

THE PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO CONSERVING AND PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MARINE RESOURCES

WINTER 23-24

# SEAWATCH

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## HABITAT UPDATE

2024

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REMEMBERING  
H.C. "CARY" KRESGE, JR.



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Editorial/business inquiries and information requests: Mary Hillyer Walther, P.O. Box 568886, Orlando, Florida, 32856-8886 407-854-7002

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CCA Florida, P.O. Box 568886, Orlando, Florida, 32856-8886

407-854-7002 • ccaflorida.org

**Managing Editor**  
Mary Hillyer Walther

**Creative Director**  
Debbie Dewell  
Great Minds, Inc.  
850-386-7401

**Printer**  
Durrprint,  
Tallahassee

**CCA FLORIDA STAFF**

**Brian Gorski**  
Executive Director

**Adam Miller**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Trip Aukeman**  
Director of Advocacy

**Frank Gidus**  
Director of Habitat  
& Environmental  
Restoration

**Mary Hillyer Walther**  
Director of  
Communications

**Denise Perine**  
Controller

**Zack Batley**  
Senior Regional Director

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Director of Events  
& Membership

**Will Ramsby**  
Regional Director

**Jimmy Michaels**  
Regional Director

**Sara Krause**  
Regional Director

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Regional Director

**Logan Kennovin**  
Assistant Regional Director

**Maria Arguello**  
Assistant Regional Director

**Andrew Danter**  
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& Inventory Manager

**Leiza Fitzgerald**  
STAR Director

**Andrea Gillispie**  
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# Marine Recreation Industry Commends NOAA Fisheries on Rejecting Petition to Establish Vessel Speed Restrictions in the Gulf of Mexico

The recreational fishing and boating community is applauding the decision by NOAA Fisheries to deny a petition to establish a year-round 10-knot (11 mph) vessel speed limit and other vessel-related measures in the Rice's whale "core" habitat area in the Gulf of Mexico.

The petitioners were asking NOAA to use their authority under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act to establish a "Vessel Slowdown Zone" from approximately Pensacola, Fla. to south of Tampa to protect the newly discovered Rice's whale. The petition proposed the following restrictions:

- Mandatory 11 mph speed limit for all vessels transiting the proposed zone;
- No vessel transits at night;
- Vessels transiting through the zone must report their plans to NOAA, utilize trained visual observers, and maintain a separation distance of 500 meters from Rice's whales;
- Use and operate an Automatic Identification System, or notify NOAA of transits through the zone, and
- Report all non-compliance to NOAA within 24 hours.

On June 21, 2023, leading recreational fishing and boating organizations submitted public comment urging NOAA not to initiate any rulemaking action based on the petition for the following reasons:

The petitioners failed to put forward any evidence that recreational vessels pose a risk to Rice's whales that would justify the significant rules proposed in the petition.

NOAA has yet to engage with the recreational fishing and boating industry on Rice's whale recovery planning or to better understand how recreational vessels may interact with Rice's whales.

NOAA needs to fully investigate and report on the likelihood of recovering Rice's whales given documented con-

cerns about its population size.

The public forcefully responded to the petition, and NOAA received approximately 75,500 public comments – many of which came from impacted anglers and boaters in the region.

"Anglers and boaters can breathe a sigh of relief that extreme vessel speed restrictions and other measures encouraged by radical environmental groups for the Gulf of Mexico are no longer a threat, but we must remain vigilant as threats to access are present on every coast. The recreational fishing and boating community sounded the alarm when these misguided restrictions were first requested, and tens of thousands of us spoke up – loud and clear – in formal comments and outreach to Congress. Earnest thanks to all our supporters who engaged on this proposed Gulf restriction," said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Sportfishing Policy. "Draconian vessel speed restrictions were never the answer to 21st century conservation challenges. We have asked NOAA to work with experts from our industry in improving technology to help tell mariners where whales are instead of effectively barring public access to America's marine waters."

"We welcome this approach by NOAA, in which they listened to all stakeholders, including the recreational boating and fishing industries, and committed to using the latest science to inform their rulemaking," said Frank Hugelmeyer, president and CEO of the National Marine Manufacturers Association. "This rule would have had dire implications on Gulf Coast communities, similar to what the proposed North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction rule will do to communities along the Eastern Seaboard. This harmful proposal would create one of the largest restrictions of Americans' ac-



cess to public waterways, put families at risk on the water, and have a devastating impact on economies up and down the Atlantic Coast. We will continue to engage NOAA and work with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to find ways to protect the right whale that do not come at the expense of American livelihoods."

"We thank NOAA Fisheries for recognizing the irrationality of this petition," said Jeff Crane, president and CEO of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. "The proposal to establish



an oppressive rule that severely limits vessel speeds and prohibits vessel transit after dark in such a large area was based on presumption and attempted to circumvent a thoughtful, science-based process to arrive at appropriate and effective Rice's whale conservation measures. We trust that the recreational fishing and boating community will be given a seat at the table should regulatory measures be necessary in the future."

"While it's a relief that the Rice's whale vessel speed petition will not move forward at this time, the sportfishing com-

munity must stay vigilant, as this issue is far from over," said Glenn Hughes, President of the American Sportfishing Association. "While others seem to want to solely rely on draconian vessel speed restrictions, our community continues to push for technology that will allow for more dynamic and effective mitigation of whale strikes. We will continue to advocate for Congress and NOAA to work with our community to fund and develop real time whale detection and mitigation measures that will allow for continued public access to the ocean while better protecting endangered whales."

"We appreciate the agency's decision to take overwhelming public sentiment into account on this petition," said Mark Ray, chairman of Coastal Conservation Association. "There is work to do to properly protect whales, and we remain committed to working with our partners to find technological solutions that can achieve that goal and still allow access to our coastal waters."



# Sportfishing Community Reacts to NOAA's Announcement on Data Program Failure

Today, the nation's leading recreational fishing and marine conservation organizations released a white paper on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) findings that its Marine Recreational Information Program – Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES) may be overestimating recreational catch and effort data by 30 – 40%.

The Marine Recreational Information Program is a NOAA program that provides estimates of recreational fishing catches and trips that occur from Maine to Mississippi and Hawaii. These data are used to assess and manage state and federal fisheries in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Hawaii.

A recent pilot study conducted by NOAA found that MRIP-FES may be overestimating recreational catch and effort data by 30 – 40%. This is the third time in 13 years serious issues have been uncovered in NOAA's recreational fishery data program.

Many states have demonstrated the capability of developing survey programs to estimate recreational catch and effort data with more precision than MRIP. NOAA needs to work with all states to identify the best steps forward including the opportunity to transition some or all recreational data collection to the states and how to best provide support (i.e., funding) to states that lead data collection improvements.

Some states may not be ready to transition to their own data collection program for estimates of effort. For those states, NOAA must collaborate with states and stakeholders on needed reforms to recreational data collection, many of which were identified in a recent National Academy of Sciences report. At the same time, NOAA must also pursue meaningful investments in the development and implementation of recreational management improvements.

"NOAA has had multiple chances to fix management of recreational fisheries, and it has failed every time. A ready

alternative exists in states that have already taken steps to develop better recreational data than the feds have ever had," said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Sportfishing Policy. "It's time to stop making the same mistakes, stop wasting taxpayer money, and stop causing chaos in recreational fisheries management and coastal communities. It's time for all parties to work together to properly fund state efforts to manage recreational fisheries."

"The recreational fishing community's confidence in federal fisheries data couldn't be lower," said Mike Leonard, vice president of government affairs for the American Sportfishing Association. "Achieving fisheries management that balances conservation and access, and that anglers can trust, requires fundamental changes to how these data are collected. Additionally, recognizing the inherent challenges in gathering recreational catch data at a level of precision needed to meet statutory management requirements, managers need to look to alternative management approaches such as what is being deployed in the Mid-Atlantic for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass."

"Yet another major revision to the federal recreational data collection system is upon us, and it should bring a realization that NOAA is just not capable of doing this job," said Ted Venker, conservation director of Coastal Conservation Association. "At best we are looking at several more years of questionable revisions, recalculations, and recalibrations based on a suspect data system that has never proven it can produce accurate information. This is no way to manage a public resource. It would be irresponsible to continue down this road rather than exploring and supporting state-based options to better manage the recreational sector wherever feasible."

"In 2013, I testified before the U.S. House of Representatives that MRIP was a good general survey but that it would never provide the data accuracy

**NOAA  
STUDY FINDS  
ITS OWN  
ESTIMATES  
INFLATED  
30 – 40%  
MARINE  
RECREATIONAL  
CATCH DATA  
PROGRAM IN  
NEED OF  
OVERHAUL**

and reliability we need for managing the recreational sector to annual catch limits. MRIP continues to prove my point a decade later," said Chris Horton, Senior Director, Fisheries Policy for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. "We are encouraged that the administration at NOAA Fisheries is embracing state data programs as a better path forward, at least in the Gulf. However, each year it becomes more obvious that the increasingly ineffective federal management model of managing to a theoretical annual quota based largely on old catch data is truly the elephant in the room."



*Photo Courtesy of Crystal River Fishing Company*



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# Snapper Cakes With Spicy Remoulade Sauce

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY HEATHER PETEREK  
JOINCCA.ORG/RECIPES

## Ingredients

### SPICY REMOULADE SAUCE

- ½ c mayonnaise
- ½ c sour cream
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp horseradish
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp Louisiana hot sauce
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- Juice of 1 lemon

### SNAPPER CAKES

- Vegetable oil for frying
- ¾ c fresh corn kernels
- ¼ c red bell pepper, finely diced
- ¼ c yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 clove fresh garlic, minced
- 2 large snapper fillets, cut into small pieces
- ½ c mayonnaise
- ¼ c green onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 c panko bread crumbs

## Directions

Make the remoulade sauce by whisking all ingredients thoroughly in a small bowl. Let sit in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. The longer it sits, the better, even as long as overnight.

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add corn, bell pepper, yellow onion and garlic; cook until all vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Add all the snapper pieces to the skillet and cook about 5 minutes per side or until fish is cooked through. Transfer the fish and vegetable mixture into a large bowl and let cool for 10 minutes. Add mayonnaise, green onion, mustard, salt, pepper, egg and panko bread crumbs. Gently fold it all together until well combined, taking care not to break up the fish too much. Refrigerate for 10 minutes then shape mixture into ½ cup patties.

Heat about 4 tablespoons vegetable oil in the same skillet over medium-high heat. Once oil is hot enough for frying, cook cakes in batches until golden brown, about 3 minutes per side. Let drain on paper towels or a wire rack. Repeat process until all fish cakes are browned.

To serve, place one or two snapper cakes on a plate, top with remoulade sauce and garnish with extra chopped green onion and lemon wedges. **MAKES ABOUT 8 CAKES.**

