

Snook

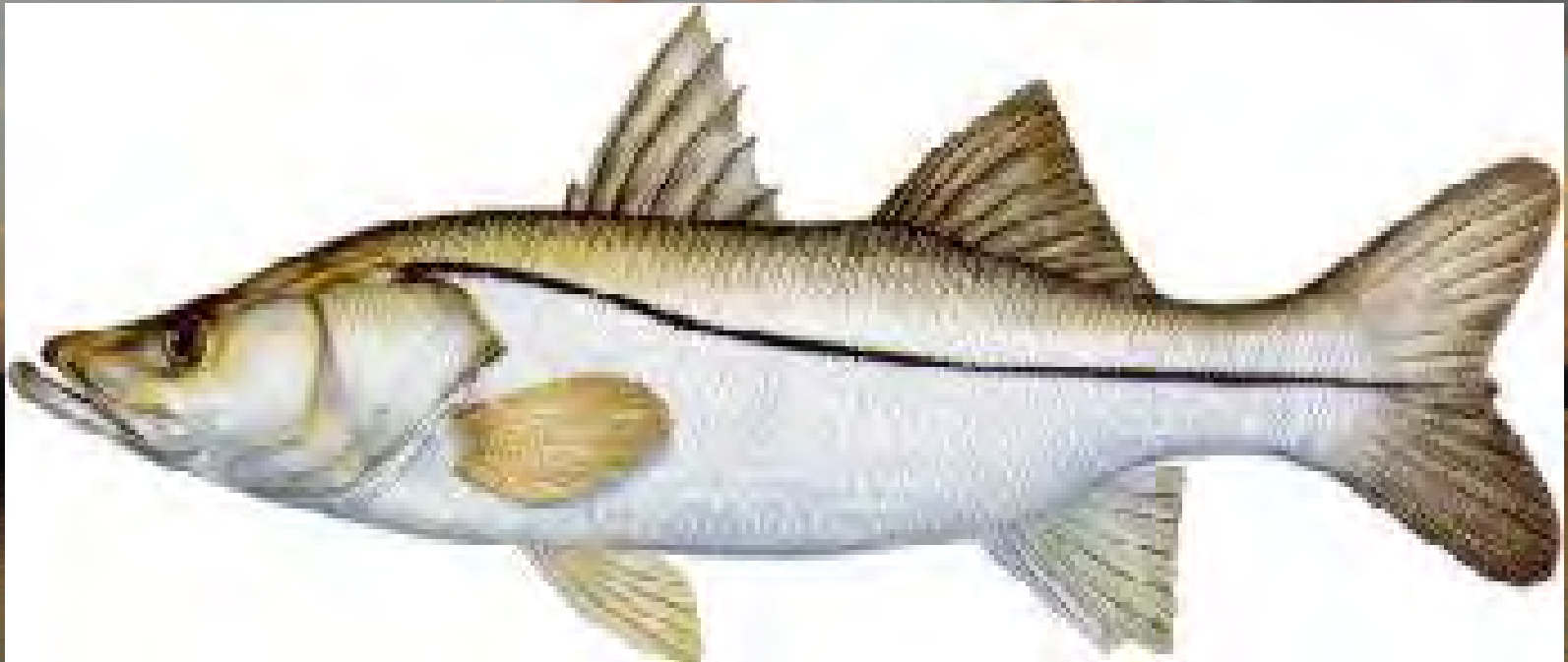
Centropomus Undecimalis

Snook description

- 12 species of genus *Cenropomus* in the sub tropics, North and South America
- Four occur in southwest Florida
- Common snook
- Sword-spine snook
- Tarpon snook
- Fat snook

Common snook

Centropomus undecimalis



A man with a mustache, wearing a blue shirt, a tan cap, and sunglasses, is smiling while holding a large snook fish. He is on a boat, and the background shows a body of water and green trees under a clear blue sky.

