



Pioneering a First-in-Kind, Guide-Led Model for Rapid Scientific and Ecological Response

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Key West & Lower Keys Fishing Guides Association



The Key West & Lower Keys Fishing Guides Association





Introduction: The Fishing Guide





Summer of 2023



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This website is an ARCHIVED version of NOAA Climate.gov as of June 25, 2023. Content is not being updated or maintained, and some links may no longer work.

NOAA and partners race to rescue remaining Florida corals from historic ocean heat wave

BY RENEEA LINDSEY | REVISITED BY JACQUELINE DE LA COUR, JENNIFER MOORE, ANAÉ FOLLOU, TILLON MIMM, AND DENISE MARSHALL
PUBLISHED JULY 26, 2023



Related Content

(Climate.gov would like to especially thank reviewers Jacqueline De La Cour and Jennifer Moore for their contributions to this article.)

In mid-July 2023, heat-stressed corals in the southern Florida Keys began bleaching—expelling their food-producing algal partners—amid the hottest water temperatures ever documented in the region during the satellite record (dating back to 1985). As weeks of heat stress have continued to accumulate, bleaching and death have become more widespread, raising fears of a mass mortality event on the region's [already fragile reefs](#).

Build-up of dangerous heat in Florida waters in July 2023

th was the hottest ever for Florida as NOAA warns 2023 is headed for a record continues

0 PM EDT | UPDATED FRI, SEP 15 2023 11:27 AM E

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NEXT UP

August was the hottest ever for Florida as NOAA warns 2023 is headed for a record

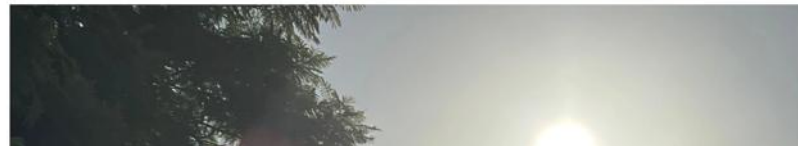
WUSF | By João Victor Pina

Published September 24, 2023 at 9:10 AM EDT



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LISTEN • 0:58





Fishing Guides Were Also Concerned





Fall/Winter of 2023 Fears Were Realized





Established a Reporting Method

- Added to website in mid-December for members to report unusual water issues or fish behavior
- Issued an advisory to members and started sharing the form with industry connections and local community
- FWC's Fish Kill Hotline was getting revamp in Dec/Jan and wasn't immediately available; it was also widely unknown

The screenshot shows a web browser interface. At the top is a dark banner with a photo of two people on a boat on water at sunset. Below the banner is a teal header with the text 'PRESERVATION THROUGH STEWARDSHIP'. The main content area is titled 'Observation and/or Conditions Report Form'. Below the title is a paragraph of text explaining the purpose of the form. At the bottom of the form area, there is a footer with the email 'info@lkga.org', a 'Switch account' link, and a 'Saving disabled' status indicator. A red asterisk indicates required questions.

PRESERVATION THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Observation and/or Conditions Report Form

The LKGA would like to document any unusual, interesting, or concerning fish behaviors, avian observations, water issues (examples could include algae blooms, fish disease, fish kills, or water discoloration), navigational concerns/hazards, or any other general information about the fishery/local waters. This information will be categorized and used to document and help identify potential scientific studies, and will be shared with partner agencies to encourage dialogue and action, and to help us stay informed of the general condition of the fishery. Please provide as much information as possible. LKGA may reach out for additional information.

