

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

1200 Glynn Avenue, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-9990

J. Leonard Ledbetter, Commissioner
Duane Harris, Director
Coastal Resources Division
912/264-7218

August 1, 1989

Ms. Phyllis A. Thompson

Byron, Georgia 31008

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I wish to personally congratulate you on your outstanding catch, which has been accepted as a Georgia Saltwater Gamefish Record. Enclosed is a certificate that serves not only to recognize the size of the catch, but also the angler's skill and the sportsmanship displayed in the landing of a gamefish record.

Again, congratulations on your achievement, and thank you for your participation in Georgia's Saltwater Gamefish Records Program.

Sincerely,

Duane Harris

DH:kls

Enclosure

cc: Captain Steve Amick - NEVA MISS VII

STATE OF GEORGIA
SALTWATER GAMEFISH RECORDS ENTRY FORM
FOR
GAMEFISH RECORDS AND OUTSTANDING CATCHES

Read all angling rules and Georgia Saltwater Gamefish Record requirements before completing and signing this application. This application must be accompanied by photographs as specified in the State record requirements.

DIVISION

☒ Women's ☐ Men's

SPECIES

Common name: RED SNAPPER

MEASUREMENTS (See measurements diagram below)

Weight: 29 lbs 8 oz

13.38 kg

Fork Length (x to x): 32 inches

Total Length (xx to xx): 34 inches

Girth: 35 inches

DATE OF CATCH: MAY 12th 1989

PLACE OF CATCH: (Be specific as possible)

SAVANNAH SNAPPER BANKS

METHOD OF CATCH (trolling, casting, fly fishing, etc.):

Bottom Fishing

ANGLER (print name as you wish it to appear on record certificate):

Phyllis A. Thompson

Permanent address (include Zip code):

[REDACTED]

Fishing Club affiliation

Angler's age (not required):

EQUIPMENT

Rod: 5'2" custom ROD Reel: PENN 68

(make & length)

(make)

Line (make & test) '80 Lbs test High seas

Name of lure or bait SQUID

Terminal rig description (include hook number, types, & arrangement)

BASIC Bottom RIG - 6/0 hook

16 oz SINKER

BOAT (if used)

Name: NEVA MISS VII

Captain's Name: STEVE AMICK

Signature: [Signature]

[REDACTED]

SCALESLocation: Wilmington Island Sea FoodDate last certified: APPROVED JUNE 88Certifying Agency GA Dept. Agri. & Forestry June 1988 LocationWeighmaster: STEVE AMICKSignature: Steve AmickAddress: 6902 SANDNETTLES DR
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA Phone: (912) 897-621**WITNESSES**

Witness to catch (other than angler or captain):

Larry A. Anderson 114 Ridgedale Dr.
Warner Robins, GA 31088 Phone: (912) 929-0446

Witnesses to weighing (other than angler, captain or weighmaster):

ED DORHAM (manager of Wilmington)
Island Sea Food Phone: (877) 3650ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: (fighting time, equipment used, additional witnesses, etc.) Fish was caught in 106' of
water**AFFIDAVIT**

I, the undersigned, hereby take oath and attest that the fish described in this application was hooked, fought, and brought to gaff by me without assistance from anyone, except as specifically provided in the regulations; and that it was caught in accordance with Georgia Saltwater Gamefish Records angling rules. I further declare that all information in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

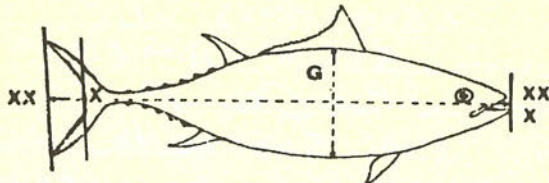
Signature Phyllis A. ThompsonDate: 6-5-89, 19 89

When completely filled out and signed, mail this application with photos by quickest means to:

Saltwater Gamefish Records
Coastal Resources Division
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
1200 Glynn Avenue
Brunswick, Georgia 31523-9990
Phone (912) 264-0610 or 264-7218

SPECIES MEASUREMENTS

Measure as indicated below, taking lengths from X to X and XX to XX.
Take girth around the fish on line marked G or at largest dimension location.



GEORGIA SALTWATER GAMEFISH RECORDS PROGRAM RECORDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 6/30/89

Please find attached for your review, comment, and approval/disapproval an application for consideration as a Georgia Saltwater Gamefish Record, Outstanding Catch, or both(indicate one).