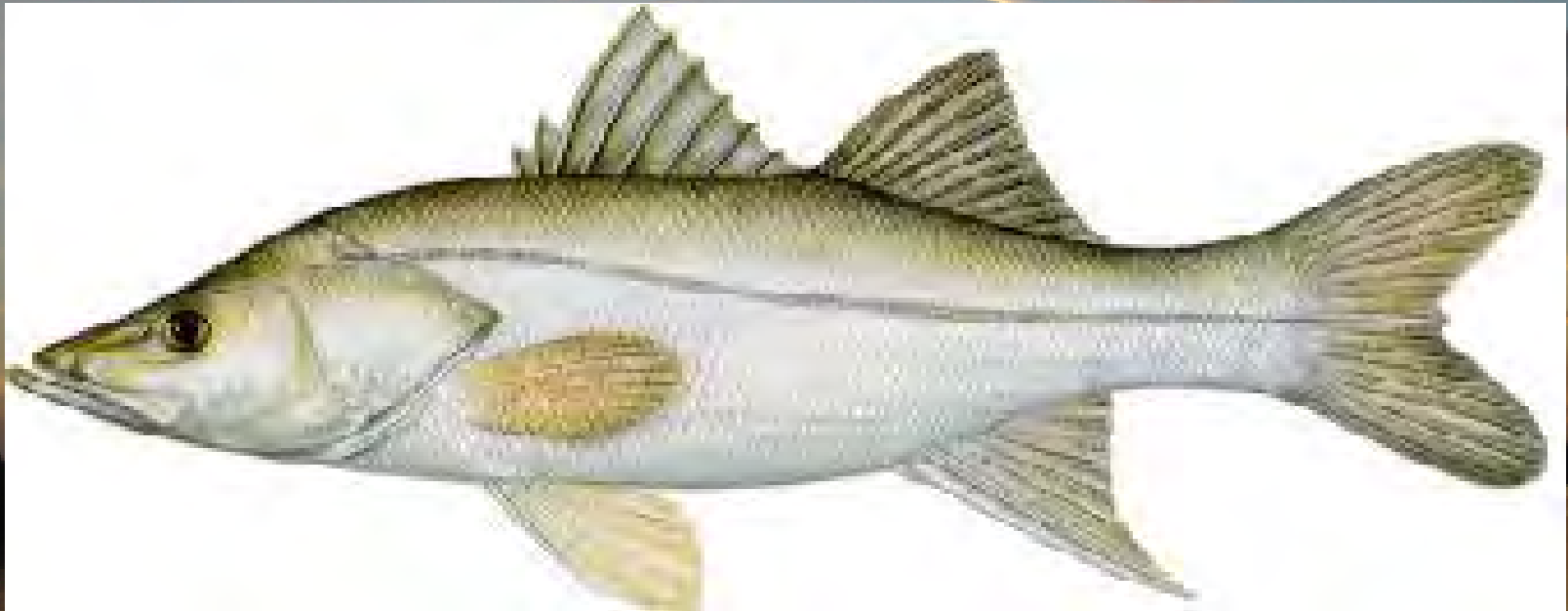
Common snook

Centropomus undecimalis

- **Description:** distinct lateral line; high, divided dorsal fin; sloping forehead; large mouth, protruding lower jaw; grows much larger than other snooks; pelvic fin yellow. **Similar Fish:** other *Centropomus*. **Where found:** from central Florida south, usually INSHORE in coastal and brackish waters, along mangrove shorelines, seawalls, and bridges; also on reefs and pilings NEARSHORE. **Size:** most catches 5 to 8 pounds. ***Florida Record:** 44 lbs., 3 ounces.

Fat snook

Centropomus parallelus



Fat snook

- **Description:** deeper body than other snooks; color yellow-brown to green-brown above, silvery on sides; black lateral line extends onto tail; mouth reaches to or beyond center of eye; usually no dusky outer edge on pelvic fin, as in other snooks; smallest scales of all snooks. **Similar Fish:** other *Centropomus*. **Where found:** INSHORE species found in mangrove habitat; found commonly in fresh waters; occurs more in interior waters (as opposed to estuarine waters) than other snook. **Size:** a small species, rarely more than 20 inches.

Swordspine snook

Family Centropomidae,

Centropomus ensiferus



Swordspine snook

Family Centropomidae,

Centropomus ensiferus

- **Description:** smallest of the snooks; profile slightly concave; prominent lateral line outlined in black (not solid), extends through caudal fin; color yellow-green to brown-green above, silvery below; giant second anal spine, hence the name; largest scales of all snook. **Similar Fish:** other *Centropomus*. **Where found:** occurs in INSHORE estuarine habitats from south Florida to as far north on east coast as St. Lucie River. **Size:** usually less than 1 pound (12 inches).

Tarpon snook

Family Centropomidae,

SNOOKS *Centropomus* *pectinatus*



Tarpon snook

Centropomus pectinatus

- **Description:** only snook with 7 anal fin rays (others have 6); lower jaw curves upward; compressed body; prominent black lateral line extends through tail; tips of pelvic fin reach beyond anus. **Similar Fish:** other *Centropomus*. **Where found:** INSHORE in south Florida; frequently in fresh water. **Size:** usually less than 1 pound (12 inches).

Snook facts

- The distinctive lateral line accounts for the common names “line sides” and “sergeant fish”
- Snook are ambush feeders, lying in wait while currents funnel prey to them
- They eat primarily other fish, crabs and shrimp

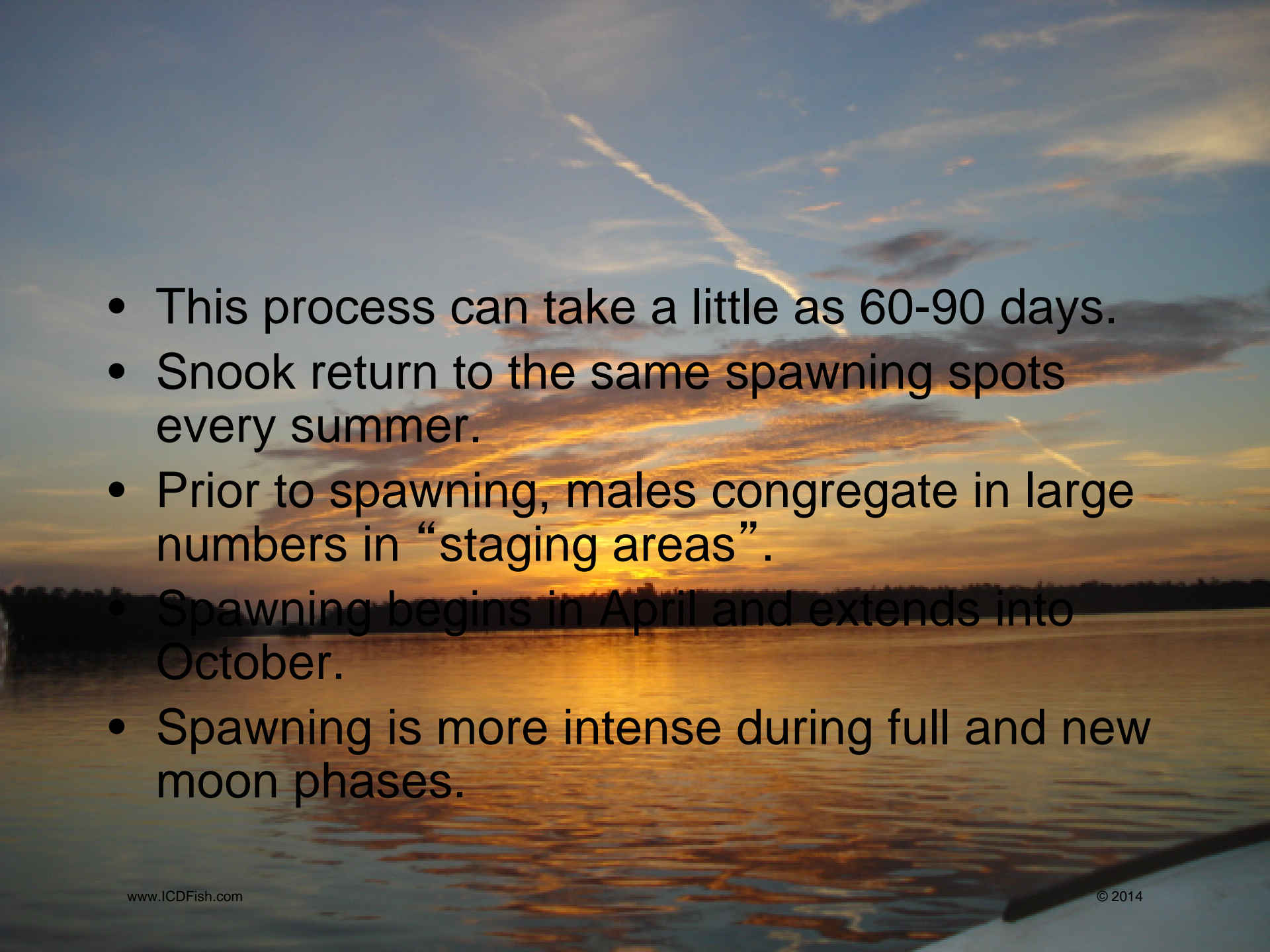
More Snook facts

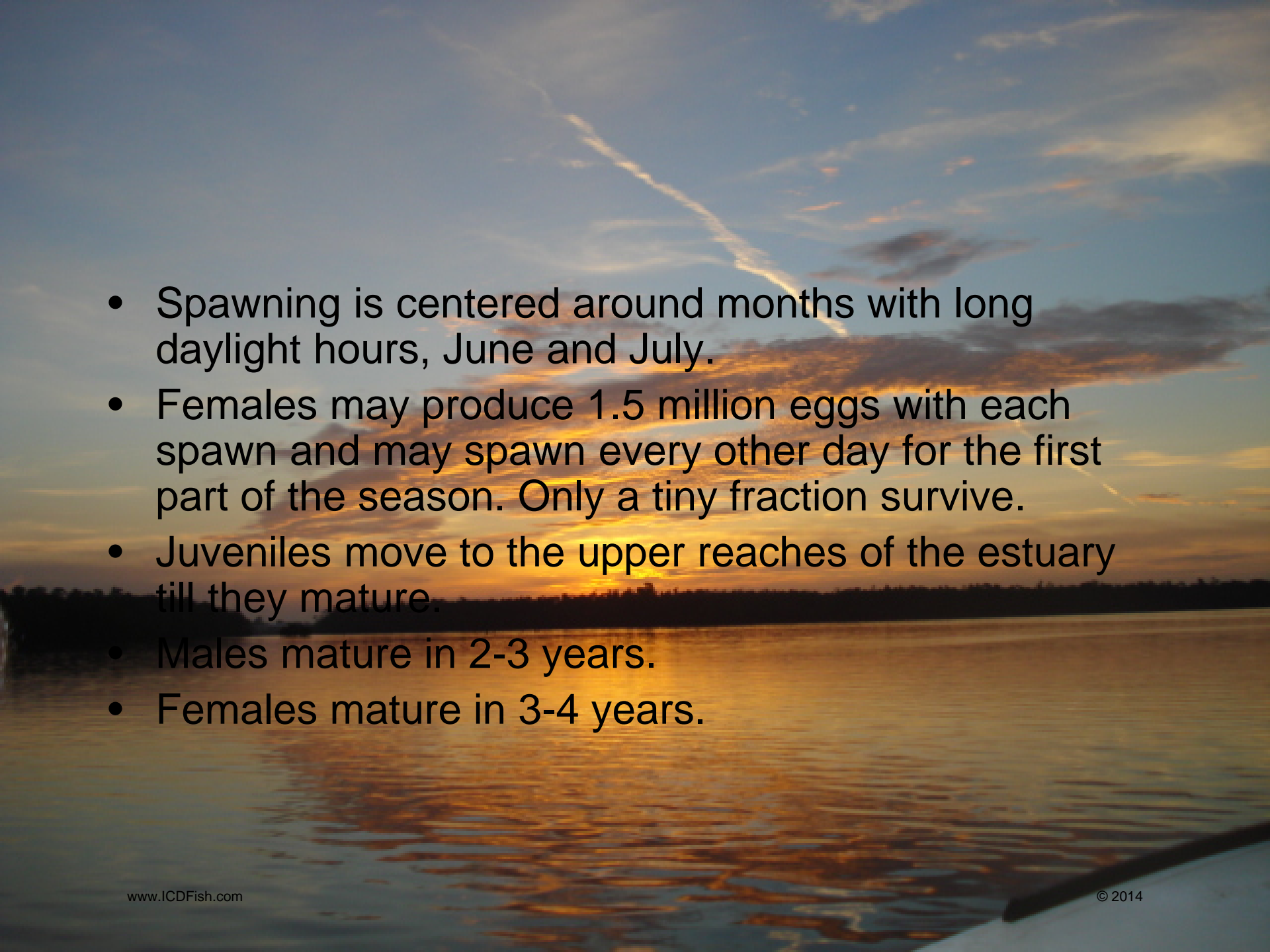
- Snook may live over 20 years.
- Growing to a length of 50 inches and a weight of over 40 lbs.
- Gulf coast catches average 7.2 pounds
- The largest gulf coast catch was 44lbs 3 ounces, caught in Ft. Myers 1984.
- Largest on fly caught in Chokoloskee in 1993 weighing 30 pounds 4 ounces.
