



Fishing Post April 2020

Atlanta Saltwater Sportsman's Club

www.aswsc.org

2020 Off To A Rocky Start

Since we are all staying at home to avoid Covid-19, we are replacing the April meeting with this newsletter. This is typically the busiest time of year for ASWSC activities, but the club will continue to monitor the Coronavirus situation and government guidelines and we will be making decisions on whether to hold or cancel events as we get closer to each of the planned activities. Our club website and Facebook page will be updated with changes as they are decided, and emails will go out as needed.

Below is the current list of club activities planned for 2020, details are on the website. This list is pretty firm; sometimes things are changed or added, but the website will be kept up to date. Of course, there could be more cancellations.

Social Events

April 25	Spring Fling / cancelled due to coronavirus
May 2	Cinco De Mayo Picnic / cancelled due to coronavirus
June 2 – 6	Georgia Coastal Cruise
July 18	Raft up on Lake Lanier
July 25	Meet at El Torero in Duluth
Aug 1	Meet up on Lake Allatoona
Dec (Date TBD)	Annual Christmas Party

Tournaments

April 16 – 18	Steinhatchee / cancelled due to coronavirus
May 14 – 16	Savannah, GA / cancelled due to coronavirus
June 17 – 20	Apalachicola, FL
July 5 – 11	Orange Beach, AL
Aug 12 – 15	Apalachicola, FL
Sept 10 – 12	Panama City Beach, FL
Oct 8 – 10	Fort Morgan, AL
Nov 1 – 7	Grand Isle, LA
Nov 19 – 21	Carrabelle, FL (Inshore)
Dec 3 – 5	Savannah, GA

April 2020 Tournament Committee Report

by Ward Lang

The plan for 11 tournaments in 2020 is now down to 10, this time due to the CV-19 mitigations. The Steinhatchee adventure is cancelled and will not be rescheduled in 2020.

For those of us who are non-essential and have a lot of free time to be at home, it's a great time to catch up on all things like boat maintenance, fishing gear repairs, and paperwork. Check the expiration dates on boat registration, insurance, HMS permits, and licenses to fish in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana. We hope to fish in all these places. And spend some time on your boat trailer. Tires and bearings sometimes wear out, and that can add hours to your day.

The **Savannah GA** Tournament was scheduled for **May 14-17**, but it was canceled when the governor extended the statewide lockdown until May 13. There are really good inshore/nearshore opportunities as well as offshore catching possible for those who can safely get out to the Gulf Stream. HMS permits (one per boat) are needed for offshore fishing. Since HMS permits expire on Dec 31st, this is a good time to renew the permit for your boat. Even though the official tournament has been canceled, some members may still go fishing, particularly if the ban is lifted. So let us know if you still plan to make a non-tournament trip.

June 17-21 is Apalachicola FL. We visit this town every June to participate in the season for the endangered (but popular) Red Snapper. Make your lodging reservations and assemble a crew for the adventure ASAP. If you want to fish this tournament as a crew member, please let the club secretary (Jace Spencer) know that you are looking for a ride: info@aswsc.org.

In July, another club tradition is the week long adventure to **Orange Beach Alabama, July 5-11**. This will be based at Cotton Bayou as usual. It begins with the Captains Meeting Sunday evening and concludes with the short ride to Pensacola on Saturday to watch the airshow featuring the Blue Angels. Fishing is fantastic here but is not usually the highlight of this trip. However, in 2020 the tournament will include days when Alabama allows har-

vesting of Red Snapper. Make your reservations as soon as possible. George Burkhart did an awesome job organizing this event last year and will repeat as tournament director. If you or anyone you know are planning to be in Orange Beach during this time and want to attend the awards dinner, please contact George in advance. He can't plan for enough seats if he doesn't know you are coming.

August 12-16 marks the second visit of 2020 to **Apalachicola**. Schools will be back in session and there will be fewer crowds in the local watering holes. August is a great time to venture into deep water for the reef donkeys (amberjack).

September 10-13 is Panama City Beach. This had to be cancelled in 2019 due to weather. Our club president has a vacation home there now and will have lots of current information about where to fish and what techniques work best.

October 8-11 is an infrequent destination for the club, only one tournament having been held there previously, in 2012: **Ft Morgan Alabama**. Situated on Mobile Bay, Ft Morgan sits between Dauphin Island and Gulf Shores/ Orange Beach. Ft Morgan allows for a shorter ride to the offshore oil rigs than via Orange Beach. Yet the fine land-based activities of Orange Beach are still a short drive.

Nov 1-8 is the **Grand Isle Louisiana** adventure. We moved this from October in hopes of getting the right date for Tuna and Wahoo. When Grand Isle is right, it is awesome.

