Roosterfish and Cubera Snapper aren't far behind.

Over on the Caribbean Coast, Costa Rica offers world record sized Tarpon and Snook fishing that is hard to match anywhere in the world. Inshore fishing in Costa Rica isn't just about targeting the rare trophy fish either; it offers incredible variety (over 20 species) and many fish you can bring back home for a tasty dinner back at the resort.



Time was precious on this particular adventure, so a half-day inshore fishing charter was the necessary option. Those with more time could easily spend a week inshore fishing for a variety of spe-

cies like Jack, Mackerel, Corvina, various species of Grouper, Snapper, Snook, Barracuda and the main prize - Roosterfish!

Papagayo Charters provided our skipper of choice for this excursion and they did not disappoint. We drew a 36' sport fish named the Ryan Lindy. To learn more visit them at: papagayofishingcharters.com/dreams-las-mareas-fishing.

A short 15-minute boat ride across the bay and the fight was on. Within minutes of the lures splashing in the water, two Barracuda were landed by Mark Wild. Not particularly impressive catches, but a sign of better things to come. After a couple of Mackerel (which makes amazing ceviche prepared by the mate) the bigger Osteichthyes came a calling!

Next up was a run of Red Snapper that kept us busy cranking the old Penns until the proverbial belly bruises showed up. Eric Allison and Dave Cook were up in the rotation as the big Snapper hit the live well. "Reds" in this area of Costa Rica are the most beautiful brilliant red I have ever seen in this species. After a short pause in the action, our skipper, who is also a dive charter operator, said that he had recently seen Grouper around some structure while diving the bay. He maneuvered the boat and then, almost on cue, the fight was on. Dave Cook was the Grouper slayer on this day. After a couple (loosely interpreted) beers, my patience was waning as we awaited the arrival of the prized Roosterfish; I turned to the captain and shouted "Yo quiero Gallo!"

(I want Rooster). With a smile the skipper turned the boat to starboard and we began working the shoreline for our inshore trophy. A short 10-minute troll and the Roosterfish paid us a visit. Roosterfish are one of the most prolific fighters in the Pacific and our rowdy friend was no exception. A hard 5-minute fight ensued and Rick Wild landed the prized catch. After a delicious lunch of freshly prepared ceviche, with ice-cold Imperial beers, the final fish of the day was a strong Jack Crevalle caught by Rick Wild.

By 1:00 PM the Pacific was beginning to get cranky, so a slow ride back to port through 4-5 foot swells completed the days adventure.

If a Costa Rican vacation is on your radar, I highly recommend Dreams Las Mareas. The staff is highly attentive, rooms offer excellent views and the tour company headed by Jesus from Julio's Happy Tours at the beach is second to none (subject of another article). ▣



TALES FROM THE OLD GUY

by David Mallory

Captain George is pretty good at predicting the weather, even two weeks in advance, though the four weather stations we listen to, can't tell us an hour ahead what to expect. He picked a day for us and said the tides and moon looked good. Even George can't predict the rain, so we take our chances on that.

We like to call Pauline the "Snook Queen" because that is her favorite fish and she often shows us why (a few times she has caught close to 40!) We started fishing on a couple of inshore reefs and caught some trout (two we could keep), and some mangrove snapper to eat.

The trout were running small so after we kept the two, we moved to an area where the tides were moving well. We moved in close to some trees and George did some chumming. We saw some fish hit the baits so we knew we could fish there. A school of jacks swam by so we threw our bait in front of them. They always put up a great fight. We each hooked one about 13 or 14 inches. Sometimes it is a challenge to keep the lines from getting crossed during a fight and we had to switch sides after putting my pole under hers.

After netting the two jacks and releasing them because they are not good to eat, we wanted to try for some snook or redfish. Both are fun to catch and sometimes we can get a redfish in the slot (18 to 27 inches) to bring home to eat. They are among the best. Snook have to be 28 to 33 inches to keep.

