

Reports

Continued from page 18

to 45 feet. We managed a few more short grouper, until I got a 19 pound kingfish to eat a blue runner that we put out behind the boat while we were bottom fishing. After a blistering run we got it to the boat, and Bridget handled the rod while I gaffed the fish!

Bridget then hooked a huge fish, which we both fought up to the boat, and it turned out to be a 6-7 foot nurse shark. We were whipped. We kept a few nice pink mouth grunts, and then decided to move on.

We moved out to 60 feet where we trolled stretch 30 plugs, and caught some more short gags, until over one area caught a double of keeper gags, 24-26inch range.

We then headed in at good cruising speed, with a few nice fish on the ice.



Bridget with Dad's big king



Granddaughter Emma hard at work helping Daddy gather scallops.

Steinhatchee Scaloping

By Captain Charlie Courtney

Debby and I did a brief family scaloping trip out of Sea Hag Marina on Saturday, July 7th. Daughter Ashley and her family (husband Jeremy Rebman and our two granddaughters Emma, 5, and Madelyn, 2) had joined us from Tallahassee for the day.

With a strong, rapidly falling tide, we left the marina at 9:30 a.m., anchored at the edge of a flat next to an 8 foot deep channel just off Dallis Creek, and started searching. Scallops were not particularly abundant, but could be found with a little effort.

The scallops seemed to drift out with the falling tide to the edge of the flat where they dropped into the last 10-20 feet of 3-foot-deep turtle grass flat next to the deeper, sandy-bottomed channel. One could swim over an area picking it clean of scallops and return in 15 minutes to find that a new batch had dropped out of the current. Once cleaned, the scallop meats were unusually large for so early in the season.

The granddaughters were fascinated by the scallops and assorted shells we brought back to the boat. Eventually they screwed up their courage, put on life jackets, and went into the water to help. "Help" consisted of riding on Daddy's shoulders while he swam along looking for scallops.

By noon the two-year-old became tired and cranky as only two-year-olds can. We therefore decided to call it an early day without filling our limits and returned to the marina. The kids took much delight in pounding across boat wakes during the

return trip up the channel and were quite dissatisfied when I had to drop off plane for the no wake zone.

We had parked our camper at Nature's Coast RV Resort located on highway 358 in Jena just southwest of Casey's Cove convenience store. The facility has new owners – Yvonne and Anthony Tocco.

The RV park had become neglected and run down following a failed attempt by its previous ownership to sell off individual RV spaces as an RV "condo" facility. However, the energetic and personable Toccas have done much to clean up and upgrade the RV park with nicely leveled gravel sites, full hookups for 16 RVs, WiFi service and more – all for less than \$30 per night.

However, best of all was the park's BIG pool. The thing is a full 20 yards long and is thus ideal for a dedicated lap swimmer like me. However, for the less active types nothing relieves the stress, sunburn and salt from a day spent scaloping like simply having a long soak in the pool.



The large pool at Nature's Coast RV Resort provides a perfect way to end the day!