

Angling Authority

When It Comes To Fishing, Mr. Daught Knows His Stuff

BY DOUG RUTTER
Daught Tripp sits just inside the opened front door of a cozy building perched almost too close to the water's edge at the end of a narrow and bumpy dirt driveway.

In his right hand is a flyswatter. That leaves his left hand free to pet a friendly, brown chihuahua named Little Bit who seems permanently affixed to her master's lap.

For the last 40 years anglers have launched their boats and bought their bait at Tripp's Fishing Center, and made time to chat with the man who knows as much or more than anyone about fishing the waters off Shallotte Point.

Tripp is an institution in this community. At age 81, he has acquired enough knowledge on local fishing to fill a bookcase. And he's always willing to pass along what he knows.

"He's taught a lot of people different stuff on how to shrimp, on how to set gill nets, on how to catch fish," says Shallotte Point resident Mike Potts.

"He'll tell you about the weather. He'll look out there and tell you if it's gonna rain or not just on how the clouds are coming in. Nine times out of 10 he's right."

Tripp's gift for weather forecasting and his fishing know-how come from six decades in the fishing business.

"I imagine I've given a lot of instruction on how to fish," he says modestly. "A lot of people come down and don't even know how to bait a hook."

Bill Tripp says his uncle has something to teach everyone. "He knows his fishing. He's been doing it a long time. He knows what goes on in that river."

Born and raised in Shallotte, Daught Tripp has worked on fishing boats ever since he completed the eighth grade at Shallotte School.

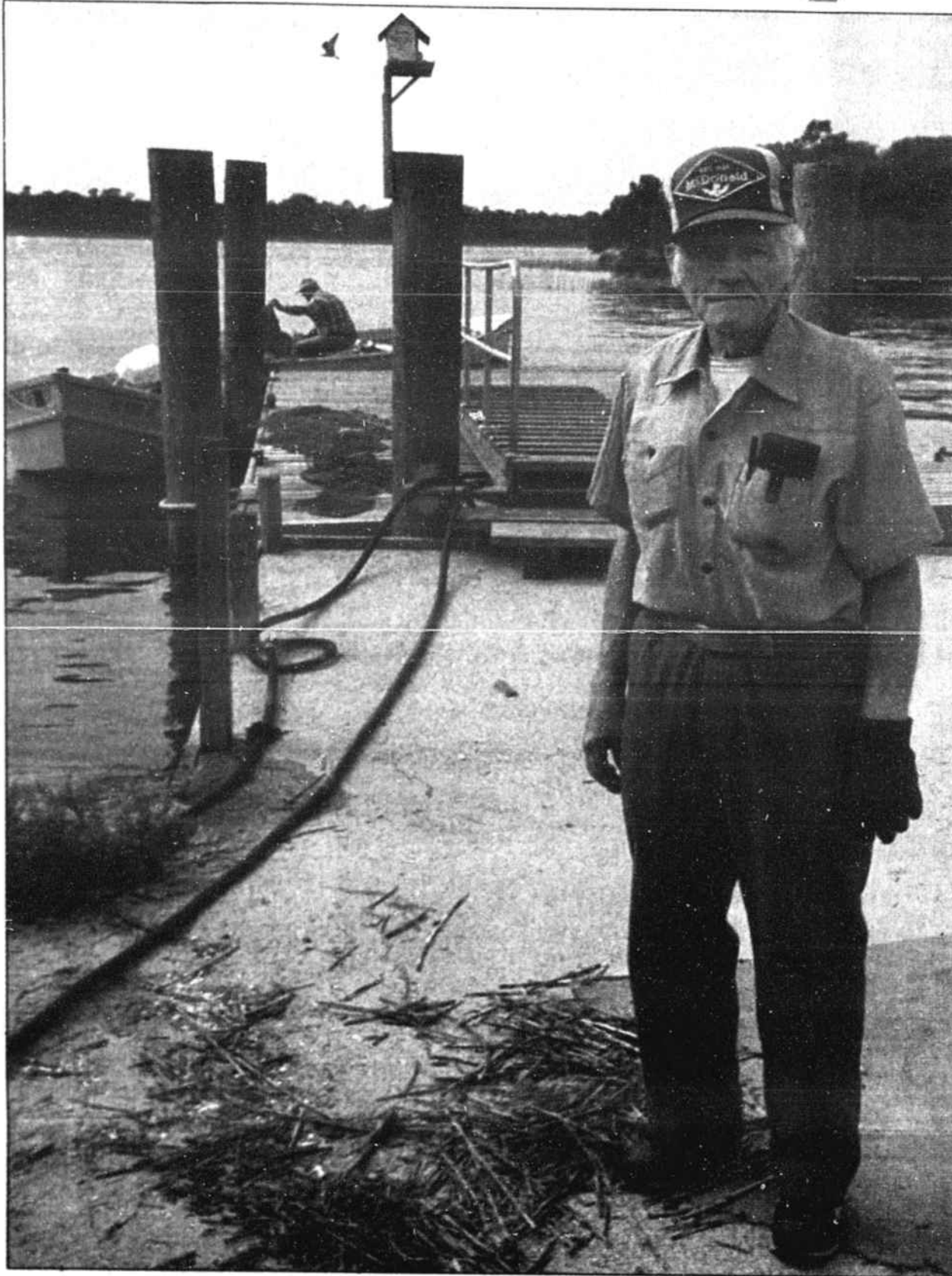
Arthritis has slowed him down lately, but he still fishes for shrimp, spot, croaker, trout, flounder. "Anything that's in season," he says.

