

Poor Oyster Season Ends Here March 31

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County shellfishermen certainly won't remember the 1992-93 oyster season as one of the best.

Although commercial landings won't be tallied for a few months, local fishermen don't expect big numbers.

"It weren't no better than last year," Sherman Varnum of Varnamtown said of the season, which ends March 31. "There ain't much to talk about really."

Local oyster dealer Ernie Galloway agreed. "It was a little slack," he said last week. "It wasn't quite as good as last year."

Varnum, who shellfishes mostly

in Lockwood Folly River, said this season was a continuation of a recent downward trend. County oystermen harvested just 276,610 pounds from 1988 to 1991.

"It was pretty good to start with, but there's nothing left down there now," Varnum said. "I couldn't tell you what the problem is. Too many people is one reason."

Rich Carpenter, southern district manager with the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, described the season as "average" and "fair" in Brunswick County.

"It's not been a great season, but we've definitely had worse," Carpenter said. The oyster harvest was better farther north, especially

"It weren't no better than last year. There ain't much to talk about really."

—Sherman Varnum, oysterman

between Wrightsville Beach and Surf City.

In Brunswick, Galloway said fishermen rarely returned to the docks with their daily limit of seven bushels. "It was off a little bit. It was still where you could scrape up a day's work."

At the beginning of the season last October, fishermen were hopeful after finding a lot of undersized oysters in the beds.

But Galloway said the oysters didn't grow as much this season as he thought they would. "We had seed at the start of the year but they didn't come out," he said.

Carpenter agreed that oyster growth was below average this season. "There's still a fair amount of

seed that didn't quite get up to three inches."

Varnum said oyster season might have been better if the Lockwood Folly River hadn't been closed to shellfishing so frequently because of bacterial pollution.

"It might have been better if it stayed open," he said. "Every time it rained it was closed for a week."

The Division of Marine Fisheries usually closes the river to shellfishing when it rains because stormwater runoff carries bacteria into the river, which makes shellfish unsafe to eat.

Although Lockwood Folly has been plagued by pollution for the past decade, Galloway said the river wasn't closed as often this season as it has been over the last few years.

"Right now when we get closed the rest of the state gets closed too," Galloway said. "It used to be we'd get a heavy morning dew and the state would close it."

Galloway said he thinks recent sewer system improvements at The Brunswick Hospital have helped the river. He said bacteria from the hospital used to wind up in Doe Creek, which feeds into Lockwood Folly.

"Our river's doing a lot better," he said. "Ever since they fixed that our river's been improving. I ain't

saying that was our whole problem, but ever since they corrected that it's helped fix our problems."

Varnum said the local oyster harvest has been getting worse since 1988, when the state's first docu-

mented case of "red tide" was detected in coastal waters.

"We used to do good before that red tide," Varnum said. "It seems like they haven't grown back like they used to."

School Board Rescinds Pay Plan For Additional Work

The Brunswick County Board of Education rescinded a new pay schedule for clerical employees last week, saying it needed more work.

Development of the schedule and its job classification scheme began approximately two years ago, then was shelved. The schedule was approved by the school board at its March meeting.

Soon after, said Superintendent Ralph Johnston, "we realized some categories were missing, such as TIMS (Transportation Information Management System) operators."

He expects the revised document to be resubmitted for consideration at the board's regular April 7 meeting, which will be held at Union Elementary School in Shallotte.

During its special meeting Tuesday, March 16, in Southport, the board hired Joyce Marlow of Ash and Sabrina Parrish of Supply as therapeutic assistants at Shallotte Middle and Union Elementary respectively; Sheila Washington of Supply, Wanda Marlowe of Ash and Wanda Long of Leland as preschool handicapped teacher assistants at Supply Elementary, Union Elementary and Lincoln Primary respectively; and Bryan Logan of Ocean Isle Beach as a mechanic I in the transportation department.

Employment for interim part-time custodian Carrie Smith of Bolivia at South Brunswick High School was extended until June 13 and the resignation of Patricia Gibson, a South Brunswick Middle School teacher, was accepted.

In other business the board: ■Appointed member Bill Fairley to a committee developing the 1993-94 school year calendar;


■Voted to participate in the A+ program, if funds are available. That means county schools will be eligible to apply for selection as a pilot program school for the multi-county project. A+ uses participation in the arts across the curriculum as a means of stimulating student interest in learning.

Approved participation in applying for an Even Start preschooler/family literacy project grant in coordination with several agencies. Brunswick Community College is the lead agency.

The board also met in executive session to hear an appeal of a student disciplinary matter that involved a weapon.

The school board was to meet Wednesday, March 24, at 5 p.m. to consider Performance Based Accountability Plans submitted by individual schools last week and recommendations from the local plan review committee. The board is expected to meet later in the month to consider its budget for 1993-94.

