

## **THE JERSEY DEVIL – IS HE LURKING AROUND YOUR BOAT?**

A song from my childhood goes sort of like this: “If you go down in the woods today, you’re in for a big surprise ...” I think the song might be about a bear, but my mind swings naturally to my old pal the Jersey Devil and his “sightings” over the last two hundred years.

Was he real? Was he Mrs. Leed’s thirteenth child? And how come the story/rumor didn’t just die a natural death? Pun intended ... As anyone from New Jersey knows, the Jersey Devil’s popularity has risen.

How far can a boat get up the Gunning River at high tide? Think our friend might be hanging out somewhere around the tree line watching you? That part of Barnegat is mighty desolate. What about Island Beach State Park? Naw, that’s too busy with visitors for him. Just like the Bass River: those Vikings move much too fast and make too much noise.

Then there are the obvious places, especially on cloudy days or evenings. Leeds Point is a good one, wandering in and around the old homes.

But, like many of us, I bet he likes to hang out around the water. Wonder if he’s ever been to Oyster Creek Restaurant for lobster or had a beer before it closed at Motts Creek? What does he think of the relatively new bridge across Nacote Creek? Or the expanded museum area at Batsto? Does the outside bar at Sweetwater Casino attract or repel him?

Next time you are out in your boat, look behind you. You might see an apparition in dark red with wings, horns and tail watching you from behind a cedar or popping up between the phragmites and grasses. Don’t panic – anyone who can lead the Jersey Devils hockey team to Stanley Cup victory certainly won’t harm you.