

HEADED FOR BELGIUM — Joe Bridges, former basketball star of Hoke High School, is leaving August 20 to play professional basketball in Belgium. A new rule allowing the foreign pro teams to have an additional player gives Bridges the opportunity.

Wildlife Afield

BY JIM DEAN

I recently returned from a week of vacation at the beach where I witnessed the landing of a possible new state record salt water species from the Emerald Isle Pier on Bogue Banks.

Of course, Joel Arrington who keeps the fish records for North Carolina will have to make the final determination, but I have reason to believe that this new state record will wind up in what is known as the "odd" category. I say this because I happen to hold the only other record in this category, but I'll tell you about that later.

What happened was this. I was standing on the pier next to this other fellow and both of us were pulling in big spots two at a time. Some of the fishermen were also catching small flounders on minnows and strip baits.

The fellow next to me had put out a live minnow, but although flounders were being hauled in left and right, his minnow had been ignored for over an hour.

"I can't understand it," he said as he picked up his rod to check his bait. "Nothing has touched this minnow...uh, wait a minute, I believe I've got a bite."

He held the rod for a moment, giving the "flounder" time to swallow the bait, then he set the hook. The rod bent sharply and the drag on his reel gave a squeal.

"Hey, that's a good one," I said. "It's really pulling good," he replied. His efforts to raise the still unseen catch attracted the attention of others along the pier rail. One of them grabbed the droplet that is used to land big fish.

"It must be a whopper flounder," said someone.

Deep under the water, I saw a wide silver flash. "It's not a flounder," I said. "It looks like a big

pompano or maybe a bluefish. I saw the flash of silver when he turned on his side."

The angler struggled for a few more minutes while we all stood around watching, then suddenly his "fish" popped to the surface. It was--believe it or not--the chrome-plated top of a water fountain.

Nobody said a word as the catch was reeled up the side of the pier and over the rail. It hit the deck with a resounding clang. Then we all collapsed in helpless laughter.

"That's a real nice one," somebody said. "You don't hardly get them kind anymore."

"What did he bite?" asked another chuckling angler.

"You really ought to have him mounted," said still another fisherman. "I believe you've caught one of the rarest of all fish--a chromed saltwater fountain fish. I hear they're a hybrid of the horseshoe crab and squid. I think they move around by squirting water."

I confess I felt instant companionship with the "lucky" angler. Perhaps you recall that I related an instance back in 1971 of how I landed a size 10 and a half low-heeled tennis shoe from the rocks of Ft. Macon using saltwater flyrod.

Like this fisherman, my catch was the subject of a spirited discussion. Onlookers suggested that 1) I ought to cast back out again since these gameshoes are said to run in pairs, 2) that my catch was one of the fastest-stepping members of the shoe family -- sort of in the wahoo of footwear, 3) that I should consider releasing it since it was only caught in the tongue and was otherwise unharmed.



BIG CATCH — Sylvester Floyd of Robbins Heights holds up a six and one-half pound catfish he caught at Jim Warner's pond.

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Scout Executive Named

Shelby Baker, field executive for Scotland County Girl Scouts, has been named to serve Hoke County, Pines of Carolina Girl Scout Council announced.

Beginning August 6, Miss Baker will be at the county library from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Wednesday. Her responsibilities will be to recruit and train a county board of directors, and to assist in the planning and implementation of programs for Scouts here.

Miss Baker will work closely with volunteer personnel here to keep them informed of training and program opportunities available in the two-county area.

This is the first time Hoke County will be served by the Scotland County field executive. Hoke used to be grouped with Lee, Moore, and Richmond counties.

Miss Baker may be reached in Laurinburg at 276-8417. A phone number at the library here will be announced later.

Miss Baker was appointed field executive in Scotland County in April of this year. She previously did volunteer work for the Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi Girl Scout Council.

MORE DECLINE
North Carolina sheep numbers continue to dwindle. The latest count indicates that Tar Heel farmers have only 11,000 head, a decline from last year of 8 per cent.



Shelby Baker

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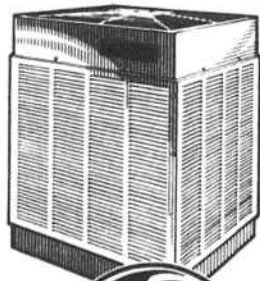
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