

Sports & Outdoors

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Fish Report

Baitfish thrills anglers at Brookings-Harbor

Last week, sardines, herring, smelt and American shad were being caught in copious quantities by anglers at the crab pier on the south jetty at the Port of Brookings Harbor, and anglers are all using sabiki rigs to catch them.

A sabiki rig is not a brand name, but a generalized name denoting a type of baitfish rig commonly used to catch herring and sardines. They go by numerous brand names, but they all consist of at least six very small hooks.

Some sabiki rigs have wings and others only have colored beads. Sometimes you will find that the baitfish will hit the rigs with wings, while on other days, they seem to go for the beaded varieties.

A trick of the trade: If baitfish are hitting rigs without wings and you only have winged sabiki rigs on hand, simply tear off the wings and you're loaded for bear. If this is the scenario, I would only tear the wings off half of the jigs and let the baitfish tell you which ones they want.

Anglers are having an absolute blast catching a plethora of baitfish that are available in the harbor, in addition to a few extra surprises.

Right now, you can expect schools of herring, sardines and smelt to be dominating the action. But this is the time of year when American shad also start making their appearance in the baitfish schools. Anytime between Mother's Day and Father's Day, the shad enter the Port of Brookings Harbor en masse.

In these parts, shad

are anywhere between 4- and 6-inches long, and look almost exactly like Pacific herring, except for one very important telltale feature — the bellies of a shad are quite sharp when stroked toward the head — so sharp that they can even cut you. Of course on the Umpqua and Coquille Rivers, shad will achieve weights between three and six pounds, but not in the Chetco River.

I decided to take a trip to the crab pier on Wednesday and proceeded to catch sardines, herring, shad and smelt about as fast as I could cast. In addition, I also caught several juvenile black rockfish on the sabikis.

But that wasn't all that was caught on these tiny sabiki hooks. One angler caught and landed a Pacific mackerel, which was about 10-inches long. When you hook one of these members of the tuna family, you can expect some harder tugs and maybe even a run or two, especially if you're using ultra-light fishing tackle.

All of the aforementioned baitfish, with the exception of the juvenile black rockfish (and I heartily recommend releasing all of these puppies), make great lingcod bait. Pacific mackerel make the best bait for the lingas-



To catch big lingcod and rockfish like Roland Hart of Stockton (left) did last week with close friend Howard Jones while fishing out of the Port of Brookings Harbor with Captain Jim Bithell of Charthouse Sportfishing, it often pays to jig for your own baitfish like Tommy Berg (right) did on Wednesday while using a sabiki rig at the Port's crab pier. The harbor is presently plugged with herring, shad, sardines and smelt.



The Pilot / Larry Ellis

urs, because they are so shiny and not frequently caught in this neck of the woods.

Smelt probably makes the best table fodder if you get can jig enough of them, which most people had no problem accomplishing last week.

If you want to try some of this exciting fishing, make sure that you bring an ice chest or a bucket loaded with plenty of ice inside. You'll also want to sprinkle a liberal amount of table salt on top of the ice. When the salt hits the ice, the temperature inside the ice chest plunges below zero, which then turns the ice chest into a freezer.

When you catch one of the aforementioned baitfish, tossing one of the fish on the ice/slurry mixture immediately stops the baitfish from wiggling, thereby enabling it to keep its scales. It is these highly-reflective scales that do most of the attracting when it comes to catching lingcod and salmon.

In addition to baitfish, a keeper-size lingcod was caught on one of the sabiki hooks, but its razor-sharp teeth cut the line.

A standard freshwater rod and reel used to catch bass and trout is all you need for a rigging. Load up your reel with plenty of 6-pound test in order to achieve

longer casts. But sometimes the baitfish were only within 15 feet of the shoreline.

You'll want to have plenty of one-half, three-quarter and one-ounce sinkers on hand.

In addition to the baitfish action, limits of rockfish and lingcod were also common at the Brookings fillet station.

Roland Hart from Stockton, California decided to pay close friend Howard Jones of Sporthaven Marina Bar and Grill a visit last week, and the two anglers easily caught limits of rockfish and lingcod on Tuesday morning while fishing with local guide Jim Bithell of Charthouse

Sportfishing.

Anglers from Brookings also towed their rigs across the border to California to cash in on the spectacular rockfish and lingcod action that the reefs outside of Crescent City were experiencing. Most of the action was occurring in 80 feet of water.

Chinook salmon have yet to make their appearance in fishable numbers outside the Port of Brookings Harbor. And although I know it sounds redundant, they will be showing themselves any day now. I'm sticking to Mother Nature's calendar. She's just a few days late this year.

Tight lines!

Big surf, strong winds make for great competition

Weather cooperates as Wave Bash enters final day of competition

By Ryan Sparks
Pilot staff writer

With strong wind gusts, big surf swells and plenty of sunshine the weather at the 2015 Pistol River Wave Bash has been perfect for the throngs of professional and amateur windsurfers competing at this year's event.

"It's been incredible," said Russ Faout, a 10-year pro rider based in Maui. "It's extreme conditions. We've had 30-knot winds, 40-knot gusts and 10-foot wave faces — even bigger occasionally."

Faout explained that he regularly rides waves that size in Maui, but rarely gets the large waves combined with the strong winds, thus creating high risk, high reward windsurfing conditions.

"If you make a mistake and fall, there are so many big waves that you can end up losing your gear and that's no fun," said Faout, who has competed in all six Wave Bash competitions. "This is as good as I've ever seen (the weather conditions)," he added. "Everyone can show their bigger moves. This is as high a level (of windsurfing)



A windsurfer carves through the waves during the 2015 Pistol River Wave Bash south of Gold Beach. Competition concludes today near "The Rock" in Pistol River.

Photo by Mark Harpur/American Windsurfing Tour

as you can get."

On Friday, the winds picked up as the day grew long, meaning many riders changed to smaller sails to adjust to the changing wind conditions.

"Now that the wind is picking up, I decided to rig something a little smaller to prepare for my heat," said Zane Schweitzer, a Maui native and son of 18-time world

champion Matt Schweitzer.

"I like the windy conditions. It creates more ramps. When it's windier you get a lot higher on jumps and, to me, that's one of the fun things about windsurfing — just launching into the air and getting super high on a jump."

For Schweitzer, whose grandfather, Hoyle, is one of the people credited with inventing the sport in the

late 1960's, getting back to the Southern Oregon coast to ride is a welcome trip.

"The weather is nice and warm and I just love the Southern Oregon coastline," he said. "It's rugged and beautiful."

The Pistol River Wave Bash concludes today near Eagle Rock, with competition beginning at approximately mid-morning.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Bruin Volleyball Camp opens registration

Registration is now open for the 18th Annual Little Bruins Volleyball Camp, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. August 19-21 at the Azalea Middle School gymnasium.

The camp is for youths grades 4-8 and will be coached by Brookings-Harbor High School coaches and players.

The cost of registration is \$30 until August 1 (\$35 after that) and registration forms can be picked up at either Azalea Middle School or the BHHS main office.

For more information, contact Emilie Aliamus at 252-305-3409 or Lori Cooper at 541-661-2005.

Little League holding can/bottle drive

The Brookings-Harbor Little League will be holding a can and bottle drive from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 14 to raise funds for the league's three all-star teams that will be competing at the all-star tournament in Grants Pass, June 18-29.

Little Leaguers will be going door-to-door, asking for can/bottle donations.

The Ray's Food Place and Grocery Outlet parking lots will also serve as donation drop-off locations.