We moved to another spot and chummed again. We got a few hits on the chum. George got up on the front deck and looked into the water. It was very clear and he said he could see some fish moving. He thought they were snook, but wasn't sure. It really didn't matter at that point. We already had enough for a meal and now we could be fussy as to what we kept, but could fish for whatever



would bite. Pauline hooked another jack and she had fun with it as it went around the front of the boat and took out some line. After she released that one, I hooked something that felt really big. It took out line and stayed near the bottom. After watching the tip of the pole, George said I had a catfish. The end of the pole does jiggle a little differently with them. We got that back in the water and moved again.

This time we started catching snook right off. They do like to fight and even the small ones give you a great fight as they try to get under some kind of cover to hook you up and break the line. I hooked a big snook and he did just that. He got into some trees and broke the line. After a few more

snook and a redfish we could keep, Pauline hooked a huge fish. We couldn't tell what it was but thought it had to be a nice redfish or snook. He tried pulling out line to get in the trees. Pauline kept him on the edge. He jumped three times and she kept the pole high.

After going back and forth a few times, she was able to keep him out of the trees. Pauline would gain a few feet and the fish would take it back. They were both getting tired but the fish was getting closer to the boat and didn't like it so each time he would make another run for cover. However, the runs were getting shorter as he tired. He took off to the bow and Pauline had to lift the trolling motor. He made one more good run to the trees, but didn't quite make it. George, being the good captain, had moved the boat out a little more, which kept the fish away from the trees. With the fish in the clear, she just had to keep the pressure on and tire him out, and she did. She got him to the boat, George got him in the net and the fight was over. The "snook queen" sat down, George got the fish out of the net, gave it to Pauline for some pictures, measure it (beautiful 37 inches) and off he went to give someone else a thrill!

We had caught 38 fish during the day, so we decided to head for home. We had some fish to eat, some nice pictures and we helped George raise his average day count. Just another typical Captain George day. ☑

- David Mallory



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The Gulf of Mexico is a dream for saltwater fishing lovers. Both beginners and experts will find plenty to enjoy here. Redfish and snook are popular catches known for their strong, spirited fights. You'll find them in shallow waters

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Captain Sergio Atanes

Things should be back to normal after all the hurricanes. Look for new areas to fish because the high wind and tides created many new fishing spots. Areas that might have been covered over the years could be exposed once again,

like old rock piles, oyster beds and in some cases new canals due to strong storm tides. Start this month with the intention of finding new spots to add to your logbook.

Artificial baits like Saltwater Assassin P&V or paddle tails allow you to cover a big area in a short period of time to explore and also catch some fish for dinner.

ABOUT THE CAPTAINS

Captain Sergio and Captain George Hastick fish the Florida waters, specializing in and around the West Coast of Florida and Tampa Bay. Their show, Fishing Adventures Florida, is about two captains sharing their knowledge and experience of the local waters. Encouraging others to share in their love of what the outdoors has to offer. Their goal is to educate, entertain and share the experience of fishing opportunities the state has to offer.



Captain George Hastick

November can be a great month in the Tampa Bay area for targeting a variety of species due to the water temperatures getting into the magic range of the mid 70s. Baitfish are plentiful and fish are very active and frisky due to

the cooling temperatures. There will be many fish to choose from like Snook, Redfish and Trout on the flats and mangrove tree lines. The water temperature will be right for more Kingfish and Mackerel to be along the beaches with Mackerel up into the bay also and maybe a few kings. Look for Pompano to be along the edges of the grass flats and keep one eye watching for Cobia patrolling the same area or under a manatee.

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WINTER WADING

by Dave Ulgenalp

My favorite time of the year to fish in the Tampa Bay area is when water temperatures drop below 70 degrees, and the winter fishing pattern begins. This usually coincides with Thanksgiving and the arrival of the season's first cold fronts. To take advantage of this seasonal opportunity, it's important to be properly prepared to stand for hours on end in cold water and protect yourself from shiver inducing winds. Preparation should start with the purchase of chest waders and like every other piece of essential fishing gear, there are numerous attributes to consider and options to choose from.