Tripp, a thin man with glowing blue eyes, has called Shallotte Point home for the past 49 years.

"I've been running this marina down here since '52," he explains. "I first started a restaurant. I dug this little ditch in here and started this marina in '54."

It wasn't long after the marina opened that Tripp experienced what he says was the scariest moment of his life.

Hurricane Hazel "cleaned out



DAUGHT TRIPP has operated a marina at Shallotte Point for the last 40 years.

everything" at the marina and destroyed a nearby restaurant also owned by Tripp.

"That was about as frightened as I've ever been," he said. "I moved up the hill. I had an old '41 Ford automobile at the time. I took off for Supply. I had water in the seat up to my waist. I made it all the way to Supply. That old car never cranked again."

The marina building, which was much smaller at that time, was ripped apart down to the foundation. Tripp said his cafe was washed into the edge of a branch.

"At that time I had a bunch of rental boats down here, skiffs. I had 22 of them and I ain't seen a one of them since. They busted all to pieces."

Tripp says one thing that hasn't been "busted all to pieces" is fishing. Despite state and federal reports to the contrary, he sees no evidence of a decline in certain species.

"The fishing changes every year.

One year you have good fishing, the next is sorry. It runs in cycles. It comes and goes. About every seven years you have a real good season, a whole lot better than the others," Tripp says.

"This year has been the best flounder season we've had in 10 years and that's the way it goes. Spots the last two seasons have been fair but not really up to par."

Tripp says there has been a decline in local oysters, but he thinks there's a simple solution to that problem.

"We have a decline in our shellfish, our oysters, and the clambers are the cause of that. They go out on the rocks with their rakes," Tripp said.

"It's like going out and planting tobacco and then going out there with a rake. You're not going to have any tobacco," he said. "The oysters would take care of itself if they would make a law against clambers on oyster rocks."

Tripp, who has been married to Lottie Tripp for 55 years, said the biggest change in the commercial fishing industry since he started working in the 1930s is the value of the catch.

He used to earn 75 cents per bushel of shrimp, and 10 cents for each pound of whiting and flounder. Those same finfish today are worth about \$2.75 per pound.

Joyce Land has worked for Tripp for the past 32 years. She recalls the time her boss caught a 15-pound, 2-ounce, flounder where the marina cove enters the waterway.

"He broke my rod all to pieces catching that fish," Land said. "Then he come back in here and wore that fish's tail off dragging it around showing it to people."

Tripp smiles. "There's been more flounder caught right out there this year than anywhere else in the river. There's a couple of deep holes and them flounder lay right down on the bottom."

Saturday's Sweep Needs Volunteers

It's one of the easiest good deeds you can do. It takes no special talent. You do it in beautiful surroundings. And it's beneficial to residents, visitors, wildlife and the land.

It's Big Sweep, the annual beach clean-up set to get under way at 8:30 a.m. this Saturday, Sept. 17, in eight of Brunswick County's waterfront towns. Volunteers are reminded to wear gloves.

Here are the meeting places and contact persons for each town:
 ■ **Sunset Beach**, Main Street and Sunset Boulevard, Clete Waldmiller
 ■ **Ocean Isle Beach**, Museum of Coastal Carolina, Dale Powell
 ■ **Holden Beach**, under Holden Beach Bridge, Pat Sandifer
 ■ **Long Beach**, Recreation Center, Arch Wilson
 ■ **Yaupon Beach**, Old Captain's Hut Restaurant, Jackie Slockett
 ■ **Caswell Beach**, Town Hall, Bill Boyd
 ■ **Southport**, Waterfront Park, Kathy Scheetz, Junior Women's Club
 ■ **Bald Head Island**, River Pilot Cafe, Martha Hayworth

Volunteers are still needed, said Kris Kime, interim special projects coordinator for the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department. She can be reached at 253-4357 or 1-800-222-4790.

Pat Sandifer and Martha Spivey, co-chairs for the Beach Sweep efforts of the Holden Beach Beautification Committee, have put out an urgent plea for volunteers.

"Coordinators know that a four-hour clean-up once a year is not enough to stop all the problems," Sandifer said. "That's why we focus our attention on education and public awareness year-round."

Sandifer said she hopes the program, which has been very successful as an annual statewide project, will receive the same level of positive community support on Holden Beach four or five times each year.

Last year almost 12,000 volunteers collected more than 230 tons of trash from Tar Heel waters. In many cases, what they picked up was left behind by recreational users—fishermen, boaters, swimmers and sunbathers. But debris also comes from the cities and towns that line rivers and perch beside lakeshores.

On the beach, common litter—like plastic zipper bags and six-pack rings—can be lethal when it is ingested by or snagged on fish, sea turtles and marine mammals. Fish hooks, glass and aluminum beverage cans left behind can be perilous for swimmers and strollers.

Drop a candy wrapper or a foam cup on the street and, chances are, it will eventually wash into the nearest storm drain. From there, it's a quick trip to a nearby creek, river or stream where debris becomes part of the larger problem of aquatic litter.

This year Big Sweep is also supporting the statewide N.C. Storm Drain Stenciling Project organized by Barbara Doll, water quality specialist with the N.C. Sea Grant Program.

Doll is encouraging groups of volunteers to stencil city storm drains in the state's coastal watershed with a "KEEP CLEAN" message that alerts passers-by that only rainwater belongs in the drains.

Last week, Gov. Jim Hunt joined a group of Wilmington children in painting storm drains with the message "KEEP CLEAN: FLOWS INTO CAPE FEAR RIVER." So far 35 cities and towns, plus the Cherry Point Marine Air Station, have agreed to work with volunteers to stencil storm drains and catch basins.

First Citizens Bank is the title sponsor of the Big Sweep cleanup. Other sponsors include R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., Duke Power, Glaxo Pharmaceuticals, IBM, Pepsi and Waste Industries. N.C. Big Sweep is led by a board of directors representing businesses, industries, universities, governmental agencies and the N.C. Waterman's Association.

Master Waste Managers To Be Trained This Fall

About 20 Brunswick Countians who are concerned about the environment will be talking trash this fall in an effort to become Master Waste Managers.

The Master Waste Manager Program, "Sorting It Out Together," will be a training and volunteer program developed by the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service and will be offered by Brunswick County's Recycling Program and Cooperative Extension Service on seven consecutive Monday evenings from Oct. 10 until Nov. 28.

"A main object of the program is to provide participants with in-depth education on solid waste—how we currently manage our trash in Brunswick County and what management options we have besides landfill disposal," said Heather Sandner, county recycling coordinator. Sessions will cover such topics as recycling, waste reduction, household hazardous waste, and composting. Two weekend tours are planned to the county landfill and to a recycling facility in Wilmington.

Volunteers in other counties have used their training to design educational displays, give presentations to civic groups, work with school children and assist with waste reduction and recycling projects, Sandner said. More than 600 volunteers have been trained in 30 counties statewide.

Those interested in registering should contact Sandner at 253-4488, workdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The training is free, but there is a \$20 charge per participant for manuals and other materials. Registration forms and payment must be received by Sept. 30. Class size will be limited to 20.

Life In The Sea Foam

BY BILL FAVER

Sometimes on a windy day sea foam can be seen skimming across the wet sand on the beach or quivering in the wind before it breaks apart. It is difficult for us to realize that caught up in that foam may be millions of minute plants and animals just like those in the sand under our feet or in the water at our side.



