

Kings Must Have Taken A Holiday

BY JAMIE MILLIKEN

Well, we knew it had to happen. It just could not continue at the pace it was going. But I hope the lull doesn't continue for long. I'm talking about the king mackerel bite.

Memorial Day weekend saw a lot of anglers coming down to our area with hopes of landing a "smoker" king. However, I believe that the kingfish went on a holiday break as well. There were a few kings located but nothing like the past month.

There was good fishing farther offshore, the tuna, dolphin and wahoo bite continued all through the week. Charles Spencer, fishing out of Southport, reported that he had two large wahoo, limited out on dolphin, and had one blackfin tuna. Chip Maree, fishing out of Windy Point, also got his limit on dolphin this past weekend.

The cobia were still doing well this past week. Brunswick County's Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan and his son hooked up a 45-pound cobia while fishing the "General Sherman" wreck off Little River.

Cobia can be found around wrecks, buoy markers, rocky bottoms and weed lines. They are very inquisitive and show little fear toward the boat. It is very common (this time of year) to have several following your boat while you are slow-trolling for kings. Once hooked up they are a fierce fighter, but once they are on your table, there is nothing better.

The International Sailfish Tournament was held this month at Flamingo Bay, Costa Rica. And what a fishing bonanza it was. Forty boats competed in this four-day event. Are you ready for this? There were 1,643 sailfish caught during the tournament. The average weight was between 80-125 pounds per fish. This is a tag and release tournament so all fish were released to fight another day. A quick check on the calculator and that is an average of 41 sails per boat for the tournament. Pretty strong, wouldn't you say?

May 31-June 2 is the annual Sun-Fun King Mackerel Tournament. Holden Beach Marina is an official weigh station for the tournament. Lockwood Folly Inlet will have a committee boat stationed there to check each tournament boat out. This is very convenient for local fishermen because it prevents them from having to work around the Sunset Beach Bridge schedule.

Well that does it for this time. Until next week, tight lines, bent rods and good fishin'.

Sun Fun Tourney Begins Friday

Anglers will fish for more than \$145,000 in cash prizes in the Sun Fun King Mackerel Tournament this weekend.

The annual fishing competition will be held Friday and Saturday, with awards presented Sunday at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center.

Holden Beach Marina is one of

four official weigh stations for the event. Boats will check out of Lockwood Folly Inlet.

The tournament, which is being held in conjunction with the 40th Annual Sun Fun Festival, offers 83 ways to win. The top prize is \$10,000 for the largest king mackerel.

Hearing Set On Fish Rules

A proposal to make shellfish harvesters write their name on containers of oysters, clams and mussels is one of several rule changes being considered this year by the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission.

The state panel will conduct a public hearing on the proposals Thursday, June 6, at 7 p.m. in the New Hanover County Courthouse in Wilmington.

The rule on identifying shellfish containers was developed in response to complaints from dealers who purchased undersized shellfish from harvesters, said Marine Fisheries spokesperson Christie Guthrie. Other proposals up for discussion at the hearing include one to open and close the seasons for transplanting oysters and clams from polluted waters at the same time.

As it stands now, the oyster transplanting season starts in February and the season for relocating clams starts in May. Ms. Guthrie said us-

ing the same seasons would make law enforcement easier.

Several proposed changes would give more authority to the state fisheries director, William Hogarth.

If the rules are approved, the director would be allowed to specify areas where gill nets are permitted as well as the seasons for gill nets, mesh length, means, number and net length.

Hogarth also would be permitted to exempt escape rings from crab pots during certain times of the year and require escape panels in pound nets.

The Marine Fisheries Commission is expected to vote on the proposed rule changes at its business meeting June 13 and 14 in New Bern.

Holiday Crowd Catches Spanish And Flounder

BY DOUG RUTTER

South Brunswick Islands residents and visitors celebrated the Memorial Day weekend by catching plenty of Spanish mackerel, bluefish and flounder.

Boaters and pier fishermen reeled in lots of Spanish. Anglers caught flounder in local inlets and blues in the surf, according to John Sheffield of Sheffield's at Ocean Isle Beach.

Several blues weighing six and seven pounds each were pulled from the surf at the east end of Ocean Isle.

"It hasn't been real good, but it hasn't been real bad either," Sheffield said Monday. "Anybody with patience has been catching fish it seems."

Joyce Land of Tripp's Fishing Center at Shallotte Point said anglers

FISHING REPORT

hooked plenty of flounder last week, averaging two to four pounds each.

"Right now flounders look real good," she said. "It looks good for the flounder tournament." Shallotte Point VFD holds its annual flounder fishing tournament next weekend.

Grady, Eddie and Kevin O'Brien and Steve Bracey, all of Red Springs, caught 83 flounder last week. William Usher of Shallotte Point caught 24 flounder last week.

Ms. Land said flounder weren't the only fish caught. Maurice Milligan of Shallotte Point and his party caught 11 flounder, 11 speckled trout, three large blues and 25 pounds of spots Saturday.

