GONE FISHIN'

For Derby fishermen the spell never ends

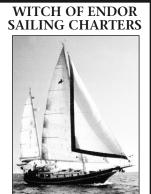
By Nelson Sigelman

The goose decoys are in the back of my Pathfinder and I have already put them to use in the season just begun; a light-spinning rod rigged for bonito and albies is in the rod rack, in anticipation of the Derby that begins Sunday; and I have started to think about where miliar with the Vineyard. to hang deer stands. It is a wonderful time of the year.

In July and August, tourists flock to Martha's Vineyard. The beaches and restaurants are the principal attractions. But the fall is when the Vineyard is at her best and offers a natural bounty hard to surpass. Did I mention dip-netting for bay scallops in late October and November?

The months spread out in front of me like a sumptuous buffet in a luxury restaurant. I know I cannot possibly eat everything, so I try to choose wisely. In September, there is no question that the Derby is the main course.

The 65th Martha's Vineyard



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the Derby. There have been ask. "Yes," I will say, "but I funny stories, tragic stories, and good stories. I am fond of telling those stories to derstand the full grip of the people I meet who are unfa-

into the retelling of some chase a Derby button know Derby tale and know that the person on the receiving end is not so interested in hearing about the time Hawkeye stripped down and jumped off Memorial Wharf in an effort to free an albie snagged on the bottom of a ferry the horror and puzzlement of a female crewmember.

And, I have been at cocktail parties where I described the return of legendary Dick Hathaway to the Derby throne at age 70, and his subsequent fall from grace the following year, and noticed that the drama is lost on the innocent person who probably intended to have a short, meaningless conversation as the shrimp got passed around.

The truth is that when I get talking about the Derby, my enthusiasm for the topic gets the better of me. Politics? Nah. The Derby? Roll out the anecdotes.

Often, during a party post-



in the water at 12:02 am.



*Maximum of 50 fish per private vessel with six or more fishermen on board.

**Striped bass may be taken only by hook and line. The discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited.

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am. I have no doubt fisher- talked too long about fishing men of all ages will have lines and the Derby. "Couldn't you see that they weren't inter-I have written a lot about ested in fishing?" Norma will

The uninitiated seldom un-Derby. For the casual observer, it is a fishing tourna-On occasion, I will be deep ment. But we who will purit is much more.

couldn't help myself."

It is nights spent under a canopy of stars waiting for a rod tip to bend under the weight of an unseen fish you hope will put you in first place, if just for that day. It is mornings watching the docked alongside, much to sky brighten and searching for the telltale splash of feeding bonito or false albacore. It is walking through a crowd of tourists and weatherbeaten fishermen and watching the numbers on the Derby weigh station scale.

> The 65th Derby may begin Sunday, but the truth is that once you have experienced the Derby, it never really stops

Derby updates

The Derby has a comprehensive website (mvderby.com) that provides most of the information an inter-

MASS. RECREATIONAL FISHING LIMITS – 2010

	WIII. SIZE	Day LIIIII
Black Sea Bass	12.5"	20 fish
Bluefish	none	10 fish
Cod	22"	10 fish
Fluke (season 5/22-9/	6) 18.5"	5 fish
River Herring Harv	rest & use p	orohibited
Scup*	10.5"	10 fish
Striped Bass**	28"	2 fish
Tautog	16"	3 fish
Blue Crab	5"	25 crabs
	no egg bearers	
Shellfish 7	own licens	e required
Lobster 5	State licens	e required

May 24-Sept. 26, 2010.

Saltwater Fishing Permit information:

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Striped Bass and Bluefish mortem on the ride home, ested fisherman would need Derby begins Sunday at 12:01 my wife will note that I to know, except where to catch a winning fish.

Derby buttons are available at all tackle shops and Menemsha Texaco. The cost to register in the Derby is \$45 for adults and \$20 for seniors and juniors.

From time to time, fishermen who only plan to fish once or twice and think they have no chance of hooking a winning fish do not enter the Derby. That is not smart. If you need to justify the expense, remember that a bad meal will cost you \$45. For the same amount you get a great Vineyard Vines hat, a smart souvenir booklet, and the opportunity to win a great, maybe even a stupendous, prize; and you will not fall into the annals of fishermen who "could have been a contenda."

This year, one of the four Derby grand prize shore winners chosen at random will win a 24-foot Eastern, boat, motor, and trailer. One of the four boat grand champions will win a 2010 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 pickup truck from Clay Chevrolet.

I recently bought a used Nissan Frontier from Clay Nissan. The Clay family is a great Derby supporter, and my experience was as smooth as could be. The vehicle was even delivered to the Island. If my wife releases her grip on it, you may see me around in it, but my guess is I will be relegated to my familiar Pathfinder.

One important note this Derby is the new federal saltwater fishing license. With some exceptions all recreational saltwater fishermen must have a National Saltwater Angler Registry card to lawfully fish in Massachu-

Registration is quick, easy,



MRIP-411.

with the Derby, there is always a need for people to help fillet fish that are later donated. No experience is necessary. Contact Matt Malowski the idea. The result was the at matt@mvfishing .com for creation of "The Beach Plum more information on volunteering and an opening for a paid evening fillet master.

Honoring vets

Many readers will remember that last year the Nixon Family of Chilmark and the Derby hosted a group of military veterans (Oct. 1, 2009, "Wounded veterans enjoy Derby's healing waters").

Last year, the concept for the trip came together quickly and was arranged through Project Healing (www.projecthealingwaters.o rg), a volunteer organization that uses the therapeutic and healing powers of fishing to help veterans in their recovery and life.

Five retired military men and women from the Togus Veterans Administration Hospital in Augusta, Maine, and one man, still on active duty and undergoing treatment at Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, accompanied by two volunteers, spent four days on the Vineyard.

The group traveled to the

and free. Go to countmy- Island at the generous invitafish.noaa.gov or call 888- tion of Bob and Sarah Nixon, owners of the Home Port If you would like to help out Restaurant, the Beach Plum Inn, and the Menemsha Inn in Chilmark, and their eightvear-old son Jack, an avid fisherman, who conceived of Inn American Heroes Saltwater Challenge.

> A host of volunteers that included Menemsha charter captains, Island businesses, and the Derby committee pitched in along with the Nixons. It was a wonderful and rewarding experience for all involved.

> The Nixons and the Derby committee are working to bring a group of up to 15 veterans back to the Vineyard on Sept. 20 for a threeday stay. Activities will include fishing on charter boats, surf-fishing from the beach, and fly-fishing.

> Volunteers are needed to help with transportation; and all gifts to help defray the cost, and souvenirs the vets can bring back with them are welcome. If you would like to assist with this wonderful effort give Maria Black, Beach Plum Inn assistant manager and coordinator for this effort, a call at 508-645-9454. ♦

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CATCH OF THE WEEK



From left to right: Hattie Smith of Union Springs, Alabama; Heather and Charles Klinck of West Tisbury and Union Springs, and Hunter Smith of Union Springs.

How do you determine which is the first fish you caught when there are two fish on the lure? That question posed itself to Heather Klinck, when two bluefish hit the same plug while Heather was fishing with charter captain Danny Gilkes last week. In addition, the day's catch included striped bass, bonito and a fluke. ♦