

Fish chanteys and “endangered species”

Yankee Homecoming had just concluded with its traditional closing party and so, to celebrate, Oscar Boreth and I had a long-scheduled “Marathon” run on the Yellow Bird. We went out to Jeffrey’s Ledge last Monday and had just the kind of therapeutic day we both needed.

The Yellow Bird “Marathons” leave Hilton’s Dock at 5:00 and return at 5:00 PM, affording the anglers about 7 hours of serious fishing time offshore. Captain Rick LaPierre took us out about 36 miles and we started our fishing by 7:30 AM. We were into a slow pick of pollock and haddock and, by 11:00 AM, I had caught 3 keeper haddock and 4 good-sized pollock. Oscar, later on, pulled in a nice pollock. The fishing “tailed off”, so to speak, after 11:00 because of fierce tides – it was a shame because Captain Rick had noticed pollock “10 feet – 20 feet thick” off the bottom and we just could not get them to bite.

There was a really skilled fisherman fishing next to me; his name was “Joe” and he drove all the way from New Jersey to fish on the Yellow Bird. While he cat-napped on the boat in the wee hours (prior to departure), he threw a line off of the stern and landed a keeper striper. Joe kept pulling in fish all day long, entertaining us with a song that went like this – I think – “One cusk, one pollock, one cod” ... Joe had a great pollock fishcake recipe which I’ll pass on to you after we check it out. Oh, yes, Joe also kept referring to his market-sized codfish as “endangered species.” It’s too bad that he is correct! It was a great day offshore and we even saw a whale while returning to port. Please call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

Kay Moulton of Surfland in Plum spoke of the many schoolie stripers still around but said that the big news was that bluefish were being caught off of the beach “near the old church.” She said that they were hitting poppers in the early morning hours.

Jim Croteau of Bridge Bait and Tackle in Salisbury said that things were slow with the exception of the bluefish action. Jim suggested using chunk herring while fishing along the beach off of Plum Island. The blues, he said, were running 4-5 pounds.

Ryan Charos of Captain’s Parties said that the bluefish were not quite there yet for his boats but should be soon. In the interim, he said, they are doing half-day trips for striped bass – including Wednesday nights – and doing fairly well with a number of keepers. When speaking of the fishing offshore, Ryan said that cod and haddock fishing was “pretty good” with some large pollock beginning to show. Please call 1-800-427-1333 for reservations.

Tim Roland-Anderson of Tim’s Bait and Tackle in Salisbury is now in rehab, recovering from his stroke. Please continue to keep up your prayers and, yes, the store remains open!

In concluding, it seems that the football-sized school tuna are here, about 25 miles out. Could be interesting...

As always, I thank Kay and Martha Moulton, Rene Vigneault, Tim Roland-Anderson, 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.

Have a great weekend!