



The PSWSFA is a family-oriented fishing club established in 1957. Our meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month (March-Dec.) at 7:00pm. We meet at the Former Plumbers Union Hall at 7812 Warwick Blvd until we find a new home. The meetings are free and open to the public and are a great place to swap stories with other local fishermen, find new fishing partners and plan trips together. We have raffles with nice giveaways-donated by local businesses plus prizes we buy ourselves. Each month we have speakers sharing their experience on one of the local fisheries. Come join us and get to know some of the other fishermen in your local area. Directions are on the last page of the Chumline.

The 20 October General Membership Meeting is Actually Happening.

Greetings and welcome to October, The never ending story of Covid continues. However, We have managed to keep the local outbreaks to a minimum and we are able to hold a meeting on 20 October at 7pm at our usual meeting place.

Unfortunately the building was finally sold and this will very likely be our last meeting at this location. So come on out for the meeting as the raffle committee has a lot to give away. If you know of any place where we could hold our meetings please contact our president Danny Forehand.

On another sad note a long time member Stan Sutliff passed away recently. I apologize for not having additional information.

Last month there was an Ad in the Chumline for the Amos G. West memorial Spot Tournament. Stan Simmerman entered and sent me the following:

"Wanted to let you know that the Amos G. West Memorial Spot Tournament was held yesterday (19 Sep 2020). Because of the small craft advisory they cancelled the fishing for the day but held the the 5pm get together. The decision was made to do a drawing for the first and second place awards. \$500 and

\$1000 respectively. Each boat entry got four tickets toward the drawing. A lady won the \$500 second prize. The drawing for the 1st place prize was won by yours truly. First time I've ever won a tournament and I didn't even intend to fish in it which of course I didn't. Just entered because I was asked and the money was going to provide scholarships for kids.

I donated the money back to the tournament director for use as one of the scholarships."

Well done Stan and a very generous gesture on your part of donating your winnings back to the scholarship fund.

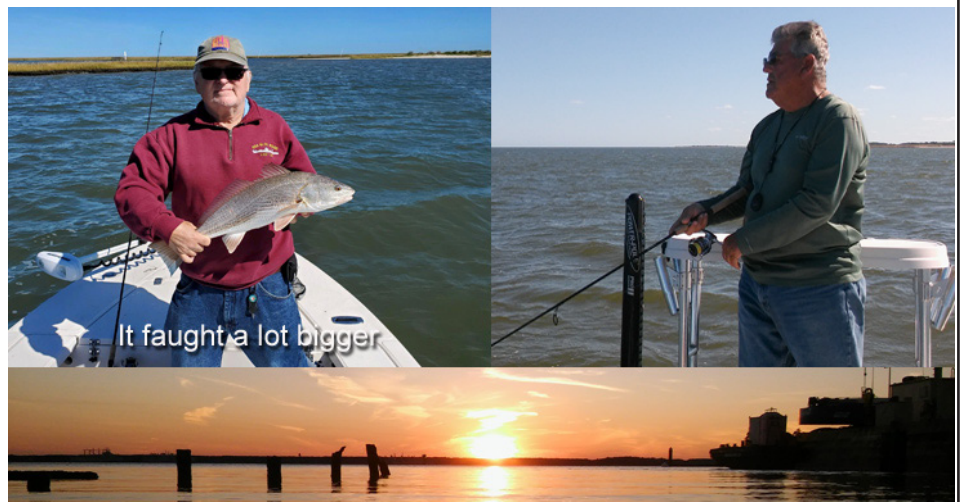
I was able to get a few nice sized stripers at Fort Eustis on October 4-7 from 19-25 with a number of smaller ones. All of the bigger ones, except one, were caught right as the sun set, I also managed to get another large mouth bass in the same spot, go figure. Plus another 23" drum with Stan on the 15th.

Don't forget that we have one last tournament this year.

The Wilcox Bait and Tackle - Irv Fenton Rockfish Tournament 1-31 December. See page 8 for additional information. We currently only have 3 people registered so you have a good chance of winning if you enter.

There is no news from Danny this month.

Mike the Editor



2020 Club Officers

Danny Forehand

President

Milton Hudgins

Vice President

Rachel Nelson & Wally Veal

Secretary

Christina Grice

Treasurer

Charles Southall

Corresponding Secretary

Stan Simmerman

Past President

Board of Directors

Bill Tice

John Hunt Jr.

Ronnie Wilson

Gary Donaldson

Dave Boyce

Rick Wineman

Daily Vandergriff

Wally Veal

Johnny Boyd

David Agree

Steve Martin

Jerald Abraham

Wes Blow

Don Lancaster

Mike Frielingsdorf



Attention all members: This is a reminder that all memberships will now expire on the last day of February of each year. Forms are available from Johnny Boyd (membership committee). At the December 2019 board meeting the board voted to increase the dues by \$10. As before, the \$40 is per individual or family. We haven't had a dues increase in pretty much forever and this will help the club pay for the increased cost of our meeting space as well as supporting events like the picnic, awards banquet, and fishing related events, organizations, and tournaments.

