



LET CHARLOTTE HARBOR LURE YOU OFF THE BEATEN PATH FOR WORLD CLASS FISHING

Sportsman's Paradise Attracts Presidents and Paddlers Alike

CHARLOTTE HARBOR & THE GULF ISLANDS, Fla.— Sometimes, even the most avid sportsman almost misses the boat. Jimmy Jacobs, editor of *Florida Game and Fish* magazine, admits that he nearly overlooked the fishing treasure that is Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands, but now recognizes: "With inshore mangroves and grass flats, open waters in the harbor, and offshore action in the Gulf of Mexico, the area has all the fishing bases covered. Add in the paddling, hiking, birding and wildlife and this region is a sportsman's dream."

With a nutrient-rich fluctuation from salt-to-brackish-to-fresh, the warm waters are so productive that the area attracts plenty of tournaments, from the ESPN2-televized Redfish Cup & Festival, recognized as the nation's premier saltwater fishing tournament, to the Inshore Fishing Association's Redfish Tour, to the Miller High Life Professional Tarpon Tournament Series -- the largest and richest live-release tarpon tournament in the world. In keeping with the area's commitment to eco-tourism, these tournaments are catch-and-release.

Often called the "tarpon capital of the world," the area has worked hard to keep an eco-friendly, no-high-rise profile while it continues to attract high-profile guests. The wealthy discovered Charlotte Harbor in the late 1800s; notable anglers included financier J.P. Morgan and Teddy Roosevelt. Since then, word has continued to spread as John F. Kennedy and later the Presidential Bush family made it a favorite destination. Most recently, several Tampa Bay Rays players were known to try their luck when not on the field at their new spring training home at Charlotte Sports Park.

Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands teems with 256 species including, Snook, Redfish, Sea Trout, Yellowtail, Cobia, Snapper, Shark, Grouper, Barracuda, Kingfish, Mackerel and Tarpon. How and where to catch them presents challenging opportunities. You can whisper-glide into the cast-demanding mangroves on a kayak, surfcast along Charlotte Harbor's 830-mile shoreline, or board a charter to search for the "muds" out in the Gulf. Tarpon and Cownose Rays stir the bottom, shoveling for shrimp and crabs to create the "muds." Further fresh and saltwater challenges are as close as the Peace and Myakka Rivers, Webb Lake, Lemon Bay, and the four barrier islands with their fertile "passes" in between.

Finding Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands, located halfway between Sarasota and Fort Myers, is easy and the reward is great. Finding the fish is the challenge if you're new to the area; in that case guides are indispensable, and there are plenty to choose from. Experienced guides include: Captain Ralph Allen, www.kingfisherfleet.com, Captain Dave Jackson, www.tarpontangleadventures.com, and Captain Van Hubbard/Let's Go Fishin' Inc. www.captvan.com. If you're new to fly fishing, consider starting at Wolf Glen Fly Fishing Schools, <http://www.wolfglen.net/>.

A list of additional fishing guides can be found at
<http://charlotteharbortravel.com/cms/index.php?id=19>

Want to eat what you catch? Take it to the Village Fish Market in Punta Gorda at Fishermen's Village where they'll prepare your cleaned catch any way you like, baked, broiled, or fried. Or you can savor the catch of the day at many casual or fine dining waterfront restaurants in the area. After a day of relaxing fishing and laid-back vistas, what could be better?

Tommy Thompson, executive director of the Florida Outdoor Writers Association and author of the soon-to-be-published *The Saltwater Angler's Guide to Tampa Bay and Southwest Florida*, summed it up when he said, "I was impressed by the sheer size of the Charlotte Harbor fishery. It's no wonder that fishermen travel from far and wide to this near-tropical, yet civilized, destination to fish for almost all saltwater species, including wary snook and the mighty tarpon — Florida's 'silver king'."

For additional resources for planning the perfect fishing trip, visit
www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com.

About Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands

Located halfway between Tampa and Naples on the Southwest Florida Gulf coast, Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands is a charming collection of nine coastal communities surrounding the state's second largest harbor. Florida's premier year-round eco-tourism destination, Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands offers a pristine unspoiled beauty that has served as the backdrop for seven major feature films as well as countless memorable vacations. A haven for outdoor enthusiasts, Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands has been named to *SAIL* magazine's "10 Greatest Places to Sail in the United States," ranked by *Golf Digest* as "Third Best Place to Live and Play Golf in America," and rated by *MONEY* magazine as one of the "Best Places to Live in the South." The city of Punta Gorda was named in one of "Top Ten Places to Retire Healthy" by U.S. News & World Report. Englewood was named as #2 of the Top Ten emerging travel destinations in the U.S. by TripAdvisor.com.

For information about area events, activities and attractions, contact the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau, 18500 Murdock Circle, Suite B104, Port Charlotte, FL 33948; 941-743-1900, or call toll free at 1-800-652-6090 for a free Visitor's Guide; or visit the Web site at
www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com.

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Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands – Immense and Diverse Fishing Destination

What's Biting, When - Peak Availability of Commonly Caught Fish

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| Red Grouper | January-September |
| Spotted Seatrout | February-March |
| Snook | February-May |
| Crevalle Jack | February-December |
| Barracuda | March-October |
| Tarpon | April-July |
| Yellowtail Snapper | April-September |
| Jewfish | April-October |
| Redfish | Mid-April-October |
| Mutton Snapper | June-September |
| Snook | September- November |
| Cobia | September- December |
| Lane Snapper | September-April |
| Spotted Seatrout | October |
| King Mackerel | October-February |
| Amberjack | October-March |
| Flounder | October-March |
| Gag Grouper | October-March |
| Black Drum | October-April |
| Black Grouper | October-March |
| Sheepshead | November-March |
| Pompano | November-August |
| Mangrove Snapper | December- September |
| Spanish Mackerel | December-May |