
February 2026 Newsletter!

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Sun, Feb 8, 2026 at 11:44 AM



Your February 2026 Newsletter!

The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, February 10. Doors open at 6:30, meeting starts at 7:00. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Bill Rutherford from the Rusty Bucket bait shop.



General Membership Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Morningstar at 7:00pm.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Captain Dave Brewer of the local SeaTow franchise. He gave a very interesting presentation on what they do: This particular franchise operates between Indian Rocks Beach and Crystal River; they go out over 100 miles; they have 10 boats available in different sizes which range between 29-32 feet that can be used for various operations and they monitor VHF radio channels 16, 22 and 78. He said they are also happy to help out boaters with simple problems but they are not a search and rescue type of operation. There was a lively question and answer period that followed.

Club dues are due now.

The next social dinner will be on February 10 at Gulf Harbors Yacht Club at 5:30.

President Mark Morningstar once again, in accordance with club by-laws, opened the floor for nominations for the 2026 Board of Directors. Vacant positions include Vice President for which there were no nominations and there were also no other nominations for other already filled positions as well.

Tournaments – at this point there all TBD.

Our next picnic will be March 28 and we're still looking for a chairman to head up the activities.

Mark expressed the club's gratitude to Butch Kaelin for once again handling the After Holidays Party.

Our Wish to Fish subsidiary will be sponsoring Hope Children's Home for a fishing charter aboard the Miss Virginia on March 19. No need for any more volunteers for this trip as there are already plenty signed up.

The annual Anclote Kids Fishing Tournament will be February 28 on the Anclote fishing pier and they'll need 10-12 volunteers. If interested, contact Mark Morningstar.

Members briefly discussed their recent fishing activities; some saying that they found quite a bit of trout and ladyfish. (Along with lots of fresh air)

The 50/50 winner was Dave Taylor - \$60.

Number of members and guests in attendance – 24.

The next general membership meeting will be February 10.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02.

Respectfully submitted,

John Grieder



Sea Tow Captain Dave Brewer, our guest speaker at the January meeting, gave an interesting presentation on the how, where and why they operate.



From the FWC



Feb. 4, 2026

UPDATED: FWC approves holistic management approach for spotted seatrout

At its February meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved new management regions and regulations for spotted seatrout as a part of FWC's holistic regional management approach. These new regulations will go into effect on April 1, 2026.

The rule changes:

- Establish nine management regions for spotted seatrout.
- Establish regional regulations for recreational and commercial bag limits, slot limits and closed seasons.

These regions and regulations are part of the FWC's holistic management approach for Florida's most popular inshore fisheries. This approach takes a more holistic view of the fishery by evaluating multiple metrics, including fishing, stakeholder experiences and environmental factors, at a smaller regional scale. It improves our understanding of regional differences in environmental conditions and stakeholder experiences and provides greater flexibility to address localized concerns.

Panhandle

- **Recreational**
 - **Open season:** March 1–Jan. 31.
 - **Closed season:** February.
 - **Bag limit:** Three fish per person.
 - **Slot limit:** 15-19 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** One fish over-slot allowed per vessel or per person if fishing from shore.
- **Commercial**
 - **Open season:** Jun. 1–Oct. 31.
 - **Closed season:** Nov. 1–May 31.
 - **Bag limit:** 50 fish (1 SPL);100 (≥ 2 SPLs).
 - **Slot limit:** 15–24 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None

Big Bend

- **Recreational**
 - **Open season:** Year-round.
 - **Closed season:** None.
 - **Bag limit:** Five fish per person.
 - **Slot limit:** 15-19 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** One fish over-slot allowed per vessel or per person if fishing from shore.
- **Commercial**
 - **Open season:** June 1–Oct. 31.
 - **Closed season:** Nov. 1–May 31.
 - **Bag limit:** 50 fish (1 SPL);100 (≥ 2 SPLs).
 - **Slot limit:** 15–24 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.

Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Southwest, Southeast

- **Recreational**

- **Open season:** Year-round.
- **Closed season:** None.
- **Bag limit:** Three fish per person.
- **Slot limit:** 15-19 inches.
- **Over-slot allowance:** One fish over-slot allowed per vessel or per person if fishing from shore.
- **Commercial**
 - **Open season:** June 1–Oct. 31.
 - **Closed season:** Nov. 1–May 31.
 - **Bag limit:** 50 fish (1 SPL);100 (≥2 SPLs).
 - **Slot limit:** 15–24 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.

Indian River Lagoon

- **Recreational**
 - **Open season:** Jan.1–Oct. 31.
 - **Closed season:** Nov.1–Dec. 31.
 - **Bag limit:** Two fish per person.
 - **Slot limit:** 15-19 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.
- **Commercial**
 - **Open season:** May 1–Sept. 30.
 - **Closed season:** Oct. 1–April 30.
 - **Bag limit:** 50 fish (1 SPL);100 (≥2 SPLs).
 - **Slot limit:** 15–24 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.

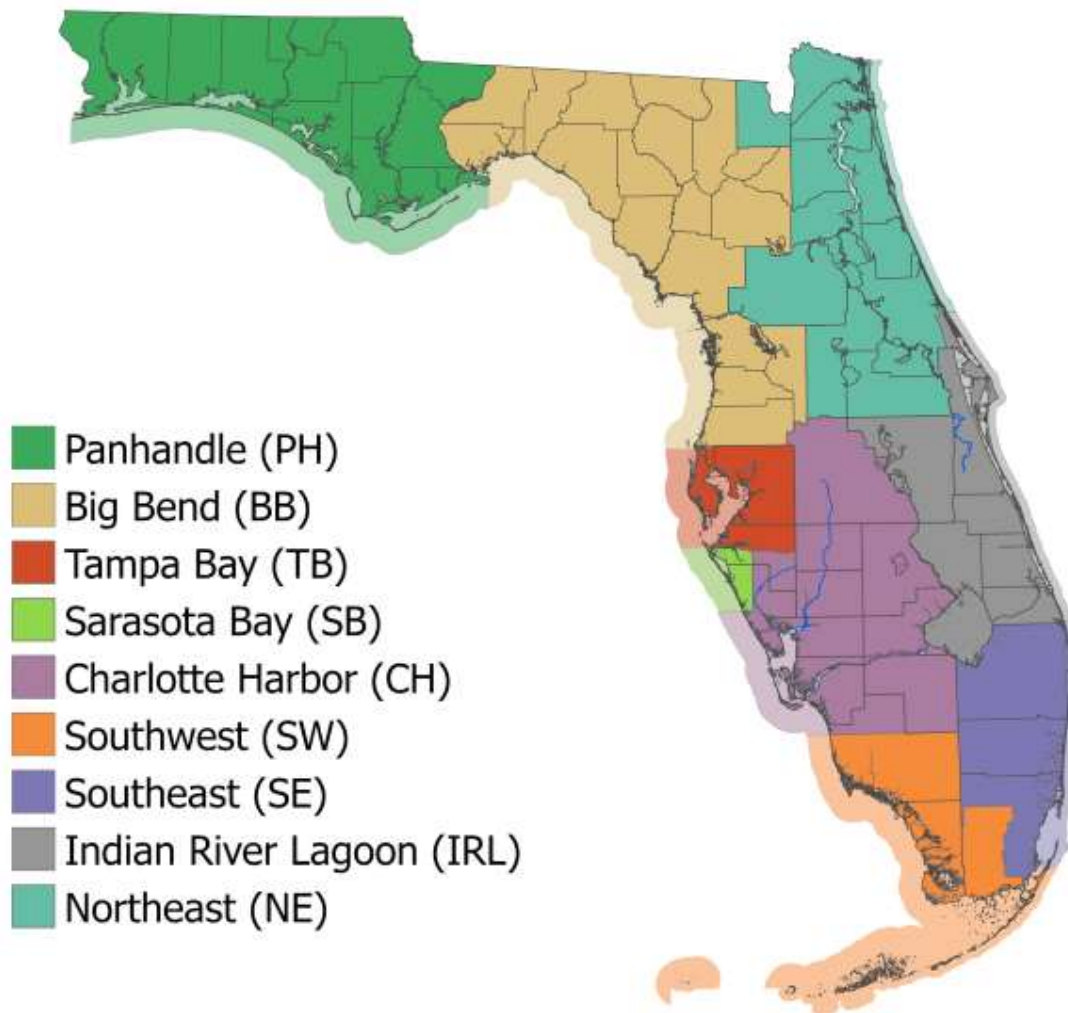
Northeast

- **Recreational**
 - **Open season:** Year-round.
 - **Closed season:** None.
 - **Bag limit:** Three fish per person.
 - **Slot limit:** 15-19 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.
- **Commercial**
 - **Open season:** June 1–Nov. 30.
 - **Closed season:** Dec. 1–May 31.
 - **Bag limit:** 50 fish (1 SPL);100 (≥2 SPLs).
 - **Slot limit:** 15–24 inches.
 - **Over-slot allowance:** None.

This innovative regional management strategy has been implemented for some of Florida's most popular inshore species, including redfish and snook, and now spotted seatrout. This management approach has been met with strong support from stakeholders across the state.

For the full [Commission Meeting February 4-5 agenda](#) and links to background reports, go to MyFWC.com/Commission and select "Commission Meetings."

