

Outdoors

First heat, now we battle a persistent wind

Dang, this wind just keeps on blowing. It has eased up a few mornings to make us feel good and head out, but by late morning it is building again and making for a rough fishing trip and very bumpy ride in. This is supposed to be the time of year when the wind and seas are so still we are asking for a little breeze, not asking it to back down. A couple of mornings of light east wind early in the week was a little break, but the fish don't bite particularly well on an east wind so it wasn't a very good change. I hope this means that when the wind finally falls out, it will be calm for a while.

I worked the North Myrtle Beach Saltwater Classic this weekend in North Myrtle Beach and several of the boats that weighed big kings also talked about seeing or hooking, but not landing, some big tarpon. The full moon was Monday night, so this should be a good week to catch tarpon around Shellbed Island. The tide will be rising at sunset and daybreak for the rest of the week, so that is another piece of the tarpon puzzle that is in place too. Maybe I'll have a big tarpon picture for next week's column.

The full moon high tide also provides one of the most exciting kinds of red drum fishing. Sighting fishing to tailing puppy drum combines several aspects of our primordial instincts to hunt and fish. If seeing spotted tails wagging on a flooded flat doesn't get your blood pressure up and your adrenaline peaking, you should schedule a visit with your doctor immediately. You may be seriously ill and not know it yet.

The onslaught of wind is affecting everything. I did not receive a report of a king mackerel from either pier, even though the Queens of Kings tournament was at Ocean Crest Pier Friday through Sunday. There were some Spanish macks landed, plus some bluefish and a good mixture of bottom feeders. Flounder led the bottom feeder catches that also included pompano, spots, red drum, black drum, whiting and a few speckled trout. As soon as the wind slackens and the water clears, the kings should return and there may be more tarpon attempting to steal baits from pier fishermen.

There were a few short breaks in the wind between last Thursday and now, but one fisherman said they were traps just to get fishermen out in the ocean before the winds picked back up and beat on them. A few king mackerel are being caught and that shows in the tournament results later in the report. However, the dolphin bite that has been so strong from just out of sight of land out to the inshore edge of the Gulf Stream has been scattered. It will probably take a few days of calmer weather after the winds subside for the ocean to clean up and the weed lines to reform. The good dolphin fishing should return at that time.

Spanish mackerel have been the saving grace of the past couple of weeks and there have been days the conditions are too rough to get through some of the smaller inlets to fish for them. The Cape Fear River Inlet is deep and is usually open enough for boats to make it through, but they don't always find good conditions in the ocean once they get there. Size 0 or 00 Clarkspoons are the hot lures for Spanish and they should be trolled behind planers or trolling sinkers to get them below the surface where they can be seen—and eaten. Smaller live pogies are also excellent Spanish mackerel baits, especially for larger ones, but should be fished while anchored or moving very slowly.

The wind has been wreaking havoc with the inshore fishing also. There have been a few days it wasn't wise to cross the Cape Fear River in a boat small enough to fish the creeks and bays behind Bald Head. Even when you get there, the wind pushes the boat around at anchor and keeps it swinging, which makes it difficult to feel bites. The wind occasionally helps blow a boat across a flooded flat, but has been so strong most of the time it is blowing the boat too fast to fish well.

The speckled trout bite is pretty slow, but there have been short flurries of action right after sunrise and occasionally again just before sunset. When this happens, the fish will usually chase topwater lures and the explosive strike of hitting topwater lures helps make the fishing more exciting.

Drum seem to almost always be feeding if you can find them. They will hit a variety of lures, including some of the same topwater lures as trout, plus various cut baits and most live baits.

Flounder have been the most consistent of the inshore fish for the past couple of weeks. There have been days when limits were caught and days that only a few were keepers. Many of the flounder being caught are shorts and must be released.

Compmillenia Catamaran

While at the North Myrtle Beach Saltwater Classic over the weekend, I had the privilege of meeting Jim Gardiner of Compmillenia (www.compmillenia.com). Compmillenia builds and provides engineering support for construction projects and processes using advanced composite materials. Jim, who is a former owner of Egret Boats and has done plug and mold work for several prominent boat builders, has a solid background in boatbuilding and one of the in-house Compmillenia projects is building a 6.7-meter (22 feet) high performance catamaran he hopes will be welcomed into the fishing community.

