

By Carmen Perez-Padron

The Ladies Try Battling Rough Conditions in the Swamp Swamp Guides Ball Tournament



The Swamp Guides Ball Fishing Tournament and Auction was established by the Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association where all proceeds benefit the Guides Trust Foundation that assists Florida Keys inshore fishing guides during times of need. This tournament now in its 25th year has become one of the most popular backcountry tournaments held each year out of the Lorelei Restaurant in Islamorada. The tournament director is IWFA member and Islamorada resident

Betsy Bullard in her second year running this tournament she has done an incredible job organizing the event, helping secure silent auction and raffle items. This year the tournament had registered 61 boats which made for a fun and interesting shot gun start at 7am from the Lorelei beach.

This year quite a few IWFA members came from around the country to fish the tournament and support Betsy with this wonderful event. Conditions were not favorable it was windy and chilly not to mention fishing has not been very good according to some of the Islamorada guides I had spoken to. It was a beautiful day and everyone went out despite the windy conditions. Joan Vandergriff partnered with Susan Gros and Captain Dave Borrás caught quite a few species of fish but nothing that measured up or counted for the tournament which target species are Bonefish, Snook and Redfish all catch and release. Annah Petty also made the trip down and was supposed to fish with Connie O'Day who later was unable to make the trip so Annah and her hubby, Dale, fished together with Captain Luis Cortes. Other anglers fortunate to fish with their husbands, including myself (Carmen) and Nelson, was Poppy Brownlee and her beau John Brownlee; Shirley Wilson from Islamorada with her hubby Captain Ted Wilson. They did fairly well catching Snook and a Bonefish. Kim Harrison coupled up with Cheryl Culberson fished with Captain Todd Monson. Not much fish to report from the ladies but then again not many boats caught fish. Tough conditions to say the least!

IWFA members that could not fish still came out to support and enjoy in the festivities. Anne Newcomb joined in, as well as Angie Lucas who helped Betsy with the silent auction and scoring

during the tournament. Linda Denkert and Brooke Black also made an appearance with future angler and future IWFA member ☺, daughter Mecartney. Shandra Rummel and her hubby stopped by as well to join in on the fun Friday evening. As usual, it was great to see the local ladies from the keys and those that made the special trip down to support Betsy and the cause.