



Local Netmaker Takes Aim On National Controversy

Supply netmaker Steve Parrish has walked right into the center of a national fishing controversy.

It's called the turtle excluder device (TED), and it's an aluminum and web box sewn into shrimp nets that helps endangered sea turtles escape the nets and avoid drowning.

North Carolina shrimpers must start using TEDs by May 1, 1988, or face possible penalty. The season will run from May 1 through Aug. 1. The devices, intended to protect turtles, have pitted fishermen against environmentalists.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regulations require shrimp trawlers 25 feet or longer to use TEDs in offshore waters from North Carolina to Texas.

Additionally, captains of shrimp boats less than 25 feet long shrimping in offshore waters and all inshore shrimpers must limit their towing time to 90 minutes unless they pull a TED.

Four types of TEDs have been officially approved by the NMFS so far. They are the NMFS-designed TED, the more oval Cameron TED with two deflector grids, the Matagorda TED and the Georgia TED.

Enter Steve Parrish, designer of a soft, all-web TED which is less bulky, simpler in design and scheduled to be tested by the NMFS Oct. 12 at Cape Canaveral, Fla.

If all goes well, Parrish said his TED should pass the test, which requires that turtle catches be reduced by 97 percent.

He explained that the testing will most likely include a control net with no TED, and another net with his TED attached. Parrish anticipates that when the control net captures 20 to 25 turtles and his net captures none, the NMFS will certify the Parrish TED.

Parrish's turtle excluder follows the only re-

quirements set by the NMFS, that there be a 35-inch opening for turtles to escape and that the maximum width between any metal bars be four inches.

The difference in his Parrish TED lies not only in the soft web material, but in the fact that turtles are excluded out the bottom of the device, while other devices exclude the turtle out the top or side.

"There is no way you can roll something heavy uphill like that," explained Parrish. "It is much easier to shoot the turtle out the bottom because he will just naturally float down. It's just really common sense that the opening should be on the bottom."

He said he has tested his turtle excluder in the nets of two Holden Beach shrimpers, William Varnum and Junior Fulford, and has yet to catch a turtle.

He added, "Sometimes you can go a whole month without catching a turtle, so it's hard to say how good it really works."

While it's effectiveness with turtles may yet be proven, Parrish said the excluder device definitely reduces extraneous catches.

"It has cut down on the amount of trash you usually find in the nets," said Parrish. He explained that shrimpers usually net truck tires, railroad ties, large rocks and "any other trash you can imagine."

"It has also cut down on the by-catch and jelly balls, and we're really not losing too much shrimp with this device," he said.

Positive reduction of their shrimp catch (southeastern shrimpers netted more than 325 million shrimp in 1986 with a value of \$600 million) is one of the objections raised by shrimpers to the use of TEDs, along with the added cost of the devices.

The NMFS TED costs \$350, and with some shrimpers pulling four nets and needing a spare, the cost could reach \$2,000.

"This TED," said Parrish of his own creation, "is something that can get rid of your turtles, but it's not so big and cumbersome that the shrimpers won't use it."

He concluded, "It may be something both groups can agree on."

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTHER

NETMAKER STEVE PARRISH works on his soft all-web turtle excluder device (TED). The National Marine Fisheries Service is scheduled to test Parrish's design Oct. 12 at Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Fishermen To Go After Four Species In BCFC Jamboree

Four species, not one, will be targeted by anglers in the Brunswick County Fishing Club's second annual Jamboree Fishing Tournament Oct. 17 at Sunset Harbor.

The tournament is open to members and non-members of the club, one of the state's largest salt-water fishing organizations.

Fishermen will win prizes for flounder, black bass, Spanish mackerel and king mackerel. In this fledgling event, prizes will be percentages of the entry fees paid, rather than a fixed sum.

First place awards for the largest king, the largest Spanish, the largest flounder and the greatest aggregate weight of 10 black bass will each be 15 percent of the entry fees. Second place in each category is worth 5 percent of the entry fees.

A \$40 entry fee is charged per boat and one person on each boat must be a member of the fishing club (Memberships are \$5 per person).

Entry fees must be paid by 9 p.m. Oct. 16, following the 8 p.m. captains' meeting at the clubhouse at Sunset Harbor.

According to Chairman Roger

Comer, fishing will start at 6 a.m. and continues through 3 p.m. Fishing will be by rod and reel, with all entries meeting state and federal species limits.

All boats with fish must be in line at the weigh station by 3:30 p.m. All fish must be brought to the Sunset Harbor boat ramp by boat and entered by a club member. The fish will be weighed in at the clubhouse and become the club's property.

Prizes will be awarded at a fish fry that night and are limited to one major prize per boat. In the event of a

tie, prizes will be divided.

Protests must be accompanied by a \$100 deposit and filed by 5 p.m. Saturday; decisions of the tournament committee are final. Entries are subject to tarry meter testing.

The weather day will be Sunday,

Oct. 18.

The tournament was originally scheduled for Labor Day weekend, but was reset because of rain.

Entries submitted before the captain's meeting should be mailed to the Brunswick County Fishing Club,

Route 1, Box 245A, Bolivia, NC 28422.

Required are the name of the captain, social security number, address, boat name, boat length, state of boat registry and the captain's signature, accompanied by a check payable to the club.

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