



WET GAZETTE



Department of Homeland Security
USCG Auxiliary
Flotilla 11-10
Dunedin, Florida

Rob Bonnem, Commander
Gordon Thomas, Vice Commander
Kristi Mackey, Immediate Past Commander
Ron Shebanek, Publications Officer

Commander's Corner



National Safe Boating Week has come and gone. For the second straight year, due to COVID 19, our efforts were curtailed. However, this year we went down swinging. We were able to secure a Proclamation from the City of Dunedin. It named 11-10 as the ambassador of the City's ongoing efforts to educate the public on boating safety. Unfortunately, I was the only member allowed to accept the proclamation – still, an improvement over last year, when it was just mailed to our Flotilla Commander. Next year we will be able to attend in force, as we have done in the past.

Gordon Thomas, Our Flotilla Vice Commander, thought outside the box with excellent results. Rather than wait for “Wear it to Work” personal flotation device day 21 May, he preemptively requested photos from our flotilla and put together a framed collage to be displayed at various marinas and businesses in the area, see photo below. This action helped people to be aware of the day. Members of our flotilla also posted their own shots on personal social media sites.

Following guidance from the Auxiliary and CDC, vessel exams and partner visits were underway during NSBW and we were even able to fit in a facility B4 IV C -130 training mission. All in all, National Safe Boating Week was a success as 11-10 was able - under trying circumstances - to get the word out to the public.

Once again Bravo Zulu (BZ) Dunedin flotilla 11-10 for all you do.

Robert Bonnem, Flotilla Commander 11-10

Photos by Sharon Bonnem



Vessel Examination Update



Gordon Thomas is the Flotilla Staff Officer for Vessel Examination (FSO-VE) and Flotilla Vice Commander (VFC). He also volunteers at Air Station Clearwater.

As I pointed out last month, the Dunedin Flotilla 11-10 is now doing vessel exams (VEs) for the Freedom Boat Club in some of their locations. We have already done the ones on Lake Tarpon and at Marker 8 on the Gulf. Last week we completed one at Marker 1 Marina in Dunedin

Masks and gloves are the rule of the day with social distancing. We do not go on the vessels and the dockmaster presents the items to us that we need to inspect. It is more work for him, than for us! No other vessel examiners are with us and I am only assisting with some paperwork that the dockmaster must sign.

Here is one of our vessel examiners, Ron Shebanek preparing to do a few VEs early in the morning before some of the boats begin to go out as rentals at the marina in Dunedin.



Photo by Gordon Thomas

The Dunedin Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 11-10 reminds you to wear your life jacket everytime you go out on the water

