

# Fishing & Hunting



By Richard Seale

## Outdoor surprises

As the article submission date closes in on me, I remain wild turkey-less, although not without some stories. With our eldest granddaughter graduating from high school in May and May planting season for wild game food plots upon me, turkey hunts dropped into third place. Lauren's "last" events edged into first place, and weather events limiting available planting times moved farming into second place. So after a Tar River Choral concert in Rocky Mount and a forecast of no rain for a few days, I headed to the Beaufort County farm for a turkey hunt. I had set up three blinds 10 days before, so I figured I could just get to a blind for an early morning hunt. After the early hunt, I would get started on setting up tractors to spread the half ton of fertilizer and 200 pounds of chufa seeds, and disc plowing all this in on five plots totaling over three acres.

In the pre-dawn darkness I hiked in the half mile to the Big Beech Bear Tree blind location. As I got closer to the blind, I could see something was not right. Sure enough, the blind was lying in a jumble on the ground. I put out the turkey decoys and returned to the blind to see if I could get it reset. In my opinion, my setup job had been well done with guy lines and pegs. I was surprised the blind was in such a mess, and assumed it was due to a storm. I had not had that problem in previous seasons. As I unsnarled the support rods and fabric camouflage cover, it became very evident this was not a storm problem. The blind had been trashed by bears. With dawn coming quickly, I had no choice but to use broken fiberglass rods and sticks to make a rather pitiful cover that was full of slits and rips. Once first light brightened up the day, the rents in the fabric showed the claw rakes of the bears very clearly. There were even tooth holes in the fabric.

No turkeys made any sounds that morning, nor did any answer my calls. In the brightening half hour before sunrise, the bird world filled the stillness with all sorts of sounds—which I enjoy. I was a bit peeved that the blind was in such a torn-up condition until I thought of the good news: "Well, at least I was not in here when the bear(s) made their attack on the blind!"



The jury-rigged blind after the bear attack brought a sobering thought to mind: being in a blind when a bear (or bears) attack could be a real thrilling experience.—Photo by Richard Seale

As I worked the farm plots throughout the day, I checked on the other two blinds. Indeed, the bears had wiped out another one. Darkness came as I finished up the last of the discing. Heavy rains fell overnight and all day Sunday so the condition of the second blind remains unknown. My last image was of a crumpled pile of fabric, some support rods separated from the fabric, and an incongruous chair sitting in the woods. So, with two out of three blinds destroyed by bears, an interesting consideration must be, "Should I go sit in the last blind in the dark?"

Midge Tankard, the farmer who tends the crop lands on the farm, called me the other day and said, "Well the deer population on the farm just increased!" He went on to explain that as he came to the farm field to plant corn he saw a doe standing out in the middle of the field. It stood there for a while, and he noted a small bundle at its feet. The doe moved off a few steps and the bundle staggered upright, wobbled a few steps towards the doe, and crumpled down again. It was a newborn fawn. In all his years of farming, Midge has never seen a doe deliver a fawn onto the middle of a barren plowed field. We discussed why she might have done that rather than the usual tall grass or other well-hidden locations. One guess was that perhaps the coyotes are so numerous in the woods that the deer have to learn new survival techniques.

As for fishing, the rock have reached Rocky Mount in the Tar River and Roanoke Rapids in the Roanoke River. Chopper-sized blues are running in smallish schools along the beaches here on Bogue Banks. Spanish mackerel can be had trolling, the crabs are in, and the sound waters are up to 70.5 degrees. Life is good for all except for blinds on Sealeland Farm.

## Importance of the Maritime Forest

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*Carolinas* by author and professor emeritus of botany at UNC-Wilmington Paul Hosier is a popular source of information and will be available in late June (from amazon.com among other sources). This is an update of a 1970 book by the same name.]

*Editor's note: Special thanks to Katie Mosher, communications director of North Carolina Sea Grant, and Michelle Brodeur, communications specialist at the NC Coastal Reserve & National Estuarine Research Reserve, for their help in providing the updates to this article.*

## Concerts at St. Francis by the Sea

By Linda Laughton

On Friday, July 6, at 6:30 p.m. Brierwood Ensemble from Wilmington will perform at St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church at 920 Salter Path Road in Salter Path. The ensemble features Linda Estep, violin; Clark Spencer, viola; Helena Spencer, bassoon; and Christina Brier, harp, and will present "Music by the Sea," a recital of music inspired by nature and the sea from the Romantic period (early 1800 to early 1900), featuring works by Elgar, Saint-Saens and others.

A reception will follow the concert in the downstairs art gallery. Concert admission is free, but donations are gratefully accepted to sustain the series.

The art gallery will open at 5:30 p.m. and feature works by Stacy, NC, artist Cora Mae Pipkin, a national award winning watercolorist. Gallery admission is free, and refreshments will be served.

On Friday, August 3, at 6:30 p.m. Carolina Pro Musica, featuring Karen Hite Jacob, will present a mixed program of early music from Celtic to Baroque and beyond. As usual, this concert will be preceded by a 5:30 p.m. free gallery opening and will be followed by a reception in the downstairs art gallery.

For more information on the concert series, contact St. Francis by the Sea at 240-2388 or [stfrancisbts@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisbts@gmail.com), or visit the website at [stfrancisbythesea.org](http://stfrancisbythesea.org).