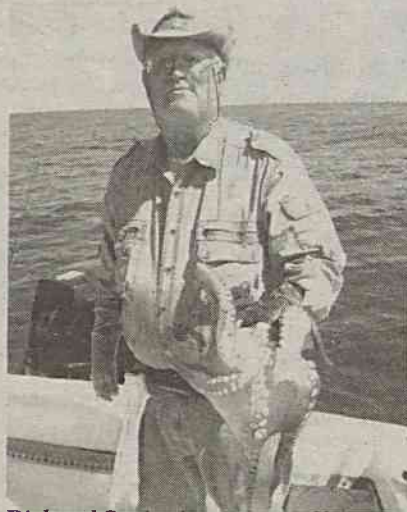


Sometimes Fishing Is Not About Fish!

By Richard Seale

A lot of work, planning and preparation is needed to accomplish an off-shore fishing trip, particularly the "first one" for the year. A boat seems to always have electrical gremlins that work during the winter to keep lights, pumps and GPS systems from operating properly when spring arrives, and all of these need tending to prior to venturing off shore. Fuel will need to be added to the tank. Livebait will need to be caught and preserved in "keepers." Rods, reels and rigs will need maintenance and care. For a bottom fishing trip, an anchor system is usually carried and that means a big anchor, 20 feet of chain, and lots of



Richard Seale shows one of his non-fish catches.

heavy line, usually 200 to 400 feet. John Furman and Art Chleborowicz worked to get Art's boat, aptly named "Work of Art," ready for a bottom fishing trip with a prime target being grouper. The plan called for venturing some 52 miles offshore, so weather, wind, and waves were of real importance. John and Art played weathermen and speculated that Friday, April 24, was the "right" day.

Ronnie Boyd, Ken Williams, and yours truly completed the group. "Work of Art" was ready to go at 5 a.m. It was more windy than we liked, and the 52 mile ride out was not a piece of cake, but we got out there. As the day wore on, the weather got better and better. John's and Art's weather projection turned into being "right on," and we all were thankful.

"Bottom fishing" in the ocean usually means deep water fishing on some sort of structure which can be natural reefs, artificial reefs, or just natural rock formations. The bottom of the sea off our area has a lot of flat areas, and these are not good fishing spots. Any chance for survival requires that smaller fish, crustaceans, and invertebrates need places to hide, or they will quickly be "lunch" to some other predator. Today's GPS and sonar technologies have vastly improved how we can locate and relocate bottom areas with good structure. John and Art had done a lot of GPS work to target likely places to find fish. Art and John navigated to these preset locations that were in water of about 110 feet of depth. As the day went by, we boated good catches of vermillion snapper, red pogy's, and trigger fish. We also caught many sharks and other species which we released, but we caught no grouper this day. We even dropped our anchor in 110 feet of water to give us more time to properly fish some structures, in hopes of luring grouper out of their "holes." To retrieve such a deep set anchor a special float is used. The

float is hooked onto the anchor line at the boat end, and the boat is powered up and driven past the anchor point. The motion of the boat produces hydraulic drag on the float, which causes the anchor line to drag through a ring on the float. Eventually, the anchor is pulled up to the float, and then the now "floating" anchor is manually hauled back to the boat. Deep sea anchoring is not an easy task!

Fishing one location we landed two octopi, one was hooked in a tentacle and one just wrapped itself around the rigging. One was about 18 inches across the tentacles and the other more than two feet. Nobody wanted them, so I said I would take them home for either dinner or a donation to the Aquarium if they were needed there. These critters are hard to handle and have a parrot like beak with which to nip you. It is OK to pick them up right where the mantle (head) joins the tentacle base. They will wrap their slimy tentacles around anything they can, in this case my arm. The suction cups will generate welts on your skin. But other than a "beak bite," a normal sized octopus is not dangerous. The octopi we landed spent the day in the boat's live bait well and the night in the PKS canal in a live bait keeper. I was unable to contact the Aquarium until Saturday since we did not get home until 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening, and the Aquarium was long closed. Early Saturday I checked the octopus to be sure they were OK, which they were, so I called the Aquarium. It turned out that they really needed some octopus as they were down to only one survivor. Art and I brought the remaining healthy octopus to Clint at the Aquarium. Clint gave us tour of the Aquarium holding tanks and shared a lot of octopus biology with us.

"Our" octopi will spend 30 days in "isolation" to be sure they are healthy and then will join the Aquarium display routines. I guess the lesson here is that fishing is not all about fish. The NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores is a remarkable asset for folks from all over the US. So if your "fishing" happens to yield something that may be of interest to the Aquarium, keep the specimen alive and then get in touch with the them.

Stepping Right Along

By Kathy Werle

As reported in the May 2009 issue of *The Shoreline*, Pine Knoll Shores has taken the first step along the path to establishing a walkway linking various parts of the community while providing safe passage for its residents and guests. The monthly meeting of the Pedestrian Master Plan Steering Committee was held on May 15 to take the next step in the planning process.

Susan Suggs with Coastal Planning and Design PLLC, consultant and coordinator for the project, reviewed with the committee the CAMA (Coastal Area Management Act) Core Land Use Plan as it relates to the Pedestrian Master Plan, ensuring that our commitment to a walkway is consistent with regulations. Other items on the agenda included informative technical input from Steve Hamilton, Division 2 Traffic Engineer with the NCDOT; the drafting of a vision statement; discussion of walkways in neighboring communities and of an upcoming field trip to Manteo (which we have been told has a great walkway system); developing a non-statistical survey for resident input; and planning for a June 23 public open house scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at town hall.

Information will be gathered through a survey which will be invaluable in the development of the town's Pedestrian Master Plan and will enhance the town's eligibility for grants and funding. After June 1 the survey will be found on the Pine Knoll Shores website www.townofpks.com. It will also be available at town hall and at the June 23 public open house.

In preparation for the public open house Town Manager Brian Kramer asked members of the committee to take photographs along Hwy. 58 depicting heavy vehicular traffic, bicyclists, joggers and walkers all trying to share the same island artery. Readers are invited to take photos of traffic situations along Hwy. 58 or elsewhere in PKS and email them, prior to the public open house, to Ms. Suggs at cpdsuggs@embarqmail.com.

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