

“SPOONPLUGGING SARASOTA BAY, FEBRUARY 2014”

By Chase Klinesteker, CSI



Spanish Mackerel from Sarasota Bay, 30 caught from a school on #500 Spoonplugs

Sandra and I recently returned from an enjoyable **weeks' vacation on Siesta Key near Sarasota, Florida.** **February 2014** was not an easy month in Michigan weatherwise, so the break was welcome. I had reserved a **fishing charter** ahead of time with **Captain Jack Ryan (seadogfishing.com)** at CBs' Saltwater Outfitters. Captain Jack is the only charter captain I know of that **uses any Spoonplugs with his clients.** He will use **many methods to catch fish, including live bait, fly-fishing, jigs, etc,** but when **conditions call for shallow water trolling, he uses Spoonplugs.** He is well **versed in Buck Perrys' material** and has been a member in the past of National Spoonpluggers. We booked a **4 hour charter** with him starting at 9:00AM because of recent **fog.** The **weather was perfect:** stable, around **70 degrees, hazy skies, and calm.** Jack uses a 25 foot **Mako Open Fisherman boat with a 250 horsepower outboard** that can cover lots of territory. Traveling in the no-wake zones, I put out a #200 and #100 Spoonplug close to the base breakline, but no takers. We stopped and

drifted a 4-6 foot flat in Roberts Bay using large live shrimp, and casting a jig and twisterail. A number of Spanish Mackerel were hooked on the live shrimp and some were landed, but **getting a solid hookset proved a challenge**. I was using the jig and was less fortunate. It was exciting to see a **large dolphin come and surface right next to the boat**. Jack recognized it and said that **it had been around for at least 30 years!** He then claimed that **he had been around Sarasota a bit longer than that**.

After a gas and rest stop at a nearby marina, we proceeded to a **large 4-6 foot flat in Sarasota Bay**. It was located **near an entrance to the ocean** and had **short stubby grass** on the bottom. We put on **#500 Spoonplugs (2-4 feet)**, began trolling, and **right away started hitting nice Spanish Mackerel**. Jack used **long lines and speeds of 3-5 mph to trigger strikes**, which came frequently. **I tried to use a #400 Spoonplug (4-6 feet) to get a little deeper, but with no strikes, soon switched back to a #500** (depth control is even important in the shallows!). For trolling #500 Spoonplugs, Jack likes to **use a stiff spinning rod and reel with braided line and a 30 pound fluorocarbon leader (Mackerel have sharp teeth!)**. Then he can **cast this light lure far behind the boat when restarting to troll** and not miss covering that water or wasting time letting out line. A couple **other species** were caught on the trip, but **most were Spanish Mackerel** caught on a #500 Spoonplug. In the 4 hour trip, **25 to 30 fish were landed** with many more strikes lost. Spanish Mackerel are **very good eating so we kept some fish**, gave some to friends, and had Clayton's Siesta Grill across the street from CB's cook up some for our dinner that night. **Delicious!!**



Good fishing right in town!