For [current spotted seatrout](#) annual reviews, visit MyFWC.com/Marine and click on "Recreational Regulations" and "Spotted Seatrout." These documents provide a summary of the management metrics in each new management region.



Here is something very special from our Vice President Bruce Archambault

Captain Bill, "Crusty Rusty Rutherford" president of VETCATCH, INC., and owner of the "Rusty Bucket" Bait shop in downtown New Port Richey will be our guest

speaker and will speak to both his Bait shop and Fishing Charter businesses here in our local community.

Bruce Archambault would like to book with Bill for an offshore day long charter but needs another person to help offset expenses. If interested see Bruce.
(Contact info below)

Last weekend Bruce went on a Tennessee Bison harvest.

If you'd like some buffalo meat, bring a small cooler to the Fish On club meeting. An American Bison is a truly huge animal!

I have limited steaks and roasts but tons of ground seasoned (secret recipe!!) burger.

If interested at the end of our meeting Bruce will present a 20 minute YouTube video of the buffalo harvest.



Tournament Board

2026 Tournaments

Fishing tournaments are easy and fun and there's nothing to sign up for -- these are all free to play for all members! Just make a catch, follow the guidelines posted below and you're in!

These tournaments are **Free-to-Play for all members!**

February 1 to April 31 - Trout

May 1 to July 31 - Snapper

August 1 to October 31 - Snook

November 1 to December 31 - Mackerel

There will also be a ONE DAY tournament in November with details to follow.

AND...also a \$ prize (besides bragging rights) for the longest fish caught for 2026 (not including sharks).

All guidelines below must be followed for all tournaments

Guidelines:

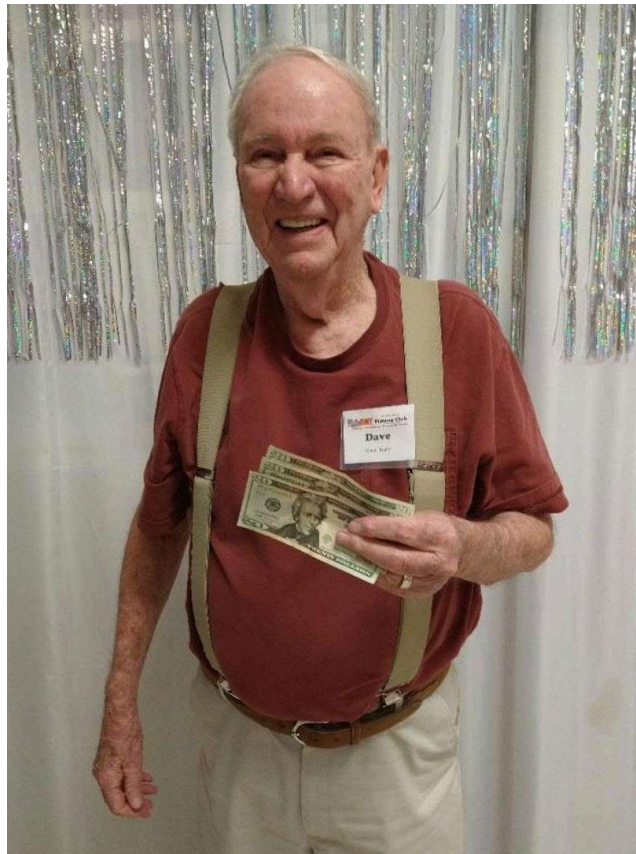
- 1 - Catch fish (!)**
- 2 - Measure fish**
- 3 - Take a picture of your catch**
- 4 - You MUST post a fishing report on the club website***
- 5 - Only species for each tournament posted will be count. (Ex: if you catch a trout when mackerel tournament is running, it won't count)**
- 6 - Fish caught on individually owned boats/kayaks/rentals/headboats or from the shore are ok. Fish caught of charters will not count.**
- 7 - Sit back (and/or keep fishing) and wait for the results which will be announced at the first general membership meeting after tournament closes**

Winners circle: 1st place - \$25; 2nd place - \$15; 3rd place - \$10

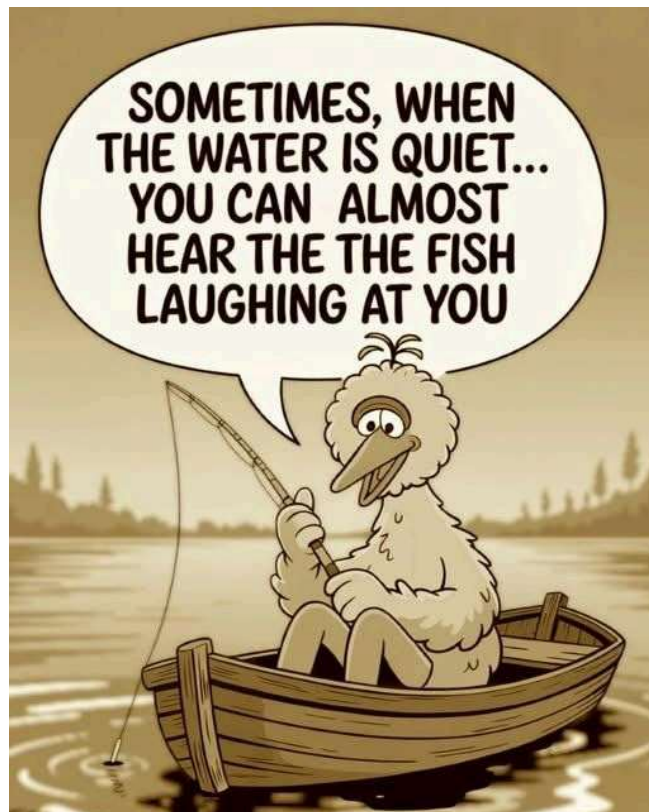
*Entering a fishing report on the club website is easy. Just give it a try and you'll find the process intuitive. If you have a problem with making your report just contact any board member below for assistance.



January meeting 50/50 winner Dave Taylor



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See you all at the meeting!

Tight lines!!

FISH ON! FISHING CLUB OFFICERS

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