

Fishing Club Scrubs, Works On Reef Project

Brunswick County Fishing Club members will make a clean sweep at their Sunset Harbor clubhouse Saturday, April 6, cleaning up in preparation for the first meeting of the year on April 20.

After a day swinging mops and brooms, members will share a covered dish supper. The social committee is sponsoring a \$1.50 per plate pancake breakfast starting from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. the following morning.

But April 20 stands out on the calendar as the first big event of the year. Congressman Charlie Rose, Rep. David Redwine, Jim Brown of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries

and other special guests are to join Reef Committee Chairman Dale McDowell for a program on artificial reefs, according to outgoing club secretary Miriam Speicher in a recent newsletter.

They plan to update members on efforts to re-establish the existing club reef and to create additional reefs off the county shores.

A free fish fry for members precedes the meeting and the first game night of the season follows it at 9 p.m.

Competition has already begun in the club's 1985 fishing contest that ends in mid-October and a two-day fishing rodeo will be held in June.

Club membership is \$5 per year.

State Once Took Major Role Developing Artificial Reefs

North Carolina once was actively involved in constructing artificial reefs off its coastline, including one of the three presently located off Brunswick County.

The Yaupon Beach reef was developed between 1974 and 1978 off Yaupon Beach, 5.7 miles off Lockwood's Folly Inlet, one of 13 oceanic and six estuarine reefs built by the state when funding was available.

Between 1973 and 1978, one-eighth of a percent of unrebated boater-paid road tax on gasoline went to the recreational fishing section of the Division of Marine Fisheries. The fund provided between \$200,000 and \$275,000 per year for artificial reef construction before it was eliminated.

Now one employee, Jim Brown, works with private groups trying to establish reefs and the state wants a local fishing club to take over the permit for the Yaupon Reef.

The state's saltwater anglers, through the N.C. Saltwater Fishing Federation, are considering asking

the legislature to require saltwater fishermen to buy licenses as is already required of freshwater fishermen. License sales proceeds offer a possible new source of artificial reef funding and a means of obtaining more political voice.

Such a tax would also make the state eligible for more federal Wallop-Breaux Funds, based on new taxes on boat and tackle. It is an expanded version of the Dingell-Johnson Fund. States with saltwater fishing licenses obtain greater portions of this pie.

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That One-Pound Spot May Be A Tournament Winner

Would you believe a one-pound spot? How about a 94-pound channel bass?

Everyone has their own fishing story to tell, but if the fish happens to be real you could be a winner in the 1985 North Carolina Salt Water Fishing Tournament.

At least 2,775 citations were presented to anglers in the state last year who caught species weighing over the specified minimum limits in the contest sponsored by the N.C. Division of Travel and Tourism. Those catching the largest fish in each of 24 categories will be awarded plaques at the end of the fishing season.

The tournament began March 11 and will continue throughout the fall. Last year, fish setting new state records were registered in two categories in the tournament including a 77-pound sailfish caught by George Baird of Long Beach. Also winning a plaque for his 112-pound, 8-ounce winning tarpon was Robert Smith of Southport.

Sometimes a winning fish may go unreported because the fisherman may not think he has a winner. Only one spot and one striped bass were entered in last year's tournament, making those catches automatic plaque winners. Only eight flounder and five gray trout were entered last

year, giving those entrants an excellent chance at finishing in first place. So that one-pound spot may be a winner after all.

Several rule changes went into effect for the 1985 season, including the deletion of striped bass from the contest and minimum weight limits for the following: bluefish, 17 pounds; sheepshead, 10 pounds; black drum, 70 pounds and sea mullet, two pounds.

Rules brochures for the 11th Annual N.C. Salt Water Fishing Tournament are free from the N.C. Travel and Tourism Division, 430 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, N.C., 27611, or call toll-free, 1-800-VISIT-NC.



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