

School will soon be in session.

Well, we're starting with kindergarten. Martha Moulton of Surfland reported that four "new fish" school striped bass were caught on jigs: one in the Parker River and three off of the jetty. Meanwhile, Martha said, the shad continue to be caught upriver and at the Rocks Village Bridge.

I spoke with Paul DeFrancisco at Bridge Bait and Tackle in Salisbury. Paul had second-hand reports of school striped bass and shad; he also had heard rumors of the first mackerel being picked up outside.

There is some good and bad news on the fresh-water front. Paul Weiner called me to tout the fine fishing in the area. Paul said that a very fat twenty-two inch rainbow trout was caught at Forest Lake last week. Paul said that the bass fishing at the Artichoke Reservoir was "excellent" and that all of the local ponds were well stocked with trout and providing good fishing. The bad news from Paul was that he is closing his "Go Fish" business in West Newbury. Paul said that the traffic in his shop was always good but that his partner/son, Mike, had moved to Vermont. We'll miss Paul and wish him luck.

I called George Charos of Captain's Parties on Plum Island. George said that the offshore (Jeffrey's Ledge) haddock fishing had slowed down a bit, but that the cod fishing was improving. George had a great day last Saturday, with one stop providing some very large codfish: eight or nine fish over twenty-five pounds and a pool fish in the forties. Please give Chris or George Charos a call at 1-800-427-1333 to make your reservations.

Captain Rick LaPierre of the Yellow Bird called in. Captain Rick said that there was good cod and haddock fishing, with the cod just beginning to hit jigs. He said that there was lots of bait "on the Ledge" (Jeffrey's), and that he has not seen too many big fish yet – his largest was a cod of twenty-seven pounds. You may call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

As always, I thank Kay and Martha Moulton, Rene Vigneault, Paul DeFrancisco 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!