

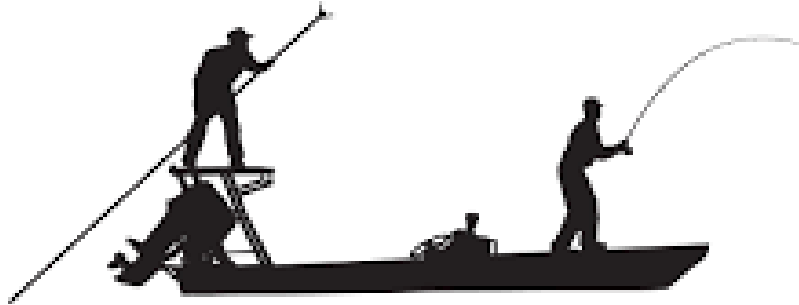


Pioneering a First -in-Kind, Guide-Led Model for Rapid Scientific and Ecological Response

Allison Delashmit, Executive Director
Key West & Lower Keys Fishing Guides Association



What is Lower Keys Guides Association?





Spinning Fish Phenomenon was the Precipice of an LKGA Identity Change

- **Rights and access** for guides and anglers
- **Sustainable use** tied to cultural heritage
- **Advocacy for sound management** at state and federal levels



- **Partnerships** with science and management
 - **Environmental sentinels** of observation and response
 - **Community-level** stewardship and resilience
 - **A modern, active role beyond advocacy** — assist and drive research, education, and policy for change
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Introduction: The Fishing Guide

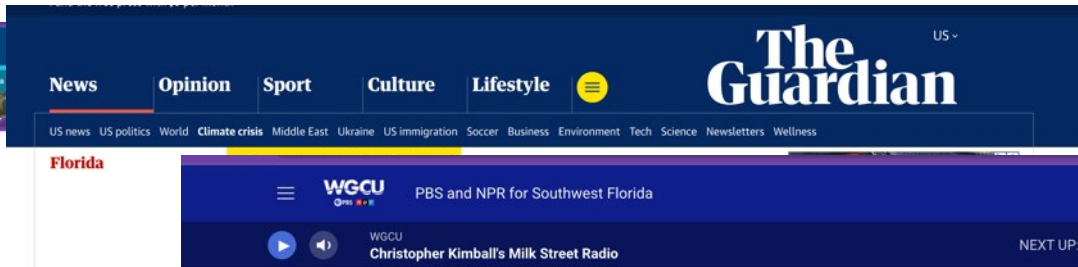
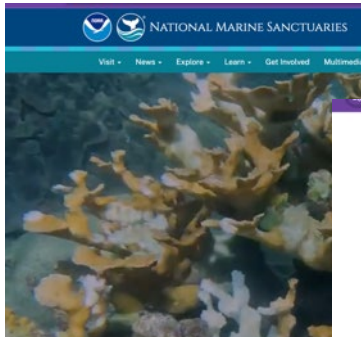




The Evolution of LKGA Fishing Guides



Summer of 2023



News & Features ▾ Maps & Data ▾ Teaching Climate ▾ Resilience Toolkit ▾ About ▾

Home ▾ News & Features ▾ Event Tracker

This website is an ARCHIVED version of NOAA Climate.gov as of June 25, 2023.
Content is not being updated or maintained, and some links may no longer work.

NOAA and partners race to rescue remaining Florida corals from historic ocean heat wave

BY BENJAMIN LINDSEY | REVIEWED BY JACQUELINE DE LA COUR, JENNIFER MOORE, GARET DILLON ARNOLD, AND SEREN WAINWRIGHT
PUBLISHED JULY 26, 2023



Related Content

(Climate.gov would like to especially thank reviewers Jacqueline De La Cour and Jennifer Moore for their contributions to this article.)

In mid-July 2023, heat-stressed corals in the southern Florida Keys began bleaching—expelling their food-producing algal partners—and the hottest water temperatures ever documented in the region during the satellite record (dating back to 1985). As weeks of heat stress have continued to accumulate, bleaching and death have become more widespread, raising fears of a mass mortality event on the region's [academyofsciences.org](https://www.academyofsciences.org).

Build-up of dangerous heat in Florida waters in July 2023

th was the hottest ever for Florida as NOAA warns 2023 is headed for a record continues

0 PM EDT | UPDATED FRI, SEP 15 2023 11:27 AM E

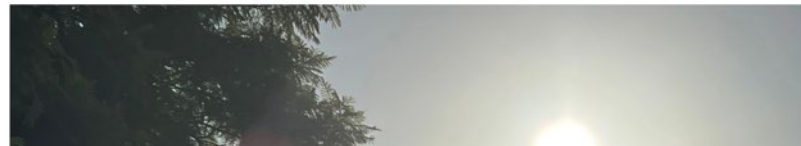
August was the hottest ever for Florida as NOAA warns 2023 is headed for a record

