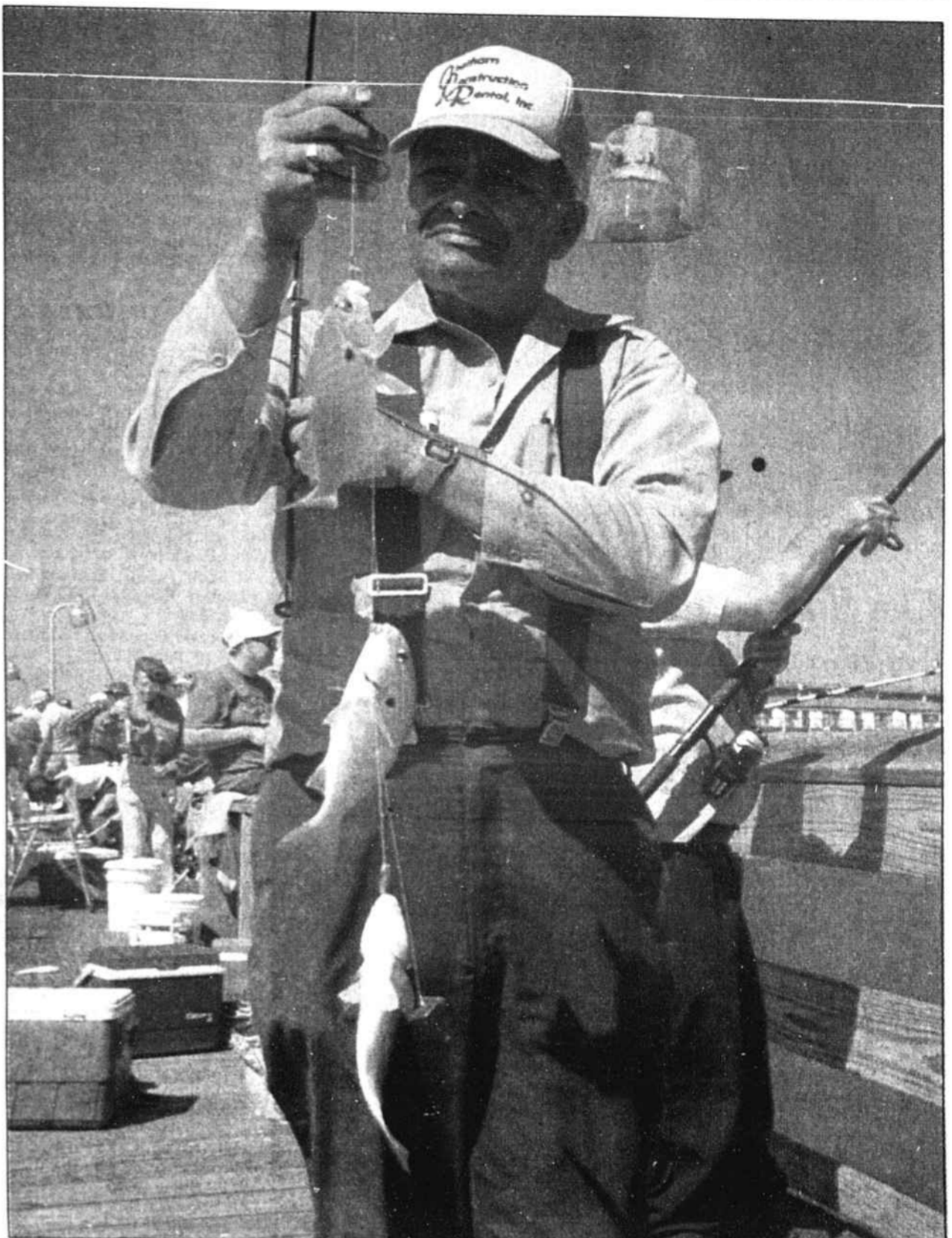




TRIPLE THREAT is the only way to describe this catch by proud angler Gurney Bullard of Maxton.

