

Capt Bobbi Brady

## From tending bar to oyster bars



Capt. Bobbi Brady of Florida Saltwater Flats Fishing Charters holding up two of her client's catches.

By DEBRA BUTLER  
Contributing Columnist

Capt. Bobbi Brady expertly docks her 22-foot Blue Wave STL with precision before quickly tying it off to a dock at Sea Hag Marina.

Her three clients for the day step out of the boat with poles in their hands and smiles on their faces.

I ask a freckle-faced little boy in the group if he had fun.

"That's the best fishing trip I've ever had in my life!" replies seven-year old Brody Thomlinson.

Brody, brother Tyler and their grandfather Ricky Moore, all visiting from South Georgia, had just wrapped up a day of fishing with Capt. Brady.

The three are soon proudly posing with their catch of redfish and spotted

seatrout hanging on the Sea Hag Marina fish board.

Brady grew up in Crystal River. Her father was a shrimper, and from the time she was in diapers she was picking shrimp with her dad and brother.

Because of the plentiful and regular bycatch of fish plucked from their nets, they never had a reason to go fishing, and she had no interest in the sport.

When Brady's father moved north to run tuna boats, she had no desire to give tuna fishing a try, something she now regrets.

After moving to Steinhatchee, Bobbi was working as a bartender at Good Times Motel and Marina's Who Dat Bar & Grill when her future husband, Capt. Mark Brady, finally convinced her to go fishing with him.

Mark hounded Bobbi to fish with him for more than a year and would always tip her well after eating his meals.

"He'd keep asking me, 'Come on and go fishing,' and I'd say, 'No, I'm good,'" she said.

Then finally, after a rough day at work, Bobbi gave in.

"He got me right in the middle of a school of reds, and I caught my first redfish," she said.

"As soon as we started dating, he quit paying for his meals," she added, laughing. "I think he had that planned all along."

Bobbi soon realized how much she loved fishing. She obtained her captain's license, and the Brady's business, Florida Saltwater Flats Fishing Charters, soon expanded.

Brady prefers fishing over scalloping. "Scalloping's fun, but there's no sport in it," she said.

Sometimes during scallop season, she will take the male members of a family out fishing early in the morning and then come back later to pick up the ladies for an afternoon of scalloping.

Capt. Bobbi has three other captains working for her, in addition to her husband, who runs charters from his locally-manufactured 26-foot Dek Kat.

According to Bobbi, "Mark's boat is one of the only wheelchair-accessible charter boats in town."

Brady says she and her husband consider themselves to be in the entertainment business.

To anyone considering becoming a charter captain, she recommends they work in the customer service industry first.

"Go waitress or bartender like I did, or even if it's

### Local Lady Anglers

Part Three

Editor's Note: During the summer of 2020, a number of area female anglers were nominated as part of an online

contest to recognize some of Steinhatchee's "Top Female Anglers." Steinhatchee columnist Debra Butler was inspired to interview (and fish with) several of those nominated in an effort to raise awareness of female anglers. The following is the third in a series devoted to local female fishing captains.

retail, be around people. You've got to think, you're stuck with three to four people on a boat for hours on end. You've got to have the tolerance and patience first and foremost and then entertain them and be able to do your job without being gruff about it," she said.

For women who may aspire to be a captain, she has this additional advice:

"As a woman, be sure you present yourself as, 'Hey, I can take you down. I can throw you off the boat if I have to.' You've got to realize that you're going to be on the boat with grown men. Drinking men sometimes."

She says she can feel out a group of people quickly and has no qualms about speaking up.

Being raised around shrimpers and then managing a bar gives Brady an advantage in an industry typically dominated by men.

"Some guys when they get on the boat feel like they can't be themselves, but as a bartender, I'll give dirty jokes right back. I'll cuss with you, if you want me to, or I can be a church mouse if you want me to. It's up to you," she said.

Brady has experienced some clients blaming a bad day of fishing on the fact that she's a woman.

She's even had people not book fishing trips with her after finding out they'd have a female captain.

Just recently, one of those people declining a charter was surprisingly a woman.


When the lady found out that Brady would be her captain, she asked Bobbi to recommend a man instead.

On the day of the requested charter, both women ran into each other at the dock.


Brady had had a good day of fishing and ended up with more fish for her clients than the other captain who the woman ended up hiring.

When the lady approached Capt. Bobbi and mentioned hiring her

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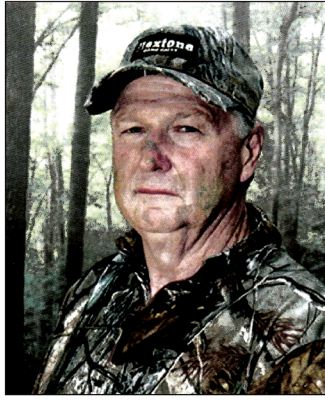
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