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Newsletter January 2009

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A newsletter to inform the members of ongoing activities within the Isle Royale Boater's Association, promote discussion among its members on various IRBA issues and share members' experiences related to boating, sport fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking.

A Great Day on the Flats by Don Hannula

As the saying goes any day fishing is better than a day at work regardless if the fish are biting or not. However, when the fish are almost jumping in the boat it can be a great day of fishing. As was the case the day we had this past August at the spot we call the flats about three miles south of Mott Island on the Big Lake.

The event was called Men's week which involved eleven fishermen in four boats staying on the Island from five to seven days. Our first day, we managed to catch enough Lake Trout to fire up the smoker and provide fresh smoked fish for snacks for the next few days while fishing. The second day, I being the cook, put the word out that we would be having rib-eyes for dinner and due to the lack of refrigeration we should have a catch and release day. The weather was looking great. My fishing partner, Norm Vierela from Republic, MI, and I have been

testing out different spoons and jigs for the past two years. We prefer to drift over reefs while jigging. However, as everyone knows the weather does not always cooperate allowing for such an anchorless drift activity. This past January Norm & I were in Washington State and found an eight oz jig that is use in salt water. These two jigs out fished any other lures the entire spring and summer. Unfortunately we hung one up in the bottom in July and lost it. A second best lure was the 4oz Swedish Pimple. The heavier lures with a treble hook work the best. We use stout poles rigged with spider wire, and a mono, leader. Often times cut bait is not needed.

Getting back to the day, the weather was perfect for a jigging day. We loaded up snacks, Norm & I and invited Bill Baxandall and Zeyad Ahmed to go with us. The Big Lake was like glass and there was no wind. From Caribou Island we were on the Flats within ten minutes. We were using sucker cut bait provided by the Boaters' Assoc.

however as we soon found out no bait was required. We started is about 135 feet of water and slowly drifted down to 180-190 when the fish started to hit. It was nonstop action to about 240 feet of water. We did have a very slight wind that came and went and there was a small current so we did not stay in one spot. Thanks to the GPS we would relocate and basically drift over the same area over and over. The four were in completion with each other. Each fisherman was keeping track of the catch.

At one point a boat was approaching and it was soon realized it was the DNR. I was standing on the dive platform when they pulled up to my stern. At the same time I was unhooking a fish and tossed it back into the water. One of the officers said, "Oh you have your limit already?" I said "No, we are having a catch and release day today. We have rib-eyes on the menu tonight and we are not keeping any fish today. We do have two on the stringer that were bleeding to bad to release that we are going to fry up as fish nuggets for appetizers." I asked them how they were doing and they said they were not rigged for that kind of fishing and not doing very well. We loaned them a 4oz Swedish pimple and directed upwind about 100 yards. I told them that between the four of us we had landed over 40 fish. I don't think they believed us until we pulled in 6-8 more while we were talking to them.

We fished for about two more hours. I stopped at 20 fish and made lunch for the crew. As luck would have it the breeze became stronger and it was hard to hold the bottom. When fish number 80 was netted I

said that was enough after all "WE ARE ONLY ALLOWED SO MUCH FUN FOR ONE DAY". We caught fish up to 12 pounds and only kept the two that would not have lived. We drove by the DNR boat and retrieved our lure. They landed five fish and were happy. I asked if they wanted to check our licenses. They said "No, not after getting us dinner" All in all, a great day on the Flats.

IRBA West End Update by Mark Rude

On Dec 1,2008 the western IRBA group held the first of its monthly meetings for the Fall 08 - June 09 season. Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at the Lakeview Castle restaurant, located on old Hgy. 61 east of Duluth. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM and all are encouraged to attend.

Following is a list of items discussed during the Dec. meeting.

1. New IRBA-IRNP project; we are considering possibilities for a new joint project with NPS which would benefit boating visitors to the park. There are some possible dock projects being discussed, and we invite your suggestions on the subject. Please submit any ideas ASAP so we can discuss the possibilities with NPS prior to opening of 2009 season.

2. We have decided not to participate in the Duluth Boat Show this season. NPS will not be attending this season either, and with rather marginal public interest it was decided to forego participation.

3. Frozen bait availability at Rock Harbor and Windigo; with the positive response and comments received last

summer we plan to make bait available again this season. Subsequent to the meeting we met with Dick Martin of Lake Superior Fish Company, Superior Wi. and discussed the possibility of providing a smelt - herring mix this season. Dick was confident that could be done. Any comments?

4. Discussed possibility of adopting a more "user convenient" method of registering. Some ideas will be discussed with NPS.

Meeting adjourned @7:50 PM

Once again, we invite your comments on any or all of the above and hope to see you at the monthly meetings.

Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament Results - by Dave Hand

The Sixth Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament was held at Rock Harbor on Saturday, July 19, 2008. The weather was sunny with some a light wind with a small chop on the water.

The rules of the tournament were each boat entered in the tournament would provide the highest total weight of three fish caught between sunrise and 2PM with weigh-in at Rock Harbor Dock. The fish caught were donated to for the Annual IRBA Fish Fry at Rock Harbor after the awards presentation. Plaques were given to the boat with the highest total weight, second place and third place. Plaques were given for the three largest fish taken by trolling and the largest fish taken in the tournament. IRBA member, John Evans (L'Anse MI) donated

trophies for the event again this year. Thanks John! In addition, the "Wooden Herring Award" travel trophy was also up for grabs by either the Minnesota or Michigan fishermen for the three largest fish by weight.

With the Tourney being held on the east end of the island, usually Jim Markham and his Misconduct crew are eager to challenge the boys from Lanse, MI (e.g. Miss Laurie Crew) for the bragging rights. Jim was unable to attend this year, but his crew figured they had to meet the challenge. So at 2 AM in the morning the Misconduct crew launched the Liquid Plumber boat with Scott Hyrkas at the helm and cruised over for a shot at the title and it paid off. The Misconduct and Liquid Plumber Crew [Scott Hyrkas (Captain), Rodney Markham, Jason Massie, and Roger Pennala] took the top spot with their three largest fish totaling 50 lb 15 oz (bobbing).

The 'Miss Laurie' and crew [John Evans (Captain), Mike 'Otis' LeClaire, John Messer Jr., and Barry Drew] took second place with their three largest fish weighing a total of 42 lb 12 oz. (bobbing). The 'Water Witch' and crew [Bill and Pat Siler and John and Carol Drew] came in third place with the three largest fish caught weighing a total of 18 lb 0 oz. (trolling). Water Witch also won the trolling plaque. The largest fish was caught on the 'Liquid Plumber' by Jason Massie which weighed 19 lb 13 oz.

The Wooden Herring Award went to those Michigan Fishermen with a total weight of 52 lb 10 oz, as the Minnesota fishermen did

not weigh in this year. Congratulations to those Michigan fishermen. The Minnesota fishermen will have a good shot at the trophy in 2009 as the tournament will be held on the west end.

Unfortunately, I do not have pictures this year because they were accidently deleted from my hard drive in the fall.

IRBA Apparel Available

We have IRBA apparel available including: hats, sweatshirts, and polo shirts. We also have nice jackets available by special order. You can order them by contacting Carol at 906 482 - 9342.

IRBA Scheduled Events

IRBA Scheduled Meeting, Tuesday, January 6, 2009, Copper Country Moose Lodge on US 41 in Dollar Bay, MI.

IRBA Scheduled Meeting, Tuesday, February 10, 2009, Copper Country Moose Lodge on US 41 in Dollar Bay, MI.

IRBA Scheduled Meeting, Tuesday, March 10, 2009, Copper Country Moose Lodge on US 41 in Dollar Bay, MI.

Articles for Newsletter consideration are welcome. ----

*Please support your IRBA
PO Box 97
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