

**Coming Up September 10th:
REEF's 2020 Upper Keys Lionfish Derby
(socially distant)** Sep. 10 at 5:30 PM
thru Sep. 13 at 4 PM



Register now for the Upper Keys Lionfish Derby, hosted by Protect Our Reefs, REEF Reef Environmental Education Foundation and REEF Invasive Lionfish Program! The derby is designed to allow teams and coordinators to maintain safe social distance while still encouraging the removal of lionfish from our reefs!

Early Bird registration discounts available:

- \$50 per team on or before Aug. 30, 2020
- \$75 per team on or before Sep. 6, 2020
- \$100 per team, deadline Sep. 10, 4PM

Minimum 2 people per team, maximum 4 people.

All registered participants will receive a 2020 lionfish derby rash guard. The first 40 paid participants will receive a lionfish derby hat.

\$3000 in prizes will be awarded for most lionfish, smallest and largest lionfish. Choose from an array of competitive divisions.

Captain's meeting Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5:30 pm (offered online).

Fishing Friday, September 11 and Saturday, September 12 - Sunrise to Sunset.

All lionfish must be at drop-off by Sunday, Sep-

tember 13 at 10am. No Fishing on Sunday.

Teams will be able to take at least 85% of their catch after it is measured. (REEF will keep some lionfish to use towards education and outreach activities.)

Final details will be provided online, through the derby rules and via email communication with teams.

No Boat? Local lionfish charters are available. Key Dives in Islamorada, FL is offering lionfish dive charters for Friday and Saturday (305-664-2211). And Rainbow Reef Dive Center in Key Largo is also offering lionfish charters dives the weekend of the derby (305-451-7171).

For more info and to register go to www.REEF.org/2020derby, call 305-852-0030, or Email lionfish@REEF.org.

Special thanks to the sponsors that support REEF's Invasive Species Program: Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, Protect Our Reefs ORCA Ocean Reef Community Association, FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, FWC Reef Rangers, Postcard Inn Beach Resort & Marina, Monroe County Tourism Development Council.

#floridakeys #Islamorada #FWCReefRangers

THE ZODIACS WHEN DRUNK

- CAPRICORN** Trying to keep it together until they vomit and get kicked out.
- AQUARIUS** No one knows what they're laughing at.
- PISCES** Most likely to black out.
- ARIES** Wakes up with bruises.
- TAURUS** Left the bar early to go get food.
- GEMINI** Has heart to heart with someone they just met.
- CANCER** Initiating shots... crying somewhere 2 hours later.
- LEO** Flirting with everyone and posting way too many Instagram stories.
- VIRGO** Never drunk enough, would rather be at home.
- LIBRA** Disappears to hook up with someone.
- SCORPIO** Either plastered drunk or completely sober. Mission is to get laid.
- SAGITTARIUS** Never wants the night to end. "After party!"

Caption Contest!



Best caption wins a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

Email your caption to theconchtelegraph@gmail.com by September 21st.

Conch Captain Spotlight on
Captain Billy Knowles
Catching a Fishing Legend by Marilee Free

If you know Islamorada history, you are probably familiar with the three settling families dating back to the 1800s: the Parkers, the Pinders and the Russells. I had the honor and pleasure of talking with legendary, 4th-generation fisherman of Islamorada, Captain Billy Knowles. His grandmother was a Russell, his grandparents had a pineapple plantation, and for a time, his family owned most of Islamorada. Fishing the Atlantic Ocean, the Everglades, and the Florida Bay for 63 years, Captain Billy is a busy, experienced, and much sought-after guide.

fish ever caught in a tournament; 15.6 pounds. He has captained many corporate boats as well as his own.

When I asked what was his favorite fish to catch, he said, "there are no bad fish if you're catching!" He likes catching tarpon, bonefish, and sailfish, when possible. As far as his favorite fish dinner, Billy likes snook, blackened or fried right there at the Lorelei, or a scamp grouper, if you can find one.

Handling the heat and watching for changing weather conditions are challenges Billy endures regularly. He told me a story of fishing in the Ever-



if he was ever worried, the elder man replied that he wasn't worried. He'd put his faith in his captain and simply asked if they could get milkshakes at "Robert is Here!" on the way home.