PSWSFA 2020 MEMBERSHIP

Dues: \$40 per year for entire family*
(March through February - not prorated throughout the year)

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Dependents Names and ages

1) _____ 4) _____

2) _____ 5) _____

3) _____ 6) _____

*Family must be living with you

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Boat Name/Call Sign: _____

Total number in your membership: _____

Send this form with a check (payable to PSWSFA) to:

PSWSFA
P.O. Box 5194
Newport News, VA 23605

Please check one of the following:

☐ Yes, please add my name to the club membership book
☐ No, please do not publish my information



The recreational cobia season has ended. The VMRC reminds us that it's time to take care of our required reports. They are due by October 21, 2020.

If you have questions about how to meet your reporting requirements, you can visit the VMRC recreational cobia website at:

<https://www.mrc.virginia.gov/regulations/VA-recreational-cobia-fishing.shtm>

Virginia Beach Fishing

Virginia Beach Fishing Rundown

Here comes October a time of transition. Our summertime species start leaving, the waters are less crowded and fish are very active.

When weather cooperates it's a great time of the year to be on the water. Lately large swells from offshore storms have made ocean inlets in Virginia and North Carolina challenging, but things are improving and those venturing out to the deep are catching sea bass, tilefish, swordfish, blue and white marlin, wahoo, dolphin and tuna. (Above) Captain David Wright, High Hopes Charters picked up dolphin and tuna on a recent outing. Boats fishing the triangle wrecks are limiting out in short order on the sea bass.

Dr. Ken Neill met Nicholas Kontodiakos at Rudee Inlet recently to certify a potentially new Virginia state record, 579 pound swordfish. Angler's name and details to follow from the VMRC.

The Rudee Tours head boats have offshore 17-hour fishing trips planned for October 6, 13, 20, 27 and 12-hour sea bass trips starting in November on Saturdays. They also have inshore ½ and full day trips.

On a recent trip to the CBBT area Dr Ken Neill and crew caught sheepshead, tautog and several nice puppy drum.

There's still large red drum around, but catches have slowed in the bay. Large drum should be feeding in surf along Sandbridge and along the wildlife refuge especially when its rough.

Speckled trout anglers are catching some quality fish. Long Bay Pointe Bait and Tackle reports speckled trout and puppy drum biting inside Lynnhaven Inlet, and Captain Jake Beck found a mix of specks and redfish inside Rudee Inlet as well.

Flounder fishing in the Bay has been slow.

Pier anglers on the Virginia Beach Pier are catching puppy drum, trout, some spots, pompano, small croakers and small flounder.

Red drum are starting to migrate out of the Bay, look for schools on the surface. As they depart surf anglers will be able to get in on the action as well. Frank Marble said the first large drum, 47 inches, was landed on the Little Island Pier in Sandbridge a couple of days ago. Look for some nice fish to be landed in the Sandbridge surf.

Last Month's Mystery Fish: The Pomfret or Monchong.



Pomfrets are perciform fish belonging to the family Bramidae. The family currently includes 20 species across 7 genera. Several species are important food sources for humans, especially *Brama brama* in South Asia. The earlier form of the pomfret's name was "pamflet", a word which probably ultimately comes from Portuguese pampo, referring to various fish such as the blue butterfish (*Stromateus fiatola*). The fish meat is white in color. (Wiki)

They are found globally in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, as well as numerous seas including the Norwegian, Mediterranean, and Sea of Japan. Nearly all species can be found in the high seas. However, fishes in the genera *Pterycombus* and *Pteraclis* tend to be found off continental shelves. Further, fishes in the genus *Eumegistus* are hypothesized to be largely benthic and found to occupy deep water shelves.

Apparently, Pomfret aka Monchong has become a favorite with Hawaiian seafood restaurants. It is described as being delicious steamed, crusted, baked and grilled. It has pinkish flesh that turns completely white when cooked. The meat is denser and the flake much smaller than that of a Mahimahi. The oil content is high, so unlike Ono, it rarely dries out. Instead, it remains soft and moist no matter how it is prepared.

Editor - I have no idea what color the flesh really is.

738-FT. CARGO SHIP RUNS AGROUND IN NORFOLK

October 1, 2020

A nearly-740 foot cargo ship ran aground just a quarter-mile off of Norfolk, prompting the Coast Guard and the Port of Virginia's Maritime Incident Response Team to rush to the scene.

The Hong Dai, 738-foot bulk coal carrier carrying a Panamanian flag, ran aground on the soft sandy bottom just northwest of Sewell's Point on Wednesday night.

At the time, it had 22 crewmembers aboard and was carrying a cargo of coal, 188,000 gallons of low sulfur fuel oil, diesel, and lube oil.

