

Happy 2006 fishing season to all!

It's good to be back. I thought we'd start with news of a major fishing tournament in June, take a stab at a forecast for 2006, and then pickup on some of the early season reports.

#### **Fishing tournament details:**

As some of you know, I'm the Yankee Homecoming Chairman for 2006. As Chairman, one of my biggest jobs is to raise money for the major Yankee Homecoming events such as fireworks, waterfront concerts, and the parade. This year's festival is from July 29<sup>th</sup> through August 6<sup>th</sup> and details are on [www.yankeehomecoming.com](http://www.yankeehomecoming.com) As you'll see from the Website, the events are all free to the public.

So, to raise some of the necessary funding, we've decided to initiate a major fishing tournament. The fishing tournament will run three days during the middle of the striped bass season: June 21-23. You'll be able to get tickets in advance at the "weigh stations": Bridge Bait and Tackle, Crossroads Boat and Tackle, Hilton's Dock, and Surfland. You will also be able to buy tickets at the Captain's Parties dock on Plum Island. Daily tickets will be \$20 for those fishing on boats and \$10 for surf fisherman. Half the money taken in will go to Yankee Homecoming, the other half will go towards four daily cash prizes: The largest cod or offshore fish (adult and child prizes) and the largest striped bass (adult and child prizes). We estimate daily prizes "in the hundred of dollars". In addition to the daily cash prizes, the angler catching the largest striper each day will get a free all-day charter with one of the local charter boat captains **and** get to go fishing with TV personality Billy Costa on Saturday, June 24. The largest fish taken during all three days will, on a date to be determined, go fishing with "The Mad Fisherman" Charlie Moore on a televised outing. All winners will be invited to join Billy Costa at a grand banquet June 24<sup>th</sup> at Michael's Harborside.

At the end of this article is my contact information. Please e-mail me if questions.

#### **The forecast for 2006:**

##### **Offshore**

- Cod and haddock: Fair-good cod and haddock fishing most of the year. Some very large cod later in the season. Schools of dogfish causing some problems in the summer. Not quite as good as 2005.
- Pollock: Decent fishing in July and August.

##### **Inshore**

- Shad: At the Rocks Village Bridge in early May. Decent fishing for a few weeks.
- Striped bass: School bass in mid-May, the large ones showing up in June. Good fishing off Joppa Flats in June and early July. "Finicky" in July and August. Fall fishing on the beaches. All in all, a good year but not as good as 2005.
- Mackerel: Good in early-mid June.
- Bluefish: Starting in June. Sporadic until late August, then good fishing into October. Better than in 2005.
- Fluke: Poor.
- Flounder: A poor year.

#### **And, my advice:**

- Go out for stripers in June and July. **Join the tournament!**
- Try some mid-summer codfishing if the dogfish have slowed down. **Join the tournament!**
- Enjoy the bluefishing in August and September.

#### **And some early reports:**

Martha Moulton told me of some small "holdover" bass being taken while shad fishing upriver near Lawrence. She had not heard of any shad being caught yet.

Captain Rick LaPierre of the Yellow Bird wrote (regarding a trip on the 14th): “Nice trip today, we knocked on a bunch of doors until someone finally answered, but when they did we had as fast as you could catch ‘em cod fishing for an hour and a half. We didn’t limit out, but we were very close. The haddock on the other hand wasn’t as I expected, we picked at them in the am up until noon, boating about 30 keepers.” You may call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

And last Saturday’s offshore fishing news from Erin of the Captain’s Parties: “Pretty foggy out today, the sun was trying to peak through now and then as the day went by. Fishing started off with a good bite, a mix of keepers and short fish. We pick away at the fish and the day ended with a good rhythm going, catching haddock, cod, and wolfish. The C/L II had a better bite at the end of the day with a mix of fish and quite a few wolfish.” You may call 1-800-427-1333 for reservations.

As always, I thank Kay and Martha Moulton, Rene Vigneault, Paul DeFrancisco, Paul Hogg, and the local sport-fishing captains for their forecasts and news. If you have your own stories, please call me, John Altson, at 978-499-9972 with your news, recipes, and stories. Better yet; send them by e-mail to [jaltson@comcast.net](mailto:jaltson@comcast.net). I’d love to hear from you. This column is available, along with other good fishing reports, on [www.surfcaster.com](http://www.surfcaster.com). Get your fishing tournament details here: <http://www.yankeehomecoming.com/fundraising.html>.

Have a great weekend!