

Tiny nibbles, BIG FISH

Anglers without boats can still catch powerful specimens

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

Many anglers disdain sheepshead because their thick spines and tough scales make them difficult to clean. Some people regard them as poor tablefare. Others find them delicious, but nobody disputes their fighting abilities.

Built for power, not speed, sheepshead don't run like rampaging redfish or slash and flash like speckled trout. Instead, they simply rely upon brute strength. They hunker down by a piling, reef or other object refusing to budge and daring anyone to bring them to the surface.

"Sheepshead get overlooked by a lot of people," commented Patric Garmeson with Ugly Fishing Charters (251-747-1554, www.uglyfishing.com) in Daphne. "Most people want to take home speckled trout, redfish and flounder to eat. With big scales and sharp dorsal spines, sheepshead are a little more difficult to clean, but they are pretty good

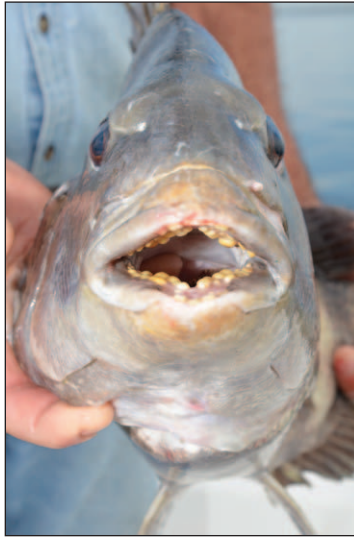


Photo by John N. Felsher

Sheepshead come with remarkable dental equipment used for crushing barnacles and nibbling shrimp, crabs and other morsels.

as table fish. These strong, scrappy fighters are a heck of a lot of fun to catch."

Sheepshead stay wherever they can find hard

See **POWERFUL**, 38

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