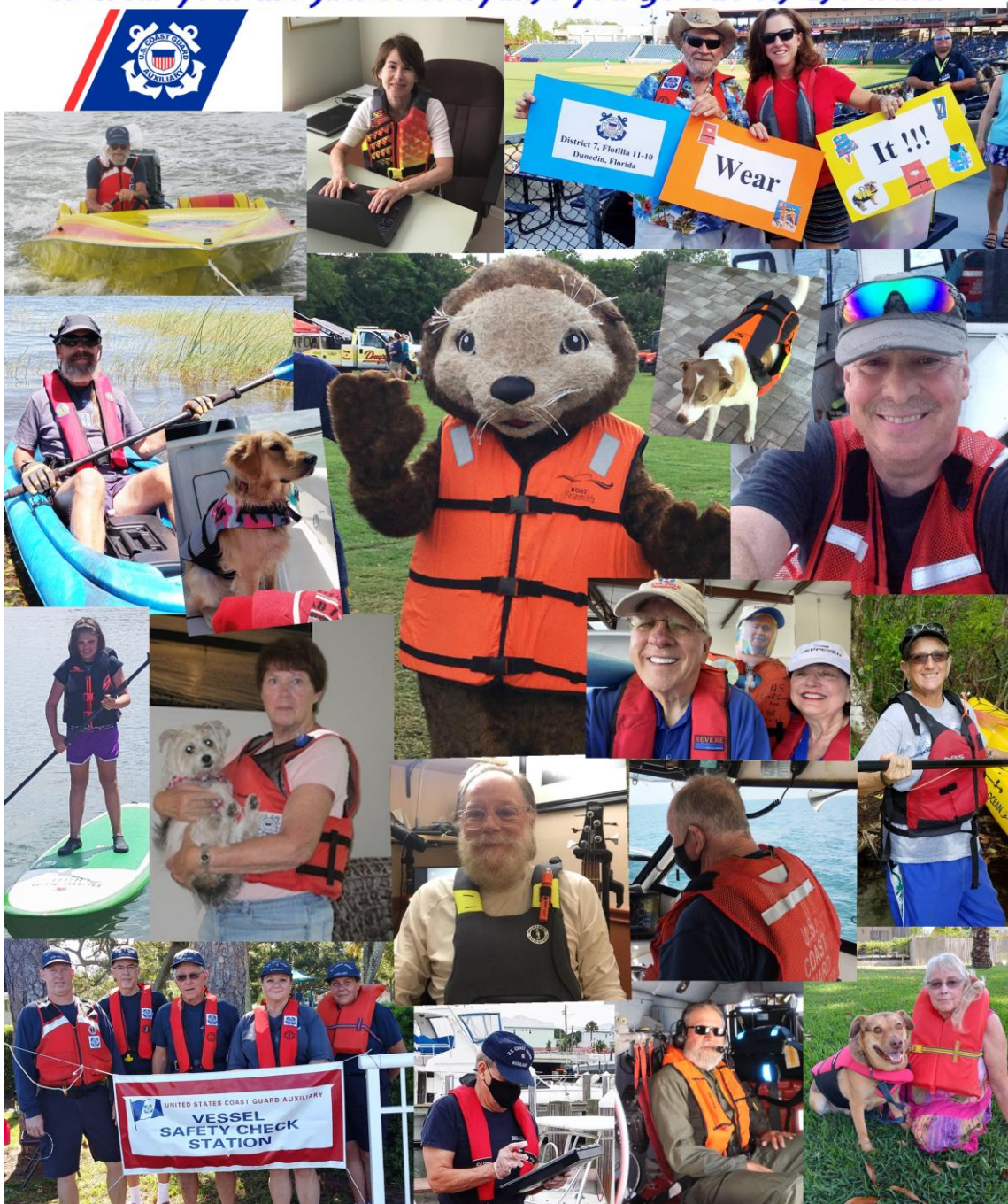


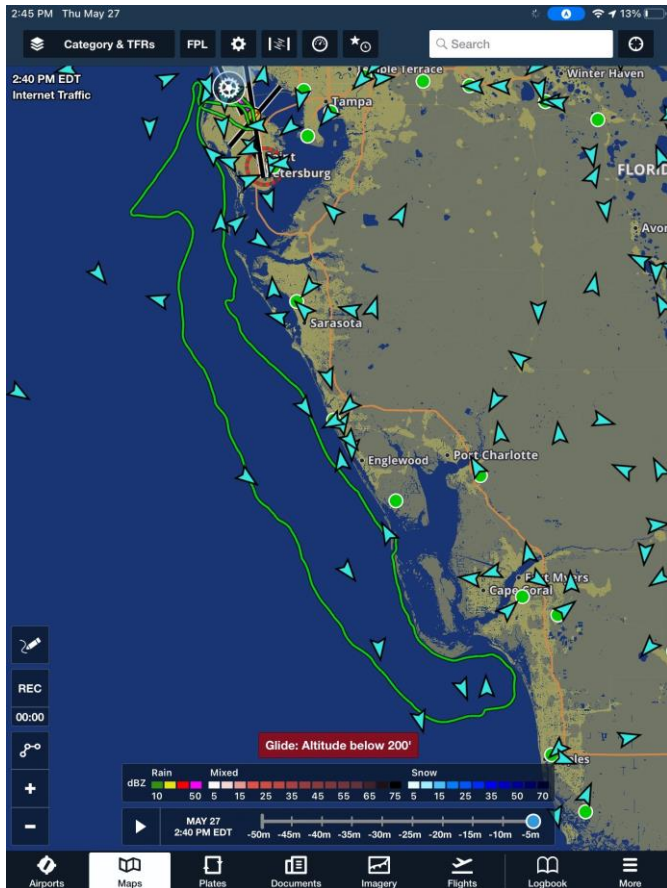
Photo collage by Gordon Thomas

AUXAIR Update



John Landon and crew Eddie Townsend and Ann Bennett are continuing to fly AUXAIR weekly missions in AUXAIR 8830.