- The world record was caught in Costa Rica in 1978 weighing 53 pounds 10 ounces.

Still more Snook facts

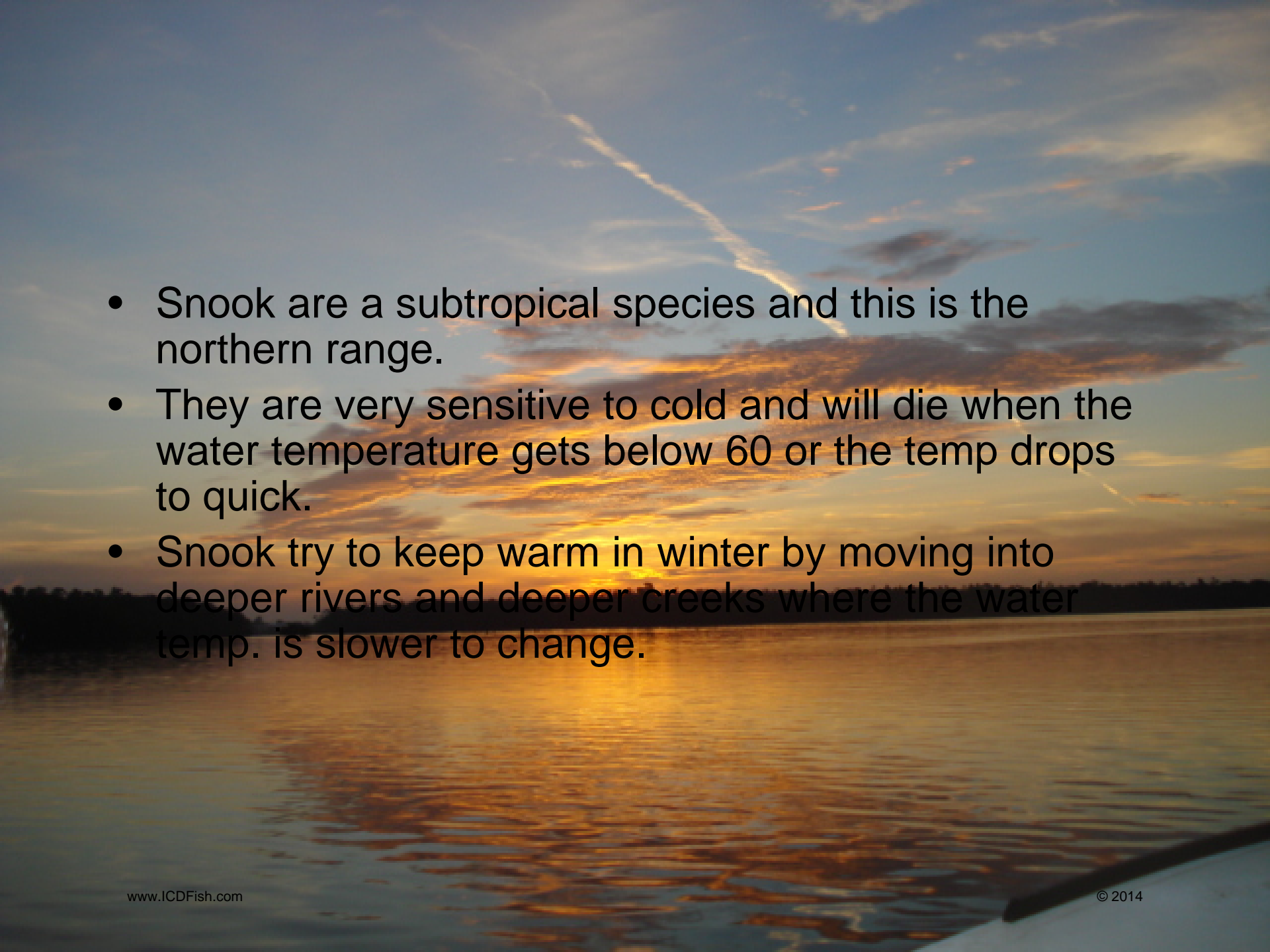
- Snook are protandric hermaphrodites.
- Meaning they can reverse their sex from male to female.
- The largest and oldest fish are female.
- This reversal is caused by a change in size of individuals within a group.
- A group that has lost its larger fish has lost females. So some males may reverse to fill the void.



