

Out and About in the Abacos

Check out the Abacos for a blend of traditional island charm and lights out fishing. **By Jeff Merrill**

Though they lack the high-rise mega-resorts found on some of the larger Bahama islands, the Abacos, also referred to as the Out Islands, attract boaters searching for beautiful beaches with turquoise-colored water, quaint shops, great restaurants and excellent accommodations. You won't find the flashy neon signs and bustling casinos but that doesn't mean you'll be longing for activities to occupy your time. From Marsh Harbour and Green Turtle Cay to Treasure Cay and beyond, the charm and tranquility this part of the Bahamas offers will draw you back again and again. Though there are numerous places throughout the Abacos to, if you'll pardon the expression, hang your hat and park your boat during a visit, we've picked a few resorts which we've found to be not only fisherman-friendly but also sport accommodations the wife and

kids will find enjoyable as well. There's enough to keep you busy away from the boat including tennis, golf, hiking, kayaking, diving, snorkeling as well as shopping. Or simply chill out on a lounge chair where you can soak up some rays and read a book. All have great restaurants on the premises while others also offer additional dining possibilities within walking distance as well. But best of all, the Bahamas also offer some great fishing opportunities for everything from bonefish to blue marlin.

Located about 170 miles due east of Palm Beach, Green Turtle Cay's uneven coastline with deep bays and white sand beaches is a vacation paradise. Here's where you'll find the Bluff House Beach Hotel and Marina which offers guests land accommodation including single and split level suites and one and two bedroom villas. For larger groups, three bedroom



cottages complete with kitchen, dining and living areas plus a private Jacuzzi. All rooms and cottages have private balconies with an ocean view, daily maid service, air conditioning and are within close proximity to the beach and marina. The Bluff House offers two restaurants and two bars including the Jolly Roger Bar and Bistro which is casual and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner either indoors or waterside at the Marina. The more formal Clubhouse dining room and bar is located in the main house on top of the bluff and offers spectacular views of the Sea of Abaco as well as White Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. The menu at both restaurants includes a selection of dishes from Western Europe, the Mediterranean and of course, authentic Bahamian cuisine. The marina has 40 slips and its entranceway is dredged and well marked. Here you'll find gas and diesel and a dockage configuration that has an angled design allowing each boat its own deck space. You'll also find electricity and water hookups plus a laundry room and restrooms.

Treasure Cay Hotel Resort & Marina on Treasure Cay is located less than 200 miles from Florida and here you'll find a 3½ mile beach with snow-white sand. Accommodation includes standard rooms, deluxe rooms and one, two or three bedroom suites. Rooms feature a garden side or marina view while suites have a private balcony overlooking the marina. The suites have a complete kitchen,



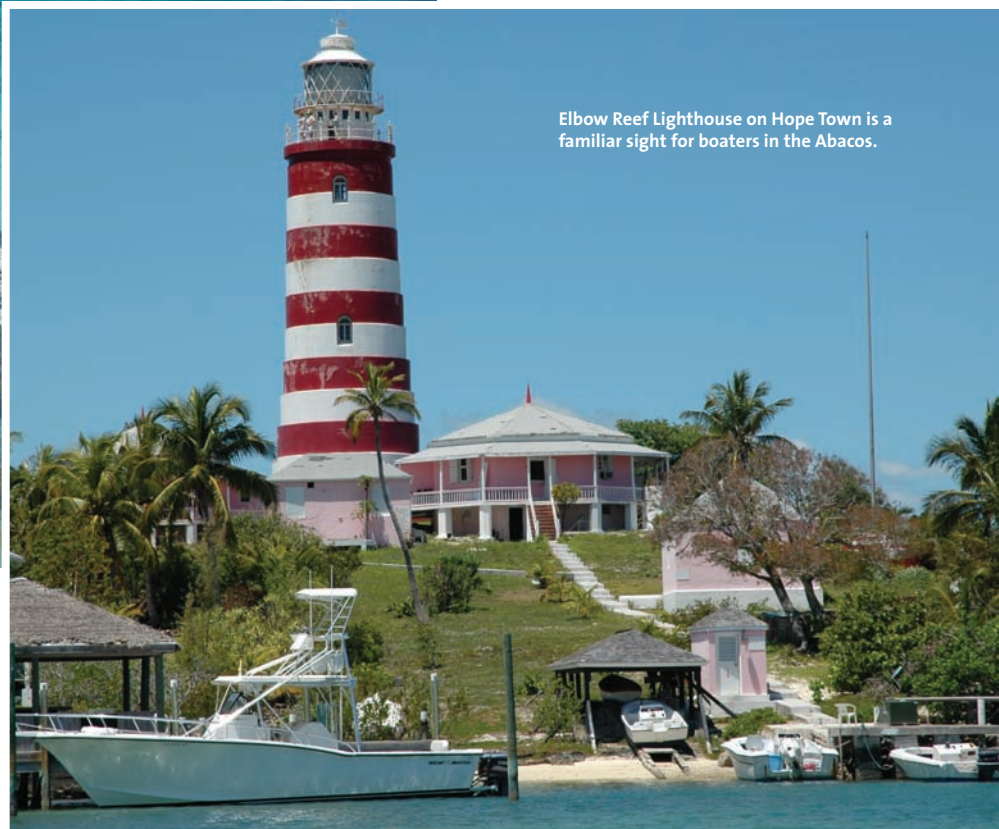
For a change of pace the Out Island's reefs and wrecks offer a wide range of tasty bottom dwellers.



It's hard to pass up a day at the beach with a view such as this.

living area and multiple bathrooms. For upscale dining with indoor and outdoor seating there's the Spinnaker Restaurant overlooking the marina or have tasty lunch at the Coco Beach Bar which is right on the beach. Both restaurants feature Bahamian dishes as well as Continental cuisine. For those who desire a meal plan there are several options available. For an adult beverage, check out the Tippy Seagull Bar which is a local watering hole with live entertainment and dancing. Treasure Cay offers a well protected 150-slip marina which is one of the largest in the Bahamas. The marina is centrally located and is within short walking distance of the beach, hotel restaurants and pool. Amenities include boat rentals, fishing charters and guides, gas and diesel plus a grocery store, duty-free shopping, laundry and showers.

Located on Marsh Harbour, Abaco Beach Resort and Boat Harbour lies tucked within 90 miles of protected waterways with numerous cays and secluded beaches. The resort has 82 waterfront rooms, suites and cottages, all featuring private terraces or balconies. There are several one-bedroom suites which have a fully equipped kitchen while numerous two-bedroom villas feature two bathrooms and kitchens. The one, two and three bedroom residences range from 800 to 3500 square feet and overlook Boat Harbour marina. The Angler's



Elbow Reef Lighthouse on Hope Town is a familiar sight for boaters in the Abacos.

Restaurant offers a blend of Bahamian and International cuisine and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can relax at either of two bars, one of which fronts one of the resort's two freshwater swimming pools.

Boat Harbour marina offers 190 protected slips and can handle vessels up to 200 feet and is the largest marina in the Bahamas. A fully modern facility, here you'll find all the amenities you'd desire including cable television, telephone, shore-side laundry and showers. For larger vessels, three-phase electricity is available while the marina's new fuel dock offers gas and diesel and can fuel three average-sized boats at the same time.

It's hard to imagine a place that offers more variety for the visiting angler than can be found in the Bahamas. From secluded cays with sandy flats to near-shore reefs and wrecks on out to the cobalt blue water of the Atlantic Ocean, angling opportunities are numerous for a bounty of species. Though you can catch most species year 'round, we've highlighted the best times to score your next trophy. You cast a fly or shrimp for bonefish from April through December

though spring and fall offer the best shot since the flats warm up very quickly in the summer and chase the gray ghost to cooler, deeper holes. You'll also find tarpon, permit, barracuda and a variety of sharks to fill the voids between bonefish bites. On the offshore scene, blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, mahi-mahi and kingfish will crash lures and baits from March through September. You'll also encounter wahoo as well but the best time to land those toothy critters is from October through June. Reef and wreck species are available year 'round though that fishery can be a bit uncomfortable while at anchor during the breezy months of October through April.

While we've barely scratched the surface on where to go, when to go and what to do when you get there, as you can see the Abaco chain of the Bahamas offers a full menu of fishing, boating and shore-side activities. Whether you make the crossing from directly from Florida for a short stay or plan a trip that takes in several islands over an extended period, you'll be rewarded with a fishing adventure with memories that will last a lifetime. [m/](#)