



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](http://www.pswsfa.com).

### Next Meeting

18 March 2025 7:00pm

We are looking for a big turnout at the club's annual Awards Banquet on 22 February. Please check out page 5 and print that puppy out and send it in with a check for the appropriate amount a week before February 22nd, Please. The food will be awesome as will the honor of your company. We can only accommodate 75 so act early. Or, Go online at: <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/pswsfa-annual-club-banquet/items?cart>

On page 4 is a flyer for George Poveromo's lecture series on 1 March 2025. There are two places on the bottom of the page with links to the site as well as who is speaking. It includes Stan Simmerman and Dr, Ken Neill plus several others. They will be speaking on all of the major fish species being caught in the bay and offshore.

We will have a booth at the VA Beach Boat Show 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2025. I'll be there all three days selling tickets for the Custom Flounder Rod and Reel combo. We also have a booth at the Great Bridge Fishing flea market on 1 March, and at the Poquoson Flea Market on 8 March. If you can help out please contact Stan Simmerman or email me and I can pass it along.

Stay well, Mike the Editor

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Folks, Welcome to the first Chumline of 2025. Mike has continued to produce the Chumline with sometimes very limited input. He has continued to do a great job and I'd like to thank him for that. 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.

2025 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. The bluefin tuna bite has been pretty good off of Virginia Beach and most folks who have tried for them have at least managed to get bit. A lot of fish were pulled off or lines broke but at least they bites were there. We had a better year with flounder than in the past several years and

hopefully 2025 will see that uptick continue. Speckled trout fishing was certainly different this past year but the quality of large trout was impressive. I think they are going to be much harder to come by in 2025 due to all the cold weather we've had lately. Offshore fishing was not too productive in 2024 with tuna, wahoo and billfish kind of bypassing our area. Maybe 2025 will be better. There has been a run of big stripers both inside the bay and in the ocean. I know of two that were caught hook and line that weighed 75 and 77 lbs. Unfortunately, they were caught by commercial guys and killed.

There will be a February seabass season again this year so hopefully the weather will cooperate, and we can get after them.

There is a lot going on over the next couple of months.

This year's banquet will  
*Continued on page 3*

**2024 Club Officers**

**Stan Simmerman**  
President

**Milton Hudgens**  
Vice President

**Wally Veal**  
Secretary

**Christina Grice**  
Treasurer

**Danny Forehand**  
Past President

**Board of Directors**

Ronnie Wilson  
Gary Donaldson  
Rick Wineman  
Charles Randolph  
Mike Frielingsdorf  
Richie Moore  
Paul Downey  
Nicole Ambercrombie  
Johnny Boyd  
Gerald Abrams (alt)



One of my favorite Christmas lights in Yorktown

**PSWSFA 2025 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

*Presidents comments continued from page 1*

be held on February 22nd and seating will be limited. At the request of most board members 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 can keep the cost to our club members the same. The PSWSFA web page already has the information about the banquet, and you can even utilize an online tool (CheddarUp) <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/pswsfa-annual-club-banquet/items?cart> to make your reservations and pay. It's easy to do and much more convenient than mailing a check. 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 participating in the Virginia Beach Boat show the January 31st through February 2nd . The Great Bridge Fishing Flea Market will be March 1st as will the George Poveromo Saltwater Series Seminar. Then on March 8th will be Poquoson Kiwanis Club Fishing and Crafts Flea Market. We will need support from you the club members to man the booth and sell raffle tickets for rods and reels and other items at the boat show and flea markets. Ken and I will be speakers at George Poveromo's seminar, and I have been asked to give a seminar on speckled trout fishing at the Poquoson Flea Market again this year so if you can attend, I'll be giving out some new secrets about specks and how to target big fish.

We will be having another Sheepshead tournament in 2025, and this one should be bigger and better than last years. The committee will be hard at work getting ahead of the power curve for this year's tournament and sponsor letters will be going out to businesses early this year as soon as the date has been set. 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.

Get out there and fish and try to get a youngster/youngsters out with you. Enter your fish in the monthly tournament and especially the youth entries. I look forward to seeing you at the banquet.

Tight Lines,  
Stan



Big nets work great for tuna that are going to be caught and released. Photo courtesy of Monty Hawkins.



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**Salt Water**  
SPORTSMAN  
**NATIONAL SEMINAR SERIES 2025**  
 Presented by  
 



**AMERICA'S NUMBER 1 SALTWATER FISHING SEMINAR TOUR**

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**March 1, 2025 – Hampton, VA**  
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**SATURDAY, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**FEATURING GEORGE POVEROMO**

HOST OF WORLD OF SALTWATER FISHING ON DISCOVERY!

Along with: Stan Simmerman, Dr. Ken Neill III, Anthony "AJ" Burns, Harry Vernon III, Ric Burnley, Captains Bill Pappas, Kenny Louderback, Russ Kostinas, Zachery Hoffman, Mike Goodwine, David Wicker and Alan Wenzel.

