



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. 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 on last page. You can visit us at www.pswsfa.com.

Next Meeting

19 March 2024 7:00pm (1900)
see last page for directions

BANQUET NEWS

The banquet it will be at our meeting location on 24 February 2024. We had a great turnout and some very good food from Scoot's Barbecue last year and we are doing it again with Scoot's in February. Please print out the flyer **on page 4** and send it and your check to our treasurer, Christina Grice. Her address and phone number are on the flyer.

If you can't print it, send her a neatly written note with all of your information; how many adult members, kids and their age and any guests etc. She can't do anything over the phone, but you can call ask her trick questions.

The Boat show is happening 2-4 February at the VA Beach Convention center. We will have a booth again this year and help is needed manning it and selling tickets for the custom rod and reel combo. Any help will be appreciated.

We also need help manning the booths at the Great Bridge Fishing Flea market on 2 March and the Poquoson Flea market on 9 March

Stay well
Mike the Editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Folks,

Welcome to the first Chumline of 2024. I'm certain that Mike will continue the great job that he has done over the past few years. He has always produced a great product with sometimes limited input. I hope you will join me in providing him with pictures and reports on your fishing trips so that he may include them in upcoming issues.

2023 was an interesting year for all of us. Many quality fish were caught by club members. The total number of fish entered into the monthly tournament was impressive. I certainly hope that you will join me in entering even more fish this year.

This year's banquet will be held on February 24th and seating will be limited. The menu will be the same also. Thanks to the money raised from the Sheepshead Tournament, the raffle for a speckled trout trip and dues we are able to keep the cost to our club members the same' I look forward to seeing all of you there and recognizing all the folks, especially the youth, who have caught so many noteworthy fish

over the past year.

We will be having another Sheepshead tournament in 2024 and this one should be bigger and better than last years. The committee has been hard at work getting ahead of the power curve for this years tournament and sponsor letters will be going out to businesses this month and I encourage you to help find as many sponsors as possible. Sponsors are the lifeblood of the tournament and financing the club for the following years. If you work for a business or know of a business that might be willing to sponsor the tournament please let Charles Randall, Wally Veal or me know so that we can get the information to them.

We will be participating in the Virginia Beach Boat show the first weekend in February, the Great Bridge Fishing Flea Market the first week of March and the Poquoson Kiwanis Club Fishing and Crafts Flea Market the second week of March. We will need support from you the club members to man the booth and sell raffle tickets for rods and reels and another speckled trout trip. I have been asked to give a

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2022 Club Officers

Stan Simmerman

President

Milton Hudgins

Vice President

Wally Veal

Secretary

Christina Grice

Treasurer

Danny Forehand

Past President

Board of Directors

John Hunt Jr.

Ronnie Wilson

Gary Donaldson

Dailey Vandergriff

Rick Wineman

Charles Randolph

Jenny Williamson

David Agee

Mike Frielingsdorf

Richie Moore

Paul Downey

Johnny Boyd

Gerald Abrams (alt)



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 2023 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

President's msg continued from Page 1

seminar on speckled trout fishing at the Poquoson Flea Market so if you can attend, I'll be giving out some new secrets about specks and how to target big fish.

On the fishing front, there was a good run of bluefin tuna in early December with fish caught between the beach and Chesapeake Light Tower and there may still be a few more out there even now. Large stripers were also mixed in with the tuna. December saw a lot of big stripers being caught inside the bay also with big fish just off Cape Charles and many big fish being caught up the bay. There have been a lot of big stripers caught in the James River and Elizabeth River as well. Seabass is now closed but we will hopefully have a February season. Tog and speckled trout seem to be the most sought-after fish for the rest of the winter.

For me, 2023 speckled trout fishing was phenomenal. Folks who fished with me caught a large number of big fish including many citations. Donnie Fricks who won the Speckled Trout Raffle was able to catch his personal best speck with a 28 1/4" citation using a mirrolure. I personally had 39 citations up to 29 7/8" and released 187 specks over 20" to lead the 2023 "Release Over 20" initiative that includes all the states between Texas and New York. The next closest was 110 releases.

Hopefully 2024 will be a better year for all of us and you can get out and catch more fish even with the expected tightening for regulations on seabass, flounder and stripers.

Tight Lines
Stan

Virginia Saltwater Fishing Report

31 Dec 2023

The 2023 fishing season closed out with a bang, when one of the most memorable events in years took place with the appearance of schools of giant bluefin tuna. They were between the Chesapeake Bay Buoy and the Chesapeake Light Tower. They were a challenge and a thrill for anglers. They should hang around into January and the giant season reopens January 1st. But look for it to be closed quickly as our seasonal limit is met.