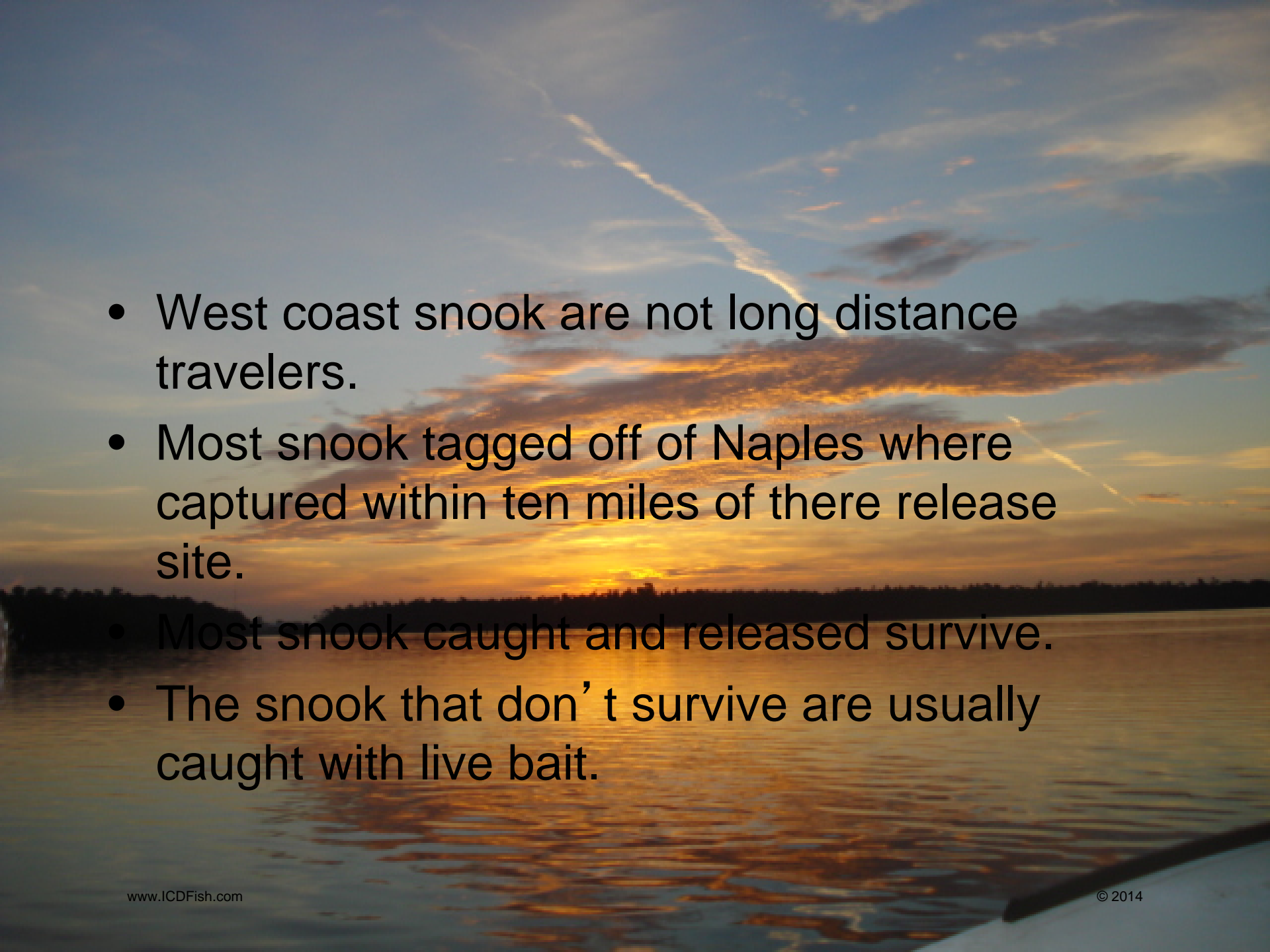
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- This process can take a little as 60-90 days.
 - Snook return to the same spawning spots every summer.
 - Prior to spawning, males congregate in large numbers in “staging areas”.
 - Spawning begins in April and extends into October.
 - Spawning is more intense during full and new moon phases.

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- Spawning is centered around months with long daylight hours, June and July.
 - Females may produce 1.5 million eggs with each spawn and may spawn every other day for the first part of the season. Only a tiny fraction survive.
 - Juveniles move to the upper reaches of the estuary till they mature.
 - Males mature in 2-3 years.
 - Females mature in 3-4 years.



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- A scenic photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some wispy clouds. In the distance, a city skyline is visible against the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.
- Snook are a subtropical species and this is the northern range.
 - They are very sensitive to cold and will die when the water temperature gets below 60 or the temp drops to quick.
 - Snook try to keep warm in winter by moving into deeper rivers and deeper creeks where the water temp. is slower to change.



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- A scenic background image showing a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water's surface. A city skyline is visible in the distance, silhouetted against the bright sky. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and a few streaks of light are visible, possibly from aircraft or satellites.
- West coast snook are not long distance travelers.
 - Most snook tagged off of Naples where captured within ten miles of there release site.
 - Most snook caught and released survive.
 - The snook that don' t survive are usually caught with live bait.





Fishing for Snook

- Snook are incredibly strong and fast making them one of the most sought after game fish.
- They will jump when hooked and instinctively run for cover.
- Snook will take a wide variety of live and artificial baits.

Where to fish for snook

- Snook are mostly a coastal inshore fish
- They can be caught in bays, creeks, passes, around pilings piers and jetties, along the beach and on fish havens, reefs and close in wrecks.
- In the backwaters they can be found on mangrove shorelines and oyster bars where the tide is likely to wash small fish, shrimp and crabs to them



The best time to fish for snook

- Snook can be caught year round. The best time to catch snook during open season is September and April.

- The very best time to catch big snook is in the summer. Snook will congregate in the passes and along the beaches in May June and July.

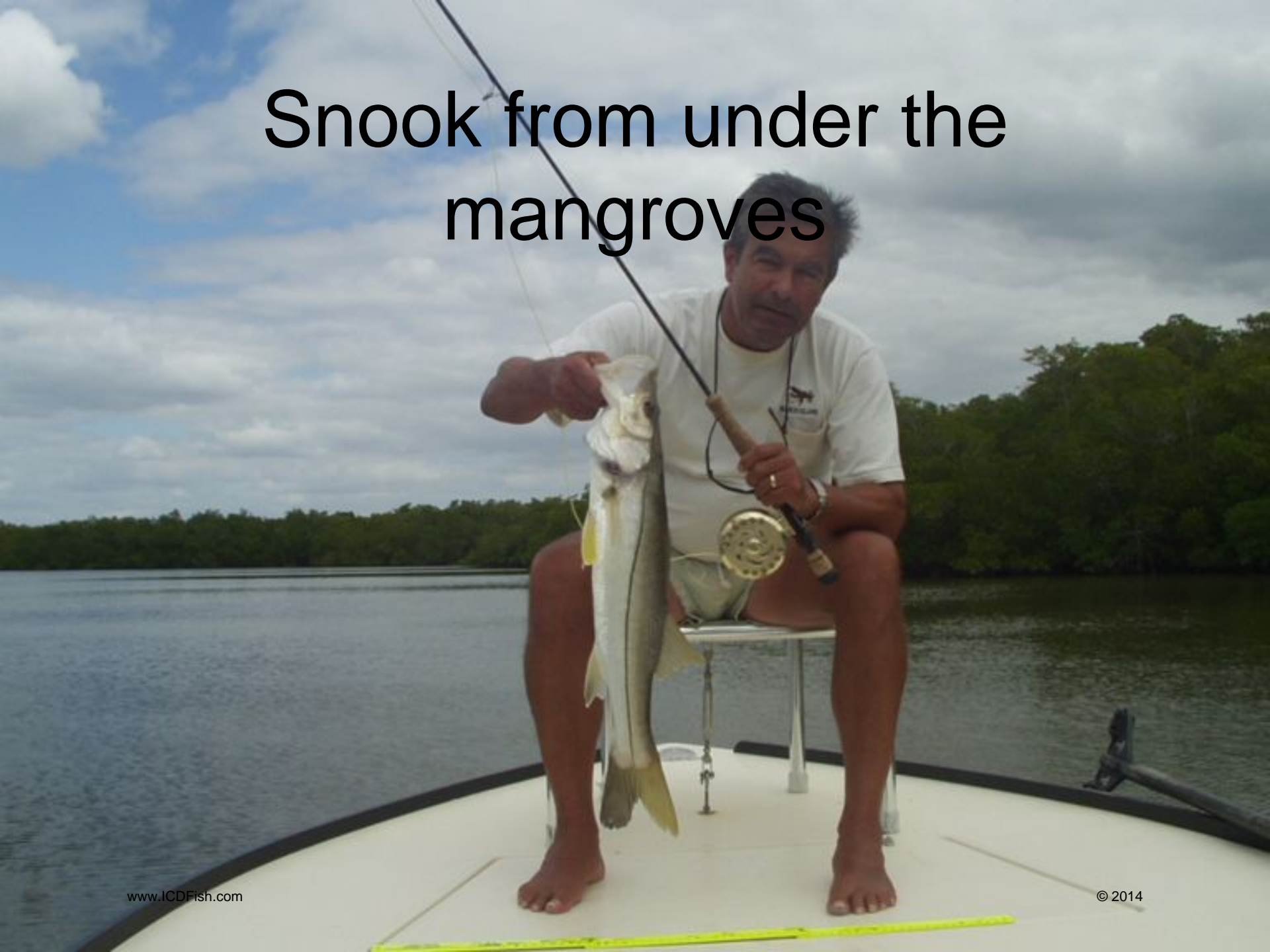
- During the winter months snook will move into the “back country” and will take flys, plugs, jigs and of course live bait. Look for them in creeks, rivers and mangrove shorelines. On cold days snook will lie in shallow bays that have a dark or black bottom that warms in the sun. These fish can be finicky and spooky but they will eat if your persistent.

