



COBIA

COBIA MIGRATION LEADS TO BIG REWARDS ON THE WATER

When Florida sport fishermen hear the word cobia, many thoughts come to mind. Some will think of the tasty,

firm, white flesh, while others think of the hard-fighting battles that come. Typically, cobia in Florida range from 12 to 15 pounds, and upwards to

BY PETER MILLER

40 pounds. But, cobia are capable of reaching 100 pounds and several that size are caught each year.

Cobia, also known as ling, or lemon fish, are found throughout all of Florida's coastal waters. Some cobia also visit inshore haunts of bigger bays like


Tampa Bay and Florida Bay. The annual migration of cobia through the Gulf of Mexico has always been a very much anticipated event for Panhandle anglers.

Beginning in early spring, Panhandle anglers will start searching for cruising schools of cobia. The migration peaks early, but can continue until early summer. Further to the south, anglers targeting cobia offshore of the Everglades consider cobia targets of opportunity. These cobia are mostly found near shore in as little as 15 to 20 feet of water and respond well to flies and lures dropped right on their noses.

Anglers sight cast with brightly colored jigs. Spinning tackle is most often employed with rods capable of handling the sometime monster, 60- to 80-pound fish. Stout reels with 20- to 30-pound braid and 60- to 80-pound fluorocarbon leader are common for bruiser-sized cobia.

Usually by March, anglers will cruise the Gulf of Mexico beaches in search of large schools of migrating fish. Cobia can also be found by anglers fishing wrecks and reefs throughout the state of Florida. The cobia's inquisitive nature will often see them come right up to an anchored boat where they are seemingly easy targets for anglers. They can also be found cruising around channel markers, buoys and floating debris on both coasts.

East coast anglers often report cobia following hooked fish to the surface, as well as nosing chum bags hanging off the stern of boats. Artificial baits work well for targeting cobia and include jigs, shallow diving lipped plugs, and even flies. Live baits for cobia seem to be dependent upon the area in which they are fished. For example, Panhandle anglers prefer live eels and pinfish, whereas east coast anglers favor pilchards, or thread herring for cobia bait.

Regardless of where or how you target cobia, no one can argue their excellent table fare and legendary battling ability. These brown warriors have excited anglers throughout the state of Florida for many years and are a prime target practically year-round. 



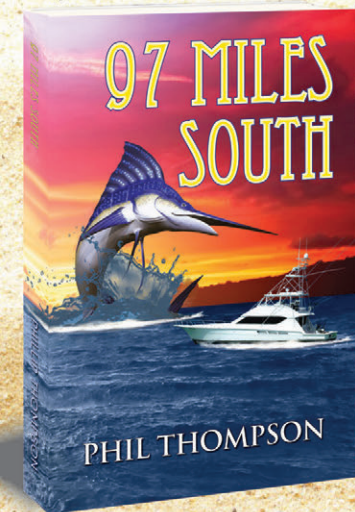
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