

The Villages Deep Sea Fishing Club December 2, 2024

President Ken Jagodzinski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 108 members in attendance.

Fishing Incentive announced

President Ken updated Members that the 20% discount will be available to ALL members for Club Fishing charters during December. That will make several charter fishing trips at \$100 (per angler) or less. He advised that the Club has decided to make this discount available to help out our charter Captains impacted by the hurricanes and to provide an excellent incentive for members to get out fishing. The club will pay each Captain a 20% discount from its treasury. He shared that the discount is available to dues-paying members only—guests pay full price. Gratuity should be based on the TOTAL cost of the trip, not the discounted rate. He encouraged all members to sign up for trips, as spots were filling quickly.

Tackle Sale 2025

President Ken announced the joint Saltwater and Freshwater Club tackle sale at Everglades Recreation Center on Friday, February 21st. He advised that more details would be provided soon.

Fishing Trip Coordinator reports

Coordinator reports highlighted current fishing reports and openings for November trips. Presenters included Jim Scheer, John Hogan, Joe Cicman, Dave Easton, Bruce Speck, Randy Herring, and Steve Newman.

American Patriot updates

President Ken advised that the October 21-24, 2024 (4) four-day trip was canceled and rescheduled to November 2025. He advised there were 3 spots available for purchase.

NEW members

Jeff Newmann welcomed 8 new members who signed up at the meeting. All new members were asked to stand and introduce themselves. Dave invited the latest members to stay for a brief orientation meeting following the regular meeting.

Membership dues renewal

Members were reminded that 2025 dues can now be paid. He advised the dues are still \$10 for the year.

NOAA is proposing massive bottom-fishing closures

President Ken shared a detailed explanation of potential bottom fishing closures being considered by NOAA. The affected area runs the Atlantic Ocean coast from North Carolina to South Florida and is seeking closure for the snapper-grouper complex.

WHAT'S DRIVING THIS? NOAA alleges that so many red snappers are being caught and released dead that it is causing the fishery to be "overfished."

An FWC spokesperson (Jessica McCawley), director of marine fisheries management, said at a recent FWC board meeting, "I can't underscore how big of an issue this is." She added, "I don't know how many people know the magnitude of what we're talking about here. "We're talking about 55 species (of the snapper-grouper complex) that you couldn't fish for, or maybe there are giant areas in federal waters that you couldn't go to bottom-fish."

When bottom-fishing in the Atlantic, you'll often encounter and likely have to discard multiple snapper-grouper species, including red snapper. NOAA insists that Red Snapper remains overfished and undergoing overfishing, even though the stock is at record-high abundance levels."

Closures are on the table. There's also the possibility of time-area closures, in which bottom-fishing could be open for one month and closed for the others.

NOAA says that discard dead levels need to be reduced by a high percentage—BUT THEY DON'T SAY BY HOW MUCH.

NOAA is taking the highly unusual step of a Secretarial Amendment, which would bypass the normal Regulatory oversight process to impose these draconian fishing closures on anglers.

They are seeking comments on a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking by November 8th.

We've reached out to our Colleagues at the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) to discuss how best our Club could advocate on this issue. Your Club's Government Affairs Committee is developing a response. We will keep you posted on any developments.

Open Forum

Several members spoke during this Open Forum segment this month.

Financial Report

Treasurer Steve Newman gave the financial report.

100% Raffle

Club member Chuck Ogle led the club raffle of six (6) \$50 vouchers that can be used on any Club trip. Congratulations to the winners. Chuck also led the second chance raffle.

Guest Speaker

There was no guest speaker this month.

The next meeting is Monday, January 6, 2025, at the Everglades Recreation Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.