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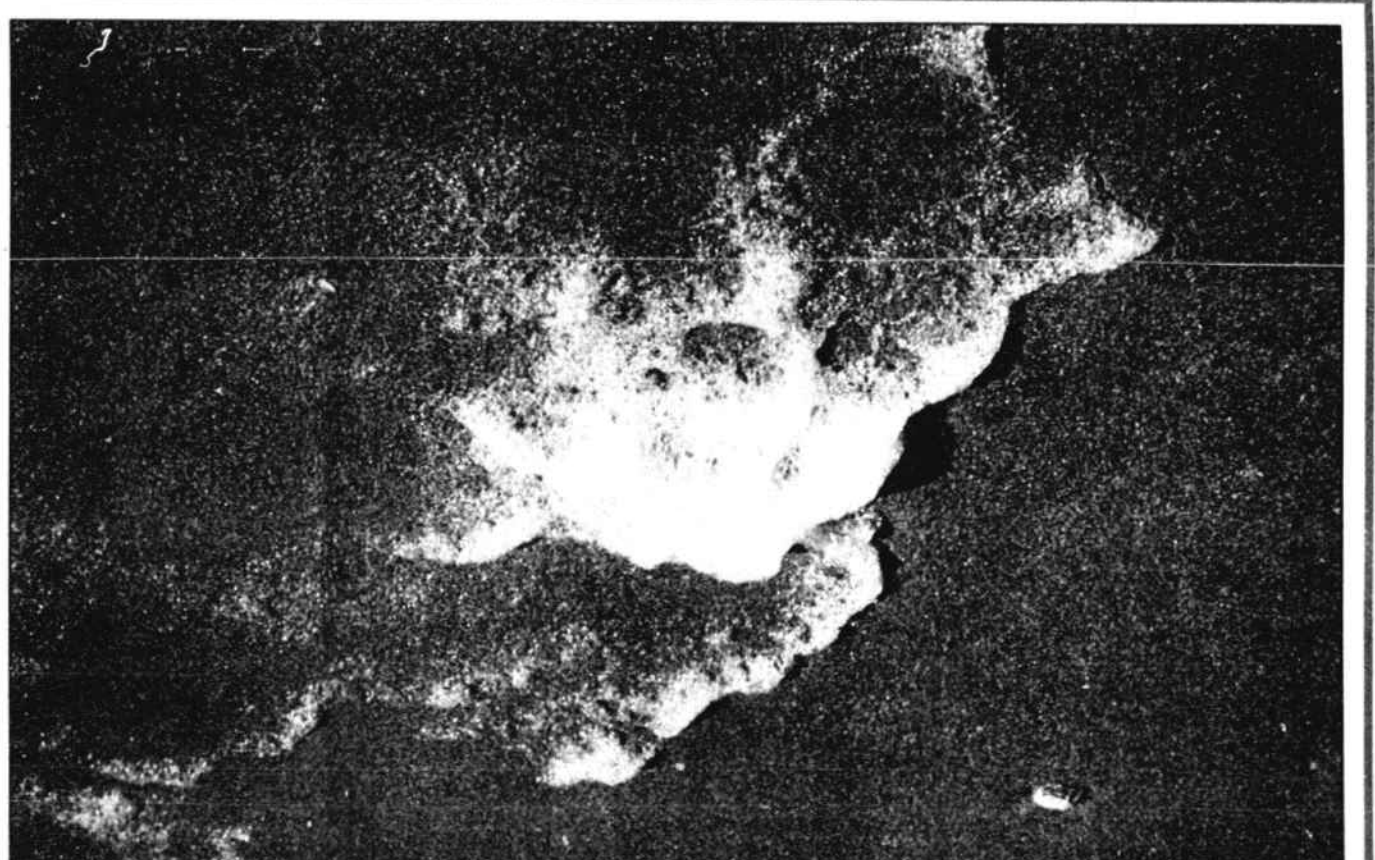
contain as many as ten trillion of them. There are about 25,000 species of diatoms, and they resemble stars, spirals, pinwheels, and many other shapes.

They are breathtakingly beautiful under a microscope. One German scientist spent 15 years mounting more than 4,000 species on a slide the size of a postage stamp. Diatoms were discovered in 1702 and at first were thought to be animals until it was determined they perform photosynthesis. The food reserves produced through photosynthesis are stored within their cells as oil. Ancient diatoms died and were buried beneath the sea by the billions to form oil reserves in many parts of the world.

Also in the foam are the animal plankton which feed on the diatoms and form an important part of the food for the bivalve mollusk species and the sea worms.

Sometimes it is hard to realize what is happening all around us as we walk along the ocean beach. Few of us would have reason to even think of diatoms, but what we do see is there because the diatoms are there!

Let us hope those tiny plants continue to work so that Kahlil Gibran is right when he reminds us, *I am forever walking upon these shores, Betwixt the sand and the foam. The high tide will erase my footprints, And the wind will blow away the foam. But the sea and the shore will remain Forever.*



FOAM ALONG THE BEACH strand may be filled with minute life forms.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER