

FishingTrends

LAKE
OKEECHOBEE

Bass anglers have had the best success flipping plastic crawdads in mats of vegetation at the south end of the lake. Winnie's Cove and Pelican Bay have been among the best spots. Bluegills and some speckled perch have been biting in the rim canal, especially where you find water running out of the main lake.

FRESHWATER/
EVERGLADES

A few bass anglers have had some decent catches along Alligator Alley, but fishing in much of the Everglades has been slow. A fair number of bass were biting plastic stick worms in Lake Ida and Lake Eden and the canals connected to them.

FLORIDA BAY/
10,000 ISLANDS

Capt. Brian Sanders said mullet have been abundant, but warm water has hampered fishing out of Chokoloskee Island. "Where's the rain?" Sanders said. "This time of year we generally have rain in the afternoon, and that keeps the water temperature down." His anglers Thursday caught a couple of redfish around the outside islands and a couple of permit and a cobia around live bottom in the Gulf of Mexico.

GOLD COAST
OFFSHORE

Dolphin have been scarce despite a fair amount of weeds and floating debris. The best bet has been kingfish. The *Flamingo* drift boat of Fort Lauderdale and Capt. Ron Mallet of *Just Add Water* reported that kingfish have been biting in 130-200 feet off Port Everglades. A few sailfish, blackfin tuna and bonito also have been caught. Boats out of Hillsboro Inlet had a few snapper and bonito. Wyatt Rubin, 8, of Pompano Beach caught 2½ kingfish — one got bit in half — a big barracuda, a 25-pound wahoo and a 90-inch sailfish Thursday using live herring in 150-200 feet off Key Biscayne on *Bouncer's Dusky 33* with Capt. Bouncer Smith. Kingfish also were biting here and there from Delray Beach to Jupiter. Fishing out of Boynton Beach Inlet, Capt. Al Sitnick of *Suddenly* guided Brian Berger of Philadelphia and his girlfriend, Sherry Bragdon, of Boston, to a 10-pound kingfish, a keeper mutton snapper, a few porgies and blue runners. Bragdon also hooked a blackfin tuna, and Sitnick was about to boat the fish "when a big barracuda played tug of war with me. The 'cud got the big half. The head section was a good 10 pounds." Sitnick's anglers Thursday caught two keeper kings, triggerfish and some reef species in two hours of fishing in 150 feet.

INLETS/PIERS

Snook were biting at most inlets, with Jupiter Inlet still the best. Juno Beach Pier had blue runners and Spanish mackerel all week, some days better than others. Deerfield Beach Pier had lots of blue runners, some mackerel and some snapper. Pompano Beach Pier had lots of bait, blue runners, a few mackerel and a couple of mangrove snapper Thursday. Anglin's Pier in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea had some mackerel every day, blue runners, jacks and a few snapper. Dania Beach Pier had some mackerel, jacks, ladyfish and yellowtail and mangrove snapper.

THE KEYS

Some big dolphin have been biting far offshore around weedlines and weed patches. Small schoolies were fairly close. The best reef fishing has been at night, with good catches of mangrove snapper along with some big yellowtails and a few muttons. Early morning has been best for bonefish on the flats. Some tarpon were biting in bridge channels at night.

— STEVE WATERS



SHARED CATCH: (l-r) Brian Sanders, Chip Hunt and Casey Hunt of the *Get Sum* team caught this 20-plus-pound kingfish, but not before a shark got some of its tail. The team's strategy is to find one spot to produce a barrage of kings. **Staff photo/Steve Waters**

Kings of kingfishing

Teamwork and attention to technique enable the *Get Sum* team to get their share of money-winning fish.

POMPAÑO BEACH • As one of the top offshore tournament teams in South Florida, you would think *Get Sum* has all types of tricks and special techniques for catching big kingfish.

After spending a morning fishing on *Get Sum* with Casey Hunt, his younger brother Chip and Brian Sanders, the only special things I saw were the total lack of egos and the total commitment to teamwork.

The seven members of *Get Sum* all have specific jobs and they all do their jobs exceedingly well, which makes catching lots of kingfish look easy. As Casey Hunt noted, it has taken years of experience for *Get Sum* to get so good.

"There's a lot of great teams out there," Hunt said. "I don't think there's another team that's worked together as long as we have."

Casey, Chip and their youngest brother, Stan, and Keith Bonnafe — who all live in Pompano Beach — and Sanders, of Davie, have fished together for about 15 years. Six years ago, they hooked up with Melanie and Craig Maret of Jupiter, who own *Get Sum*, a 31-foot SeaVee.

"Our teamwork is the No. 1 thing," said Casey Hunt, a former charter fishing boat captain who now runs a private boat, and whose job is to drive *Get Sum*. "I never leave this wheel all day. I'm lucky if they give me something to drink."

Seriously, Hunt said he only has to worry about driving because his anglers and crew do their jobs so well.

"I'm counting on them as much as they're counting on me," he said.