The best tides for snook fishing

- Snook have been caught on all tide phases. That said there is probably no other fish in southwest florida that is so tide sensitive.
- Snook become very active on an outgoing tide. The best tide is the strong outgoing around the full and new moon.
- As the tide drop, small fish are pulled from the mangroves and the oyster bars.

- Look for places that water moves and forms edies. Fallen debris that has the tide washing into it. The edges of oyster bars and drop offs.

Snook from under the mangroves



Where to fish for snook

- Snook are predators that will lay in ambush.
- They like cover, fallen trees submerged debris and mangrove points where the water eddies
- In the summer snook will patrol the beaches looking for food near passes where they spawn





Fly Fishing for Snook

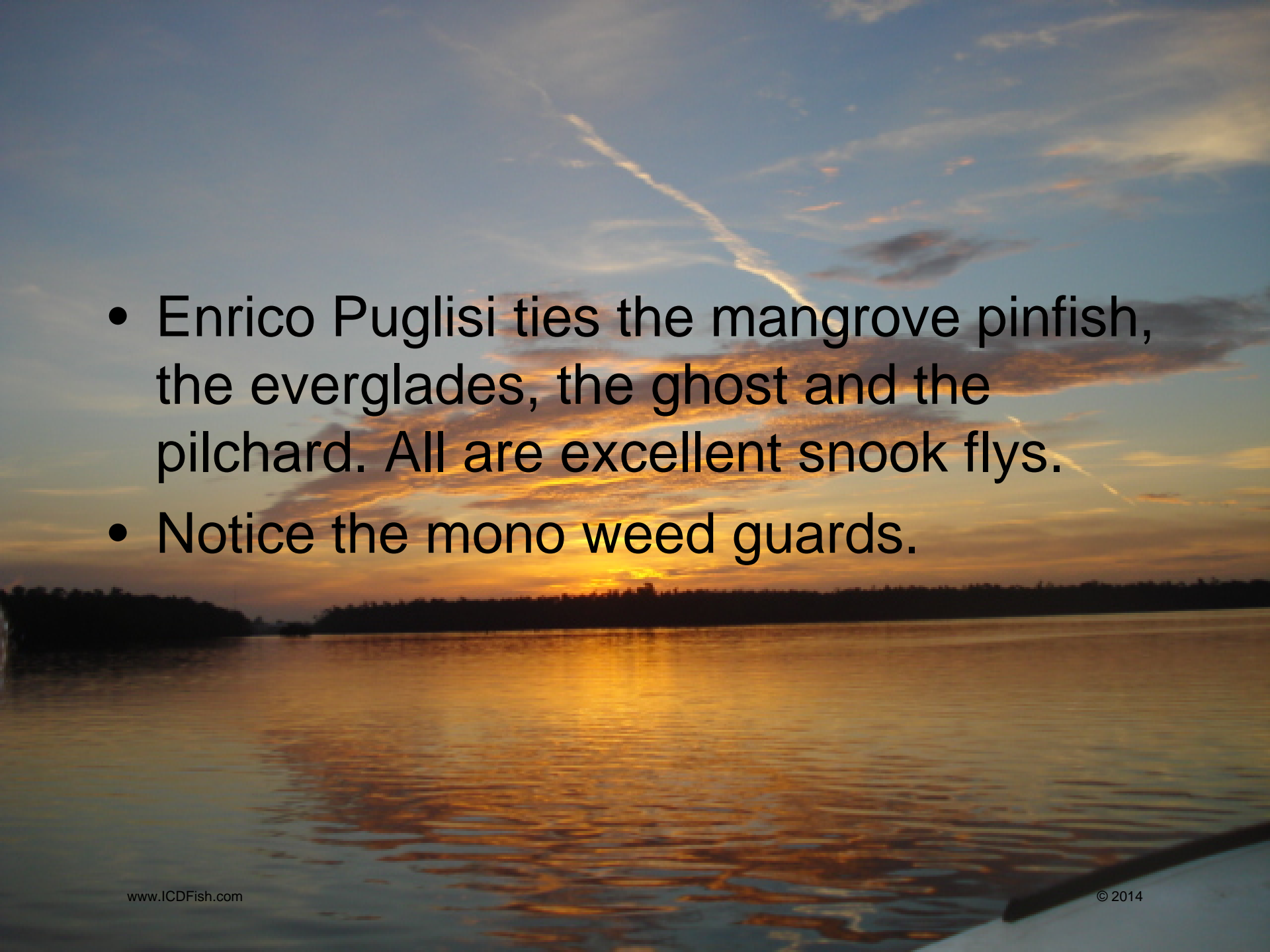
- Snook are one of the greatest fish to catch on a fly. There is a skill level needed to get your fly under mangrove limbs and over oysterbars. Any size snook is a well earned catch but a 10lb + fish is unforgettable. Strong, fast and they like to jump!