Nov 19-22 is a repeat of the **Carrabelle FL** inshore tournament we ran in 2019. Carrabelle is a few miles east of Apalachicola and is a relaxing place to visit and fish. Mike Ball will be the tournament director.

The final scheduled tournament for 2020 is **December 3-6 in Savannah GA**. Weather permitting, this can be very productive inshore and offshore. Captain John Roche will be our director for this one. Expect a special trophy for the winner.

Tournament Planning Advice

by Chuck Alford

For the folks that are new to the club, or have not participated much in tournaments, here is some advice.

If you are a boat owner and are hesitant to participate in a tournament because you are not sure what to do, you really need to jump on in. The strength of this club is the willingness of the members to help you find new places and ways to fish without you having to fumbling around by yourself. Talk to club members you know, or send questions to info@aswsc.org. Never hesitate to ask, "Can someone help me out?"

The ASWSC is a great place for networking with other saltwater fishermen. We hold tournaments and do our best to get captains and crew members connected for fishing, but the reality is we can not tell someone who they have to take on their boat. Many captains and crew know each other and make arrangements for fishing tournaments on their own. But typically members who want to fish a tournament just email to info@aswsc.org and their name will be provided to the Captains who are looking for additional crew. Sometimes we have all the boats full and someone may not find a spot, and sometimes we do not have enough "crew" to fill out all the boats. But things usually work out fairly well, so if you are new to the club, throw your hat in the ring. It helps to come to meetings and social events whenever possible to get to know the other members.

If you sign up as a Captain and need additional crew, let our club Secretary Jace know by emailing info@aswsc.org with your needs and contact info; he will keep you apprised of anyone looking for a spot.

There is not a specified place you have to stay or keep your boat for a tournament; you just have to get to the Captains Meeting and the weigh-in locations at the appropriate times. The tip sheets for tournaments usually have recommendations, but for several of the tournaments there are places where most of the club stays, and the fun of hanging around and swapping fish stories after the fishing is done is one of the best things about our tournaments.

Apalachicola – Bay City Lodge is a throwback old school fish camp that is really cool. Most of the club stays and slips their boats there. Especially for June (Red Snapper season), if it is not full already, then it is getting close. So if you are thinking about going, you need to go ahead and call to make the reservation. If you can't get in, Apalachicola hotels are only a few miles away and you can still hang out at Bay City if you like with a short drive back to your room.

Orange Beach – Almost everyone stays at Cotton Bayou. It is very convenient, very nice and a great place to slip the boat right at the condos. There are only a couple of VRBO's left. If you cancel at the last minute you probably won't get a refund, but if the weather is bad, Orange Beach is still a great place to hang out, there is a lot of club socializing here.

Grand Isle – Like Bay City Lodge in Apalachicola, Bridgeside Marina is an old school fish camp, but it is about the most convenient place you will ever fish out of and a great place to stay.

You will find that as soon as the Tournament Schedule comes out, the experienced club members start making reservations. You can usually make them much later, but you may not get lodging where you will have the most fun, so earlier is always better.

If you are a Facebook user, please like our Atlanta Saltwater Sportsman Page, and I really encourage you to use our Atlanta Saltwater Sportsman Club Group where you can make posts, asking questions, giving advice, or showing off your fish pictures. During our "Social Distancing," some members are still fishing and posting pictures and telling ~~lies~~ stories about their trips. If you have anything to share, please do so; it helps us to stay tuned in to our favorite hobby and it is an opportunity to continue to share information and learn, even while we are stuck at home.

Everyone stay safe. Hopefully we will be back to meetings and events soon. In the meantime, on the next page is a nice article Jace Spencer wrote for your reading enjoyment.

How Bad Is It?

By Jace Spencer

I'm not a cold-weather person; I'd hibernate through the winters if I could, but unfortunately I can't even make it through one night without a bathroom trip. For me, Winter is defined by the weather; it typically starts sometime during October and usually ends during April. During those six long cold wet months, I look forward to Springtime with a longing not matched by many. This year warmer weather finally arrived, but instead of hopping on my boat and heading offshore, I'm stuck at the house working through a 'Honey Do' list that never seems to get any shorter. Fuel is cheaper than it's been in a long time, which is just rubbing salt in the wound. As you might imagine, my anxiety level has been high during this lockdown situation. It doesn't help that much of my retirement savings have been wiped out - which means I will need to retire later and die earlier (yeah, it's easy to make jokes, but it's hard not to be stressed out about all of these negative developments). At times like these, I like to count my blessings and try to put things in perspective.

I've got a great wife and the best sons anyone could hope for. I've lived a happy successful life, thanks mostly to the hard work and thoughtful planning of my parents. They taught me to be honest, that I need to work hard, that life doesn't owe me anything, and that I shouldn't expect any handouts.

