
Subject: Teenagers Drag Winning Marlin Around Pirates COve, NC
Posted by [SanCocho](#) on Tue, 25 Aug 2009 14:02:18 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

The big one nearly got away.

It didn't break the leader and run. It didn't tail dance and spit the hook out.

It was stolen.

According to Manteo police, a 21-year-old man and three teenagers were arrested on Aug. 13 at 5 a.m. and charged with larceny of the 755-pound blue marlin caught by Billy Duerr aboard the "Sea Hag" in last week's 26th Annual Pirates Cove Billfish Tournament.

The once majestic blue marlin that won Duerr and the Sea Hag crew \$173,151 in prize money, was allegedly stolen and dragged with a rope by a pick up truck with a noisy exhaust down the roads inside Pirates Cove towards Ballast Point at 3:30 a.m., said the report.

By the time the incident was over, the fish had been damaged from being dragged, its tail cut off, and it was left in the middle of the road inside of Pirates Cove.

Three of the suspects, who fled in the truck, were followed by law enforcement officers and were apprehended at the public parking lot on the southwest side of the Melvin Daniels Bridge.

Before 5 a.m., all four suspects were charged with misdemeanor larceny as the fish was only valued at \$600, according to the police report. Each suspect is scheduled to appear in court on Sept. 4.

They are Harris Clifford Eckstrom, 21, and John Peter Eckstrom, Jr. both of Columbia, S.C., Matthew Webster Hodges, 18, of Richmond, Va. and William Davis Witmer, 17, of Charlottesville, Va.

Manteo police officer Thomas D. Renkosiak responded to call for help from fellow officer Jonathan Bender to come to the scene at the marina.

At one point in the narrative, Renkosiak recorded that he smelled alcohol on the suspects once they were caught near the Melvin Daniels Bridge.

"I noticed a strong odor of fish and alcohol coming from all the subjects and asked them where the fish went," he said in his report.

It all started when officer Bender was doing a security check under the pavilion at Pirates Cove.

"I heard a loud crash of metal and a vehicle driving away with a noisy exhaust," he said. "I ran to the location of the noise and saw that the AstroTurf had been pulled from under the catering tent.

"The catering tent was damaged and the cooking equipment had been knocked over," Bender reported. "I could still hear the vehicle pulling away and see its lights as it turned past the guard gate."

Bender contacted the guard at the gatehouse, and he reported seeing the vehicle drive through at a high rate of speed dragging something. Bender then called for back up and that's when Renkosiak arrived.

They went back to the scene at the pavilion and that's when Bender realized what had happened.

"Upon his [Renkosiak] arrival, I showed him what had happened, and then noticed the blue marlin was missing from the dock," Bender said. "I then heard the same sounding vehicle exhaust and told officer Renkosiak that was the suspect vehicle."

While Bender stayed to secure the scene at the marina, Renkosiak left in pursuit of the noisy vehicle. He was joined by Dare County Sheriff's Deputy Tom Mears as well as Eric Francis, the Pirates Cove security officer.

Mears said over the radio he intended to stop the truck on the east side of the Washington Baum Bridge. The truck did not stop, however, until it reached the Melvin Daniels Bridge where there's parking for fishermen.

Mears, Renkosiak and Francis all arrived at the scene.

"I noticed three suspects, Witmer and Hodges, in the truck and Eckstrom, Jr. in the bed of the suspect vehicle," Renkosiak said.

Eckstrom Jr. tried to run from the scene but was apprehended by Mears while Renkosiak watched the other two, the report stated. All three were arrested and taken to the Dare County Detention Center.

Before the night was over, police contacted Harry Hindmarsh, tournament director, to have him to remove the marlin from the middle of the road, according to a report by Manteo police Sgt. James Burroughs.

They all eventually met at the scene where the fish was in the road.

"I observed the trail left by the fish as it was dragged behind the pick up truck," Burroughs said. "I took pictures of what was left of the fish.

"There was no tail on the fish," he said. "The fish was then lifted onto the back of a pick up truck and removed from the road."

As Burroughs was finishing up his work, he was informed by Renkosiak where to find the fourth suspect, H. Eckstrom, a mate working on a boat in the tournament. Burroughs picked him up and placed him in custody.

The only thing that was missing now was the tail of the blue marlin.

"At this time, the suspect [H. Eckstrom] who was by my police vehicle stated: 'The tail - I cut the tail off and threw it into the water,'" Burroughs quoted H. Eckstrom as saying.

sports@obsentinel.com | 252-480-2234

Subject: Re: Teenagers Drag Winning Marlin Around Pirates COve, NC
Posted by [CaptBubba](#) on Fri, 02 Apr 2010 14:56:20 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

idiots