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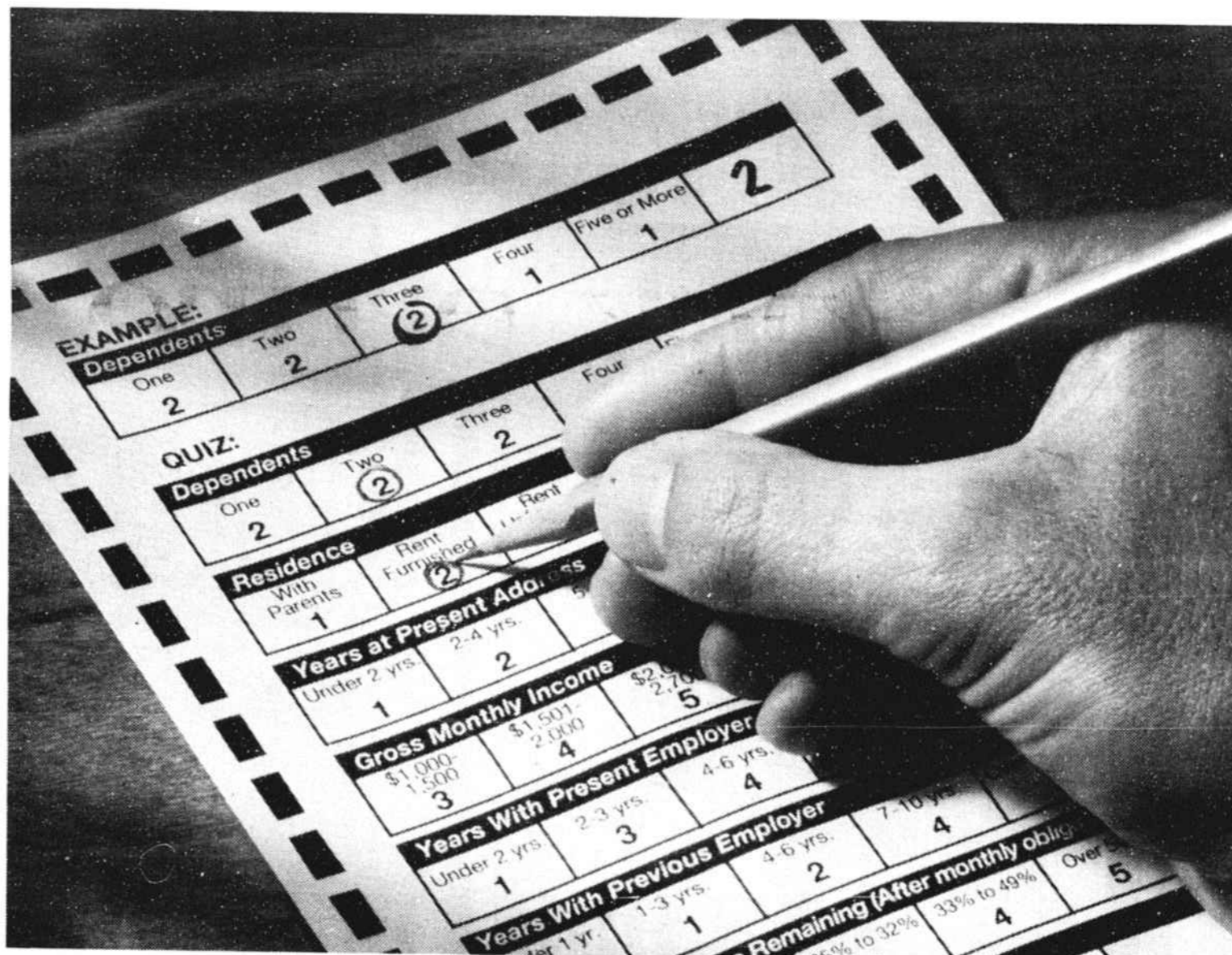


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Dependents				
One	Two	Three	Four	Five or More
2	2	2	1	2

QUIZ:

Dependents				
One	Two	Three	Four	Five or More
2	2	2	1	1

Residence				
With Parents	Rent Furnished	Rent Unfurnished	Own Mortgage	Own Clear
1	2	3	4	5

Years at Present Address				
Under 2 yrs.	2-4 yrs.	5-8 yrs.	9-14 yrs.	15 yrs. or more
1	2	3	4	5

Gross Monthly Income				
\$1,000-1,500	\$1,501-2,000	\$2,001-2,500	\$2,501-3,500	Over \$3,500
3	4	5	6	7

Years With Present Employer				
Under 2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	4-6 yrs.	7-10 yrs.	Over 10 yrs.
1	3	4	5	6

Years With Previous Employer				
Under 1 yr.	1-3 yrs.	4-6 yrs.	7-10 yrs.	Over 10 yrs.
0	1	2	4	5

% Monthly Income Remaining (After monthly obligations)				
Less Than 10%	10% to 24%	25% to 32%	33% to 49%	Over 50%
1	2	3	4	5

Bonus Points (Circle all that apply)

Checking Acct. with UCB	Savings Acct. with UCB	Loan at UCB	Loan at another bank
1	1	2	1

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