"NOT BAD for a 78-year-old grandma," says Mildred Hester of Elizabethtown, pictured at left.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

GONE FISHIN'

Pier Anglers Know What Hits The Spot

BY DOUG RUTTER

It's an early fall day, and the spots are biting like crazy. Word has spread quickly because there are close to a hundred anglers standing elbow-to-elbow on the west side of Ocean Isle Beach Fishing Pier.

There's a cool breeze blowing in off the ocean, not a cloud in the sky. It's a good day to call in sick.

A group of excited fishermen has gathered for one thing and one thing only—leostomus xanthurus.

It's a tasty little panfish with an unmistakable black dot behind the shoulders. Spots are small, averaging less than a pound apiece, but in terms of popularity they are without equal.

It's the spots that bring waves of anglers to local fishing piers every October. Huge schools migrate south each fall. Many are hooked along the way and end up on the dinner table.

At any given moment, this contented crowd at Ocean Isle Pier is pulling up three or four or five fish.

Late-season sunbathers hardy enough to withstand the chills are seeing a show. From their vantage point, it looks like the silvery fish are jumping onto the pier.

Up on the wooden planks, anglers work feverishly to untangle fishing lines. They occasionally reach into

plastic baggies filled with bloodworms to freshen up their hooks.

Spots splash in 5-gallon buckets that are filling up by the minute. Others are carefully covered with ice in 48-gallon coolers.

Gurney Bullard reels in his line and finds not one, not two, but three spots flipping on the end of his jagged hooks.

This Maxton man's been at it all day. While everyone around him pulls in one fish every couple minutes, Bullard is filling up his white bucket at a furious pace. He is unstoppable.

His fishing buddies smile and shake their heads in amazement every time he hooks another.

It's 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

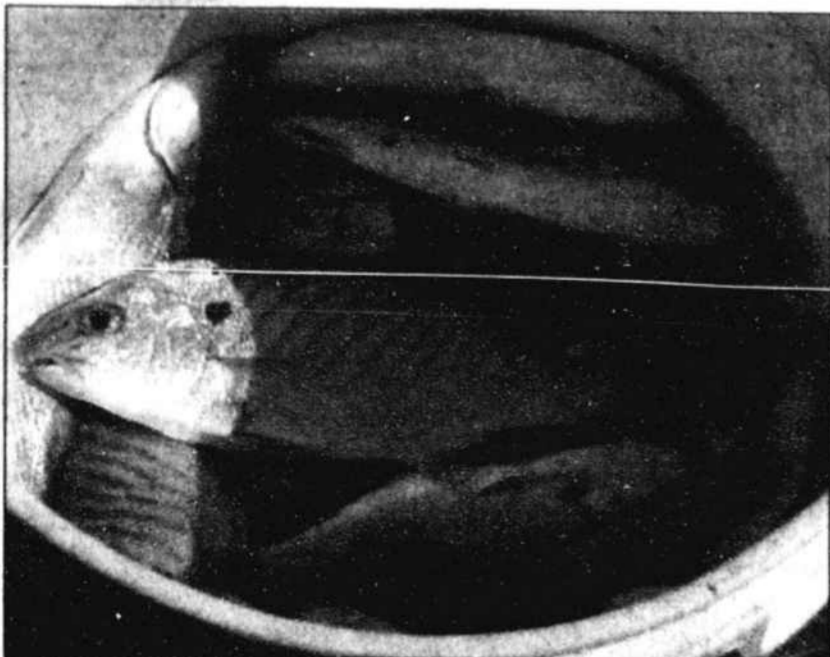
Mildred Hester and Norwood Butler, visiting from Bladen County, have already caught over 100 spots between them and show no signs of slowing up.

"Not bad for a 78-year-old grandma," Mildred laughs as she hoists another keeper onto the pier.

