

# Providing Charter Boats, Guides For Sports Fishermen Has Become Big Business On East N. C. Coast

By **BILL SHARPE**  
A Piedmontese industrialist would hardly speak of his factory in terms used by lean, slightly graying and windburned Ernal Foster, of Hatteras.

"I like her," he said with shy bragadoccio. "She's dry. Look how live she is, too. And she's got good engines into her."  
You will be making a big mistake if you smile at Ernal Foster's appraisal of his "Albatross I," as he described her while standing on the "Albatross II." There are some 1,000 to 1,500 people on the coast of North Carolina like Ernal, working in factories more or less pretentious than the one he is operating. Some of them have piers which cost thousands of dollars to build, and some have only a couple of skiffs, a pole, two stout arms, a merry heart and ready tongue.

It is a motley industry undisciplined, often part-time, and difficult to catalogue, but for all that it probably approaches in overall economic importance and in possibilities the commercial fishing industry itself, which is much easier to squeeze into statistics. The commercial fishing industry grossed \$8,821,648 in 1947, which put it near the top of southeastern states in this respect.

But the 26 party boats on Roanoke Island averaged 100 charters apiece last year, at \$30 per charter, for a gross of \$78,000. If the 1,500 estimated guides grossed \$2,000 a year apiece, the return would be \$3,000,000.

That is only part of the picture. In addition to the return to boatmen and guides, expenditures directly dependent upon the sport are made with grocery stores, cafes, hotels, sport stores, bait dealers, filling stations, and many others. For instance, boats leaving the bridge at Roanoke Island are estimated to leave an average of \$10 at Dykstra's Fishing center in the form of gear rental, bait purchases, lunches, beverages, hats, sport shoes, sun glasses and other sundries.

National estimates indicate fishermen from one of the heaviest spending groups of all vacationists. In North Carolina, we figure the expenditure per fisherman runs from a minimum of \$12 per day for the bass fisherman in Currituck to \$20 per day for a member of an offshore party at Morehead City. The estimate is conservative. In Currituck, it will cost \$12 for two to be poled or towed to fishing grounds and another \$5 apiece for bed and board at the more modest camps, or \$11 for each. Bait, beverages, and gear-gaws must be accounted for, not to mention transportation to and from the fishing places.

At Morehead and Wrightsville, a Gulf Stream party of four will pay from \$60 to \$75 for a boat, and while the members usually will sleep aboard the boat, they will take two or more meals ashore. Meals, beverages, bait, lures, knick-knacks for lunch and other items will run \$25 in addition. Here, as elsewhere, there are lower rates, but often as not the saving in charter fee is wiped out by lack of sleeping privileges aboard.

Even the surfman who needs no boat usually leaves a substantial sum in the state, and he illustrates the value of our sport fishes.  
For instance, one day in mid-May, some 25,000 pounds of channel bass were taken in nets at Oregon Inlet, for which the commercial operator probably

received 10 cents a pound. On the same day, a surfcaster at Hatteras caught the only channel bass landed there that week. He was a member of a party of three from New Jersey which had fished the surf for a week, and the three of them, by actual check, had spent \$180 hotel and meals, 30 jeep hire, 5 bait, 32 miscellaneous (tips, sun glasses, hats, beverages, drug sundries, etc.) a total of \$247 which made that little fish worth \$13.72 a pound to Hatteras.

Johnny Moore, at Collington, boasted he had \$16 in his pocket for a morning's guiding, and still another party coming in the afternoon. Up in Currituck, there are more than 200 guides like Johnny and there is scarcely a waterfront hamlet on the coast which cannot spare a half-dozen of varying gear, ability and activity. Clark's Sport center, at Poplar Branch, is a two-person operation conducted by a retired New Jersey trainman and his wife. With occasional hired help, he operates three boats, can bed and feeds eight people, and it is a thriving little business indeed for most warm-weather months. Clark's place is duplicated scores of times down the coast, the pattern occasionally soaring to more pretentious outfits, such as Ken Ward's Lone Cedar club at Manteo, the Beachcombers at Ocracoke, the club of Roy Eubanks at Portsmouth, and the lodges at Mattamuskeet and Belhaven of ambitious Axson Smith. It dips, too, to the most simple fishing camps, like Ira Morris's place at Drum Inlet, and to boarding houses which make a living from sport fishermen.

The ramifications often are obscure unless closely examined. Mrs. Parkerson's hotel at Nags Head has tacked on a good 40 days to its profitable season by catering especially to fishermen, adding a potential of \$12,000 to the hotel operation. Ninety per cent of her clients are from outside North Carolina, and include parties as large as 40 at a time from clubs or firms.