USCG Sector Virginia investigators boarded the ship Thursday morning and are helping to assess damages and the threat of pollution. The ship's crew didn't initially report any injuries, pollution or flooding concerns.

It took seven tugs to refloat the Hong Dai with the high tide on Friday morning. Late Friday it remained at anchor under a Captain of the Port order to restrict its movement until the company does an underwater survey and the vessel is deemed safe to sail.



The Hong Dai sits aground a quarter mile Northwest of Sewell's Point near Norfolk, Virginia, October 1. Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard

-Meg Walburn Viviano

SPOTTED: JIMMY BUFFETT DOCKING, DINING ON THE BAY

October 5, 2020

Forget a cheeseburger in paradise—it was Maryland crab claws in paradise for Jimmy Buffett this weekend.

The legendary entertainer with an island vibe just spent a few days docked at Chesapeake Inn Restaurant & Marina on the C&D Canal, cruising the upper Bay before heading down to Annapolis.

Chesapeake Inn owner Gianmarco Martuscelli tells Bay Bulletin he got a call from Buffett's personal assistant just before the weekend, asking for a slip for his head-turning Caribbean blue, 42-foot custom sportfisher.

"The marina was actually full," Martuscelli laughs, "but once we found out who it was, a couple of our seasonals were nice enough to move their boats to get him in." Buffett's captain asked Chesapeake Inn to keep the visit under wraps until after the singer and his crew had left.

The restaurant and marina staff followed the rules, even hiring security for the section of dock around the slip, but as Martuscelli points out, Buffett's boat is pretty noticeable. Last Mango is a never-before-seen combination of a 42 Freeman Boatworks catamaran hull and a custom Merritt Boatworks house, built in Pompano, Florida.



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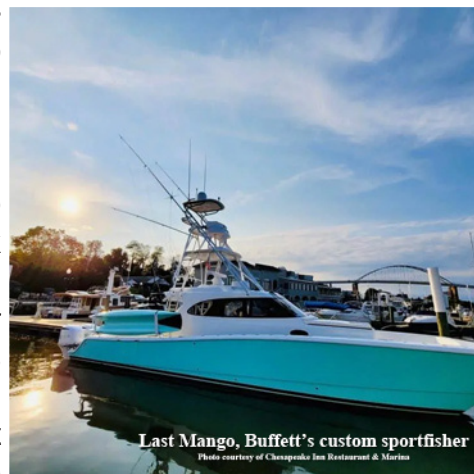
The 73-year-old Buffett, his staff, and his longtime captain, Vinnie LaSorsa, spent the weekend exploring the area, posting a photo on Instagram of Buffett standup paddleboarding just offshore from Concord Point Lighthouse on Sunday.

Martuscelli says Chesapeake Inn Restaurant catered lunch on the boat for Buffett and the crew that afternoon, serving them crab bisque, sushi, brick oven pizza, and Bay crab claws. Buffett took more of the crab bisque to go.

It's not the first time Buffett has enjoyed time on the Bay; we hear he loves the area. He apparently visited the marina about five years ago, but flew under the radar on that trip.

Martuscelli says Buffett and company were bringing the boat down from the New York area, but wasn't sure where they were headed next. One of our readers in Chesapeake City saw Buffett's boat have a rendezvous with a sea plane (!) off Tower Point on Monday. And Bay Bulletin spotted Buffett's signature turquoise powerboat and his matching sailboat at Annapolis Yacht Basin on Tuesday.

With a net worth of \$550 million, as reported by Forbes, Jimmy Buffett can bring all of his water toys to the Chesapeake. And local Parrotheads aren't complaining.



Last Mango, Buffett's custom sportfisher
Photo courtesy of Chesapeake Inn Restaurant & Marina

-Meg Walburn Viviano



NOAA Fishery Bulletin – Billfish

Catch and Release Only For Blue Marlin, White Marlin, and Roundscale Spearfish for the Rest of 2020 in All Areas of the Atlantic Ocean

Based on the best available landings information, NOAA Fisheries has determined that the Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish 250-landings limit has been met and exceeded for 2020. Under applicable regulations, only catch-and-release fishing is permitted for these species for the rest of the year.

Effective September 30, 2020, through December 31, 2020, NOAA Fisheries is requiring catch-and-release fishing only for Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish in all areas of the Atlantic Ocean including the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. Caribbean.

HMS Angling and HMS Charter/Headboat category permit holders and persons aboard vessels permitted in the Atlantic tunas General category or Swordfish General Commercial that fish in registered Atlantic HMS Tournaments, may catch-and-release (or tag and release) Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish of all sizes. Atlantic sailfish may continue to be landed (retained) consistent with applicable regulations.

