

RECORD: Brian Andrews tops greater amberjack mark

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in the 25- to 40-pound range with one about 60 pounds, plus some vermilion snappers, also called beeliners.

“We were fishing an area known as the Yellow Gravel area,” Walker revealed. “The fish were suspended. Amberjack are bottom feeders, but they move around up and down in the water column. Most of the time, they hang out about halfway to the surface or in the upper part of the water column.”

Often called “reef donkeys” for their power, stubbornness and pugnacity, amberjack can test any tackle. Many people compare fighting a big amberjack to hoisting an anvil off the bottom. Greater amberjack can grow to more than 155 pounds. People usually start looking for them in about 60 to 80 feet of water, but anglers typically find them in water at least 200 to 300 feet deep. The state established many artificial reefs off the Alabama coast to attract amberjack and other fish.

“We were sitting in about 250 feet of water,” Walker advised. “Whenever someone hooks a big fish like that, there’s always a possibility that it heads home straight to the bottom. We have to drag them away from the structure with the boat if we want to land them.”

To catch amberjack, most people simply drop down a bait over a reef. The voracious predators eat almost anything they can grab including various fish, crabs and squid. Most anglers use live baitfish. Andrews used a live hardtail, also called a hardtail jack or blue runner, for bait. Other good



Photo submitted

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Brian Andrews shows his state record 132.80-pound greater amberback.