Like most people alive today, I have no direct experience or memory of the more traumatic periods of the twentieth century. My parents were born in Texas during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl years. I find it difficult to imagine; the daily hardships would be intolerable by our modern lazy self-centered standards. Before the country had even recovered, the second World War erupted. Can you imagine waking up each day not knowing if you would remain a citizen of a free country for much longer? Food was rationed, curfews were in place, and most resources went to the war effort. Parents of soldiers lay awake every night, wondering if their children would return from the fighting. These were truly tough times in our country; our predecessors had to overcome incredible hurdles to lay the foundation for the way of life we've come to take for granted. And we dare not forget the ultimate price paid by so many of our nation's military patriots, sacrifices they willingly made to preserve American freedom.

Even when I look back the roots of my own family, I am humbled. My father was born into abject poverty

(I'm not talking about a simple lack of luxuries here - you've seen those crumbling gray-wood shacks with rusted patchy tin roofs and no electricity, right?) My mother's family was slightly better off, but 'comfortably impoverished' at best. To support his wife and five children, my dad's father poured his efforts into their small farm, working long hard hours 7 days a week right up until the day he died. My mom's father was an auto mechanic his entire adult life, falling in love with the combustion engine at an early age (which was an early age for the combustion engine as well). Prior to World War II, while working at a small service station in his tiny Texas hometown, the station caught fire and he suffered permanent eye damage saving one of his coworkers from the burning building. Because of his eyes, he was unable to serve in the armed forces during World War II, so he worked at the airplane factory near Dallas, doing final adjustments and quality checks on P-51 Mustang fighter planes before test flights. My father's family had no access to dental care and he lost most of his teeth before his mid-twenties. (He also had to walk 10 miles to and from school barefoot in 3 feet of snow during the Texas summers, uphill both ways. It's true - he told me so, LOL). Despite the odds, he was the only child in his family to graduate college, which he paid for himself by working odd jobs, eventually landing an executive position with Texaco.

When I think about everything our previous generations had to go through, maybe in the greater scheme of things my current problems aren't such a big deal after all. I'm still concerned about the precedents being set and how easily it seems our personal freedoms can be stripped away. I'm sure there are a lot of doomsday preppers out there saying, "I told you so" and I admit it's harder now to accuse them of undue paranoia. For now, I'm hanging in there, hoping for the best, and trying my best to be patient. I look forward to gathering with friends, taking my wife out to dinner, being out on the blue water of course, and maybe - just maybe - someday even walking down a grocery aisle fully stocked with toilet tissue and paper towels.

Meanwhile, I hope that you and your families remain safe and healthy until our lives can get back to some semblance of normalcy. Be thankful for what we have, keep the faith, and say a prayer for those who've lost so much more.

Jace

ASWSC SCOREBOARD

BOAT OF THE YEAR (after West Palm Beach Tournament)

BOAT	WPB	SAV- MAY	APAL #1	ORG BCH	APAL #2	PCB	FT MGN	GRD ISLE	CRBL	SAV- DEC	TOTAL
<i>Knot Online</i>	20										20
<i>Rent Money</i>	15										15
<i>Pegasus</i>	10										10

ANGLER OF THE YEAR - MEN'S DIVISION (after West Palm Beach Tournament)

ANGLER	POINTS
Jeff Harvey	100

ANGLER OF THE YEAR - LADIES DIVISION (after West Palm Beach Tournament)

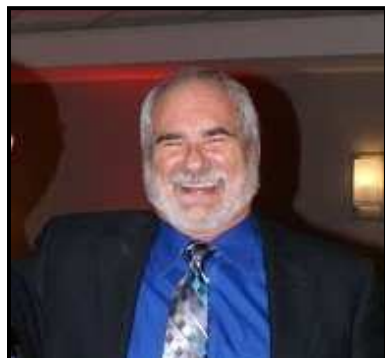
ANGLER	POINTS
Leslie Alford	50

(NO ENTRIES YET FOR JUNIOR ANGLER DIVISION)



Atlanta Saltwater Sportsman's Club

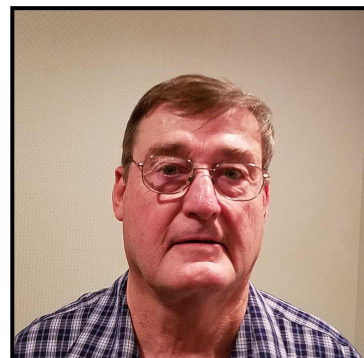
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Jace Spencer, Secretary
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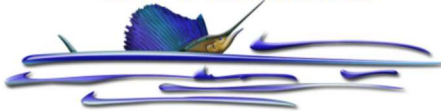
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