

For Our Longer Lives

By Kathy Werle

The North Carolina Coastal Federation, a partner in our quality of life

How much water does just one oyster clean in a day? That was the question Rachel Bisesi, coastal education coordinator at the North Carolina Coastal Federation, asked during the May 19 Third Thursday Forum at Four (TTFF) when she joined the forum to share with attendees information about the many volunteer opportunities and events available through the federation.

The mission of the federation is to protect and restore the water quality and critically important natural habitats of the North Carolina coast by collaboration, advocacy, restoration, education and information.

The federation fulfills its mission in many ways. In addition to the clean-up opportunities for volunteers, it offers citizens many interesting events, including special birding cruises three times a year for up to 35 people, coastal cruises leaving from Hammocks Beach, kayak and yoga trips to Jones Island, and summer camps. Registration for these events is made simple by calling 393-8185. Sunset cruises may be arranged for a group outing of up to 15 people by calling Sarah Williams at the Pine Knoll Shores town hall at 247-4353, ext. 13.

The federation was established in 1982, and has expanded its services to three locations and a staff of 27—and boasts 3,000 volunteers and 10,000 members. There are 30 serving on the Board of Directors, including our very own Sarah. The nearest office is on Highway 24 in Ocean; others can be found in Wrightsville Beach and Wanchese.

Also participating at the forum, Bree Tillett, an environmental engineer and Coastal Fellow with the federation, spoke about her work with our town staff on resolving storm water runoff issues.

As part of an effort to improve habitat and water quality on the coast, the federation partners with others to construct oyster reefs in estuaries. They are currently building an oyster reef in Salter Path out of recycled oyster shells, which will create a habitat for marine species, including oyster larvae, which will settle on the reef and begin filtering and cleaning the water.

So, how much water does just one oyster clean in a day? Bob Danehy, one of the attendees at the TTFF and an obviously informed observer of coastal activities, offered the answer: 50 gallons.

The North Carolina Coastal Federation is an exceptional partner in our quality of life, not only in town but also along our fragile coast. You may read more about the federation and its volunteer opportunities on their website at nccoast.org.

The Age-Friendly Advisory Committee is grateful for the many speakers who have given generously of their time and talent to bring topics of timely importance to our forums and our citizens. As always, we are searching for topics of particular interest to our citizens for future forums and welcome your suggestions so we all continue growing healthier and smarter together.

Suggestions for future forums may be submitted to Sarah Williams at town hall at SWilliams@townofpks.com or by calling 247-4353, ext. 13.

Fishing & Hunting

By Richard Seale



Cobia, blue claw crabs and growing concerns

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has set forth Proclamation FF-25-2016. It defines North Carolina's proposed "compromise" regarding the NOAA South Atlantic Fisheries Commission (SAFC) rules for cobia. As previously written, SAFC wanted to close all cobia fishing as of June 1, 2016, for the rest of the calendar year. At the NC Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in May, North Carolina set forth the following rules, effective May 23, 2016, at 12:01 a.m.:

Recreational Season, Harvest and Size Limits:

- a) Fish must be a *minimum* of 37 inches, Fork Length. (Fork length is from the tip of the mouth to the *middle* of the tail where it meets the body, not the end of the tail fins.)
- b) A recreational and a commercial limit cannot be combined on the same boat.
- c) The season will close on September 30, 2016, but can be closed earlier by proclamation.

For-Hire Vessels while engaged in for-hire operations:

- a) It is unlawful to possess more than 4 cobia per vessel per day or 1 cobia per person if less than 4 persons are on board.
- b) Harvest will be allowed 7 days a week.

Private Vessels not engaged in for-hire operations:

- a) It is unlawful to possess more than 2 cobia per vessel per day, or 1 cobia per person if only 1 person is on board.
- b) It is unlawful to possess cobia except on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Shore-based fishery:

- a) It is unlawful to possess more than 1 cobia per person per day.
- b) Harvest is allowed 7 days a week.
- c) Reminder: the size must be 37 inches.

Commercial Harvest and Size Limit:

- a) Minimum fork length must be 33 inches.
- b) It is unlawful to possess more than 2 cobia per Standard Commercial Fishing License.
- c) Harvest is allowed 7 days a week.

I have written that there are *many* questions regarding the data reliability for all the NOAA rules and lots of anger and frustration on all fronts. Take time to Google "NC New Cobia Rules" and read some of the comment sites. The comments are insightful.

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