



# the bahamas MARCH/APRIL FISHING FORECAST

By Capt. Kevin Kates

The most exciting fishing one can ever experience occurs during the early spring in the Bahamas. I look at March and April as two months better recognized as ‘the gates to the season’, bringing with them a variety of species ranging from amberjack to yellowfin tuna. Just about anywhere you fish throughout this wonderful island chain you should find plenty of action to keep you busy. The only downside during this early season time of year is the wind. Throughout March and April it’s not uncommon for wind to blow above 15 to 20 knots for a week straight, but when the weather does break, get all your gear together and make a run for it! Your efforts will pay off in plenty of bent rods and screaming reels. You’ll also find that making the crossing will usually be the lowest point of the entire trip.



## The Isaacs to the Cay Sal Banks including the Gingerbread Grounds, Bimini and Gun Cay:

In the early part of March anglers venturing across the ‘Stream can count on catching the end of the winter wahoo run. High speed trolling works best along the predominant edge stretching the entire distance. Along with working the

northern area off of Great Isaacs which typically produces outstanding wahoo action, head south of Bimini toward Riding Rocks. This southern stretch experiences less fishing pressure and the results rival and often exceed those of Great Isaac. Troll the edge from 150 to 400 ft. in an “S” pattern. Along the way there is no reason you shouldn’t cross paths with at least a few striped torpedoes. Large lures pulled in excess of 12 to 15 knots work best. You can also expect to tangle with big ‘smoker’ kingfish and a few dolphin. One good piece of advice: if you find that ferocious barracuda are tearing apart your expensive lures, you’re not trolling fast enough!

Once you have had your fill of high speed wahoo trolling, then dolphin, blackfin tuna and school size yellowfins can be found along this same edge and on many of the local offshore seamounts. Switch lures and slow down a bit and you should do just fine. One particular area just to the northwest of Isaacs is a great place to focus your efforts. It’s called the Four Tops and if you’re lucky enough you may even run into a stray marlin there. If things don’t pan out stay on the edge and head back toward Bimini. Somewhere along the line you’ll find consistent action.

If trolling all day long isn’t exactly your cup of tea, other options do exist. More and more anglers have invested in electric reels and it’s no wonder why. Deep dropping for snapper and grouper along these same edges yields fantastic catches of a variety of tasty bottom dwellers. You can easily find likely spots by keeping a close eye of your bottom machine while trolling the edge for wahoo and their pelagic pals. Make a note of the hilly areas and go back to them for an enticing change of pace. Countless productive hills and depressions have been pinpointed this way.



A second option is to hire a local guide. Local guides are extremely affordable and can easily make the difference between small bait stealers and bragging size fish, especially in the deepest spots. There is no question that ‘good’ numbers are the ticket to success so keep these locations under your hat. You know the saying, “the three fastest ways to send information are by telephone, television, and tell a fisherman.”

Looking south, let’s take a quick look at the Cay Sal Banks. Cay Sal is not for everyone and fishing the area does require a greater level of preparation. The entire bank is circumvented by powerful currents, pushing nutrient rich waters up on the bank from every direction. The Santaran Channel lies to the east, Nicholas Channel to the south, and the prevailing Straits of Florida to the north. Cay Sal isn’t exactly a hop, skip, & jump either, so heading there with another boat or two is probably a good idea.



Throughout March and April in the waters surrounding Cay Sal you can expect to find solid action for both dolphin and yellowfin tuna. Of course a pelagic surprise such as a hefty marlin may show up at anytime so be prepared for anything. Throughout the spring you will also encounter wahoo here, though the hot wahoo bite does slow down by early April. Fortunately, the large numbers of cooperative tuna and dolphin will more than make up for the lack of 'hoos.

As an alternative, the deep dropping around Cay Sal is second to none. Here you'll find square mile after square mile of water that just hasn't been fished. You can pull on 5 pound yelloweye snapper and 10 pound queens until your arms fall off. These dark depths also yield absolutely massive mystic groupers. The biggest you have ever seen! There is no question that if you can make the trip to Cay Sal, it will definitely be worth your time.



### Berry Islands to Andros Island including Chub Cay and New Providence:

Smack dab in the center of the Bahamas lies Chub Cay, and when the breeze is predominantly from the southeast the fish pile up in an area here known as The Pocket. Anyone who has visited this area will agree that spring in Chub can be one of the greatest places on earth to fish, that is if you have that southeasterly breeze we



mentioned. The fish prowling the deep water here may not be the monsters that you encounter in other areas, but the action can be nonstop. Trolling The Pocket with rigged ballyhoo will produce white marlin, sailfish, dolphin and tuna. Of course the bottom fishing here is also outstanding with exceptional catches of yelloweye and black snapper hitting the docks on a consistent basis. Directly southeast from the pocket is New Providence and the capital of the Bahamas, Nassau. Many visitors troll around the buoys leading into the port for consistent action with wahoo and tuna.

breaking the surface and toss out a few handfuls of pilchards along with a couple hook baits. It shouldn't be long! Adding a little lead and getting your hook bait below the melee should quickly do the trick. And don't forget to always keep a sharp eye peeled for frigates, floating debris, weed lines and/or predominant rips.

