

N.C. Seafood Festival



(Above Photo) Morty Gaskill, Ronnie O'Neal, Maddie Payne and Molly Lovejoy (from left) roamed through the crowds at the Seafood Festival.

CATCH THE EXCITEMENT!



Ocracokers were caught off-island at the 2007 North Carolina Seafood Festival in Morehead City. The Ocracoke Working Watermen's Association had an educational display about Ocracoke's seafaring traditions. Local musicians played on the Coastal Yesterday stage on Sunday afternoon, and other Ocracokers came just to enjoy the sights, sounds and seafood. Here, James Barrie Gaskill (left) and Tom Payne take a break from manning the OWWA tent to listen to some good music. For more photos from the festival, see Island Images on pages 4 and 5. (The Ocracoker Photo/Sundae Horn)

netting, duck hunting, charter boating and the effort to save the fish house.

Jack Dudley, author of "Ocracoke Album" and "Mattamuskeet & Ocracoke Waterfowl Heritage," two books that provide many beautiful photos and information about Ocracoke, stopped by to say hello, as did island residents and supporters who have been following the fish house story.

OWWA also was pleased to provide fresh shrimp and drum cakes, an old Ocracoke favorite, as part of the private Friday night opening ceremony for the festival.

OWWA fishermen displayed educational information about their mission, cooked hors d'oeuvres and attended the ceremony.

OCRACOKE — "We had a great time answering questions and meeting people. We're used to being isolated on the water, so getting out in public and seeing so much interest in what's happening to us is nice," said Farris O'Neal, a native islander who has worked the water all his life along with his brother, Erick.

O'Neal is treasurer of the Ocracoke Working Watermen's Association (OWWA), the group of over 30 watermen who came together to save the island's last fish house.

OWWA's tent in the educational section of the 21st annual North Carolina Seafood Festival earlier this month was busy. Visitors enjoyed reading and talking with the watermen about oyster and crab research, pound