

**PUTTING YOU IN
THE PICTURE**



Douglas Stevens July winner of the **Junior Rover Match** - 25lb 7oz.



Jez Goldthorpe Thursday Match winner June this year with **136lb 9oz**



Tom Compton bags **Catfish of the week!** August - 43lb 4oz



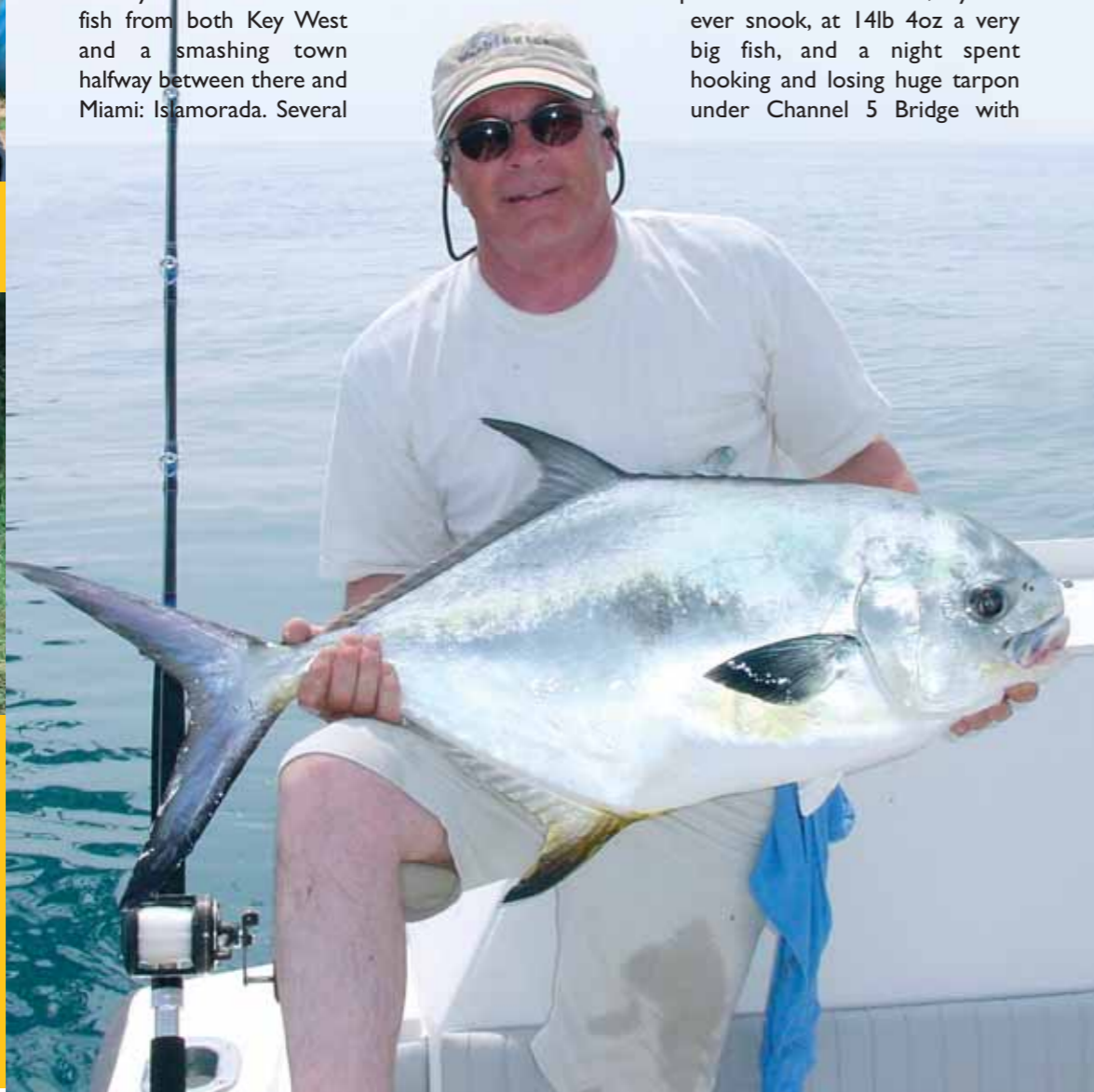
Welcome to PARADISE



SKY TV PRESENTER KEITH ARTHUR KICKS OFF HIS NEWSREEL SERIES WITH SOME MOUTHWATERING TALES OF TARPON, SNOOK AND SEVERAL OTHER NATIVES OF THE FANTASTIC FLORIDA KEYS.

