

# On-line weather system little known to fishermen

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TARPON SPRINGS—  
Capt. John Georgiou sails 16 to 18 miles into the Gulf of Mexico in search of grouper and snapper, but he knows nothing of an Internet weather system designed to keep him safe.

Capt. Rich Knox mainly fishes the flats closer to shore. He, too, has never heard of the hourly updated weather information available from a buoy offshore.

The two commercial fishermen said they did not know about the Coastal Ocean Monitoring Prediction System's on-line data until a reporter told them about it.

Georgiou, who sails the *Two Georges* out of Tarpon Springs, said he watches the weather on television or listens to it on a marine band.

Information from COMPS, a network of coastal weather stations and buoys, recently went on-line with its stream of meteorological data.

Clifford Merz, director of the COMPS program at the St. Petersburg campus of the University of South Florida, said the high-tech recording

the Port Richey Recreation Center, one in Aripeka and a buoy 28 miles offshore of Hudson.

Accessing the Web site, <http://comps.marine.usf.edu>, a fisherman could get the wind speed, direction and speed of gusts from the buoy in the Gulf.

But Georgiou, who runs Dolphin Deep Sea Fishing in Tarpon Springs, relies mainly on the radio for weather information. "We monitor the weather on the marine band."

Knox, who operates A Absolute Flats Fishing in New Port Richey, said he was not aware of the Internet-based weather information system. "I don't know about it."

He said fishing charters that go out deeper into the Gulf would probably better benefit from such a system than shallow water charters like his.

The system has another purpose, though, that of providing earlier warning to residents of impending coastal flooding, said Michele Baker, Pasco County emergency management director. Meteorologists and emergency

managers use the data to alert residents.

*Information from the Media General News Service was used in this report.*

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**SOME LOCAL COMMERCIAL** fishermen do not know about, nor use, on-line weather information from this buoy in the Gulf of Mexico.

Photo provided by Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System

instruments will help with boating and fishing.

People who ply the gulf will get used to visiting the Web site and will use the data as reference points, Merz predicted.

The system's area data collection points include a coastal weather station at