



THIS KESTRAL, or sparrow hawk, is an important link in the food chain.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

All Form Links In The Chain

BY BILL FAVER

Most of us know animals need energy and raw materials in order to grow and develop and to carry out their life processes.

Although these animals gain vitamins and warmth from sunlight, they cannot capture and use the light energy from the sun directly. They must get their energy and raw materials by eating plants or by eating other animals who have eaten plants.

Only plant materials can transform the sun's energy into a form useful to consumers—the animals feeding on the plants.

There is a wide range of plant material on land. Leaves, grasses, roots, bark, sap, flowers, fruits, nuts, nectar and seeds are some of the material available to consumers.

Along the seashore, the waters contain lichens, seaweeds and phytoplankton as plant materials.

Also, some of the material from land plants accumulates in the water as food for sea creatures.

Plant materials form the basic link in the food chain. Animals feeding on plant materials, like cows, rabbits and snails, are called herbivores. Animals feed-

ing mainly on other animals are carnivores. Omnivores are the animals that feed on both plant and animal material.

Some examples of herbivores are weevils, caterpillars, bees, beetles, rabbits, mice, seed-eating birds and horses.

Some of the carnivores are toads and frogs, spiders, cats and dogs, hawks, owls, gulls, crabs, fish and herons.

Omnivores include some of the warblers and other birds, shrimp, fanworms, barnacles, sponges, herring gulls and human beings.

We can think of each plant or animal as a link in the food chain. When a snail feeds on a thistle we have a two-link food chain. If a bird eats the snail, we get a three-link food chain, and it becomes a four-link food chain if a hawk eats the bird.

Another four-link chain happens when zooplankton (animal) eats phytoplankton (plant) and then mackerel eats zooplankton and man (or woman) eats mackerel.

It's easy to visualize food chains for large animals. Think about the small ones—insects, worms and tiny sea critters—and see if you can construct food chains for them. Such an effort helps us appreciate our surroundings and understand some of the effects of pollution and overuse on our resources.



FAVER

MORE LETTERS

Postal Changes: Petty Annoyance Or Real Problem?

To the editor:

It is quite evident that our postal service in Shallotte has deteriorated quite noticeably since the move to the new post office (at Sunset Beach). It seems that our erstwhile postmaster and public servant has no regard for the foremost needs of our community.

He has been quoted as saying that the businesses and the people would have no curtailment of services. Perhaps this public paid bureaucrat should take a good look at this situation.

The manner in which all of this has occurred is appalling. Just to appease the employees of the postal service is no reason to inconvenience the public.

Mr. Frank Bringoli, our erstwhile postmaster and chief public servant and bureaucrat, has made the following comments, as recalled to the best of my knowledge:

1. The building in Shallotte is dirty and the people should see it. (A little soap, water and elbow grease could solve that problem.)

2. The building in Shallotte has excessive amounts of asbestos. (No one else has complained about it.)

3. Postmaster did not have ample space.

4. Letter carriers did not have ample space.

5. Shorter hours, lunchtime closings, early daily closing as well as early closing on Saturday are the result of budget cuts.

6. If more postal employees were available, service would be better.

7. Putting mail up late does not occur. (Frankly, this statement borders on the utmost of obvious prevarications.)

8. Noises of laughter, joking around and loud conversations are heard around the boxes during time mail should be put up is due to carriers, not postal clerks.

There is more to mention, but let the above suffice for now. Our erstwhile postmaster says no services are nor will be cut. By his own statements, cuts are being made—shorter hours to do business, fewer employees to serve the public on desk and late mail, to name some of the cuts.

Perhaps now that the postmaster is in his new quarters, he doesn't visit Shallotte and see for himself what the situation truly is.

I think that contact by phone, letter, fax and the like should be made with postal officials, elected politicians and anyone who might be able to help to remedy our situation.

In closing, the tone of my conversation reflected arrogance on the part of our postmaster, a public servant who should try to help our community.

W.R. (Bill) Waldron
Calabash

League Effort Deserves Praise

To the editor:

An organization exists in our county that deserves a note of thanks.