If Paradise is half as nice as the Florida Keys it must be one hell of a place. I was introduced to The Keys in 1992 when, after a successful sales year with Daiwa, they took all the reps to Marathon, 110 miles from Miami and 45 miles from Key West. Although we went in February and the fishing wasn't at its best, I saw enough to want more and started saving... **HARD!** I have now been at least once each year since 1994 and fish from both Key West and a smashing town halfway between there and Miami: Islamorada. Several

days will remain firmly glued in my memory; the 3 hour 10 minute battle with a huge tarpon on 12lb line in the 1996 Key West Classic Tournament; a double hook-up of sailfish in the 2003 event, when Roy Marlow and I played the fish whilst they leapt, smashed the water with their bills and ran simultaneously. Eventually mine frayed the fluorocarbon leader, but we managed to successfully release Roy's and score points. From Islamorada, my first ever snook, at 14lb 4oz a very big fish, and a night spent hooking and losing huge tarpon under Channel 5 Bridge with



local angler Shaun Roarke and his good buddy, angling artist Tim Borski. Eventually I boated a Silver King, although this was more of a prince - about 12lbs!

Last year I spent a day with Captain Damon Santelli and my old pal Bill Allen fishing the Gulf of Mexico. We travelled over 120 miles during the day, visiting shrimp boats for bait and catching bonito, towers for permit and barracuda, wrecks for mutton snapper and grouper and a bonus king mackerel of over 40lb. We caught 15 species and the highlight of that day was Bill's 35lb permit, caught way out in the Gulf close to a tower used as a virtual bombing target by US war planes. He had to battle to keep it away from the legs of the tower, no mean feat on 20lb line and the light rods we use.

One of the main targets of my trips to Paradise are the huge tarpon; massive herrings that come inshore in early spring and stay throughout the summer, feeding on the shallow inshore waters. They can be caught on the flats in water scarcely deep enough to cover their backs. My favourite way of catching them though is the "drifting deadbait".

The bait used is shrimp boat bycatch, staple diet of many Key West fish. In almost any other circumstance I would rebel against the 85% waste that shrimpers achieve, however in this case it ALL gets recycled and the vast majority is used as "chum" so the fish get to eat it for free. Most of the bycatch is natural prey to the fish that we aim to catch anyway; we just act as "middle man".

Key West Harbour is a prime tarpon spot in spring and to fish there the captain will attempt to anchor the boat, usually a 28-30ft centre console model with open decks that you can walk around, along one of the ledges. Once anchored a chum line is started with mejorra and the rest of the chum being cut into pieces and thrown over the stern. Tackle is simple: a 20lb class rod, Daiwa Super Kenzaki in my case, good lever drag multiplier loaded with LOTS of 20lb line with a 60lb fluorocarbon leader about 6ft long armed with a 6/0 Owner SSW hook. No weights, no swivels, no floats. The hookbait, a mejorra, has the tail trimmed off just above the wrist and is hooked through both lips. Lowered into the water, it is then free spooled so it runs as closely as possible to the speed of the current. I allow the line to trickle over my left index finger, feeling for bites. When it occurs the bite is merely a speeding up of the line. You either notice the



spool moving faster, or feel the line get somehow heavier. You then point the rod at the bait and wind as fast as possible until resistance is felt. Then **WHAM!** the hook needs to be set into the rock-hard bone of the tarpon's jaw and I strike at least three times, short jabs are best.

What happens next will never be forgotten. The fish will usually leap, sometimes several times, and head for Cuba, 80 miles away. The skipper will drop anchor, you walk (or get dragged by the fish!) to the front of the boat and fight from there. A 100lb fish will often take 45 minutes or more to beat, unless of course it beats you first, and I have travelled 7 miles whilst fighting a single fish!

Once at the side of the boat, the captain will reach over and unhook the tarpon, ensure that it is upright, and watch it swim away. It is important to make sure the fish is swimming, as giant hammerhead sharks are frequently not too far away and they will snap up any fish that looks in distress, sometimes snatching on during the fight.

I'll be back again, God willing, in April 2004 to do battle with the Silver King. I will never tire of it; it simply gets more exciting each and every time I do it. I feel truly blessed.



**Q & A WITH
KEITH ARTHUR**



One of the highlights of my angling year are my trips to **White Acres**. Not only do I get to fish a match (albeit one I can't win) but I am able to talk to people face to face about the sport I love. It is entirely different to both my radio and TV work, because with those I am in control. On stage at **White Acres** anything can happen.

I have been asked some very diverse questions, and not all about **White Acres** by any means, and the response is always the same; tremendous.

I am happy to let you know that they will be continuing, something that delights me (three days at **White Acres**, 4 or 5 times a year!) and I hope pleases you. I trust you find the evenings as entertaining as I do.



MAIN PIC: Bill Allen with a 35lb Permit, caught in the Gulf of Mexico.

RIGHT TOP PIC: Roy Marlow hard at work!

RIGHT BOTTOM PIC: Reeling in a Tarpon