



Cape Fear Flyfishers Meeting Minutes—15 January 2020

www.capefearflyfishers.com

President Bill Buchsbaum called the meeting to order and held the fly drawing which was won by Al Roy.

Treasurer Dennis Hill announced that we had \$1,871 in the bank at year's end with several thousand more recently deposited from renewals and new members.

Guests in attendance were Monty Robinson, Jeff Gerken, Kerr Sloyer, Kevin Zink, Rick Heffenbach, Jim Brown, and Rich Flanagan.

Bill reminded everyone of the Flyfishing Show in Atlanta over January 30 and February 1.

Bill also said that sign up for the spring Bristol TN trip is closing as well as the Naples Florida trip and anyone interested should sign up now.

EVENTS CALENDAR & MEETING TOPICS

- February 19—monthly meeting with speaker Doug Turner
- March 18—monthly meeting with speaker Rob Thompson
- April—pond fishing/meeting
- May—picnic
- June, July, August—no meetings for the summer
- September—monthly meeting
- October—monthly meeting
- November—monthly meeting
- December—holiday banquet

OLD BUSINESS

Past president Ed Smith concluded a bit of leftover business from the December banquet which was the presentation of two awards, the *Rookie of the Year* award and the (potential) *PITA* award. Dennis Falkenstein was deemed to be the most enthusiastic new member during 2019 and won *Rookie of the Year*. Big Jim Larsen, who was deemed by a waitress in Patagonia to "potentially" be the biggest pain in the ass for the week, won the *PITA* award.

PROGRAM

The program featured guest speaker Jerry Dilsaver. Jerry spoke about fishing in our local waters and the state of the resource.

Jerry began by saying that the unusual weather so far this winter has allowed people to fish for longer than normal this season, but that would probably be changing based on the cold weather in the forecast. Jerry said there is real concern that our area could suffer a major fish kill from the extreme cold only a few days away.

Jerry said that overall, fishing improved during 2019 and that it possibly was the best year it has been for 15-20 years, but there were also some negatives.

Jerry said that the main factor that influenced the better fishing during 2019 was Hurricane Florence which occurred in September 2018. Although the hurricane caused lots of destruction and fish kills due to zero oxygen levels in and around the Cape Fear River, in a strange way, the hurricane helped the fishing because both commercial and recreational fishing stopped for months after the hurricane so the fish that did survive grew larger and had a good spawn in the spring. Jerry anticipates that increased numbers and size of fish will continue for 2020 and he said the two species that benefited most are the specks and the flounder. Jerry added that the stripers in the Cape Fear River, Northeast Cape Fear River, and Brunswick Rivers are still recovering but stripers have been caught already this winter in these locations.

Bluefin tuna are also offshore and several have been landed locally. Captain Coulter fishes for bluefin out of Hatteras aboard the *Sea Creature* if you are interested.

New catch limits and regulations will begin in 2020 for several species. Bluefish will be limited to three fish per angler except for charters where the limit will be five per angler. Menhaden, croaker, and spots are other species in questionable circumstances and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be discussing the bag limits for them beginning in January. South Carolina is also seeing a reduction in flounder catches.

When heading out for winter fishing, it is important to leave a float plan with someone who can follow up on your return. Also have a fully charged cell phone and VHF radio along.

Before heading out, the following resources are available to check weather:

www.weather.gov/ilm
www.spaghettimodels.com
www.cormp.org

Jerry said that some fishing is still possible offshore for bottom fish, kings, wahoo, and blackfin tuna. Bottom fish include black sea bass, grunts, porgies, triggerfish, beeliners, and a few African pompano and hog snapper.

King mackerel can be found from the Horseshoe out to Frying Pan Tower and beyond. Winter kings need water temperatures above 67 degrees and will hit while trolling either live or dead baits, spoons, sea witches rigged with strips, or swimming lures. It may also be possible to flyfish for winter kings.

Occasional specks and red drum are being caught beyond the breakers and off of the OKI pier.

The backwaters of the creeks are warmer this time of year and are holding specks and red drum. Success can be had with various baits or scented lures, etc.

The Cape Fear River is producing a few specks and puppy drum along with a few stripers. Of course there is a moratorium on stripers in inland waters.

Size and number regulations for all coastal species may be found in the Hot Topic links at the top right of the Division of Marine Fisheries home page at www.ncdmf.net.

Effective January 1, ocean striper regulations will allow a slot limit between 28 inches to 35 inches (does not include 35" fish) for recreationally caught stripers with a one fish per day limit. The regulations for inland waters striped bass remain unchanged. See <http://portal.ncdenr.org/we/mf/proclamation-ff-54-2019> for more information. Also take note that since inland striper regulations remain unchanged, the question remains about what will happen if you are checked at an inland ramp and are in possession of an offshore caught striper. Perhaps consider having sushi or sashimi before returning to the dock!

NC Coastal Fisheries Reform Group to Push for Fishery Reforms (the following text is taken from Jerry's notes)

The NC Coastal fisheries Reform Group first formed several years ago to encourage reforms in the way the state manages coastal fisheries with the desired results being more fish for everyone. They have decided that with 2020 being an election year, this is a good time to push for more fishery reforms and will be stepping up in the next few weeks to that purpose.

Their statement is that "The time has come. It's time that we come to the rescue of our diminishing coastal marine resources. It's time that we force change in the way NC manages our coastal marine resources. It's time to force our Governor to keep his promises. It's time

that we force the legislature to do the right thing for our citizens, instead of acting in their own political interests.

The NC Coastal Fisheries Reform Group is headed by Joe Albea, Dave Sammons and Bob Crone. Their website (www.nccfrg.org) describes the issues and the remedies they consider necessary to protect, preserve, and replenish our precious coastal marine resources. Their plan is to use the political season to bring a ground well of support from all citizens of NC to make the sweeping changes that are necessary.

Dates to remember

Feb 1 and Feb 8—OKI Recreation Department Fishing Schools--both are full

April 25 and 26--Women Anglers In Training (WAIT)—ladies only fishing school OKI

February 28 - March 1—Central Carolina Boat and Fishing Expo in Greensboro

February 1—Saltwater Sportsman National Seminar Series in New Bern

February 8—Fisherman's Post Magazine all day fishing school in Wilmington

Jerry also mentioned that cold stun is a winter concern for fish in our area and any cold stun fish you see should be reported to NC Marine Patrol at 800 682-2632 or to the spotted sea trout biologist Tracey Bauer at 252 808-8159 or Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov.

Ocearch is an organization that tags great white sharks and the waters off of the Carolinas are a winter gathering place for great whites. Ten tagged sharks have pinged this winter between the Outer Banks and Hilton Head Island. Researchers believe that the abundance of food is what attracts the sharks. Several Great Whites have been sighted by fishermen off the Carolinas in the past few weeks and several new sharks have been caught on hook and line with one female estimated at 2,800 pounds. You can follow tagged sharks online by visiting www.ocearch.org--open the Shark Tracker. To follow sharks tagged by the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, visit them at www.atlanticwhiteshark.org and open the Sharktivity app.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fuller
Secretary