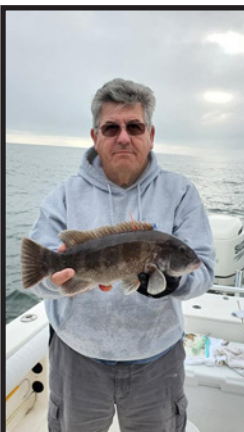
Anglers are reminded that Atlantic billfish that are released must be handled in a manner that will maximize survival, and without removing the fish from the water. For additional information on safe handling, see the "Careful Catch-and-Release" brochure.



FISH TALES



Kens personal best Drum 54 inches caught on 9 Oct 2020



Nice Sheephead Hunter



Stan with nice Drum - 9 Oct 2020



Wally Veals Grandson Cristiano and his Spot entry into the Tournament.



Another tagged fish waiting to be recaptured



Nice keeper Sheephead



Keith Nuttall and a nice catch of Specks



A drum for dinner



Another nice Puppy Drum



Another diseased striper pulled from James River at Fort Eustis and he's only about 12in long.



Nice Striper, don't know when it was caught

Monthly Tournament List

July - August 2020

July

Wahoo 63" - Wally Veal

Blue Marlin 144" (citation) - John Hunt, Jr. -

Bluefish - 13" - Grayson Shield (youth)

Speckled Trout

Stan Simmerman - Speckled Trout - 21"

Grayson Shield - 18" (Youth)

Spanish Mackerel

Matt Waldell - 28"

Stan Simmerman - 25 1/2 and 26 1/4" (Cit)

Nicole Abercrombie - 22" and 23"

Chelsea Shield - 22 1/2" (Youth) Ladies/Youth Tourney

Chauntea Shield - 19" (Ladies Tourney)

Grayson Shield - 18" (Youth) Ladies/Youth Tourney

August

Flounder

Grayson Shield - 19" (Youth)

Chelsea Shield - 18 1/2" (Youth)

Dolphin

Wally Veal - 45"

Tabb Bridges - 39"

Channel Bass - Chelsea Shield - 18"

Blue Fish - Grayson Shield - 18" (Youth)

Croaker - Grayson Shield - 9 1/2" (Youth)

Spot - Grayson Shield - 8 1/2" (Youth)

Spanish Mackerel

Ken Neill - 28 1/4 (Citation)

Caleb Sava - 26" (Youth)

Michael Hudgins - 24 1/2"

Taylor Simmerman - 24 1/4 (Youth)

Cyler Brooks - 21 1/2 (Youth)

Grayson Shield - 20" (Youth)

Yellow Fin - Wally Veal - 48"

Cobia - Wally Veal - 42 1/2 (Don Forman Tourney)

White Marlin - Tabb Bridges - 89" (Citation)

False Albacore - Caleb Sava - 28" (Youth)

Since we haven't been holding meetings during the pandemic please send your entries to Milton by the 3rd Tuesday of the month by 7:00pm either as an email or snail mail to the address' on the left. Please direct any questions to Milton.

MAIL ENTRY FORMS TO:
MR. MILTON HUDGINS
1894 KATIE LANE
HAYES, VA 23072

(e-mail: judygee03@gmail.com)

Deadline for turning in your 2020 entry forms:

Month of Entry	Deadline (RegMtg)	Month	Deadline (Reg Mtg)
January	21 Feb	July	18 Aug
February	18 Mar	August	15 Sep
March	21 Apr	September	20 Oct
April	19 May	October	17 Nov
May	16 Jun	November	15 Dec
June	21 Jul	December	by Brd Mtg 12 Jan 21

PSWSFA 2020 TOURNAMENTS



2020 PSWSFA TOURNAMENTS

Download "Official Entry Form" at
<https://www.pswsfa.com/MonthlyEntry.pdf>



FOR ALL TOURNAMENTS

You must register prior to fishing and use the official monthly form filled out by an official weigh station with time, date and weight of fish, & weight master's signature to verify catch. All Club Tournaments will have Awards for the first 3 places.

Questions Contact: Tournament Director Rick Wineman: rick@getanetsportfishing.com or 757-268-1539.

CLUB TOURNAMENTS

For Club Members: \$20 entry fee for each individual tournament or
 \$60 if you sign up for all tournaments at one time

Bishop's Triple Threat Tournament

Cobia – Channel Bass – Black Drum

"Combined total number of inches"

April 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020

\$20/each member & \$30/each non-member

Leave from any port, no weigh in (length total of 3 fish)

Must Receive Completed Form no later than the Board Mtg. Aug. 11, 2020
 See Rules below for Catch and Release fish totals. (Witness or photo)

Don Forman

Club Cobia Tournament
 sponsored by Bishop Fishing Supply

August 1-31, 2020

\$20/each member & \$30/each non-member
 Leave from any port

Must Receive Completed Form no later than
 the Board Mtg. Sept. 8, 2020

Grafton Fishing Supply Club Spot Tournament

September 19-20, 2020

\$20/each member & \$30/each non-member

Weigh in: 2:00pm Sept. 20th at Dare Marina

All entries will be weighed using the same scale
 followed by the **Annual Club Picnic and Awards Ceremony** for the Spot
 and Youth & Ladies Croaker / Spanish Mackerel Tournaments

