

Sweet Action Charters

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A 2007 Fishing Story

Last summer, at around noon on July 28, I dropped off my morning charter in Linekin Bay. The weather was deteriorating quickly, growing foggy, and overcast. The winds were down and the boat cruised easily, but I wondered if the weather would hold long enough for the afternoon trip.

I soon ran into Paul Modena, his son Ross and Ross's girlfriend Carly. The previous day, they had fished with me in the morning. At the end of our trip, we came into a spot where we could see many Stripers ranging from 20" to 42". Together, we threw everything but the kitchen sink at them, but they were not biting. So I was pleased to see that the Paul, Ross and Carly had made the effort to rent a boat the next day to hit that

same spot again. I pulled Sweet Action along side their skiff and they reported having the same maddening experience as the day before. I left feeling bad for them because it seemed like they were having tough luck. However, later that day around midnight, Ross, an excellent fisherman, caught a 39" Striper out of a rowboat in a spot known to some in Boothbay as the Top-Top, Secret-Secret, Top-Secret Spot.

At 1:00pm, I picked up my next charter – Regan and Allesandra from Chicago –and this is when the story begins to get interesting. This mother and daughter combo were in the Boothbay region while college hunting. First, Regan and I conferred about the weather. I had checked and hard showers

were inevitable but Regan was undaunted. I knew Allesandra was skeptical but she was a terrific sport and went along with her mother's wishes.

We headed out to Damariscove Island and slayed the Mackerel in short order. So, I decided to take them to the spot in Boothbay Harbor where Paul Modena and family had spent so many long hours in the past day with no luck. We used cut bait. Immediately, there was action on the line and I handed the rod over to Allesandra. I knew we were golden and I remembered the Modenas and the trouble they were having earlier. What a difference a few hours can make! A little while later, Allesandra

caught the fish you see pictured below.

After killing the Stripers in Boothbay, we decided to head up river and not worry about the weather. We got up into the Sasonoa where we continued to catch fish. It was super fishy with the storm coming. We stayed too long because pretty soon it began to down-pour. We cruised back in pelting rain but we didn't care. Allesandra and Regan were absolutely thrilled and so was I.

This fish measured 40" and weighed 25lbs



Some Sweet News

First, Sweet Action is in the process of re-outfitting our electronics. A larger screen and radar, and a more powerful sonar will be the main additions. Radar is the most important tool for collision avoidance and serves as a backup to the GPS. On the open ocean, radar can even be used to target fish by locating large groups of birds. The digital sonar will precisely

target fish and clearly identify any important bottom structure. Our new digital sonar will be so accurate and detailed that an experienced user will be able to distinguish a bluefish from a striper.

Second, this summer I will be working closely with Colin Yentsch, one of the fishiest people I know, to extend our season until almost Novem-

ber. When I go back to being a teacher in September, Colin, a native of Boothbay and a lobster fisherman, will continue to offer ground fishing, shark fishing, and his specialty, tuna fishing. If you are interested in a later charter and/or an off-shore experience, I can put you in touch with Colin.

If you are coming to Maine this year, I urge you to contact me ASAP. To head out for a

fishing adventure please contact me at 207-865-1468 (Winter phone), 207-318-4898(Cell), or wolotsky@sweetactioncharters.com

One last bit of news – my wife and I are expecting the birth of our second child on June 7. It's a boy! We're hoping he'll be as fishy as his big sister.

Drifting Herring in Hockamock Bay in 2007

From July 31 to about August 19, mackerel fishing was as tough as I have ever seen it. On July 31, I had a friend spend all day in a big fast boat and he was unable to catch one mackerel. However, I soon discovered a bait oasis in this mackerel desert. This oasis, which would dry up as the sun came up, held mackerel, but also tiny blueback herring.

We caught the herring on Sabiki rigs. This shiny baitfish is usually about 4" long. It seemed that we could keep an unlimited amount of herring alive in our tank at any one time. On a good trip, we took at least 60 herring with us.