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## 2024 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

**Saturday, 22 February 2025**

**Regular Club Meeting Hall**

**2605 Cunningham drive**

**Hampton, VA 23666**

**6:00 - 10:00pm**

**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 or Member** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How Many:**

**\$20 for Member:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$10 Children (Ages 3-10) 2 and under Free** \_\_\_\_\_

**\$40 for Guests** \_\_\_\_\_

**Buffet Includes Pulled Pork, Beef Brisket, Fried Chicken, Mac-n-Cheese, Corn Muffins, Green Beans & Dessert**

**Total Number Attending** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address or Phone number for Confirmation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form along with a check made out to PSWSFA Postmarked by 13 Feb 25 to guarantee dinner.**

**Send To: Christina Grice P.O Box 32 Gwynn, VA 23066 For questions call Christina at 757-869-7238**

**Please don't call for reservations. Reservations must be in writing.**

# Soar Like an Eagle: MD Coast Guardsman Minds the Sails of Military's Only Active Sailing Ship

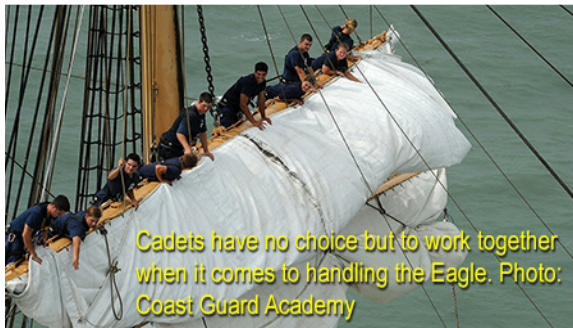
By Chris Landers / December 12, 2024

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Eagle is a bit of an odd duck. A relic from the trailing edge of the great age of sail that has stubbornly persisted, through world wars and budgetary concerns, into the 21st century. The Eagle is a holdover that has managed to find its niche among the icebreakers, offshore patrol cutters, and go-fast drug interdictors of the modern Coast Guard.

The 295-foot head-turner carries 21,350 square feet of sail over three masts, two of which (the fore and main) carry square sails. That specific configuration of sails makes her a barque. The only active commissioned sailing vessel in the U.S. military, The Eagle is not a particularly fast ship. But that is not her job. The Coast Guard claims a maximum of 17 knots under sail, and her square sails allow a limited point of sail, only allowing for her crew to steer around 70 degrees off the wind.



The Cutter Barque Eagle, the ultimate training ground for young cadets, spends time in Curtis Bay each year for maintenance. Photo: David Sites



Cadets have no choice but to work together when it comes to handling the Eagle. Photo: Coast Guard Academy

While there are motorized winches and the like to help manage the heavy yards and sails, they mostly go unused. The ship was built to run on the power of young sailors—pulling on ropes to bring the yards around the mast to wear ship [Editor's note: that's tacking, to us fiberglass boaters], or flying aloft to loose the royals [the smallest sails at the top], where the height and heel of the boat make the water seem almost close enough to touch.

The ship was built for training sailors in the lore and mechanics of the sea and wind, and it is intentionally complex, a monument to the idea that some things can only be learned by doing them the hard way. It is similar to a modern Coast Guard cutter in the same way that a grandfather clock is similar to a smartwatch, and like a grandfather clock, it is a beautiful and complex machine.

Leland Currier is one of the people responsible for keeping the machine ticking, and like the ship he keeps returning to, he seems to have found his niche. As the 1st Lieutenant, or Sailmaster, of Eagle, Currier is responsible for maintaining and overseeing the operations of the sails, the rigging, and largely everything above the deck of the nearly 100-year-old ship. While the Eagle is home-ported in New London, Connecticut, in recent years it has spent the winters in the Coast Guard yard in Curtis Bay, just south of Baltimore, undergoing maintenance. Currier, who is from Anne Arundel County ("I grew up at the headwaters of this creek," he points from the yard near where Eagle is berthed), is in his seventh year on the Eagle, spread over three tours and five visits to this shipyard.



Bay native Leland Currier can't seem to leave the Barque Eagle behind. Photo by Chris

Continued on page 7

One of the ship's main purposes is to train cadets from the Coast Guard Academy in the ways of the sea, but Currier wasn't one of those. "I was an enlisted member," he says, grinning. "I chose it."

It wasn't necessarily the romance of the sailing life that drove him—Eagle was the first sailboat he ever stepped aboard. "I was not sure how long I was going to stay in the Coast Guard, and speaking to some people about it, if I was planning on doing only four years, why not go somewhere that's going to take me around the world?"

Currier had been on large cutters before, as he trained to be a bosun's mate. Still, his first view of his new ship was daunting. "I was like, okay, cool, this is going to be fun. And then I remember walking over the hill at Fort Trumbull in New London and thinking, 'What the heck did I just get myself into?'"

Once he started to make sense of the six miles of rigging, he found he enjoyed it. His first tour, from 2005 to 2008, took him to Europe, the Caribbean, and the West Coast of the United States. "I didn't have a bad go, if I was only going to do four years." He has also spoken to his then-commanding officers since that tour, who assure him that awakening the crew at two in the morning to fly aloft and stow sail or muscle the heavy yards to a different point of sail was "planned into the day," a notion he seems mildly skeptical of in retrospect.