In a typical tournament, *Get Sum* puts out seven lines — two on downriggers, the rest flat lines — and Hunt



STEVE WATERS
ON OUTDOORS

slow-trolls to keep the baits moving and cover water.

When a fish gets hooked, Melanie Maret grabs the rod, and the downriggers are cranked up to avoid tangles. Then she goes to the bow with her rod held high, which makes it easy for Hunt to see what her fish is doing, while the other anglers pick up rods in the hope of getting another bite.

"There's some times we've had five or six fish on," said Hunt, who will go back to the spot where the first fish bit while Maret fights her fish. "We might take 30 minutes for Melanie to land a big king. The key is everybody else is still fishing."

That's all part of how *Get Sum* approaches tournament fishing. Rather than pick through countless bonitos in the hopes of landing a few keeper kingfish, the team searches for that one spot that will produce a barrage of big bites.

"Sometimes, the bite can be over in an hour," Sanders said. "We fish all day for that hour."

Hunt pointed to his chart plotter, which has dozens of spots — ledges, rockpiles, wrecks, all of which attract bait, which attracts kingfish — marked from Pompano Beach to Sebastian. Before a tournament, he'll call commercial fishing friends along the coast to find out where the kingfish are biting and what they're eating.

As he runs north, he'll scan

the water and his temperature gauge, looking for bait and the warmer water of the Gulf Stream. When things look right, lines are immediately deployed. If the kingfish are small or aren't biting to Hunt's satisfaction, he'll move on to the next spot.

That strategy worked to perfection this past weekend.

Get Sum capped a successful summer by winning Saturday's Mercury/SeaVee Pompano Beach Saltwater Showdown with four kingfish and a wahoo weighing 148.81 pounds. That catch, the heaviest of the three events that make up the Pompano Beach Saltwater Circuit, included the heaviest kingfish of the tournament, a 47.48-pounder caught by Melanie Maret, who was the top angler for the Showdown as well as the master angler for the Circuit.

Maret caught her big king a little after 8 a.m. off Jupiter. When *Get Sum* couldn't get anything bigger than a 15-pound kingfish over the next 90 minutes, Hunt decided to run to Fort Pierce. The dramatic move paid off with a 20-pound wahoo, a 30-pound king and two 20-plus-pounders. Hunt took full advantage of the boat's fuel-efficient 275-horsepower Mercury Verado four-stroke outboards: He left Hillsboro Inlet with 242 gallons of gas and made it back with seven gallons to spare.

During our trip out of Hillsboro Inlet, Hunt didn't stop until we were in 90 feet just south of Jupiter Inlet, where he saw a lot of bait, found some northerly current and liked the water temperature. Chip Hunt and Sanders had live goggle-eyes out on two downrigger lines and two flat lines in no time.

The first bite came quickly, but it was only a big

HOW YOU CAN GET SOME, TOO

Brian Sanders of *Get Sum* said among the team's keys to success are "a fast boat, lots of fuel and good fishermen," but there are some things he and his teammates do and some gear they use that help them catch and land big kingfish.

When they hook up, all anglers fight their fish from the bow so skipper Casey Hunt can tell by the way their custom-built conventional rods are bending what their fish are doing.

Stan Hunt, who has the longest arms on the crew, is the dedicated gaff man. His brother Chip will put a second gaff in a big fish — "It saves a few fish," Chip said — and help Stan pull it into the boat.

Get Sum uses Accurate 665 Boss Magnum reels on 12- to 15-pound rods. The reels hold a lot of line, have a very fast 6:1 retrieve ratio and are strong. That allows anglers to quickly reel the slack out of a downrigger line on a bite and get a fish to the boat in a hurry.

The team recently changed from 20-pound Diamond line to Diamond's new 16-pound Illusion line, which is marketed by Momo, a major sponsor of *Get Sum*. Hunt credited the thin, green, abrasion-resistant line,

barracuda that Sanders caught and released. Just when Hunt announced that he was ready to leave, another rod got hit, and Sanders fought about a 24-pound kingfish that lost a couple of pounds when a shark bit off its tail. That fish was followed by a small kingfish, another barracuda and a couple of bonito.

Hunt tried several nearby spots and made several phone calls. Eventually, he learned that the kingfish were concentrated off Stuart. Since we were just out for fun and

which he used for the first time in Saturday's Mercury/SeaVee Pompano Beach Saltwater Showdown, for getting *Get Sum* a lot more bites.

Before, Hunt would tie a Bimini twist in the main line, then tie on a fluorocarbon leader with an Albright knot and tie the leader to a small swivel attached to a No. 5 wire leader with two super sharp 4/0 Matzuo hooks. Because Illusion, which is available in 8- to 30-pound test at area tackle stores, is 200 times more abrasion resistant than regular monofilament, Hunt now ties the 16-pound directly to the swivel.

"That gets rid of the Bimini and Albright knots, which eliminates hours of work for me," Hunt said. That also eliminates the danger of winding those two bulky knots onto the reel and having them whack the rod guides if a big fish takes off. The 16-pound Illusion also results in less drag on the baits.

