

All Things New and 62

By Richard Seale

I can finally report that ocean temperatures are getting into the low 60's. As is always the case this time of year, and with delayed article publication dates, it is very hard to define what is happening when you read this versus what was happening when I wrote it. You know the old fishing cliché, "You should have been here yesterday!" Some time between now and the next article, I hope the Atlantic Bonito show up at 315 or 320. Like everything this year, that run of fish is a bit late. A valiant effort was made to catch them on April 16 despite the wind, but to no avail.

There have been a few speckled trout and red drum caught over the past couple of weeks, but most of them were undersized. Actually, there are 12" specs right in the McNeill Inlet opening into the boating channel. They hit on good old white grub bodies with either straight or curly red tails on ¼ ounce heads—really old style lures! On flooding tides, there is some reasonable fishing in the back necks of Spooner, Gales and Broad Creeks too. 17M Mirror Lures in green and red have produced, as have the normal Clauser and Deceiver flies. Ron McPherson and Tom Tempel have convinced me to make a "spec rig" with the 17M on the tail leader and a streamer fly on the front. These rigs can be fished slowly and still stay up in the water column.

Some of the fish caught were actually legal in size. By the way, some limits are as follows: specs 14" and 10/day, red drum 1/day and 18"-27" slot, flounder 8/day and 15". Grey trout are currently 6/day and 12", but expect the 1/day possession change on May 1. Note

that these are per-day limits, not per-trip limits. Some folks have taken a day limit in drum, run to shore to offload and then gone out again for another limit in drum. The Marine Fishery and Wildlife Officers have nailed several persons by watching this exercise from shore with scopes and binoculars. Nuff said!

Linda and I took our grand girls out for a northern Core Banks adventure. The trip started at the Morris ferry, at the east end of the town of Atlantic. The ferry crosses Core Sound to the Long Point Cabins dock. This trip is an adventure in its own right, particularly when the small, two-car ferry must be used due to water depth conditions! Once off the ferry, we drove in four-wheel drive, which is a must. A sandy path runs through the cabins and onto the beach. The run to the ghost town of Portsmouth, which is across Ocracoke Inlet from the town of Ocracoke, is 16 hard miles right down the beach. An old red buoy marks the cross-island track from the ocean beach to the parking area at the Coast Guard Station in Portsmouth. After leaving the beach, you wind through the coastal scrub forest. You then come to a large salt flat that stretches westward as far as the eye can see. On the eastern end of the flat is a track that you can drive across. Driving this is not an exercise for the faint of heart. The flats are usually all, or mostly all, under water, even at low tide. It is a very nerve wracking 900-foot trip across this flat in a vehicle. If you get stuck in an unseen soft spot, you are looking at 500 dollars or more in towing fees! The really bad news is that you have to come back the same way! I always try to get

to the flats at low tide. From mid-April till first frost, the bugs in Portsmouth are terrible. I honestly do not know how 700 folks lived there.

What this trip revealed was the loss of loggerhead turtles this cold winter. I have written about "cold stunning" previously, but to see the carnage on the beach was sobering. We counted more than 20 turtle carcasses. The rangers told us that more than 100 turtles had died over the winter of 2009-2010. We discovered a dead harbor seal and a dolphin pup too. We also found five Scotch Bonnet shells, but shelling was tough in the blowing sand.

We saw two vehicles of surf fishermen in our 32 miles of beach driving. That type of isolation is hard to come by. They were fishing for red drum but had not had any luck for a few days. The prior week, fishermen had caught a couple of "in slot" red drum, those between 18 and 27 inches. The wind was howling and lots of sand was in the air. The fishermen were camping in tents, which is permitted on "the banks." The camps, though tucked in the dunes, were a racket of wind-driven slapping canvas. I am pretty sure no matter what those folks put together for a meal, by the time they ate, it turned out to be "sand-wiches."

So far this April, it is better to go clamming.

In Memoriam
Cyrus Lindgren

Crystal Coast Events for May

22nd Annual Beaufort-by-the-Sea Music Festival
Event Dates: May. 7-8, 2010. The Beaufort Music & Performing Arts Festival brings an enormous amount of music to the Beaufort downtown waterfront. Blues, jazz, soft rock, reggae, gospel, and country - You'll hear it all. And, it's all free on multiple stages. For more information, info@beaufortmusicfestival.com

1st Capt. MAC Beach Run. **Event Date:** May. 8, 2010. Sponsored by Carteret County Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee. Location: Sheraton Atlantic Beach 5K participants have an out and back oceanfront course at low tide. The 1 Mile course is a Fun Run along the seashore. The Military Challenge winner will be awarded in the 5K run. For more information call 726-6350. You can register online at www.carteretchambermac.com

Crystal Coast Quilt Show. **Event Dates:** May. 14-15, 2010. Location: Crystal Coast Civic Center, Morehead City Contact Lori Mayo for details, 252-354-3056

Morehead City Family Boating & In-Water Boat Show **Event Dates:** May. 14-16, 2010 **Event Time(s):** 10-5 Saturday, 11-4 Sunday. Sponsored by the Downtown Morehead City Revitalization Association

Location: Morehead City Waterfront between S 7th & 11th Streets

1st "ARTrageous" Art Festival **Event Dates;** May. 15-16, 2010 **Event Time(s):** All day Saturday & Sunday. An exciting public art event on the Morehead City waterfront held in conjunction with the Morehead City Family Boating & In-water Boat Show. Call 726-8148 for more information

Strawberry Social **Event Date:** May. 15, 2010 **Event Time(s):** 5 p.m. All locals and visitors are invited to bring their favorite strawberry creation to share at a Strawberry Social event hosted by the Carteret Local Food Network. Be prepared to share your recipe. Come to the Curb Market, corner of 13th and Evans St, Morehead City on Saturday, May 15 at 5 p.m. No fee to enter, but bring your appetite! More information at www.carteretlocalfood.org, Call 729-6513 for more information

Scrapbooking Workshop **Event Dates:** May. 15, Jun. 19, Jul. 17, Aug. 21, Sep. 11, 2010 **Event Time(s):** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Scrapbooking Workshops with Linda Phelps will take place at Emerald Isle Parks and Recreation. Pre-registration is required, ages 12 and up. Fee is \$5 with additional packages available. Use of tools

and snack included. Fees are payable at workshop. You may call Linda Phelps at 910.326.6164 or email rphelps@ec.rr.com

2 v 2 Beach Volleyball Tournaments **Event Dates:** May. 15, Jun. 19, Jul. 10, Aug. 7, Sep. 11, 2010 Tournament location: Western Ocean Regional Access, Islander Drive, Emerald Isle. For registration, payment and general information, contact Brittany Wood at 354-6350 or bwood@emeraldisle-nc.org

2010 Cherry Point Air Show **Event Dates:** May. 21-23, 2010. Buckle up and strap in because it's time for NC's largest air show to take off! The US Navy Blue Angels will be returning as the premiere act. Contact Bob Kenward for more information, bob.kenward@usmc-mccs.org or call 1-866-wings-nc

Carteret Cty. Arts & Crafts Coalition Spring Show **Event Dates:** May. 29-30, 2010. Juried sale of arts and crafts of coastal artisans held three weekends a year. Held at the Beaufort Historic Site on Memorial Day. This is the perfect occasion to browse and buy the work of coastal artists and craftsmen. Contact Carol Collier for more information, collier1505@embarqmail.com