Jim's in-laws live on Oak Island and while we had spoken on the phone several times and exchanged e-mails, we had never met. Those of you who know me, know I've never been a big fan of performance catamaran powerboats and every time he mentioned catamaran, my mind closed like the rusty steel trap it is. On Saturday morning, Jim took me for a ride I won't soon forget. We didn't do anything foolish, but he proved to me there is one performance catamaran that will do what the boat builder says it will.

The Compmillenia 6.7 Catamaran is an impressive boat. It rides much longer than 22 feet and the open deck configuration provides more fishing room than most boats a half dozen or more feet larger.

Performance is impressive too! With a pair of Suzuki 175 four stroke outboards the 6.7 will easily top out in excess of 50 miles per hour, yet cruise at 30 to 35 while sipping regular fuel. The boat stays extremely flat in all situations and only has a couple of inches of bow rise when accelerating from idle to plane, which it does in short order. It is extremely stable and we gave it a pretty good little test in the ocean too. It handled and ran impressively into a head sea, down sea and in side to and angling courses. I'm probably going to have to take back some things I said about performance catamarans in the past, but Jim will have to bring his demo back a few times, so I can continue with my analysis—just to be sure.

You can check out the Compmillenia 6.7 Catamaran at www.compmillenia.com.

There was some humor to our morning cruise too. Jim's demo is a highly polished metallic silver gray that has a definite military or SWAT look. Because he uses it for demonstrations, he keeps a speed gun on board. The speed gun, which is one like baseball scouts use to clock a pitcher's speed, looks much like a handheld radar and boy

does it get responses like one too!

We were in the Intracoastal Waterway between Little River Inlet and the Hwy. 17 Bridge at North Myrtle Beach and there are a couple of No-Wake Zones there. Several times Jim was focusing

on non-moving objects to calibrate the speed gun so we could use it and we noticed all the boats around us were quickly dropping from their "a little quick" speeds back to absolute idle speed. I can only guess they thought we were Marine Patrol or some other waterway enforcement vessel and clocking their speeds in preparation for an expensive No-Wake Zone ticket.

I was invited to two fishing club's summer picnics last week and had great times, so here's a well-deserved shout out to both. The picnics were timed well as it was too windy to fish comfortably either day. The Cape Fear Fly-fishers had their 2010 Summer Picnic at St. James Waterway Park on Wednesday, July 21 and had a big crowd. The next night, Thursday, July 22, the St. James Fishing Club had their 2010 Summer Picnic at the same location and more than 100 folks attended. My doctor is on my case right now for all the fried chicken and fish I ate, but the food and the company were both really good. Thanks for the invites!

The next N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday through Friday, August 11-13 in Wilmington. The agenda has not yet been established, but there will be time for public comments at least one of the days. For more information visit www.ncdmf.net.

The date for the Military Appreciation Day (MAD) 5.5 event at Oak Island has been set for Saturday September 11, 2010. This year the event will be headquartered at Bill Smith Park. Fishermen and boats to carry military participants and volunteers to prepare and serve food are needed. For more information visit www.militaryappreciationday.org.

Queen of Kings and kids fishing derby

The Queen of Kings Pier King Tournament was held Friday through Sunday (July 23-25) on Ocean Crest Pier. King mackerel, Spanish mackerel and bluefish were the eligible species and the ocean stayed stirred up enough that only Spanish and bluefish were caught.

Shortly before the tournament ended Sunday afternoon, Missy Passmore landed a three-pound, 11-ounce Spanish mackerel to take the lead she would not relinquish and earn a winners prize package valued at more than \$1,500. Wanda Johnson was bumped from the top spot by Passmore, but only slipped one spot. Her two-pound, five-ounce Spanish mackerel finished in second place. Carrie Seay placed third with a one-pound, 10-ounce Spanish caught earlier in the tournament. For more information visit www.oceancrestpier.net.

