

## **Area fishing facilities on rebound**

March 12, 2006

David Rainer

Mobile Press-Register

Catching up on news while the weather settles down enough to go fishing: The good news is that most of the area bait shops and boat ramps are back in operation after the destruction left by Hurricane Katrina.

Roland "Mac" McRae at Cedar Point Pier is steadily re-building the pier and expects to be finished with the major part of the work in another week or so. Fishing is being allowed on the section that has handrails.

Mac plans to bring in modular units for the bait shop and restroom facilities. The lighting is currently under construction and sections of pier will reopen at night as the lights are restored, McRae said.

Jemison's Bait Shop is back in business near Heron Bay Cutoff, while Hoppe's Fish Camp on Dog River has been open for a while.

Dauphin Island Pier has also been open for a while, although there is still some work left to do. The main problem is that Sand Island now connects to the end of the pier. I don't know if there is a solution to that problem.

On the opposite side of the bay, Gulf Shores Marina (formerly Fort Morgan Marina) is back up and running with both live bait and the boat ramp.

For the Causeway fishermen, Scott's Landing (formerly Mizell's Fish Camp) has been selling bait for several months.

The boat ramp parking lot at Viewpoint (Pelican Point) is currently closed so it can be repaved. Down time will probably be about two weeks.

Water access meeting A meeting to discuss public access to water from Bayfront Park to Dauphin Island will be held at 7 p.m. Monday at Galathea Hall at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

The event is presented by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Auburn University, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and **Mobile Bay National Estuary Program**.

The different state agencies collaborated on a public survey to gauge sentiments about boat ramps and fishing opportunities.

Boaters, commercial and recreational fishermen, oyster fishermen and other water users are encouraged to attend. Weeks Bay event The Weeks Bay Fishing Club will hold its first tournament of 2006 on Saturday at American Legion Post 199 in Fairhope.

A captains meeting is set for 6 p.m. Thursday at Post 199. Registration will be available that night or at Fisherman's Discount by 6 p.m. Friday.

Entry fee for members is \$25 per person, \$35 for non-members.

The team tournament will be decided by the heaviest 10 speckled trout, best three slot (16 to 26 inches) redfish, top three flounder and top three sheepshead. Optional lunger pots for each species are available at \$10 each.

The start is Saturday morning at safe light. The weigh-in will be on Mobile Bay at the American Legion and all fish must be in by 2 p.m.

For more information, call Lyons Bousson at 583-8681 or Stan Hallford at 591-7198.

Youth turkey hunts The Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries will host youth turkey hunts at the University of South Alabama Foundation Hunting Area in north Mobile County for the upcoming spring season.

Hunt dates are the Saturdays and Sundays of the regular season (March 15-April 30), and Tuesdays and Thursdays as follows: March 21, March 23 and April 18, April 20. These dates correspond to spring break dates in Baldwin, Mobile, and Washington counties.

Hunting hours will be daylight until noon. The hunts are open to youth under 16 years old. The youth must be accompanied by an adult supervisor 25 or older with a valid state hunting license and wildlife management area license. The adult supervisor must remain with the youth at all times. Only one firearm will be allowed per group. Only the youth will be permitted to use the firearm for hunting.

All participants must register by calling the District 5 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office on the Causeway at 626-5474. Only a limited number of youth-adult groups will be allowed at any time. All permit requirements and regulations will be issued upon registration. Orange Beach boating The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will holds its boating safety course from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 25 at Orange Beach Civic Center.

The course covers navigation, rules of the road, boating laws, personal safety equipment, boating for hunting and fishing, as well as water skiing.

Cost is \$35 and covers course materials and lunch. The course is open to anyone over age 12. Class size is limited. Call John Griggs at (251) 955-1443 for information. The course meets qualifications for the Alabama boat operator's license. No fishing report There will be no fishing report in Thursday's Sports section. I'm going to take a few days off to finish repairs to my property from Hurricane Ivan. Yes, I said Hurricane Ivan.