



The Newsletter of the ... **The Reel News**



Serving the Northeast Florida Fishing Community Since 1959

Volume 62 Issue 3

March 2022



The 2022 EL Cheapo is Here!

The 22nd annual El Cheapo Sheepshead Tournament will be held on March 5th, 2022.

We have some great sponsors that have stepped up again for this year, and some new fantastic sponsors! Go to elcheapojax.com to see our sponsors and be sure to shop them for your needs, and thank them for their support!!!

The Jacksonville Offshore Sports Fishing Club (JOSFC) welcomes you to the 22nd Annual EL Cheapo Sheepshead Tournament. No doubt that 2020/2021 were a couple tough years and all of us faced many unique challenges. At the Tournament, we have had our challenges as well, just like many of you. One of our challenges was filling gaps in our prize structure. I am proud of the assistance and great strides the JOSFC made in bringing forth new sponsors to such a wonderful tournament.

Continues page 2

El Cheapo Continued

I would like to thank Cast & Blast Boats, Hagan Coastal Outfitters, Atlantic Coast Marine, Dandee Foods, Fishing Nosra, Academy and many more. It is their support that makes what we do for you possible. Please take time to visit these fine folks and let them know you appreciate their support of the best sheepshead tournament around. We have the prize structure now listed on the website: www.elcheapojax.com. Take a minute to visit the site and look for yourself.

As Covid lingers, we are holding our tournament to bring back some normalcy in our daily lives. You deserve it! We invite you to come out with us safely and have a great time catching sheepshead like we have done over the past 21 years. Can you believe it, 21 years? I am looking forward to seeing each and everyone of you on March 5, 2022.

Best Wishes for Catching that Tournament Winner,
Bill Pollackov
Tournament Director.



Emergency Phone Numbers First for Any Emergency - 911



U.S. Coast Guard, Jacksonville
Emergencies

904-564-7500 Press 1

U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center
1-800-424-8802

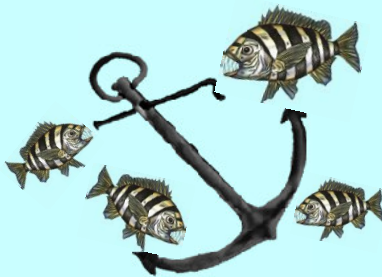
Jacksonville Sheriff's Marine Unit
904-630-2160

Florida Fish and Wildlife
1-888-404-3922

Sea Tow
1-800-473-2869

Tow Boat U.S.
1-800-391-4869

Now use that thing on top of your shoulders for more than a Hat Rack! Program the above numbers into your Cell Phone so you always have them!



Want to catch more Sheepshead?

Well I am NOT going to tell you how! That is because I can't catch those pesky bait thieves for love or money. BUT I am going to give you some good advise that just may help you catch that winning fish!.

You all know the 7 'P's, well that is what you need to really pay attention to . Proper planning and preparation.

First and probably most important, do you want that tournament winning fish to break off right at the boat? I didn't think so If you haven't already done so, go to Hagan Coastal Outfitters and get NEW line on your reels! They now have a line winder and great prices for line! Tell them you are fishing the El Cheapo!

Sheepshead have a mouth FULL of teeth, and a really hard mouth. DO NOT depend on your hooks being sharp enough right out to the box. Sharpen them with a fine stone so they are as sharp as you have ever had a hook.

How about your landing net? Yes, even those can get weakened by this Florida Sun and UV. I have seen this happen to people, they go to land the fish, and it breaks right through the net, so now they have the hoop of the net around their line with the rotten net, and are still trying to fight the fish (That luckily didn't break off YET.) through the net! Not a very good thing to have happen.

How about your boat? In tip top shape, motor recently serviced? I have seen people that entered the tournament back their boat down to launch it, and the motors wouldn't start! Your batteries FULLY charged? Bilge pump working? Here is one moat people overlook, how good is that 'O' ring on your drain plug? Replaced it in the last couple years?

Now a couple more little things to check. Make sure your fishing license is CURRENT, AND that you have that "Reef Fishing" permit added to your license. It is free you just have to get it added if you are fishing offshore.

Double check your measuring device, and ALL the fishing regulations before you go out. Remember that FWC officer may have had a bad night and be in a bad mood so he WILL write you a ticket if he has a chance! Good luck and catch some BIG ones!

SHEEPSHEAD

Order: Perciformes
Family: Sparidae
Genus: *Archosargus*
Species: *probatocephalus*



This is your target for the month of March, the Sheephead, 7 Striped Jetty Snapper, or as I like to call them DINNER!