In 2020, Currier returned to the sailing ship for two years after time spent tending to Bay navigation aids out of Crisfield and Baltimore. He then took a break from the big ship, knowing he would likely return again. He is part of a small community of Eagle sailors who rely on each other for the sort of knowledge that only comes through experience.

"I always liked it," he says. "On my first tour, everybody told me to be prepared to come back, and now that I'm on my third tour, I still run into people and say, be prepared to come back. It's such a weird niche I guess ... so having at least some knowledge of the ship helps with the safety of the ship."

Modern electronics and weather predictions have, even over a blip in time like 20 years, lessened the need for 2 a.m. wakeups, but the core mission of the ship, that of training young recruits for the rigors and discipline of life at sea, has remained the same since the Eagle was first put into service by, well, the Nazis.

The Eagle was originally named Horst Wessel, after a young stormtrooper and law-school dropout. Wessel was killed in 1930 during a somewhat confusing dispute with a man who was, depending on the source, either boyfriend or pimp to Wessel's girlfriend. Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels seized an opportunity by claiming the assailant was a communist, and used the occasion to make Wessel a martyr for the burgeoning Nazi cause.



The Cutter Barque Eagle, the ultimate training ground for young cadets, spends time in Curtis Bay each year for maintenance. Photo: David Sites

A poem Wessel had written was set to music as the Nazi anthem, and he was further memorialized in 1936 when, with Adolph Hitler in attendance, Wessel's mother cracked a bottle of champagne to christen the barque Horst Wessel as the flagship of the German sail training fleet. It spent most of World War II representing Nazi Germany in various capacities, until 1945, when the captain took a group of refugees aboard and, perhaps attuned to the prevailing winds, sailed off and surrendered to the British.

After the war, the allies divvied up Horst and its three sister ships, all of which are still around: the Albert Leo Schlageter (now the Portuguese Navy's NRP Sagres), Mircea (actually Romanian, but still

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taken by the Soviet Union, and currently Romanian again), and the Gorch Fock (briefly the Soviet Tovarishch, currently a museum ship in Straslun, Germany which, if internet reviews are to be believed, has seen better days).

Eagle is unique in the U.S., but military sail training is not the anachronistic pursuit it might seem. From the Italian Navy's full-rigged Amerigo Vespucci to Argentina's ARA Libertad (a hit when it visited Baltimore this summer), these giants still prowl the seas worldwide, showing young sailors the literal ropes. The Coast Guard, in particular, has had a sail training component since its formation as the United States Revenue Cutter Service in 1878.

An 1886 Harper's Magazine article describes the aim of sail training Coast Guard cadets which, despite the antiquated language, seems to have changed little:



A sailing Coast Guard Cutter, the Forward, between 1893-1894. Photo: USCG

“He has a taste of the sternest and most trying obligations at the threshold of his undertaking, which results in a pretty thorough test of his metal [sic], and if any one is actually unfit for the sea, physically or otherwise, the fact is at once brought to the surface, and gives him an opportunity to turn back at the beginning of a career in which he would not be likely to succeed.”

Modern Coast Guard Cadets spend about a month and half on the Eagle, learning damage control, helm lookout, and standing an engineering watch—the general stuff one does on any boat, with the added rigors of a traditional square rig.

“What we're doing with Eagle is supporting the academy's goal of delivering fleet-ready ensigns,” Currier says, “so when that person graduates the academy and heads out to a [modern] ship, they're ready with a basic knowledge to serve onboard.”

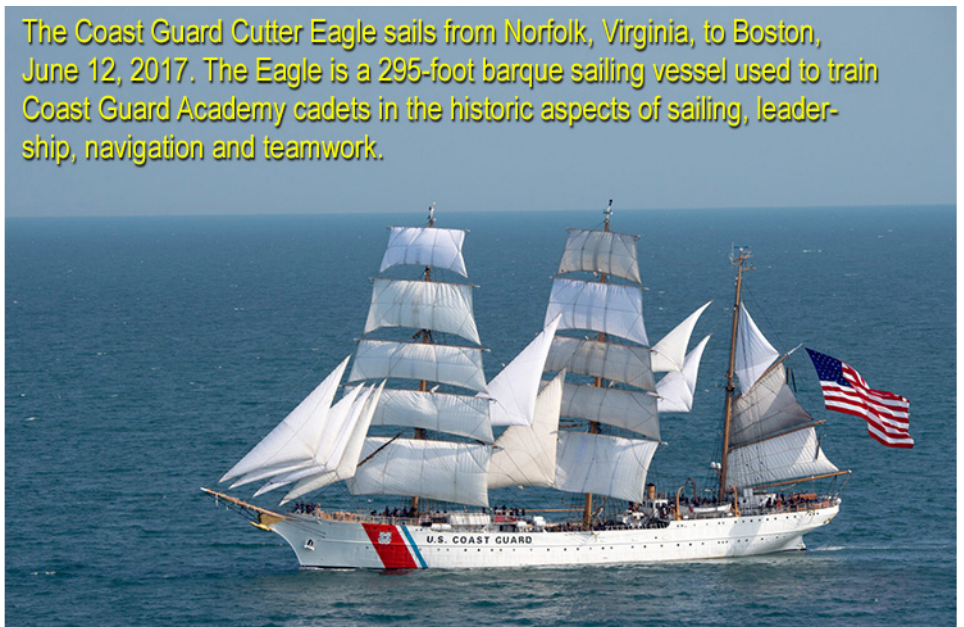
A second part of the mission should be obvious to anyone who has seen the graceful barque Eagle coming into port—it's there to impress.