### Eleuthera Island to Great Inagua including the Exumas, San Salvador and Cat Island:

Working our way from the bottom up, Acklins, Crooked, San Sal and Cat Island all come to mind as destinations that hold big numbers of huge wahoo. Though these mountains rising from the sea are hundreds and hundreds of miles from



### West End to the Abacos including Mantonilla Shoal, Walkers Cay and Green Turtle Cay:

On the southern end of the Abacos fishing the Hole In The Wall to Cherokee Sound will again produce consistent dolphin action and outstanding yellowfin tuna fishing. By mid April, offshore fishing can be so hot here



here, and resources may be limited at best, the region is undoubtedly worthy of your visit, especially for big boaters with all the amenities of home. From now through the end of the spring season you can expect double digit days with ferocious wahoo reaching and sometimes exceeding the hundred pound mark! Giants as thick as telephone poles are not uncommon as evidence by George Poveromo's record setting 143 pound beast! In the vicinity of Rum Cay and Long Island, anglers can also expect to encounter plenty of yellowfin tuna and an unlimited number of dolphin.

Steering a course north toward Eleuthera and Harbor Islands you will find some of the best deep dropping in all of the Bahamas. Big mystic grouper, queen snapper and many other tasty denizens can be taken from the depths in this area. An equally inviting attraction to Harbour Island is the incredible yellowfin tuna bite. Load up on the pilchards at any of the local marinas and head out to James Point, The Shallow Grounds or The Dutch Bar. From mid April through the summer all three popular locations should yield plenty of exciting action. Run up on pods of fish

boats try to stay away from the monstrous schools of dolphin so their baits don't get destroyed by the thousands of colorful fish that invade these waters. If you are specifically seeking tuna, the Hole In The Wall is the place to be.

If billfish are more up your alley then the deep water canyons just offshore of Elbow, Man-O-War, and Guana Cay are where you should be fishing. Grab your chart and look for the Hopetown Pocket, The Bridge, Mushroom, Jurassic Park and the Table Top, all hold blue marlin with fish usually weighing between 200 and 500 pounds, though 'granders' weighing in excess of 1000 pounds have been taken here. As you can tell, you better bring the heavy artillery if you want to fish these spots in the open Atlantic.

To the northwest, around Walkers Cay you still cannot stay here due to the massive damage left behind from the 2004 hurricane season, one we will soon not forget. But if you have the means to stay on your own vessel, the fishing is red hot! The seamounts north of Walkers continue to hold a fair number of marlin along with plenty of tuna, and oh yeh, a zillion of those pesky dolphin.

What really makes Walkers stand out in the early spring though is the constant possibility of hooking a giant bluefin tuna. Use only your biggest guns when targeting these immense beasts that possess the shear power of a

freight train. 50's are the minimum while 80's and larger would be the right idea. As I mentioned big marlin aren't out of the picture either so you really can't go wrong trolling big lures and extra large naturals.

Throughout this entire region the flats fishing is also exceptional. Throughout the spring the Marles yield reliable bonefish shots while a pack of permit or two always seem to make a showing. If you are unfamiliar with the area, hiring a local guide is definitely the way to go.

All in all the Bahamas offer a great place to get away and spend a single day, a weekend, or a full week. From multi-million dollar sportfishing yachts to single outboard powered center consoles, the islands offer something for everyone. No phones ringing, no traffic, very little fishing pressure and pure peace and quiet. The heck with Disney World, take the family over to the Bahamas for a getaway you will never forget! See you over there!



## About THE WRITER

Capt. Kevin Kates has been fishing the south Florida area for over 22 years. Kevin has run private yachts and fished most of the eastern coast of Florida as well as the Keys and Bahamas. His tournament rigged 31' Contender - Intrinsic Value - can take full advantage of all the east coast fishing opportunities. Whether it be making a day trip to the Bahamas, going offshore at night for swordfish, or staying in close for kingfish, blackfin tuna, sailfish, or whatever is biting, Capt. Kevin Kates ensures success.



Contact Info:

**Intrinsic Value Charters:**  
954-725-9662 or cell 754-367-0259  
[www.catch-fish.com](http://www.catch-fish.com)

## Intrinsic Value

Daytrips to the Bahamas

1/2 day trips - Full Day - Night Fishing (local, Keys, Bahamas)



**31' Contender**  
Proven Tournament Winner  
Capt. Kevin Kates

- Sailfish
- Swordfish
- Marlin
- Tuna
- Dolphin
- Wahoo
- Kingfish
- Tarpon
- Grouper
- Snapper

We can take a day trip to the Bahamas or go at night for Swordfish, stay close to shore for Kingfish, Blackfin Tuna, Sailfish, or whatever is biting. We have the capability to trailer Intrinsic Value to where the fish are, so we have more time on the water with your rod bent rather than being where the fish aren't. I mainly run the boat out of Hillsboro Inlet but if the conditions aren't right I'll pull the boat and we'll go to the fish. Whether it's Elliott Key or Stuart we will find the fish!

Let's Go Fishing!  
Local: (954) 725-9662 e-mail: [capt.kev@catch-fish.com](mailto:capt.kev@catch-fish.com)  
Toll Free: (800) 256-8042 website: [www.catch-fish.com](http://www.catch-fish.com)



More and more anglers are taking advantage of electric equipment to reap the rewards of the Bahamas deep trenches

