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Dory fishing off Pacific City yields some unusual species

PACIFIC CITY— The coffee lost identity in my nostrils amidst the pungent miasma of ocean scents.

All kingdoms were represented in the damp air: animal, vegetable and mineral. Gasoline fumes punctuated the otherwise natural scentscape as my friend Dom Porcelli and I met up with our captain, Josh Putman, in the wan light of almost daybreak.

We loaded our gear into a wooden boat painted a cherry red — presumably just for the aesthetic value and high visibility. The vessel was saddled with two large outboards and sat resting its haunches on a trailer in the public parking lot rather than idling at a slip in the harbor like most charter boats on the Oregon Coast. It was the first signal of the unique fishery we'd stepped into.

As gray light began brushing the black sky into a textured gray watercolor, we towed the boat down to the sandy beach. As we descended the small dunes framing Pacific City Beach and the coastline unfolded before us, we saw half a dozen other trucks and SUVs parked on the sand with empty trailers behind them.

Captain Josh backed his trailer into the pounding surf and a man in waders untied the boat and began pulling. He slid it off the struts and turned the bow out to the open ocean.

Once chest-deep in the roiling waves, the captain boarded with impressive spryness, took command of his ship and fired up the engines. We braced and charged into the surf.

Dory

Normally, Captain Josh is booked year-round, but a last-minute cancellation enabled Dom to get a trip in, and he generously invited me along, presumably for my razor-sharp wit and local knowledge.

Dom is on track to become the fourth person in history to catch 1,000 species of fish on hook and line, which should happen in the next month or two if all goes as planned.

The two of us had done quite



The author with a yelloweye rockfish, his first.

Dom Porcelli/Contributed Photo

MORE INFORMATION

This was a typical day for Pacific City's Dory Fleet, which has operated in much the same way for more than 120 years just south of Cape Kiwanda. The flat-bottomed sturdy wooden boats are known for their safety and stability, according to the Tillamook County Department of Tourism. Of all ports on the Oregon coast, Pacific City was the only one of any size I'd never visited. It's tucked out of the way and removed from Highway 101 just enough that you have to be intentional about visiting, but you won't regret it. Windswept dunes, salt marshes, pine flats and rugged mountains will keep you busy when you're not fishing. There are numerous boats operating out of Pacific City. Captain Josh is usually booked solid, but you can try your luck by calling (503) 708-1141. Otherwise, just Google "Pacific City dory fishing," and I guarantee you'll find dory.

well the days before, fishing area jetties, tidepools, rivers and streams from Corvallis to Barview, but he was hoping to find two fish on that dory: cabezon and China rockfish.



Luke Ovgard/Contributed Photo

See, Ovgard/Page B2 The Pacific City dory fleet has been operating for more than 120 years.

Make perfect dove poppers on the grill



TOM
CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

Since dove season is almost over and you've had time to ponder on the matter, suddenly it hits you. What the heck am I going to do with all of these doves in the freezer? As a kid we'd pick our doves and then with a pair of scissors clip off the feet, wings, rear-end and make a cut down both side of the backbone and pull the neck and backbone off. Then mom would fry them whole.

After college I got a real job and moved in with my hunting buddy Bob Jett. He told me the best way to cook doves was on a grill. So that's how I cooked them for the next 35 years.

But there's a lot better way to cook them. Make poppers out of them. It will take a minute to prepare them but boy, is it worth it. I just smoked some dove poppers last night that were the best that I ever had.

Here's how I did it. First, you want to breast them out. Pick them first then, using a 6-inch boning knife like the Smith's 6.3-inch boning knife, breast them out. Cut on each side of the breast bone. Make an incision between the breast and the leg. Then scoop it out.



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

Smoke the poppers over medium heat. When the bacon is done, they're ready to eat.

On mourning doves you'll want to slice the breast in half longwise. On the bigger Eurasian doves you will want to slice them in thirds.

Rinse them off and then put them in a bowl or, if you have a bunch, in a plastic bag. Marinate in Tony Chachere's Creole Style

Chicken marinade. I also added a little balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire sauce.

If you marinate them in a bag, squeeze out the air so the marinade is touching all parts of the breast.

I like to marinate meat in a bag because you can lay the bag

in your fridge and every hour or two pick up the bag, massage it and flip it over and never get dirty, plus it gets better coverage. I like to marinate meat at least four hours. Doves are dark meat, and the Tony Chachere's Chicken Marinade removes the gamey taste. Like I said above,

these were the best dove poppers that I've ever had.

To prepare them is simple but a little time consuming. Cut some strips of bacon in half. Also cut thin slices of jalapeños and onion. Lay a slice of breast, onion and jalapeño on the ½ strip of bacon. Roll it up and pin it together with one or two toothpicks.

I smoke and barbecue all of my meat on a Camp Chef pellet grill. Granted, to get the perfect smoke flavor you need to use real wood but they are so easy to cook with and maintain a constant temp that I now use a Camp Chef.

Fire up the grill and lay the poppers on the grill. You want to cook them until golden brown. Don't cook it at too high of a temp or they'll be crispy and taste like you're eating a charcoal briquet. Don't cook them enough and they're ... well, no one likes to eat medium cooked bacon. So when the bacon looks perfect, they're done.

This time by chance I had a container of sour cream that I was using to cook another dish. I put a few dollops of sour cream on a plate and dipped them in it and oh my gosh, they were the best. I've always liked dove poppers but with my new marinade they were the bomb.

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