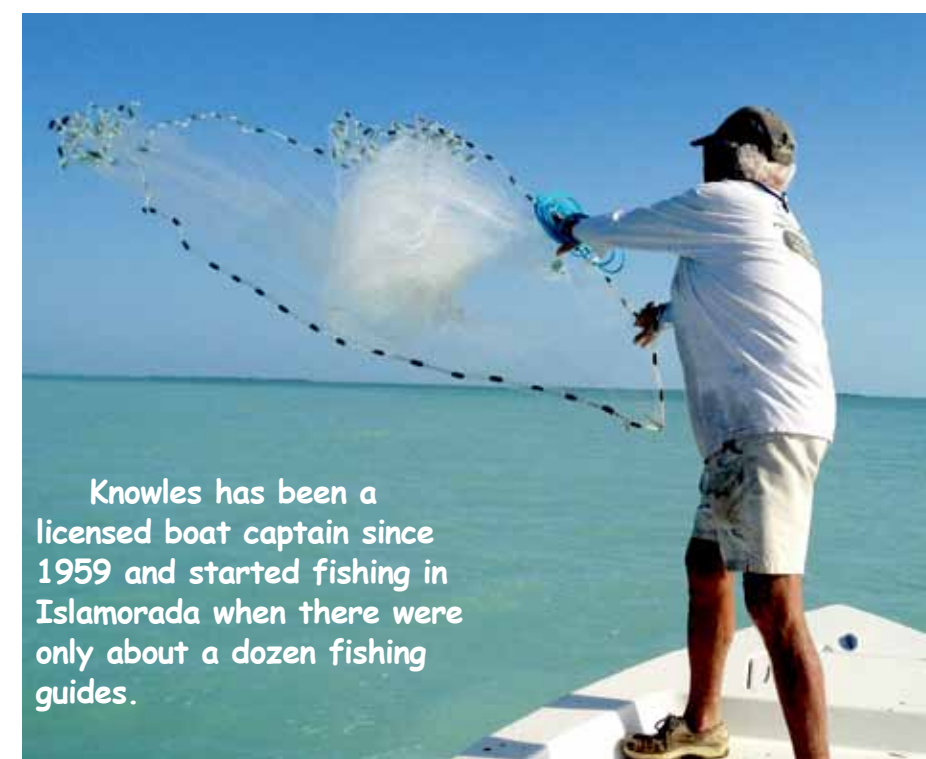
When I asked my signature question, "Do you believe you are living the dream?" He got a smile on his face. "Yes," he replied. He has traveled the world, fishing and hunting where many people would love to go. He has seen the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights after salmon fishing in Alaska. He has provided food for locals in Central America, hunting white-winged doves that were

over-populating and eating the farmer's crops. With his wife, Nickie and his 4 daughters, Ronda, Robin, Renea, and Crystal, 5 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter, Billy is grateful to have the support of a loving family. Max, their 4-year-old King Charles Cavalier pup is loved like family, what a lucky dog.

The family enjoys traveling to Michigan, Colorado, Savannah, South Carolina, and around Florida. They are looking forward to a family get-together in the Blue Ridge mountains. As an early riser, Billy loves to see the sunrise because that means he has another day on this great Earth.

With this many years of fishing experience, other guides ask Captain Billy when he plans to retire. He says he will continue fishing as long as he can, just to make their lives Hell!

Fish on, Captain Billy! You are truly a treasured legend of the Florida Keys. To book a trip fishing with Captain Billy Knowles, visit his website at CaptainBillyKnowles.com or call 305-393-6009.



Knowles has been a licensed boat captain since 1959 and started fishing in Islamorada when there were only about a dozen fishing guides.

Some of his repeat clients have been fishing with him for over 45 years. The Lorelei Marina is where he guides from; he trailers his boat after the fishing trips.

Captain Billy can take up to 4 passengers on his 25-ft. boat, or 2 passengers on his flats boat. He has been the Poor Boys Tournament champion 11 times and still holds the record for the largest bone-

glades with a man in his late 80s, when the lightning crashed a little too close for comfort and a nasty storm started dumping rain on them. Billy couldn't see in the downpour; they were lost until he saw a familiar marker. They dodged the storm and pulled out the boat into the flooded parking lot from the boat ramp. When he asked the man

