



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED
FAYETTEVILLE RESIDENTS Milt DeReyna (left) and Tim Cannon show off two of the American red snapper they caught Saturday on the Alice E out of Holden Beach.



ROBERT PAYNE of Raleigh (left) receives a trophy from Holden Beach Marina manager Gary Carr Saturday for catching the year's first Spanish mackerel among marina storage customers.

FISHING REPORT

Anglers Land Mackerel, Blue Marlin

BY DOUG RUTTER

Local fishermen celebrated the arrival of Spanish mackerel to inshore waters last week and enjoyed three catches of blue marlin offshore.

"The fishing is really doing good," John Sheffield of Sheffield's store at Ocean Isle Beach said Monday. "We had a spectacular weekend."

Highlighting the weekend was the catch and release of three blue marlin in the Gulf Stream. Anglers were Sammy Sessions of Ocean Isle, Mike Helms of Charlotte and Oscar Stephens of Whiteville.

Sheffield attributed the catches to bigger boats and advances in fishing equipment. "That's the first ones anyone's caught fishing out of here," Sheffield said. "I'm sure in the next couple of weeks we'll have a lot more once everyone hears about it."

Besides the marlin, anglers who ventured offshore last week caught several wahoo and yellowfin tuna.

Inshore, Sheffield said fishermen caught spottailed drum and flounder in the waterway. "The first Spanish mackerel have showed up out here. The fish are moving in closer now."

Tripp's Fishing Center

Fishermen out of Shallotte Point caught spots, croaker, red drum, blues and flounder inshore last week, and wahoo, yellowfin tuna, dolphin and black bass offshore.

"It's looking up a little bit," Joyce Land of Tripp's Fishing Center said Monday morning.

Chip Maree of Windy Point caught wahoo, blackfish, tuna and dolphin aboard the *Reel Chase*.

Inshore, Billy Lefler of Albemarle caught spots, whiting and drum over the weekend. Jimmy Jackson of Lumberton landed several flounder and one drum.

Sea Mist Camping Resort

Fishermen in the Brick Landing area caught spots, small flounder, Spanish and spottailed drum last week, according to Barbara Scott of Sea Mist Camping Resort.

"There's still not much fishing, but there's some spots coming in," she said. "It's starting to pick up and looking a lot better."

Anglers caught their first Spanish mackerel of the season last week, she said, and pulled several large spottailed drum from Shallotte River.

"It looks like it might be good by Memorial Day," Scott said. "They say the water's not as warm as it usually is. We didn't have any warm snaps during the winter."

Pier Fishing

Pier fishermen finally got their first good week of the spring, catching lots of bluefish and Spanish mackerel to kick off what they hope will be a good month of May.

The highlight of the week was the catch of a 32 1/2-pound king mackerel Sunday night at Sunset Beach Fishing Pier. It was the first king caught at a local pier this year, and one of the biggest kings caught at Sunset in the last few years.

Sunset Pier manager Ed Kayler said anglers also caught bluefish and Spanish mackerel over the weekend. The Spanish showed up Saturday, after blues had been hitting for several days.

Gil Bass of Holden Beach Fishing Pier said anglers caught blues, Spanish, spots, whiting and croaker last week.

"They really picked up this week. They've been catching quite a few blues, and some nice ones too," Bass said. "Everything picked up a little bit, but mostly it's been blues. It's one of the best runs we've had in the last couple of years."

Anglers weren't so lucky last week at Ocean Isle Beach Pier. Manager Curtis Williamson said the fishing still hasn't started.

"Ain't had no fish in the last week," Williamson said Monday. "A man's been out there all morning and he ain't seen a fish. He ain't had a bite."

This Week's Tide Table

		MAY		HIGH		LOW	
Day	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	6	8:48	9:23	2:45	2:51		
Friday	7	9:40	10:13	3:36	3:39		
Saturday	8	10:30	11:02	4:25	4:27		
Sunday	9	11:20	11:50	5:13	5:16		
Monday	10		12:11	5:59	6:05		
Tuesday	11	12:40	1:03	6:49	6:57		
Wednesday	12	1:30	1:54	7:38	7:51		

ADJUSTMENTS
SHALLOTTE INLET—add 17 min. high tide, add 32 min. low tide.
LOCKWOOD FOLLY—subtract 22 min. high tide, subtract 8 min. low tide.
BALD HEAD ISLAND—subtract 10 min. high tide, subtract 7 min. low tide.
SOUTHPORT—add 7 min. high tide, add 15 min. low tide.
LITTLE RIVER—subtract 11 min. high tide, add 18 min. low tide.

The Mosquito Fleet Strikes Yellow Gold

BY JAMIE MILLIKEN

The weekend of May 1 produced some of the most incredible fishing action that has taken place in recent memory.



CAPTAIN JAMIE'S OFFSHORE FISHING REPORT

May is always the most productive month for blue marlin and yellowfin tuna. The Gulf Stream provides a super highway for these migratory gamefish.