When deciding upon the right waders for you and your situation, budget, comfort, durability, options, and warranty are among the most important considerations. Comfortable waders are available for less than \$100 but as expectations for durability and options increase, so does the price. The highest quality, Gore-Tex chest waders run upwards of \$1,000, but it's not necessary to spend that much for a pair that will serve you well for many years if taken care of properly.

The first piece of advice I offer, and strongly so, is choosing stocking foot versus boot foot waders. The rubber boots that are usually incorporated into boot foot waders are heavy, rarely fit perfectly and are not practical or comfortable when walking long distances or wading through grass or soft bottom. Stocking foot waders allow you to wear booties that are light, flexible and comfortable enough to walk moderate distances without blisters while still provid-

ing protection from oysters, rocks, glass, and other bottom structure. They will also make it much easier to wade through thick grass and areas with a soft bottom. I suggest you consider the **Zipit Flats Bootie**, made by Simms and available for \$129.95 on simmsfishing.com, or something similar. Order them two sizes larger than normal if you only plan to wear them with waders and want to leave room for thick wading socks.

You will also have to choose the type of material or fabric you want your waders made from. Neoprene waders are typically the least expensive option, offer the greatest

warmth, and are more durable than similarly priced waders made from waterproof polyester or nylon. For wading in Florida or other warm climates, 3.5mm neoprene is all you will need. They are also easily washable and dry quickly when hung in a cool, dry environment. The downside to neoprene is that it doesn't breathe, so while it will keep you warm without having to wear layers of clothing underneath, it often will have you sweating like a dog at the end of a day of fishing. They are a good entry level option and cheap enough that you can just throw them away after a season or two if they start

to leak. **Frogg Toggs** and **Caddis Wading Systems** both offer 3.5mm, neoprene, stocking foot chest waders for less than \$125.



Waders made from PVC, waterproof treated nylon or polyester, Gore-Tex, and other waterproof fabrics, are another option and provide varying degrees of breathability, durability, and comfort. Breathable waders allow heat to escape without letting cold air or water in and allow you to layer clothing to suit the conditions. Pricing will vary depending upon the type of fabric, number of fabric layers, seaming, and options you choose, including zip up fronts, articulated knees, insulated and/or waterproof pockets and pebble guards. Breathable waders can also be worn all year round if there's a need for protection from jellyfish or other hazards that may be present when wading in the spring, summer, or fall.