Photos by John are from the May 27, 2021 mission.



Upcoming 2021 Hurricane Season

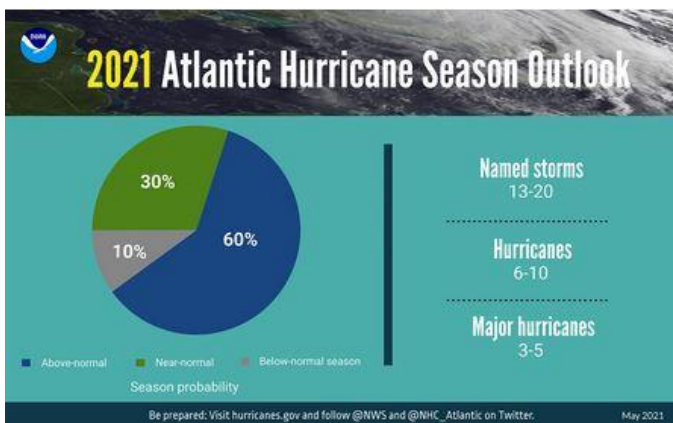
NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center is predicting another above-normal Atlantic hurricane season. Forecasters predict a 60% chance of an above-normal season, a 30% chance of a near-normal season, and a 10% chance of a below-normal season. However, experts do not anticipate the historic level of storm activity seen in 2020.

For 2021, a likely range of 13 to 20 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 3 to 5 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher) is expected. NOAA provides these ranges with a 70% confidence. The Atlantic hurricane season extends from June 1 through November 30.

“Now is the time for communities along the coastline as well as inland to get prepared for the dangers that hurricanes can bring,” said Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. “The experts at NOAA are poised to deliver life-saving early warnings and forecasts to communities, which will also help minimize the economic impacts of storms.”

Last month, NOAA updated the statistics used to determine when hurricane seasons are above-, near-, or below-average relative to the latest climate record. Based on this update an average hurricane season produces 14 named storms, of which 7 become hurricanes, including 3 major hurricanes.

In an effort to continuously enhance hurricane forecasting, NOAA made several updates to products and services that will improve hurricane forecasting during the 2021 season.



Article Source: NOAA

The new U.S. Climate Normals are here.

Every 10 years, NOAA releases an analysis of U.S. weather of the past three decades that calculates average values for temperature, rainfall and other conditions.

That time has come again. If you think it is getting hotter, it is.

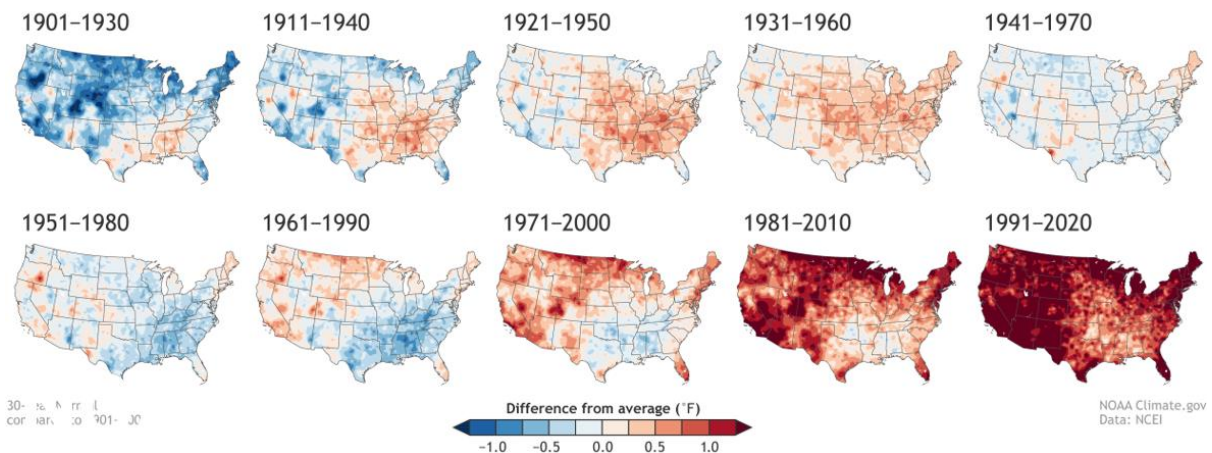
Known as the U.S. Climate Normals, these 30-year averages — now spanning 1991-2020 — represent the new “normals” of our changing climate. They are calculated using climate observations collected at local weather stations across the country and are corrected for bad or missing values and any changes to the weather station over time before becoming part of the climate record.