SPECIFICATIONS

Species: Red Snapper
 Division: X Women's Men's
 Current Record: 24 lbs 15 oz
 Weight Needed 25 lbs 7 oz
 Entry Weight: 29 lbs 8 oz
 Date Received 6/17/89

NOTES: Entry form + photos (3)
Attached, along with
article on trip.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

REVIEW COMMITTEE	<u>Approved as</u> <u>New Record</u>	<u>Approved as</u> <u>Tie Record</u>	<u>Disapproved</u> <u>Record (Explain)</u>	<u>Approved as</u> <u>Outstanding</u> <u>Catch</u>	<u>Disapproved as</u> <u>Outstanding</u> <u>Catch</u>	Comments (use back for ad- ditional space
Duane Harris, Director Coastal Resources	<i>PH</i>					
Susan Shipman, Chief Coastal Fisheries	<i>SS</i> <i>7/3/89</i>					<i>I like the close-up of the scale Nice fish!</i>
Jim Music, Leader Commercial Fisheries Program	<i>J Music</i>					
John Pafford, Leader Recreational Fisheries	<i>JYP</i>					
Henry Ansley, Leader OCS Program	<i>HA</i>					

State of Georgia

Saltwater Gamefish Record



Joe Frank Harris
GOVERNOR State of Georgia

J. Leonard Ledbetter
COMMISSIONER Department of Natural Resources

DIRECTOR Coastal Resources Division



PHYLLIS A. THOMPSON

holds the

Womens Record

for a

RED SNAPPER

Lutjanus campechanus

Lbs. 29 Oz. 8 Kg. 13.38 Date: MAY 1989

Coastal Resources Division

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Savannah's "Secret" Snapper Banks

Captain Bill Shearin is one of a handful of Savannah charter captains leading a trickle of deep-sea anglers to the best, and most overlooked, snapper banks in the Southeast. By Brad Bailey

The first thing you wonder when you set the hook into a fish 100 feet under the boat while deep-sea fishing is "What have I hooked this time?" A Red Snapper? Sea Bass? Grouper? Trigger Fish? Maybe a shark? Part of the appeal to fishing in the ocean is the variety of fish you can catch - you never know what's coming up next.

Last Tuesday morning we were 35 miles off Georgia's coast to find out exactly just what we could catch in 100 feet of water - deep-seas fishing Savannah style. Our party was made up of me and my wife Jan, our boys Todd, 9, and Matt, 6, and Bobby Mapp of Waynesboro and his 12-year-old fishing buddy Tommy Welsh. At the helm was Bill Shearin, who with his wife Gloria, operates Neva Miss Charters out of Savannah.

A deep-sea charter out of Savannah isn't just a fishing trip, it's an *adventure*. To the roar of the 320 hp diesel powering the 30-foot *Sporting Venture*, we passed shrimp trawlers dragging their nets in the sound and then we headed out into the open At-

lantic. Curtains of salt spray rained down as we plowed the ocean swells; soon the coast disappeared below the horizon; a porpoise cut across our wake, and a line of brown pelicans winged past; later in the day a 7 or 8-foot-long shark would cruise beneath the boat. This isn't your typical fishing trip to Lake Lanier.



Bill Shearin with the Red Snapper we caught a week ago Tuesday.

Bill Shearin has been captaining deep-sea charters out of Savannah since 1974. He currently operates four boats with two new ones slated to join his fleet.

Deep-sea fishing off Georgia's coast has been good this year. On May 12, the new women's record for Red Snapper was broken on a Neva-Miss charter when Phyllis Thompson of Byron boated the 29 1/2-lb. record snapper. Incredibly, four Red Snappers that topped 22 pounds were caught on that trip. The Georgia men's division record Red Snapper, a whopping 37 1/2 pounder, was caught by Captain Bill Shearin himself last September.

Once you lose sight of land, one piece of ocean looks exactly the same as the next to me. Fortunately, not to Bill and his sophisticated navigation equipment. A LORAN C receiver on board times the arrival of pulse radio signals broadcast from land stations in North Carolina and Florida. By calculating the time differential of the incoming pulses, the receiver can pinpoint the



On May 12, a Neva-Miss charter caught four Red Snapper that weighed 101 1/2 pounds! The largest (second from left) caught by Phyllis Thompson of Byron is the new women's state record at 29 1/2 pounds.

boat's coordinates on the ocean and, just as importantly, relocate fish-holding features on the ocean floor found on earlier trips.

From the Georgia coast offshore to a distance of about 30 miles the ocean bottom is essentially a desert - featureless, flat sand. Beyond that distance there is a wide area of live bottom, coral reefs and rock outcroppings, called the Savannah Snapper Banks. As a submerged stump in a freshwater lake will hold a bass, these offshore structures hold bottom-feeding saltwater fish.

After a 2 1/2 hour run from the dock on Wilmington Island, Bill shut the diesel down over an

area of live bottom and we baited up. Bill's gear is standard deep-sea tackle: a pool-queue-sized rod with a big Penn reel spooled with 80-lb. test mono. At the end of the line is an 16-oz. weight and two 6/0 hooks on one-foot droppers. For bait we were using cigar minnows and cut squid, usually a minnow on one hook and squid on the other. Once the hooks are baited, the spool on the big reel is released and the baits spiral out of sight on their way to the bottom.

Deep-sea fishing can be some of the fastest fishing you have ever experienced. Even be-

Continued on page 22



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GEORGIA OUTDOOR NEWS

Snapper

Continued from page 20

fore all our lines were in the water, Tommy caught the first fish of the day, a white snapper: moments later Todd hooked up with a sheepshead and Matt, with his rod propped on the rail, laboriously reeled up a sand bass from the 100-foot depths. The water was crystal clear and you could see your catch on its way up from 30 or 40 feet below the surface. Each time, after the

shout "I've got one!" there was a minute or two of mystery to find out what's on the line - or how many. With the two-hook setup, double catches are common. Bobby had the best double of the day, a pair of 5-lb. Red Snapper; Todd doubled on Sea Bass.

About mid morning, Jan got a stronger than usual strike that had her pool-cue-sized fishing rod bouncing. "That's a shark," said Bill glancing at the rod long before he could see the fish. Moments later a sleek 3 1/2-foot bull shark appeared far below the boat. When the shark saw the boat, it tried to surge back to the



Bill hauls in the big fish of the day, an 18-lb. grouper caught by Bobby

bottom, stripping off line, but it was soon flopping on ice in the cooler. (The filets, fried in butter and lemon juice, were delicious!)

Snapper and grouper like most bottom-feeding fish are not nomadic. They tend to hold over a piece of structure and there is a certain amount of hunting involved before you find good fishing. Typically, Bill, with one eye on his depthfinder and one on his LORAN gear, had us drop bait as we drifted over a reef. If the spot produced, we might re-drift or anchor. If not he would crank up the diesel and run us to another fishing hole picked from his lengthy list of LORAN coordinates that indicate productive reefs he has logged from years on the water.

Our biggest fish hit just before noon. At 11:55 Jan yelled that she had a good one on, and with a white-knuckled grip she clutched her fishing rod that arched over the side of the boat and threatened to pull her overboard. Everybody cheered her on, and with the rod butt tucked firmly under her arm, she gradually worked a gleaming red fish to the surface. Bill gaffed our biggest snapper of the day and Jan's biggest fish ever - an 11-lb. Red Snapper. But we weren't done with big fish.

At 12:05 p.m. Bobby reared back and set the hook into another heavy fish. After a four-or five minute tug of war straight over the rail, Bobby had our first Grouper of the day thrashing on the surface. Bill gaffed and swung aboard the biggest fish of our trip - an 18-lb. Grouper. Two fish that totaled 29 pounds in less than 10 minutes! A typical day-long deep-sea charter out of Savannah will average a catch of more than 200 pounds of fish. That's a freezer full of filets in a day's fishing.

On our trip, with only four rods fishing, we caught 11 different kinds of fish that totaled about 90 pounds in only about three hours of fishing (we cut our trip short due to deteriorating weather). But with the fishing as good as it was, we saw only one other boat heading deep sea fishing.

It's no surprise that Bill rates the deep-sea fishing off of Savannah as the best in the Southeast, but his reasoning makes sense. Number one, he



Jan Bailey caught her biggest fish ever - an 11-lb. Red Snapper.

said, is that it's a fairly long run to the Savannah Snapper Banks, which has served to limit the size craft that can reach the fishing. Second, fishing pressure is relatively light compared to more popular deep-sea fishing areas like Panama City or Destin, Florida. Those areas have been heavily fished for years and, according to Bill, the quality of the catch, in both size and numbers, has declined. Many Georgia deep-sea fishermen who have traditionally fished the Gulf Coast are now "discovering" excellent deep-sea fishing closer to home off the coast of Georgia.

One word of caution that I can speak of from green-gilled, up-close and personal experience: the scourge of a deep-sea fishing trip is being seasick. If you think you might have any chance of turning green on the high seas take whatever precautions you can. You miss a lot of good fishing if you end up spending time hanging over the rail!

There are few places where you can catch more big fish faster than on a deep-sea fishing trip, and it's closer to you than you think. From Macon, it's only a 2 1/2-hour run to Savannah, and some of the best deep-sea fishing in the Southeast waits 2 1/2 hours off Interstate 16.

For a deep-sea fishing adventure, Bill Shearin's Neva-Miss Charters can be contacted at (912) 897-2706. GON

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