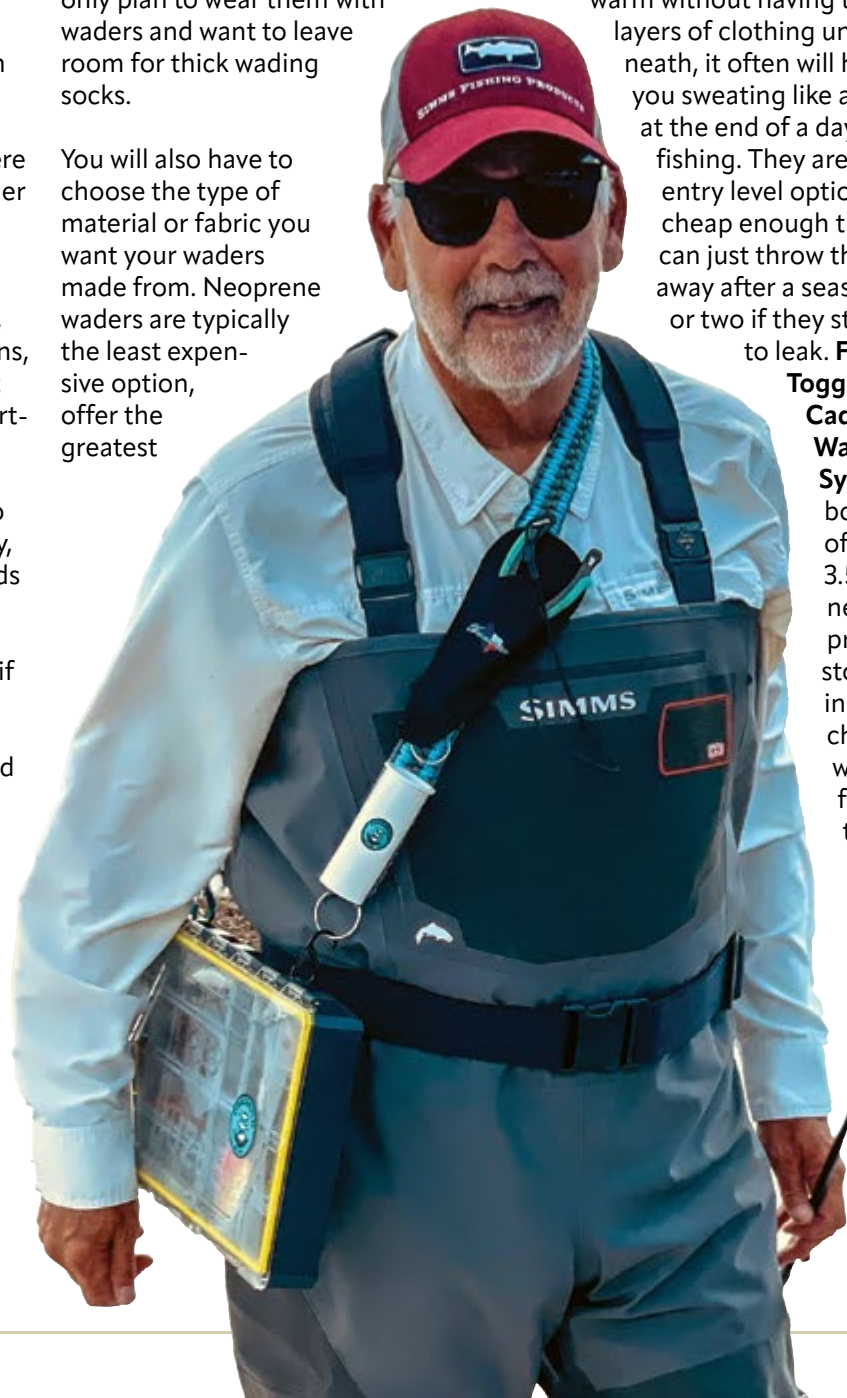
Regardless of the type of waders you decide to buy, it's important to select the right size and take proper care of them. Most companies provide sizing guides and care

instructions on their websites, and I suggest you utilize them to ensure proper fit and product life. You should also confirm that your waders come with a wading belt and pebble guards as they are essential for safety and durability. Your search for waders should include products from **Frogg Toggs**, **Caddis Wading Systems**, **Slumberjack**, **Orvis** and **Simms Fishing Products**.

As a wade fishing guide, I'm in the water five days a week and need the most durable, comfortable, and highest quality waders available, which is why I use **Simms G3 Guide Waders**. At \$699.95, they are on the higher end of the price range but well worth it. I highly recommend the entire line of waders offered by Simms Fishing Products and can vouch for their outstanding customer service and industry leading 60-day "no questions asked" and 365-day leak-repair guarantee.

Regardless of your choice, waders will allow you to comfortably get in on some great winter fishing for Trout, Redfish, Flounder, and Pompano. So, start looking now! Winter will be here before you know it. ☑

Dave Ulgenalp, aka "Wader Dave," is Tampa Bay's Premier wade fishing guide. You can find out more about him and book a trip at www.wadersguide.com or follow @waderdave on Instagram. Also, be sure to check out the numerous videos he's featured in on SaltStrong.com and YouTube by searching for Wader Dave.