Simply stated: The Normals are the basis for judging how daily, monthly and annual climate conditions compare to what’s normal for a specific location in today’s climate.

For the past decade, the Normals have been based on weather observations from 1981 to 2010. In early May, climate experts at NOAA’s National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) issued an updated collection based on the weather occurring from 1991 to 2020. The data set reflects a “new normal” that takes the most recent 30 years of climate change-influenced weather and climate conditions into account.

The U.S. Climate Normals collection has 10 versions: 1901-1930, 1911-1940 and soon through 1991-2020. In the image below, we’ve compared the U.S. annual average temperature during each Normals period to the 20th-century average (1901-2000). The influence of long-term global warming is obvious: The earliest map in the series has the most widespread and darkest blues, and the most recent map has the most widespread and darkest reds.

U.S. ANNUAL TEMPERATURE COMPARED TO 20th-CENTURY AVERAGE



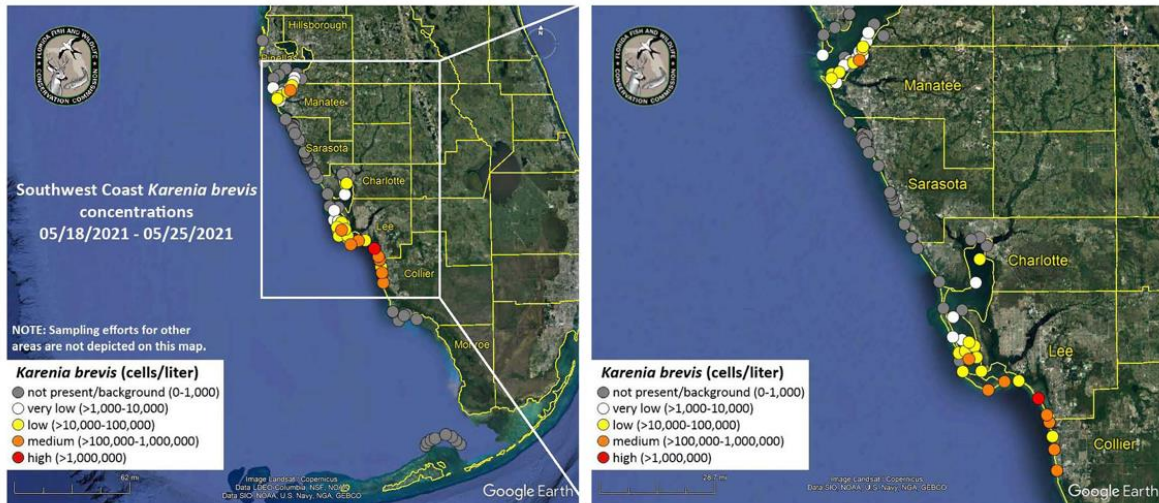
30-yr. normals
compared to 1901-2000

NOAA Climate.gov
Data: NCEI

Source: NOAA

Red Tide Update

Red Tide Status Update for May 26, 2021



Current Conditions

A patchy bloom of the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, persists in Southwest Florida, where it was detected in 57 samples over the past week. Bloom concentrations (>100,000 cells/liter) were observed in one sample from Manatee County, five samples from Lee County, and five samples from Collier County. *K. brevis* was also observed at background concentrations in one sample from Northwest Florida. Additional details are provided below.

- In Southwest Florida over the past week, *K. brevis* was observed at very low concentrations in Pinellas County (in one sample), background to low concentrations in Hillsborough County (in five samples), background to medium concentrations in Manatee County (in 15 samples), background to very low concentrations in Sarasota County (in 9 samples), very low and low concentrations in Charlotte County (in two samples), background to high concentrations in Lee County (in 17 samples), and low to high concentrations in Collier County (in eight samples). Samples collected offshore of Monroe County did not contain red tide.
- In Northwest Florida over the past week, *K. brevis* was observed at background concentrations in Escambia County.
- Along the Florida East Coast over the past week, *K. brevis* was not observed.

Fish Kills

In Southwest Florida over the past week, fish kills suspected to be related to red tide were reported in Manatee, Lee, and Collier counties.

Respiratory Irritation

Respiratory irritation suspected to be related to red tide was reported over the past week in Southwest Florida in Lee County.

Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Adventures Meeting the Plane



Harvey Prior, harvb4@aol.com, is the Flotilla Staff Officer (FSO) for Member Training.

One of the Coast Guard support missions that the Auxiliary does in our area is to support the drop training of the C-130 pilots and crews. This training helps the Coast Guard to accurately drop everything from messages to pumps, first aid kits or life rafts. The ability of these aircraft to carry a large cargo of people or supplies while flying thousands of miles explains why it has been a workhorse for decades.

Going six or seven miles into the Gulf of Mexico can be a pleasant ride on smooth water but it can also be a bumpy, wet outing through a great many waves. On one trip, we had just turned west from the bay when a Coastie said, "Skipper. I am not going to be any help when I get seasick." There was no "if" to the statement, so we turned around and canceled the mission.

The C-130 will drop a 30-gallon sealed metal can by parachute. The parachute makes life interesting for the boat coxswain. On breezy missions, the chute may stay open and drag the can thru the water. Now the boat must get in front or alongside of the chute to stop it. On some occasions, the open chute will lift the can out of the water. If the boat is too close, the can could strike the side of the boat or the can might land in the boat. Other days, the chute either lays on the surface of the water or it sinks. Now, the coxswain has to be careful not to run over the chute and get it in its propeller. The most unusual can drop was the day that the can came down with the parachute still in its pack. It made a good splash plus a quick and easy recovery for the boat's crew.

Another aircraft pass drops an Aerial Survival Rescue Kit (ASRK). The practice version is five large boat fenders in canvas bags with a couple of hundred feet of floating line between each of the bags. Sometimes the bags hit and skip on top of the water. Sometimes the line between the bags will break or come undone. This can be tough at night because now the boat crew must hunt for the bags and there could be a quarter mile between them. If the coxswain is lucky, the plane is still circling, and the pilot can spot the bags from above.

The weather does not have to be super windy to cancel a mission. One afternoon, we got underway with light winds and visibility greater than two miles. By the time we were three miles up the bay, radar would show a channel marker less than a half of a mile ahead, but we couldn't see it. We canceled knowing that if the plane can't see us they can't expect us to find the gear they drop.

Sometimes the pilot will request to know the highest point on my boat. To us, that means he plans to do a message drop flyover. The pilot adds about 50 feet to the height of the boat and flies at that level directly over the boat. When told by the pilot, the people in the back throw one or more message streamers out. The yellow message streamer on a good run will land within 20 feet of the boat. We must recover them quickly or they will sink. Occasionally, there will be an actual message like "I owe you a beer." However, we have never heard of a coxswain actually getting a beer.

Some missions turn into just a boat ride for the Auxiliary. An actual mission may send the aircraft somewhere. There could also be an operational problem with aircraft. Whatever the situation might be, the result is the Auxiliary being asked to wait or to cancel and return to base. A two or three hour boat ride is not bad duty.

On rare occasions, the Auxiliary vessel has been reassigned to handle a Coast Guard case. One time, the aircraft, and the Aux vessel both responded to a vessel taking on water just a few miles away. The C-130 dropped a real pump and the Auxiliary crew assisted the other boat's crew. The distressed boat and crew were saved to boat another day.

So, when I hear that a Coast Guard C-130 assisted someone, I like to think that the Auxiliary might deserve a little bit of the credit.



Photo by John Landon

Sunshine Skyway Bridge Disaster

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge plunged into Tampa Bay 41 years ago, May 9, 1980.



One of the worst disasters in bay area history took place when a freighter struck the bridge on May 9, 1980, killing 35 people.

It was 40 years ago that the storm-blinded freighter *Summit Venture* crashed into the support columns of the old Sunshine Skyway bridge, causing a 1,200-foot span of the bridge to collapse into the bay.

At 7:33 a.m., 35 lives were lost. They died in the six cars, truck and Greyhound bus that fell 150 feet into the water below.

The bus took 26 lives. Nine people died in the other vehicles.

The Tampa Bay area was already reeling from a deadly incident that took place in those very waters beneath the bridge 102 days earlier. The Coast Guard cutter *Blackthorn* collided nearly head-on with an oil tanker on Jan. 28, 1980.

The 180-foot buoy tender was leaving the bay when it crashed into the 605-foot *Capricorn* as it entered the bay. The Coast Guard vessel survived — but then the tanker’s anchor suddenly gashed the smaller vessel’s hull.

The *Blackthorn* sank in 10 minutes, killing 23 guardsmen — nearly half the crew were trapped as it sank in 40-feet of water. It is considered the Coast Guard’s deadliest peacetime disaster, one blamed on an inexperienced officer navigating an unfamiliar and difficult channel.

Three months later, the Sunshine Skyway disaster would also be caused by a vessel trying to navigate the difficult channel into Tampa Bay.

In 2000, a “St. Petersburg Times” article by Jean Heller described how the disaster unfolded:

Capt. John Lerro was the harbor pilot trying to guide the freighter Summit Venture, a ship two football fields long, into the 58.4-mile channel that leads to the Port of Tampa. It is a long and treacherous channel thanks to the shallow depth of the bay and Florida’s unpredictable weather. The freighter was already dealing with fog when it was hit by 60 mph, tropical-storm force winds and blinding rain.

The radar went down, too, when Lerro had to decide when to turn the Summit Venture between two of the Skyway’s main piers as the storm hid the ship’s bow from its pilot.

On the bridge, Lerro considered his options. Visibility was terrible. There was also a ship leaving the bay approaching. Unable to track the approaching ship Pure Oil, the pilot judged it too risky to turn out of the shipping channel — what if he turned into the path of the oncoming ship?

If he tried to bring the Summit Venture to a halt, the winds could cause the freighter to lose control and fling it into the bridge.

The best course, Lerro decided, was to get the Summit Venture safely between the bridge’s pillars. But he misjudged the winds, unaware that a squall had changed the direction of the wind, pushing the freighter out of the channel and off-course. The vessel was also empty, riding high on the waves.

A minute before impact, the skies cleared just enough for Lerro to see the Sunshine Skyway before him. Despite a flurry of last-second maneuvers, it was too late.

At 7:33 a.m., the bow of the Summit Venture struck bridge pier 2S. The pier came down, and so did Interstate 275 above it during rush hour.

Lerro radioed the Coast Guard for help: “Get emergency . . . all the emergency equipment out to the Skyway bridge. Vessel has just hit the Skyway bridge. The

Skyway bridge is down! Get all emergency equipment out to the Skyway bridge. The Skyway bridge is down. This is Mayday. Emergency situation. (Nearly screaming) Stop the traffic on that Skyway bridge!”

A state inquiry later cleared Lerro of negligence. The Coast Guard found that his decision to sail in zero visibility contributed to the crash.

Yet many factors were found to be beyond the pilot’s control: The storm that blinded the ship was not forecast; Lerro had no idea the oncoming tanker had anchored and was no longer a threat; a passing pilot never warned Lerro about the storm.

Source: “Tampa Bay Times” articles and photos.



