

BLACKFOOT CHARTERS

Florida Backcountry Flats Fishing



Springtime - The return of the King!

Tarpon have returned to the Keys and many anglers are heading out in search of the silver king. Anyone driving down U.S.1 can tell you where the best spots to fish for tarpon are. Most of the bridges and passes are holding schools of tarpon right now. Live baits like mullet, crabs, and pilchards have been key to hooking up, while dead baits work well there is no substitute for live bait. From Ocean Reef to East Cape the tarpon are here and hungry. For those looking to land their king on fly tackle try using flies that match the color bottom you are fishing.

If you are planning a trip into the backcountry make sure to wear long pants, the horse fly population is booming this time of year. When fishing the flats try to stay out of your boat's cockpit, instead try standing up on the deck or cooler. This will lead to less annoying bites and more fishing. While the past few months saw massive numbers of small redfish, lately the average fish range between 4-6 lbs with several fish over 7 lbs. Once again gulp tipped jigs worked along the bottom of passes and island motes have been the fastest way to locate productive areas. Once a productive area is found shrimp tipped jigs will not be refused. Along with the reds are seatrout, black drum, and mangrove snappers caught in the same areas.

In the shallow waters of Florida Bay the seatrout bite has been very predictable with most boats catching their limit with ease around the Flamingo area. Cajun thunders or Paradise poppers with a gulp shrimp tipped jig (nuclear chicken) have been the most productive lures for finding and catching seatrout. Look for the mullet mud's to help you locate a productive area to fish. The past couple of weeks there are more and more reports of anglers catching snook, while the average fish range between 27-32 inches a couple of fish caught were even bigger. Live baits like pilchards and pinfish fished around creek mouths and any kind of overhanging structure with current are the hotspots to target.

This is the time of year to be here! I have a few openings during the day but don't forget about the night trips that are available and will adjust to your schedule. Last year I had a charter from 1 am-9am for tarpon and they were not disappointed. Let me be your guide! For those of you who know me, know that to me, fishing is more than just a game, it is a way of life. So fish hard and fish often!

Tight lines,

Capt. Mike Makowski
Blackfoot Charters



Snook



Bonefish