Stuart Green of Laurinburg and his three fishing partners caught

their 40-fish limit on Spanish Saturday. Anglers also caught king mackerel about 20 miles offshore.

"Right now it looks like it keeps up it's going to be a good season for all the fish," Ms. Land said.

Joe Hardasty of Independent Seafood at Holden Beach said offshore fishing was good last week. Anglers caught king and Spanish mackerel, cobia, dolphin and amberjack.

Fishermen working inshore waters caught flounder. "Overall, I'd say it's pretty fair," Hardasty said.

Pier Fishing

Memorial Day weekend reports from the local fishing piers varied, with one pier manager saying activity was relatively slow and another calling the weekend the best since the start of 1991.

Curtis Williamson of Ocean Isle Beach Fishing Pier said anglers there had their best weekend of the year with catches of blues and spots.

"Everybody seemed like they caught fish," he said. "It was a good holiday."

Williamson said two fishermen caught nine-pound blues during the weekend. "We're looking for a good summer and a good fall for fishing," he said.

Holden Beach Fishing Pier Manager Gil Bass said fishing was somewhat slow last week. Anglers reeled in Spanish mackerel, whiting, spots and flounder.

"It's just a little of this and a little of that," he said. "It's not as good as it has been."

Bass said poor fishing didn't keep many people away from the pier.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
CAPT. MIKE POSTELL of the Mega Flite recently caught this 43 1/2 pound dolphin.

"It's one of the best Memorial Days as far as people I've ever seen," he said.

This Week's Tide Table

		MAY		LOW	
Day	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	30	9:51	10:20	3:57	3:50
Friday	31	10:27	10:56	4:36	4:28
		JUNE			
Saturday	1	11:05	11:29	5:15	5:07
Sunday	2	11:44	-----	5:56	5:48
Monday	3	12:07	12:29	6:38	6:35
Tuesday	4	12:51	1:19	7:21	7:28
Wednesday	5	1:38	2:15	8:09	8:29

ADJUSTMENTS
SHALLOTTE INLET—add 17 min. high tide, add 32 min. low tide.
LOCKWOOD FOLLY—subtract 22 min. high tide, subtract 8 min. low tide.
BALD HEAD ISLAND—subtract 10 min. high tide, subtract 7 min. low tide.
SOUTHPORT—add 7 min. high tide, add 15 min. low tide.
LITTLE RIVER—add 7 min. high tide, add 7 min. low tide.

SHELLFISH BEDS OPEN

Waters Closed To Trawling

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries closed some local waters to shrimp and crab trawling last week and opened part of Shallotte River to shellfish harvesting.

Area waters closed to trawling include the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway between Southport and the South Carolina state line and Bonaparte Creek from waterway marker No. 111 to Little River Inlet.

The waters were closed Sunday to protect small brown shrimp, according to a Marine Fisheries pro-

clamation.

A lower section of Shallotte River was opened to shellfishing last Friday after being closed for two weeks.

Waters upstream of a line running from the south shore of Shallotte Creek to a point 300 yards south of The Swash remain closed to clam harvesters.

The area was opened due to satisfactory bacteriological sampling results, according to a state proclamation.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
PAT BARNHILL of Laurinburg (left) caught this 33-pound cobia earlier this month aboard the Super Salty I. Also pictured is Capt. Ronnie Rabon.

State Sets Fishing Limits

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries last week put limits on the catch of blue and white marlin, sailfish, red drum and northern lobster.

Minimum size limits were set for blue marlin, 86 inches; white marlin, 62 inches; and sailfish, 57 inches.

Each of those fish are measured in fork length, which is the distance from the lower jaw to the middle of the fork in the tail.

The state also made it illegal for fishermen to catch more than five red drum per day that are between 14 and 32 inches long. The minimum size for red drum is 14 inches.

Anglers also are prohibited from catching more than one red drum per day that is more than 32 inches long.

It is also illegal to possess northern lobster, also called American or Maine lobster, that have a carapace

length of less than 3 1/4 inches.

State Fisheries Director William Hogarth set the new limits last Friday, according to Marine Fisheries proclamations.

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SIZE	600 FT. REELS	REG.	SALE PRICE
1/4 inch ...Hollow Braid Polly		\$13.50	\$10.80
5/16 inch		\$23.14	\$18.51
3/8 inch		\$28.29	\$22.63
1/4 inch.....Twisted Polly		\$11.90	\$9.52
5/16 inch		\$18.86	\$15.09
3/8 inch		\$29.14	\$23.31
7/16 inch		\$40.06	\$32.05
1/2 inch		\$47.60	\$38.08

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SIZE	600 FT. REELS	REG.	SALE PRICE
3/8 inch...Twisted Extra-Lene		\$54.47	\$45.57
1/2 inch		\$98.80	\$79.04
5/8 inch		\$144.40	\$115.52
3/4 inch		\$190.00	\$152.00
3/8 inch.....Twisted Nylon		\$63.00	\$50.40
7/16 inch		\$90.00	\$72.00
1/2 inch.....		\$117.00	\$93.60

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