Although it reaches a maximum size of about 29.5 inches (76 cm) and 22 pounds (9.6 kg), adult sheephead are most commonly about 1-8 pounds (.5-3.6 kg) and 14-18 inches (35 cm). Maximum known lifespan of the sheephead is at least 20 years with maturity typically reached at 2 years of age.

This fish is highly valued for human consumption due to its fine white flesh and mild flavor. However, its heavy scales and strong fin spines make it difficult to clean and fillet. It is marketed fresh and frozen and may be prepared by frying, broiling, microwaving, and baking.

Primarily occurring inshore around rock pilings, jetties, mangrove roots, and piers as well as in tidal creeks, the sheephead prefers brackish waters. It seeks out warmer spots near spring outlets and river discharges and sometimes enters freshwater during the winter months. This fish moves to offshore areas in later winter and early spring for spawning, which sometimes occurs over artificial reefs and navigation markers.

Sheepshead average about three pounds but can get over ten, and are terrific fighters who like to run anglers' lines around the pilings where they are most often caught. Their bite is very hard to detect and they are a difficult fish to hook if you don't know what you are doing.

Sheepshead are tied to hard structure such as bridges, jetties, docks, and piers. They use their sharp teeth to scrap barnacles from this structure and gobble up and break the shells of barnacles, mussels, and crabs. They do not travel in schools but orientate themselves around a food source and become very territorial, often staying in an area until the food supply is used up.

Catching sheepshead is not easy. They are not often caught incidentally by bottom fishermen but are hooked and fought by local anglers in many states who target them. A strong rod and heavier than usual line, around 20 lb test, is recommended as when hooked sheepshead quickly try to run the line around those pilings. It is important to put strong pressure on the fish to bring them away from the hang-ups.

Sheepshead are caught on unusual saltwater baits and rarely take usual ones such as cut shrimp, squid or cut fish. Instead they hit fiddler crabs, pieces of larger crabs such as cut blue crab, sand fleas (also called mole crabs) or even barnacles scrapped from a piling and held together by their own sticky mesh or rubber bands.

- Despite their brute strength Sheepshead have a bite that it is so soft it is often impossible to detect. ***The old saying among sheepshead fishermen is that you must set the hook just before a sheepshead bites!*** It's not that difficult, but almost. One trick is to watch the rod tip, which will have a slight dip from the weight of your sinker. When a sheepshead bite the dip will disappear as the tip rises. Even if you feel nothing, set the hook.

Sheepshead don't usually swallow the bait, they take the crab, in their mouth, crush it and suck the flesh out then spit out the shell. When you feel a light jerk, what you are feeling is them spitting out your hook with the shell! You HAVE to hit when you see or feel that rod tip lift!.

Sheepshead anglers don't stay in one place but move from piling to piling. Sometimes they can be seen in clear water rising up and slowly working on the barnacles and mussels of the pilings.

Sheepshead have protruding lips that give the fish its name. They also have a white body and big, black bold stripes. They are sometimes confused with black drum, another inshore structure fish that covers the same areas but is easier to catch.

Sheepshead are a hearty, tasty fish that yield delicious white meat fillets which fit into many seafood recipes. Sheepshead fillets are also very good simply breaded and fried.



This is the season for fishing for Wahoo, so I thought this would be a good time to give you this information.

Kingdom - Animalia

Phylum - Chordata

Class - Osteichthyes

Order - Perciformes

Family - Scombridae

Genus - Acanthocybium

Species - Solandri

Common Name - **Wahoo**

I will attempt to tell you everything that science and expert fishermen know about Wahoo except how to actually catch one.

Here are some facts to start with. The Wahoo is a member of the Family - Scombridae, which includes both the Mackerel and Tuna. World wide there is only one "Species" of Wahoo, they are the same fish no matter where you go. Fish tagged in the Gulf have been caught off the Carolina's.

They mature between 1 and 2 years of age, and live an average of 5 to 6 years. They grow quickly from fry 1" long to about 30" in the first year, then they grow at about 1.2" to 1.5" per month. Their max length is about 98" long with the average being 39" to 66".

They are one of the fastest fish in the ocean, with an estimated speed of 60 plus MPH!. (Remember this for later.)

The world rod & reel record, Caught off the Pacific coast of Mexico is 158 pounds 8 oz. The Florida record caught off Marathon in 1960 is 139 pounds.