“We're a goodwill ambassador,” Currier says. “We go around, flying the American flag, showing what the Coast Guard can do, and supporting diplomatic affairs overseas.”

And the allure of the ship is undeniable, even for someone like Currier, who knows every thump and creak of the rigging.

“There's definitely a romance about it,” he admits. “It's a lot of hard work, but you see the fruits of your labor when you're under full sail in a moderate breeze and the ship's heeling at about 15 degrees, and you're doing 13 knots. When you're going faster under sail than the engine can take you. There's something to be said about that, and there is a romance about it still.”

The Coast Guard Cutter Eagle sails from Norfolk, Virginia, to Boston, June 12, 2017. The Eagle is a 295-foot barque sailing vessel used to train Coast Guard Academy cadets in the historic aspects of sailing, leadership, navigation and teamwork.



## Way South Chesapeake Bay Fishing Report, January 9 2025 Update:

Our speckled trout may be in some serious trouble. Old man winter has come out of retirement this year and brought us some snow and very cold temperatures recently. This does not bode well for our beloved speckled trout as they do not handle the cold very well. We have seen several reports this past week of dead trout turning up in the Virginia Beach tributaries. One angler reported that most of the fish he has seen have been between 12 and 16 inches, though we did have a few reports of bigger trout also dying unfortunately. It does not appear to be a huge fish kill yet, but if cold temperatures persist in the coming weeks, it may get worse.

The wind has been blowing hard this week and most anglers have stayed off the water to avoid the brutal cold. The tributaries are offering some protection from the wind and some reds have been caught despite the cold. Mullet have been abundant in the rivers and are great live or cut bait when fishing in the winter. One angler fishing this week reported catching a few slot reds while fishing with cut mullet in Rudee Inlet. Out on the Bay, migratory striped bass should still be around, but boats have been unable to target them thanks to the wind. When we get break in the weather, they should still be hanging around ledges and shoals. Cape Charles is a historically productive area for big winter striped bass and the fish have already shown themselves there this winter.



Angler Billy Brown shows off a 29.5" speckled trout he found frozen along the bank of a Virginia Beach tributary.

## Coastal Mid-Atlantic Fishing Report, January 9 Update:

A little snow isn't slowing down the bluefin tuna action along the coast! Snow usually misses Delmarva, but they got in on the wintry precipitation early this week with several inches of snow across the region. The snow didn't stop some boats from heading out to chase bluefin tuna and we heard of a few successful trips. Fish In OC had reports on Monday from Captain Chase Eberle of Chasin' Tides Charters who quickly boxed their one bluefin limit and then went on to catch several nice tautog. A few days before the storm rolled in, Chasin' Tides had another great trip targeting tuna where they hooked into a true giant. In just five minutes of trolling, the crew was hooked up with a 97" bluefin that took three hours to hit the deck. The fish weighed 442 pounds and filled their one "giant" bluefin tag for the year. Captain Monty Hawkins of the Morning Star has also been getting in on the tuna action. Last weekend, his crew went seven for nine while trolling for tuna. Each fish was landed with a tuna net and safely released. The two others that got away were the biggest fish that were hooked during the trip. A classic case of the big one that got away. These tuna are still providing action off Virginia Beach too. Playin Hookey Charters has landed several nice fish recently including a 150-pounder caught on a Nomad Design Tackle DTX Minnow 220. Since the snow hit, the winds have really ramped up, keeping most of the fleet off the water. When we get a reprieve from the wind, there will likely still be plenty of tuna and tog to chase. Just make sure to bundle up because it doesn't look like the cold is going anywhere.

## Virginia Beach Sport Fishing



The arrival of Bluefin Tuna in Virginia's nearshore waters has become an exciting and highly anticipated event each December. This year is no exception, with these massive fish making their presence know.

Dr. Ken Neill and Stan Simmerman encountered fish busting in multiple locations between the Triangle Reef and the Chesapeake Light Tower on Saturday. And a few were reported 8 or 9 miles east of Fishermans Island. These giants have made their way in even closer .... in recent years one or two have been hooked in the Bay east of the CBBT. But most will be out around the Chesapeake Light Tower area.

Weighing between 150 and 500 pounds, anglers are in for a thrilling fight. Let's dive into the history and resurgence of this fishery and what makes it so special today.

### **The History of Virginia's Bluefin Tuna Fishery**

In the past, Bluefin Tuna were a rare sight in Virginia's nearshore waters. While these apex predators were once more abundant along the Atlantic coast, decades of overfishing significantly depleted their populations. Strict management measures, including quotas, size limits, and international cooperation through organizations like ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas), have helped these iconic fish make a remarkable comeback.

### **Why December? The Seasonal Migration**

The resurgence of the inshore Bluefin Tuna fishery during December is linked to their annual migration patterns. As inshore water temperatures drop, Bluefin Tuna move along the Atlantic coast in search of baitfish, such as menhaden and herring, which are abundant in Virginia's coastal waters during this time.

