

GIVING BACK

TO THE WATER WE LIVE ON

VICKI MCGAHEE, *CONFETTI*

Two years ago, we sold our house, our cars, and most everything we owned and moved aboard *CONFETTI*, our Krogen 39'. We love our cruising life and have met wonderful people and visited beautiful places along the Atlantic Coast and in the Bahamas. However, one of the most difficult things to do while living full-time on a boat is finding opportunities to give back to the coastal communities we visit.

It became a sort of mission of mine.



**LISA SMITH, KROGEN 52'
PRIVATEER, WITH FISH
MONITORING DEVICE**

When we came across an announcement on a boating website about a need for “Fish Finder Volunteers”, we jumped at the chance to participate. The Fish Finder Project is a program done by the Ocean Research Project (ORP) in partnership with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. When we applied, the project was looking for boaters who were going to travel the U.S. Atlantic Coast, the Gulf of Mexico or the Bahamas. Our cruising plans met that criteria. The ad further explained that each time the boat was anchored or docked, participants would place a monitor in the water to help gather information on the location of marine species.

where no researchers or scientists are located or working at that time. Currently, the Fish Finder Project has a dozen volunteers. ORP has plans for more teams of volunteers for more research in 2019.

Serving as a Fish Finder Volunteer is easy. Each time we anchor or dock, we place the monitor in the water off our swim platform and we record specific data which we send off to ORP monthly. They are also finalizing a phone app for even easier data entry. Fish that have been tagged by researchers transmit a signal to the receiver and the monitor picks up the signals. Each tag emits a unique sound/pulse that is understood by the



We sent in our application and after a phone interview, *CONFETTI* was accepted. A second Kadey-Krogen, Krogen 52' *PRIVATEER* (Gregg and Lisa Smith), applied and they, too, became Fish Finder Volunteers.

Since becoming involved, we've learned much more about why funding and volunteers are so important to their mission. The Fish Finder Project began in 2014 with a pilot study to demonstrate how recreational boaters, armed with special monitoring devices, could deploy their technology and receive signals from fish in various waters

monitors. *CONFETTI's* monitor will be mailed back to ORP at the end of March 2019.

We hope the data we collect will help the ORP learn more about fish populations and their migration patterns. The ORP's research can also be useful for fisheries and resource management facilities. Pretty cool! ■



CONFETTI, KROGEN 39'

INTERESTED IN APPLYING TO BE A FISH FINDER VOLUNTEER?

Contact Michelle Edwards, project coordinator, at EdwardsM@si.edu.

And, follow @OceanResearchProject on Facebook or visit www.OceanResearchProject.org for more updates and funding opportunities.

