

DRoffer describes conditions that plagued fishermen this past summer when cold ocean water temperatures stretched from the beaches of Daytona Beach, Florida to St. Simmons Island, Georgia.

"The cold inshore waters this summer were caused by consistent southwest winds", said Dr. Roffer. "When you have day after day of southwest winds, several things begin to happen to the water temperature".

"Continual southwest winds will begin to blow the surface water offshore. The next thing that happens, is that the ocean waters down deep begin to move to the surface. These are normally the colder water temperatures and are referred to as the thermocline".

I know a lot of fishermen have been asking questions why we have had such a long spell of cold inshore waters this past summer, Dr. Roffer has just given you the correct answer.

However we must also understand, what actually is a thermocline?

"A lot of people are misled in what they believe a thermocline actually is", said Dr. Roffer. Under normal summer conditions, the warmer water temperatures are on the surface. The surface water temperature may well be 81 degrees, but as you go down deeper, the water temperature begins to drop. The thermocline is located where the water temperature makes a distinctive change, this could be as small as one degree or five degrees".

day of southwest winds, the surface waters are blown offshore and the thermocline slowly comes to the surface. This situation produces cold surface water temperatures, but more importantly the thermocline is now located on the surface of the ocean".

And this past summer was a very unusual one at that. The cold waters lasted from early June right through the first part of August. We also experienced the calmest summer of all, with light southwest winds, you could have gone king mackerel fishing on most days with a jon boat!

However the thermocline was a blessing for Georgia fishermen. It seemed like the cold waters came to a halt at St. Andrew's sound. There, the summer water temperatures at this fertile inlet remained in the high seventies and low eighties. Just a few miles north of St. Andrew's inlet, the St. Simmon's inlet enjoyed even warmer water temperatures, often reaching the mid eighties.

While from Daytona Beach to the most northern boundary of northeast Florida, the St. Mary's inlet, the water temperatures close to shore were often in the low to mid seventies. A low water temperature of 68 degrees was recorded this past summer at Daytona Beach!

Smart fishermen this summer were purchasing fishing forecast annalist from Roffs. A chart is faxed to the fishermen giving the latest water temperatures and areas where the best fishing may be found. The chart is marked where there are temperature breaks, where warm

and according to their location to inlet mouths, offshore reefs and popular fish havens, they are indicated as excellent areas to fish.

"A lot of the tournament fishermen have been purchasing our fishing forecast annalist before a tournament", said Dr. Roffer. "David Workman of C&H lures often gets several charts before and during the tournament. He also calls me while he is out on the water with his cellular phone for a last minute water temperature update".

Stewart Ballard of Georgetown, South Carolina also knows the importance of water temperature.

"During the Myrtle Beach

in the low thirties. Our winning aggregate weight came to 109.93 pounds for the two days of competition".

Contestants could weigh in up to two fish per day for the aggregate division. The aggregate winner was determined by the boat that weighed in the heaviest total of kingfish for the two days, two fish per day with a maximum of four fish for the two days of fishing.

However word has it that there has been somewhere in the vicinity of \$170,000.00 won by fishermen fishing the St. Simmon's channel this past summer! It seems that thermoclines do have some sort of positive effect on fishing.

Taking into consideration

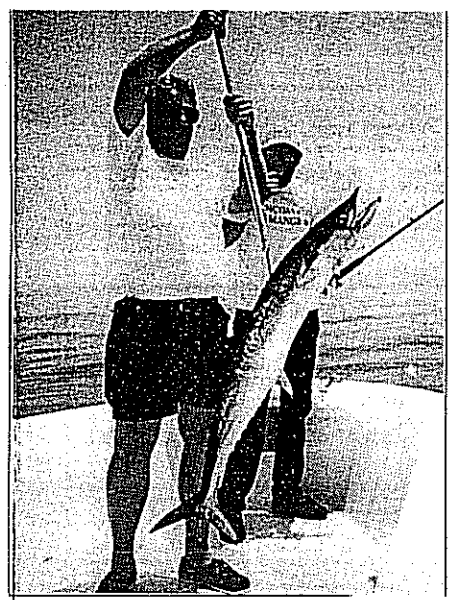
"However during the last day of

the inshore waters were in the mid to high seventies", said Ballard. "However the warmest waters were found some thirty miles offshore, here the water temperature was 81 degrees. That's where we found our kingfish.