With the live well stocked and the right tide, we liked to head to the area between Upper and Lower Hell's Gates between the Kennebec and Sheepscot Rivers. The fast moving water and intricate waterways created perfect drift fishing opportunities.

The herring are striper candy for many reasons. First, when you cast herring, their scales fall off creating a visual/chum effect. Now in the water, the herring is hampered by the circle hook, and appears to be wounded. As a result, the herring swims helplessly, unable to escape. Also, because herring are so light,

the pick-up is easy to distinguish, as is not always the case with mackerel. The end result is one can fish with this bait like lures. In other words, we like to come up to a spot, pitch the bait out and leave them in a spot. When the boat pulls the bait out of position, we reel the bait in and reposition it. The result is one of the most exciting live bait fishing experiences you will ever have.

Would You Like to Tag a Striper?

In September, I landed my first tagged fish. I removed the tag which had a number and a website for the [American Littoral Society](#) (ALS). I soon learned the mission of ALS is to care for the coast. One thing they do is organize a public voluntary system of tagging Stripers for the sake of science. In fact, anyone can join ALS and purchase tags and the equipment needed to tag fish.

I reported the information to ALS and a few months later, I received a patch as a thank you for completing their research. I also learned that the fish I caught on 9/1/07 in Hockamock Bay was tagged in the Thames River in CT on 12/30/06. It was

said to have gained 3" and 3lbs growing from 22" 2 1/2 lbs to 25" and 5 1/2lbs in just eight full months. I was amazed by the growth, the location of the tagging, and the time of year the tagging occurred!

But the story doesn't end here. In December, I picked up "On the Water" magazine and read about the winter fishery on the Thames. Through the tagging efforts of a captain, a teacher, and his students; scientists have been able to make some hypotheses about the Thames River over-winter Striper population. I was thrilled to learn more about my tagged fish. According to this arti-



cle, the fish I caught was most likely spawned in the Hudson River in New York and would have returned to the Thames for the winter if it had been luckier.

If you have a driving interest in tagging a fish, let me know ASAP. We can contact ALS, make the arrangements, and then make a plan to catch some fish.

Mussels Oregono

Ingredients: 20-30 mussels, 3/4 cup bread crumbs, salt and pepper to taste, 1 Tbs garlic powder, and 3 Tbs dried oregano. For sauce pan: 1/3 cup butter, 1/3 cup olive oil 1/2 cup white vinegar

Exploring the water's edge as a child is one of my fondest memories. During my explorations, I would find star fish, green crabs, sea urchins, and *mussels which I learned can be a tasty treat*. The mussels are usually found on the water's edge below the high tide line attached to rocks in bunches. So grab your bucket and get to it. After collecting your bounty from the Maine shoreline, you are now ready to create a sweet appetizer.

Cleaning: First, rinse the mussels in cold water removing all of the loose debris. With a small knife you will need to scrape off the beards (the hair-like substance the mussel uses to attach itself to the rocks) and barnacles (if any are present). You will know you are finished when the mus-

sel looks like you just pulled it out of your local seafood market.

Opening mussels: For those of you who have opened any type of clams before this will be familiar; for those who haven't here are some simple instructions. Use the same small knife that was used to clean the outside of the mussel to open them. Start by placing the mussel in whichever hand you feel most comfortable with. Hold the mussel so that the outside of the curve is facing away from your palm. Now very carefully insert the knife into the back side of the two shells and slowly separate. This will take some practice but once you get it, it will be a piece of cake. With the shells split, loosen the meat from both sides and place

all the meat on one half shell then place them on a tin-foiled lined baking sheet.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees and then in a separate bowl you will need to mix all the dry ingredients. Now spoon in the dry ingredient mix onto each half, making sure not to overfill or pack down (approx 3/4 Tbs. on each). **In a small sauce pan** melt butter, olive oil and vinegar together. Once combined, liberally spoon on each mussel, pouring the extra sauce into the bottom of the pan to create a basting sauce. **Bake** at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes, and then baste with juice from the bottom of the pan. Then broil until golden brown. Divertirsi! (Enjoy!)
By Matt Piccerelli with help from brother Mark