

# LAGOON LINESIDERS

MEET THE NEWEST “SPOTLIGHT” SPECIES  
OF MOSQUITO LAGOON. **BY HUNTER BACH**

**S**panning 28 miles from New Smyrna Beach to Kennedy Space Center and offering roughly 36,000 acres of water surface, Mosquito Lagoon is one of the largest undeveloped areas on the east coast of Florida. The brackish water lagoon, once home to groups of the Timucuan and Ais Native Americans, is a transitional zone between the temperate climate to the north and the subtropical to the south. One of the most unique bodies of water in North America, the lagoon's restricted circulation and often hyper-saline levels have led to its characterization as a “miniature ocean.” Some fish species remain in the lagoon for their entire life cycle, as opposed to migrating offshore. Mosquito Lagoon

was recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an “Estuary of National Significance” and consequently placed in the national estuary program in 1990.

Mosquito Lagoon is the ideal habitat for redfish, seatrout, flounder and sheepshead. Seasonally, it nurtures a healthy juvenile tarpon population as well as the occasional beast of a migrating adult. Only recently, however, has the snook joined ranks in a very real way, becoming a permanent resident. Although the warmer waters of the Gulf of Mexico (and spring fed rivers) have sustained a healthy snook population north of NASA's latitudes for years, opportunities on the east coast this far north have been few and far between. During the years follow-



The writer and company pole Mosquito Lagoon, in East Central Florida, in search of laid-up or popping snook. They'll likely encounter redfish and trout, too.