

# Fishing & Hunting

By Richard Seale



## At last, some peaceful time for memories, repairs and future planning

While not including weather, March on my calendar is a peaceful time. All the normal fall and winter hunting seasons end when February does. Between September and the end of February, animals ranging from bears to squirrels and land and waterfowl game birds from snipes to swans have all been included in legal hunting seasons. Most of the species that can be hunted require changes in equipment, techniques and times to be somewhere. And this is just the hunting segment of my life. We are most fortunate to need another whole set of efforts and equipment to take advantage of the ocean, sound and fresh and salt water fishing available to us. With these realities in focus, you can understand why to get some peaceful time is quite important. As if the above is not enough, in mid-February, I was required to recognize that I have travelled around the sun 81 times now.

We have had a day or two when the sun actually got the temperature up into the 70s. But even with water temperatures still in the 50s, that sun has started to warm up shallower waters. Up the rivers and estuaries, the speckled trout are stretching some cold muscles and starting to attack 17 and 18 MirrOlures with regularity. Bogue Sound has not kicked into much fishing mode yet here in early March, but black seabass are showing up around ocean wrecks and artificial reefs. The 70-mile rides out to the Gulf Stream can yield yellow fin tuna and wahoo while trolling. Deep water bottom fish are out there as well, but we are talking all day voyages in very changeable weather. Later winter trips often result in tough beatings for us aging folks. Getting serious fishing in March can wipe out my peaceful time.

So what are some peaceful time things to do? I do take my Cape Dory for a row on calmer days. That 10-foot boat, *Otter*, has provided me almost 50 years of enjoyment at this point. I had to do a major rehab in 2020, but her beautiful lines survived, and she still rows like a dream. Her oars are called spoon oars because the faces of the blades are worked into scooping curves. The oars are carved from a single piece of lumber and are really works of art. She can carry a single sail and, though not a speed demon, can get me around Bogue Sound. I have found that dragging a couple of trolling lures behind her can result in some good surprises from blue fish, trout, puppy drum and flounder. There is something about the rhythm of rowing that makes the lures run just right.

Showery April days are a good time to take apart reels and lubricate them and perhaps unspool the line and reverse it on the spool to put unused line into action as well as save some money. Lubing roller guides and reel seats on ocean rods and sorting through tackle boxes are useful projects as well. Of course, the end of hunting seasons' to-do list is cleaning barrels and mechanisms and lubricating actions on guns before they go into a safe for summer storage—or at least until the next trip to target shoot. As a safety step, be sure to check that magazines and breeches are empty of a forgotten round.

Although probably something that could be classified as “work,” I find running a tractor a peaceful activity. On the farm, there are fields to plow, lanes to bush hog, fallen trees to remove, fertilizer to apply and, finally, seeds to get planted for annual crops. And that leads to repairs and maintenance of those machines, too.

The smell of newly turned soil is worth the toil as are sights of startled game.

Well, after proofreading this, I can see why we do not have a television. Heck, how can you find time to do all this fun stuff, enjoy some peaceful time, read some books, and still have time for TV? Carpe diem. Oh yes, it is suddenly wild turkey season from early April to early May, so there will be a bunch of 3 a.m. alarms and 4 a.m. walks into the forests in hopes of hearing a gobble and getting to where you can call him in to your gun range. I have been seeing a lot of turkeys as March moves along, and a flock of 41 mixed-aged birds was in one of my fields early in the month. Soon gobblers will be starting harems of hens.

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Two long beard gobblers strutting for hens—Photo by Richard Seale

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