

The \$1605.05 Fish (singular or plural, you choose)

This fish tale is best told in reverse so bare with me. I picked up my youth angler visitor Robert “Chuckie” Reid” about 4:30 am on May 22, 2010 as planned for a day of tournament fishing he earned on Tuckertown Lake. We ran through occasional downpours on the way to Denton and our customary breakfast at Rick’s before fishing tournaments on the Yadkin Chain lakes. We launched without much fanfare or fuss other than club member Steve Gunter and his dad, Sam, had a deer run into his boat in route to the ramp. The boat didn’t sink when they launched it so everyone fished and we returned to the Flat Creek Church landing for weigh-in at 2:00 pm as planned.

Catches we mixed. The muddy water from all the rain seemed to throw some anglers and the fish they thought they had located. But, someone always catches fish. Clayton “Lucky” Proctor is proving to be more of a consistent performer than merely lucky. The Archdale Bass Club’s most senior angler netted third place with 5 fish weighing 13.17 pounds. Jamie Denison had a super second place bag of 5 fish as well with a total of 15.25 pounds. And your author nailed down what turned out to be a very expensive win with 5 fish weighing 17.09 pounds including the biggest fish of the tournament at 6.76 pounds

The explanation starts with the comment about muddy water in the beginning of the story. I took off from work Friday to scout around at the lake. With all the rain we had, I knew some areas would be muddy and difficult to fish. Especially ones I like to fish. Getting on the water before sunrise can make it difficult to tell just how muddy the water is. It can leave you fishing in water with the wrong lures and techniques wasting valuable tournament time.

I parked my little 04 Toyota Tacoma Friday morning at the top of the Flat Creek ramp around 9 am and went happily one my merry way. I found out what wanted to know, came back to the ramp around 3 pm and cranked the truck to put the boat back on the trailer and head home. I immediately ejected myself out of the truck surprised by the huge, uncustomary roar that bellowed from under my little 6 cylinder truck. It sounded like it was about to explode. Having no idea what was wrong, I turned the truck off and started looking around to see if I could figure out what was going on. When I looked under the bed, the exhaust system was gone. G-o-n-e, gone, gone, gone.

The very apologetic deputy from Rowan County that filled out the police report said they had a rash of similar thefts last year at High Rock Lake’s Southmont ramp. As my always helpful and professional service friends at Vann York told me, the catalytic converter on Toyota trucks are not only easily accessible due to the superior ground clearance of their Tacoma truck, they are very valuable targets for thieves who seek the platinum in them. They bring \$200 to \$400 on the black market by some reports. While it may benefit their bottom line, so far, the bill to replace my property which was stolen while I was enjoying a leisurely day scouting for our tournament is \$1605.05.

It would be a stretch to say the win outweighs the irritation. It doesn’t. The closest thing to a grin I’ve been able to get out of this new adventure in fishing is a story Ms. Bonnie at Rick’s relayed about a somewhat similar situation they had to overcome. Between stealing catalytic converters off poor

unsuspecting fishermen and the like, someone stole the copper wire out of the telephone system somewhere in Southmont rendering their 911 telephone system inoperable for several days. The extent to which thievery has stooped to is amazing but, even more remarkable, they are getting away with it and no one saw a thing in any of these thefts.

My bride's suggestion to this travesty was this might be reason enough to consider giving up fishing. Nice try, dear. You won't have any trouble hearing me coming and we'll STILL see you on the water.