It was 6 p.m. Friday. Rube McMullan and I, along with Trilene, my golden retriever, were sitting on the stern of the *Caribbean Soul* rigging ballyhoo. The forecast was perfect, and the excitement level between us was high enough to ignite the nuclear reactors at CP&L.

Before long a few of the best offshore fishing captains began to arrive. There was Capt. Adam Sanders, Capt. John Sheppard, Capt. Daniel Hooks and Capt. Chip Maree. I'll tell you, there was enough fishing knowledge around my book to write a "how-to" book on bluewater fishing. Chip and Kyle White had fished the bluewater that day, and the 52-pound wahoo in their fish box had everyone fired up.

At 5:30 a.m. Saturday morning the VHF was busy. The "Mosquito Fleet" had departed Shallotte Inlet. There was the *Job Site*, *Island Son*, *Captain Hook II*, *Shooting Star III*, *Caribbean Soul*, *Sin-Sation*, *Boomerang*, *Hot Water* and the *Lindsey Kay*, making their way to the Gulf Stream. At 8:15, *Captain Hook II* got everyone's attention when he screamed over the VHF, "Marlin hook-up!"

David had one on. I remember at one point he informed the fleet that he was having to run the fish down. See, David and his crew had this blue marlin on a Pen 4/0 and a Pen Stand-Up Slammer rod. David, O.C. and John successfully landed the estimated 150-pound blue and quickly snapped a few pictures and successfully revived the blue and removed the hook. This magnificent fish was free to grow and reproduce. Congratulations, *Captain Hook!*

The *Boomerang* and *Island Son* soon called with successful landings of 40-pounds-plus wahoos. Bill Tripp and I landed a nice dolphin and had a smoker wahoo on. This "hoo" is probably still laughing at us. He dumped 300 yards of line on his first run and then reversed himself and charged the boat at his mean 70mph swimming ability. It was this maneuver that won him his freedom. What a fish!

Capt. Sammy Session, fishing his boat the *Shooting Star III*, called us over to his location. Sammy was embattled in some incredible yellowfin tuna action. It didn't take long for the entire fleet to move to the tuna bite. We all were working a well-defined weed line in 650 feet of water, roughly 70 miles from Shallotte Inlet. Everyone was picking up a few yellowfin and an occasional wahoo. I remember making the comment to Bill, "You know, this is blue marlin country."

The three blue marlin I've had the honor to be a part of catching were always around large schools of tuna. They are running mates. Not long after we discussed that, someone screamed over the radio, "Sammy, a billfish in your baits!" Sammy later told me the story of what happened next.

Brent Gore dropped the bait back to this blue "just like the book says," and this bad boy of the deep was quick to pick it up. They were hooked up. This is the fish that Sammy has always dreamed of doing battle with. The big blue ran off around 500 pounds of line and did an estimated 12 spectacular greyhound leaps. Two hours later, with a body that was worn to a frazzle, the big blue gave up. They estimated his weight at 300 pounds and once again released the greatest gamefish of them all.

Sammy's dream had been fulfilled, and I know that he and Capt. David Hooks will never be the same. I'll tell you, this; it couldn't have happened to two finer guys in the world. Way to go, guys. I love you both!

This is not the end of the story. You see Chip Maree, Kyle White and Chip's father Hap Maree left Sunday morning. Remember, they fished on Friday, rested Saturday and, with all this action, they were going back.

I'll tell you, fishing friends, I have seen a lot of full fish boxes in my life, but their Sunday night was a sight to behold. Eleven yellowfin tuna, nine dolphin and one wahoo!

And are you ready for this? Mr. Map landed the fish of the day, a 72-pound yellowfin! Any of you who have ever been hooked up with a tuna know the incredible strength that these fish possess. Bill and I landed a 40-pounder, and my back is still out. Mr. Hap battled this for at least 45 minutes with a 6/0 Penn before they gaffed and dragged that mule over the rail. It did my heart good to witness this father and son back at the docks.

When I was around Chip he would say, "That's my daddy!" and Mr. Map was saying, "That's my son." I love this sport!

Until next time, good fishin' and good luck, "Jolly Mon."

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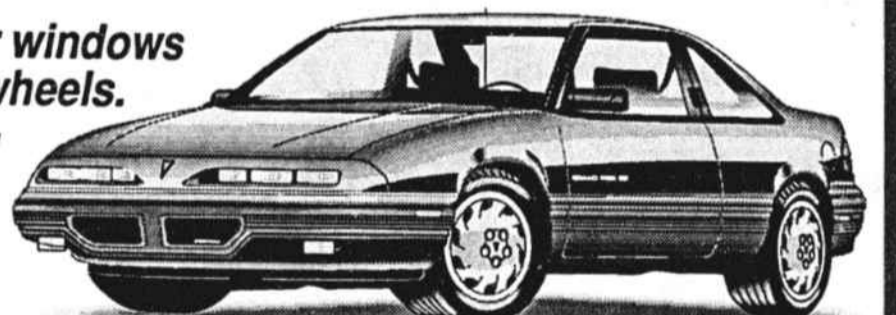
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