

It's been a pretty active month for the redfish tracking project. Our acoustically tagged redfish have been observed by almost all of our VR2s (fixed listening stations) and a good number have been picked up on our mobile tracking unit (VR100). Some of these guys have been world class travelers and others have been more of the home body types. Below is a summary of some of the movements we have observed to date.

Fish #14, originally caught in Matlacha Pass hung out at Fishermen's Village until 4/28. It then explored the PGI canals showing up on our units at Bass Inlet and Colony Point. On 4/29, we picked it up at Ponce Inlet, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> it was recorded the mouth of Alligator Creek. Our last observation of this fish was at Hobbs Point on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Taking a similar path is Fish #8. This fish left Fishermen's Village on 4/21, heading over to Colony Point. It was observed a day later at Ponce and then on the 24<sup>th</sup> at the mouth of Alligator Creek. My husband and I picked it up with the mobile tracking gear on May 9<sup>th</sup> along the PGI shoreline north of the Alligator Creek channel. This fish was also observed at Hobbs Point, showing up on the 14<sup>th</sup> and recorded there again on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. Also recorded by the Hobbs Point unit was Fish #24 (originally caught in Pine Island Sound) on 5/19, and Fish #s 28 and 15 (both originally caught near Turtle Bay) and both observed at Hobbs on 5/3. All three of these fish took similar paths in getting to Hobbs as Fish #s 14 and 8.

A number of our fish, including #s 7 (originally caught in Pine Island Sound), 25 (originally caught near Turtle Bay) and 51 (originally caught near the Boca Grande Bridge) have spent a considerable amount of time in the PGI canal system. These guys have been going round and round being picked up at Fishermen's Village, Bass Inlet, Colony Point, Ponce Inlet, on the PGI Rim Canal and #51 at Alligator Creek.

Some of our other interesting observations include Fish #22 (originally caught in Matlacha Pass), which was last picked up on the south fork of Alligator Creek on May 9<sup>th</sup>, and Fish #5 which was not heard from after he left Fishermen's Village on April 21<sup>st</sup>, until we picked him up on our mobile unit near the center span of the 41 Bridge on May 8<sup>th</sup>. This fish was originally caught at the northern end of Matlacha Pass.

Two of our home body fish are numbers 11 and 27. Fish #27 (originally captured near Bull Bay) has made it over to Colony Point, but keeps coming back to Fishermen's Village. His last recording there was 5/18. Fish #11 (Originally captured on the West Wall) has only been observed at Fishermen's Village and only sporadically have we heard it. Our last recording of this fish was on 5/8 when Roger and I were mobile tracking in the area. It came close enough to the boat to be picked up one time, but must have been moving fast because we couldn't find him anywhere after that initial recording.

Roger is out downloading equipment today and I will be out doing the same tomorrow. We are definitely a little slower with the website this year, but should be posting soon. Anglers, by now you should have received your letters indicating your Fish #. If you have not received yours,

give me a call. Captain's, if you want to follow the fish your angler captured, you will need to contact your angler to receive their fish #.

Captain's and Anglers, if you provided your email address on the Tournament application, we will send you an update when the tracking maps are up on the web. Anglers, we will also let you know if your fish is recaptured and called in to the Redfish Hotline (no calls on this year's fish yet). Also anglers, this year your name will be added to Mote Marine Laboratory's Junior Fin Clip Raffle program, for a chance to win cool prizes. Mote collected fins clips of all of the fish weighed in to determine if any are hatchery reared fish. Last year all of our redfish were from wild stock. The data we have received so far this year is pretty exciting. The question now is, are the fish moving faster this year, or did we improve the study design to the point that we are garnering more observations. Maybe a little of both, or maybe neither. At this point, only the fish really know. Stay tuned for year two of the Redfish Tracking Program.

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