Wahoo like warm water, with a lower avoidance temperature of 65 degrees F. And a preferred range of 68 to 80 degrees and an upper avoidance temperature of 88 degrees F.

Unlike that of most mackerels, wahoo flesh is white and delightfully flavored. It's still a good idea to remove the dark lateral line from the steaks.

Wahoo are far more structure-oriented than you may think, especially with regard to big fish. The rocky perimeter of the continental shelf off northeast Florida is a prime example. You will catch more fish staying on the ledge than on a good temperature break just a mile further out.

Here is a new finding, **depth of presentation is not necessarily the key to catching Wahoo**. Far more important, it seems, is speed. About 18 knots to be more specific. Use weights to keep the lures in the water, the fish will sense and see the lure coming and come up to it.

The best bite is at first light, right at daybreak when you can just barely see your lures in the water, until around 9 o'clock. Then it gets good again late in the day, around sunset. It's also good on an afternoon tide change.

Wahoo are rarely alone. They travel in packs along color changes and drop offs, no matter where you're fishing. If you catch a wahoo on a color change or weed line in 200 to 500 feet of water, circle back around and there's a good chance you'll catch another one.

Finally another great tactic is to shut off your engines and let the fish come to you. Use weights or downriggers to put live baits at 100 to 200 feet, and chum as you drift.

Don't Read This!!!

Don't forget, you only have Until February 28th (Remember February is a **SHORT** Month!) left to fish the Sheepshead Tune-Up! Declaring your day is simple. Just select your date at top of the recently renamed, "Tournament Date Declaration and Registration Form," on our club website:

<https://jaxfish.com/tournaments/registration/>

Also, **PLEASE** don't forget to check back in, **regardless of whether you caught any fish**, with us. Otherwise, we are likely to start calling you and your emergency contact for fear that you have gone missing. That's no fun for anyone. My number is (904) 887-8474.

This is the "OFFSHORE" club, only 1 Offshore captain has registered so far!!!!



PRESIDENTS CAST NET CAPTAIN

Robert Vermillion

The El Cheapo is right around the corner, we have some good sponsors this year.

Atlantic Coast Marine, Hagan Coastal outfitters, Cast & Blast Boat's, Angie's Sub's is back this year, Dandee foods, Nosara Fishing, Anchor Apparel, Academy Sports is back. This is just some of our great sponsors we are blessed to have them on board this year.

As most of you know we have a new tournament director, **Bill Pollackov**. He has been working hard putting this together. And is doing an excellent job. So, make sure when you see him to say thanks.

February 26th we are doing the club clean up show up at the clubhouse with some tools around 8 am

We will be looking for volunteers for the tournament, you can show up March 4th at the club house to help set up. Or on March 5th we will find you something to do.

On March 3rd we will be opening the doors to the club house at 5pm for the Capt. Bucket stuffing.

On March 26th we will be doing the club clean out for the Demo

We will be moving to the new Building some time in May. We will be having are meetings at the Fort Caroline club 4131 Ferber rd. next to the Lonnie Warn boat ramp.

I would like to thank Captain Chris Rooney for putting on the Wahoo seminar at the last meeting Chris does an excellent job and likes to give away some secrets.

On to the Fishing Fronts Offshore

There have been a lot of Wahoo in the blue water, look for blue water and bait for your Wahoo. There are some Big Blackfin in the mix. Triggers and B-liner Sea Bass will be in closer around 80ft. look for blue water and bait for your Wahoo.

Inshore

Trout will be in the creeks try trolling for them, it's fun and you get lots of hook up. Look for the Reds to be in the shallows warming on the mud banks. Sheep heads will be on the rocks and docks.

That's it for now see you at the Club House, tight lines.

CAPT. Rob Vermillion



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Again Safety thoughts for you!

I have said this several times, but I will be repeating this as long as I am doing this:

"There are only two (2) things I am afraid of while on the water Fire and Lightning!"

Fire, Make sure that you have a current fire extinguisher or 2 of sufficient size to actually put out a fire! That little one that came with your boat is WAY too small!

There are NEW Fire extinguisher requirements from the USCG - See below Article.

IF you have an Inboard engine, make sure you have a "Fire Port" in it so you don't have to lift the hatch to use your extinguisher!

Lightning, RUN! Get as far away as you can. The rule of thumb is if you can see the flash and hear the Thunder you are too close! For every 5 seconds between the flash and thunder equals 1 mile from it.

BoatUS: New U.S. Coast Guard Fire Extinguisher Regulation Effective April 20

12 year expiration for disposables and different carriage requirements for older, newer model year vessels!

