



FEATURESGONE FISHIN'

Gone Fishin'

4 MINUTE READ

by Julia Moye



Until I read these articles in SCWild, my only frame of reference for fishing was going out on my grandfather's boat to fish off the coast near Garden City. The first article explores experiences like mine about recreational fishing with family to share a mutual love of nature. In the second, we learn about the career of a fisheries biologist, where the emphasis is on ensuring the future of our state's natural resources. The third article examines sport or competitive fishing from the perspective of a woman who hopes to become the first female champion in the Forrest Wood Cup and the Bassmaster Classic.

Jackson Bland wrote about fishing with his dad during his senior spring break at the University of South Carolina. His story vividly depicts his trip and makes you feel as if you are there. Jackson shares the typical obstacles anglers face, such as the wind, weather, and tide not cooperating, and illustrates the unpredictability of fishing: "We idle down the Intercoastal with high hopes and a set plan. The wind picks up as the tide turns and we hit open water. With the tide pouring in and a slight chop hindering our sight fishing plans in the low-tide oyster minefield, we decide to pivot our focus. The skiff motors into a U-turn and we begin the voyage toward the creeks in search of some wind-protected water. Before we know it, a school of mullet spook beyond the skiff which consequently startles a smaller group of redfish. I pole further along to a more obscured break in the creek and stake out the boat, readying for the intended target to cruise down the shallow oyster highway. My dad offers me the bow and our luck begins to turn as a pod of reds recklessly move toward us."



Flats Focused by Jackson Bland

Toward the end of the day you learn what mattered most to Jackson and his dad was that they had a great time and made wonderful memories. "We stake out the boat once more, with no intention of enticing any unbeknownst redfish but to simply take in the beauty of a low country low-tide and laugh about missed shots and clumsy fish," Jackson says.

Pam Corwin's piece guides readers through a day as a fisheries biologist at the SCDNR's Jack D. Bayless Fish Hatchery in Bonneau: "My boss, Forrest, yells, 'FISH ON!' A female striper was ready to have her eggs removed. This was a larger than usual striper, the size that old fishermen reminisce about back in the good ol' days. She was beautiful. Forrest and the crew carefully handled her to gently squeeze the eggs from her ovaries. A pretty, blue-green stream poured into the egg-collecting glass. This was the art of strip spawning at its finest."

Pam's day began at 4:30 a.m. and ended after 1:00 a.m. the following morning and left her exhausted but fulfilled. The process of strip spawning lit a fire in her that everyone should get a glimpse of now and then. She saw her duties as having a direct impact on protecting the natural resources of our state.

This career path was her lifelong dream: "I became a biologist because I've always loved the outdoors and nature. I spent my childhood racing through fields to the pine forests near my house — chasing snakes, catching crawdads and exploring the natural environment to its fullest. I was a fisherwoman. I loved fishing, and every chance I got, you can bet I went."

After college she considered moving to Alaska or out West. When she realized she wanted to stay in South Carolina, Pam worked as an hourly employee with bald eagles, sea turtles, and later with eels, American shad and sturgeon. Today Pam is a wildlife biologist with the SCDNR, and her work focuses on American shad and striped bass. She is a great reminder that sometimes it takes internships and hands-on experiences to find your niche.



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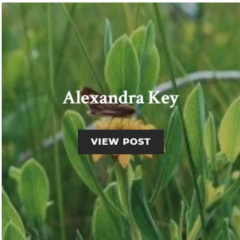
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South Carolina Wild: Looking back

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FEATURE PHOTOS





How a Fish Changed Everything by Pam Corwin

Anastasia Patterson is a recent Political Science graduate from Presbyterian College (PC). She grew up fishing with her father and developed a passion for the sport as she grew older. While she was a Junior at PC, she became a founding member of their bass fishing team where she served as an officer. This extracurricular activity was not only a way for her to get involved on campus but also propelled her into choosing her passion as a career path.

"When people asked what I wanted to do when I grew up," Anastasia explains, "I'd either tell them I wanted to be a lawyer, Miss America, in a duck blind, or a Bassmaster Classic or Forrest Wood Cup champion. I'd seen women do all of these things besides win the Classic or the Cup."

Anastasia knew she had the potential to be the first woman to win a Fishing Classic or Cup. She went with her gut and chose to further her career in the fishing world: "Next year I'll fish the FLW tournaments and other tournament trails, adapting to different lakes and situations, establishing patterns, building relationships, and chasing a dream. If you have a dream you think is too far out of reach, don't give up. It's never too late."



"A Dream Gig" by Anastasia Patterson

Anastasia and her partner Andrew Shelgrove with a Top 10 finish in the Anglers for Athletes Tournament benefiting the Special Olympics in early 2018 on Lake Greenwood (Photographed by Abigail Crisp)

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Flats Focused

'A Dream Gig' for South Carolina Angler Anastasia Patterson



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