*\*Scan the QR code on the previous page for some helpful videos.*



2024

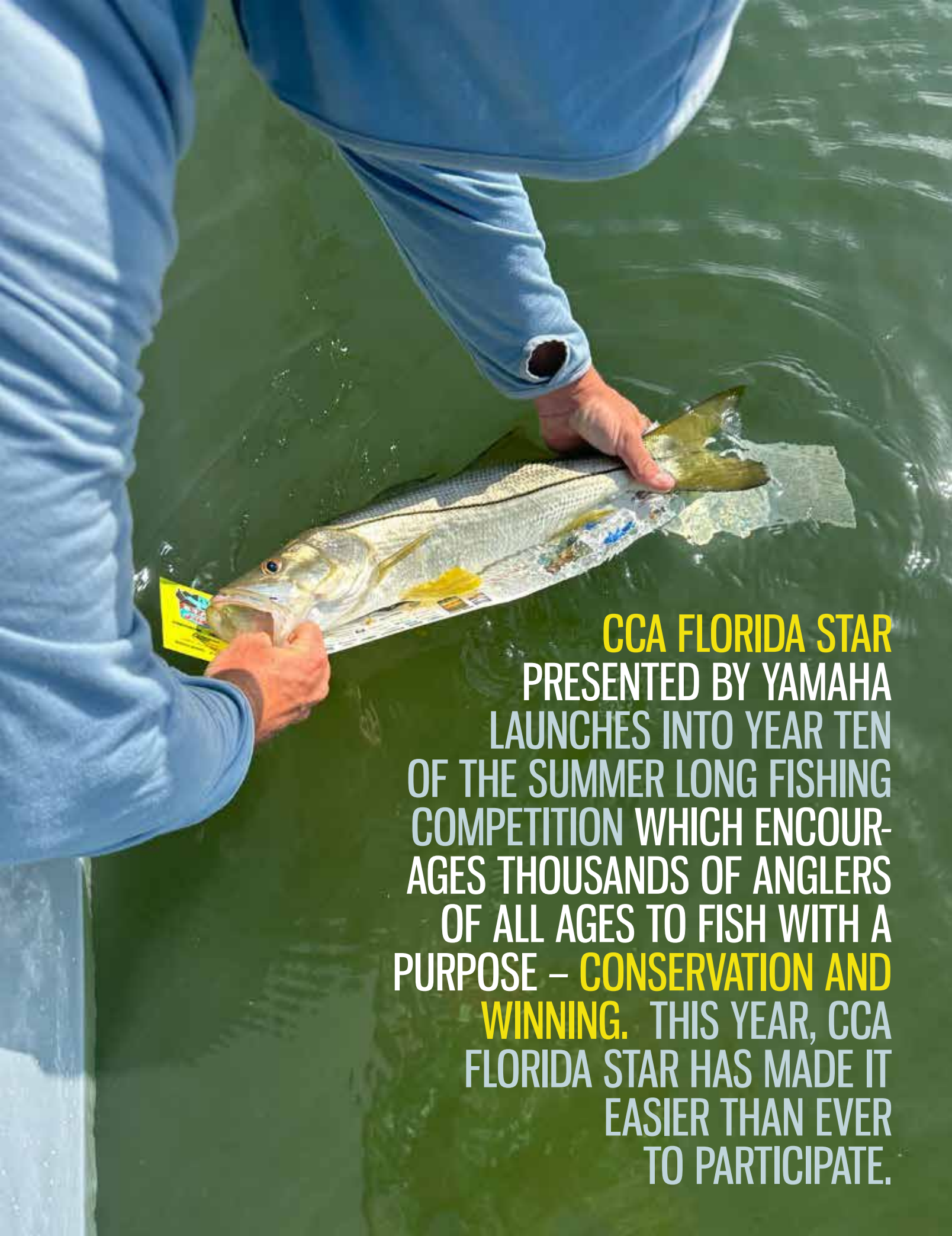


**STAR**

# IT'S EASIER TO WIN BIG

IN STATEWIDE  
CONSERVATION  
FOCUSED FISHING  
COMPETITION



A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and orange gloves is holding a large, silver fish over a body of water. The fish has a yellow tag in its mouth. The person's shirt has a small tear at the cuff. The background is a greenish-brown body of water with ripples.

**CCA FLORIDA STAR**  
PRESENTED BY YAMAHA  
LAUNCHES INTO YEAR TEN  
OF THE SUMMER LONG FISHING  
COMPETITION WHICH ENCOUR-  
AGES THOUSANDS OF ANGLERS  
OF ALL AGES TO FISH WITH A  
PURPOSE – **CONSERVATION AND**  
**WINNING.** THIS YEAR, CCA  
FLORIDA STAR HAS MADE IT  
EASIER THAN EVER  
TO PARTICIPATE.

## THE 100-DAY FISHING COMPETITION CREATES AWARENESS FOR CONSERVATION AND THE MISSION TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE FLORIDA'S MARINE FISHERY

CCA Florida, the state's leading organization dedicated to marine fisheries conservation, habitat restoration, education and advocacy, organizes the 100-day fishing competition to create awareness for conservation and the organizations mission to protect and improve Florida's marine fishery.

Heading into year 10, CCA FL STAR is simplifying the competition to make it easier for participants to enter their catches and win big. It's not just about anglers winning but the fishery too. Florida STAR focuses on conservation with its technology-based, CPR format and dedicated smartphone app which promotes the proper handling of species and allows participants who, at the time of their catch are members of CCA and registered in STAR to upload photos of their catch for an entry in the competition. STAR has set the bar for other fishing tournaments to follow by implementing conservation friendly alternatives, a trash division and some really big prizes.

The CCA Florida STAR competition presented by Yamaha has a division for everyone, from the non-angler to the experienced angler and targets inshore and off-shore species. For the 2024 competition, CCA Florida STAR will offer over \$500,000 in prizes and scholarships but has pared down the number of divisions to make participation simpler. STAR will offer only 8 divisions which include a Tagged Redfish Division, Tagged Dolphin Division, an Inshore and Offshore Division, Native Watercraft Kayak Division, Realtree Youth Scholarship Division, Power Pole Conservation Division and Costa Kick Plastic Trash Division.

STAR's signature Tagged Redfish Division presented by T H Marine will offer 5 adult winners, the choice of a Contender Boats 22 Sport, Dek Kat Boats 27 Flat Kat, Spyder Boats FX19 Vapor, Micro Draft Skiff 22 Extreme and a package that includes a Sea Doo Fish Pro Trophy and a Can-Am Defender. Each boat will be powered by Yamaha and sitting on an Infinity Trailer, the competitions presenting sponsor and sitting on an Infinity Trailer. The first winning tagged redfish angler will receive their choice of all these packages as their prize. The next four winning anglers

will receive their choice of a Contender Boats 22 Sport, Dek Kat Boats 27 Flat Kat, Spyder Boats FX19 Vapor, Micro Draft Skiff 22 Extreme and a package that includes a Sea Doo Fish Pro Trophy and a Can-Am Defender. Each boat will be powered by Yamaha and sitting on an Infinity Trailer, the competitions presenting sponsor and sitting on an Infinity Trailer. The first winning tagged redfish angler will receive their choice of all these packages as their prize. The next four winning anglers





will have their choice of the remaining prizes in the division. For the first two youth anglers who win in this division, prizes include a tiller boat powered by Yamaha, trailer, Minn Kota trolling motor and Humminbird electronics.

Once again in 2024, STAR has the ALTA SUPER STAR tagged redfish swimming in Florida waters and if it is recaptured, the winner will receive \$50,000 cash from ALTA Equipment!

It is not impossible to catch one of these tagged redfish, almost every year, STAR has had at least one winner of a brand-new boat and anglers have reported over 18 recaptured tagged redfish annually but.... they were not in the competition and a CCA member at the time of the catch and were not eligible to win. With each of Flor-

ida's coastal counties having an average 4 tagged redfish released in their coastal waters there will be a total of over 160 prize winning tagged fish out there for anglers to pursue. The best opportunity to catch one of this year's tagged redfish will be in Citrus and Charlotte Counties, STAR's 2024 Destination Counties. Each Destination County will have 8 tagged redfish in their coastal waters.

What simplification of STAR means to participants? The competition combined all the past non-tagged inshore divisions into one Inshore Division, The Carolina Skiff Inshore Division presented by Minn Kota trolling motors. The 2024 Inshore Division will offer anglers the opportunity to enter 3 catches each day of competition from the non- tagged inshore species list in the STAR

Yamaha  
 Contender  
 Dek Kat Boats  
 Spyder Boats  
 Micro Draft Skiff  
 Sea Doo  
 Can-am  
 Carolina Skiff  
 Duke Energy  
 Realtree Fishing  
 ALTA Equipment Company  
 Carolina Skiff  
 Tigress Outriggers & Gear  
 Engel Coolers  
 Humminbird  
 Minn Kota  
 West Marine  
 Native Water Craft  
 Bull Bay Tackle  
 TH Marine  
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Tournament App. Redfish, Snook, Trout, Tarpon, Sheephead and Flounder are just a few included in that list. This division will pay out 12 places with over \$60,000 in prizes available. First place prize being Carolina Skiff's new E-Series E18 JVX with a 75HP Yamaha and trailer valued at over \$35,000.

For the offshore anglers, the Tigress Outriggers and Gear Tagged Dolphin Division offers the first STAR registrant and

CCA Florida member who catches one of the tagged dolphin a \$10,000 cash prize. Twenty dolphin (Mahi Mahi) will be tagged and released for STAR in the lower keys of Florida.

This year, all the past non-tagged offshore divisions will also be combined into one division, the Engel Cooler Offshore Division presented by AFTCO. The 2024 Offshore Division will offer anglers the op-

portunity to enter 3 catches each day of competition from the non-tagged offshore species list found in the STAR tournament app. Mahi Mahi, Mackerel, Sailfish, Grouper, Snapper and Amberjack are just a few included in the list. The Offshore Division will pay out 12 places with over \$60,000 in prizes available. First place prize being a 250HP Yamaha with AFTCO sponsor prizes in the package for a total value of \$35,000.





The Native Watercraft Kayak Division, Realtree Youth Scholarship Division, Power Pole Conservation Division and Costa Kick Plastic Trash Division round out the competition and remain the same as in past years but with much bigger prizes offered.

STAR continues to be the largest family-friendly saltwater fishing competition in Florida, the event runs from Saturday of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day and boasts amazing prizes for anglers of all ages and skill levels. Since STAR's inception in 2015, the competition has awarded trucks, new boat, motor and trailer packages, electronics and fishing tackle totaling nearly \$4 million in prizes with \$900,000 of that being in youth scholarships.

"Our state's resources and fisheries are here for our enjoyment, and we understand that smart fishing will preserve them for the future," said Leiza Fitzgerald CCA Florida STAR Director. "Given the issues plagu-



ing areas of our state's water and estuaries, protecting our fish populations and habitat is critical to ensure healthy fisheries will be here to enjoy in the future."

"We're extremely proud that STAR can

provide a family-friendly fishing competition that leverages technology to remain focused on CCA's mission of conservation". "Through the competition's divisions, we're able to educate the public on the im-



portance of conservation, the appropriate handling of some species, including tarpon, and we've collected more than 5,000 five-gallon buckets of garbage and debris."

Now with only 8 divisions, plus ALL salt water species included in the event and most winners determined by random drawing, anglers of all ages and skill levels can fish from anywhere in Florida's saltwa-

ter and have greater opportunities to win BIG. Registration is \$40 for current CCA Florida members, or \$80 for non-members, which includes CCA Florida membership. Kids ages 6-17 can register for free with their current (\$10) CCA Florida youth membership.

All STAR entries must be photographed with the official 2024 CCA Florida Mea-

suring Device, which will be available free of charge at various locations throughout the state, including all Florida West Marine stores, the preferred distribution location. For a full listing of measuring device locations, visit [ccaflstar.com](http://ccaflstar.com).

For more information on STAR, or to register, visit the [ccaflstar.com](http://ccaflstar.com) or the Facebook page.

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# 2024 STAR



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**STAR is Florida's largest family-friendly fishing competition giving anglers of all ages endless summer-long fun!**

**For more information on STAR, please visit [www.CCAFLSTAR.com](http://www.CCAFLSTAR.com)**



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OF OYSTERS**



WERE SAVED FROM WASTE BY CCA FLORIDA IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. THUS FAR, 36 OF THE 80 TONS HAVE BEEN RECYCLED AND REDEPLOYED TO CREATE ARTIFICIAL REEFS



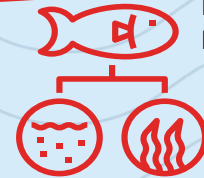
**MORE THAN 17,000 MEMBERS  
ACROSS FLORIDA'S 67 COUNTIES**

**IN LAST 10 YEARS**

**46**  
ARTIFICIAL  
REEFS



**80**  
HABITAT  
PROJECTS



**ADVOCATED  
GAMEFISH  
STATUS FOR  
REDFISH**

ADVOCATES AND CREATES  
AWARENESS  
FOR IMPROVING  
STATEWIDE  
WATER QUALITY

**WORKED  
WITH FWC TO  
ENSURE MAXIMUM  
ANGLER ACCESS  
FOR RED SNAPPER**

**PROTECTING  
FLORIDA'S MARINE  
RESOURCES AND ANGLERS'  
ACCESS FOR MORE  
THAN 35 YEARS**

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CONSTITUTIONAL  
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INTRODUCE DESCENDING  
DEVICE BILL AND  
FORAGE FISH  
CONSERVATION ACT

**HELPED BAN LONGLINES  
FOR BILLFISH  
AND PELAGIC SPECIES**



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RESTOCKED AND RELEASED



**280,000 REDFISH**  
RESTOCKED AND RELEASED



**110,000 SEA TROUT**  
RESTOCKED AND RELEASED



**\$900,000 IN CCA FLORIDA YOUTH COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS  
HAVE BEEN AWARDED SINCE 2015**



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**H.C. “Cary” Kresge, Jr. was honored in October 2023 at the 35th Annual CCA Florida Orlando Chapter Banquet & Auction.** Cary was born in Los Angeles and moved as an infant to the Detroit area and then to the Sunset Isles of Miami Beach where his lifelong passion for all things fishing was cemented. He attended Detroit Country Day School and the Asheville School for Boys before enrolling at Rollins College where he graduated with a BA and then an MBA. In 1965 he married the love of his life Susan Camp Kresge, whom he met at Rollins. They remained married for over 58 years and were dedicated to each other like no other couple you’ll ever meet.

**DECEMBER 20, 1941 – AUGUST 2, 2023**

**H.C. “CARY”**



KRESGE, JR.

