



The Margate Fishing Pier at Essex Avenue, where the fish haven would be constructed. H/19/70

Haven for Fish Under Margate Pier



By
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Learn**

OLD, BEATUP TIRES that have been lying around in dumps may be put to use to improve the fishing off the fishing pier in Margate.

The tires, clusters of rock and concrete, and planks of long leaf yellow pine would be assembled and anchored with malleable metal wires to create a fishing haven underneath the pier, which stretches 300 feet into the ocean off Essex Avenue.

This underseas rig, whose principal element would be the 24 truck tires, each weighing 130 pounds, would form additional surfaces and crevices on which would grow barnacles, mussels, hydroids and other invertebrates. These goodies, all members of the zoological family of mollusca, are food for finfish, who presumably would hurry to the Margate pier for dinner.

The 165 paid-up members of the Anglers Club of Absecon Island, the pier's

proprietors, would be standing atop the T-shaped wooden finger that juts into the Atlantic as the fish congregate. They would be standing there not only with baited breath but with baited lines, which they would toss out for record-breaking catches.

The idea of this fish haven, which would cost an estimated \$7,000, is the creation of three fishing pier members, Louis Hernberg, a retired manufacturing and tool company executive of Philadelphia; Herman H. Kline, a retired Philadelphia architect-engineer, and Dr. Martin H. Gold, a retired medical physician.

UNDER THE PLAN, for which Kline has drawn elaborate blueprints, the timber planks would stretch along eight rows for the pier's length. Four rows would be 18 inches above the seafloor, and the four others, directly above, would be 30 inches high. Between these two troughs of planks, the 1,900 pounds of old tire would be placed.

Augmenting the tires would be heavy triangle pieces of rock, four of each placed with their apexes pointing to a common point, to form a pattern in the shape of a diamond, or a German Iron Cross. The trio estimated the rock project would cost \$500.

"The fish haven will save the old pier," said Hernberg. Membership on the pier, built in 1923, has declined in recent years from 285 to 165. The membership also needs new, young blood, as the majority of the fishermen are of retirement age.

The fish haven has the endorsement of Richard B. Stone, oceanographer of the U.S. Department of Interior's Marine Laboratory at Sandy Hook, who wrote to Kline:

"I think the added surface area and crevices that would be formed by your proposed fish haven under the 'T' of your existing pier or under the proposed extension will help to increase the number of fish in the vicinity of the pier. Barnacles, mussels, hydroids and other invertebrates which are used as food by finfish need solid substrates such as the pilings, cross members and tires on your proposed fish haven to complete their life cycles.

"However, you should consider the possibility of using quarry rock around and under the pier. This might be very effective in conjunction with your proposed fish haven or possibly used as an alternate method of improving fishing in the vicinity of the pier. Sanding may be a problem with quarry rock. I would suggest that you experiment with a small amount of rock before making any de-

cision about the use of rock around the entire pier."

STONE'S REFERENCE to "the proposed extension" concerned another, more ambitious project of the three men: They envision extending the 300-foot pier by another 250 to 300 feet seaward, at an estimated cost of \$40,000.

The big question regarding the fish haven is: Will the planks and rocks and tires snag fishing lines?

"Absolutely not," Kline insisted. He explained that the haven will be at a sufficient distance underneath from the edges and the end of the pier to eliminate snagged fishhooks.

Use of old tires to create artificial, made-made fishing holes is not new, as a pilot project using tires is underway at the Marine Laboratory at Sandy Hook. The project is not confined to tires, however: Also dumped into the artificial reefs as building blocks are rusting auto bodies gathered from the spoiled countryside, broken concrete and derelict boats and ships.

All this debris is dumped into reefs, laid in the Atlantic off Long Island and at six other sites down the coast as far as Florida. They provide anchorage for the simple, sedentary marine plants and animals and small fish that live on the growths.

The life forms seem to like a rubber base, but the concrete bases are slower to gather a family, according to Stone. Chained together, the automobile bodies will disintegrate in three to five years, but the tires and concrete will last far longer, Stone expects.