FWC Releases 2020 Boating Accident Statistical Report

With the release of the 2020 Boating Accident Statistical Report, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) encourages boaters to focus on taking the necessary steps for a safer boating experience.

“A leading contributor to boating accidents is the operator’s inattention or failure to maintain a proper lookout, said Lt. Seth Wagner, FWC Boating and Waterways Section. “Many operators believe they are looking around but they are not recognizing potential hazards or are distracted by dividing their attention between things like electronic devices or other occupants in the boat.”

In 2020, 402 boating accidents involved collisions and 44% of them were due to the operator’s inattention or failing to maintain a proper lookout.

“It is important for boaters to keep in mind that a vessel should be treated with the same responsibility as a car or truck so everyone can enjoy Florida’s beautiful waters,” Wagner said.

Florida had 836 boating accidents in 2020, which is 113 more accidents than in 2019, a 16% increase. A total of 79 people lost their lives last year in boating accidents, 14 more than the previous year. Since 2003, falling overboard has been the leading type of fatal accident with drowning as the leading cause of death. Of the drowning victims, 88% were not wearing a life jacket. Today’s boaters can choose from several models of light and comfortable, inflatable belt-pack or over-the-shoulder life jackets that can be worn while fishing or enjoying the sun. Events can happen quickly and unexpectedly, and boaters might not have time to grab their life jacket before finding themselves in the water. The message is clear, “Life Jackets Save Lives.”

The FWC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and compiling boating accident data for the state. Its statistical report details boating accidents and their causes. FWC officers want to help keep Florida’s beautiful waterways a safe place to boat. For a copy of the [2020 Boating Accident Statistical Report](#), visit [MyFWC.com](#) and select “Boating,” “Safety & Education” then “Recreational Boating Accidents.”



Hermit Crabs Are Not Crabs Nor Are They Hermits

There are over 800 species of hermit crabs worldwide, and almost all are ocean dwellers—though people are likely most familiar with the dozen semi-terrestrial species, called land hermit crabs, which are often kept as pets. There's only one freshwater hermit crab, *Clibanarius fonticola*, which is native to Vanuatu.

Hermit crabs are omnivorous scavengers, eating microscopic mussels and clams, bits of dead animals, and macroalgae.

These crustaceans have been misnamed for two reasons: First, they are not true crabs, like blue crabs, in that they don't have a uniformly hard exoskeleton and can't grow their own shells. Instead, hermit crabs have a hard exoskeleton on the front part of their bodies but a soft tail on the other half, which they protect using the discarded shells of other animals, like whelks. They're more closely related to certain kinds of lobsters than to true crabs.

Hermit crabs have a curled tail with a hook that enables their bodies to fit inside these borrowed shells. Sometimes when a new shell turns up, hermit crabs will form a line of crabs, biggest to smallest, to see which animal fits the new shell. The next smallest will take that crab's hand-me-down home, and so on.



Article and Photo Source National Geographic

Flotilla Staff Officers

ELECTED OFFICERS	
FC Flotilla Commander	Rob Bonnem
VFC Flotilla Vice Commander	Gordon Thomas
IPFC Immediate Past Flotilla Commander	Kristi Mackey
FLOTILLA STAFF OFFICERS	
FSO-CM Communications	Scott Birdwell
FSO-CS Communications Services	Walter P. Murray
FSO-DV Diversity	Rafael Caridad
FSO-FN Finance	Jimmy R. Ryder
FSO-HR Human Resources	Kristi Mackey
FSO-IS Information Services	Rafael Caridad
FSO-MA Materials	Charles Whitener
FSO-MS Marine Safety and Environmental Protection	Daniel Paolillo
FSO-MT Member Training	Harvey Prior
FSO-NS Navigation Systems	Doug Simpson
FSO-OP Operations	Keith Betzing
FSO-PV Partner Visitor	Rob Bonnem
FSO-PA Public Affairs	Teresa Hughes
FSO-PB Publications	Ron Shebanek
FSO-PE Public Education	Cono F. Casale
FSO-SR Secretary/Records	Allen Leimbach
FSO-VE Vessel Examination	Gordon Thomas

