

MSC-GULF OFFSHORE TACKLE BOX

- **Fluorocarbon leader** - 20 lb test, 30 lb test, for good eye sighted snapper
- **Monofilament leader** - 40 lb test, 50/60 lb test and 80 lb test for poor eye sighted grouper
- **Sinkers** ounces - 2 - 8's, 2 - 6's, 2 - 4's, 2 - 3's, 2 - 2's per fisherman.
- **Hooks**

4 Sabiki rig packages for catching bait fish. Hook size 8. Green or pink "fish skins" type with gold hooks are best. Those hooks are SHARP! Use a 2+ ounce triangle sinker. Buy good brands. Use dehooker when removing bait and drop into bait well. Avoid touching fish by hand. Best to have one person remove bait and two others catching them. Know where to get bait near shore on way out to fishing spot. Bait is hard to find off shore. Circle hooks – required for bottom reef fishing - 4/0, 6/0, and 8/0. These for larger mangrove snapper and groupers. For yellowtail snappers, on surface behind chum, use harder to see 1/0 "Owner" Brand Mutu Light Wire circle hooks on 6' long 20# fluorocarbon leader. Regulations are being changed and may allow non circle hooks for surface yellowtails.

For larger bottom fish, consider using "Owner" or "Gamakatsu" brand hooks. These are made from stronger forged Japanese steel and are very sharp. Avoid cheaper Chinese made hooks that are high carbon steel that is more prone to breaking than bending.
- **Bottom Rigs**- suggest making up a half dozen, per angler, "Chicken" rigs with two single hook locations. Put each of them in a zip lock bag to keep them handy and tangle free.
- Use 60-80# **braid** line (Power Pro type) for main line. Suggest yellow line. Easier for you to see near surface. If using mono, replace yearly.
- Use a **quality reel** with at least 4 waterproof bearings and 20-40# drag depending on size of catch. Shimano and Penn are proven brands with good service. Get reels serviced yearly to keep in good condition. Saltwater Corrosion starts the first time you use it.
- Buy a decent **quality rod** to suit the types and sizes of fish you are catching. Learn how to clean and dry them after each use and how to adjust drag.
- **Kingfish Rigs**

Store bought with wire leader & 2 treble hooks. Sharpen the premade rig hooks with hook file.

Gulp 4" swimming mullet

Lures – 3" spoon – gold or silver

Live bait works best. Use blue runner hooked thru back and trailing treble hook in front of tail. Use short 6-10" of 31# wire with twisted knots, to keep sharp teeth away from leader.

- Know how to tie **good knots**. Best ones are ones you can tie on a rocking boat and not have fail. Suggest learning how to tie Uni to Uni know for tying braid to leader. Use improved clinch knot from leader to hook or swivel. Surgeon's knot for making sinker loop at bottom of chicken rig and for side hooks on chicken rig. There are stronger knots and suggest learning Bimini twist for loop at end of main line when using a swivel and FG knot for tying leader to main line.

BOAT FISHING GEAR

- Plastic **cutting board** for cutting bait, Buy a good one that fits into rod holder.
- 6" blade **bait knife**
- **Bait scissors** for shrimp tails and cutting braid.
- Fish **rags** & Kevlar **gloves** to hold fish during hook removal and prevent cuts from knife
- **Landing net** long enough to reach larger and heavier fish and sized for type of fish
- Long handle **gaff**
- 5 gallon **bucket** to put trash in or use for bait.
- Wire or plastic **chum cage** – used for any fish, to get chum to bottom and slowly bring basket to surface to bring fish above the structure and easier to catch without fear of breaking off.
- Cloth mesh **chum bag** to tie to boat. Disperses chum on surface.
- 10" long blade sharp and flexible **filet knife**. Good quality and know how to sharpen it.
- Stainless steel **fishing pliers** with side cutters for fish line. Get one with sheath that attaches to pants belt.
- Side cutter type **pliers** for wire
- **Measuring** stick or decal on boat to check fish size. Be LEGAL!
- Copy of current **FWC fishing regulations** and photos of different fish breeds. handle with metal loop for dehooking fish.
- Frozen **chum** blocks-Marks Tournament brand is best. Each lasts about an hour.
- "**Seaqualizer**" device if fishing for bottom fish in water deeper than 60'. This device on its own fishing rod can return an undersized or out of season fish to deep enough water (below 33') so it can quickly return to bottom and away from predators.
- **Appropriate Bait** for targeted species. Can be artificial, frozen or live.

BOAT and SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- **PFD** to fit each person on boat. If passenger can't swim, consider making them wear one at all times.
- Current **fire extinguisher**
- Throwable float **cushion** with a 100' line. Used if someone falls overboard and needs to be pulled back to boat.
- **VHF radio** with DSC location transmitting. Know how to use it and limits of range.
- **GPS** system to navigate home and to fishing spots. Garmin or better.

- **Bottom Machine** (Fish Finder) to locate wrecks, bottom type and fish. Consider CHIRP transducer. Garmin or better. Don't skimp on screen size or transducer quality.
- If buying a MFD type unit, get at least 12" screen size to see GPS and Depth Sounder at same time.
- **Sound** making device – horn, current flares and gun to boating regulations.
- Fresh **First aid** kit. Know how to remove a fishhook from humans.
- **Sunscreen** Waterproof. Avoid Coppertone and bronzing type brand as they stain gelcoat.
- Rain **poncho** if expecting wet weather.
- Wearable **PLB** or larger boat mounted **EPIRB** Satellite Locating Beacon with GPS location. They transmit a signal to a satellite and emergency services should you be out of radio range.
- **Jackets** for cold mornings and evenings and wet weather.
- Non slip boat soled **shoes**. Do NOT use "Croc's"-too slippery when bottoms wear down.
- Captain needs to **review safety procedures** with passengers BEFORE leaving dock.
- If going out of sight of land and radio range, Suggest carrying a current **life raft** that can contain number of boat passengers. Sinkings occur and you could be in the water for hours until recovered. Hypothermia occurs if water temp is below 86F and sharks are prevalent above 80F.
- Suggest getting a free boat **safety check** once a year from Power Squadron – Coast Guard Auxiliary on Marco. They will help you on deficiencies. They don't give you tickets!
- File a **FLOAT PLAN** with someone who will miss you. Let them know where you are planning to go, who is aboard the boat, their significant other's name and contact phone numbers, description of boat, boat registration number and when expected back at dock. Call all the significant others when you get back at dock.
- Learn how to **anchor** your boat over a wreck. Rig your anchor for "breakaway" in case you get it stuck on bottom.
- Learn how to use a **sea anchor** to slowly drift over the bottom.
- Carry any **medicine** you need in a water proof container and advise captain of any health problems. Carry sugar snacks if you are diabetic and could go into shock.
- Check **weather and tides** before leaving dock.
- Use apps on smartphone called "Tides4Fishing" and "Tidegraph" for finding best times to fish and "Fishweather" for winds and weather at offshore buoys.

Revised by DMR on 2-13-17