

# Fishing Tournament

benefits cancer research

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*She didn't get the master angler award but she did get the most applause. Shelby Bachnik got up at 5 a.m. just to go fishing with her mother, aunt, father and uncle for the 16th annual Old Salt Ladies Fishing Tournament to raise money for the Celma Mastry Ovarian Cancer Foundation.*

*As Bachnik gazed up at her fish, hanging just above her head of blond curls, she smiled up at it in the hot afternoon sun. It weighed 3.32 pounds, the announcer said. There was a brief moment of silence until the crowd realized it could be in the running for largest trout catch of the day. Applause broke out and Bachnik's smile widened. Bachnik, 5, placed fourth for the largest trout with her catch—and was the youngest participant in the tournament.*



Spectators react as Anna Patterson unloads her 20.44 pound Amber Jack fish for the weight-in process at Gators on the Pass in Treasure Island.

PHOTO BY LIZ LUCSKO



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### What is Old Salt?

Old Salt stands for Operation Loop Development—Suncoast Angler’s Loop Tournament which started off as fishing expeditions to investigate the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Loop current. The club supports scientific efforts involving fishing as well as the American Cancer Society’s investigation of Red Tides and their connection to environmental cancer.

Old Salt board member Dick Hill was an official during the weigh-in process. Hill placed four of the largest Grouper fish, that weighed in at 26.5, 26.16, 25.4, and 19.54 pounds.

The tournament weigh-in was June 19 at Gators at the Pass restaurant, but the fishing started the night before—at midnight.

Eight species were up for grabs and the woman who managed to catch them all-or as many as she could—would be awarded “master angler.” One hundred and thirty-eight women fished in hopes of claiming the title. The prizes for the largest catch for each species were \$300 for

first, \$200 for second and \$100 for third. The master angler won a gold pendant from Johnston Jewelers and a check for \$200. The tournament was sponsored by Gators restaurant and Thunder Marine.

The inshore species: trout, sheepshead, Spanish mackerel and flounder. The offshore species: snapper, grouper, amberjack and king mackerel. The strategy: fish offshore, then inshore, offshore and in again.

The master angler, Donna Lo-Grande, caught five of the eight species. She caught: a 2.6 pound sheepshead, 1.20 pound trout, 6.62 pound grouper, 1.68 pound Spanish mackerel and 4.66 pound snapper.

The day smelled like fish guts, beer and sweat. As the women lined up at 4 p.m. with their catch, the sun beat down on them. The only break was the little space under the blue tent where the women lined up to have

their fish weighed.

The wooden A-frame with a hook hanging off of the top of it was connected to a high-tech device that measured the weight of the fish when placed on the hook. The fish were hung by their gills, and after the weigh-in, women posed for pictures with their fish hanging next to them.

Some fish were brought in dead, while others brought in live catches placed in a bucket off the metal hook.

After they were weighed, the live fish were released.

Women asked one other what they caught and where they caught it. Some were forthcoming with their answers. Others, such as one woman who caught a very large grouper, got up to the weigh-in line and said she caught the fish “in the water.” At exactly 5 p.m., the line was cut off by an Old Salt board member, and only the women who were actually in line

could have their catch weighed.

Some women had been fishing since midnight and brought bean bags onto their boats with them and would trade off sleeping, said board member Dick Hill. Others had been fishing since the early morning and still came back just as exhausted as those who had been out since the night before. Their tan faces, with a hint of sunburn atop the tan, were sweat-covered.



PHOTO BY LIZ LUCSKO



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"It's a purple ticket, do you have it?" said Denise Anderson to Jim Hathcock. Hathcock searched through the raffle tickets for the number that was called by Old Salt board member Ray Markham, but did not have the winning ticket. Carol Hathcock later won a Bait Masters gift package from the event.

Some fished in teams and wore shirts adorned with their team name on them. There were the women in pink sleeveless polo shirts. In tank tops with the logo from previous Old Salt Tournaments on them. Names like "Blue Runner," and "Team Yellow-fin," dotted the line of women. Others wore bikini tops or tank suits. There were short shorts and shorts that reached the knees. Oversized T-shirts and tight tank tops.

"The ladies have to do all the catching," said Hill. "When you get all eight, it's tough to do." This year even the woman crowned master angler didn't catch all eight species.

Jill Foraker, 25, from Seminole, a participant and secretary of the Old Salt Club, said the money raised by the tournament would go the Celma Mastry Ovarian Cancer Foundation just as the funds did last year. Last

### The results of the contest

- Amberjack**  
 1st Place Jennie Feola 35.14 lb  
 2nd Place Jill Foraker 25.44 lb  
 3rd Place Carol Hatchcock 25.34 lb  
 4th Place Anna Patterson 20.44 lb

- Grouper**  
 1st Place Louisa Conklin 26.5 lb  
 2nd Place Jennie Feola 26.16 lb  
 3rd Place Laura Quinta 25.4 lb  
 4th Place Lena Janssen 19.54 lb

- King Mackerel**  
 1st Place Debrah Pirone 29.44 lb  
 2nd Place Katie Hasson 19.44 lb  
 3rd Place Juanita McClain 19.44 lb  
 4th Place Carla Dowd 17.92 lb

- Snapper**  
 1st Place Amy Verdensky 7.32 lb  
 2nd Place Cindy Whitehouse 7.2 lb  
 3rd Place Jill Foraker 7.18 lb  
 4th Place Joan Myler 6.46 lb

