

SOUTHPORT CREEKS CLOSED

Fishermen Moving Oysters In River

BY DOUG RUTTER
The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries had good news and bad news this week for the county's commercial shellfishermen.

The good news is that the state's paying a handful of them to move oysters from polluted to cleaner waters near Lockwood Folly River.

The bad news is the state has closed about 45 acres of waters in the Southport area because of pollution.

A few boatloads of commercial fishermen started moving oysters Monday morning from polluted waters in Lockwood Folly to cleaner waters.

Jerry Parker, shellfish biologist with the division office in Wilmington, said oysters are being moved to three areas near the river mouth, including spots known as Cross Rock and Sheep Island.

The oysters will clean the bacteria from their bodies in a few weeks, he said, and be ready for harvesting when oyster season opens in the fall. Fishermen are paid \$1 for each bushel of oysters they relocate.

Parker expected the oyster relay to continue through today (Thursday). To accommodate the move, Marine Fisheries temporarily closed the three areas to clambers while the oysters are relocated.

Last Thursday, the state closed shellfishing in Dennis Creek and Piney Point Creek, located just west of the Oak Island Bridge.

George Gilbert, assistant director of the N.C. Shellfish Sanitation branch, said the closure is more than a temporary one which typically follows a heavy rainfall.

The closure was based on a recent sanitary survey of shellfishing waters between Southport and Beavercreek Creek.

Gilbert said bacterial pollution counts in Dennis and Piney Point creeks were higher than state limits allow.

"It could be opened again if there was enough resource to justify it and the bacteria counts dropped," Gilbert said Monday.

Sanitary surveys are conducted every three years for all shellfishing waters in the state. Gilbert said the

latest survey report for Lockwood Folly River should be completed by mid-summer.

This Week's Tide Table

Day	Date	HIGH		LOW	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	2	7:17	7:30	1:08	1:21
Friday	3	7:53	8:07	1:51	1:58
Saturday	4	8:28	8:47	2:31	2:37
Sunday	5	10:06	10:28	4:10	4:15
Monday	6	10:48	11:12	4:54	4:58
Tuesday	7	11:34	---	5:42	5:47
Wednesday	8	12:06	12:29	6:33	6:42

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.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER
MARINE FISHERIES officials John Schoolfield and Jerry Parker (right) prepare to leave the Sunset Harbor boat ramp Monday for an oyster relay in Lockwood Folly River.

For Hot Action, Go To Frying Pan Tower

BY JAMIE MILLIKEN

The long-range forecast last week that called for light and slight conditions lived up to my expectations. Gale force winds pounded the South Brunswick Islands most of the weekend. Well, March is nearly gone and traditionally April promises some fine fishing weather. Boy, am I ready!



CAPTAIN JAMIE'S OFFSHORE FISHING REPORT

If you are planning a fishing trip in the month of April and are undecided on where to go, allow me to make a suggestion: Frying Pan Light Tower. This gem of a fishing spot really cranks up in April. The tower is located right on the edge of the "blue water." The lon-

gan coordinates are 45166.0/59221.0, which is approximately 31 miles from the Cape Fear sea buoy. There are numerous rocky ledges that provide the perfect habitat for many species of fish.

If king mackerel is your target, anglers should have little trouble boating their limit in the waters around the tower. Kings follow the food chain and there is always an abundance of bait fish in the area. This time of year you will find frozen cigar minnows as the bait of choice. Simply use your Carolina live bait rig and troll these minnows just as you would a live bait. Don't forget to bring along your down-rigger. I believe you will have a lot of action on your deep-trolled bait. The limit is still set at five kings per person in federal waters.

April will start our spring run of cobia, amberjack and dolphin. Cobia are especially attracted to this structure. Pay close attention to your bait. Cobia are often very cautious about striking. You can improve your chances of a good hook-up if you tease them with a cast bait.

Watch for bird activity to lead you to the numerous schools of dolphin that work the area. Once you get in a school you can keep them around your boat by chumming with small pieces of cut squid and by maintaining one hooked dolphin in the water.

The rocky ledges that I wrote about earlier have always produced grouper, snapper, tilefish, grunts and black sea bass. While you are anchored over these ledges, don't forget to drift some light line baits behind your boat. With all the bottom fish being brought, there is no telling as to what kind of game fish you can attract to the surface.

The water temperature will be in the high 60s at the tower. So if you can catch a pretty day, go and experience the hot fishing action that this famous light tower can produce. You will be delightfully surprised.

Until next time, good fishin' and good luck "Jolly Mon" wherever you are.



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

It's Fishing Weather

Ian Cameron of Winnabow found peaceful Rice's Creek at the N.C. Wildlife boat ramp off of Governor's Road a good spot to fish during warmer weather last week. However, the fish were not biting, he said.

King Mackerel Fishing School of the Carolinas

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