

Stripers and sewage

Dick Hogg of Crossroads Bait and Tackle in Salisbury reported that his customers were still catching school-sized striped bass in the Merrimack. He said that they were being caught off of Cashman Park with clams and off of Deer Island with seaworms. While these were undersized fish and had to be thrown back anyway, Dick's customers said that they were afraid of eating any stripers from the river – if they had caught keepers, they too would have been returned to the river. Everyone is just fearful of the sewage.

Kay Moulton of SurfLand gave me a better report, but then her customers are more fishing the Plum Island surf or the mouth of the Merrimack. Kay said that there were “lots of fish.” Kay said that, while no keepers had come in since the storm, there were schoolies being caught on the beach at Plum Island Lot 1 and at low tide near the river mouth. Lead-headed jigs, she said were still the most effective lures.

Offshore we don't worry about sewage...

Ryan Charos of Captain's Parties said that he was having “decent fishing” since the storm. He reported codfish to 14 lbs and “a decent number of haddock.” The fishing landscape may be improving further as Ryan said that the mackerel are moving in and he plans to start fishing for them as early as this weekend. Please call 1-800-427-1333 for reservations.

Paul DeFrancisco of Bridge Bait and Tackle in Salisbury continued with some good mackerel stories. A friend of Paul's was fishing the waters off of Cape Ann and had 500 lbs of mackerel on the 17th and, that same day, one of his customers was catching mackerel while surfcasting mackerel jigs off of Seabrook Beach – while pulling in schoolie stripers.

Captain Rick LaPierre of the Yellow Bird had a trip on the 20th: “One stop fishing today, it wasn't full throttle all day long, but it was steady right up until the end. The catch was a mix of cod and haddock with the biggest cod at 20lbs. Many of the haddock were in the 7-8lb. range with the biggest at 11lbs.” You may call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

Kate Yeomans described the Erica Lee's fishing on that same day, May 20: “Well, after two really bad trips, it was good to get back in the saddle again. Our 14-man charter left at 6 a.m. and our first stop was close to shore, less than 10 miles. The lines were in the water by 7 and the market cod and haddock came over the rail till 11, then it slowed up. By the time we got to the dock at 3 p.m., 65 fish had been bagged—guess the floods didn't mess up everything!

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. I'd love to hear from you. This column is available, along with other good fishing reports, on www.surfcaster.com. Get your fishing tournament details here: <http://www.yankeehomecoming.com/fundraising.html>.

Have a great weekend!