



IFAS Extension

Charlotte County Extension
Sea Grant Extension Program

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July 17, 2008

Shawn Dick
Aquatic Release Conservation
P.O. Box 730248
Ormond Beach, FL 32173-0248

Dear Shawn,

Several months ago you sponsored a sonic tag in support of the Kids Cup Redfish Tracking Project. I would like to thank you for your generous support and take this time to provide you with an update of our tracking project.

On April 19th, we sonically tagged 20 redfish at the Water LIFE Magazine Kids Cup Tournament. All of our sonic tags were sponsored by community businesses, organizations, or individuals. Each fish sonically tagged was released at the tournament dock after fully recovering from the tag implant (approximately 10 minutes). We have been monitoring these fish since the tournament. To date, we have data on all of our 20 fish. In conjunction with the sonic tagging, we also placed external dart tags on each Kids Cup redfish in hopes that anglers will report any recaptures. 68 redfish total received dart tags this year.

So what have we learned?

Early Tracking Results: Our most interesting early observation this year was that unlike last year, many of our redfish left the marina basin soon after the tournament. Several of our redfish were observed at Alligator Creek and even Hobbs Point by Pirate Harbor within a week of the tournament. Last year, we were surprised to discover how many of our redfish went in to the PGI Canal system. This year we covered that area more extensively with our acoustic receivers. What we have learned is that the redfish utilize the PGI Canal system extensively as a corridor and many of them reached Alligator Creek through the mosquito ditch connecting Alligator Creek to the Rim Canal.

You may recall the question we proposed was "If a fish is caught in Pine Island Sound and released in upper Charlotte Harbor, will it go back to Pine Island Sound or will it stay in the upper harbor?" To date, our furthest south observation has been at Hobbs Point on the eastern shoreline and near Cape Haze on the western shoreline. This later observation came in the form a call into the Redfish Hotline from an angler who recaptured the redfish. That angler re-released the redfish so that we can continue to learn from it.

This project is providing valuable insight in to redfish behavior and survival. Having the opportunity to combine our research with education through our community outreach efforts and through the Redfish Tracking website has been incredibly rewarding.

Again, I do thank you for your support of our redfish tracking project. It is our hope that we will be able to conduct this study each year in conjunction with the Kids Cup Redfish Tournament. If you have not had the opportunity to visit our "Follow Your Fish" redfish tracking website, I encourage you to do so.

<http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu/seagrant/kidscup.htm>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Staugler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Betty Staugler
Florida Sea Grant Agent
University of Florida IFAS Extension
Charlotte County