Spot Tournament - Two categories with 1st – 3rd place winners:
 "ADULT ENTRIES" and "YOUTH ENTRIES"

(Anglers for the Spot Tournament must be present to win)

RSVP by Sept. 15th if you are coming to the Annual Club Picnic to the
 Tournament Director

Wilcox Bait and Tackle Irv Fenton Rockfish Tournament

December 1-31, 2020

\$20/each member & \$30/each non-member

Must Receive Completed Form no later than
 the Board Mtg. Jan. 12, 2021

Specifics as to how we will determine a
 winner will be provided in the November
 Chumline.

MAIL ENTRY FORMS TO: MR. MILTON HUDGINS, 1894 KATIE LANE, HAYES, VA 23072 (e-mail: judygee03@gmail.com)

Youth and Ladies Croaker/Spanish Mackerel Tournament

July 1-31, 2020

Free Tournament for Lady and Youth members/Guests
 (Do not need to register to participate)

Must Receive Completed Entry Forms no later than the Board Mtg. August 11, 2020

Awards will be given at the **Annual Club Picnic on Sept. 20th at Dare Marina**
 (Anglers for the Youth & Ladies Tournament are not required to be present to win)

RSVP by Sept. 15th if you are coming to the Annual Club Picnic to the Tournament Director

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2020 PSWSFA Tournaments Rules

ALL Club Tournaments (Except as noted on previous page):

- Entry Fees: \$20 for member & \$30 for non-member. Youth and Ladies croaker/flounder tourney is free.
- You must register before fishing by e-mailing Rick Wineman: rick@getanetsportfishing.com or call 757-268-1539.
- Leaving a message will be sufficient to register, give all anglers names (specify club members and club guest), and also give a phone number.
- Guest(s) must fish with at least one member on boat/shore/pier/kayak
- Use a club "Official Entry Form" and weigh in fish at any Va. Saltwater Tournament official weigh station. Record the weight of fish, date and time caught and have the weigh master sign the form to verify catch. If two identical fish are caught on the same day, the earlier fish wins. That is why time is so important. Triple Threat entries require witness or photo since this is a length total tourney.
- All pertinent PSWSFA bylaws apply

To register or ask questions, e-mail Rick Wineman, Tournament Director at rick@getanetsportfishing.com or call Rick @ 757-268-1539

MEASURING INSTRUCTIONS: With the fish lying on a flat surface, measure in quarter inch increments, from the tip of the mouth to the tip of the tail with the fish in a natural position and the mouth closed. *Please note the flounder is an example only.*



Tournament Results

The **2020 PSWSFA Triple Threat Tournament** sponsored by Bishop Fishing Supply ran from April 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020. The annual winner is based on the combined total number of inches of a Red Drum, Black Drum and Cobia.

1st Place – Wally Veal – 102" – 53.5" Red Drum and 48.5" Cobia. First Place Gift Certificate from Bishop Fishing Supply and \$24 from PSWSFA.

2nd Place – Rick Wineman – 94.5" – 53.5" Red Drum and 41" Cobia

The **2020 PSWSFA Youth and Ladies Croaker / Spanish Mackerel Tournament** ran from July 1 – 31, 2020. This annual free tournament is open to ladies and youth PSWSFA members and guests.

Ladies (Spanish Mackerel)

1st Place – Chauntea Shield – 1.69 lb / 19" Spanish Mackerel caught at York Spit (\$100 from PSWSFA)

Youth (Spanish Mackerel)

1st Place – Chelsea Shield – 2.72 lb / 22.5" Spanish Mackerel caught at York Spit (\$100 from PSWSFA)

2nd Place – Grayson Shield – 1.68 lb / 18" Spanish Mackerel caught at York Spit (\$40 from PSWSFA)

The **2020 PSWSFA Spot Tournament** sponsored by Grafton Fishing Supply ran from September 19th thru the 20th. This annual tournament is a weight tournament with two categories and 1st – 3rd place winners for "Adult Entries" and "Youth Entries". Overall winner goes to the heaviest fish.