Another December highlight was the abundance of big ocean rockfish at the High Rise and near Cape Charles.

The black seabass and the Bay rockfish season closed on December 31st. The next opportunity to catch seabass will be from May 15 to July 6, followed by another period from August 9 to December 31. Check the VMRC website for any changes. Some years there's a special two-week season in February.

The Virginia Coastal Rockfish Season started on January 1, 2024, and will last until March 31. However, these fish are usually just out of reach during the winter, as they stay east of the Territorial Sea boundary.

Tautogs should be available in January, depending on the water temperature.

Speckled trout can also be caught in river and marsh shallows during warmer periods throughout the winter.

We will resume our fishing reports in March. Our fishing season usually picks up again in April, until then check back for periodic fishing news. Book your charters early!

Happy New Year. Tight Lines in 2024!





2023 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2024

CLUB MEETING HALL

2605 CUNNINGHAM DRIVE

HAMPTON, VA 23666

6:00pm – 10:00pm

RAFFLES

RAFFLES

Social Hour: 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Dinner: 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Awards and Raffles to follow

PLEASE PRINT:

MEMBER: _____

SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER/ 1 GUEST _____

NAME OF GUEST/S OF MEMBER: _____

CHILDREN: _____

How many:

\$20.00/MEMBER: _____ \$10.00/CHILDREN (AGES 3-10 YEARS): _____

FREE/CHILD (AGES 2 and under): _____

\$40.00/GUEST: _____ \$20.00/ GUEST CHILD (AGES 3-10 YEARS): _____

Buffet includes Pulled Pork, Beef Brisket, Fried Chicken, Mac-n-Cheese, Corn Muffins, Cole Slaw, Green Beans and Dessert.

TOTAL NUMBER ATTENDING _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Email address or Phone No. for Confirmation: _____

Mail this form along with check payable to "PSWSFA" postmarked by Feb. 15th to guarantee dinner:

TO: Christina Grice
P.O. Box 32
Gaymn, VA 23066



Question: Call Christine at 757-853-7238 (after 5pm)
Please do not call in your reservation. Reservations
must be in writing.

Exploring The Mattaponi River

19 Nov 2020

By Capt. John Page Williams

How high is the Chesapeake's highest daily vertical tide change? Compared with the 10- to 40-foot changes from Downeast Maine through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it's fairly small. Most of the tide stations in the Bay system see one- to two-and-a-half feet, and our strongest tides are way upriver. The largest range in NOAA's tide tables turns out to be three-and-a-half to five feet (depending on the moon's phase), at Wakema on Virginia's Mattaponi River, some 15 miles above West Point (where the Mattaponi and the Pamunkey join to form the York River).



Tides are progressive waves of energy with periods around twelve hours and twenty minutes long. As one wave rolls up a river and reflects off the point where the bottom rises to sea level, it collides with the next wave coming upstream. Depending on the three-dimensional shape of the basin, these opposing forces may hinder or reinforce each other, so some resulting river tides are quite small, while others grow surprisingly high. In the entire Chesapeake system, the Mattaponi's tides are the tallest. Years ago, I paddled both with and against them over three summers working as a counselor at a camp for boys. Those summers formed the beginning of my long-time love affair with the Mattaponi.

That current is one factor that makes the Mattaponi a fascinating waterway to explore. Another is its good water quality, thanks in large part to its still-forested watershed. The river rises from commercial pine timberland, mixed hardwood bottomland, and wetlands in Central Virginia's Piedmont as the Matta, Po, and Ni rivers. Those wood- and wetlands absorb rainwater naturally, filter it, and release it gradually into the river system. They also provide great habitat for wildlife, from whitetail deer and bobcats to river otters and migratory waterfowl. Good examples with hiking trails open to the public are the Mattaponi Bluffs Wildlife Management Area of Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources (visit dwr.virginia.gov/wma/mattaponi-bluffs) and Zoar State Forest of the Department of Forestry, which also offers canoe/kayak access to the river (dof.virginia.gov/stateforest/list/zoar.htm). A good five-mile flatwater paddling trip runs from the landing at Zoar downstream to DWR's boat landing and ramp at Aylett. Further downriver is Sandy Point State Forest (dof.virginia.gov/stateforest/list/sandy-point.htm), with trails and frontage on the river.

