

Fish Tales

New shallow-water anchor gains popularity

Flats fishermen are great ones for gadgets, which is why a fully rigged skiff can cost more than a small house. Shallow-water anglers are a serious lot when it comes to fishing, and they are constantly looking for an advantage over increasingly wary and pressured fish.

Lifelong Brandon resident John Oliverio was drifting across a sandbar off Sarasota three years ago, sight fishing for snook. Every time he saw a pod of fish, he would break out the anchor to stop the boat, set up, make a few casts, maybe catch a fish, and then move on. The anchor was noisy, and boat position was less than precise, so Oliverio started thinking.

With a background in mechanical engineering, the wheels started spinning toward what would become the Power-Pole, a shallow-water anchoring device that attaches to the back of the boat. Three years later, Oliverio quit his day job to pursue his dream of manufacturing the Power-Pole. The first production run is already out, and Oliverio recently set up an assembly shop in Plant City.

After ironing out a few kinks, Oliverio is finally satis-

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fied with the finished product. So are professional anglers. Oliverio's tool recently was featured on the popular local TV slot, "Fish & Chip" with full-time Tampa Bay fishing guide Capt. Doug Hemmer.

Other professional anglers have picked up on the tool as well. Greg and Bryan Watts of Mulberry are professional fiberglass boat repairmen and avid tournament fishermen. Both of their boats sport Oliverio's poles, and they credit much of their tournament success this past year to the anchoring device. Most recently, the Watts brothers finished second in the prestigious Professional Redfish Tour Championship Event in Jacksonville in November. They also won a Maverick high-tech flats skiff at a tournament in Flamingo last spring.

The pole itself is a fiberglass stake of vinyl polyester resin, a material known for its flexibility. It is mounted on an arm of extruded aluminum that pivots at two points, and it is connected to the transom of the boat on a cast aluminum bracket fortified with titanium for strength and corrosion resistance. It is powered by the same hydraulic motor used in trim tabs, via switches mounted in any convenient location on the boat.

A good case scenario for the Power-Pole would be drifting in on a school of redfish in shallow water (the pole will function in up to 6 feet of water). Instead of having to stake the boat out with the push pole, which is nearly impossible to do over sand, or dropping an anchor, which is noisy and slow, you push the switch and down comes the Power-Pole. Fast and silent, the boat is secured without any damage to seagrass. The idea is to make fishing in wind or current a lot easier by affording superior boat control.

The target market for Oliverio's patented invention is professional fishing guides, tournament fishermen and



John Oliverio of Brandon has patented a shallow-water anchoring device called the Power-Pole.

serious flats anglers.

Interested anglers can check it out online at www.power-pole.com.

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