

Here's a good story for you – one with a good return on-investment (ROI).

It seems that a one fisherman stopped by Crossroads Bait and Tackle in Salisbury to buy a dozen seaworms. He then went to fish the Merrimack near the pump station, returning 45 minutes later to have his picture taken with a 42-inch striped bass. How about that?

Richard of Crossroads fame told me that there are lots of bass around. Besides the 42-inch beast, he has seen a number of bass “in the 30s” and heard stories about many small fish. Richard reported good fishing in the river off of Deer Island. He recommended the incoming and the outgoing tide and suggested worms, Storm lures (chartreuse, pearl, or red), and Calcuttas.

Kay Moulton, of SurfLand on Plum Island has also seen a number of stripers. She showed me a few pictures of stripers caught in the surf to 16.7 pounds and told me about a couple who had just returned after catching 20 small stripers and one keeper – they were fishing the oceanfront using metal lures. Kay suggested Storm lures, worms and clams in the surf. Kay said that the river mouth had a great deal of flotsam and jetsam (wasn't Jetsam a cartoon character?) and that fishing off Joppa was slow, with schools of the proverbial finicky stripers.

Rene of Bridge Bait and Tackle gave me his report: Those who ventured out in the nor'easter saw “pretty good” fishing. There was debris in the river just after the storm and then fishing picked up again. Rene reported 10 keepers caught last Sunday - to 36 inches. Rene's suggested baits: herring, clams, and jigs. By the way ... Rene said upriver fishing was still good for striped bass and shad.

Kate Yeomans reported on the Erica Lee's post-nor'easter trips: “After the four-day Perfect Storm, the fish were still rolling from the beating they took...their appetite was near extinction.” Then, on the 29th: “And their appetite returned! We were able to pick 50 fish for the day. A nice mix of haddock, cod, cusk and pollock, and one ocean cat, on both bait and jigs. The fishing wasn't fast and furious, but under my boat, the fish were hungry!” Please call 978-463-9425 for your charter reservations.

Captain Rick LaPierre of the Yellow Bird described his trip on the 29th: “Much better fishing for us today, we had a steady pick on the haddock for most of the day. Most went home with 10-12 keepers, 90% being haddock. It was nice to have excellent sea conditions again, we were able to drift for a better part of the trip.” You may call 1-888-234-3531 for Yellow Bird reservations.

George Charos, from Captains Fishing Parties said he did not get out last week but had “real good fishing” on the 28th and 29th. They had mostly haddock, but had a good mix of “market-sized” cod into the teens. George has been trying for mackerel – they have been around but have not yet been cooperating. Please give Chris or George Charos a call at 1-800-427-1333 to make your reservations.

.As always, I thank Kay and Martha Moulton, Rene Vigneault, Paul DeFrancisco, Paul Hogg, Kate Yeomans, 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. See the striper ornaments at www.sportsornaments.com.

Have a great weekend!