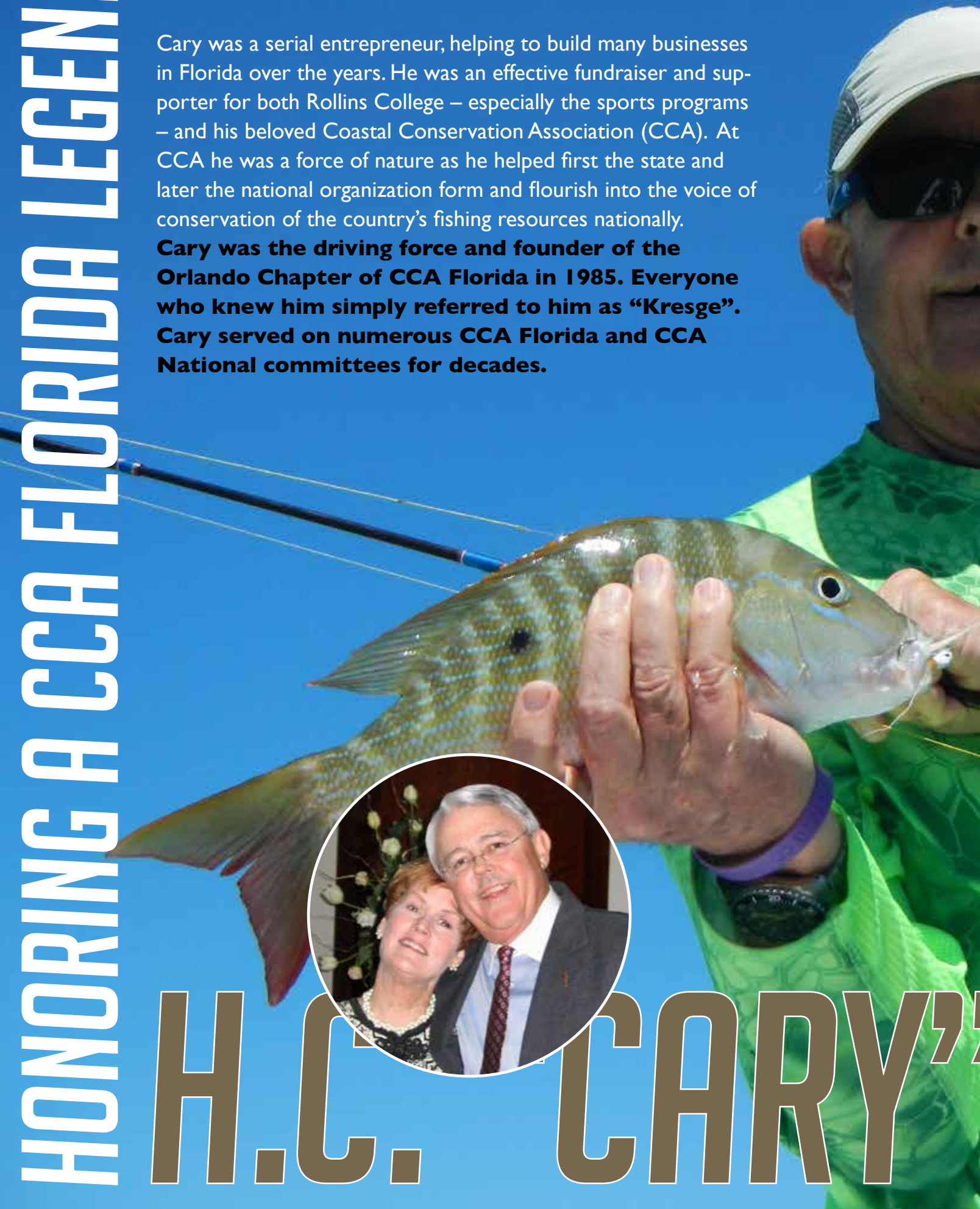
# HONORING A CCA FLORIDA LEGEND

Cary was a serial entrepreneur, helping to build many businesses in Florida over the years. He was an effective fundraiser and supporter for both Rollins College – especially the sports programs – and his beloved Coastal Conservation Association (CCA). At CCA he was a force of nature as he helped first the state and later the national organization form and flourish into the voice of conservation of the country's fishing resources nationally.

**Cary was the driving force and founder of the Orlando Chapter of CCA Florida in 1985. Everyone who knew him simply referred to him as "Kresge". Cary served on numerous CCA Florida and CCA National committees for decades.**



# H.C. CARY'S





**He wasn't big on the nitty gritty details of fisheries management but his uncanny ability to recruit supporters and volunteers, secure donations and his leadership was a big part in what CCA is today.** Prior to CCA, Cary served on the board of the Everglades Protection Association and helped to successfully advocated for a ban on commercial fishing in Everglades National Park. One of his greatest accomplishments with CCA was the push for a referendum to ban entanglement nets, which was passed in 1994 by an overwhelming majority. Kresge knew this was a landmark deal for CCA Florida and often voiced his approval for the rebound of fishery and its domino effect on other sea and bird life.



**KRESGE, JR.**

# HONORING A CCA FLORIDA LEGEND

**Many of you knew Cary and even if you didn't, you definitely benefited from his passion and dedication to CCA and Florida's precious natural resources.** If you have attended a CCA event over the past 38 years, then you have benefited from his efforts. I'd even be willing to bet that you own a piece of art, a rod, a reel, a high-end watch or general fishing equipment that was procured by Cary. The Orlando events were always unique thanks to his ability to procure auction and raffle items that you wouldn't see at any other CCA event in Florida. Not only would he secure more donations than anyone else, he would turn around and bid on them himself at the auction. Back in 1986, Cary and his good friend Bob Showalter bid and won the first boat ever auctioned at a CCA Florida event, a Maverick Master Angler. They appropriately named it "Auction Fever." That purchase almost caused two divorces and in hindsight, Bob said they should have named it "9 Scotch's Each" instead!

Cary's hard work, dedication and passion for conservation did not go unnoticed. He earned numerous awards for his efforts over the years and most notably the CCA Florida Lifetime Achievement Award as well as the Ted Forsgren Conservation award, the highest honor in CCA. The Orlando Chapter honors Cary each year by choosing a recipient of an award that bears his name, "The Cary Kresge Volunteer of the Year Award." In 2019, The Cary Kresge Artificial reef was deployed in his honor off the coast of Brevard County.

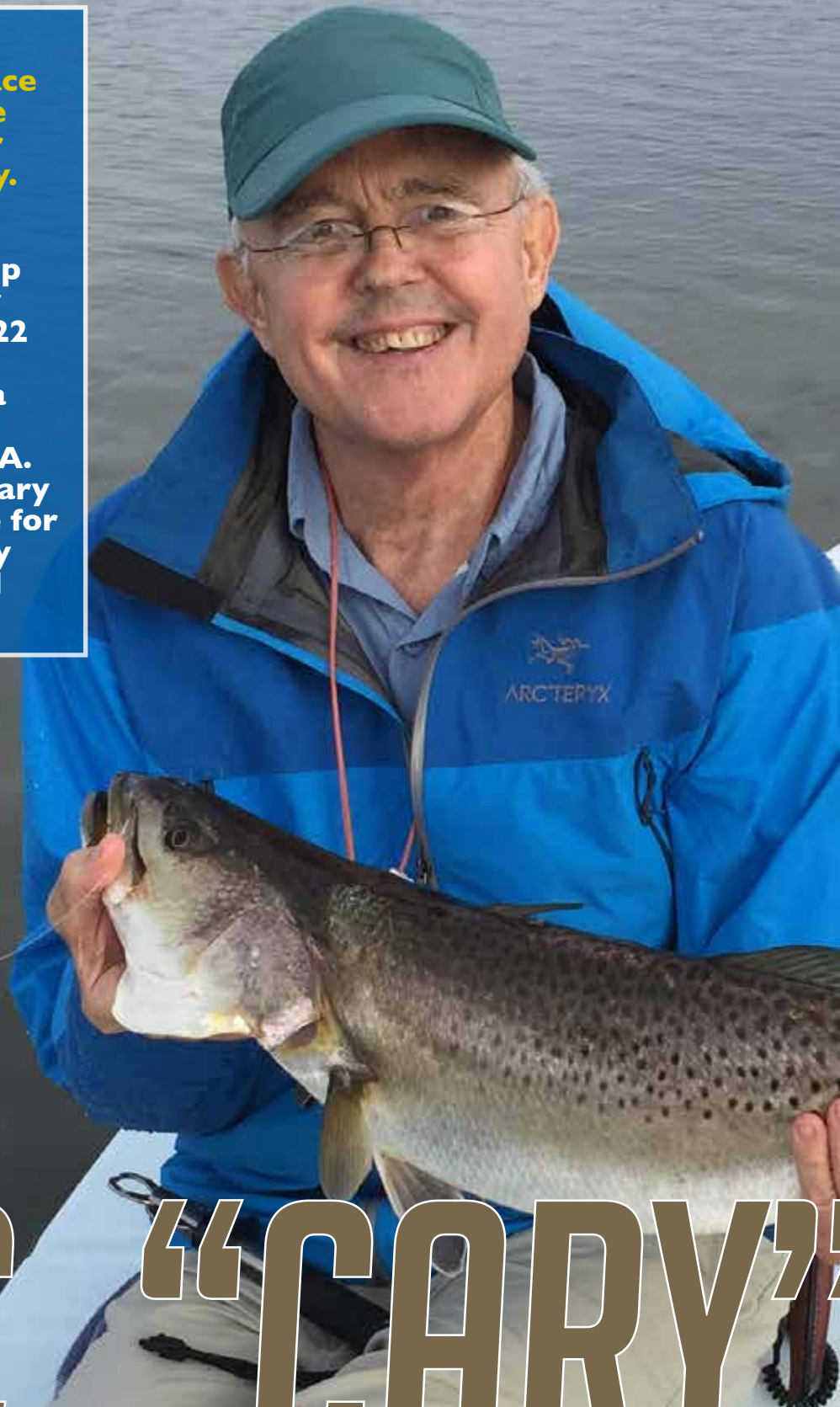
# H.C. "CARY"



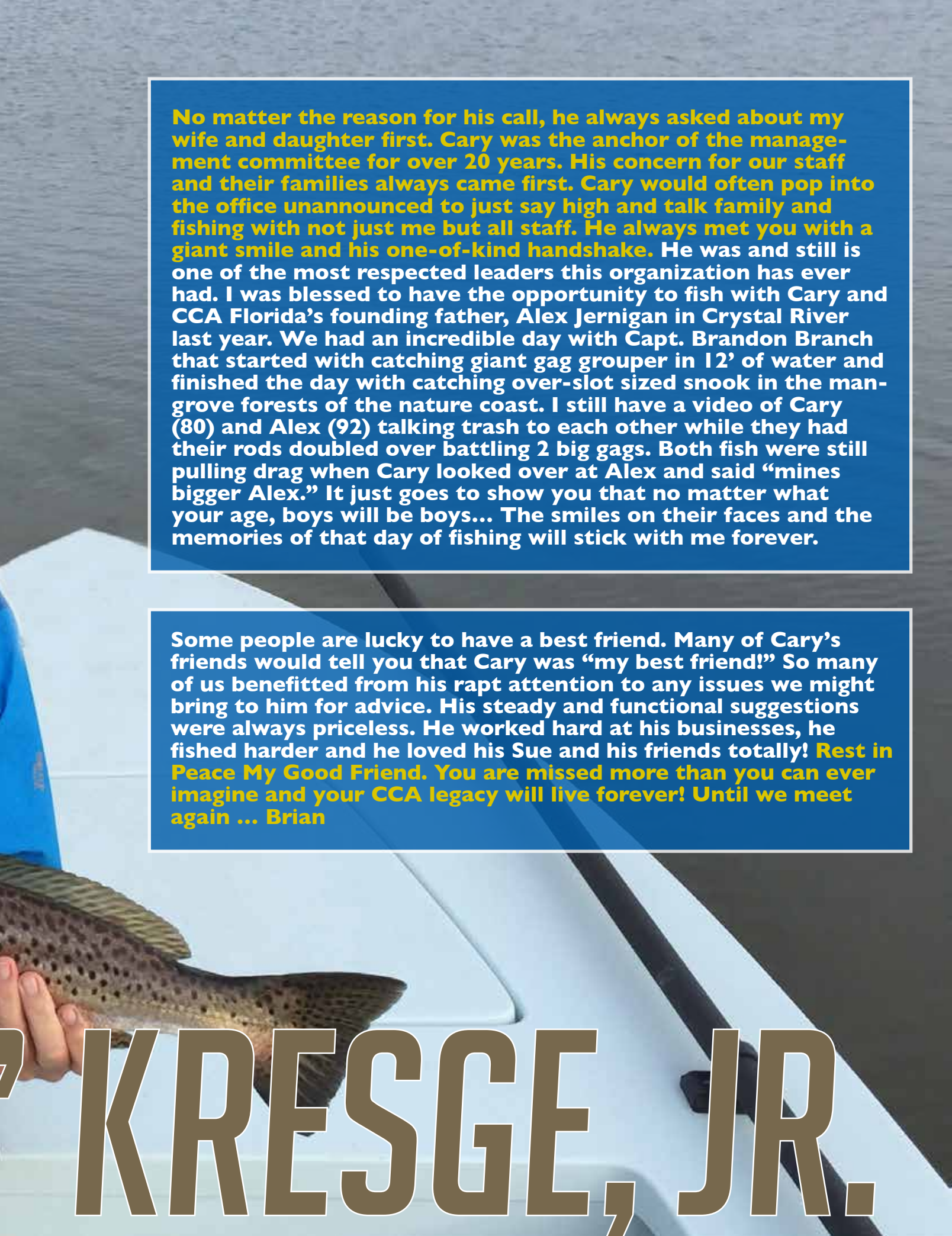
' KRESGE, JR.