The Oak Island Parks and Recreation Department hosted a Kids Fishing Derby on Oak Island Pier on Saturday, July 24. Tournament director Rebecca Squires of the Oak Island Parks and Recreation Department said the fishing was very slow, with the kids catching mostly pompano and sharks. Trevor Wycoff caught the largest fish of all the kids, a 16-inch long shark.

Prizes were awarded for the first fish, the most fish and the shortest fish in several age groups. Ryder Tsangarides caught the first fish in the Under 5 Group, while Elliott Register scored first for the 6-8 Group, Saylor Tsangarides was first for the 9-10 Group and Grace Aldredge caught the first fish of the 11-12 year olds.

In the Most Fish Caught category, Makayla Kellett led the Under 5 Group, Jake Williams led the 9-10 Group and Ty Williams topped the 11-12 Group. Shortest fish was a distinction the kids weren't really fishing for, but were happy with the prizes they were awarded. Canyon was short man for the Under 5 group, with Aidon Koosh scoring for the 6-8 Group, Sierra Moss for the 9-10 Group and Darby Griffen for the 11-12 Group. For more information call the Oak Island Recreation Department (910-278-5518) or Oak Island Pier (910-278-7006).

Locals claim top spot at redfish tourney

The North Myrtle Beach Saltwater Classic was held Friday and Saturday, July 23 and 24, from Harbourgate Marina in North Myrtle Beach. This was the seventh of eleven tournaments in the 2010 Saltwater Classic Series and was also sanctioned by the Southern Kingfish Association. The Saltwater Classic Series events feature a king mackerel tournament and a redfish tournament from the same site on the same day. With the windy conditions the field was reduced to 58 boats.

Team Fin Chaser, with Capt. Todd Streeter and Darrin Strickland of Southport and Oak Island won the redfish tournament. Strickland said they decided to fish in N.C. waters and the hardest thing to do was to catch fish that fit the smaller measurements of the combined N.C. and S.C. slot limit sizes to take to the scales. North Carolina's slot is 18 to 27 inches and South Carolina's slot is 15 to 23 inches. By fishing in N.C. waters, Strickland and Streeter further limited themselves to fish that were in a five-inch slot from 18 to 23 inches and legal in both states. They released a lot of fish that were legal in one state or the other, but persevered to find the right ones and brought the trophy back to display at Marine Mart on Long Beach Road.

The king mackerel fishermen weren't limited by an upper size, but were limited by the rough ocean conditions. In spite of the seas, three of the top five boats were competitors from the 23 and Under Class. The Miles Away, with Capt. Jason Miles of Charleston was the Top Boat Overall and in the Class of 23. Their fish weighed 29.35 pounds and also earned Top Youth Angler honors for Junior Miles.

Another Class of 23 Boat was second. The 2 Dogs, with Capt. James Dawkins weighed a 27.78-pound king early and held the lead until the Miles Away crew arrived at the scales. The Dirty Work, with Capt. Joe Wells and crew finally broke the little boats stranglehold with a third place overall and a Top Lady Angler award for Amanda Wirth. The Dirty Work's fish weighed 27.26 pounds.

The Brunswick Islands Saltwater Classic will be coming to Oak Island on August 27 and 28 with king mackerel and redfish tournaments. The tournaments will be headquartered at South Harbor Village Marina. Mark your calendar and visit www.bluewaterpromo.com for more details.

Tournament three of Capt. Jimmy Price's Top Dog Flounder Series was scheduled for Saturday, July 24, from Wildlife Bait and Tackle. The proceeds from the Top Dog Flounder Series benefit the less fortunate children of Brunswick County at Christmas. Unfortunately, due to a persistent southwest wind that hadn't broken for about 10 days, the tournament was postponed and not rescheduled. The Top Dog Flounder Series will continue with the tournament scheduled for August 28. For more information visit http://topdoginc.weebly.com or call Capt. Jimmy at 910-457-9903.



