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## Conch Captain Spotlight on Captain Kerry of "Tails Up" Fishing Charters - Let the Good Times Pole!

by Marilee Free



Native Floridian Captain Kerry Wingo spent most of his childhood in Winter Park and Winter Haven, where he dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player and a boat captain. One of his childhood fishing icons was Kurt Gowdy of the 'American Sportsman' series. Kerry has led an exciting life; he was offered a chance to try out for the Kansas City Royals in the way backs. Even played in a band called "Royal Flush" that opened for Bob Seger, at one point in his life. Inspired by his dad who taught him to fish in Central Florida, it was his love of the sport that lured him back and reeled him in.

In 2001, his dream of being a boat captain and fishing guide came true when

he got his captain's license. Since then he has become an expert on the flats and back-country waters of Key Largo and the Everglades. He keeps very busy with fishing charters, weather permitting.

Wingo is recognized as a "Blue Star Fishing Guide in 2019," which is a program that encourages responsible and sustainable fishing in the Florida Keys. He is one of the few who have a coveted license to fish in Everglades National Park. He takes his clients to his favorite spots, usually around Flamingo, where they catch and release a variety of fish from bonefish, snook, permit, to tarpon and redfish. He guides his trips on a Ranger 19-foot flats boat with a maximum of 3 passengers.

Captain Kerry has been living in Key Largo and actively fishing here since 1987. He also is an aluminum contractor, installing hurricane shutters, railings and other aluminum products for



Happy Anglers make Captain Kerry a very popular guide!

homeowners in the Upper Keys. However, he prefers fishing in season. When he has free time to travel, he likes to go fishing around the country. One of his favorite fly-fishing trips was when he drove Stu Apte's car to Bozeman, Montana and then did some fly fishing with the legend. He has traveled to West Virginia, Michigan, Alaska and South Carolina to name a few other places where he has fly-fished.

To prepare for each charter, Captain Kerry gets up between 4 and 4:30 am, to get the fuel, bait and ice ready for each trip. He meets his clients at The Marina Club at Blackwater Sound. His list of clients includes professional football players, sports team managers and other professional figures. He keeps it fun and enjoys teaching kids and beginners technique, to guiding the tournament ready fishermen. Every trip is custom tailored to meet each client's back-country fishing desires. If the client wants to bird watch for part of the time, that is what they do. Whether they fish a whole, three-quarters or a half day, his clients return with a smile on their faces and a camera roll full of memories.



Kerry regularly attends NASCAR races in Homestead. He has traveled to Daytona, Vegas, Charlotte, NC, and Atlanta, GA, as a racing spectator. He was a fishing guide for the Racer's Invitational Tournament scheduled for March.

When Captain Kerry isn't fly-fishing, poling around the backcountry, at a Nascar race, or installing storm shutters, you can catch him around town helping with local charities and events. He was previously a president of the Key Largo Fishing Guides Association. He has been involved with the "Take Stock in Children" charity for over 20 years. Recently, he was spotted catering for the Nautical Flea Market with the Key Largo Rotary. So, catch him if you can!

For a fantastic day fishing with Captain Kerry call 305-393-1383 or visit his website at [tailsupfishing.com](http://tailsupfishing.com).

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