The Brunswick County Animal Welfare League, through its membership and support, has kept numerous unwanted litters of kittens and puppies from being born by their assistance of helping to fund the services of neutering and spaying.

Their efforts have addressed a large problem in our county with a simple solution. Neutering and spaying not only cuts down on unwanted animals and strays, it saves our tax dollars, as many of these animals face a certain death at pounds due to a lack of homes.

Many thanks to the members of the Brunswick County Animal Welfare League for your efforts, your concern and your help. You've taken action and made a difference and that's what counts. Much continued success!

Sandra Carlyle
Ash

It Took More Than Luck To Save Lives

To the editor:

With great pride the Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association commends the Holden Beach Water Rescue Squad, Coastline Rescue, the Holden Beach Police and *Salty* charter boat for the splen-

did success of their lifesaving effort May 3 at Holden Beach. Each participant performed the role assigned them excellently, with the result that lives were saved.

Some critics have labeled the success "luck." Well, if the *Salty* hadn't been called and diverted before anyone knew exactly what was happening; if the swimmers had not been kept calm by the police, thus expediting their transfer to the *Salty*; if the rescue squad had not been at the beach and at the marina to transport people to the hospital and provide first aid; if one of these links had broken down, lives could have been lost. Sounds like skill, not luck.

Too often all of us are guilty of being critical of our volunteer rescue and fire persons and certainly about our island police.

Well, this incident should make us pause and realize how lucky we are to have such a fine group of people serving our community.

Jim Lowell, President
Greater Holden Beach
Merchants Association

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to...
"YOU"
Sincerely,
WAYLAND VEREEN

An Eye For An Eye With A Fishing Pole

There are worse things in life than getting poked in the eye with a fishing pole, but I've found that few things are more painful.

I did that to myself last week and spent most of a day at the eye doctor.

"Did someone do you this favor, or did you happen to manage it on your own?" the ophthalmologist asked just before squirting my eye with a yellow liquid dye.

There's nothing I hate more than to put liquids in my eyes, in my ears or up my nose. I'm such a baby about taking medicine of any kind, and those that are absorbed by the sensory organs in my head throw me into fits.

"I did it to myself," I answered, knowing what the good doctor would ask next.

"Well, did you catch any fish?"

No. Actually, I was replacing a ladder in the storage shed at home when a corner snagged the tip of a fishing pole stored away overhead. When the ladder finally turned loose, the tip of the pole flew back and gave me a stunning whack in the left eye.

I never even saw it; I never had time to blink. It happened so quick. And then that sick feeling that comes from being scared beyond funny takes over when you think you've lost an eye. For a while I was

Terry
Pope



afraid to take my hand away, thinking that the world would be black when I finally opened it.

The world wasn't dark after all, but everything was blurry. After looking in a mirror, I determined the pole had scraped my eyeball and eyelid and gave me a strong lick just below the eyebrow, on that part of the forehead that overhangs the eye like a ledge. It was starting to swell so I packed it in ice.

That Saturday was a good day for working in the yard. I had spent most of the day washing the walls of the storage shed.

When the eye didn't improve overnight, I took it to one of those emergency walk-in clinics on Sunday.

A nurse there had asked the same questions.

"I got poked in the eye with a rod and reel," I told her.

She looked at me like I was crazy. "A what?"

"A rod and reel," I nervously repeated.

"Oh, you mean a fishing pole," she added. "Did you catch any fish?"

I had to explain that it happened at home, that I never left the yard, had never intended to go fishing and will now probably throw the stupid pole into the trash.

"We've been swamped with injuries today," the nurse explained. "When the weather's nice and people start working in their yards, accidents tend to happen."

A doctor there numbed the eye, put in some ointment and patched it overnight.

When the morning sunlight hit the eye the next morning, I staggered around like Dracula. An ophthalmologist would know for sure if there was serious damage.

His final prognosis was that I had suffered a corneal abrasion with normal healing expected. I would have blurred vision for a few days and the eye would be sensitive to bright light. I'm thankful that it wasn't serious, and it made me think about others who are less fortunate.

Sure enough, he was right. The eye is feeling better, but if I get up enough nerve to venture back into the storage shed again, that fishing pole is history—it's gone. An eye for an eye.

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