

# Coastal Conservation Association Florida



## *Big Bend Chapter*

Dedicated to Conserving and Protecting Florida's Marine Fishery Resources

Issue 8

Spring 2006

### A Great Evening of Fun—CCA Florida's Annual Fundraising Banquet

***This year's Big Bend Conservation Fundraising Banquet takes place on May 16, 2006 at the University Center Club Ballroom at Doak Campbell Stadium.***

Tallahassee members of CCA Florida's Big Bend Chapter invite you to a night of fun and fundraising for marine conservation. This year's banquet includes raffles, door prizes, a huge silent auction, an exciting live auction and a great dinner.

Raffle and auction items include guided fishing trips, fishing lures, rods and reels, quality fly fishing gear, wildlife art, marine boating equipment, outboard engines and dinners at fine local restaurants.

Guided fishing trips include outings with some of the area's best local guides as well as multi-day fishing trips to Texas, the Bahamas, Alaska, Mexico and Canada. Many of the nearby fishing trips are paired with stays at coastal vacation homes and condos.

The doors open at 5:30 p.m. for cocktails and silent auction. Dinner and the live auction begin at 7:30 p.m. So come early and enjoy a chance to catch up with old friends while perusing the merchandise and bidding on auction items. The University Center Ballroom at Florida State University's Doak Campbell Stadium is a wonderful

facility, and the food is always excellent.

Individual banquet tickets are \$70 each and include dinner and a full year's membership in CCA Florida. Couples tickets are \$120, and include an Individual Membership and an Associate Membership.



*Join your friends at the FSU University Center.*



### Big Bend Chapter Annual Banquet

MAY 16

**University Center Club Ballroom at Doak Campbell Stadium**

RAFFLES, LIVE & SILENT AUCTIONS, DOOR PRIZES, GOOD FOOD AND A GREAT TIME.

For tickets and information contact Lee Huszagh at the Florida Land and Title Association at 681-6422, e-mail: [leeh@flta.org](mailto:leeh@flta.org); or contact CCA Florida's Tallahassee office at [info@ccaflorida.org](mailto:info@ccaflorida.org).



**PLANNING TO RE-POWER?**

**A quality YAMAHA outboard engine will be one of the live auction items at the Big Bend Banquet. Call 224-3474 for details.**

#### Corporate Sponsors

Corporate tables are \$700 for eight people and include four Individual Memberships, four Associate Memberships and special recognition at the banquet, in the banquet program and in next year's newsletter. Corporate sponsors also receive a beautiful, framed art print to commemorate the evening and their support for conservation. A Corporate Sponsorship table is a great way to reward employees, entertain friends, and introduce others to the importance of marine conservation in Florida. ☛

#### *Donations Welcome!*

Donations of quality merchandise, including outdoor recreational items or local amenities, are being sought for the Big Bend Chapter banquet. If you would like to make a donation and receive recognition for your support, please contact Chapter President Frank Feliciano at 251-4912.

## BIG BEND CHAPTER

2005 Officer of the Year



**Dave Lear, CCA Florida Board member, presents Officer Wood with his award.**

In 2005, Officer Charlie Wood was chosen to receive the CCA Florida Big Bend Chapter Officer of the Year Award. Officer Wood was chosen for his ability to blend knowledge, skill, courtesy and investigative technique when pursuing resource-related crime. This is evident not only by the 157 resource-related

arrests and warnings compiled during the previous year, but also by the low number of complaints generated against him out of the nearly 3000 users he checked. Eleven of those arrests involved the apprehension of violators of the net ban. Several illegal nets were also seized as a direct result of Officer Wood's actions. Officer Wood was raised in, and currently works in Franklin County, where he served as a sheriff's deputy prior to joining the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 📧

## CONSERVATION NOTES

### Net Ban Under Attack

Since passage of the Save our Sealife Constitutional Amendment in 1994, there have been numerous attempts by the commercial fishing industry to weaken or create loopholes around its provisions. Last year we stopped an attempt in the Florida legislature to repeal the net ban and strip the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) of its constitutional authority.

