

NORTHERN GULF NEWS

While, as always, we bring you Northern Gulf news from the cruising community, perhaps the star attraction below is our updated report on the Northern Gulf, hurricane damaged marinas from Panama City to Mobile Bay. These statistics are the result of a telephone survey, and, may we emphasize, have NOT yet been verified in person by us!

OOOPPPSS! Captain Jane Tigar has just pointed out an unfortunate typo in the "Word from Claiborne" section of this newsletter, which you have already received. At the bottom of this section, our e-mail address should read, opcom@cruisingguide.com . PLEASE make that correction. Thanks!

Northern Gulf Hurricane Damage Report

Only those marinas reporting damage to us after Hurricane Ivan are listed below. Facilities are arranged by location from east to west.

St. Andrew Bay Yacht Club - fully repaired, once again taking accredited visitors

Lighthouse Marina & Boat Yard - fully recovered - taking transients and pumping gasoline and diesel fuel

St. Andrews Marina - back in 100% operation - taking transients - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel

Sun Harbor Marina - 100 % recovered, taking transients, but no slips currently available - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel

The Marina at Bluewater Bay - "got hit hard" - almost fully recovered - taking transients - pumping gas and diesel, plus waste pump-out - power and water connections working - open for business and ready for cruisers - a few minor repairs left to do, will be done by the middle of May

Guisseppi's Wharf Restaurant and Marina - telephone number we had has been "disconnected"

Lighthouse Key Marina - could not be reached by this newsletter's deadline

Harborwalk Marina (Destin) - 100% recovered, all docks rebuilt, pumping gasoline and diesel fuel - five transient slips open at this time

Shalimar Yacht Basin - 100% recovered - taking transients - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel

Deckhands Marina - marina is going out of business - property has been sold, and property is going condo

Marina Motel - dock fully repaired

The Boat Boatyard & Marina - not even started to do major repairs - docks reconstruction begins in a week or two, "when water warms up" - hope to be back 80% operation by June - hope to be completely recovered by September - currently not taking transients

Fort Walton Beach Yacht Basin - could not be reached by deadline

Beach Marina (Fort Myers Beach) - 100% recovered, except no waste pump-out for thirty more days - taking transients - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel

Pensacola Yacht Club - reached, but "did not have time to talk to us" before deadline

Bahia Mar Marina (Bayou Chico) - wet slips are back in operation - gasoline and diesel fuel being pumped - no waste pump-out - very limited transient dockage - most slips are taken up by local customers - dry storage is ordered, but don't know when will be finished

Brown's Marine Service - talked with Ted Brown himself - "survived fairly well" - in the process of building new docks - boatyard is "full" of boats being repaired - have boat repair backlog into the summer - limited transient dockage - much of the transient dock used by boats waiting for repair - can offer temporary dockage for one or two boats from time to time - in three months should have things more back to normal

Island Cove Marina - only have a few pilings left to reset - docks almost fully rebuilt - taking small craft transients - larger slips are filled

Pensacola Shipyard - one dock being rebuilt in April - other slips are in good shape - taking transients - power and water connections are in good shape

Seville Harbor - 1/3 up and operational - limited transient dockage - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel - more repairs by July

Palafox Harbor - completely shut down, reconstruction will begin in July

Lost Key Marina (formerly Rod and Reel Marina) - not currently in business - in the process of rebuilding - hoping to rebuild wet slips in the first quarter of 2006

Southwinds Marina - new telephone number, 850-572-5464 - currently rebuilding - "going to be awhile" - now rebuilding docks, two completed - four to six weeks before electrical connections are ready - should be able to start taking transients when electrical connections are working

Oyster Bay Marina - could not be reached by deadline

Holiday Harbor Marina - "up and running" - fuel dock inside basin is pumping gasoline and diesel fuel - fuel dock on Waterway is still not working - hope to have repaired within six weeks - transients are being accepted

Sanroc Cay Marina - reopened - 95% recovered - docks rebuilt - taking transients - gasoline and diesel fuel being pumped

Zeke's Landing Marina - could not be reached by

Sportsman Marina - all docks are rebuilt - power and fresh water connections at all wet slips - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel - operating out of a temporary dock store - "filled up," so transients are first come, first served, call to see if slip space is available

Trent Marina - still closed down - hope to reopen in about five months

Orange Beach Marina - "still rebuilding, getting closer every day" - 90% docks rebuilt, but still undergoing slip improvement - taking transients - pumping gasoline and diesel fuel - waste pump-out station working

Bear Point Marina - still in rebuilding stages - no wet slips for three months - restaurant hoping to reopen Memorial Day weekend

Pirates Cove Yacht Club - all docks gone - probably not going to rebuild the transient docks - restaurant is open

Dauphin Island Marina - still out of business (by way of taped message)

Destin Dredging Completed

Ever since the original release of "Cruising Guide to the Northern Gulf Coast" in 1991, dredging at East Pass inlet and the entrance to Destin harbor either seems to be in progress, just finished, or planned for the near future, every time I'm in this popular resort community. Now tells us of the completion of just such a project.

Claiborne,

The dredging project for the entrance to the Destin Harbor is completed. The dredging for East Pass that was scheduled for January, has been postponed until mid-March. The only dredges large enough for the East Pass project are currently in use elsewhere. Once dredging begins, it is anticipated that the project will last approximately 1 month. The goal is to dredge the East Pass channel to a depth of 14'.

I hope this information is useful to you.

Regards.

Capt. Scott Miller / Bimini Breeze

Destin, Fl

A Sad Passing

We were saddened to receive the following report on January 8.

Claiborne,

I thought that you would like to know that my father, Tim Murray, died this week. Stanton Murray

Tim was the founder and, for many years, the publisher of "Mid-Gulf Sailing" magazine. I worked closely with him in those days, and we exchanged information often. Just this past May, Tim was kind enough to attend my presentation about cruising the waters of the Northern Gulf Coast at the Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans. His wit and brightness of eye were undiminished at that time. I will sincerely miss talking with Tim, and the entire Northern Gulf cruising community has lost a true friend. Fare you well Tim, wherever your voyages take you!

Tchefuncte River Mystery Solved

Even since I penned the first edition of "CGNG," I have noted the existence of a bridge to nowhere at the mouth of the Tchefuncte River. Anyone who has entered this delightful stream from Lake Pontchartrain has undoubtedly spotted this strange skeletal structure as well, and wondered what it was doing now. Now cruiser, Kevin Dufresne, answers that question!

Claiborne,

FYI, that "bridge to nowhere" that you say in the Tchefuncte River on the way to Madisonville, La. is actually some replacement sections for the nearby Causeway Bridge, that crosses Lake Pontchartrain about 26 miles into Metairie. Back a couple of decades ago, before some of the more modern navigation systems, every once in a while a barge would strike the bridge in the fog and they needed sections to be able to put in right away. There was actually an incident in the 60's when a station wagon with 9 nuns went into the lake on a foggy day when a barge had struck it and taken down a section. All were lost.