Captain Stewart Ballard is the owner of the "Tail Walker", a 261 Mako. His fishing partners are Don Mussman and Frankie Clemmons. All are the recent aggregate winners in the Myrtle Beach Kingfish tournament. Ballard is also a regular subscriber to Roff's fishing forecast annalists.

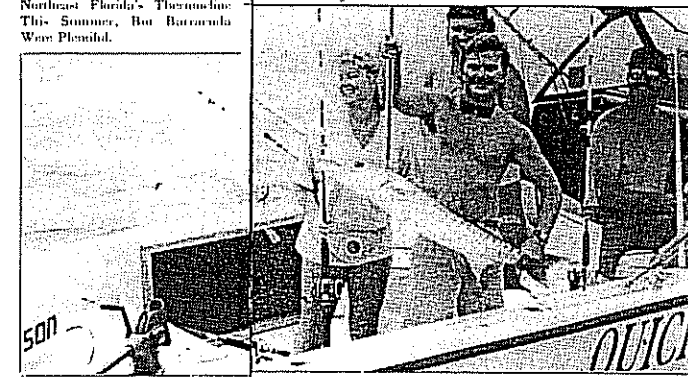
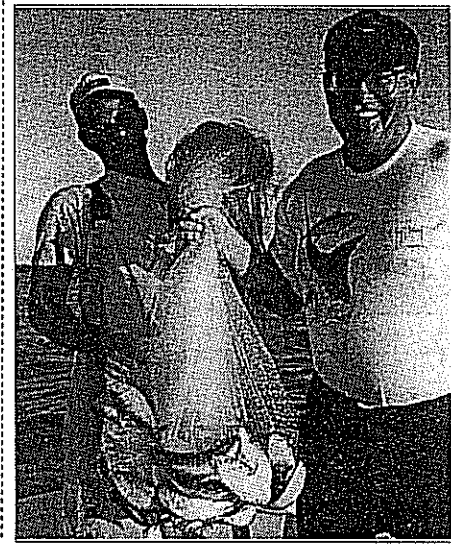
"During the first day of the two day event, we boated seven-teen kingfish", said Ballard.

"However during the last day of



Top: The Average Size Kingfish Taken From The St. Simons Channel This Past Summer Was Over 20-Pounds.

Left: From Left T.D. Lewis And Tom Wheeler Found A Big School Of Menhaden Off Of St. Simmon's Island Georgia. Cooler Southern Waters Had Pused The Schools Of Bait Fish And Kingfish North To The St. Simmon's Island Area And North. Below: Off-Shore Fishermen Struggled To Find Summer Kingfish During Northeast Florida's Thermocline This Summer. But Barzanola Were Plentiful.



itive effect on fishing. Taking into consideration that these southwest winds pushed warm waters, bait fish pods and big schools of kingfish north from Daytona to Amelia Island, Florida. Big concentrations of kingfish were holding in the St. Simmon's shipping channel.

During the "Golden Isles Sport Fishing Association Kingfish Tournament", the fishing team on the "Georgia Bell" landed a 43 pound smoker king from the channel and took 1st place honors. This was the beginning of a long success story.

In tournaments that soon followed, many of the winning big fish and aggregate winners were caught from the St. Simmon's Channel.

In fact during the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament the majority of the one thousand boats ran north to fish these warmer Georgia waters. I heard captain Jay Childers of St. Simmons talking on the vhf radio during the GJKT, "I would have never believed that there would be this many tournament boats fishing our channel. I am amazed by the number of big kingfish that have made their home here this summer because of the cooler southern waters".

