

Mackerel have certainly arrived in the Forth

The catamaran powered out of Burntisland Harbour at 8.30am. It was flat calm under a slate grey sky and we had eight passengers on board, some novice anglers, all seeking to hook into mackerel.

Reports had indicated that the superb fish was in the Forth in great numbers and we were determined to catch some. On went the three feathers and, ten minutes into the trip, the engine stopped.

Time to catch. Second cast I was into a fine, hard-fighting fish. The distinctive skin with silver streaks eventually came near the surface, the fish darting from side to side in a frantic bid to free the hook.

This plump mackerel was hauled over the gunnel and dealt with. Minutes later I was into another and my companion had three on. We were not alone as the excited chatter from the stern of the boat indicated that others were catching.

The sport continued along with a pleasing flow of warming Nescafe Gold Blend coffee. We moved to another location near Kinghorn Beach after the fish takes began to fade, then we crossed the water heading towards Edinburgh, stopping, this time, near uninhabited Inchkeith.

The lighthouse built in 1803 is prominent on the skyline on the 57 acre island which rises to a height of 60m. Inchkeith

has a colourful military history having, in previous times, defended the Firth of Forth from attack.

However, my concentration was lower down, on the surface of the sea and the hooks were under constant attack from mackerel, an excellent source of Omega 3 fatty acids. They jumped at the sparking, silver feathers as they were lowered and raised in the water.

A small shower of rain came through, but that did not deter the other eager anglers who were continuing to fill their buckets, plastic bags and cool boxes, raising and lowering their rods in the hope of more bites.

Leanne Taylor, one of the owners, was busy, unhooking and providing hits and tips. "I'm not an expert angler," she said. "However, i do know how to catch mackerel."

She sure did and the cool boxes rapidly filled. All too soon, the skipper called rods in and we headed back to Burntisland, well-satisfied and relieved that the rain had not cascaded down as it did later on in the day.

Leanne has availability until late August and the trips are being snapped up as anglers target the fish which is prized for food and also as a valuable source of bait for winter fishing.

We thoroughly enjoyed the trip and two hours is just right, particularly for anglers with little experience. It can get choppy in the Forth and it can also get cold so, if you fancy this, then wrap up well. It can be pretty exposed out there, but the reward can be a bucket of fish to take home.

Leanne normally takes eight passengers on fishing trips and the age is from 12 upwards, but she can accommodate younger people after talks with parents.

Anglers can bring their own equipment but rods can be hired

along with feathers. It's great fun and an ideal way to introduce young and even old to the sport of fishing.

The firm also offer wreck fishing trips plus bird watching, marine tours, corporate and private celebration trips and are only 20 minutes from the Forth Bridge by car and two minutes walk from Burntisland railway station. Parking is a few paces from the boat.

Forth Sea Safaris are based at East Dock Harbour KY3 9DR. Call 01592 747280 or see social media or their website.

PICTURE: Graham Brazenall and the haul of mackerel tempted from the depths by him and his fishing buddy. Picture **Nigel Duncan**



FOCUSED: Anglers target mackerel off Inchkeith on board Forth Sea Safaris in the Forth. Picture **Nigel Duncan**



PICTURE: Leanne Taylor before a briefing on board Forth Sea Safaris catamaran with one of the anglers. Picture **Nigel Duncan**



BOAT DOCKED: A view of the spacious deck area on the catamaran run by Forth Sea Safaris out of Burntisland. Picture **Nigel Duncan**