

Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 3:44 PM

Subject: C-Life From Boca Chita National Park in Biscayne Bay, Florida

Well, the great winter vacation in Marathon, Florida, had to come to an end. While you in North Carolina were experiencing temperatures well below freezing, and more snowfall than seen in a long while, we did see a low one morning of 55 degrees. Generally the highs have been in the 70 - 80 degree range. Our friend Bob Kassal took us out to the 7-mile bridge for a fun fishing day. We caught more grouper and grunts than we wanted to keep. Kay said that she must have caught at least 50 or more fish herself. We were using light tackle, with lead shot weights and live shrimp and cut fish for bait. What a great day!

We also went fishing back in the mangroves on our little dingy, along with Louis and Diane on their dingy. We did not catch as many fish as we did with Bob, but Kay assures me that she had just as much fun as if Joseph and I had caught a sailfish on our fishing trip the week before.

One of the best meals that I have had in Marathon was the Bar-B-Q ribs at the Dockside Restaurant. Our friend Bob Kassal joined Margie, Larry, Kay, and I for dinner that evening and we were entertained by one of the best known local entertainers on guitar and banjo, Joe Mama and John Holum. I talked with Joe Mama about common friends that we have back in Southport, George and Mary Beth, and I am bringing them back one of his CDs.

One afternoon while riding through the canals with Larry and Margie we saw one of the meanest looking iguanas that you can imagine. These brown and green large lizards look more like prehistoric monsters.

Another surprise was a visit by friends of ours from Southport,NC, David High and Haila MacKay. They are anchored in Boot Key Harbor at Marathon on their sailboat *Old Yeller*. David worked with our son Joseph at the Southport Marina and he was very involved with keeping the Southport Marina from being sold to a developer back in 2005-2006.

The month, actually five weeks, at Marathon have just flown by, and it is time to move north. We left Marathon on March 4 and anchored behind Islamorada the first night. I have no idea what the white stakes on the sandbar out in the middle of Florida Bay are but isn't it interesting how each one has a bird (Cormorant) perched on it. We then moved up to Key Largo and anchored in Tarpon Basin. Each evening we have anchored with our traveling friends on Bella Luna and Wanderin' L&M. We have now traveled through part of Biscayne Bay and are tied to a basin wall in Boca Chita National Park. We can see the Miami skyline, and Turkey Point Nuclear Power Generating Station from the park. Kay and I did find time yesterday to prepare a Frogmore Stew (Low Country Boil) for ourselves and eight of our boating friends.

The park ranger at Boca Chita told us how to use a poem about how to read water color when boating. Kay thought this would be fun for young and old boaters to learn. Most of the shallow water that we encounter here is coral, which is high on the ranger's list of items to protect.

Blue, Blue, Cruise on through
Green, Green, nice & clean
Brown, Brown, Run aground
White, White, You might

Robert & Kay
C-Life

Photos: *Old Yeller*, Cormorants, fishing, iguana, Boca Chita National Park