The Compmillenia 6.7 Catamaran is an impressive boat. Owner/designer Jim Gardiner took Capt. Jerry Dilsaver for a sea trial Saturday morning and the Capt. was impressed. The boat is 22 feet long and made of state-of-the-art materials and construction techniques. Photo by Jerry Dilsaver



Capt. Todd Streeter (left) and Darrin Strickland of Team Fin Chaser, are sponsored by Marine Mart and Long Bay Boats on Long Beach Road. The duo won the Redfish Division of the North Myrtle Beach Saltwater Classic held over the weekend. Photo by Jerry Dilsaver

Upcoming tourneys

A big handful of saltwater tournaments ranging from kayaks to the Gulf Stream are scheduled for this week and weekend along the N.C. Coast. The Cape Fear Flounder Classic will be held from Southport Marina, with fishing on Saturday, July 31. This tournament is being done by the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce and will feature guaranteed prize money, just like the U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament. For more information, visit www.southport-oakisland.com.

The TMJ Celebrity Charity Kayak Tournament will be held Saturday from Hook Line and Paddle Kayaks in Wilmington. Fishing will be allowed from Topsail to Bald Head and up the Cape Fear River to River Road Park. Proceeds from the tournament will be donated to the North Carolina Alzheimer's Association. The tournament will feature prizes for the inshore species of speckled trout, red drum and flounder. For more information visit www.hooklineandpaddle.com.

The Capt. Eddy Haneman Sailfish Classic will be held this week from Wrightsville Marina in Wrightsville Beach. Friday and Saturday, July 30 and 31, will be the fishing days. For more information call 910-540-2464.

The 22nd Annual Ducks Unlimited "Band The Billfish" Tournament will be held Friday and Saturday, July 30 and 31, from the Morehead City Waterfront. This is the sixth of seven NC Governor's Cup Billfish Conservation Series tournaments for 2010. For more information visit www.bandthebillfish.com.

The 26th Annual Raleigh Saltwater Sportfishing Club King Mackerel Tournament will be held Saturday, July 31, from Jaycee Park on the Morehead City Waterfront. This is a Southern Kingfish Association sanctioned tournament. For more information visit www.rswsc.org.

The 18th Annual Oriental Rotary Tarpon Tournament will be held Saturday and Sunday, July 31 and August 1, from Whittaker Pointe Marina in Oriental. This is an all release tournament. For more information visit www.orientalrotary.org.

Jerry Dilsaver may be reached at captjerry@captjerry.com.

Good fishing

Southport Tides

Tide	Height	Sunrise	Moon Time	% Moon
Thursday, July 29				
Low 4:30 AM	0.2	6:22 AM	Set 9:34 AM	92
High 10:43 AM	3.9	8:15 PM	Rise 9:58 PM	
Low 4:38 PM	0.4			
High 10:55 PM	4.2			
Friday, July 30				
Low 5:00 AM	0.2	6:22 AM	Set 10:29 AM	87
High 11:17 AM	3.9	8:14 PM	Rise 10:24 PM	
Low 5:14 PM	0.5			
High 11:22 PM	4.1			
Saturday, July 31				
Low 5:27 AM	0.2	6:23 AM	Set 11:24 AM	80
High 11:43 AM	3.9	8:14 PM	Rise 10:52 PM	
Low 5:52 PM	0.6			
High 11:49 PM	3.9			
Sunday, August 1				
Low 5:57 AM	0.2	6:24 AM	Set 12:20 PM	72
High 12:13 PM	4.0	8:13 PM	Rise 11:23 PM	
Low 6:39 PM	0.7			
Monday, August 2				
High 12:29 AM	3.8	6:24 AM	Set 1:19 PM	63
Low 6:34 AM	0.2	8:12 PM	Rise 11:57 PM	
High 12:59 PM	4.1			
Low 7:38 PM	0.8			
Tuesday, August 3				
High 1:20 AM	3.8	6:25 AM	Set 2:19 PM	53
Low 7:23 AM	0.2	8:11 PM		
High 1:55 PM	4.2			
Low 8:47 PM	0.8			
Wednesday, August 4				
High 2:21 AM	3.7	6:26 AM	Rise 12:38 AM	43
Low 8:24 AM	0.2	8:10 PM	Set 3:21 PM	
High 3:01 PM	4.3			
Low 9:55 PM	0.8			