



Georgetown County, South Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Redfish Tour continues to see growth in Georgetown, will return in 2016

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — A duo from Georgetown won \$700 in cash and prizes for a fish they brought in during the IFA Redfish Tour's latest stop in Georgetown County on Aug. 29.

The 5.31-pound redfish, caught by the father and son team of Billy and Will Cook, was the biggest fish weighed in during the event, which involved 83 boats and 166 anglers. It was the only fish the Cooks brought in that day. If they'd caught one more, they might have added additional cash prizes and a \$26,000 Ranger/Yamaha boat package to their winning for the day. A second fish weighing at least 3.4 pounds would have done it.

Instead, first place and a total prize package worth nearly \$31,000 went to another South Carolina team, that of Dodd Wood of Anderson and Glenn Finley of Belton. Their two-fish limit had a total weight of 8.7 pounds with the biggest weighing 4.61 pounds.

Placing second were J.D. Nobles and Kyle Craven of Florida, taking home \$4,555 in prizes, and coming in third were Rigoberto Lomeli of Longs and Michael Rouhselang of Conway, who took home just under \$2,000 in prizes. Cash prizes of a minimum of \$500 were awarded up to 15th place.

This was the Inshore Fishing Association's third stop in Georgetown County in just over one year. Since the Redfish Tour's first stop at the county's Carroll A. Campbell Marine Complex in August 2014, participation in the tournament has grown by about 30 percent. Even a year ago, Eric Shelby, the tournament's director, said participation in Georgetown was the highest of any in the Atlantic Division in the division's history. The division stretches from Florida to Virginia.

The IFA has already committed to bringing the Redfish Tour back to Georgetown County in 2016, with the date to be announced. Georgetown County Administrator Sel Hemingway hopes to see participation reach 100 boats and, with participation up this year for both local and visiting anglers, he believes the county is well on its way to achieving that goal.

“I think local anglers are really starting to embrace it as they see the kind of prizes they can take home, and more anglers from other regions of South Carolina and out of state are signing up as Georgetown County’s reputation as a great place to visit and fish continues to grow,” Hemingway said. “This is a place where they can come compete and enjoy our natural resources, but it’s also a place where their families want to visit, so they can turn it into a family vacation.”

There was a noticeable increase in the number of families present at weigh-ins for this most recent event and Hemingway expects the county will see that trend continue.

While Georgetown County’s leadership and staff have worked hard to attract tournaments here and make sure organizers and participants want to keep coming back, Hemingway said much of the success belongs to the community.

“Whether it’s in the restaurants or anywhere in the community, when people see them and recognize them as part of the tournament, they go out of their way to go over and say ‘thank you for being here’,” Hemingway said. “It’s that element that really adds to the success of these events and makes people want to come back. It’s how they’re received in the community and welcomed more than the number of fish they catch. I can’t thank the residents enough for that.”

Hemingway said one of his favorite things about hosting the Redfish Tour is that it does offer a chance for local residents to participate and compete, as there are no qualification events for a slot in the tournament.

All of the IFA’s stops also include a kayak event. The IFA Kayak Fishing Tour took place in Georgetown County on Aug. 30 with weigh-in at Surf the Earth in Pawleys Island. There were 32 kayaks entered and a Charleston area resident, Dave Jaskiewicz, won the event and a spot in the World Championship in China in November. Jaskiewicz had biggest redfish and biggest trout for the event, with a 48.75-inch aggregate.

Taking second place was John Chapman of Florida and in third place was Robby Freeman of Georgia.

Videos of Redfish Tour and kayak tournament winners talking about their catches are available at [facebook.com/gtcountysc](https://www.facebook.com/gtcountysc). Photos from the events are also available at that site. Look for information on upcoming tournaments in the county’s free e-newsletter, available at www.gtcounty.org/Newsletters.

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