I was also amazed. As most of you know, it has been hard for me to give up fishing the St. Mary's channel during summer kingfish tournaments. These are my home waters and I feel more comfortable fishing here.

However during the Golden Isles Sport Fishing tournament, we had not had the first strike while slow trolling the deep waters of the channel. The Hummingbird water temperature gauge showed a steady 74 degrees.

On our arrival, the water temperature gauge showed a warm 84 degrees. We were also marking big pods of bait-fish from the surface down to the bottom of the channel. Sea birds were also numerous, often diving, bombing a school of bait-fish that had moved to the surface.

Our fishing team knew up front that we had found the kingfish. Actually there were only a few tournament boats fishing at the St. Simmon's inlet at the time. One that we would not forget was the "Georgia

Bell", who had landed the biggest king of the event just before our arrival.

During the next few hours of fishing, we landed three kings in the low twenties. We knew where we would be fishing during the final day of the event!

During the final day of GISAKT, the whole field of tournament boats were fishing the St. Simmon's shipping channel! This fishing pattern lasted right through the month of July.

However there were boats in many of these kingfish tournaments that did not have large enough gas tanks to make the long run from the St. John's inlet to the St. Simmon's channel. This run was close to sixty miles.

So these smaller boats had to learn how to catch fish from colder waters, and they did quite well.

Joe Bruce did not have the problem of not holding enough fuel, yet his fishing partner did not show up for the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish

Tournament. Captain Bruce knew that the best fishing would be found north in the St. Simmon's shipping channel, but he was fishing by himself and would need to take safety into consideration.

"When my fishing partner called the night before the GJKT, I was determined to fish, even if it meant fishing by myself", said Bruce. "But I decided to fish the St. Mary's shipping channel and stay closer to the weigh in site for safeties sake".

"I was very aware of the cold water situation and I watched my water temperature gauge during the entire day of the event. I soon found that the channel water

temperature was 79 degrees but as I moved north and away from the channel, the water temperature warmed up to 81 degrees. I soon began to mark pods of bait fish on my fish finder, these were the signs that I was waiting for and concentrated!

my fishing efforts in these warmer waters".

It was in these warmer waters that Bruce hooked a smoker of a kingfish and ultimately ran the boat and fought the fish at the same time. Fifteen minutes later Bruce gaffed a 28 pound kingfish and nearby boats applauded his single handed fishing skills!

Other boats that were not able to make the long run to the St. Simmon's channel also caught fish while fishing at the St. Mary's channel. But the fishing was slow and tournament fishermen had to show patience.

"I think that the best game plan to have when dealing with cool water, is to find the schools of bait-fish", instructs Joe Bruce. "If you find the schools of bait-fish concentrate your efforts in these waters".

Joe Bruce and Al Torrans were fishing the 1993 "King Buster Classic" from the St. Augustine inlet when they also encountered cold water temperatures.

"We were fishing just off from Flagler Beach with the rest of the fleet of Team Fountain boats" said Bruce. "The vhf radio was filled with talk of cold waters and most of the boats began to leave after an hour of fishing. The water temperature was 73 degrees".

"However we were marking lots of bait-fish and decided to stay. Minutes later we landed three kingfish, all weighing in the mid twenties!"

However the best way to deal with changing water temperatures, is to purchase a fishing forecast annalist from Roffs. It really can make the difference from not catching fish and

catching fish. The money spent is well worth a day of full practice before a tournament. In fact the chart is a lot less expensive than a tank full of gas that would be needed to find the fish!

For more information on Roffs fishing forecast annalists, call 1-800-677-7633.



"THERMOCLINE AND IT'S EFFECTS ON FISHING"

A massive thermocline hit the southeast this past summer causing havoc with fishermen. But some were successful, here is how they coped with this dilemma.

by Terry Lacoss