

# The Big Reds Tournament: Brood stock for Conservation

## Rules and Regulations

**Date:** Saturday November 13, 2010.

In case of unfishable weather as determined by the Tournament Chairman, the tournament make up day will be November 20th, or on a later date to be determined.

### **Entry Fee:**

Entry fee is \$750 per angler, with 2 anglers and 1 guide per boat. Guides will register their crews in advance. To be eligible the signed and completed entry form and fee must be received by November 11, 2010.

### **The Big Reds Anglers Gala:**

Friday, November 12, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Florida Institute of Technology's Vero Beach Marine Laboratory, 46th Place East, Indian River Shores (see map on Angler's Gala page on the fmfei.org website)

Attendance at the Gala is **Mandatory** for the guide and at least one team member. Attendance is necessary to pick up the special permit and banner for catching over slot limit redfish, review fish handling techniques and to review the tournament format and guidelines.

Dinner, beer and wine will be served at the Anglers Gala. Families of the anglers are welcome to attend if they have been listed on the tournament registration form.

### **Fishing Rules and Regulations:**

#### *Overview:*

This tournament is designed to capture live, healthy redfish that will be the brood stock of fishery enhancement efforts. Tournament anglers will catch the fish, place them in live wells or net pens, and transfer them to large tanks on "chase boats" that will be distributed throughout the fishing area. Fish in the 32-40" range will be kept as brood stock, and the numbers and sizes of the fish will count toward each angler's overall tournament score. Each angler will also be allowed to enter one redfish larger than 40" by photographing and then releasing it. Smaller redfish will be released without contributing to the angler's score.

#### *Required Tackle and Techniques*

The guidelines presented below are designed to reduce handling stress and increase survivorship of red drum caught by angling that will be used as spawning brood fish for the Florida Marine Fishery Enhancement Initiative (FMFEI).

## Recommended Tackle

➤ **Circle hooks reduce hook damage & subsequent mortality rates**

Non-offset circle hooks (4/0 to 5/0) are preferred when fishing for large (>28" in length) red drum that are to be kept alive. This hook type is preferred because it tends to hook fish in the jaw and has been shown to reduce hooking mortality. Fishing with barbless hooks by flattening the barb on the hook with a pair of needle nose pliers will minimize injury to the fish and facilitate easier hook removal.

➤ **50-60 lb. test line**

Heavy monofilament line in the 50-60 lb line class is preferred for landing large red drum that will be used as brood stock. Another option is to use braided line (50-60 lbs.) and attach a 6-8 ft. leader of (40-50 lb.) fluorocarbon and using a tighter drag than when fishing with monofilament. This combination is more resistant to abrasion and will cut through weeds and debris better than monofilament. This setup will also allow you to land fish quicker thereby reducing stress and injury to the fish.

➤ **Land the fish quickly**

To reduce exhaustion and stress in the fish it is best to reel the fish in swiftly without overpowering your tackle gear. This is best accomplished by using heavier tackle, such as an 8 foot medium to medium-heavy action rod, with a tighter drag setting on the reel.

## Bringing Fish Onboard Your Boat

➤ **A knotless mesh net should be used to remove fish from the water**

A knotless fine mesh net (<1/2 inch square openings) is strongly recommended to remove the fish from the water because it is less abrasive and minimizes slime and scale loss. The finer mesh size will reduce entanglement and splitting of the fins. Since the external mucous layer of the fish is one of its primary defense mechanisms against infection, maintaining its integrity is critical to the fish's health and survival. Do not lift the fish out of the water using only fishing tackle, by a gaff, or by grabbing it by any part of its mouth, body, or opercle. A knotless, wide-mouth, fine mesh net should be used and slid under the fish while it is still in the water. Gently lift the fish out of the water and onto the boat being careful not to hit the fish against the side of the boat or the gunwale. While the fish is being held in the net above the deck and not on the ground, the hook should be removed (see instructions below). Next the fish should be removed from the net to measure its length and then placed

into the live well (see instructions below). **The fish should not remain in air for more than one minute** and it should be transferred into the live well as soon as possible with minimal handling.

➤ **Hook removal**

Keep the fish in the net while removing the hook as this will aid in controlling the fish should it “kick”. If it is difficult to remove the hook and the barbed end is visible then cut off this end and remove the hook. Alternatively, if the barb is not visible then the shank of the hook should be cut and the barbed end left place. Eventually the remaining portion of the hook will fall out or it will be removed at a later date when the fish is anesthetized. If the hook is deep in the throat of the fish or it is not visible, then cut the fishing line as close to the hook as possible. At any point during hook removal the fishing line should not be pulled in an attempt to locate the hook or free it from the fish.

