

**PUBLIC HEARING JAN. 10**

# Fish Commission May Create Clam Season

BY DOUG RUTTER

Clam harvesting, presently a year-round occupation for some area fishermen, would be limited to 10 months per year under a proposal before the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission.

The state panel is considering creating a special clam season and prohibiting fishermen from harvesting the shellfish from April 1 through May 31 of each year.

"There's a lot of pressure on clam stocks, and this would reduce the pressure somewhat," said Rich Carpenter, southern district manager of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

North Carolina commercial fishermen harvested 722,235 pounds of clams in 1992. That was a 36-percent decrease from 1991 and an 87-percent drop-off from 1990 when fishermen landed 1.35 million pounds.

Besides helping clam stocks, Carpenter said stopping the harvesting for two months each year would give state officials time to conduct "clam relay" programs like they do with oysters.

Fishermen would be paid to move clams from polluted waters to clean waters, where they eventually could be harvested.

The new clam season is one of several proposed rule changes that could affect local fisher-

*"There's a lot of pressure on clam stocks, and this would reduce the pressure somewhat."*—Rich Carpenter

men if it's approved by the state fisheries commission next month.

Fishermen will have the opportunity to express their opinions on the rule changes at a public hearing Monday, Jan. 10, at 7 p.m. at UNC-Wilmington's Kenan Auditorium.

Among the other proposed revisions that would affect clambers is one that would require at least 1/8 of an inch between the teeth on clam rakes. The minimum size limit for clams is 1-inch thick.

"It would let the undersized clams slip through the teeth," Carpenter said. "It's trying to discourage the harvest of undersized clams."

A third proposal affecting local shellfishermen would allow the state fisheries director to issue proclamations reducing the minimum size limit for oysters from 3 inches to 2 1/2 inches.

Carpenter said oysters in some parts of the state never grow more than 2 1/2 inches long.

Also, he said the director may choose to allow the harvest of smaller oysters in areas where there are high concentrations of oyster-killing parasites such as Dermo. Older oysters are more likely to die from Dermo than younger ones.

The Marine Fisheries Commission also has proposed designating Davis Creek and Davis Canal near Long Beach as permanent secondary nursery areas, which would make those areas off limits to trawlers.

Carpenter said the proposal is part of the commission's overall effort to reduce the pressure on certain types of fish and marine life.

"This is one area that does contain a lot of small fish," he said of Davis Creek. "The majority of the year the shrimp are small in there."

Another proposal directly affecting shrimpers would add one day to the existing weekend closure. Shrimp trawling would be prohibited Friday night through Sunday night, instead of Saturday night through Sunday night.

The Marine Fisheries Commission is expected to vote on the proposed rule changes during its business meeting Jan. 14 and 15 at Shell Island Resort at Wrightsville Beach.

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# Nine Lives Lost This Year On County Roadways

BY SUSAN USHER

Fewer people died on Brunswick County roadways in 1993 than in 1992.

Nine people were killed, several in single-car accidents, compared to 19 deaths in 14 fatal accidents during the previous year.

Paul Francis Valade, 27, of Wilmington, became the county's first highway fatality on Jan. 23, when his car ran off N.C. 133 south of Belville and overturned.

Shalotte businessman Sidney Edward Jones, 45, of Ocean Isle Beach died in a single-car crash on Ocean Isle Beach Road the night of Feb. 3. He was the owner and operator of Jones Ford.

Nathan Douglas Dale, 22, of Delco, died in a single-car crash on Mt. Misery Rd. in Leland on March 12.

Less than a week later 19-year-old Vincent Edward Brown Southport was killed in a March 18 colli-

sion that occurred north of Southport near the intersection of N.C. 133 and N.C. 87.

Several weeks later, Patty Dawn Carpenter, 31, of Route 4, Leland, was killed in a two-vehicle accident on Village Road in Leland when her husband attempted to make a left turn in the path of an approaching vehicle.

On July 7, Lyle Dean Andrews, 25, of Copperville, Mich., became the only pedestrian killed on a Brunswick County road during 1993. He was walking on N.C. 130 near Ash when struck by an automobile.

Fall brought three more highway deaths.

On Oct. 13, Johnny Elmer Silver III of Loris, S.C., was killed in a near head-on collision with another car just beyond the south end of the U.S. 17 bypass of Shalotte.

Silver had apparently fallen

asleep at the wheel of his northbound auto. Mary D. Stanley, 35, of Shallotte, who was driving south on U.S. 17, was pulling onto the right shoulder in an attempt to avoid the Silver vehicle when it struck nearly head-on. Stanley was seriously injured and her son, Marvin Joshua, 2, was also hurt.

On Nov. 4, Allie Marie Skipper Wescott, 67, of Leland, drove east on Zion Church Road and came to a

stop at its intersection with U.S. 17 before pulling out in the path of a southbound vehicle. The oncoming Ford van struck the driver's side of the car, killing Wescott.

The ninth fatality came on Nov. 12 in a single-car crash on Project Road near Ash. Marlin Dale Smith Jr., 22, of Ash ran off the dirt road on the right side. His truck overturned in a deep ditch, landing on a large drainage pipe.

## Truck Skidded On Icy Road

The N.C. Highway Patrol office reported a quiet holiday week on Brunswick County roads, with officers investigating mainly "fender benders." Trooper T.D. Pearce said Tuesday.

Ice and snow on the roadway contributed to a single-vehicle accident near Sandy Creek Thursday morning.

Charles Graham Eddins, 51, of Leland was traveling west on Mal-

mo Loop Road about 6:55 a.m. when his 1988 Dodge pickup skidded out of control. The truck ran off the right shoulder and overturned in a ditch.

Eddins sustained minor injuries but was not transported for treatment, said Pearce.

Property damage to the truck was estimated at \$4,500. No charges were filed.

# Community Boat Ramp Is Town's Hottest Issue

BY DOUG RUTTER

Down the road in Varnamtown, the hottest issue of 1993 was improvement of the community boat ramp on Lockwood Folly River.

After receiving petitions for and against the project, aldermen accepted a project bid in December. Varnum's Docks & Bulkheads is expected to begin work shortly after the new year.

The cost of \$19,500 will be covered by the N.C. Wildlife Resources

Commission, which had agreed to spend up to \$25,000 to rebuild the public ramp and improve parking and access.

A 16-by-72-foot concrete ramp will replace a launch that has deteriorated over the years and caused damage to some boats. The town plans to lease a parking area nearby to accommodate the public.

Other than the new ramp and a controversial trailer park ordinance adopted last spring, Varnamtown

was its usual quiet self in 1993.

Board member Tonya Robbins resigned in May, saying she didn't have time to serve both the town and the customers at her restaurant.

Tony Varnum was appointed to serve the remainder of the term,

which expires in 1995.

That was the only change on the Varnamtown board this year. In November, voters re-elected incumbent aldermen Ada McDonald and Ennis Swain and Mayor Judy Galloway.



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