

June 2003

### **Inshore Fishing Report**

The temperatures are only slightly changing, but the inshore picture has already improved. The scallop season ended with a whimper this year because of questionable weather the last two weekends, but the scallops collected were among the largest seen in years. Loretta, who many of you have seen cleaning scallops at Sea Hag, was frequently there until 1 in the morning cleaning scallops, and cleaned for a total of 546 individuals, many of whom had multiple coolers full. She looks real tired.

Redfish are becoming much more active. Tommy "Twinkletoes" Thompson has been finding large schools around Horseshoe and Steinhatchee. The back islands around Cedar Key have been producing large quantities of large reds. There have also been some keeper size cobias seen in the shallows around north key and some other deep areas near channels. The reds are active both inshore and offshore, with reports from at least one former club president with an ugly yellow boat that large schools are interfering with his grouper fishing. Inshore baitfish are plentiful, although not like they will be in a month or so. We were taking reds on topwaters, live pinfish and grubs. Tommy has been using his Terror-Eyz, which just goes to show there's one born every minute.

The larger trout are still in deeper water. I have been surprised recently at the number of smaller fish that are in shallow water, usually the hangout of larger solitary fish. Chris Francis has also been catching good quantities of smaller fish. For this time of year, this is a little unusual, because the small schooling fish are more common in the spring. However, the inshore trout have been active when present, taking topwaters and grubs under Cajun Thunder floats, especially tipped with Fishbites. Live shrimp have been difficult to find, and when they have been used, the booming pinfish population makes short work of them.

There have been some large flounder catches recently, but nobody's talking much about where. Additionally, Spanish mackerel seem to be coming closer to shore, being found easily around Seahorse and Spotty Bottom.

We're poised for a great fall. Please join us for the fall tournament at Seahag in Steinhatchee on October 26; things should be in full swing by then.