This migration brings these powerful fish within reach of anglers targeting them with heavy trolling gear, large spreader bars, and deep-diving plugs. Their proximity to shore makes them accessible to both private boats and charter operations, creating an exciting winter fishing opportunity.

### **Tactics for Inshore Bluefin Tuna**

Catching Bluefin Tuna requires preparation, strength, and the right gear:

- Trolling Techniques: Use spreader bars, daisy chains, and ballyhoo rigs to mimic schools of baitfish.
- Gear Tips: Heavy-duty trolling rods and reels capable of handling 200+ pound fish are essential.
- Safety First: Bluefin tuna are powerful fighters. Ensure your crew is familiar with proper fish handling and boat safety.

The continued success of Virginia's inshore Bluefin Tuna fishery depends on sustainable practices. Anglers should adhere to current regulations, including size and bag limits, and prioritize catch-and-release for oversized fish. By respecting these measures, we can ensure the fishery remains healthy for future generations.

Whether you're a seasoned professional or a passionate hobbyist, targeting inshore Bluefins in December offers an unparalleled fishing experience. The mix of adrenaline, skill, and history makes this a fishery worth celebrating.

## National TRAP Program funds large-scale cleanup of discarded fishing gear

by John Wallace | December 10, 2024

A massive cleanup of derelict fishing gear in U.S. coastal waters is set to begin now that William & Mary's Batten School & VIMS has awarded \$1.4 million to fund 11 projects under the National Fishing Trap Removal, Assessment, and Prevention (TRAP) Program. From diving in waters up to 130 feet deep to retrieve lobster and crab traps in protected ecosystems to the removal of debris in tribal fishing grounds, this initial round of projects facilitates removal efforts in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New York, Washington and the Freely Associated State of Palau, in addition to supporting ongoing efforts through the Virginia Marine Debris Program.

The funding for the removal projects stems from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Debris Program through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Following a rigorous review and selection process, the Batten School & VIMS received an \$8 million, four-year grant from NOAA in 2023 to administer the National TRAP Program. In addition to distributing approximately \$1.5 million annually to fund regional cleanup efforts in years 2 through 4, this project aims to standardize data collection practices and establish a national database to evaluate the environmental and economic impacts of these efforts and inform future policies.

"This is a special program because it allows local communities to tackle the issues that impact their environments and livelihoods the most, all under the same overarching goal," said Kirk Havens, who directs the Center for Coastal Resources Management (CCRM) at Virginia Institute of Marine

Science, which administers the TRAP Program under the direction of co-principal investigators Professor Donna Bilkovic and Associate Professor Andrew Scheld. "The Batten School & VIMS is uniquely positioned to lead these efforts thanks to our nearly two decades of experience tackling this issue in the Chesapeake Bay."

Coastal waters in the U.S. and around the world are littered with fishing equipment that has been lost, abandoned or otherwise discarded. It can harm ecosystems and economies by trapping and killing animals, damaging marine habitats and competing with actively fished gear. Beginning in 2008, VIMS partnered with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and local watermen to establish the Virginia Marine Debris Removal Program, which ultimately led to the removal of more than 34,000 derelict crab pots between 2008 and 2014.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program was involved in these initial efforts, funding ongoing research by CCRM evaluating the ecological and economic impacts of the derelict gear. A 2016 study estimated removal efforts over the six year period in Virginia and Maryland increased blue crab harvests in the Chesapeake Bay by 38 million pounds, putting an extra \$33.5 million into the pockets of local watermen. An additional 2016 report revealed that removing just 10% of derelict crab pots and lobster traps on a global basis could increase landings by 293,929 metric tons—a yearly value of \$831 million.



A derelict crab trap recovered from Maryland waters in the Chesapeake Bay containing several species of bycatch. Photo by Oyster Recovery Partnership

*Continued on top of page 12*

“The TRAP Program is innovative in the way it combines a multitude of regional cleanup projects with data collection and analysis to guide national policies and future efforts. This approach can serve as a model for solving global issues related to marine resources and the resilience of coastal communities that rely on them,” said Derek Aday, dean of the Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences and director of VIMS.

Funding recipients will begin their cleanup efforts in January 2025 and will be required to submit standardized data on their progress. The data will be analyzed by the Policy Innovation Lab, a partnership between the Batten School & VIMS and the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government, to explore drivers of derelict trap abundance, bycatch and other ecological or economic variables. This information will help inform state and federal policy recommendations to improve derelict trap prevention and mitigation.

In the spring of 2025, the Batten School & VIMS will solicit proposals for funding in 2026. Those interested in becoming engaged are encouraged to visit [trapprogram.org](http://trapprogram.org) for more information on the TRAP Program and associated removal projects.

“We are proud to support these projects with the Batten School & VIMS,” said Amy Gohres, acting director for the NOAA Marine Debris Program. “This partnership helps to ensure that Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding is benefiting fishing communities, economically important species, and habitats at the local level.”