Spot (Adult)

1st Place – Chauntea Shield – 0.64 lb Overall Winner (\$64 from PSWSFA) + Gift from sponsor Grafton Fishing Supply

2nd Place – David Shield – 0.61 lb (\$48 from PSWSFA)

3rd Place – Wally Veal – 0.30 lb (\$24 from PSWSFA)

Spot (Youth)

1st Place – Grayson Shield – 0.59 lb (\$64 from PSWSFA)

2nd Place – Chelsea Shield – 0.58 lb (\$48 from PSWSFA)

3rd Place – Cristiano Strickland – 0.35 lb (\$24 from PSWSFA)



Fishing Around the World

Ocean and deep water fishing abounds

Fishing in Puerto Rico is undoubtedly one of the most popular activities and many fisherman, professional and social, flock here to enjoy a weekend or longer of fishing. Puerto Rico is mostly known for its spectacular deep-sea excursions, but recently the demand for fly-fishing has



increased. Anglers look forward to pulling in a Blue Marlin, Billfish, Macao, Snook, Yellow Fin Tuna, Mahi-Mahi or a Tarpon. There are many marine charters that accommodate fishing enthusiasts, and most operate from Mayaguez, San Juan, Humacao and Fajardo. It only takes approximately thirty minutes to reach deep water and therefore anglers will find that they have more than enough time to concentrate on reeling in the big one.

The best time for tarpon fishing is during the winter months but most other fish are available throughout the year. It is advised that you take your camera along when fishing in Puerto Rico because even though charters will assist you in bringing in a Blue Marlin, you will not be permitted to keep your catch and so you will be required to let your Blue Marlin go back to the ocean. Blue Marlins are abundant in an area called "Blue Marlin Alley", and you will be taken to the north of Puerto Rico if you are looking for this particular type of fish. Charters will provide passengers with refreshments and all the equipment that they will need. There are operators that will also take anglers into the lagoons or bays if there is an interest in fishing in shallower waters, where snook and tarpon can be found. Many of the charter services believe in the catch and release system, so it is important to first find out from the charter operator what is permitted in regard to keeping a catch. The waters off Culebra Island are the best place to find Bone Fish.

Man-made lakes and fresh water regions see to the growing interest in fishing for Sunfish, Tilapia, Largemouth Bass and Catfish. At present Puerto Rican authorities are putting great effort into the stocking of these fish and there are a few fishing clubs that can be found around Puerto Rico. Fly-fishing is becoming increasingly popular. The most popular places to stay are Toro Negro Reserve and Casa Grande. Puerto Rico is also host to many international fishing tournaments that attract anglers from all over the world, making fishing a well-known activity in Puerto.

**So you think you know
your Fish**

Can you name this easy one?

Answer next month

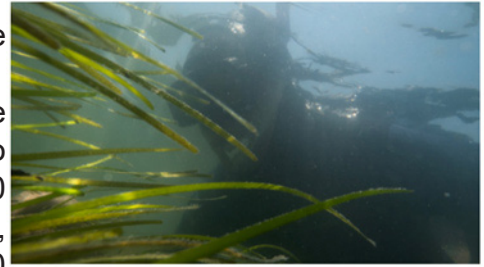


Seagrass restoration speeds recovery of ecosystem services

by David Malmquist | October 7, 2020

Project offers blueprint for future efforts to maintain & restore coastal habitats

The reintroduction of seagrass into Virginia's coastal bays is one of the great success stories in marine restoration. Over the past two decades, scientists and volunteers have broadcast more than 70 million eelgrass seeds within 4 previously barren seaside lagoons, spurring a natural expansion that has so far grown to almost 9,000 acres—the single largest eelgrass habitat between North Carolina and Long Island Sound.



Water Clarity Eelgrass patches dampen waves and stabilize seafloor sediments, clearing the water enough for sunlight to reach the plants for continued growth and natural seed production. © Jay Fleming.

Now, a long-term monitoring study shows this success extends far beyond a single species, rippling out to engender substantial increases in fish and invertebrate abundance, water clarity, and the trapping of pollution-causing carbon and nitrogen.

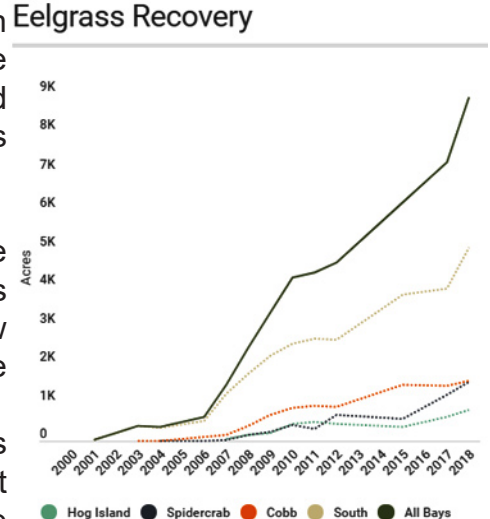
Published in the October 7th issue of *Science Advances*, the study was led by Dr. Robert “JJ” Orth of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, along with VIMS colleagues Mark Luckenbach, Ken Moore, Richard Snyder, and David Wilcox. Joining them are Jonathan Lefcheck of the Smithsonian's Environmental Research Center; Karen McGlathery, Lillian Aoki, and Matthew Oreska of the University of Virginia; and Bo Lusk of The Nature Conservancy.