The power of the flow from the Mattaponi's watershed and its tides provides plenty of current that attracts anadromous fish—species that spend most of their lives in the Chesapeake and the Atlantic Ocean, but ascend the river to spawn. They include river herring (alewives and bluebacks), shad (American and hickory), striped bass, white (gray) perch, yellow (ring) perch, and even a few Atlantic sturgeon. Most of them spawn in the spring, a constant parade from late February into June, with a small run of sturgeon also in the fall. Meanwhile, the meandering channel of the tidal river and its freshwater marshes support strong populations of both species of perch, several sunfish (locally known as bream), largemouth bass, black crappie, chain pickerel, and blue, channel, and white catfish. Longnose gar gather to gulp air at the surface in “playgrounds” over the deep water in the meanders. A few of the Mattaponi's blue cats reach trophy size, but the most satisfying fishing experiences here are for “whatever bites”: general bait fishing with worms or cut bait, or casting small lures like spinners and spoons with light gear. The variety will please both young and older anglers, as will a few of the panfish harvested for an excellent meal. Anyone interested in birds will find plenty to watch as well, in all seasons.

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The riches of the Mattaponi have made the river home to Native Americans for multiple millennia. The Mattaponi Tribe, “the people of the river,” formed peace with the English in 1646; in 1658, the Virginia General Assembly ratified their claim to long-settled land that has been their reservation ever since. It lies on the outside of a curve about ten miles below Walkerton. Faithful stewards of the river for many years, the residents have been especially active not only in subsistence fishing for American shad in the spring but also participation in efforts to strengthen the stock. The tribe (mattaponination.com) gained federal recognition in 2018, along with the Upper Mattaponi Tribe (umitribe.org), indigenous to the river’s headwaters.

A look at later human history of the Mattaponi brings some surprises. Aylett appears to be an idyllic village today, known mostly for its bridge over the Mattaponi on U.S. Route 360 (the road from Richmond to Tappahannock). The river is only 20 yards wide there, but in the 18th century, the town was a busy port for shipping out grain and tobacco, as well as receiving manufactured goods from England. Ditto for Rosespoint, which sits on a high bank on the outside of a turn a mile downstream. The name signifies a large wooden pipe (spout) through which farmers poured grain down into ships’ holds. Rosespoint’s old wharf pilings still show at low tide.

Follow a map along the Mattaponi (you can order river maps from the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Association, mpira.org) and you’ll see a string of landings that supported the region’s agricultural economy for nearly three centuries, from the earliest English settlers until the steamboats ceased their runs in the 1920s. Older riverside estates like Newington have buildings constructed of stone brought in by ships as ballast. At Chelsea Plantation, ballast stone piles in the river augment natural fish habitat. Walkerton, twelve miles below Aylett, was particularly important for shipping out lumber from the forests around the Mattaponi. Late 19th-century photographs show schooners and three-masted rams moored there waiting to load. With the building of roads in the 20th century, Waterfence Landing, a few miles above West Point, became the primary site for loading lumber. Multiple ferries crossed the river before construction of the bridges at Aylett, Walkerton, and West Point.

Now contemplate what it took to skipper a sailing ship up that winding, narrow-but-deep, tree-lined channel for some thirty-five miles above West Point. Making that tedious trip meant playing the tides, probably with crews rowing a small towboat to give the ship enough way to maintain steerage. The river does grow wider further down, but even at West Point, it is only a quarter-mile across, hardly the fetch that modern recreational sailors seek. For colonial America, though, this kind of water was instant infrastructure in a land without roads, so ship captains did whatever they had to do to move goods up and down. The development of internal combustion engines for yawl boats made the trip easier on the crews, but life moved at a much slower pace back then.

So what are the right boats for exploring the Mattaponi River in 2020? Well, there’s plenty of depth even for cruising powerboats all the way up to Aylett, though vertical clearance at Walkerton is only six feet. The most appropriate vessels, though, are those that place their crews close to the water. The upper reaches are great for paddling, especially if you pay attention to the tides (yes, I speak from experience). In addition to Zoar State Forest and Aylett, public access points include Walkerton, Melrose Landing just below King & Queen Courthouse, Waterfence, and West Point. Fees for the first, which is privately owned, go to support Walkerton’s rescue squad. The others are free, built and maintained by DWR. For them, outboard skiffs of 14-20 feet are ideal, especially if equipped with pushpoles for poking up into the marshes (and getting back out if caught by inattention to a falling tide; again, I speak from experience).

A lot of cars and pickups cross the Mattaponi at Aylett while carrying or towing boats. Not many of them stop. Local people chuckle. They like their river quiet. Nevertheless, I’m confident that any CBM reader who has followed this column will treat their river with the respect, curiosity, and delight that it deserves. Let us know what you find when you explore it.

Life in the Tidal Zone

By Wayne Bierbaum

Every year, I take a trip to Assateague Island. During this year's trip, I decided to do a little surf fishing but it was really slow and crabs ate the bait I brought. But as I was waiting for that "jerk" on the line, I saw two whales spout, several pelicans skim over the surface of the waves, and lots of little shorebirds running around at the edge of the incoming waves.