# HONORING A CCA FLORIDA LEGEND

Cary will always hold a special place in my heart as he is responsible for where I am today. As a member of CCA Florida's highest leadership committee, Cary interviewed me 22 years ago when I first applied for a regional director position with CCA. Since that day, Cary was always there for me and genuinely cared for me and my family.

A man with glasses and a green cap, wearing a blue Arcteryx jacket, is smiling and holding a large, dark-colored fish. He is standing on a boat with a white railing. The background is a body of water.

# H.C. "CARY"



No matter the reason for his call, he always asked about my wife and daughter first. Cary was the anchor of the management committee for over 20 years. His concern for our staff and their families always came first. Cary would often pop into the office unannounced to just say hi and talk family and fishing with not just me but all staff. He always met you with a giant smile and his one-of-kind handshake. He was and still is one of the most respected leaders this organization has ever had. I was blessed to have the opportunity to fish with Cary and CCA Florida's founding father, Alex Jernigan in Crystal River last year. We had an incredible day with Capt. Brandon Branch that started with catching giant gag grouper in 12' of water and finished the day with catching over-slot sized snook in the mangrove forests of the nature coast. I still have a video of Cary (80) and Alex (92) talking trash to each other while they had their rods doubled over battling 2 big gags. Both fish were still pulling drag when Cary looked over at Alex and said "mine's bigger Alex." It just goes to show you that no matter what your age, boys will be boys... The smiles on their faces and the memories of that day of fishing will stick with me forever.

Some people are lucky to have a best friend. Many of Cary's friends would tell you that Cary was "my best friend!" So many of us benefitted from his rapt attention to any issues we might bring to him for advice. His steady and functional suggestions were always priceless. He worked hard at his businesses, he fished harder and he loved his Sue and his friends totally! **Rest in Peace My Good Friend. You are missed more than you can ever imagine and your CCA legacy will live forever! Until we meet again ... Brian**

**KRESGE, JR.**

P O W E R   Y O U R   P U R S U I T

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# 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIGITAL PHOTO ALL-RELEASE CHALLENGE

On September 23rd the CCA Tampa Chapter hosted the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Digital Photo All-Release Challenge in Memory of Captain Richard Seward. It was a great turnout with over 100 participants showing up to compete for the top spot. Our presenting sponsor, T.A. Mahoney, showed up in full force to support, promote, and participate in this year's event. They gave away some unbelievable prizes and one of the highlights of the weekend was the friendly competition between Capt. Brian Watts and Mike Mahoney himself. Visit <https://www.tailsfromthedarkside.com/> to catch up on the whole episode and see how it ended! We couldn't have done it without our other supporters such as TECO, Peoples Gas, Bull Bay Rods, Tampa Bay Watch, Power-Pole, and Southeast Personnel Leasing.

## FIRST-PLACE

## WINNERS

**Redfish: Nick Nappi**  
**Redfish Non-Motor: Wayne Roberts**  
**Snook: John Melendez**  
**Snook Non-Motor: Cory Maysles**  
**Trout: Capt. Leiza Fitzgerald**  
**Trout Non-Motor: Frank Weber**  
**Youth: Delaney Lynch**



# 2024 HABITAT UPDATE

CCA Florida's ongoing habitat restoration work highlighted here continues to **positively impact water quality, water clarity, and marine species around Florida.**

Since 2010 and in collaboration with the Building Conservation Trust, CCA Florida and our partners have contributed **over \$1.5 million and leveraged those funds with our partners to over \$10 million in habitat projects statewide.** Here's a look at what we accomplished in 2023 and what is coming in 2024!

## CCA/UCF Oyster Ring Making Event

On Sunday, January 22, CCA Florida, Mud Hole Custom Tackle and 56 volunteers teamed up with UCF to create 370 oyster rings, which will be used for oyster reef restoration in the Mosquito and Indian River Lagoon. Oyster rings have been proven to be extremely effective in recruiting “baby” oysters to restore damaged reefs and provide a vital habitat that filters water too. In fact, after one year, the 370 rings will provide a home for approximately 29,600 oysters. At the end of the second year, those 370 rings will contain more than 59,000 oysters that will continue to grow, filter the water and provide outstanding habitat.

## CCA Oyster Shell Recycling Program Expansion

On October 16, we made history as CCA Florida and friends celebrated the ribbon cutting ceremony of the first permanent CCA Florida recycled oyster shell storage site. Two 100-foot by 30-foot concrete pads were installed for storage of our recycled oyster shells. Special thanks to the Lake County government, Lake County Commissioner Sean Parks, the Clermont Oyster Bar, SteelWorx, ConcreteWorx, DZ, CCA Clermont Committee, and Lake County Solid Waste Management. DZ Block donated 65 yards of concrete to the project and Concrete Worx/Steel Worx donated all labor, site work and finishing work. This site will store and dry out oyster shell for future restoration projects around the state.

In November, CCA Florida and Duke Energy teamed up with volunteers from the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and Southwest Florida Reefs to plant mangroves and clean hurricane debris on Hemp Key in Pine Island Sound. 200 black mangroves and 50 white mangroves raised at the Duke Energy Mariculture Center were donated and planted to provide shoreline stabilization, marine habitat, and storm protection.

## Hemp Key Mangrove Project

## Bob Burton Memorial Reef



On July 10, 2023, the Bob Burton Memorial Reef was successfully deployed off the coast of Delray Beach with the family and CCA in attendance. Bob Burton was a CCA Life Member from Palm Beach, Florida and was one of the most active volunteers CCA has ever known. He served on a couple different fisheries management panels and would attend every CCA board meeting and pretty much every CCA state-wide event. Everyone that knew Bob knew that if you fished with him, he would make you join CCA! The memorial reef was deployed approximately ½ mile off Delray Beach in 65 feet of water. Many thanks to the Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management Department, McCulley Marine Services, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the many donors for making the project a success.

In 2022, CCA Florida supported the Palm Beach County FWC artificial reef grant for this project. The grant application was submitted on April 22, 2022 and was awarded in August 2022. The deployment plan included a large memorial structure of Bob built by a local marine artist, surrounded by several piles of large limestone boulders. The limestone boulders were deployed in early June 2023. In addition to the \$60,000 FWC grant funds received, CCA Florida has raised an additional \$40,545 for this project.

## CCA/UCF Oyster Ring Making Event

On March 19, CCA Florida volunteers and UCF students created 187 oyster rings for Mosquito Lagoon habitat restoration. The rings are incredibly efficient at restoring oyster reefs by attracting oyster larvae called spat. They will be deployed on damaged and restored oyster reefs this summer. Since 2007, UCF's oyster reef restoration program, under the leadership of Dr. Linda Walters, is responsible for more than 17 million new oysters in the Mosquito Lagoon. CCA Florida is very proud of our involvement with UCF to help improve water quality and marine habitat in such a vital ecosystem.

## IRL Living Shoreline Restoration

On April 2, 2023, volunteers from CCA Florida and Marine Discovery Center teamed up with UCF to enhance over 500 linear feet of shoreline using concrete “volcanoes,” mangroves and spartina grass. The “volcanoes” are made with the same proven oyster-attracting method for creating oyster rings, but on a much larger and heavier scale. The “volcanoes” are used to absorb wave energy and reduce erosion while the mangroves and spartina help anchor the shoreline, together, providing excellent habitat for fish and wildlife. Life members Greg Harrison and Tom Emge even stayed late to help professor Dr. Linda Walters and her husband Paul deploy 100 oyster rings to enhance a restored oyster reef. And during the deployment, the volunteers spotted seagrass on several occasions, indicating a definite return.

## CCA/UCF Mangrove Educator’s Workshop

In August, 2023, CCA Florida along with the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program provided boat support for the 15th annual UCF Mangrove Educator’s Workshop in Canaveral National Seashore. Volunteers included 30, K-12 teachers from six Central Florida counties, including Orange, Seminole, Volusia, Brevard, Polk and Lake, and nine support staff. CCA Florida donated the buckets used by the teachers to collect red mangrove propagules from Mosquito Lagoon that will be planted and grown out by their students. This spring, UCF will collect the mangroves from the schools, which will be used for shoreline restoration projects in future years. This educational and fun project for the children has added over 15,000 vital mangroves in the Mosquito Lagoon that filter water, stabilize shorelines and provide predator protection for juvenile fish.

## CCA Florida & Duke Energy Donate \$100,000 to the Indian River Lagoon Billion Clam Initiative

CCA Florida, Blair Wiggins Outdoors, the University of Florida Whitney Lab and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have been partnering on clam restoration in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) since 2018. Since that time, over 25 million clams have been restored in the IRL. At a recent clam fundraising event and BBQ on October 27, over 200 guests helped raise funds for the upcoming IRL Billion Clam Initiative that was officially announced at the event. This new initiative will utilize new methodologies and technology to significantly increase the number of clams being deployed. A patented, modified agricultural drone owned and operated by Blue Ocean Quest will be used to deploy clams in exact locations and densities and at a much faster rate than spreading them by hand. In a second surprise announcement, Duke Energy and CCA Florida each donated \$50,000 to this important initiative and presented a check onstage for \$100,000. While the long-term goal is to deploy several billion clams, all of the funds raised at the event will be used for the first deployment of 100 million clams in two locations in the IRL as part of this new initiative. Many thanks to the CCA Music City Chapter for donating \$10,000 in seed funding to help kick-start this project in 2018!

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## CCA Turtle Bay Oyster Reef - 3<sup>rd</sup> Deployment

On May 25, 2023, CCA Florida completed its third deployment of the Turtle Bay Oyster Reef project by installing an additional 22.5 tons of recycled oyster shell at the site. Since 2021, a total of six dump truck loads of CCA-recycled oyster shells have been deployed on the reef. Special thanks to Clermont Oyster Bar, Ingman Marine, Abbott Construction, Lee Reefs, Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Association (GICIA), Capt. Jay Withers, Oyster Boys Conservation and Lake County for their continued support on this project. The oyster reef continues to boost water quality, enhance marine fisheries and improve recreational angling in Charlotte Harbor. A 4<sup>th</sup> deployment is scheduled for the spring 2024.

## CCA/Northeast Florida Realtors Clam Project

On October 25, 2023, CCA Florida and 15 volunteers from the Florida Realtors deployed over 90,000 clams in the northern end of Mosquito Lagoon. The Florida Realtors brought volunteers from Jacksonville and Orlando, including their president. As always, thanks to Dr. Todd Osborne and the University of Florida Whitney Lab, Blair Wiggins Outdoors, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for our ongoing partnership on this project. The Florida Realtors and CCA Florida each contributed \$5,000 to the project.

## CCA/Duke/UF Living Shoreline Master Plan for Cedar Key Old Fenimore Mill

CCA Florida and Duke Energy collaborated with the University of Florida (UF) on a new living shoreline project in Cedar Key. Due to severe shoreline erosion near Old Fenimore Mill, a living shoreline stabilization project was proposed by UF. CCA Florida and Duke donated 250 reef balls, 100 mangroves and 900 large tufts of Spartina grass (*Spartina patens*) to the project valued at over \$20,000. To date, the Spartina grass, mangroves and a few reef balls have been placed in a couple of different temporary locations but these have all been up the beach to try and capture sand, not in the final reef locations. Permits to place the actual reefs are still in progress and UF is awaiting the 60% design and the permitting process.