“Human activities are degrading coastal habitats worldwide,” says Orth. “Our study serves as a blueprint for restoring and maintaining healthy ecosystems to safeguard multiple benefits as we move into an uncertain future.”

Orth and his co-authors stress that several of the restoration benefits—including removal of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide via burial of carbon in seafloor sediments—were not even considered as management goals when the project began. These novel benefits provide additional impetus for future habitat restoration.

“Seagrasses play an important role in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it out of circulation for decades to millennia,” says McGlathery. “This is the first study to show how habitat restoration can make this happen and help combat climate change.”

“A major challenge to restoration is determining what constitutes success,” adds Orth. “Traditional metrics have focused on habitat attributes such as plant biomass, coverage, or density. But the ultimate motivation is often not to restore the habitat itself, but the services it provides, benefits such as enhanced water quality, fisheries production, and now, carbon storage. As regulatory agencies worldwide seek to conserve and recover ecosystem services, our study shows that marine restorations are possible on scales that contribute directly to human well-being.”



Reasons for disappearance and recovery

Eelgrass flourished in the seaside bays of Virginia's Eastern Shore until the 1930s, when a wasting disease and intense hurricane wiped them out. The research team lays out several reasons for the success of the subsequent restoration effort.

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First is that natural recovery was precluded not by degraded environmental conditions but a lack of seeds. With no mature, seed-producing plants available within these isolated coastal lagoons, they remained almost completely unvegetated for more than half a century. In 1999, when Orth's team began planting seeds and shoots collected elsewhere, conditions were ripe for recovery. A corollary, says Orth, is that in areas like Chesapeake Bay where turbidity, nutrient pollution, and warming continue to challenge eelgrass health, "we must identify the stressors that led to the problem in the first place, and then mitigate or compensate for those before restoration efforts begin."

Second is the relatively large size of the seeded plots and the high seeding density. Field monitoring shows these factors helped jumpstart a positive feedback loop in which eelgrass patches grew sufficiently robust to dampen waves and stabilize seafloor sediments, clearing the water enough for sunlight to reach the plants for continued growth and natural seed production.

A third factor is the long-term commitment to the team's annual seeding and monitoring efforts, supported by funding from NOAA, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's Recreational Fishing License Fund, the National Science Foundation, the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, and other public and private funders.

In the 21 years since 1999, scientists and volunteers have spent more than 3,500 hours gathering an estimated 10 million seeds from the coastal bays. They have planted these, plus more than 60 million seeds collected from harvested shoots, into 536 restoration plots covering roughly 500 acres. Continued seeding has helped the nascent eelgrass meadows survive the natural ups and downs experienced by any coastal ecosystem.

Lusk says, "The Eastern Shore community has provided a willing partnership to this protection, as we all rely on the surrounding waters as part of our economy and culture. Working side-by-side with hundreds of volunteers collecting seeds for this project is a highlight of each spring."

A fourth factor is the project's location within the 40,000-acre Virginia Coast Reserve. Managed by The Nature Conservancy, the reserve has been under intensive study since 1987 as a Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) site administered by the University of Virginia. "The reserve protects one of the last stretches of coastal wilderness along the U.S. East Coast," says Lusk. "As a result, water quality there remains exemplary, enabling the success of eelgrass restoration."

Overall, says Orth, the team's success "required a strong understanding of the causes of decline, repeated assessment of best restoration practices, and a sustained commitment to long-term monitoring and research."

Bay scallops

When eelgrasses disappeared from the coastal bays in the 1930s, so too did numerous marine organisms and seabirds that had relied on them for food and nursery habitat. One notable loss was the bay scallop—which until that time had supported a significant commercial fishery.

In 2008, several authors of the current study decided to build on their success with eelgrass restoration by launching a program to restore the tasty bivalves as well. They have planted young scallops from North Carolina into Virginia's coastal bays each year since then.

Dr. Dick Snyder, director of VIMS' Eastern Shore Lab in Wachapreague, reports that bay scallop populations have so far only returned to a fraction of their estimated historical values. He says "Our results to date suggest that further intervention may be needed to fully restore this species, including greater seagrass area and broader genetic diversity of the broodstock."

One bright sign is the discovery of bay scallops in clam aquaculture beds more than 20 miles from where they are set out in spawning cages, suggesting natural dispersal of larvae via currents.

Dr. Mark Luckenbach, associate director of Research and Advisory Services at VIMS, says "A harvestable bay scallop population may be one of the ultimate measures of the overall success of our restoration effort, as has been the case for wolves in Yellowstone." Luckenbach was director of VIMS' Eastern Shore Lab in Wachapreague when the scallop restoration project began.

The authors caution that any eventual scallop harvest would need to be carefully managed to sustain the restored population.



A researcher holds a bay scallop.

