



## Florida Keys Stone Crab Eating Contest Video

Participants quickly cracked and consumed stone crab claws Saturday during the Keys Fisheries Stone Crab Claw Eating Contest, a rowdy Florida Keys consumption competition in Marathon.

In two competitive heats, 24 contestants chowed down hoping to be named the most proficient cracker and consumer of the tasty crustaceans.

Miami resident Kevin Bombardier, 47, was crowned the 2019 champion, setting a new contest record, finishing in 14 minutes and 16 seconds.

Contestants had to crack and eat 25 stone crab claws and pick them completely clean in the fastest time. No claw meat could be left behind, with a 30-second penalty imposed for infractions.

Bombardier incurred penalties of 1:30, but still managed to best rivals including Juan Mallen of Miami and defending champion Christian Gatti of Big Pine Key, Florida.

Bombardier said he had never cracked stone crab claws before and employed advice from past winners and a professional cracker prior to competing.

"I spoke with the professional cracker upstairs who does it for everybody, he gave me some advice to do 'crack-knuckle-knuckle-knuckle-claw,'" said Bombardier. "I also spoke with Juan who was a three-time champion here, and got some advice and tips from him.

"That was my strategy, then I just focused and did my own thing," he said.

Marathon, Florida residents Greg D'Agostino and Ryan Beckett claimed their fifth consecutive top team title, finishing in six minutes, 40 seconds.

The Florida Keys island chain is Florida's top regional supplier of the world-renowned delicacy — considered a renewable resource because of the crabs' ability to re-grow harvested claws.

About 40 percent of the state's stone crab harvest that averages more than 2 million pounds annually comes from Keys waters, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Stone crab season runs from Oct. 15 to May 15.

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