This North Carolina industry has grown up largely in the last decade. The first sailfish caught off the North Carolina coast by hook and line was landed only 12 years ago by Tony Seamon, of Morehead City. And as late as 1935 about the only persons who went to the tip of the Outer Diamonds were commercial fishermen looking for blues. Since then, 11 boats have been made available at Hatteras for sport fishing. From 1937 to 1947 the number of powered fishing cruisers at Morehead City increased from eight to 32, and the number of skiffs and other small craft available has increased at an even larger rate.

It is significant that the number of hotel beds available to tourists in season has increased at Morehead City from 68 to 245 in the same period of time. Wherever the fishing has been good, the facilities have grown, for North Carolina has no luxurious beach resorts to attract tourists. At Hatteras, three new boarding houses opened this year, there is a new hotel at Shallotte, and even Harkers Island is building a 50-room hotel which will cater almost exclusively, perforce, to sportsmen. You can even get accommodations now at Cape Lookout, East Lake, Stumpy Point, Fairfield and other places which, a few years ago, had not a bed for com-

## OUR DEMOCRACY — by Mat



**SETTING OUT A ROW OF SMALL TREES ON THE WINDWARD SIDE OF HIS HOME, THE NEW SETTLER WAS PLANNING A WINDBREAK FOR THE FUTURE. ADDING YOUNG TREES EACH YEAR HE EXTENDED HIS PROTECTION UNTIL, FINALLY, HOME AND FARM BUILDINGS WERE SHELTERED AND SECURE AGAINST STORMS AND BAD WEATHER FOR YEARS TO COME.**



**SETTING ASIDE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY IN LIFE INSURANCE AND SAVING THE YOUNG FAMILY STARTS ITS PROGRAM FOR FINANCIAL SECURITY... ADDING TO IT YEAR BY YEAR, THE AMOUNT OF PROTECTION GROWS, THE SECURITY STRENGTHENS, ASSURING THEM ECONOMIC STABILITY AND PEACE OF MIND FOR TODAY AND FOR THE YEARS AHEAD.**

mercial rent.  
The instability of the industry is a characteristic of rapid progress. Practices vary widely, but with the coming of knowing and demanding sportsmen, competition has brought many improvements. Bill Ballou's "Victory", a high-powered, well-equipped cruiser at Morehead City, is a good example of a modern sportsfishing boat. Vic Lance's "Moja" and Hulan Watts' "Idle-On" at Southport, the "Bill N' Jim" at Morehead, Ken Ward's "Cherokee" at Hanteo, and a dozen more boats capable of fast runs to deep water, manned by sober and hard-working crews, have forced lackadaisical guides to

look to the comfort and well-being of their patrons.  
The professional touch is being added now, slowly but surely, and it is spreading out. Ernal Foster, still lovingly surveying his "Albatross I", put it this way:  
"I like this business. I know a lot of my folks comes hundreds of miles to have some fun, and I like to take them where they can catch fish. A long time ago, I saw we'd have to put in stern chairs, and outriggers, and a toilet—lots of the fellows bring their families now—and we did it. And twin engines, so we could run to the Stream and back safely."  
No industrialist, peering confidently into the future, could

### Edgar Carter, In Navy, Stationed At San Diego

Edgar A. Carter, former operator of Carter's Radio shop here, has joined the navy, and is stationed at the U. S. Naval Training center, San Diego.  
have better expressed his feeling of responsibility, hope and ambitions.

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Season 1 lb. beef or veal rump or round, cut about 1 inch thick. Sprinkle with flour, pounding to help make meat tender. Cut into serving pieces; brown in fat; add 2 cups A&P's IONA TOMATO JUICE; cover and simmer gently till meat is tender (about 2 to 2½ hrs.) Serves 4.

**LOW-COST CROQUETTES**  
To make 12 economical fish croquettes, melt ½ cup of A&P's "Perfect Blend" DEXO, and stir in ½ cup flour, 1½ tps. salt, dash pepper and 2 tps. chopped parsley. Add 1 cup milk gradually; and cook, stirring constantly, till smooth and thick. Add 2 cups cooked flaked fish (1 lb.) and 2 cups soft bread crumbs. Chill. Form into croquettes and roll in fine cracker or bread crumbs. Add 2 tps. water to 1 beaten egg; dip croquettes in mixture, covering entire surface; roll again in crumbs, and fry in hot DEXO (390° F.) about 1½ inches deep, till golden brown.

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