

Fishing & Hunting

By Richard Seale



Suddenly It's Summer

Fishing has been good to very good during May and June. From even small boats, sight casting for cobia along the ocean shore has produced some very nice fish. Sight casting is very different from bait casting for this "poor man's sport fish."

Bait fishing is done with a couple of heavy-duty rods rigged with live or dead bluefish, spot, croaker or pinfish. The 5/0 or 6/0 heavy, but well-sharpened, hook is on a sliding sinker. When a cobia grabs the bait, it normally runs about 100 yards, stops and then ingests the bait. Waiting all that time to set the hook is hard to do, but that is the deal. Sight fishing for cobia follows a lazy-start protocol since you need to have the sun up pretty high in order to have the lighting right to see the fish in clear water. Starting at 10 a.m. is not late.

The trick is to drop a 1/2-ounce or 3/4-ounce white jig head about 10 feet in front of a sighted cobia. The jig head should be rigged with some white and sparkling streamer materials and a strip of squid for "flavor." As in all fishing, nothing is guaranteed, but this year sight fishing success has been above average.

Cobia can run into the 80-pound class and they are very hard fighters—and very muscular. You do not want to put a "green" cobia in your boat. A "green" fish is one that has not been worn down in the landing fight. A green cobia can really mess up your boat. A good hammer or baseball bat will take more fight out of a boated cobia. The good news is that this is a very good eating fish and lots of fun to fight.

The mahi-mahi fishing out near Big Rock has been very good, too. Big bull dolphins, in the 25-to-40-pound class, have been hammering trolled ballyhoo baits on the surface and some nice wahoo have been hooked from deep trolling rigs. Blue marlin are out there too, so good fishing was expected for the Big Rock Tournament.

Close to land, the flounder are in the inlets and marsh flats. Along the beaches, some 18-inch Spanish mackerel are being landed on 00 silver or gold Clark Spoon lures. Another good rig is a chartreuse yellow or sparkly green small Huntington Drone spoon. Trolling speed for Spanish is about 6 to 7 knots. Get down to 5 knots and the bluefish will be the fish you hook, and the fish that cut your lines! With these light lures there is the tendency for hooked fish to spin as they are brought in and this can make a mess out of your line. A 16-foot, 15-pound test fluorocarbon leader is a good Spanish rig, but it can spin into a mess. A trick is to put a small black swivel in the middle of this leader. Use black since bluefish are apt to strike at silver "anything" and they will cut your leader and you will lose your lure.

Crabbing has picked up with some nice male "Baltimore Jimmies" in the mix.

As the water warms up, an increasing number of bacteria find it a friendly place to populate. If you are swimming, boating, clamming, paddle boarding or kayaking and happen to get cut on oyster shells or something else, it is important to get that wound disinfected as soon as possible. Normal peroxide might not be strong enough. Consider keeping a supply of betadine in your first aid kit, as well as a tube of triple antibiotic ointment and sterile bandaging, too. Hopefully, you will not use these often, so you should check the expiration dates at the start of the summer season. Wash the wound, apply a good bath of betadine, let the betadine dry, consider applying some triple antibiotic ointment and put a clean band aid or bandage on the wound. Redress and watch the wound carefully for a few days. If the wound starts to redden or the tissue around the wound starts to swell, get to urgent care or a hospital. There are some tough bacteria out there and they need to be taken care of before they get a head start.

Be safe and don't forget to get sunscreen on the grandkids, and you, too. A day in our sun requires at least a 25 SPF, put on half an hour before getting into the sun, and reapplied after swimming. A safari type hat and sun glasses are good, too. Oh, yes, remember to wear life jackets when in a boat—by law the kids need them.

Mosquitoes Bite!

By Sarah Williams

Facts about the enemy

- Mosquitoes are the deadliest animals on earth. That's right; more deaths are associated with mosquitoes than any other animal on the planet. Mosquitoes may carry any number of deadly diseases, including malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and encephalitis. Mosquitoes also carry heartworm, which can be lethal to your dog.
- Only female mosquitoes bite humans and animals; males feed on flower nectar.
- A mosquito's wings beat 300-600 times per second.
- The average mosquito weighs about 2.5 milligrams and can fly an estimated 1-1.5 miles per hour.

Though small in size, mosquitoes can be a huge nuisance. The town is proactive in this area and mosquito spraying is ongoing in Pine Knoll Shores—in an environmentally responsible manner. The town will continue an aggressive approach with larvicide on a town-wide scale. Larvicide will be applied in public areas, and we urge everyone to consider helping us use this completely organic substance to kill larvae before they become a problem.

To help with this effort the town has again purchased larvicide "donuts" in bulk, which are sold commercially under such names as Mosquito Dunks. We will sell these at cost with no tax. A six-pack of donuts at a local store is \$9.97, plus tax. We sell six donuts for \$6. Each donut will kill mosquito larvae in 100 square feet of surface water and is effective for 30 days—and may be broken up by hand for smaller areas. For more information on the larvicide used, contact town hall at the number below.

The Public Service Department will continue to spray for mosquitoes during early daylight hours, which is more effective than in the pre-dawn dark. The product we use is Aqua-Reslin, a mosquito adulticide which is *not* the old DDT-based compound that we once used to fog our streets.

Last year the town's spraying program was inspected by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Pest Control/Pesticides Division. They found our program to be satisfactory in terms of recordkeeping, certifications, equipment calibration and dosage monitoring. We dilute our Aqua-Reslin to a minimum strength and spray well below the maximum amount allowed by EPA regulation. All of our employees who spray are certified.

What you can do

- **Take steps to eliminate standing water.** Just a few inches of water is all it takes for a female to deposit her eggs. Tiny mosquito larvae develop quickly in roof gutters, unused flower pots or buckets and old tires dumped in vacant lots. Do not allow water to stagnate in these or other receptacles. Dump anything that holds water often—and more often if it has rained. Birdbaths, non-chlorinated wading pools, footbaths, garbage can lids and pottery will all attract breeding mosquitoes. Remember to empty the saucers under your flower pots, and don't leave water in pet bowls for more than two days.
- **If you are not a full-time resident** or if you will be away from home for an extended period of time, empty containers and birdbaths and turn them over or move them inside before leaving the beach.
- **Keep gutters clean and unclogged.** Be sure your downspouts drain properly without leaving puddles in the drainage area. You may need to reroute your downspouts or add extensions to carry water away.
- **Walk your property** after a rain and look for areas in the landscape that are not draining well. If you find puddles that remain for four or more days, regrade the area or apply a mosquito donut. Likewise, check after watering your yard to be sure that no standing water remains.
- **Call the town hall at 247-4353** to report any areas of standing water that are not on your property and need attention.
A little vigilance will go a long way toward reducing the mosquito population.