



The 2016 GollyWhopper sets records with 113 Entries, \$14,550 paid out in cash prizes, and 16 winners. Fishermen and divers are finding the Gollywhopper to be one the most fun tournaments along The Forgotten Coast with 2 nights of live music, great food, and even better competition to see who can bring the largest fish to the scales. With the ever changing state and Federal regulations, the tournament committee is dedicated to creating the best categories for species that are in season during the tournament. 2015 was the first year that grouper was a species in the tournament and a lionfish division was added for the divers. A target weight division was also created this year with fishermen not just trying to catch the biggest fish, but also the fish with the closest weight to a predetermined amount.

68 boats entered the tournament to see who could catch the largest Red Snapper, Grouper, and King Mackerel. There were also 18 anglers (14 or under) in the youth division and the number of divers increased from 12 in 2015 to 27 in 2016. A big captain's party was held on Friday June 4th that featured KonKrete Soul performing and lots of good food and door prizes. The weigh in on Saturday conducted by tournament founder Josh Bloodworth was attended by well over 400 people. Many large fish were weighed in along with live music by Rockin Randall and ribs and chicken prepared courtesy of Chef Steven Childs. This was an exciting event that even saw a 78lb cobia and large wahoo weighed in for the crowd's entertainment. The large custom trophies built and donated by Brian Cathey for the 1st place anglers were sought out as much as the prize money and were a hit once again. Team Tu-Buku and Captain Clay Crosby placed in 3 categories and won the lionfish bonus with 49.57lbs and were followed closely by Team TGIF with 48.15lbs.



The Red Snapper category saw many nice fish weighed in with diver Doug Wiggins on Team TGIF spearing the largest Red Snapper in tournament history at 29.90lbs. Diver Bob Cox weighed in the 2nd largest Red Snapper of the event at 23.95lbs with Clay Crosby coming in 3rd for divers in Red Snapper at 23.45lbs. The first place team for the anglers was Simple Interest with Captain Greg Davis at 23.5lbs, 2nd place Team Tu-Buku with Captain Clay Crosby at 23.40lbs and Cape Horn 19 with Captain Stevie Price at 22.55lbs in 3rd. The target slot weight was 11.1lbs and Team Hooked up with Captain Joe Sapp took the prize with an 11.0lb snapper. 13 year old Hagan Banks won the youth title with a 22.3 lb red snapper.





In the first year with grouper as a category, there were many nice fish brought to the scales. The anglers beat the divers in this category and Team Rusty Hook and Captain Caleb Pitts caught the largest fish at 30.20lbs and now holds the tournament record. Team Night Prowler and Captain Nathan Smith landed a 27.7 lb grouper and Captain Mark Moore on Team Seahunt took 3rd place with 26.65lbs. First place diver was Sam Bell at 16.8lbs, with Robert Griner in 2nd at 11.45lbs, and Brian Stone in 3rd at 10.75lbs. The target weight for the grouper was 12.2lbs and Team Fresh out won 1st with 11.9 lbs.



The King Mackerel category saw a number of familiar faces and past winners. Captain Keith Carraway and Team Seament won first place with 32.75lbs. Captain Stevie Price who has placed 3 years in a row won his second prize

of the day with his 29.4 lb King Mackerel and Captain Doug Lake and Team Fresh out were back for their 2nd prize of the day with a 3rd place 24.7 lb king. The target weight for kings was 13.3lbs and was won by Team Current Solutions and Captain Charlie Lanford at 13.4lbs.



Both The Captain's Party and Weigh-In are held at The Mexico Beach Welcome Center and are put on with the support of the Mexico Beach CDC and a number of volunteers including tournament directors Lee Cathey, Josh Bloodworth, Kimberly Shoaf, and Zach Childs. This tournament is tentatively being held on the 1st Saturday in June each year. The tournament committee hopes you will make plans to attend next year and support local tournaments. Upcoming tournaments include the Bayou Bash July 23rd, Mexico Beach Offshore Classic July 29th and 30th, and

the 20th Annual Mexico Beach Artificial Reef Association's Kingfish Tournament on August 27th.