Norwood has a lot of catching up to do, he grumbles from under a Seattle Mariners baseball cap. He suggests Mildred take a break, but she'll hear none of that. Her line returns to the water, and she waits for another tug.



SPOT FISHERMAN Norwood Butler (above) totes his third bucketful of the day off Ocean Isle Beach Fishing Pier. Behind him, the action remains hot and heavy. Below, buckets and coolers fill up quickly in the fall.



ELBOW ROOM and folks who know how to untangle fishing lines are at a premium when the spots are running strong.

Walkers Raise \$6,400 For Heart Association

More than 48 walkers in the Charlotte area raised \$6,400 for the Brunswick County Division of the American Heart Association in the American HeartWalk held Oct. 1 at Charlotte Middle School.

Judy Seaboldt, local American HeartWalk chairman, called this year's event "a tremendous success." It was one of hundreds of walks nationwide in which participants collected donations from friends and co-workers to fund AHA's research and programs.

"Not only did we raise \$6,400 for cardiovascular research, we also demonstrated the benefits of walk-

ing as exercise," she said. "We were able to show how regular exercise helps promote cardiovascular fitness."

The top four money-raisers were Judy Seaboldt, Mike Logiovino, Irene Caudle and Robin Caudle. Top money team was United Carolina Bank in Charlotte.

Money raised goes to support AHA's cardiovascular research, public and professional education and community service programs. Cardiovascular diseases and stroke are North Carolina's number-one killer.

Nostalgia On The Agenda For Those With Pre-Hazel Memories To Show, Tell

Nostalgia will be the main agenda item Friday, Oct. 14, when the Seafood Barn hosts a reunion for "those who enjoyed Holden Beach before Hurricane Hazel," according to organizer Franda Pedlow of Richmond, Va., and Holden Beach.

Pedlow is author of Sand and Sea Fever, a collection of accounts of life on Holden Beach and in Brunswick County prior to October 1954, when the devastating hurri-

cane came ashore. The event will take place from 3-6 p.m. There will be no charge for admittance. Refreshments will be served, and there will be a cash bar.

Participants are being asked to bring old photographs and mementos to share with one another. "We'll also enjoy music from the J&K jukebox," Pedlow said.

For information, call Pedlow at 842-6023.

In Memory Of The Scot Settlers

BY BILL FAVER

In May 1965, the North Carolina General Assembly named a state seashell "in memory of the early Scot settlers in this state." This action made North Carolina the first state to designate an official state seashell, and the Scotch Bonnet was the shell chosen for the honor.

and Helmet shells. Usually they are found in shallow tropical waters. All members of this family have a broad, heavy shield adjoining the opening.

On the specimens we find along the beaches, the spots have often faded and they appear to be only a solid color. The dark grays and blacks of some shells are believed to be caused by the mineral content of the water and the age of the shells.

Scotch Bonnets range from North Carolina to Brazil and prefer to live on sandy bottoms in shallow water. They feed on sea urchins and sand dollars. Shells of the females are larger than the males, and the egg capsules are laid in the shape of a tower or in clumps and are horny in appearance.

Pieces of these shells are often found

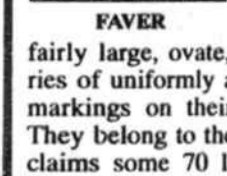
along the beaches, but complete specimens are found only occasionally, usually following a storm. Bonnets are more abundant along the Outer Banks. Even the broken pieces are unusual and unique and such pieces are carved into cameos in some areas of the world. Abandoned shells are quickly taken by the striped hermit crab and this may help account for their scarcity.

Some wonder why such a scarce shell is our state seashell. Some think it was more abundant at one time and the designation has caused it to be overcollected for souvenirs.

Whether that is true or not, I am pleased this special shell was chosen "in memory of the Scot settlers" and that those who find them along our beaches have found a treasure worth keeping!



SCOTCH BONNET shells are found only occasionally along the Brunswick County beaches.



FAVER

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER