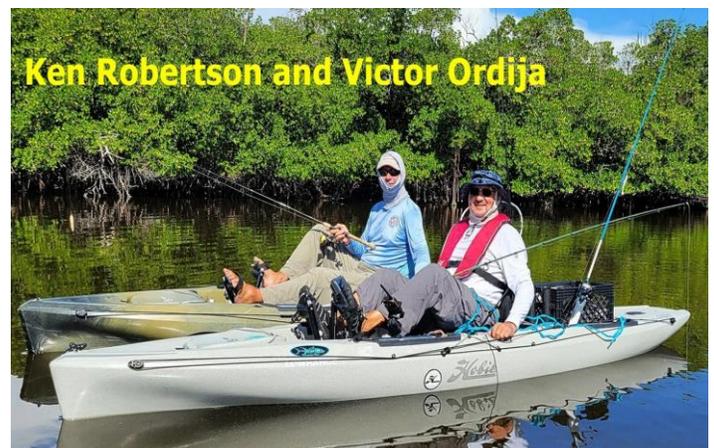


**MSC Kayak Group Trip
August 27, 2021 – Chokoloskee Bay
A Water Quality Wake-Up Call**

The MSC Kayakers returned to one of our favorite venues, Chokoloskee Bay, for a beautiful day trip in Everglades National Park. Fishing was a little slow in the morning, but as the tide turned and the incoming water filled the waterways and started to cover the oyster bars, the action picked up. No changes were made to the “Kayak Leaderboard” during this outing for the 2022 kayak fishing challenge, but Dave Schott did land a nice snook!



The Kayak Group has been fishing the Chokoloskee Bay/Everglades National Park area for years. The fishing has always been good here and the water has been clean. However, as we headed back across Chokoloskee Bay with the incoming tide, we noticed something in the water that we haven't seen here before...lots of brown algae floating on the surface. This looks like the same brown algae that has been seen floating in the Marco Island canals for the past few years. Up until now, we thought that by fishing south, in Everglades National Park, we could avoid the water quality issues. It looks like those days are over. As we approached the launch we were in for another surprise. The incoming tide had pushed the brown algae in the bay towards the shore, and as we approached, what looked like a sandy beach was, in reality, about 20 yards of thick, brown algae that we had to travel through in order to get our kayaks out of the water. Not a very pleasant sight or something any of us wanted to do!

The fact that this algae has now moved south and into what, up until now, was regarded as “clean” water should give us all something to think about. Water quality issues effect what our waterways look like and also have an effect on the amount of oxygen in the water. As the oxygen levels decrease, the fish will move to other areas where the water provides a “healthier” environment. There is also research being done into the long-term effects of living near “impaired” water and breathing whatever may be released into the air.

We all moved to this area in one way or another for the water...to look at it, swim in it, or for the wide variety of fish that could be caught here. Slowly but surely, this is all slipping away! If you haven't gotten involved before, please look at what is happening around us right now and take action. Join forces with groups that are trying to do things that will have a positive effect on water quality; support local, regional and state candidates that have water quality as their top priority or just make other people aware of the seriousness of the problem. If we could get everyone to understand the problem, that could be the start of a solution!

