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Conch Captain Spotlight on  
**Captain Skip Bradeen**

**Coming Out of Quarantine With Skip Bradeen - Let The Sun Shine!**

by Marilee Free

If anyone can lift our spirits and guide us to a brighter tomorrow, it's Captain Skip. It was a pleasure to visit with him for the Conch Captain of the Month Spotlight at Wahoo's, overlooking the Whale Harbor Marina. Between pickleball and a Key Largo Rotary meeting, I was grateful to have a few moments with this busy, humorous, and successful fishing icon of Islamorada.

Since 1964, Captain Skip has renewed his Captain's license consecutively 12 times (licenses are good for 5 years) and celebrates 55 years fishing out of Whale Harbor. Is that a Guinness World Record? He said, "there is only one captain in the Upper Keys that has been guiding longer, Billy Knowles, he has been fishing here 60 years." (Captain Billy, up for an interview?)

Besides being the Coconut Telegraph's "Conch Captain of July," Captain Skip was voted as one of the "50 Best Captains in the World" by Salt Water Fisherman magazine in 2014. He has won the "People's Choice Award" of the Upper Keys for 'Best Captain' 18 years running. Rumor has it, Captain Skip may be inducted into the IFGA Fishing Hall of Fame in 2021, the most prestigious worldwide award captains can receive, for his long-time dedication.

And speaking of dedication, he and his lovely wife Lisa, a sought-after wedding planner (Weddings by Lisa) give visitors a taste of this island paradise by planning a day of fishing on the Atlantic or a dream wedding event,

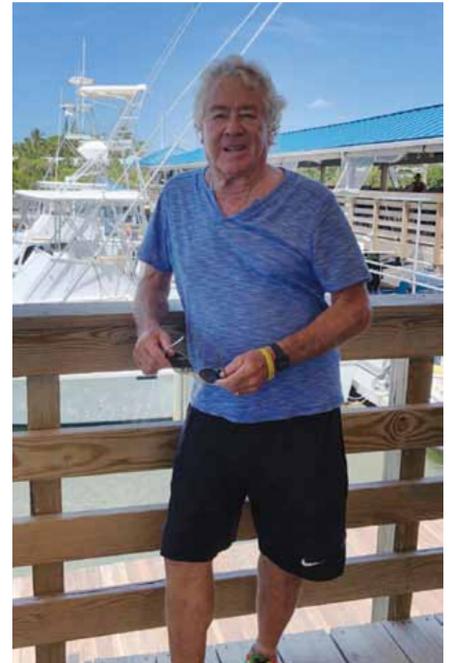
sometimes both. Many fishing charters book year after year with Skip. They both have dealt with 'monumental cancellations' as a result of Covid-19. He reminded me, we are not in the clear yet, and still should wear a face mask and follow social distancing guidelines now that the Keys has reopened to tourists. He is hoping that all businesses in the Keys can get back on their feet after this pandemic. As a community, we plan on closures in hurricane season, but never planned on a shut down for the height of tourist season; 2020 has been an unprecedented year.

Prior to 'living the 55-year dream' in Islamorada, Skip grew up in Long Island, New York. After high school he joined the Air Force and served in Vietnam. He recalls talking to a buddy who was going to Florida for a vacation, some place called, "Isa-slama-doora." Call it fate, call it 'Keys Disease,' call it what you will, Skip answered the call. He went fishing one time with his buddy, was paid \$5 to mate and got a \$5 tip (and in 1964 that was a good day on the water!) and he was hooked, reeled in and the rest is history.

The "Always" was the first boat Skip owned, for "Always catches fish." Since then he has had the Blue Chip 1, The Blue Chip Too and the Blue Chip Too 2. He is looking forward to the painting and upgrades to be done soon and getting her back on the water. (You know what BOATT stands for? Break out another ten thousand!)

Captain Skip has a son, Brad, who lives in Ft. Lauderdale and works on cruise ships. He also has a daughter, Kristine, a Nova University alum, who lives in Toronto and has three daughters. He got a little twinkle in his eye when he mentioned the granddaughters.

Beginning in 1987, Captain Skip did the 'On the Water Fishing Report.' It was the daily listen for what fish are being caught, sea conditions, and weather for fisherman on the local radio stations. His report recently ended when radio station 96.9FM went off the air, just before the pandemic.



Matt Bellinger does the report on Sun FM, 103.1. He says stay tuna'd, he may do the fishing report again in the future.

So if this article makes you want to grab a pole and fish with a local legend, you can visit Captain Skip's website at [www.bluechiptoo.com](http://www.bluechiptoo.com) or call 305-852-8477 for rates and dates available.