➤ **Smooth rubber or latex gloves should be worn**

Using smooth rubber or latex gloves will help protect both the handler and the fish. Note that it will be difficult to put on latex gloves with wet or moist hands. For this reason it is suggested that slightly oversized rubber gloves be used as they are easy to don and doff with wet hands. Actual physical “handling” should be kept to a minimum. Never insert hands under the operculum and into the gill cavity to lift the fish. This can lead to injury and hemorrhaging at the gill filaments. In addition, avoid grabbing the fish around the tail. Use both hands to support the fish as it is lifted out of the net by placing one under the head and the other near the vent and lifting the fish in a horizontal position. Fish that are handled poorly have a high incidence of bacterial infection which can result in their mortality several weeks later in the hatchery.

Proper horizontal support of red drum using two hands.

Note: smooth rubber or latex gloves should be worn at all times when touching or handling the fish.

➤ **Measuring total length**

The total length of the fish should be measured with the left side of the fish facing up and laying on a flat and smooth surface that is wet with seawater. Placing the fish on a premade measuring board is preferred but a flexible fiberglass tape measure, which can be purchased in fabric or department stores, can also be used. To measure the fish using a fiberglass measuring tape place the tape on top of the smooth, wet surface. Keeping the tape measure taught, lay the fish on top of the tape measure and verify that the start of the tape measure, 0 increment line, is in-line with the most forward tip of the closed mouth when looking straight down from above the head of the fish. While holding the fish in place, usually with your left hand on the fish's head, use

your right hand to pinch the top and lower lobes of the tail together as shown in the diagram. Note that red drum have a truncate or straight end to their tail and you may not be able to pinch the lobes close together. Record the length of where the longest lobe on the tail touches the tape measure. If using a measuring board gently push the snout of the fish up against the beginning of the board and measure following the procedures described above. Depending on the units on the tape measure, record the length of the fish to the nearest millimeter or 1/16". See the total length measurement, in red, on the diagram below. Make sure that your measuring station is not high off the deck to reduce the chance of injuring the fish in the event that it flops off the board.

- **Be attentive when placing fish into the holding tank**  
If the fish is in a net, then place the whole net into the tank and gently turn the net over and allow the fish to swim out of the net. If needed, carefully assist the fish out of the net. If the net frame is too large to fit into the tank then place the net as close as possible to the tank with the fish's head near the tank opening. Grab the netting and pull it taut and help roll the fish out of the net while guiding into the tank or lift the fish out of the net using two hands (wearing rubber gloves) to support the fish as shown in the diagram above. Be careful not to let the fish touch sharp edges or protrusions (latches, screws, etc.) that may be in close proximity to the tank opening.

**Remember that the events listed above should occur in less than one minute after you have removed the fish from the water.**

- **Frequently monitor the live well and fish**  
It is important that the holding tank not be overloaded with fish in order to provide adequate room for movement and well oxygenated seawater to the fish. The holding tank should be covered to prevent water loss and reduce "sloshing" and also prohibit the fish from jumping out of the tank. When fish are in the live well it is very important to monitor the system and fish every 10 minutes. Check to verify seawater is still flowing into the tank and that the fish is resting comfortably in an upright position; not wedged into a corner or incurring further injury. Observe the gill movements of the fish to help to evaluate if the fish is comfortable or stressed. A slow, steady rate (1 beat per 5 seconds or longer but not stopped) indicates the fish is okay but if excessive beats are observed (1 beat per 1-2 seconds) then either the seawater flow rate to the tank will need to be increased or supplemental oxygen will need to be added from an aquarium type aerator.
- **Live well specifications, water supply and capacities**  
All participant boats will need to meet the following minimum live well requirements to be considered for tournament entry:

- All boats need the ability to maintain at least one red drum 32-40 inches in length. Therefore the overall live well minimum length or diameter, if using a circular live well, should be 34 inches. Larger live well lengths are necessary for larger fish and a good rule of thumb is that the tank length or diameter should be at least 2 inches longer than the length of the fish.
- The water depth in the live well should be at least 12 inches.
- The interior of the live well should be smooth and free of rough or sharp protrusions that can cause injury or remove scales from the fish and be of sufficient size to allow the fish to rest comfortably in a horizontal and upright position.
- Live wells should be easily accessible with large openings that allow the fish to be moved in or out of the well in a horizontal position with a knotless net or vinyl sling.
- Supply fresh seawater to the live well at a rate that will provide at least **four** complete water exchanges of the holding tank per hour. To determine the appropriate pump size and turnover rate you'll need to know the number of gallons of seawater in the tank (see below to calculate tank water volume). Multiply the number of gallons in the tank by four to get the number of gallons in one hour that need to be pumped into the tank. For example, a tank holding 45 gals will need a pump rated to at least (45x4) 180 gal per hour (gph) to provide four water exchanges in one hour. A pump rated at 200 gph would meet this requirement provided it is working at optimal performance. A greater water turnover rate is better so long as the flow is not overpowering the fish (i. e. the fish is not exerting energy to maintain its position in the tank or pushed up against tank wall). If you do not know the rate of your pump, several methods to determine it can be employed. 1) Time how long it takes to fill the tank until it reaches the overflow level or drain. This time should be less than 15 minutes. 2) Time how long it takes to fill a known volume container such as a plastic 1 gal jug or 5 gal bucket. Determine the fill rate of the container to a one minute rate. For example if it takes 15 sec to fill a 1 gal container then this equals 4 gal per minute. Multiply by 60 to determine the gph rate of the pump (4x60=240gph). In this example the tank size should be less than 60 gal to achieve four water turnovers in one hour.
- Provide a tank cover to prevent fish jumping out of the live well.
- The fish holding capacity of the live well should not exceed 1 pound per 1.5 gallons of seawater.

The following examples and calculations will to help determine the live well water volume and subsequent fish holding capacity.

For rectangular live wells:

Measure the interior length, width, and the depth of the water not depth of the tank. For example a live well measures 42"L by 18"W, with a water depth of 14"D. Multiply all three numbers together ( $42 \times 18 \times 14$ ) = 10584 cubic inches. Divide cubic inches by 231 to get gallons ( $10584/231 = 46$  gal). At 46 gallons this live well would hold (46 gal/1.5 gals per pound) 30 pounds of fish. Based on the tank length and the table below this live well could hold one 40" red drum or two if they are 34" or less.

For circular live wells:

Measure the radius of the live well and the depth of the water not depth of the tank. For example the radius is 17" with a water depth of 14". Multiply the radius by itself ( $17 \times 17$ ) then by the water depth 14" and then by 3.142 ( $17 \times 17 \times 14 \times 3.142$ ) = 12712 cubic inches. Divide cubic inches by 231 to get gallons ( $12712/231 = 55$  gal). At 55 gallons this live well would hold (55 gal/1.5 gals per pound) 36 pounds of fish. Based on the tank diameter this live well could only hold fish less than 33" in length and incorporating the table below this live well could hold up to three fish if they are 32" in length.

Different shaped live wells:

If your live well is not one of these basic geometric shapes then you'll need to use different equations or know the rate at which water is flowing into the tank and then time how long it takes to fill the tank. For example if your flow rate is 5 gals/min and it takes 10 min for your tank to reach the overflow then this tank volume is ( $5 \times 10$ ) 50 gals and has an appropriate turnover rate. This tank could hold ( $50/1.5$ ) 33 pounds of fish but the longest dimension of the tank will also determine the length of fish that can be placed in this live well.

*Fishing locations:*

To maintain the requirements for the genetic structure of the brood stock and because of the need for rapid transfer to the chase boats, one fishing region has been defined.

**Sebastian Inlet Fishing Zone (<http://www.fmfei.org/images/Slide3-2.JPG>):**

Northern Boundary – Mullet Creek by Honest John's Fish Camp.

Southern Boundary – Wabasso Causeway.

Western Boundary – Sebastian River Bridge.

Eastern Boundary – Sebastian Inlet Bridge. Anglers may fish in or just outside the mouth of the Sebastian Inlet if their boats have live-wells large enough to hold 40" redfish and transport them back inside the inlet. The chase boats will be too slow and too heavily loaded with water tanks for them to safely navigate the inlet.

Shore operations for this zone in the tournament will be based near the boat ramps at the South Sebastian Inlet State Park. This site will be the central operations center for all tournament activities.



*Fishing times:*

Lines in the water at 7 AM on the tournament day. At least 4 chase boats will be distributed throughout the Fishing Zones before 0700, and each angler's boat should check out with one of the chase boats prior to fishing. No lines shall be in the water prior to that time. All boats must check in by 3 p.m. on the day of the tournament by notifying one of the chase boats or passing the shore operations center in either Fishing Zone.