info@lkga.org [Switch account](#) Saving disabled

* Indicates required question



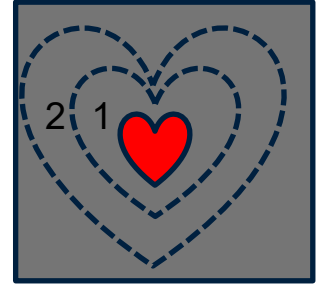
Science Stepped In

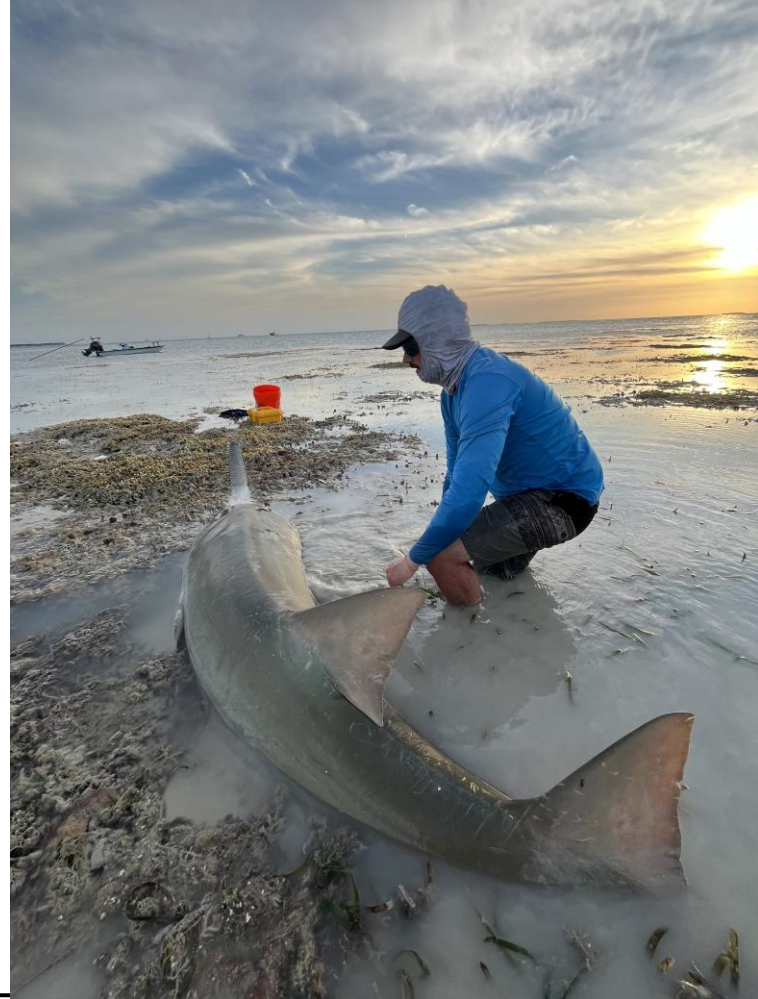
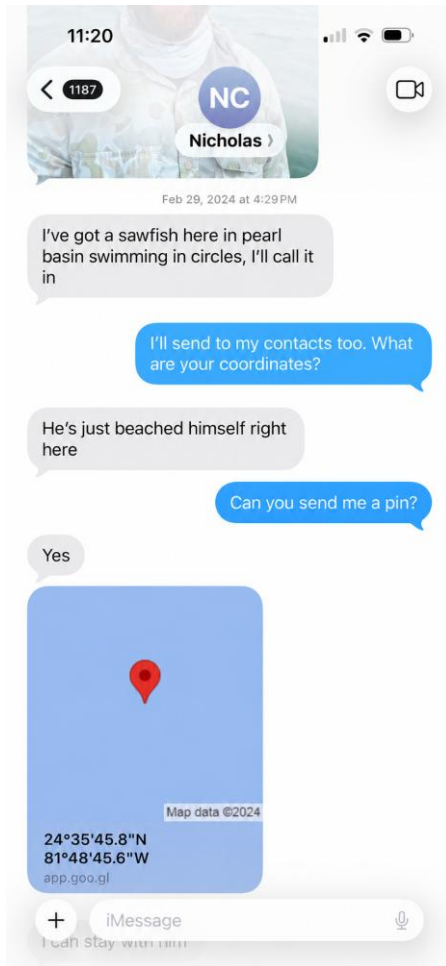


- Bonefish Tarpon Trust starting collecting samples and reaching out to contacts in late 2023
 - Started compiling a collaborative of researchers interested in the situation
 - FWC stepped in to coordinate mass sampling and weekly phone calls with experts started in February
 - Fishing guides were providing information (locations) & boat support for any organization wanting fish/water samples
-



The Evolution of LKGA Fishing Guides







Guides Were Playing an Integral Part



- Participating in the planning
- Managing reports from guides/public
- Contributing to messaging
- Utilizing our vessels and expertise

But we were all suffering from the same problem....

\$\$\$





LKGA Guide Rapid Response Network (GRRN) was formed

- First-ever guide-led response network (entirety of the Keys)
- Acquire necessary equipment for night trips
- Procure sampling holding equipment & locations
- Compensate fishermen for equipment use, knowledge, & time



Ocean Reef Conservation
Association



LKGA GUIDE RAPID
RESPONSE NETWORK



LKGA GRRN By the Numbers

80+

Professional Fishing
Guides

127 hours

of Fieldwork in Year 1

5

Sample Collection
Sites

20

Pieces of Equipment
Acquired

100+

Water/Fish/Bird
Samples Collected

130+

Reports to FWC Fish
Kill Hotline

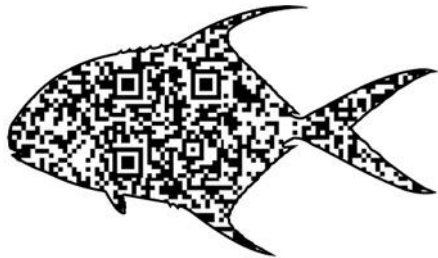


LKGA GUIDE RAPID
RESPONSE NETWORK

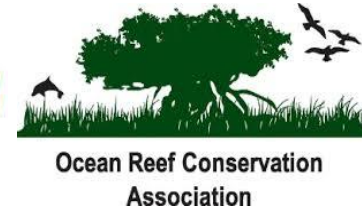
- Inclusion in Grants
 - Independent/Trained Sample Collection or Equipment Management
 - Knowledge Exchange/Relationship-Building
-



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