2024 HABITAT UPDATE

## IRL Coastal Community Cleanup Tournament

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, CCA Florida supported Ocean Aid 360's Coastal Community Cleanup Tournament in the Indian River Lagoon. Boaters and anglers, jet skiers, paddlers and shoreline walkers searched local waters for trash and were awarded big prizes for their findings! STAR Director Leiza Fitzgerald and Assistant Director Andrea Gillespie gathered more than 240 pounds of garbage, and in total, more than 5,000 pounds of marine debris and plastics were collected by tournament participants. CCA Florida supplied over \$1,000 in prizes for the event.

## Cedar Key Coastal Cleanup

CCA Florida partnered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, SeaGrant Florida, University of Florida, OceanAid 360, and the Cedar Key Aquaculture Association for a much-needed coastal cleanup in Cedar Key. The event took place on June 10, 2023 at the Cedar Key Marina. Volunteers brought trash and marine debris to an offshore barge and to an onshore dumpster near the marina for disposal.

## Southwest Florida Regional Artificial Reef Workshop

On March 8, 2023, CCA Florida was proud to present on new artificial reef initiatives at the Florida Sea Grant and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Southwest Florida Regional Artificial Reef Workshop in Palmetto, Florida. These workshops aim to bring together artificial reef coordinators, managers, researchers, industry experts and other interested stakeholders to discuss new research, provide regional updates for Florida's Southwest region, and inform statewide initiatives. This one-day workshop was held at the Manatee County Extension Office in Bradenton.

# CCA/Indian River Land Trust Impoundment Solar Aeration Project

CCA Florida partnered with the Indian River Land Trust (IRLT) on efforts to improve Indian River Lagoon health and the health of iconic fish populations. To that end, we have been working towards modifications of management techniques in mosquito impoundments, which serve as important nursery habitat for juveniles of popular fish species such as tarpon and snook. During warmer months when the impoundments are isolated from the IRL and become stagnant, dropping oxygen levels and rising sulfide levels can become dangerous for fish and other aquatic organisms such as seagrasses. CCA Florida and the IRLT undertook a pilot project that uses a solar-powered aerator in a Land Trust-owned impoundment to reduce stress on and prevent loss of fish and seagrasses. CCA Florida contributed \$4,000 and the IRLT matched that to get the project fully funded. The solar aeration system was installed on June 14, 2023 by CCA and IRLT volunteers. If this system proves its effectiveness within the impoundment, this technique can be used in other IRLT-owned mosquito impoundments throughout the Lagoon in Indian River County to improve the health of important nursery habitats for fish and seagrasses.

## Key West Marine Debris Rodeo Tournament

On September 13-15, CCA Florida supported Ocean Aid 360's Coastal Community Cleanup Tournament at the Key Haven Public Boat Ramp in Key West. Boaters and anglers, jet skiers, paddlers and shoreline walkers searched local waters for trash and were awarded big prizes for their findings. More than 10,000 pounds of marine debris and plastics were collected by tournament participants. CCA Florida supplied over \$1,000 in prizes for the event.

## St. Joe Bay Sea Urchin Roundups

On May 6, 2023, CCA Florida partnered with FDEP's Central Panhandle Aquatic Preserves, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the St. Andrews and St. Joseph Bay Estuary Programs on a Sea Urchin Round Up on St. Joseph Bay. An overabundance of sea urchins (*Lytechinus variegatus*) continues to destroy turtle grass beds through overgrazing. The Roundups involved volunteers assisting State-agency scientists collect and relocate sea urchins from active grazing fronts. The animals were collected and released in deeper areas of the bay at a distance from grazed areas. The weather was perfect and volunteers collected over 10,000 urchins. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, the FDEP and FWC hosted its sixth sea urchin roundup event in St. Joseph Bay. During the event, 25 volunteers collected roughly 1,500 sea urchins. CCA Florida was proud to also support this event.

## CCA Brevard Zoo Power-Pole Donation

On September 28, CCA Florida met partners the Brevard Zoo and Restore Our Shores at the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute to donate a brand-new Power-Pole Pro Series II for their conservation boat and restoration efforts in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). While onsite, we had the opportunity to observe their new seagrass nursery, part of the new IRL National Estuary Program Seagrass Nursery Network to build restoration capacity for IRL seagrasses.

## CCA/UNF Living Shoreline Oyster Reef Project

CCA Florida partnered with the University of North Florida (UNF) Coastal and Marine Biology program and the Northeast Florida Association of REALTORS (NEFAR) to develop an experimental “Living Shoreline - Oyster Reef” project in northeast Florida. This project is intended to rebuild historical populations of Eastern oysters by providing suitable habitat for oyster spat to settle and grow. The project began in May 2023 by constructing 18-24 cement-based substrates known as pervious oyster shell habitat (POSH) units. POSH units are similar to reef balls and castles, structures that are constructed from concrete and occasionally include small amounts of embedded oyster. These structures have been shown to be more effective in the development of living shorelines than typical alternatives, such as the use of recycled crab traps containing loose oyster shell, because they provide a greater amount of surface area for oysters to colonize.

The POSH units will be deployed later this year in sites where historic oyster beds once occurred within the University's 1,050-acre property in the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, the William C. Webb Coastal Research Station. Following POSH deployment, UNF will conduct monthly monitoring to determine the rate of settlement of new oyster spat on the units. They will also conduct monthly assessments of sediment dynamics in front of and behind the structure to examine their effect on erosion as well as examining monthly changes in water quality and invertebrate/fish abundance. CCA Florida donated \$10,000 and NEFAR donated \$17,568 to this project for supplies/labor for the construction of the POSH units and monthly monitoring (boat use fees, fuel, supplies).

## CCA/UCF Ongoing Restoration Partnership in Mosquito Lagoon

CCA Florida is continuing its ongoing partnership with Dr. Linda Walters and the University of Central Florida (UCF) restoring oyster reefs and living shorelines in Mosquito Lagoon and the surrounding area. CCA Life Member and Habitat Committee Chairman Greg Harrison has been assisting UCF students and volunteers on almost a weekly basis. CCA Florida also recently donated a Power-Pole to the UCF Coastal and Estuarine Ecology Lab for use on one of their boats that is used for this restoration work, along with donations towards materials and supplies. CCA regularly provides volunteers, funding and boat support for the UCF restoration events throughout the year, total over 15 projects this year alone.

## Veterans Unite for Conservation Oyster Ring Event

CCA Florida was proud to support the inaugural Veterans Unite for Conservation: Operation Mission Coastal Renewal habitat restoration workshop at University of Central Florida (UCF) this summer that honored our veterans. Veterans, UCF students, volunteers from the Central Florida Offshore Anglers Fishing Club, and CCA mustered to create 160 oyster rings that will be used for oyster reef restoration.

## CCA/University of North Florida Restoration Project

CCA Florida teamed with Dr. Kelly Smith, Associate Professor of the UNF Biology Department, on a joint CCA/UNF coastal oyster restoration and marsh restoration project. The project locations included Shell Bluff in St. Johns County, and Kingsley Plantation in Duval County. CCA Florida contributed \$4,633, which included lift nets and fish monitoring supplies for this coastal wetland restoration project. In addition to the funding, CCA members worked with UNF on the construction of modules for the project. The oyster shells were graded and collected at GTMNERR Middle Beach. The initial cement coating and POSH construction took place at UNF on July 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

## Brevard County Reefs

CCA Florida has an ongoing partnership with Brevard County to support their artificial reef program. CCA donated \$3,000 toward their 2023 summer reef deployments and as in years past, CCA also wrote a grant support letter on behalf of Brevard County for an FWC artificial reef grant in which they were awarded funding. CCA Life Member Greg Harrison has been working on the Brevard artificial reef program for many years and has observed excellent invertebrate species growth on them as well as black sea bass, juvenile red snapper, crabs and large schools of baitfish. CCA Florida is also currently working with Brevard County Natural Resources Management Department on a new nearshore artificial reef 2.5 miles off the coast. They recently had the site surveyed and will begin permitting soon. More details will follow.

## Seagrass Restoration SW Fork of the Loxahatchee River

CCA Florida teamed with the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Sea & Shoreline on a newly permitted pilot seagrass restoration project. The purpose of this project is to permanently restore 1.61 acres of native seagrass, consisting of *Halodule wrightii* and *Ruppia maritima*. The project is located in the Jonathan Dickinson State Park (Hobe Sound, FL) in the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, a tributary to the IRL. CCA Florida contributed \$29,360 to this \$100,000 restoration project. An overview of the project tasks includes:

1. Repair and add height to 13 existing fence pens to protect eelgrass from herbivory during higher water levels, especially during the months of September to November
2. With FWC present, collect bare root eelgrass plants from Lake Echo and transport to Sea & Shoreline's aquaculture facility for grow out and fabrication of 4" peat pot planting units
3. Replant existing 13 fence pens with 4-inch peat pot plants
4. Install patented GrowSAV Herbivory Exclusion Devices in remaining two fence areas
5. Install eelgrass 4-inch peat pot planting units inside GrowSAV devices
6. Install navigational aids surrounding GrowSAV devices
7. Perform necessary maintenance of plants and GrowSAV devices for a one-year period
8. Provide monitoring and reporting of project for a one-year period



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## Wildlife Florida/CCA IRL Eelgrass Restoration

CCA Florida partnered on a new eelgrass restoration project along the St. Lucie River with Wildlife Florida (STAR Sponsor) and FWC. A formal vote from the Habitat Committee voted in favor of funding \$10,000 towards this project. On May 23, 2023, volunteers and staff from CCA planted the eelgrass in an oxbow off the St. Lucie River, as this area has slower moving water and has a lot of nice shallow areas for plants. FWC estimated that 0.35 acres was planted within the oxbow including 100 fence enclosures and 500 4" eelgrass pots. The eelgrass fence enclosures will stay in place for 3-6 months to prevent foraging and allow it to establish.

## Sarasota Bay Watch Clam Restoration

This past summer, CCA Florida donated another \$10,000 to Sarasota Bay Watch (SBW) to sponsor the restoration of 100,000 clams back into Sarasota Bay. This is the third year that CCA Florida has contributed to this program. SBW is working to restore clams and scallops to the bay with these important filter-feeders that play a critical role in mitigating poor water quality. They actually eat red tide and other algae, sequester carbon, filter up to 10 gallons of water per day, and provide food for other marine life. In total, each of the 300,000 clams are over 2-inches in size and according to Dr. Bruce Barber, Executive Director of the Gulf Shellfish Institute, a single 2-inch clam filters out 50,000,000 red tide organisms per day. That equates to 1 trillion organisms per day for the 300,000 clams. CCA Florida will continue working with SBW on clam and scallop restoration into 2024, and we will be the Title Sponsor of the 2024 Scallopooza event in February.

## CCA Delnor-Wiggins Mangrove Planting

On December 12, 2023, CCA Florida staff and volunteers joined together and planted mangroves at the Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park in Naples. Volunteers from Duke Energy Florida, CCA Florida, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks, Sunshine Ace Hardware and Lee County Electric Cooperative teamed up to plant 500 red and black mangroves across a 4,400-square-foot portion of the park, an area struck by catastrophic storm surge from Hurricane Ian. The mangroves were grown and donated by the Duke Energy Mariculture Center and CCA Florida. Additionally, Sunshine Ace Hardware donated the shovels to aid in the restoration project.



## Vertical Oyster Garden at Marker 24

On January 9, 2024, CCA Florida staff and ABC Fine Wine & Spirits volunteers participated in a Vertical Oyster Garden (VOG) making event in Orlando. Together, the participants created 70 VOGs in preparation for deployment at Marker 24 Marina in Merritt Island. And on January 17, 2024, CCA Florida and ABC joined Marker 24, Capt. Alex Hughey, Capt. Bouncer Smith, and Derek and Cory Redwine to deploy the VOG's in the Banana River along the Marker 24 dock. VOGs are oyster shells strung together that are intended to hang below docks. VOGs support marine habitat by attracting oyster larvae, fish and other marine life along with improving water quality.

## Fantasy Island Living Shoreline Project in Honor of Fred Crabill

CCA Florida and Duke Energy have teamed to support a new living shoreline project on Fantasy Island in Tampa Bay. Duke Energy recently donated \$50,000 to CCA Florida for the project and CCA Florida matched those funds 1:1. Our \$100,000 donation to Tampa Bay Watch (TBW) for the project secured naming rights and signage, currently proposed as "The Fantasy Island Living Shoreline Project in Honor of Fred Crabill." The project includes 60 tons of fossilized and recycled shell and 870

Oyster Reef Balls to create new oyster communities along the northeastern shoreline of Fantasy Island. Construction commencement is anticipated for spring 2024 and is expected to be completed within 12-18 months.

## Deep Stim III Vessel Deployment

On January 30, 2024, The R/V DEEP STIM III, a 239-foot former seismic research vessel, was successfully deployed on the ocean floor in the Destin-Fort Walton Beach area. CCA Florida and the Building Conservation Trust were proud to contribute \$65,000 to this Tri-County partnership project between the Tourist Development Councils in Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Panama City Beach, and Walton County, as well as other dedicated partners including the Emerald Coast Reef Association and South Walton Artificial Reef Association. The vessel is now accessible to recreational anglers and divers as it sits in a range of depths from approximately 65-feet at the top of the wheelhouse to 135-feet at the bottom.

# MING IN 2024

## St. Andrews Bay Seagrass Restoration

In February 2023, CCA Florida submitted a legislative funding request to the Florida House and Senate for a seagrass restoration project within the St. Andrews Aquatic Preserve (Preserve). This partnership project with Sea and Shoreline, LLC (S&S) included a \$999,496 funding request for permitting, seagrass cultivation/installation, sediment tube fabrication/installation, and annual monitoring/reporting for 3 years. The objective of this project is to install sediment tubes in moderate and severe propeller (prop) scars in the Preserve. Nursery cultivated seagrass planting units will also be used to complement the natural recovery afforded by sediment tube application in scarred beds. The funding request has been approved by both the House and Senate, and signed by the Governor. A final agreement between CCA and the FDEP is pending project commencement. Expansion of this project is also currently pending and CCA and S&S submitted an additional non-recurring funding request to the state legislature for \$999,000 for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

## St. James City Vertical Oyster Gardening Project

On January 24, 2024, CCA Florida staff and the Lake Highland Preparatory School lacrosse team made 100 Vertical Oyster Garden (VOG) ropes at the CCA headquarters in Orlando. The VOG's were made from recycled oyster shell from our oyster recycling program in Lake County. The VOG's will be donated to an oyster gardening

project in St. James City in Southwest Florida and hung from private docks in the area. CCA Florida is also looking into having a state university incorporate a scientific research study into the project.

## CCA Rhodan Reef

CCA Florida is working with our sponsor Rhodan on a new artificial reef approximately 5 miles off of Manatee County. The reef will consist of 60 Bay balls (2' x 3' - 550lbs) placed on the deck of an existing barge reef, then surrounded on all sides with taller modules. A Supra reef ball (4'3" x 5'6" - 4200lbs) will be placed at the 4 corners and at midpoint on all four sides, then filled in with Pallet balls (3' x 4' - 1200lbs), and Pallet balls with solid extended bases (3'2" x 4'10" - 2400lbs) along with 2 Deep Cover modules (30" x 81"). This will add some really great habitat to the barge and provide all kinds of marine life new and varied habitat. In turn the fishing and diving opportunity will increase as well. The Rhodan Reef is planned to be deployed in early 2024 as soon as a favorable weather window opens.

## The CCA Ripper Reef

CCA Florida is working with the Jacksonville Chapter on a new artificial reef off of Duval County. A large rotary crane barge approximately 175' x 60' x 10' is currently being cleaned and prepared for an early 2024 deployment. This will be the largest vessel deployment in Jacksonville since 2000. The barge will be deployed at a pre-permitted reef site known as Harm's Ledge, which is about 28 miles east of the Jacksonville inlet and 90-100 feet deep. The Cameron Smith Foundation donated \$50,000 to CCA and with that donation it includes the naming rights.

*(continued on page 48)*

## Manatee River Oyster Habitat Restoration Project

CCA Florida successfully teamed with Manatee County and secured a State Wildlife Grant for oyster restoration in the Manatee River. As in in-kind grant match, CCA Florida will donate 7 tons of dried out oyster shells from our oyster recycling program, including transportation of the shell and volunteer hours to load, transport, unload, and deploy the shells, at a total estimated cost of \$7,992.50. In addition to the oyster shell donation, CCA Florida pledged a cash donation of \$5,000 in support of this project for a total of \$12,992.50. The project includes the survey, design, and permitting of a 0.5-to-1.5-acre oyster reef east of the US 41 Bridge and an up to 5-to-10-acre oyster reef(s) further upriver to create two “shovel ready” project areas. Additionally, a 0.2-acre oyster reef will be constructed within the 0.5-to-1.5-acre permitted oyster reef area east of the US 41 Bridge as part of this project. The project is currently in permitting and is anticipated to begin in the spring 2024.

## CCA Steinhatchee Reef

CCA Florida, Sea Hag Marina, Steinhatchee Marina and Florida Sea Grant have teamed to deploy a new artificial reef off of Steinhatchee, Florida. A kick-off meeting was held on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Sea Hag Marina to discuss the project goals, timing and fundraising needs. Florida Sea Grant currently has a \$120,000 FWC artificial reef grant and plan on deploying before August 2024. The current plan would be for us to piggyback on this deployment, thereby lowering our overall deployment costs. The Steinhatchee Reef will be deployed within the Buckeye Reef pre-permitted area, approximately 28 miles west of Steinhatchee. Fundraising ideas are currently being discussed as well as potential materials for deployment.

*(continued on page 50)*



# ANGLER DRIVEN. CONSERVATION MINDED.

PATHFINDER AND CCA FLORIDA

EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & HABITAT CONSERVATION



**PATHFINDER**  
ANGLER DRIVEN

## Biscayne Bay Seagrass Restoration Project

CCA Florida and Sea & Shoreline have teamed up on a new seagrass restoration project in Biscayne Bay. This project is designed to restore seagrass within the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve by repairing propeller scars, blowouts, and impacts from vessel groundings that are 20cm deep or deeper left by commercial and recreational boaters in vital seagrass meadows. The scope of work includes surveying, permitting, mobilization, manufacturing and installation of sediment tubes to fill vessel groundings, demobilization, and project monitoring. CCA contributed \$50,000 towards this project with the money coming from the CCA license plate fund. The project is currently in the permitting phase and work should commence in 2024.

## CCA/UCF Tomoka State Park Living Shoreline Restoration

CCA Florida recently committed a \$5,000 grant match for a new living shoreline restoration project at Tomoka State Park. The University of Central Florida (UCF) is applying for a state grant for the project and the proposal rankings have “funding by partners” as one of their judging criteria, so our match is important to the success of the grant. The grant proposal is for approximately 1600 feet of living shoreline stabilization for Tomoka State Park. UCF is requesting ~\$70,000 from FWC for this effort with a significant match from UCF. CCA funds will provide UCF with the opportunity to engage more volunteers and

help cover the costs of restoration supplies to make sure they do the best job possible along the midden shorelines at this important, highly eroded, state park.

## 2024 Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP) Grant

In October, 2023, CCA Florida provided a letter to Dr. Todd Osborne at the University of Florida (UF) Whitney Lab to confirm our contribution of in-kind cost sharing for the grant project entitled “The Restoration of Clam Populations in the Indian River Lagoon for Water Quality Improvements Year 4,” funded by IRLNEP Council. The project has reached key milestones as proposed through our partnership. Our organization promised support for this project in the form of out planting and fate tracking in the amount of \$34,040. These in-kind funds were committed through multiple out planting assistance throughout the year by CCA staff and CCA volunteers. Furthermore, our financial support included public outreach and education about the project through social media to our almost 19,000 members.

## Florida Keys Pennekamp Seagrass Restoration

CCA Florida and Sea & Shoreline, LLC (S&S) recently successfully partnered on an \$81,893 grant from NOAA’s Office of Habitat Conservation to restore habitat through the coastal National Fish Habitat Partnerships. Over the next year, CCA Florida and S&S will work with volunteers to restore damaged

seagrass beds in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, which borders the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The project goals include restoring the natural bathymetry to the impacted areas within the Park, enabling seagrass recolonization through the installation of sediment tubes, subsequent monitoring for three years, and launching an educational awareness campaign through community involvement. CCA Florida is also contributing a \$75,000 match to the project to double the project restoration area. The project is currently in the permitting phase.

## NOAA Large Scale Marine Debris Cleanup Grant with CCA Florida and CCA National

CCA Florida, CCA National and Ocean Aid 360 have teamed up on a nationwide marine debris cleanup grant through NOAA. The project title is, "The Southeast Coastal Community Cleanup: Diverse groups affecting long-term habitat improvement through removal and monitoring of large scale marine debris, in the form of derelict traps, fishing gear and other solid waste, to improve resilience of coastal and marine environments in seven states." The Letter of Intent was submitted to NOAA on October 27, 2023, and was selected for the full grant proposal which is due on February 23, 2024. The proposed locations include **Texas** (Galveston Bay, Corpus Christi, Baytown), **Louisiana** (Lake Pontchartrain, Venice, Houma), **Mississippi** (St. Louis Bay, Biloxi Bay, Pascagoula River), **Alabama** (Mobile Bay, Bayou La Batre, Perdido Bay), **Florida** (Apalachicola, Cedar Key, Stock Island), **Georgia** (Savannah River, St. Mary's River, Altamaha River), and **South Carolina** (Port Royal, Charleston/Cape Romain NWR).

## CCA Fort Lauderdale Oyster Ring Project

Mike Lambrechts with the CCA Broward Chapter has been working with the City of Fort Lauderdale on another oyster pilot project designed to study oyster propagation on oyster rings/mats hanging off the City's sea walls in the vicinity of the Intracoastal Waterway. The city has given the green light to begin the project as part of Phase I. Phase II would include a larger scale oyster cultch restoration project.

## CCA/Charlotte County Artificial Reef

CCA Florida is working with Charlotte County on a new potential concrete artificial reef project. Concrete materials consisting of manholes and culverts that were rejected from a \$22,000,000 utility project are available and are currently stored on county property near I-75 and the Peace River. Two offshore permitted reef sites are available and include Palm Island Ferry Reef (55ft) and Jeff Steele Memorial Reef (60ft). Both permits are good through 2028.

## Manatee County Larry Borden Reef

CCA Florida is working with Manatee County on a potential new artificial reef deployment in 2024. The existing Larry Borden Reef is a fairly new and highly productive fishing and diving reef located 7 miles west of the Longboat Pass Bridge. To date, only large limestone boulders have been deployed here including 575 tons in 2018 in which CCA contributed. However, next year the addition of concrete materials may be an option. CCA will also support the county on an FWC artificial reef grant application early next year for this project.

*(continued on page 52)*

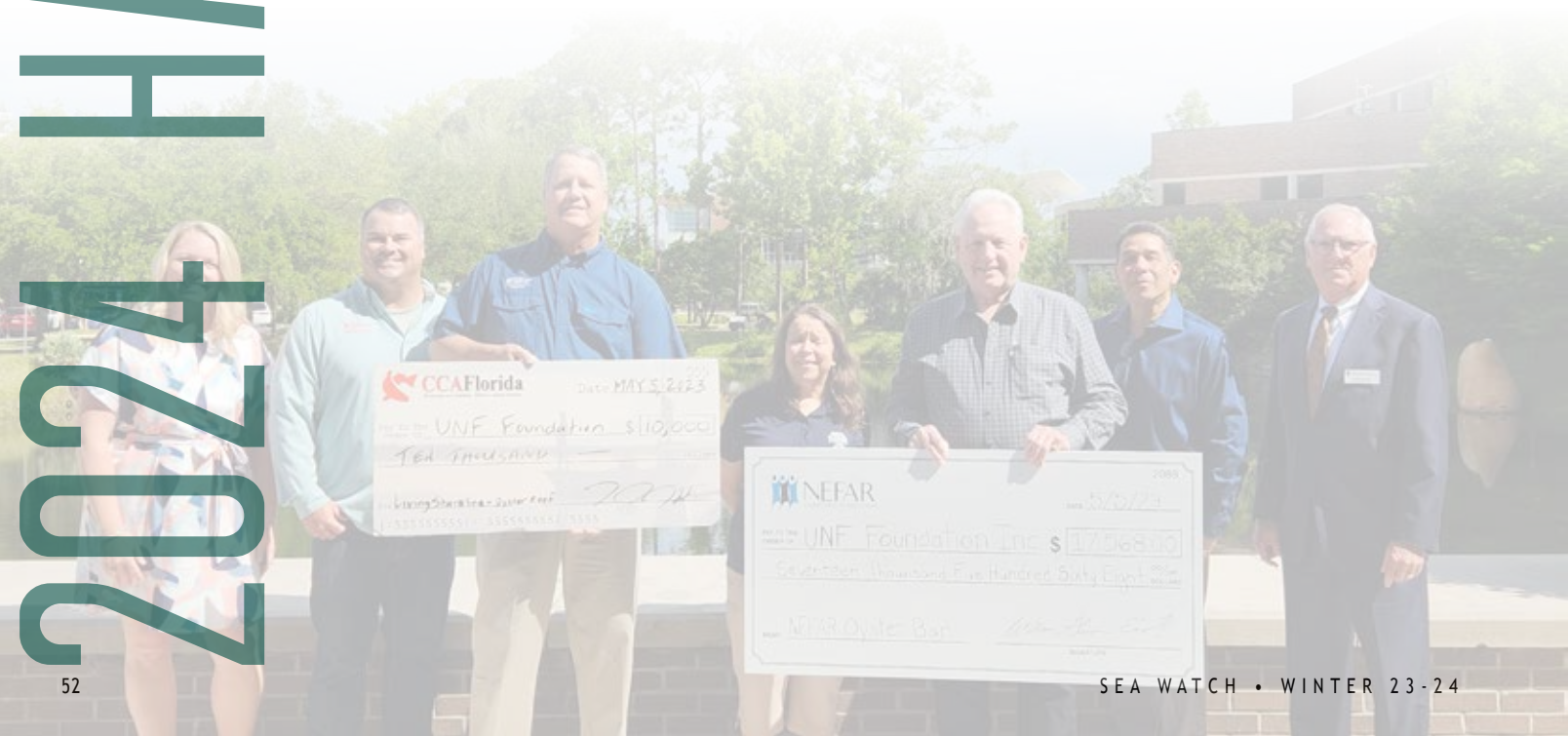
## CCA Treasure Coast Living Docks Project