WUSF | By João Victor Pina

Published September 24, 2023 at 9:10 AM EDT



▶ LISTEN • 0:58





Fishing Guides Were Also Concerned





Established a Reporting Method

- Added to website in mid-December for members to report unusual water issues or fish behavior
- Issued an advisory to members and started sharing the form with industry connections and local community
- FWC's Fish Kill Hotline was getting revamp in Dec/Jan and wasn't immediately available; it was also widely unknown

The screenshot shows a web page with a header image of two people on a boat at sunset. Below the image is the text 'PRESERVATION THROUGH STEWARDSHIP'. The main heading is 'Observation and/or Conditions Report Form'. The body text explains the purpose of the form: 'The LKGA would like to document any unusual, interesting, or concerning fish behaviors, avian observations, water issues (examples could include algae blooms, fish disease, fish kills, or water discoloration), navigational concerns/hazards, or any other general information about the fishery/local waters. This information will be categorized and used to document and help identify potential scientific studies, and will be shared with partner agencies to encourage dialogue and action, and to help us stay informed of the general condition of the fishery. Please provide as much information as possible. LKGA may reach out for additional information.' At the bottom, there is a footer with the email 'info@lkga.org', a 'Switch account' link, and a 'Saving disabled' status. A red asterisk indicates required questions.

PRESERVATION THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Observation and/or Conditions Report Form

The LKGA would like to document any unusual, interesting, or concerning fish behaviors, avian observations, water issues (examples could include algae blooms, fish disease, fish kills, or water discoloration), navigational concerns/hazards, or any other general information about the fishery/local waters. This information will be categorized and used to document and help identify potential scientific studies, and will be shared with partner agencies to encourage dialogue and action, and to help us stay informed of the general condition of the fishery. Please provide as much information as possible. LKGA may reach out for additional information.

info@lkga.org [Switch account](#) Saving disabled

* Indicates required question



Science Stepped In



- Dr. Ross Boucek with Bonefish Tarpon Trust starting collecting samples and reaching out to contacts in late 2023
 - Started compiling a collaborative of researchers interested in the situation
 - Coordinated mass sampling and weekly phone calls with experts started in February
 - Fishing guides were providing information (locations) & boat support for any organization wanting fish/water samples
-



Guides Were Playing an Integral Part



- Participating in the planning
- Managing reports from guides/public
- Contributing to messaging
- Utilizing our vessels and expertise

But we were all suffering from the same problem....

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LKGA Guide Rapid Response Network (GRRN) was formed

- First-ever guide-led response network (entirety of the Keys)
- Acquire necessary equipment for night trips
- Procure sampling holding equipment & locations
- Compensate fishermen for equipment use, knowledge, & time



Ocean Reef Conservation
Association



LKGA GUIDE RAPID
RESPONSE NETWORK



LKGA GRRN By the Numbers

35+

Professional Fishing
Guides

127 hours

of Fieldwork in Year 1

5

Sample Collection
Sites

20

Pieces of Equipment
Acquired

100+

Water/Fish/Bird
Samples Collected

130+

Reports to FWC Fish
Kill Hotline



LKGA GUIDE RAPID
RESPONSE NETWORK

Five Sample Drop Sites:

- Key West: Ocean's Edge Marina (inside the barn), 5950 Peninsular Ave, Key West, FL 33040
 - Lower Keys: Cudjoe Gardens Marina (non launch side of the building) 477 Drost Dr., Cudjoe Key, FL 33042
 - Marathon: Seven Mile Fly Shop (freezer only/outside of building) 1638 Overseas Hwy, Marathon, FL 33050
 - Islamorada: Safe Harbor Angler House Marina, 80500 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada, FL 33036
 - Key Largo: Florida Bay Outfitters, 140050 Overseas Hwy, Key Largo, FL 33037
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How LKGA GRRN Can Help You

Inclusion in Grants:

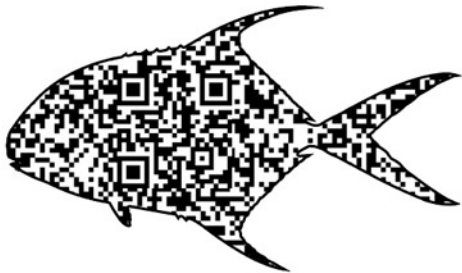
- Consider utilizing fishing guides with fieldwork
 - Flats Boats (1-2 researchers) = \$400 - \$600/full day
 - Bay Boats (4-6 researchers) = \$1000 - \$1200/full day
 - Light Tackle Boats (6-8 researchers) = \$1500+/full day
- Letters of Support – Request on LKGA.org

Independent/Trained Sample Collection or Equipment Management

- Water samples
- Fish samples/tagging efforts
- In-water equipment support and management

Knowledge Exchange:

- Host focus groups/webinars
 - Survey guides
 - Get involved with LKGA – Membership Meeting (2/13/26)
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Thank You

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