This year the net ban is again being threatened in the legislative session. This time the danger arises within a plan to move "statutory material" out of the constitution. Among the amendments suggested as statutory material are the pregnant pigs amendment, school class sizes and the net ban. At this time the net ban has not been addressed as part of the proposed legislation, but we believe an attempt will be made to remove it from the constitution. In addition, the same legislators who tried to remove the net ban last year have introduced bills that could weaken the authority of the FWC.

### Visit Our Website

Staying abreast of legislative maneuvering is just part of what CCA Florida does on behalf of saltwater anglers. We

*Cont'd on next page*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Frank Feliciano

It seems that every year the challenges to the resources of the Coastal Conservation Association become more varied and increase in dimension. Our grateful thanks go out to CCA's executive and legal staff for the well-fought battle against the federal government's attempt to close off the Gulf grouper fisheries this past winter. The effort was costly, running into six figures, but the strange science used by the federal government to justify the closure did not meet the standards of the court and most of the recommended closures were denied.

Now we have a new legislative session underway which may prove to be a huge challenge to recreational fishing interests. As expected, the effectiveness of the net ban continues to be attacked. As many of you can see each time you go fishing, the net ban constitutional amendment has been the single most effective initiative in improving the numbers of available fish in state and federal waters. Therefore, it is imperative for each of you to consider writing, calling, e-mailing or communicating with your legislators to ensure they understand this legislation should not be weakened in any way. The latest attempt is an effort to have the net ban language removed from the Constitution and placed into statute where legislators can more easily manipulate the language and allow net fishing back in to state waters.

Other back-door attempts to weaken the state's ability to manage fisheries include reducing the authority of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to research saltwater species populations and to use this research to properly manage the species. That legislation, if passed, would return the state to a previous time when the citizens of the state, out of frustration with the ineffectiveness of marine resource management, were forced to place netting restrictions into the state Constitution, a move supported by a huge majority of the voters.

The latest tactic seeks to put legislators in the decision making process when new laws are created to regulate commercial and recreational fishing. The FWC currently has that responsibility and the agency's commissioners and staff, who provide them with solid scientific data,

have a vested interest in the successful conservation of resources. They have that vested interest because it is their responsibility and their jobs to pass effective rules. In the past, legislators were often driven by issues other than resource protection. The results were devastating to the resource.

Springtime brings us an opportunity for many things—opportunities to go fishing, go on vacations and to help CCA raise funds to combat these and many other challenges facing recreational fishing. That opportunity, which includes a great evening, is the Big Bend Chapter's Annual Banquet. Once again it will be held at the FSU University Club which provides a great meal and a great facility for the event. I've attended several banquets over the years and it's always been a fantastic night of fun and fish stories.

Please make an effort to attend this year's banquet and remember the proceeds from the banquet are used to protect the fisheries of the state of Florida and adjacent federal waters. And remember: Everyone has to have something to believe in, so I believe I'll go fishing. 📧



**Ada and Frank Feliciano at the 2005 fundraising banquet.**

# Big Season in Store for Apalachee Bay

by **Scott Paterna, Jerry's Bait and Tackle**

The Apalachee Bay angler has a lot to look forward to this season. The early fishing reports have been terrific, and many anglers are saying this is already the best fishing year ever.

One pattern local anglers are practicing more often is fishing shallow water. Big trout and reds are happy to reside in one or two feet of water, all we have to do is sneak in there and catch them. Topwater lures and soft-plastic twitch-baits can be very effective in the bay's skinny water. Stick-bait lures like the Redfin or the Rattlin' Rogue can also be relied on to catch the attention of big fish. If you're looking for something new, Mirr-O-Lure has come out with the Mirr-O-Minnow, a new suspending lure that will make a great addition to the shallow water angler's arsenal. It emulates a glass minnow, right down to the reflective lateral line.