CCA Florida is working with the Florida Oceanographic Society (FOS) on a proposed living dock project in the Treasure Coast. The project would consist of tying recycled oyster shells onto mats and attaching them to dock pilings. FOS would first perform site assessments to pick a dock that will be ideal based on environmental characteristics such as water quality, salinity, tidal influence, etc. FOS will also apply for the state and federal permits. The proposed timeline is 3-6 months for site assessments and permitting, and the deployment is projected to be in the spring 2024.

ing for lyngbya removal and seagrass planting in the main Homosassa River area. According to HRRP, the Homosassa River is facing a ninety percent loss of native vegetation and invasion by lyngbya algae, affecting water quality, clarity, manatee food resources, and native fish habitat. The goal of this project is to restore the river bottom by removing accumulated sediment and lyngbya mats returning it to sand and limestone bottom. Then the areas will be replanted with native eel grass vegetation. This will return the river to its natural state and restore this first magnitude spring to a pristine waterway. This process has been proven successful in other spring systems in Florida.

## Homosassa River Restoration Project (HRRP)

In August, 2023, the CCA Florida habitat committee approved a \$60,000 donation as matching funds for a Tourist Development Council grant to continue phase 2 of vacuum-



# HABITAT HIGHLIGHTS

**Number of Ships Deployed  
on Artificial Reefs** \_\_\_\_\_ **7**

**Concrete/Rock Deployed  
on Artificial Reefs** \_\_\_\_\_ **7,300 tons**

**Number of Artificial  
Reefs Deployed** \_\_\_\_\_ **46**

**Recycled Oyster Shells  
Deployed** \_\_\_\_\_ **80 tons**

**Shoreline Restoration** \_\_\_\_\_ **4.5 miles**

**Number of Oyster Reefs  
Restored** \_\_\_\_\_ **36**

**Number of Clams Deployed** \_\_\_\_\_ **25,000,000+**

**Number of Spartina Grass  
and Mangroves Planted** \_\_\_\_\_ **50,000+**

**Amount of Trash Removed** \_\_\_\_\_ **86 tons**

**Number of Trout Restocked** \_\_\_\_\_ **110,000**

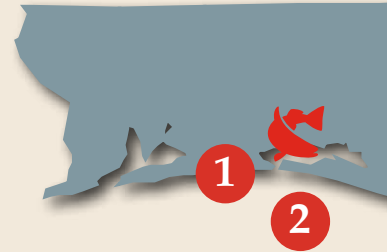
**Number of Snook Restocked** \_\_\_\_\_ **5,150**

**Number of West Coast  
Redfish Restocked** \_\_\_\_\_ **183,250**

**Number of East Coast  
Redfish Restocked** \_\_\_\_\_ **86,250**

**For more information on CCA Florida Initiatives,  
please visit our website at [www.ccaflorida.org](http://www.ccaflorida.org)**

# COMPLETED HABITAT PROJECTS

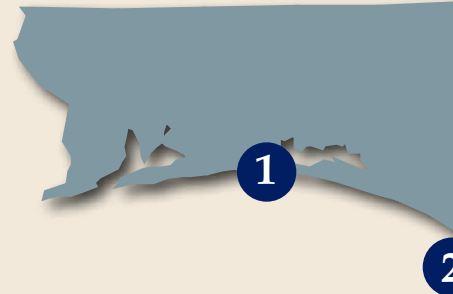


Since 2010, CCA Florida in collaboration with the Building Conservation Trust and our partners, have contributed over \$10 million in habitat projects statewide. Join us in these efforts!

1. CCA/South Walton Artificial Reef Association, Inc. Reefs
2. CCA/Tri County Deep Stim III Reef
3. CCA Reef/MBARA
4. CCA/Duke Energy Reef – Mexico Beach
5. CCA/Ocean Aid 360 Apalachicola Ghost Trap Rodeo
6. CCA/FDEP Sea Urchin Round-Up Project
7. CCA/FDEP/Duke Spartina Grass Replanting
8. CCA/BCT Billy's Barge Artificial Reef
9. CCA Dr. Bart Carey Memorial Reef
10. CCA R.Z. "Sandy" Safley Reef
11. CCA NCBS Lone Cabbage Reef Fish Monitoring
12. CCA/UF/IFAS Centipede Bay Oyster Reef Restoration
13. CCA/Hernando Co. Ghost Ship Reef
14. CCA/BCT/Tampa Bay Watch Fantasy Island Oyster Restoration
15. CCA/BCT/Tampa Bay Watch 2D Island Oyster Restoration
16. CCA Duke Energy Red Tide Research Project
17. CCA/FWC Suncoast Youth Conservation Center Saltwater Pond
18. CCA/Ocean Aid 360 Tampa Bay Ghost Trap Rodeo
19. CCA/UCF De Soto National Memorial Living Shoreline Stabilization
20. CCA/BCT Sean Gucken Memorial Reef
21. CCA/Manatee County Larry Borden Artificial Reef
22. CCA/Lee County USS Mohawk CGC Reef – Veterans Memorial Reef
23. CCA/BCT/Lee County Punta Rassa Oyster Restoration
24. CCA/BCT/Lee County San Carlos Bay Oyster Restoration
25. CCA/Duke Energy Hemp Key Mangrove Project
26. CCA/LBHS Seagrass Restoration Project
27. CCA Turtle Bay Oyster Reef
28. CCA/Duke Energy Delnor-Wiggins Mangrove Planting Project
29. CCA/Naples Bay Oyster Restoration Project
30. CCA Florida Bay Seagrass Restoration
31. CCA/UNF Florida Bay Turtle Grass Research Project
32. CCA/Eagle Scout Andrew Hall Dragon Reef
33. CCA Broward Chapter Pilot Oyster Project
34. CCA/No Shoes Reef 4
35. CCA Bob Burton Memorial Reef
36. CCA/BCT Goggle Eye Reef
37. CCA/BCT Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation Reef
38. CCA/BCT Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation "No Shoes" Reef
39. CCA/Florida Oceanographic Society Seagrass and Oyster Restoration
40. CCA/MCAC Brause Girls Reef
41. CCA/Wildlife FL/FWC Eelgrass Restoration Project
42. CCA Curtis Bostick Reef
43. CCA/Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Seagrass Restoration
44. CCA/Indian River Land Trust Solar Aeration Project
45. CCA Indian River Lagoon RISSA Seagrass Buoys and Oyster Restoration
46. CCA Treasure Coast Chapter Revegetation Project
47. CCA/BTT/IRL Land Trust Tarpon and Snook Impoundment Tagging
48. CCA Spotted Seatrout Acoustic Study
49. CCA/City of Satellite Beach Samsons Island Restoration Project
50. CCA/BCT Lady Philomena Cargo Ship - Volusia County Reef Site No. 12
51. CCA/Northeast Florida Realtors Clam Project
52. CCA/UCF/NPS Canaveral Nat'l Seashore Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
53. CCA/BCT Starship II Reef
54. CCA/UCF Tomoka State Park Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
55. CCA/Heineken/UCF Tomoka State Park Indian Midden Living Shoreline Restoration
56. CCA/City of Fernandina Living Shoreline Oyster Restoration
57. CCA/BCT Starship Reef
58. CCA/BCT Jacksonville River Reef



# ONGOING & UPCOMING HABITAT PROJECTS



Since 2010, CCA Florida in collaboration with the Building Conservation Trust and our partners, have contributed over \$10 million in habitat projects statewide. Join us in these efforts!

1. CCA Choctawhatchee Bay Shoreline Restoration Project
2. CCA St Andrew's Bay Seagrass Restoration Project
3. CCA Steinhatchee Reef
4. CCA/Duke/UF Living Shoreline
5. CCA/Duke Energy/Reef Innovations/Citrus County Inshore Reef
6. CCA Homosassa River Restoration Project
7. CCA/Hernando County Bendickson Reef
8. CCA/Hernando County Jenkins Creek Living Shoreline
9. CCA/Pinellas County Reef
10. CCA/Duke/TBW Fantasy Island Living Shoreline Project in honor of Fred Crabill
11. CCA/Larry Borden Reef
12. CCA/Manatee County Oyster Habitat Restoration Project
13. CCA Rhodan Reef
14. CCA Sarasota Bay Artificial Reef
15. CCA/Sarasota Bay Watch Clam Restoration
16. CCA/Charlotte County Artificial Reef
17. CCA/Lee County Phoenix Reef
18. CCA Turtle Bay Oyster Reef Restoration
19. CCA/St. James City Oyster Gardening Project
20. CCA/John Pennekamp Park Seagrass Restoration Project
21. CCA/Biscayne Bay Seagrass Restoration Project
22. CCA John Michael Baker Memorial Reef - Broward County
23. CCA Fort Lauderdale Oyster Ring Project
24. CCA/Loxahatchee Eelgrass Restoration Project
25. CCA Treasure Coast Living Docks Project
26. CCA 10-Mile Creek Eelgrass Restoration Project
27. CCA/BWO/FWC/UF Indian River Lagoon Clam Restoration
28. CCA/Brevard County Artificial Reefs
29. CCA/UCF Mosquito Lagoon Oyster Restoration
30. CCA/University of North Florida Living Shoreline Restoration Project
31. CCA Ripper Reef
32. CCA Oyster Shell Recycling Program



# One Man's Trash

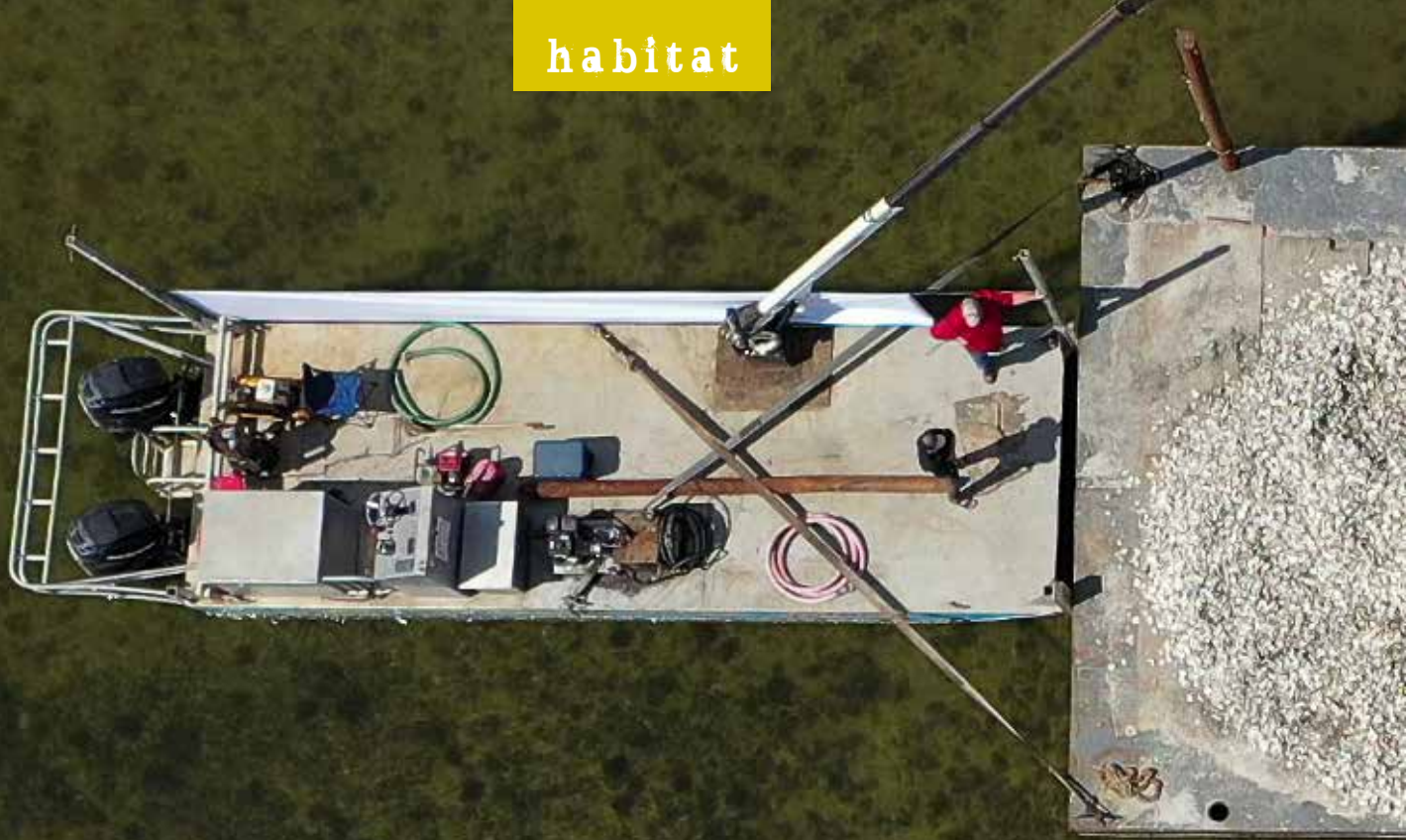
THE LIFE  
CYCLE OF A  
RECYCLED  
OYSTER SHELL



