

The Newburyport Striper Tournament may have been over as the tournament week actually started. Martha Moulton of SurfLand told me that last Sunday Robert Roi of Salisbury weighed in a 47 lb. striped bass; he caught it while live-lining a mackerel.

Martha also told me that the striper fishing has slowed down off of the sand bar (at the river's mouth), with a few fish being caught at the jetty. "The fish are finicky", she said. Martha went on to say that Joppa Flats is providing good fishing for the boaters using herring as bait and, to spice it up, there are a few bluefish thrown in. Finally, Martha said that the mackerel are back and a few boats are limiting out on flounder. For those fishing the beaches, she said, there are blues, bass, and quite a few flounder – typical mid-summer fare.

Paul Hogg, of Crossroads Bait & Tackle in Salisbury told me that he has too many striped bass charters to go out for tuna; he hopes to get out for tuna soon. Paul also said that the bass were slowing down at the jetty (perhaps due to large schools of baitfish), but much better at Joppa Flats in the late afternoons and at night using eels. Last week, Paul's charters had striped bass to 45". Call Paul at the shop (978-499-8999) for charters.

Paul of Bridge Bait and Tackle in Salisbury raved about the bass fishing. One of his customers weighed in a 47.5 lb. bass (50") and mentioned that it was NOT in the tournament – what a shame. The monster bass was, again, caught using live mackerel. Paul had gone out fishing near the river mouth last week with his wife, hauling in "a couple dozen" "The bass are in thick", Paul said. Paul also mentioned that the blues are around, but "spotty".

Deb Cole of Ipswich wrote "We had a great time fishing Wednesday night with Paul (Piraino). Scott (Homan) and I were joined by our friends, Rich LeBoeuf and Darlene Foley. Rich hadn't been salt water fishing in years, as in, since he was a youngster. Darlene hadn't been at all. Between us we caught about 23 striper. No other fish were brought in although Rich broke his 30 pound test, fiberglass line on something, but we don't know what. Rich and I caught the most with seven a piece. My longest was 27.5 in. Rich brought in a 29 in. on his second fish. His first was 27.75. I'm no longer his fan. :- (Scott caught about five, including one keeper at 28.5. Darlene got the hang of the baitrunner and pretty soon was hauling in her share of striper, bringing in four." Paul Piraino may be reached at 617-803-6315 for charters.

Chris Charos of Captains Parties on Plum Island talked about the pesky dogfish being a problem offshore on the full-day boat. He said that if you work the jigs (instead of using bait), you could work through the dogfish and pick up some nice-sized cod – to the 20's last week. Chris said that the half-day boat was picking up a mixture of bluefish and (much larger) mackerel. Please give Chris or George Charos a call at 1-800-427-1333 to make your reservations.

Captain Rick LaPierre of the Yellow Bird wrote (on July 5th): "Had a slow start to our day today, but did put some fish in the boat in the afternoon. We fished southern Jeffrey's in the morning and didn't do too much. In the afternoon we moved out to the east to fish the deep water and had a pretty steady pick on some cod and haddock, most coming in on jigs. The dogs were around but manageable." Please call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

Finally, Paul Weiner (of Go Fish in West Newbury) phoned in the fresh water fishing report. Paul said that fly-fishing in the ponds is excellent, as is the crappie fishing. Paul also suggested Chadwick Pond in Haverhill for largemouth bass (using shiners) and Pentucket Pond for big bass (on plastics). Paul Weiner may be contacted at 978-363-1867 for clinics in fly-fishing as well as for guided trips on the Ipswich River or to local ponds.

As always, I thank Kay and Martha Moulton, Paul and Mike Weiner, Paul Hogg, Rene Vigneault 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 altson@us.ibm.com. 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!