That's because a [new U.S. Coast Guard regulation beginning April 20](#) for disposable fire extinguishers mandates a 12-year expiration date from the date of manufacture. Boaters can find the manufacture date stamped into the bottom of the bottle or near the UL label. This may be two or four digits

Vessels on the water today that are less than 26 feet and model year 2017 or older may continue to carry older, dated or undated "B-I" or "B-II" disposable extinguishers. However, when they are no longer serviceable or have reached 12 years of age since manufacture, they must be replaced with newer class "5-

Fire Extinguisher Cont.

B" or greater extinguishers. Boats less than 26 feet and 2018 model year or newer must carry unexpired "5-B" "10-B" or "20-B" fire extinguishers. Having older "B-I" and "B-II" types do not meet the new carriage requirements.

Many retailers today offer "10-B" class fire extinguishers, which may be a good choice as they exceed U.S. Coast Guard minimum carriage requirements for boats under 26 feet, while at the same time giving boaters more extinguishing coverage. For boats 26 feet or greater, however, having one "10-B" aboard does not equal two 5-Bs. Only a "20-B" classification meets the requirement to carry two "5-B" extinguishers. For a look at how many and what type of fire extinguishers are needed aboard all recreational boats up to 65 feet, go to BoatUS.org/Fire-Extinguishers.

BoatUS strongly recommends going beyond the regulation's minimum requirements. [The results from a Foundation-sponsored boat burn showed](#) that one extinguisher may give very little time to make an emergency call or potentially prepare to abandon your vessel.

To be serviceable, a portable extinguisher must have a pressure gauge indicating an operable range, lock pin firmly installed, clean discharge nozzle, and no significant corrosion or damage. Some more recently manufactured portable fire extinguishers aboard boats today may carry both old and new labeling, for example, having simultaneous "B-I" and "5-B" classifications.

For more information on the new requirement, as well as frequently asked questions and an infographic, go to www.uscgboating.org.

YOUR FLOAT PLAN

What you didn't take the time to fill it out?!!!

This is an **ORDER**, or Bananas on your boat!

Go to this URL:

<https://jaxfish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/JOSFC-Courtsey-Float-Plan.pdf>

Click on it and print it out. THEN, Fill out your permanent information that does not change for every trip, NOW, make several COPIES of it so all you have to do is fill in the new info like crew and destinations and then leave it on the dash of your tow vehicle when you go out! A simple life saving little bit of work!

Wear these!

They don't work in the cabin!



PLEASE at least wear one while your boat is underway!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 	2 	3 Club Meeting Bucket Stuffing 	4  El Cheapo 	5  Tournament 
6 	7 Board Meeting 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12 
13 	14 	15 	16 	17 Club Meeting 	18 	19 
20 	21 	22 	23 	24 	25 	26 Empty out Club House before it is torn down. 
27 	28 	29 	30 	31 	march  	

Key - The more little black fish on a day means better fishing



COMING EVENTS:

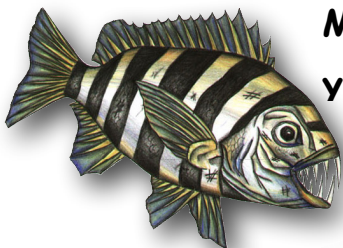
**March's Tournaments - For inshore = River Tournament &
Offshore = Non-Live Bait Tournament**

March 3rd - Club Meeting. 5:00 PM Captains Bucket Stuffing

EL CHEAPO 2022 - March 4 / 5

March 7th - Board Meeting.

March 17th - Club Meeting Last one in our Club House after 34 years there!



JOSFC SPONSORS

Listed in alphabetical order.

Academy Outdoors • Anchor Apparel Company • Angies Subs • Apex Training Solutions • Atlantic Coast Marine • B & M Bait and Tackle • Cast & Blast Boats • Captain Dave's Sport Fishing Charters • Colonel Jim's Breeding Co. • Consignnet Boat Sales • DanDee Foods • Duval Glass & Mirror • FishingNosara.com • Five Star Painting • Five Star Pressure Washing • Hagan Coastal Outfitters • Hagerty Construction & Roofing • Knight Electric • Mark Feagle Relator • Murphy Communication • Ocean Waves Sunglasses • Outdoor Show • Paradise Vacation Hotel • Pro Clean Marine Mobile Detailing • Ricks Bait & Tackle • Sailfish Construction • Solomons RV & Boat Storage • Strike Zone • Styles Smith Plumbing • Weather Routing Inc. • 904 Website Solutions •

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