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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

by Captain Sergio Atanes

A good angler is like a magician who can pull tricks out of the bag to help him catch more fish. It could be just a simple item to save time or a technique that gets the fish to bite. We all have some tricks to help us catch more fish and I am going to share some of them with you.



THESE FIVE BASIC TRICKS CAN HELP YOU CATCH MORE FISH AND SAVE TIME AND MONEY:

1.) Noodles used for kids in the swimming pool cut into different lengths make excellent leader holders, especially during the Mackerel and Kingfish season. They allow you to have 12 pre-rigged leaders ready to go. Use one color for Mackerel and another color for Kingfish. Make the leaders at home while watching TV instead of commercials.

2.) During the fall when the trout bite goes crazy, my favorite way of catching them is using a "Four Horsemen" float, only because it has two sound producing beads and a weight that increases my cast during windy days and the beads create the sound of a wounded bait. The clarity of the water dictates the size of my leader, anywhere from 15 to 30-pound



fluorocarbon. I work the float with a popping action to draw attention to my bait and the float. Over the years, I've noticed that my float had chunks missing from the trout attacking the float like a top water bait, so I put a small split ring where the swivel meets the float wire and added a 2/0 hook, and I started catching 2 trout at a time. This method can be used with live bait or with an artificial bait.

3.) One basic problem over the years was keeping the soft baits on the hook after a few hits, so here is a simple problem solver. After the head of the bait starts to break just cut it back a little and stick the tip of a toothpick through the bait and the eye of the hook. This keeps your artificial baits from sliding off.



4.) When fishing winter tides in shallow grassy areas you need to work just above the grass line. So, take one of your top water plugs, remove the rear hook and put a short leader; the length depending on the depth of water. I have mine set at about 8 inches and tie a mid running fly.

The action of the plug draws attention, and the tailing fly becomes the easy prey for the fish to hit. In some cases, I have also caught two fish at the same time.



5.) Fall and winter fishing for Sheepshead, Mangrove Snapper and Flounder in deep water can be fun and very productive. I found a trick to get them to bite when all else fails, and I fish this method all winter long.



A simple soft glow bead is placed between the eye of the hook and the lead, and for some reason the glow of the bead seems to draw attention to the bait and my Sheepshead, Snapper and Flounder bite has tripled over the last few years.

The one question I ask myself...is it the bead that gets them to bite or has my luck simply increased. Either way, it works for me!

November Outlook

It depends on the weather. If the water temperatures drop below 68 degrees, start looking for the bigger Sheepshead coming in from the Gulf; they will work their way to nearshore ledges and inshore bridges.

Big trout can be found on the edges of channels or deep holes and November is a great month to use artificial baits like a Saltwater Assassin P & V plastic bait paired with 1/4-ounce jighead.

Lastly, this is the month where Redfish should be at their peak around creek mouths and oyster bars. Get out there, chase some fish and enjoy! 🎣

Captain Sergio Atanes is host of the Fishing Adventures Florida Show on Waypoint TV, Carbon TV and YouTube. He is owner of Reelfishy.com fishing charters and can be reached by calling 813-973-7132 or by email at: atanes@msn.com.



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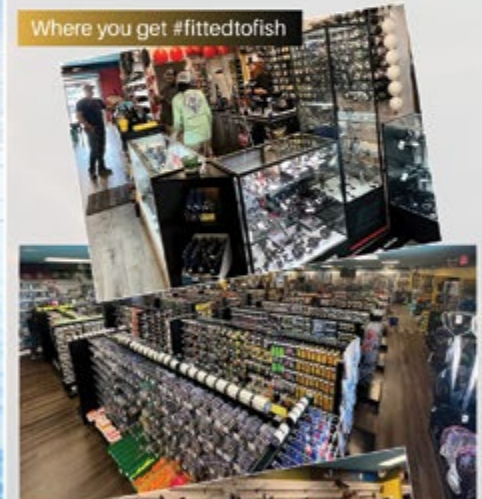
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