NEWEST “SIEGE OF YORKTOWN” SHIPWRECK SURVEY COMPLETE

September 22, 2020

Researchers have just finished mapping the latest shipwreck discovered in the York River. It is believed to be one of two transport vessels that collided with a British warship in 1781 during the Siege of Yorktown, the last major battle of the American Revolution.

The wreck found last year near Gloucester Point, Virginia is currently known as “Wreck 11,” and contains at least seven iron cannons. JRS Explorations, Inc., which discovered the wreck, says it’s been the most difficult to study of all those in the Yorktown Shipwrecks National Register District. Strong tidal currents, almost no visibility, and a thick covering of oyster shell impede traditional methods of measuring shipwrecks.

Over the span of five days earlier this month, JRS Explorations researchers relocated the wreck using a side scan sonar, then divers inserted PVC pipes around its perimeter.

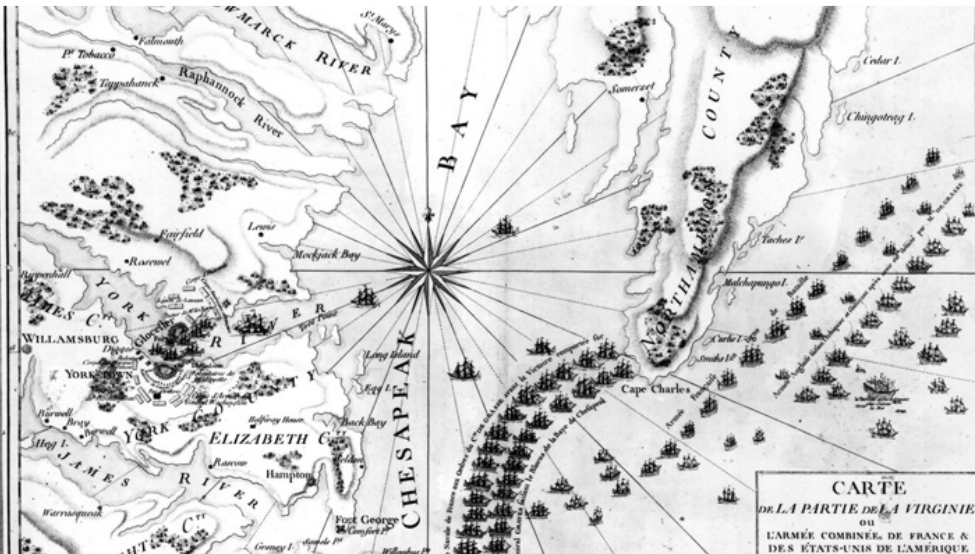
Located near the wreck of the battle’s largest British warship, HMS Charon, researchers believe Wreck 11 is one of the two transport vessels that collided with Charon before they were set on fire and sunk. Given the size of the wreck and the number of cannons on board, JRS Explorations think it is likely the transport Shipwright, and will do more research to confirm the possibility.

This survey is part of JRS Explorations’ larger effort to map and protect the 11 wrecks discovered since 1975, which hold international historical significance. By the time the Revolutionary War ended in 1781, some 40 British ships were sunk by enemy cannon fire or deliberately scuttled near shore by Cornwallis to prevent the French from landing troops on the beach.

The survey was led by chief archaeologist Dr. John Broadwater, who has been down to the wreck of the Titanic and on the York, recovered 5,000 artifacts from another British transport, Betsy, back in the 1980s. Fellow archaeologist Joshua Daniel headed the dive team and conducted the remote sensing survey from a Waldrop Diving Services research vessel. The Watermen’s Museum in Yorktown served as expedition headquarters.

JRS Explorations’ CEO Ryan Johnston says, “JRS Explorations is grateful to the continued efforts of our research and dive team who make these investigations possible. We are accumulating valuable data that is helping shape our long-range research plan for these important shipwrecks.”

JRS is now turning their attention to two shipwrecks on the Yorktown side of the river, looking into their archaeological potential. JRS and Watermen’s Museum President Steve Ormsby says of the ongoing project, “Our principal goal in this effort is to gain new insights and share our information with the American public so we can all better understand the historic events that led to the founding of our great nation.”



This map shows the site of the Siege of Yorktown, now an underwater piece of history.

Map Courtesy of JRS Explorations

Directions to PSWSFA Meeting Location (for the last time)

Former Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Hall
7812 Warwick Blvd, Newport News, VA

Going west on Mercury Blvd (towards the James River Bridge) make a right onto West Warwick Blvd, then almost immediately, at the 1st light, make a right onto Union Dr. Follow the road around to the largish one story building (about 150 yards). The Union sign is still on the building.



WHAT'S UP NEXT & BEYOND



20 October: Meeting is a GO 7:00 pm

17 November - Meeting location currently TBD. The building was finally sold.

If you know of any place that can hold up to 75 folks, we may consider 50, and doesn't cost the earth, please let Danny Forehand, our president, know about it ASAP at his email address below.

fish4funtoday@gmail.com

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