- On Higher tides and days with water less than clear, we blind cast shorelines and creek mouths.
- On lower tides we can quitly pole our skiff down shorelines and throw to fish under mangroves or cruising the oyster bars

Fly rods and lines

- We suggest seven to nine wt. rods, nine feet long with matching weight forward floating lines
- We are happy to tie leaders for you. From the fly line down we use 40-30-20 and then a short piece of forty mono
- or fluorocarbon for the bite tippet. Total length around nine feet

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- A scenic photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange glow across the sky and reflecting on the water's surface. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. In the distance, a dark silhouette of a city skyline is visible along the horizon. The foreground shows the calm water with gentle ripples.
- Enrico Puglisi ties the mangrove pinfish, the everglades, the ghost and the pilchard. All are excellent snook flies.
 - Notice the mono weed guards.

recommended along the route. It is advisable to park Ranger at either Lades City before plotting the trip.

CHOKOLOSKEE, AND 9

Local knowledge numerous bays.

COLLECT DEMONSTRATION 1. VS. 80 1454 1466 1467 1468

Mangrove

Chokoloskee

EVERGLADES WATERWAY
(see note)

COLLECT 15 OF MARCATION 1501 80 1454 1466 1467 1468

SAW 1979
RIVER

Mangrove

1'

10

Mangrove

Mangrove

Palmetto Key Grasses

Artificial lures for snook

- By far the most satisfying way to catch snook is with a jig, lure, fly or plug.
- A 1/4 oz jig of buck tail, nylon or plastic works in most situations.
- Worked slow on the bottom in creeks and passes.
- Cast up under mangroves while working shorelines and around oyster bars.

Working a shoreline



Artificial lures for snook

- Top water plugs like the Zara Spook, jumping minnow and mirror lure 7m series are about as fun as it gets. To see a ten pound snook hit your lure on the surface is unforgettable.
- Subsurface baits like the mirror lure 17 and 19 series and the 52m series work well.
- Noise making baits like the rattle trap work well in dirty water conditions.

Marabou jig



1/4oz weedless spoon, soft
plastic, DOA shrimp



Rattle trap



Zarra spook and Jumping minnow



Boone spinana



Mirror lure 7mch



Mirror lure Catch 2000



Mirror lure mr-17



Mirror lure mr-19



Weedless skip bait.



Tackle for snook

- Most snook can be caught with a medium action rod 6' 6" -7' long
- A spinning reel that holds at least 150 yards of 10-12 lb test mono or 15-20 lb test braid.
- A plug or bait casting combo should be 6' medium action with 15-20 lb test braid.
- For fishing from piers, bridges and in fast moving currents in passes should use heavier equipment.

Terminal tackle

- Snook have a very abrasive mouth and a razor sharp gill plate.
- At least 40lb test leader should be used
- For casting plugs and jigs it should be 15- 24", live bait and bridge rigs should be longer
- Use as little weight as necessary.

Sharp gill plates



Seasons and limits

- On the gulf coast snook season is closed, December, January, February, May, June, July and August.
- One fish per person per day.
- Slot size must be between 28 and 33 inches.

Management goals

- Snook populations are better now than in the past but the goal of 40% spawning potential ratio was not being met.
- That's the ratio of egg production in a fished population compared to a population that isn't fished.
- With the shorter season and stricter limits snook should continue to rebound.