Oystercatcher with sand crab

The shorebirds seemed to be finding plenty of food right in front of me and hung around for quite a while. As I walked to the water's edge, I could see a cluster of small disturbances in the sand that made small V's in the receding waves. Those small disturbances were sand crabs (aka sand fleas, mole crabs, emerita). Under a washed-up clump of seaweed, I found several small red worms and a ghost crab went scurrying away.

The week following my trip, Hurricane Ian came through. It made me think about how those beach animals have a very fragile existence.

I returned to Rehoboth Beach last week and the erosion caused by the storm was significant. I walked several miles and could not find any clusters of sand crabs, but ghost crabs, especially little ones, seemed to be everywhere. Although I didn't find any sand crabs over the four days that I looked, they should be able to repopulate the beaches over time.

Sand crabs are strange little crustaceans that swim and dig in the surf zone. They are about as large as the digit of a thumb and can dig into water-saturated sand extremely fast. The animals have no legs and no pinchers, just appendages that dig or swim. Sand crabs cannot move sideways, only forward or backward. They dig backward which keeps their mouth tilted up. They try to stay barely buried in swirling water and as the water moves over them, they raise two feather-like antennae to collect plankton. They can sense vibrations in the sand and will quickly burrow deeper if they feel footsteps.

The females are larger than males and can produce several hundred eggs before they are 10 months old. The eggs are released into the water and after hatching the larva circulate the coast as they go through several growth stages. That open water circulation is how the beaches get repopulated. It happens quickly as the crustaceans live only about two and a half years. They are eaten by almost every shorebird, shoreline fish, raccoon, and fox, and are used as fishing bait. Some humans even eat them; I'm told they taste like a shrimpy crab.

The ghost crabs live in holes dug in the sand above the high-tide line. They are North America's most common terrestrial crab and like all crabs, they need to keep their gills moist to breathe. The young small crabs live in shallow holes near high tide. The larger crabs live farther away from the unpredictable waves in a hole that can be over 4 feet deep. Ghost crabs are omnivores and will eat anything from seaweed to baby turtles. They can be buried by a storm or a beach tractor and still manage to dig themselves out. Like the sand crab, ghost crabs release eggs into the water and go through several larval stages before finding a beach to call their own. They live about three years and get to about the size of a dollar. They have a 360-degrees vision and can run quite quickly. They do have pinchers. They are not targeted as food as much as the sand crab and are not suitable for human consumption. They do not seem to do well around crowds of people with beach blankets. I have observed fewer numbers in Ocean City as compared to Assateague or even Fenwick Island.



Ghost crabs eat anything

The tidal zone seems like a very harsh place to call home. Being adapted to being slammed by waves or covered by sand every day seems rather unpleasant.

Fiddler crabs are moving north as waters warm, and salt marsh grasses are suffering for it

by Staff | November 9, 2023

The relationship between fiddler crabs and plants on the U.S. Atlantic coast was thought to be a positive one: fiddler crabs help plants grow. In a new study, published today in *Ecology*, VIMS researchers Kayla Martínez-Soto and David Johnson found that, thanks to climate change, the relationship between crabs and plants is not always positive.

Martínez-Soto and Johnson looked at impact of the recent range expansion of the mud fiddler crab, *Minuca pugnax* on salt marshes in its expanded range (northern Massachusetts). Historically, it was found from northern Florida to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. However, due to ocean warming in the Gulf of Maine, it is now found as far as central Maine. Johnson first found fiddler crabs in northeast Massachusetts and New Hampshire after the 2012 marine heatwave.

“Fiddler crabs are the earthworms of the salt marsh,” says Johnson. These thumb-sized crabs burrow into the organic-rich soils of salt marshes. And just as earthworms help grow prize-winning tomatoes by oxygenating the soil and releasing nutrients with their burrows, he said, fiddler crabs can help marsh plants grow. For decades, researchers, including Johnson, have shown that when fiddler crabs are present, there is more grass than when fiddler crabs are absent.

However, in their new study, Martínez-Soto and Johnson found that in their expanded range, north of Cape Cod, the presence of fiddler crabs is associated with a 40% drop in grass biomass.

The mud fiddler crab, *Minuca pugnax*, in its expanded range, northeast Massachusetts. Fiddler crabs are so named because when the males eat with their small claw, it looks like they’re fiddling.



Kayla Martínez-Soto, Emily Goetz, and Leah Scott walk in a salt marsh in northeast Massachusetts. *David Johnson*

“We were surprised at such a large, negative effect of crabs on plants. Especially since they have a positive effect on plants in their historical range,” said Johnson. “The paradigm for almost half a century was the fiddler crabs grew grass. But that paradigm has shifted thanks to climate change.”

“Even if historically there is an established relationship between crabs and plants, it doesn’t mean their interaction will be the same everywhere,” said Martínez-Soto, highlighting how shifting species can change how species interact.

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As to why they saw a negative effect of crabs on plants, the authors suggest that when the crabs burrow, they damage the plants' roots, which are important for water and nutrient foraging. They found that when fiddler crabs were present, the biomass of roots and rhizomes in their expanded range was 30% lower.

Why does the fiddler crab grow grass on the southside of the Cape Cod but reduce it on the northside? Martínez-Soto suggests that there it's because of the novel interaction of plants with crabs north of Cape Cod. That is, plants on the northside haven't experienced any burrowing crabs and they aren't adapted to burrowing animals whereas plants on the southside, which have co-existed with burrowing crabs for millennia, have adapted.

They think the plants will eventually get used to their new neighbors, however, and the negative relationship between plants and crabs may disappear and even become positive. "It's like when a new neighbor moves in and you don't get along. But you eventually figure out a way to get along and maybe even become friends," says Johnson.

In the meantime, fiddler crabs in their new territory may have other impacts on the marsh. Plants are critical to salt marsh maintenance and preservation, said Martínez-Soto. They are responsible for helping salt marshes keeping up with sea-level rise and for storing carbon in their soils. By reducing plant growth and increasing burrows north of Cape Cod, says Martínez-Soto, fiddler crabs could reduce marshes' ability to store carbon and keep up with rising seas.

"All over the world, plants and animals are migrating into new territories because of climate change," Johnson said. "For instance, blue crabs, famous in Chesapeake Bay, have moved into Maine. Krill have expanded their range south in the Antarctic."

"Fiddler crabs have shown us to expect the unexpected because we can't predict their impacts once they migrate based on what we've seen before."



Map of *Minuca pugnax* distributions. Black dot in northeast Massachusetts indicates area where studies were conducted. Map courtesy of Alex Schneider, VIMS PhD student.



10 TIPS FOR BEGINNER KAYAK FISHING ANGLERS

So, you want to get out on the water and take a cast from a kayak to catch that trophy fish, but you haven't yet taken that first kayak fishing adventure? Here are 10 tips to take into consideration prior to making your move.



1. Most importantly, pick a kayak that's built for fishing. Kayaks built for fishing have integrated rod holders, seats that are comfortable to fish from all day, and places to put a tackle crate and/or storage boxes within reach. See [Selecting the Best Fishing Kayak](#) for some detailed insight into what to look for.
2. Safety first. Once you pick out your kayak, get it on the water. But, get out there without your tackle or rods a few times. Learn to handle the boat, and understand your limitations on distance and the ability to control your craft in wind and waves.
3. Pick a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) that is made for fishing. One that has a few pockets for items that you want with you in case you ever topple over. I have my phone in one of the pockets, a knife in another, a whistle, and when on big water, a portable VHF marine radio. Keep in mind that your PFD is your primary life safety device. Wear it at all times and don't overload it to the point that it can't support your weight plus what you are carrying.
4. Before you launch your kayak, learn proper ramp etiquette. You should have your kayak fully loaded and ready before wheeling it to the ramp. If you don't have wheels or a cart to get your kayak to the water, consider unloading next to the ramp or find a soft launch where you have a bit more time to unload your boat and gear. And avoid socializing at the ramp when others are waiting their turn. You'll have plenty of time out on the water.
5. Proper dress is an important piece of the kayak experience, and dressing for the weather is essential. Keeping the sun off you in the heat of summer and staying warm in cooler weather is a must for a great day out on the water.
6. Choose fishing rods that work well for a kayak. I use seven-foot rods so if I need to, I can lead a fish around the bow of the boat. A longer rod helps in landing a fish too, allowing you to bring the fish to the boat by leaving enough line out, then guiding the fish to the net.
7. Choosing a fishery that you are familiar with and have fished before is always a good choice for your first outing. You want to have success and build your confidence on the kayak, and landing a fish will make that happen!
8. Don't over think it and keep things simple. Use fishing techniques that have worked for you in the past. You don't want to try to take a longshot trip for that giant striped bass on your very first week of fishing. Building confidence and skill takes time.
9. Being able to land your catch is your number one goal once you've hooked that fish, and doing so will require you to keep your center of gravity in the kayak. I do this by keeping my head in the center of the boat. I don't lean over the side, then use a net to scoop up the fish or lip-land the fish next to the boat. Don't reach or lean too far out and lose your center of gravity.
10. Now let's go fishing: plan your trip in advance. Select tackle for the species you are targeting. And most importantly check the weather before heading out.

Remember a cast not taken is a fish not caught. Get out there and take that cast off of a new kayak!

-By Eric Packard



GOOD NEWS FROM MARYLAND

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Fall Oyster Survey recorded a remarkable year for juvenile oysters in Maryland waters, finding both prolific numbers and a widespread distribution throughout many regions of the Chesapeake Bay.

The survey's spatfall intensity index, a measure of reproductive success and potential population growth for oysters, was 86.8 spat, or juvenile oysters, per bushel, nearly four times the 39-year median of 23.6 spat per bushel and the fifth highest in that timeframe.



DNR Secretary Josh Kurtz joins Fishing and Boating Services staff analyze to oyster spat during the fall survey. Photo by Robert Bussell, Maryland DNR.

"We have not recorded this extent of oyster spat recruitment in the fall survey in a generation," said Department of Natural Resources Secretary Josh Kurtz. "Both the quantity and the wide distribution of spat throughout the Bay, including several areas where our biologists have rarely observed spat in nearly 40 years of results, are outstanding. We plan to build on these natural spatsets by continuing oyster restoration efforts and promoting aquaculture to bolster the overall oyster population."

This survey, which measures the population status of oysters in the Bay, marks the fourth consecutive year of above-median results for juvenile oysters, a promising sign for restoration efforts for the bivalve, which has faced precipitous population declines over the decades.

Aside from the spatfall intensity index, the department looks to see how widely young oysters are distributed throughout Maryland's oyster habitat. For example, the 1997 survey produced the highest index in the history of the survey at 277 spat per bushel, but the spatset of that year was concentrated in particular areas of the Chesapeake Bay: the eastern portion of Eastern Bay, the Miles River, the northeast portion of the lower Choptank River, and in parts of the Little Choptank and St. Marys rivers.

By comparison, the 2023 survey found spat in areas where they are rarely observed, including in the upper reaches of Bay tributaries that are typically too brackish for strong oyster reproduction. The distribution of the 2023 spatset far exceeded prior spatsets.

[Complete article here.](#)

Last Month's Mystery Fish Golden Blotch Grouper



Mycteroperca rosacea, the leopard grouper or golden grouper, is a species of marine ray-finned fish, a grouper from the subfamily Epinephelinae which is part of the family Serranidae, which also includes the anthias and sea basses. It is found in the Eastern Central Pacific that occasionally makes its way into the aquarium trade.

A large Grouper 50cm +. It has the typical grouper shape with a strong triangular head, jutting lower jaw and large eyes, but it is much less heavily built than the Dusky grouper (24), with a thinner body. The distinctive dark lines running along the body also distinguishes it from the Dusky grouper. A golden blotch behind the head gives it its name but whilst sometimes obvious, this is only reliably clear in breeding males.

This large grouper characteristically has 6 or 7 dark lines running along its body.

Although it can be seen resting on the seabed it usually swims actively in mid water or adjacent to reefs. It is a predator of smaller fish and seabed life.



Virginia Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

*Last Revised
June 2023*



Atlantic Croaker

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: 50 per person; additional 50 live bait per customer capacity on for-hire or charter vessels



Spot

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: 50 per person; additional 50 live bait per customer capacity on for-hire or charter vessels



Kingfish

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: No bag limit



Grey Trout (Weakfish)

- Minimum Size Limit: 12 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 per person



Bluefish

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: 3 per person from shore or a rented or private vessel
- 5 per person on for-hire or charter vessels



Spanish Mackerel

- Minimum Size Limit: 14 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 15 per person



King Mackerel

- Minimum Size Limit: 27 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 3 per person



Cobia

- Minimum Size Limit: 40 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 per person or 2 per vessel, whichever is more restrictive. Only 1 fish per vessel may be greater than 50 inches total length.
- Season: June 15 - September 15
- Gaffing prohibited



Summer Flounder

- Minimum Size Limit: 16 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 4 per person



Striped Bass

Any person fishing striped bass recreationally shall use non-offset, corrosion-resistant, non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing with bait.

Chesapeake Bay Spring Season

- Size Limit: 20-28 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 fish per person
- Season: May 16 - June 15

Chesapeake Bay Fall Season

- Size limit: 20-31 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 fish per person
- Season: October 4 - December 31

Coastal Season

- Size Limit: 28-31 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 per person
- Season: January 1 - March 31, May 16 - December 31

Select species provided for information purposes only. Not all regulated species are included. All regulations are subject to change. It is the angler's responsibility to know and abide by all current regulations and laws. Check for new regulations before you go fishing.
www.mrc.virginia.gov



Spadefish

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: 4 per person



Sheepshead

- Minimum Size Limit: No size limit
- Recreational Bag Limit: 4 per person



Black Sea Bass

- Minimum Size Limit: 18
- Recreational Bag Limit: 15
- Season: May 15 - July 6, August 9 - Dec. 31



Tautog

- Minimum Size Limit: 16 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 4 per person
- Season: January 1-May 15, July 1- Dec. 31



Speckled Trout

- Minimum Size Limit: 14 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 5 per person, only 1 greater than 24"



Red Drum

- Minimum Size Limit: 18 inches
- Maximum Size Limit: 26 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 3 per person



Black Drum

- Minimum Size Limit: 16 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 per person

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FISH TALES



The Barclay crew & some nice sea bass



Dave Brabrand and 27" speck



Stan with another citation speck 27.5"



Dave Wineman with a nice striper



Stan and 51" drum Citation



Rick Wineman and very nice bass



Wally with another nice bass

Monthly Tournament List November 2023

Shark
Rick Wineman 80"

Sea Bass
Wally Veal 23.25"

Speckled Trout
Donnie Fricks 28.25"

Tautog
Wally Veal 20.5"

Bluefish
Rick Wineman 37"

Monthly Tournament Contenders	
Species	Min Size
Albacore Tuna	35"
Amberjack	40"
Bigeye Tuna	40"
Black Drum	40"
Blackbelly Rosefish	14"
Blackfin Tuna	45"
Bluefin Tuna	45"
Bluefish	25"
Blueline Tilefish	20"
Blue Marlin	Release
Channel Bass - Drum	40"
Cobia	40"
Croaker	16"
Dolphin	35"
False Albacore	25"
Flounder	22"
Golden Tilefish	30"
Gray Trout	24"
Grouper	16"
Jack Crevalle	36"
King Mackerel	35"
Pompano	12"
Sailfish	Release
Sea Bass	15"
Shark	60"
Sheepshead	15"
Snapper	12"
Spadefish	18"
Spanish Mackerel	20"
Spearfish	Release
Speckled Trout	21"
Spot	8"
Striped Bass	36"
Swordfish	Release
Tarpon	Release
Tautog	18"
Triggerfish	15"
Wahoo	40"
White Marlin	Release
Whiting (Roundhead)	14"
Yellowfin Tuna	35"

Photo taken Oct 2022 by the Editor at Hapuna Beach, Hawaii

Bring your entries to Milton at our monthly meeting by 7:00 pm or send an email or snail mail to the address' on the left (Yellow Box). 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 2023 entry forms:

Month of Entry	Deadline (RegMtg)	Month	Deadline (Reg Mtg)
January	15 Feb	July	15 Aug
February	15 Mar	August	19 Sep
March	19 Apr	September	17 Oct
April	17 May	October	21 Nov
May	20 Jun	November	19 Dec
June	18 Jul	December	by Brd Mtg 9 Jan 2024



PLEASE HAND DELIVER TO MONTHLY MEETING or MAIL TO:
PSWSFA, P.O. Box 5194, Newport News, VA 23605

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Eligible Species

Amberjack	40"	Pompano	12"
Albacore Tuna	35"	Sea Bass	15"
Big Eye Tuna	40"	Sailfish	Release
Black Belly Rose Fish	14"	Shark	60"
Black Drum	40"	Sheepshead	15"
Black Fin Tuna	20"	Snapper	12"
Blue Fin Tuna	45"	Spadefish	18"
Bluefish	25"	Spanish Mackerel	20"
Blueline Tilefish	20"	Spearfish	Release
Blue Marlin	Release	Speckled Trout	21"
Channel Bass	40"	Spot	8"
Cobia	40"	Striped Bass	36"
Croaker	16"	Swordfish	Release
Dolphin	35"	Tarpon	Release
False Albacore	25"	Tautog	18"
Flounder	22"	Triggerfish	15"
Golden Tilefish	30"	Wahoo	40"
Gray Trout	24"	White Marlin	Release
Grouper	16"	Whiting (Roundhead)	14"
Jack Crevalle	36"	Yellowfin Tuna	35"
King Mackerel	35"		

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE THE TRUTH, AND THE RULES OF THIS CONTEST HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH (see back of this sheet)

Required Information:

Tournament _____ Fish: _____

Date Caught: _____ Time Caught: _____ am/pm Length: _____

Name (printed): _____ Adult Youth

Signature: _____ Witness Signature: _____

Optional Information:

Weight: _____ Where Caught: _____

Weight Master Signature: _____

All Club Tournaments (Except as noted on front):

- Entry Fees: \$20 for member & \$30 for non-member. Youth and Ladies croaker/Spanish mackerel tourney is free.
- Rules and Entry Fees listed below do not apply to the Sheepshead Tournament. This is a sperate paid entry tournament.
- 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 for weight tournaments. 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. Length tournament entries require witness or photo.
- 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.



www.pswsfa.com



Fishing Around the World



With a mainland coastline spanning over 1,860 miles and more than 60 islands, Spain offers a wealth of incredible fishing destinations.

Though the country may be enveloped by the Bay of Biscay, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, it also boasts a rich and diverse inland topography. This ranges from the lush mountains of the Asturias region in the north where the inland waters are abundant with salmon and trout in the summer months, to the plentiful River Ebro which flows 565 miles from the Cantabrian mountains to the Mediterranean coast in Tarragona.

Asturias

With craggy coastal cliffs and green, mountainous backcountry, Asturias is as diverse as it is beautiful. Somewhat away from Spain's well-trodden tourist path, the luxury accommodation options are sparse. However, the fishing opportunities in this serene northeastern pocket of Spain, as well as the region's natural beauty and pretty as a picture coastal villages, more than make up for this.



Tenerife

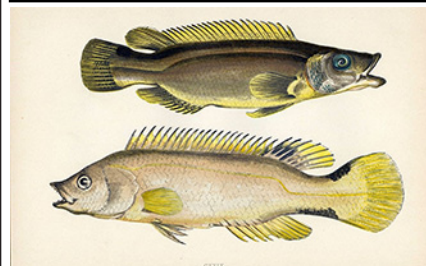
The Canary Islands as a whole offer some of Europe's best fishing waters but out of them all, Tenerife probably holds the crown. There are fishing guides and charters dotted all around the volcanic island's shores offering both shore fishing or the chance to hit the waves in search of something larger such as marlin, barracuda and tuna.



Andalucia

Andalusian cuisine is synonymous with seafood therefore it should come as no surprise that the sun-kissed region also offers some of the best fishing Spain has to offer. Uniquely positioned featuring both an Atlantic and Mediterranean coastline and with the narrow strait of Gibraltar acting as a migratory highway for a wide variety of fish species, it provides outstanding sportfishing and onshore angling adventures all year round.

So you think you know
your Fish
What is it?





As a member of Peninsula Salt Water Sport Fisherman's Association,
a BoatU.S. Cooperating Group, you are invited to become a BoatU.S. Member
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BOAT U.S. COOP GROUP #: Contact Gary Donaldson at
GaryD66@Cox.Net
For the PSWSFA Coop group #

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ANNUAL *Fishing Flea Market*

MAJOR
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March 2, 2024
8:00 am - 2:30 pm

VIRGINIA BEACH FIELD HOUSE

Free Raffle!

50/50

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George - gwa1963@cox.net 757-421-7888
Lavern - rs2intro@gmail.com 757-974-3090

You are invited to visit or join the best fishing club in Tidewater. Each month the club has a speaker to present an information program on various local fishing topics. Check us out at www.fishgbfa.org

Or visit Facebook.com/GreatBridgeFishermansAssociation

- Monthly Newsletter • Annual Awards Banquet
- Fishing Tournaments (Bass & Surf) • Special Events such as Oyster Roasts & Fleets
- Philanthropic Events to Benefit Organizations such as Rape House and Walk-A-Fish
- 12 High School Scholarships Presented in 2023

Directions to PSWSFA Meeting

**Former St Mark's Episcopal Church
Now used by Peninsula Baptist Church**

From 64 (either direction) take the Mercury Blvd exit towards the James River Bridge (West) stay in the right hand lane and turn right at the light onto Todds Lane. Go past Zaxby's chicken about 400 ft and the driveway to the church is on the right. The original St, Mark's sign is still on the lawn just short of the driveway with a new Baptist church message.

If you come to the traffic light at the intersection of Cunningham you went to far. Turn right on Cunningham and look for the Cunningham entrance to the church (500ft). If you miss it you will need to do a U-turn on Cunningham and go left onto Todds Lane.

The church driveway is just short of the Bercuese Funeral home entrance or just after it if coming from Cunningham.

WHAT'S UP NEXT & BEYOND



**2-4 Feb - Mid Atlantic Sports & Boat Show
Virginia Beach Convention Center**



2 March - Great Bridge Fishing Flea Market



9 March - Poquoson Fishing Flea Market



19 March - First member meeting of 2024

PENINSULA SALT WATER SPORTS FISHERMAN'S ASSOC.
P.O. Box 5194
NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23605