During a recent trip, we caught all our fish on 16-pound Illusion and never had a break-off and didn't even have to re-tie, which adds up to more fish in the box, especially during a hot kingfish bite.

— STEVE WATERS

OutdoorsNotebook



Dinner meeting: The Lighthouse Point Saltwater Sportsman Association has a dinner meeting at

6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum in Dania Beach. Guest speaker is Capt. **Bouncer Smith**. Cost is \$40. To reserve a spot, call **Joe Imbriale** at 954-753-1600.

Swordfish talk: Capt. **Ray Roshier** of Miami will discuss swordfish tactics, including bait and tackle rigging and finding productive spots, at Wednesday's meeting of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse at 201 Fifth St. Call 561-832-6780 or visit www.westpalmbeachfishingclub.org.

ORVs allowed: Effective today, the off-road vehicle trails within Big Cypress National Preserve will reopen. The trails are reopening after a 60-day closure that is required under the Preserve's ORV management plan to allow for reduced ORV use within the area. The Zone 4 airboat trails also will reopen. Visit www.nps.gov/bicy.

Turkey hunts: Special-opportunity turkey hunt applications for the 2006 spring season are now available from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Hunters can obtain applications online at www.myfwc.com and at all FWC regional offices.

Applications will be accepted beginning 10 a.m. Sept. 1 and must be received by Oct. 17.

Cost to apply is \$5 per application. Permits will be awarded through a

random drawing. Successful applicants pay an additional \$50 to \$175, depending on the hunt area.

Gator permits: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has nearly 1,300 alligator harvest permits remaining for the upcoming season, available on a first-come, first-served basis through Sept. 20. Hunters can kill two alligators from designated areas during the season, which is Sept. 1-Oct. 8. Visit www.myfwc.com/alligator.

Safe boating: Plantation Flotilla 38, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, will conduct a one-day Boating Safety program at 8 a.m. Aug. 27 at the Plantation Community Outreach Center at the north entrance to the Broward Mall at University Drive and Broward Boulevard (954-916-5601). Cost for the eight-hour course is \$45.

For information or to pre-register, call **Ron Albert** at 954-915-0667 or send e-mail to flsafeboating@comcast.net.

Bass-Holes results: **Mike Allgair** and **Joe Arcese** caught 18 pounds, 4 ounces of fish to win the Bass-Holes Aug. 6 club tournament along Alligator Alley. **Ron Ackerman** and **Jason Meadows** were second at 14-9. **Mike Bennett** and **Bill Jones** were third at 13-11. Allgair and Bennett tied for big bass honors at 3-8.

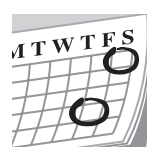
Swordfish tournament: The inaugural Dusk to Dawn Swordfish Tournament and celebrity charity auction to benefit A Child is Missing is Aug. 27-28 out of the International Swimming Hall of Fame Marina in Fort Lauderdale. Entry fee is \$500 per boat. Call **Kaytee Moran** at 954-763-1288. **Calling contest:** The 2005 Florida

State Duck Calling Contest is Aug. 28 during the Fall Hunting Classic at Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in Orlando. Contestants must be Florida residents 17 or older. Entry fee is \$30. Call **Marc Stepbach** at 352-263-1717 or e-mail him at mstepbac@tampabay.rr.com.

Youth clinic: Chevrolet and the International Game Fish Association are hosting a Kids Fishing Clinic at 10 a.m. Aug. 27 at the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum in Dania Beach. The free clinic is for boys and girls 16 and under of all angling abilities. Each youngster must be accompanied by an adult. Kids will receive an IGFA junior membership along with a free rod, reel and tackle box.

To register or for more information, visit www.igfa.org or call IGFA junior angler coordinator **Peter Gaube** at 954-927-2628.

Calendar



Today: Chevy Florida Fishing Report, featuring Capt. Rick Murphy and Whit Watson with a focus on tripletail, 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Sun Sports.

Today-Sunday: Islamorada Swordfish Tournament. Entry fee \$1,250 per boat. Call Cherise Jennette at 954-501-5034 or visit www.islamoradaswordfish.com. **Saturday:** Strictly Snook From Florida, 7 a.m., 790 The Ticket (WAXY AM), with Tim Mullin. **Saturday:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission alligator hunter class, 1-4 p.m., South Florida Water Management District, 3301 Gun Club Rd., West Palm Beach. Visit www.myfwc.com. **Sunday:** Monthly bass tournament, Lloyd's Bait & Tackle, North Lauderdale, 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Entry fee \$10 per angler. Call 954-722-9252. **Sunday:** Lake Ida Open Bass Tournament, Lake Ida Park boat ramp, Delray Beach. Entry fee \$20 per person. Sign up at ramp at 5 a.m. Call Carl Bousquet at 954-298-1912 or Art Carnahan at 561-791-0896.