*Fishing Regulations:*

All fish must be caught on hook and line and in accordance with applicable Florida and Federal recreational rules and regulations. Because of the special nature of this tournament to collect large brood stock, the normal slot size limit will be waived. The special permit and banner authorizing these captures must be displayed conspicuously at all times during the tournament.

As the purpose of the event is to collect healthy brood stock for hatchery rearing, heavy line, circle hooks and minimum fight will be the norm. Bring fish into the boat quickly and without tiring the fish through unnecessary fight and play. Assistance in catch and capture is permitted and encouraged to minimize the stress on the fish.

No gaffing is permitted, and foul-hooked fish will not be entered into the tournament.

Once a fish is caught, it must immediately be placed in a live well or in the holding net that will be provided to each boat. The biological staff must immediately be notified and one of chase boats with holding tanks will be dispatched to pick up the fish. Numerous chase boats will be monitoring the fishing region, so pickups should take place within a few minutes.

Communication between anglers and the chase boats is essential. All boats must monitor channels 16 & 71 throughout the tournament, and calls can be made to the chase boats via the cell phone numbers and channels distributed at the captain's Gala Friday night.

**Determination of Winners:**

Determination of winners will commence by reviewing catch data at 3 PM. As fish are registered and transferred to the chase boats, fish and angler information will be transmitted to the central tournament station at the South Sebastian Inlet State Park. If a boat wishes to enter the largest fish category, the boat must have their photograph of the largest fish verified at the central tournament station.

**Awards Ceremony:**

An awards ceremony will be held at 3:30-4:30 PM at the South Sebastian Inlet State Park. The anglers must be present to win their awards. Any award not accepted at the awards ceremony shall be given to the next winning individual in each category. By accepting the award, the angler and

captain agree to allow the use of their names and images.

### **Award Categories:**

#### *Longest Fish:*

There will be a single Longest Fish Award for the tournament. This is an individual angler award, not a boat award.

Redfish over 40" long are eligible for the Longest Fish Award. Each angler may determine, at the time of capture of a fish over 40", whether to register that fish as his/her longest fish for purposes of this award category. Once a fish has been selected, the angler may not select a larger fish caught after the first fish was selected for this entry. The fish should be properly handled, with a minimum of stress and released immediately after measurement and a photograph with measuring tape showing length.

#### *Cumulative Brood Stock Length Award:*

The Brood stock Awards are team awards given to the first, second and third place anglers.

All redfish in the 32-40 inch brood stock slot range will be eligible for this award. The total length of all fish in this slot range caught by each angler will be added together to generate the total length score for the angler. **Three healthy 32-40 inch brood stock per angler will be used for this cumulative score, plus one large redfish over 40" per angler (Catch and release this over 40" fish after measuring and photographing with tape! Please handle this fish carefully.)**

It is vital that all fish survive! If a fish dies, that length will be subtracted from the anglers live fish total length score.

### **Tournament Safety:**

All boat captains and anglers are responsible for their own safety and it is the responsibility of the boat captain and crew to insure the boat is properly equipped and that it is operated within the limits of the boat and the skill and seamanship of its captain and crew. Each boat is responsible for making the determination as to whether the boat and crew can safely operate on the day of the tournament and in the sea conditions of the tournament.

### **Liability Release:**

The owner, captain and/or anglers of each boat understands and agrees that Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Institute of Technology, and Hubbs Sea World Research Institute, and any of their volunteers or employees shall not be held liable or responsible in any way for any injury, death or other damages to the crew or the boat that may occur as a result of participation in this tournament. This shall include any damage or injury, which is the result of the negligence of any person(s) affiliated with The Big Reds Tournament.

The owner, captain and/or crew intend to fully exempt, release and hold harmless Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Institute of Technology, and Hubbs Sea World Research Institute and all of their volunteers and employees from any and all liability or responsibility for any injury and/or damage. All boat captains by signing the registration form acknowledges that he or she understands and agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Tournament staff and/or volunteers from any and all damage or claims brought regarding the tournament, The Big Reds Anglers Gala and the Awards Ceremony.

**General:**

The Tournament Committee reserves the right to amend the rules at anytime, as it deems necessary. We reserve the right to deny entry to any team or participant, regardless of acceptance of entry form or payment, refund of fee will be made. All participants agree that all decisions of the Tournament Chairman are final and hereby agree to waive all rights to any further interpretation and/or litigation. Venue for all claims and disputes shall be solely in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida.