

## SARASOTA REDFISH

by Captain Lace Allenius. Photography by Captain Lace Allenius & Adam Cross.

The water was flat calm as we backed our boat out of the marina. The rippling water lapped along the sides of the vessel as we smoothly cut the surface and slowly headed out of the channel. The sunrise was finger-painted across the sky in shades of luminescent gold, blue and pink. Fishing with Capt. Bruce and Bryan Burkhart of Casual Lies Charters is always a pleasure. We were targeting redfish and our journey began nicely.

With our Grizzly cooler full of ice and cold drinks, we set out to fish the mangrove islands and oyster bars in little Sarasota Bay. We were prepared to use the chum method with greenbacks to get the fish fired up and close to our boat. Little Sarasota Bay is not only known for its redfish, it's also great snook and trout habitat.

After releasing a can of Fish Bomb menhaden oil to create a chum slick in the water, I was certain we were going to be hooked up in no time. I

could feel the sun kissing the back of my neck as I cast my lure out into the glassy water. As my bait plunked into the perfect spot next to the mangroves, I had a great feeling about catching the redfish we had come for.

With a few exciting tugs, my heart started racing as Capt. Bruce exclaimed, "fish on!" Fighting this fish was a joyful experience and a bright smile came across my face. As I fought with my bending rod, the fish came closer to the boat. As the fish approached, I could feel the excitement building within me. Swirling on the surface of the water, I could see it was a beautiful redfish. The glistening bronze scales reflected gorgeously in the morning sun and the day was off to a great start.

Landing a redfish starts with a precise cast into a dock, hole or a school of tailing fish with a live shrimp, pinfish or artificial bait of your choice. I recommend a Tsunami Holographic Shrimp or a



Yo-Zuri Crystal 3D shrimp. At times, redfish can be stubborn, so the best technique can sometimes be a piece of cut bait like ladyfish or pinfish under a popping cork. An alternative way to catch redfish on a flat or near a dock is to chum with greenbacks.

After catching and releasing several redfish, we hit slack tide and moved to our next spot. The sun was higher in the sky and it was a beautiful Florida day. I could hear the seagulls peeping as they curiously circled over our boat. "Be ready", said Capt. Bruce, as we cast out our lines. Staring intently at the water, we concentrated on feeling the next bite. Sure enough, our rods started popping and another redfish hookup ensued!

Some tips for success when fishing for reds are to fish over grass flats with deep sandy holes, oyster bars, mangrove lines, or deep docks. As in all fishing, patience is a necessity. Redfish are sometimes a tide-based fish, so if you have enough patience and keep fishing them, it is likely you will eventually get one to bite. Something to watch for is schools of mullet, because redfish generally hang around them. Also, redfish will feed on grass flats with their tails sticking out of the water (which is called tailing). When you

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