### Projects funded by the National TRAP Program

The following projects were selected through a national competitive grant process administered by the Batten School & VIMS. In addition to the recipients below, the Batten School & VIMS received \$152,669 to build on the success of the Virginia Marine Debris Removal Program. These efforts will continue to employ local fishermen to target hotspot areas of derelict traps in the Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay, providing valuable information on the rate of trap accumulation in active blue crab fishery areas and the economic and ecological impacts of the discarded gear.

**This list is not complete:** for the full list click [Here](#).

The California Lobster & Trap Fishermen’s Association received \$105,550

A total of \$150,580 was awarded to Coastal Mapping & Sciences, LLC in Louisiana.

Cornell Cooperative Extension was awarded \$141,249 to remove derelict lobster pots from LI Sound

Delaware Sea Grant received \$69,504 to remove derelict recreational blue crab pots from Delaware’s Inland bays.

Ebiil Society, Inc received \$128,000 to remove derelict mangrove crab traps.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation was awarded \$154,139 to remove submerged derelict traps.

## The December Mystery Fish Cabezon



The cabezon is a scaleless fish with a broad bony support extending from the eye across the cheek just under the skin. It is the largest member of the cottid family and lacks scaling through the body. It has 11 spines on the dorsal fin. The cabezon also has a stout spine before the eye, an anal fin of soft rays, and a fleshy flap on the middle of the snout. A pair of longer flaps are just behind the eyes.

While mollusks play a significant role in the adult diet, they were absent from the stomachs of juveniles, which mainly contained smaller shrimp and fish. It’s likely that the younger fish lack the strength to dislodge even the smallest, resilient gastropods.

Fishing for Cabezon began with early Native Americans, while Californians did not specifically target them until the late 1930s. Historically, most Cabezon in California have been caught by recreational fishermen. Fishermen target nearshore kelp beds using hook and line gear or traps. The Cabezon was first targeted by live fishermen in 1994. Between 1996 and 1997, there was an increase in Cabezon landings.

## East Coast Managers Delay Tightening Striped Bass Limits Until 2026

By Meg Walburn Viviano / December 17, 2024

Chesapeake Bay anglers, environmentalists, and charter business owners were all watching carefully this week as East Coast striped bass fishery managers held a special meeting in response to dismal rockfish population numbers.

Many believed the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board would likely impose new restrictions that could include additional season closures, on top of the mid-season closure Maryland put into effect during high-mortality summer temperatures. The Board considered taking immediate action to reduce fishing mortality in 2025.

However, the Board ultimately opted for "an addendum that would provide the Board more time to develop a fuller suite of management options," delaying big changes until 2026.

In recent years, Maryland and Virginia have enacted measures to curb the striped bass catch, including a controversial move to allow anglers to keep only one fish per day during the season. While conservationists believe immediate action is necessary to keep the rockfish population, the prospect of limiting recreational fishing of the Bay's most popular sport fish even further doesn't sit well with charter fishing companies, who say their business has already suffered from the ever-tightening catch limits.

The ASMFC took public comments ahead of the Dec. 16 special meeting, receiving an outpouring of 4,360 comments, including those from individuals, organizations, and their supporters.

"We want to thank the thousands of members of the public who took the time to provide thoughtful comments ahead of this Board meeting," said Board Chair Megan Ware from Maine. "We understand that many will be disappointed in the Board's decision to initiate an addendum versus taking immediate action. However, after deliberating for more than three hours about the path forward, the Board came to the conclusion that the best course of action is to proceed with an addendum which will allow for clarity on 2024 removals and additional analyses."

The Striped Bass Management Board's Draft Addendum III will focus on recreational and commercial management measures for 2026 with a goal of rebuilding the stock by 2029. They will look at a range of options to reduce the fishery, including season and size limits, no-harvest and no-targeted closures.

According to the 2024 Stock Assessment Update, striped bass have not recovered from past overfishing, but they are not experiencing overfishing currently. Biologists predict an increase in fishing mortality in 2025. The new 2026 measures aim to rebuild the stock using full 2024 fishing data, which wasn't available in time to implement 2025 measures.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) points out that while the stock assessment doesn't indicate overfishing currently taking place, ASMFC wasn't taking into consideration the six straight years of below-average juvenile striped bass recruitment in the Chesapeake Bay.

Calling the low recruitment a "looming concern," CBF leaders believe ASMFC should not have delayed action for another year. "Our only hope now is that 2026 will not be too late for striped bass," said CBF Maryland Executive Director Allison Colden. "Given the uncertainty associated with the striped bass fishery and its incredible social and economic value to states along the East Coast, fisheries managers must err on the side of conservation."

The next step is to introduce options for the proposed addendum at ASMFC's winter meeting in February. The Board plans to take final action by October 2025 and implement the reductions in early 2026.





# Virginia Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Last Revised  
March 2024



### 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: Jan 1-May 31: 16 inches  
Jun 1-Dec 31: 17.5 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 4 per person



### Striped Bass

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

#### Chesapeake Bay Spring Season

- Size Limit: 19-24 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 fish per person
- Season: May 16 - June 15

#### Chesapeake Bay Fall Season

- Size limit: 19-24 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](http://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: 13
- Recreational Bag Limit: 15
- Season: Feb 1-29 (permit required);  
May 15-July 15, July 27-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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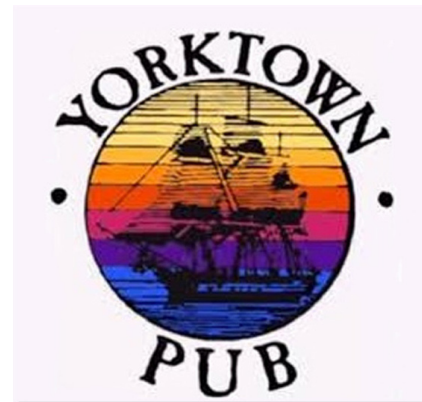
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Wally's 76in Bluefin



Dr. Neill with speck, fishing with Stan



Stan freezing his buns off with a nice speckled trout fishing with Dr Neill



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LaVern - [rv2mtns@gmail.com](mailto:rv2mtns@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 informative program on various local fishing topics. Check us out at [www.fishgbfa.org](http://www.fishgbfa.org)

Or visit [facebook.com/GreatBridgeFishermansAssociation](https://facebook.com/GreatBridgeFishermansAssociation)

- Monthly Newsletter • Annual Awards Banquet
- Fishing Tournaments (Boat & Surf) • Special Events such as Oyster Roasts & Picnics
- Philanthropic Events to Benefit Organizations such as Hope House and Wish-A-Fish
- High School Scholarships Presented

# Monthly Tournament List November 2024

**Sea Bass**  
Wally Veal 21.5"

**False Albacore**  
Bill Seemuller 27"

**Triggerfish**  
Rick Wineman 15"

**Speckled Trout**  
Stan Simmerman 24.5"

**Bluefish**  
Dave Wineman 36.25"

**Striped Bass**  
Danny Taylor 38"

Monthly Tournament Contenders	
Species	Min Size
Albacore Tuna	35"
Amberjack	40"
Bigeye Tuna	40"
Black Drum	40"
Blackbelly Rosefish	14"
<b>Blackfin Tuna</b>	<b>25"</b>
Bluefin Tuna	45"
Bluefish	25"
Blueline Tilefish	20"
Blue Marlin	Release
Channel Bass - Drum	40"
Cobia	40"
<b>Croaker</b>	<b>14"</b>
Dolphin	35"
False Albacore	25"
Flounder	22"
Golden Tilefish	30"
<b>Gray Trout</b>	<b>22"</b>
Grouper	16"
Jack Crevalle	36"
King Mackerel	35"
Pompano	12"
Sailfish	Release
<b>Sea Bass</b>	<b>18"</b>
Shark	60"
<b>Sheepshead</b>	<b>20"</b>
<b>Snapper</b>	<b>17"</b>
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"

**Fish in Red are updated  
as of 1 Jan 2025**

*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](mailto:judygee03@gmail.com))

### Deadline for turning in your 2025 entry forms:

Month of Entry	Deadline (RegMtg)	Month	Deadline (Reg Mtg)
January	18 Feb	July	19 Aug
February	18 Mar	August	17 Sep
March	15 Apr	September	21 Oct
April	20 May	October	18 Nov
May	17 Jun	November	16 Dec
June	15 Jul	December	by Brd Mtg 13 Jan 2026



Three Ways to Turn in your Forms:

- Hand deliver to monthly meetings
- e-mail to judygee03@gmail.com
- Mail to: Milton Hudgins, 1894 Kate Lane, Hayes VA 23072

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

### Eligible Species

The fish in red were updated 1 Jan 2025

Albacore Tuna	35"	Pompano	12"
Amberjack	40"	Sailfish	Release
Bigeye Tuna	40"	Sea Bass	18"
Blackbelly Rosefish	14"	Shark	60"
Black Drum	40"	Sheepshead	20"
Blackfin Tuna	25	Snapper	17"
Bluefin Tuna	45"	Spadefish	18"
Blueline Tilefish	20"	Spanish Mackerel	20"
Bluefish	25"	Spearfish	Release
Blue Marlin	Release	Speckled Trout	21"
Channel Bass	40"	Spot	8"
Cobia	40"	Striped Bass	36"
Croaker	14"	Swordfish	Release
Dolphin	35"	Tarpon	Release
False Albacore	25"	Tautog	18"
Flounder	22"	Triggerfish	15"
Golden Tilefish	30"	Wahoo	40"
Gray Trout	22"	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 next page for the rules).

**NOTE:** Copies of release citations with this form are acceptable

## Required Information

**Tournament:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fish:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Caught:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time Caught:** \_\_\_\_\_ **AM or PM**    **Length:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Circle One:**    **Adult**    **Youth**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Optional Information:

**Weight** \_\_\_\_\_ **Where Caught:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Weigh Master's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 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. All paid club tournaments will be judged by weight.



## FISHING CONTEST RULES

1. Contest will run from January 1 to December 31. Only fish caught for recreational purposes, in accordance with state regulations, are eligible.
2. The territorial limits for this contest shall be from Ocean City, MD to Morehead City, NC. Slight variations north or south of these limits will not disqualify entry.
3. This contest is open only to PSWSFA members and their families whose dues have been paid before the catch. Youth anglers must be age 15 or less on the date of the catch. Youth entries must also meet state minimum requirements.
4. Only fish caught on hook and line, rod and reel are acceptable. No assistance at the rod or line shall be permitted, except holding the leader while the fish is being gaffed or boated.
5. There are no restrictions on tackle with the exception that power reels are not permitted.
6. Awards will be made for fish caught each month (1st through last day) at the next monthly meeting. All entries must be in the hands of the tournament chairman by the beginning of the meeting. A later entry will not be accepted. Only monthly entries are eligible for awards.
7. Acceptability of fish entered in this contest is to be entirely within the discretion of the Tournament Committee or the Board of Directors.
8. In case of a tie, the first fish caught will win.
9. Signature of witness of release must accompany entry or release.
10. November and December entries must be submitted received by January 10.
11. Monthly prize money must be picked up within 3 months after being announced.
12. A person who enters fish into another fishing club is ineligible to enter fish into the PSWSFA monthly tournament.

### Angler of the Year Award

The Angler of the Year Award is designed to honor the fisherman who consistently submits qualifying entries. The Tournament Committee will recommend Angler of the Year candidates and the PSWSFA Board will make the final Angler of the Year determination.

### Angler of the Year Scoring System

- 2 points will be awarded for each species of fish entered for the monthly contest. The fish must meet the club's minimum length to qualify, including all release entries.
- 2 points will be awarded when an entry is accompanied by a copy of a State Fishing Tournament Citation.
- 2 points will be awarded for any fish that wins the monthly contest in each species.
- 6 points will be awarded for the 1st place annual award winner in each species.
- 4 points will be awarded for the 2nd place annual award winner in each species.
- 2 points will be awarded for the 3rd place annual award winner in each species.
- 5 points will be awarded for the 1st place winner of any PSWSFA tournament.
- 3 points will be awarded for the 2nd place winner of any PSWSFA tournament.
- 1 points will be awarded for the 3rd place winner of any PSWSFA tournament.
- 5 points will be awarded for any fish that becomes a new club or state record.

Anglers are limited to 3 fish per species.

Those fish with the highest point value will be entered in the Angler of the Year point system.

### Fish of the Year Award

The Tournament Committee will make Fish of the Year recommendations to the PSWSFA Board of Directors. If in the opinion of the Board of Directors, no fish is deemed worthy of Fish of the Year, no award will be made. Regardless of the method used to determine Fish of the Year, the decision of the PSWSFA Board of Directors will be final.

### Critter of the Year Award

Any unusual catch submitted by a club member will be eligible for award when approved by the PSWSFA Board of Directors.

# Fishing Around the World



The bulk of the fly fishing in Venezuela is based around the Los Roques Archipelago, a set of beautiful islands and keys located 128 kilometres from the mainland. It's the perfect fly fishing environment consisting of one significant Island, El Gran Roque, and surrounded by a few dozen or so lesser, mostly uninhabited islands and hundreds of smaller mangroves and cays. Its mass of coral reefs and pristine flats are the ideal habitat for big Bonefish, Tarpon, Permit and an array of other species.

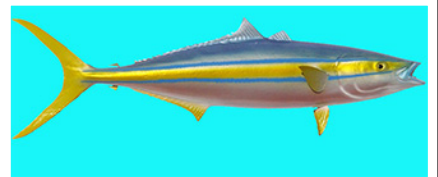
The rich waters of the coast of Venezuela are perfect for fly fishing, and the saltwater environment is rich and varied. Therefore, visiting anglers will have the opportunity to wet a fly in a wide variety of water during a typical fishing day. While the archipelago is famous for its pancake flats, the area also offers excellent opportunities on its coral banks, sandy beaches, massive flats and mangrove lagoons. For anglers who love to wade, Los Roques is a paradise.

Saltwater fly fishing in Venezuela has traditionally been based around Bonefish, and it's one of the best Bone fisheries globally, with excellent numbers of fish with superb average size. However, in recent years travelling rods have really explored the complete variety of species on offer. Tarpon and Permit to specimen sizes are regularly landed, along with Triggerfish, Parrotfish, Snook and a variety of Snappers, rugged fighting Jacks, Blue Runners, Barracuda, and Spanish Mackerel.

The mainland of Venezuela is troubled with civil unrest, and some areas feature high crime rates and poor infrastructure, but the islands off its coastline are very safe and popular among foreign tourists and Venezuelans alike. Los Roques, a scarcely populated island with around 2,000 permanent residents, has no cars and streets made of sand. It's one of the safest and quietest islands in the entire Caribbean, and crime is virtually unknown.

Once you arrive in Venezuela at the main airport in Caracas, our transfer team will take you to the National Terminal located at La Guaira (next to the International Terminal). It's then just a short 35-minute flight to the island of Los Roques.

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## 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. A new Peninsula Baptist Church sign is on the lawn just short of the driveway.

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



Club Board Meeting 14 Jan 2025



Cub Board Meeting 11 February 2025



Club Awards Banquet - 22 Feb 2025



Boat Show - 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2025



Greatbridge Fishing Flea Market - 1 March 2025



Poquoson Fishing Flea Market - 8 March 2025

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