The Bass Assassin 5-inch Saltwater Shad is another excellent trout and redfish bait. When rigged with a worm hook, it suspends just under the surface and is visible to the angler at all times. As soon as it disappears, you can be sure it's in the mouth of a fish. Anglers can then set the hook even before they feel the strike on the line. And the fish will be hooked before it has any chance to spit the bait. Of course, let's not forget the trusty live shrimp suspended under a Cajun Thunder float. It's a reliable and effective way for any angler of any skill level to catch fish.

There are plenty of shallow flats along the coastline of Apalachee Bay. Wakulla Beach and Piney Island to the west are already producing plenty of action. To the east, the Rock Garden out from Stony Bayou creek is fertile trout and redfish territory, especially in spring.

So there's no excuse to stay off the water this spring. We have some of the best shallow water fishing in the state and now is just the right time to take advantage of it. 🐟

## CONSERVATION NOTES *from page 2*

invite everyone to visit [ccaflorida.org](http://ccaflorida.org) to learn more about these and other important issues we deal with on behalf of Florida's saltwater anglers. On the site you can read about how we took on the National Marine Fisheries Service over an attempt to close all Gulf of Mexico grouper fishing for two months last year as part of a red grouper building plan. CCA Florida looked at the data, as did the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and concluded the closure was completely unnecessary. We sued to stop the closure and we won, thus saving the winter grouper season for thousands of anglers and charter boat captains from Pensacola to Naples.

You'll also read about how earlier this year the First District Court of Appeals in Tallahassee turned back another lawsuit out of Wakulla County that attempted to allow the use of any size mesh in legal seines allowed by the constitution. A different outcome could have returned gill nets to state waters.

You can also learn about our efforts to stop the unnecessary creation of no-fishing zones, our work to improve enforcement of the net ban, and our fight to keep longlines out of important fishing areas in the Gulf. In addition, you can follow our involvement with the FWC regarding the scientific-based creation of fishing regulations that protect the marine resources of Florida, while making sure we always have the opportunity to pursue the sport we all love. —**Rick Farren**

## NFGFC Supports CCA Florida

For the past three years, the North Florida Gulf Fishing Club (NFGFC) has sponsored a "CCA All-Release Challenge" as a way to support marine conservation and membership in CCA Florida's Big Bend Chapter. Tournament entrants become members of CCA Florida and all proceeds from the event are donated to CCA. The tournament is held in October each year, and is one of the club's events in which members can earn points for the annual "Angler of the Year" Award.

"The tournament helps to promote the concept of catch and release in the Big Bend area," said Club President Mike Scibelli, adding that the NFGFC supports two other

important community causes including "Hands Helping Anglers," which is a Rotary Club event in which volunteers take persons with disabilities fishing for a day. NFGFC and CCA Florida members also take part every year in an event hosted by the Celebration Baptist Church in which children from the Baptist Children's Home are treated to a day of fishing.

The NFGFC was started in 2001 and meets the third Thursday of each month at Beef-O-Brady's on Thomasville Road at 7:00 p.m. Guests are welcomed. The club also holds monthly tournaments along the Big Bend. For more information go to [www.nfgfc.org](http://www.nfgfc.org).



**2005 tournament winners Jim Frederick (left) and Andrew Clark (right) with NFGFC President Mike Scibelli.**



**Members of CCA Florida's Big Bend Chapter and members of the North Florida Gulf Fishing Club take part every year in an event in which children from the Florida Baptist Children's Home are treated to a day of fishing.**

## 2006 BANQUET COMMITTEE

Frank Feliciano, Banquet Chairman

Mike Dalton  
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Matt Ellinor  
Don England  
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Rick Farren  
Ted Forsgren

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Mike Scibelli  
Capt. Chuck Simpson  
Dave Suban

## 2005 Banquet Corporate Sponsors

*The following individuals and companies made a significant contribution to underwrite the costs of last year's banquet through the purchase of a corporate table. This investment indicates their major commitment to CCA Florida's accomplishments and future goals. Please recognize their strong support for marine conservation.*

### **BANK OF AMERICA — PRESENTING SPONSOR**

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