If you were to ask the average person to make a list of the most imperiled species in the world, it's a safe bet that the Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) would not be at the top of that list. When folks think about imperiled species they think of the iconic Bald Eagle, the ancient gopher tortoise, colorful coral reefs, pristine forests, or cuddly cute animals that people adore. The slimy, wet, and some would say ugly Eastern oyster is in bad shape though. It is estimated that 85% of world's oyster reefs are lost. In Florida, it's even worse with as much as 90% estimated loss in some areas. The cause of this loss varies depending on the location but in general oyster reefs have disappeared because of commercial over-harvesting, dredging for development, wetland loss, pollution, habitat degradation and disease. However, the oyster remains a critically important species to health and future of our coastal estuaries and restoration of the reefs must continue.



(continued on page 60)



Oysters are considered Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and are the ultimate filtration system in our coastal estuaries. The Magnusson-Stevens Act is widely praised as one of the best things to happen to recreational angling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the accomplishments of the Magnuson Stevens Act is defining EFH as “those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.” Any angler worth his salt knows to target oyster reefs while pursuing snook, trout, redfish, sheepshead, and many other sought-after fish. But why do these species congregate here? These reefs offer protection for fish, crabs and many other species from larger predators and also provide habitat for the baitfish and crustaceans they consume. Oysters also provide ideal breeding grounds for many of these species to mature. Some folks compare the complex

oyster reefs to the coral reefs of the tropics, although oyster reefs don’t look as pretty on a postcard it is obvious they serve just as important of a purpose as the highly regarded coral reefs of the world. The vast biodiversity of oyster reefs is indisputable and is so important for the survival of some of recreational angler’s most cherished species. Oyster reefs have also been compared to forests. The same way trees filter pollutants to create better air quality, as do oysters in our waterways. Could you imagine if we lost 85% of the world’s forests? The response would be deafening.

Oysters also remove nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from the water. High nutrient loads fuel algae blooms like red tide and cyano bacteria which have been devastating Florida waters for many years now. It’s no wonder we have nutrient load problems when up to 90% of our nutri-

# THE LIFE CYCLE OF A RECYCLED OYSTER



ent removing oyster reefs are gone! Here's something else that needs to be mentioned. Oysters filter the water. This makes the water clear and lowers turbidity. Clear water allows sunlight to reach the bottom of the water column which enables photosynthesis which allows seagrass to grow. Substantial seagrass loss is another huge problem Florida's waterways are experiencing. Growth of seagrass beds is directly affected by the presence of healthy oyster reefs.

Oysters are consumed all over the globe and are known as a delicacy in many areas. CCA Florida is fortunate to have partnered with the Clermont Oyster Bar. The Clermont Oyster Bar is located in land locked Lake County. It's almost poetic that one of the most positively impactful restaurants to Florida's waterways isn't even on the water. The Oyster Bar provides CCA Florida with around 2 tons of empty oyster shell every

3 weeks. It sounds simple, but it's not. The Clermont Oyster Bar is a traditional oyster bar with a trough and professional "shuckers." These shuckers are skilled in opening (Shucking) oysters and they do it with the efficiency of a volume bar tender on a busy night behind the bar. While the shuckers are busy opening beer, serving food, and shucking oysters, they are also making sure to separate the discarded shell from the trash. All the shell goes into the trough, then into a bucket, and finally into a dump trailer that is parked behind the oyster bar. Most restaurants simply throw the shell out with the trash. Well, one man's trash is another man's savior of our coastal estuaries. Once the dump trailer is full, it is transported to our Oyster Storage Site in Astatula, Florida. Lake County has been gracious enough to allow us a large piece of land where the recycled oyster shells dry out for at least 6

*(continued on page 63)*



# Rhineland Cutlery

===== ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ =====  
X50 CR MOV 15 High Carbon German Steel



## A Cut Above

Rhineland Cutlery founded in 1995

Industry experts worldwide consulted on all stages of design and development to create the ultimate line of cutlery

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months before being returned to the water. Shell is dried out during this time period to remove any bacteria that may cause cross contamination once deployed in a new area.

Once the shell has dried out it's ready for deployment. Many people ask, "how does this work? Does the shell just come back to life?" Nope. Typically twice a year, in the spring and fall, oysters release larvae or "spat". The oyster spat floats through the water column and adheres to substrate. The best and most attractive substrate for oyster spat to attach to is other oysters because of their porous structure and chemical composition. If you've ever seen an oyster shell you've maybe noticed the grooves and holes throughout the shell. Once the oyster spat attaches to the old shell, a new oyster is formed and this process compounds until a new oyster reef is formed.

Our most recent oyster deployment occurred this year on May 25<sup>th</sup>. With the help of CCA Charlotte chapter president Mike Brimer, CCA Fort Myers chapter president Mike Campbell, CCA Clermont chapter president Trampis

*(continued on page 64)*

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A RECYCLED OYSTER SHELL



Bonjour, Ingman Marine, Abbott's Construction, and Captain Jay Withers we were able to transport over 20 tons of recycled shell from Lake County to Placida in Port Charlotte. The shell was then loaded onto a barge and transported to Turtle Bay where it was deployed onto a permitted site. This site was scouted out six years prior and was identified as the most ideal spot that includes adequate water flow, ideal depth, and is downstream of existing oysters. This was the third deployment

of recycled shell on this site and we plan for many more in additional locations throughout the state.

We're excited to continue this oyster recycling program and are very thankful to all of the partners involved. Famous satirist Jonathan Swift once said "He was a bold man that first ate an oyster." We like to say that it is an even bolder group of CCA members who fight to save them.

## VACATION HOME SITTING EMPTY?

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# PICTURE



# RAFFLE PACKAGES

**CCA Florida's raffle packages return! Choose from the Grander, \$500, \$250 or \$100 raffle pack for the ultimate selection of tickets! Ticket packages include:**

**GRANDER** - Six (6) Contender 28T tickets, Seven (7) Pathfinder 2200 TRS tickets, Seven (7) Contender 24S tickets and nine (9) Hewes Redfisher 16 tickets (a \$480 savings)

**\$500** - Three (3) Contender 28T tickets, Four (4) Pathfinder 2200 TRS tickets, four (4) Contender 24S tickets and Six (6) Hewes Redfisher 16 tickets (\$320 savings)

**\$250** - One (1) Contender 28T ticket, Two (2) Pathfinder 2200 TRS tickets, Two (2) Contender 24S tickets and four (4) Hewes Redfisher 16 tickets (\$135 savings)

**\$100** - One (1) Pathfinder 2200 TRS ticket, One (1) Contender 24S ticket and Two (2) Hewes Redfisher 16 tickets (\$50 savings)

**Purchase your raffle package TODAY!**

INTRODUCING VARIETY  
RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA  
**RAFFLES**

Contender 28T  
6 tickets \$600 value

Contender 24S  
7 tickets \$350 value

Pathfinder 2200 TRS  
7 tickets \$350 value

Hewes Redfisher 16  
9 tickets \$180 value

CCA FLORIDA

**THE \$1000 TICKET PACK**  
29 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$480

**BUY NOW**

INTRODUCING VARIETY  
RAFFLE PACKAGES

CCA FLORIDA  
**RAFFLES**

Contender 28T  
3 tickets \$300 value

Contender 24S  
4 tickets \$200 value

Pathfinder 2200 TRS  
4 tickets \$200 value

Hewes Redfisher 16  
6 tickets \$120 value

CCA FLORIDA

**THE \$500 TICKET PACK**  
17 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$320

**BUY NOW**

# FALL EVENTS SAVE THE DATE

## February

**15**  
North Brevard Banquet  
and Auction

**22**  
Keys Banquet and  
Auction

**29**  
Manatee County  
Banquet and Auction

**21**  
Tampa Banquet and  
Auction  
**Martin County**  
Banquet and Auction

**28**  
Charlotte County  
Banquet and Auction

**28**  
Polk County Banquet  
and Auction

**19**  
Space Coast BBQ  
**25**  
Hernando County  
Banquet and Auction

**26-27**  
Sarasota All Release  
and BBQ

**26**  
Orlando BBQ

**11**  
Naples Banquet and  
Auction

**16-19**  
Life Member Outing

**16**  
Northeast Florida BBQ

## March

**7**  
Citrus County Banquet  
and Auction

**8**  
Ocala Banquet and  
Auction

**14**  
Fort Myers Banquet  
and Auction

## April

**5 - 7**  
Tortuga Music Festival

**4**  
Homestead Banquet  
and Auction

**11**  
Lake County Banquet  
and Auction

**Emerald Coast**  
Banquet and Auction

## May

**1**  
Sarasota Tarpon  
Tournament

**2**  
Steinhatchee Banquet  
and Auction

**3**  
Treasure Coast BBQ

**9**  
Big Bend Banquet and  
Auction

## June

**5-9**  
Inter-Chapter  
Challenge

**9-13**  
Youth Scholarship  
Program

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4 TICKETS - YOU SAVE \$50

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## Ingredients

Extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

- 9 mini red, orange and yellow sweet peppers, seeded and sliced (3 of each color)
- 3 jalapeño, seeded and sliced
- 1 12 oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 12 oz package quesadilla melting cheese
- 4 oz cream cheese
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 c green onion, thinly sliced
- 12 oz fresh lump crab meat
- 2 bags thick tortilla chips
- 2 c shredded Monterey jack cheese

Garnish: lime wedges, cubed avocado, sliced green onion

## Cajun Crab Nachos

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY HEATHER PETEREK [JOINCCA.ORG/RECIPES](http://JOINCCA.ORG/RECIPES)

### Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Arrange sweet peppers and jalapeño on a large baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for about 10 minutes to soften. Remove from oven and set aside for assembly. Leave oven on for cooking nachos.

In a medium saucepan, heat evaporated milk until hot, but not boiling. Slowly add in cheeses, Cajun seasoning and garlic, and whisk continuously until smooth. Once all ingredients are thoroughly combined, gently stir in crab and green onions. Remove from heat and set aside.

Distribute a layer of chips on a 14"x19" sheet pan, greased and lined with parchment paper. Spoon desired amount of the crab mixture over the chips then top with another layer of chips. Spoon over more of the crab mixture, then top with the shredded Monterey jack cheese. NOTE: you will have enough crab mixture to make two full 14"x19" sheet pans full of nachos.

Bake in the preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Remove from oven and top with roasted peppers, avocados and green onion. Serve immediately with lime wedges. SERVES A CROWD.





*Maverick*  
Fish the Legend.

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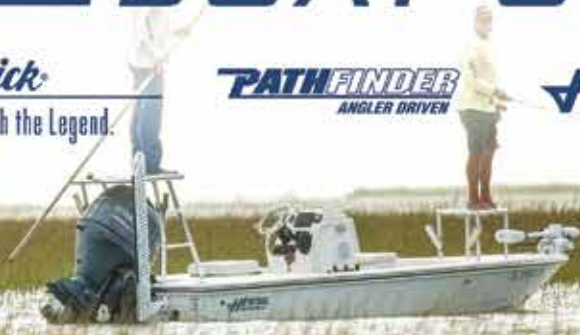
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