

Fishing & Hunting



By Richard Seale

Nice to be home

Linda and I are still struggling to get up to speed after so long away from home on our around-the-world cruise. Although a flu-like cruise ship "crud" laid us out for our first 10 days home, I did manage to do some crab potting with good results. A couple of days provided about three dozen nice crabs. In the mess were two sponge crabs—one was a blue claw and the other, surprisingly, a stone crab. Of course, both of these were quickly returned to the water. I want those eggs to turn into baby crabs. Also in the mess were several doublers with female blue claws just starting into the molting process. If you can set out a shedder keeper and keep some food for these crabs, some might shed and provide you with a softshell meal. If not, these preshedders will be nice full steamed crabs for picking, as will the "jimmy" that was the carrier. There are plenty of pinfish, croakers and hogfish around that you can catch on small hooks—and shrimp for crab pot bait. Here on the North Carolina banks we have a good life. We are well blessed.

The latest Division of Marine Fisheries proclamations applied a 75-fish limit on commercial spotted sea trout harvest. The recreational rules were not changed, so the four-fish, 14-inch minimum remains in place. I have heard reports that specs were being caught in the estuaries. Flounder have a 14-inch minimum and four-fish-a-day limit.

The warmer water in Bogue Sound will bring clams up from their overwintering deep sets, so clamming is something to consider on a nice day. Raking these tasty morsels is more successful and a lot easier now. Oyster harvesting is out of season, but mussels from along the shore are plentiful at lower tides. While mussels are more work, they are there for the taking. Steamed open, plucked out of the shell, and dipped in a crushed fresh garlic and melted butter sauce, the mussel is an interesting treat.

The bluefish had been migrating past our ocean shores since March and several very nice three- to seven-pound fish were landed in the ocean waters outside Beaufort Inlet or at Cape Lookout in early May. Also, a father was photographing his daughter holding a large blue fish on the McNeill Park dock early in May. I am in the process of getting my boats tested out and running right and expect to be out fishing by the time you are reading this.

On our trip I went out of my way to visit local fish markets. The variety of fish, shellfish and crustaceans for sale was very interesting. Of course, traveling by ship puts you up close and personal to the local fishermen. I took many photos of these folks, their gear, their boats and their catches.

Hunting successes

I had hoped I would get in a wild turkey hunt after getting home, but the cruise crud not only wiped me out, but the coughing was sufficiently continuous that there was no way a wild turkey would come near that much noise. My granddaughter Lauren harvested a nice gobbler, as did my son Roger. He is a very good turkey hunter and seems able to convince real turkeys that his calling is from another actual turkey. My old boss at Scott Paper Company, Tom Kelly, would be proud of Roger's turkey skills. Tom has a website and markets turkey hunting stuff. The last I had heard he was still hunting, but he must be approaching 90 years of age. Perhaps I will be as fortunate.



Lauren Seale, granddaughter of Pine Knoll Shores residents Linda and Richard Seale, pictured with her own gobbler and that of her dad, Roger. Family friend Lee Gay from Rocky Mount also appears with his bird.—Photo by Roger Seale

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