

# Big cobia earns top award at Reef Builder tournament

Greg Weiss picked a good weekend to reel in his largest cobia.

Saturday, a day after celebrating his birthday, Weiss and friends Greg Campbell, Brett Barner and Ken Pence were aboard the boat Reel Reptile and steered over the north end of the Six Mile Reef. Using a mix of live and dead sardines, they hoped the spot would produce a catch of one or two species large enough to weigh in the 8th annual MCAC Reef Builders fishing tournament in which they were entered.

“I free-lined a live sardine and about 20 yards back behind the boat, I could feel it get eaten,” Weiss said. “We didn’t see our strikes, but as it got closer to the boat, I could tell it was a big cobia.”

He admitted he didn’t realize how big it was until Pence, Weiss’ brother-in-law, stuck the gaff and had a little trouble getting it over the side and into the boat.

Back at The Twisted Tuna in Port Salerno, Weiss’ cobia weighed 41.3 pounds, much larger than the largest cobia Weiss had ever landed before. The achievement earned the team \$1,000 for the largest cobia in its species category as well as the Kyle Conrad Memorial Award presented to the tournament’s top boat.

A total of 33 boats fished the event and were joined by eight teams of divers competing in the fourth annual Lionfish Roundup that ran simultaneously. The anglers endured somewhat slow fishing conditions perhaps in part due to a strong full moon the night before and varying current and tide conditions in prime fishing spots. But the diving was favorable for targeting lionfish as the eight teams combined to remove 512 lionfish from area reefs.

The tournament and roundup is a major fundraiser for the MCAC Reef Fund, a not for profit organization that helps Martin County government construct artificial reefs to buoy fishing and diving opportunities locally.

The Sunseeker Too team of Emil Laviola, Larry Benning and Greg Schenk, of Fort Pierce, fished the reefs in 180 feet of water due east of Bethel Shoal off Fort Pierce with live sardines to get Benning’s 34.5-pound division-winning gag grouper along with a couple of scamps to sweep the category. Steve Broxmeyer fished the reefs south of St. Lucie Inlet aboard the Safari I party boat with Capt. Rocky Carbia to capture the division-winning 14.6-pound mutton snapper. Pierce Killer, 11, of Jensen Beach fished in 35 feet of water off Hutchinson Island aboard Renegade with his brother Conrad, 15, and great uncle Bob Pelosi to defend his title of top junior angler and kingfish division winner by weighing a 23.2-pounder.

For more information about the artificial reefs constructed by the group go to [www.mcacreefs.org](http://www.mcacreefs.org)

## RESULTS

### Lionfish Roundup

Most lionfish team: 104, Stuart Scuba, \$500

Most lionfish individual: 61, Gabriel Arrington, \$500

Largest lionfish: 16.75 inches, Team Fishingrulesapp.com, \$250

Smallest lionfish: Less than 5.5 inches, Uncle Jacks Kids, \$2500

Total: 512 lionfish harvested by 8 teams

## **MCAC Reef Builders tournament**

### Cobia

1. 41.3, Greg Weiss, Reel Reptile, \$1,000
2. 24.0, Russell Dyson, Reel Busy, \$500
3. 21.0, Will Charles, Bone Dock, \$250
4. 20.8, Bob Schaeffer, Reel Busy, prizes

### Grouper

1. 34.6, Larry Benning, Sunseeker Too, \$1,000
2. 7.4, Emil Laviola, Sunseeker Too, \$500
3. 6.4, Greg Schenk, Sunseeker Too, \$250
4. None

### Dolphin

1. 15.7, David Singer, Hooker Up, \$1,000
2. 6.58, Stan Giesey, Full Circle, \$500
3. 6.5, Skyler Wichers, Prime Time, \$250
4. 6.0, Greg Campbell, Reel Reptile, prizes

### Snapper

1. 14.6, Steve Broxmeyer, Safari I, \$1,000
2. 6.6, Bryan Williams, no name, \$500
3. 5.1, Bill Williams, no name, \$250
4. None

### Kingfish

1. 23.2, Pierce Killer, Renegade, \$1,000
2. 8.0, Andy Long, Prime Time, \$500
3. 6.4, Dave Long, Prime Time, \$250
4. None

### Wahoo

None weighed

Kyle Conrad Memorial Award (Top Boat): Reel Reptile

Top charter boat: Reel Busy, Capt. Wayne Brodner

Top Junior Angler: Pierce Killer, Renegade

Second place junior angler: Will Charles, Bone Dock

Sailfish release: Conrad Killer, Renegade