



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 Member Meeting

17 March 2026 7:00pm

Greetings and welcome to another New Year. More flying time.

The club will once again have a booth at the Mid-Atlantic Sports & Boat show in VA Beach this year 30 Jan - 1 Feb 2026. We still need folks to help man the booth and Participate in selling raffle tickets for the custom rod and reel combo we are offering this year. Please contact myself or Stan if you can help at the boat show.

The awards banquet will be on 28 Feb 2026, the last Saturday in February, 6-10pm. The price is still \$20 for members and family and/or 1 guest. \$40 for non-members. You can access the Online payment at www.pswsfa.com, a little ways down the home page, or directly at <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/pswsfa-annual-club-banquet-copy>. QR Code on page 2.

Page 4 has the standard mail-in form & info. Either print the form or make your own with the same information. The club must have it by 20 Feb 26. **No ticket sales at the door.**

Stay well,
Mike the Editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Folks, 2026 is upon us and we have several events coming up over the next couple of months. The club banquet and awards ceremony will be February 28th. It will be held at our meeting hall as we have done the past couple of years. There is more information on the PSWSFA website and the ability to sign up online is available from there. We will be limited to 75 people, so I encourage you to make your reservations earlier instead of later. The Virginia Beach Boat Show will be held Jan 30th – Feb 1st and we will have a table there. We need a few volunteers to help man the booth and sell tickets for the rod and reel.

This year we are raffling off a custom rod and reel combo designed for sheepshead/flounder. It is a beautiful piece of work. The drawing will be Sunday at the boat show.

There are 3 events taking place in March. 1st will be the Great Bridge Fishing Flea Market on 7 March 2026. The club will have two tables there and we need volunteers to man the booth, sell tickets for another raffle and discuss the club with visitors. 2nd is the Poquoson Flea Market on the 14th and we will also have a couple of tables there and need volunteers to man the table, sell tickets and discuss the club with visitors.

We will have a couple of the club members speaking at the event on various species of fish and how we catch them. The 3rd event is the first meeting of the year the March 17th. I hope to see all of you there as we kick off another great year for the club. Chris Harris has taken over as our new Program Director and should be getting some good speakers to cover topics of interest to all of us.

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2025p 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 Abraham (alt)
Rob Laymen



QR Code for Banquet

PSWSFA 2026 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:

Please check one of the following:

New Address
PSWSFA
P.O. Box 1056
Yorktown, VA 23692-2878

- Yes, please add my name to the club membership list to get the newsletter
- No, please do not publish my info, but we never do

Presidents comments continued from page 1

For many of us last year created many challenges when it came to fishing in our general area. We dealt with a significant number of very cold and windy days that made fishing difficult. Although we had a February sea bass season, the winds and cold weather limited the days when most folks could get out and target them. Hopefully that will change for this upcoming February season. Even the spring, summer and fall was plagued by much more wind than normal. To make matters worse, the migration of many of our local species and mainstays of the warmer months changed. Many of the cobia bypassed the bay and went north to Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and even New York. Flounder fishing was more productive if you could get out but the winds created problems there also. Sheepshead fishing was okay but overall, there seemed to be fewer fish and generally speaking the size seemed to be decreasing. Even the charter boat captains were complaining about the lack of cobia and the fact that the state needs to limit the number of sheepshead. The recommendation most are making for sheepshead is a 3 fish bag limit with only 1 citation size fish. Toga fishing was pretty good around the CBBT, the reefs and inshore wrecks during the fall with a good number of keeper size fish in the mix. Spanish mackerel were around but not in the numbers found in the past. A lot of floating grass inside the bay made trolling for them difficult. King mackerel were available and seemed to be of a larger class if you could find them.

Tuna fishing is on fire as I write this with many very big fish just off the beach and on out to the windmills. There appears to be a new state record of over 800lbs that may actually be pushed out by an even larger one caught the next day. Many of the fish are over 500 lbs. With the recreational and commercial season being closed in December very few people targeted them but on Jan 1st the season opened, and it has been game on.

Stripers showed up in late December and there were a decent number of big stripers available. They are still around up the bay and up the James River around Surry. A lot of big fish are in the Rappahannock and even the Piankatank. David Brabrand caught a 49 inch striper while fishing for trout the first week of January. Speckled trout took a huge hit last winter and many were killed by the cold weather and March snow. Hopefully this winter will give them a break and the stock will rebound. The fish that survived the winter did have a large spawn and in the fall, there were plenty of 9 to 12 inch fish. Those are the fish that hatch over the summer. Currently there are some nice fish in the areas that they winter over but I've noticed a trend this past year and this winter that many of the big fish are being killed instead of being released. Trout over 20 inches are the main spawning stock where 15 to 19 inches are much better eating size from what I've been told.

To give you an idea of how bad the kill off was over last winter here are my statistics. 2023 I tagged and released 940 specks over 13 inches with 39 of those being citations. In 2024 I tagged and released 960 specks over 13 inches with 19 being citation. In 2025 I tagged and released 101 specks over "12" inches with only 5 being citations.

With the huge hatch of trout last year, it will be interesting to see how this year goes and if they return to the bay. Only time will tell. For those of you who don't fish over the winter, I encourage you to take this time to get your gear prepped and your boat ready for spring so that when the bull reds show up in the spring you are ready to tangle with them. Those of you who do fish through the winter months 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.

Stan



2025 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Saturday, 28 February 2026

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: A member can have one non-member guest at member price.

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

\$20 for member with one non-member Guest _____ **\$40 for additional non-member 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.

CBM Goes Inside World's Largest Sailing Cargo Ship on its Second Visit to Baltimore

By Bay Bulletin / December 16, 2025

It was a strange sight, visible all the way from the entrance of the Port of Baltimore's Dundalk Marine Terminal on Tuesday: a ship sitting at the dock with two massive white masts folded towards each other in the shape of a giant "X".

The ship carrying those two masts is unlike any other vessel to call on the Port of Baltimore—or any other vessel in the world, for that matter. It is the Neoliner Origin, a wind-powered roll on/ roll off cargo vessel that was just delivered to its owner in September. The ship's two foldable masts are each 295 feet tall, carrying up to 32,000 square feet of



The Neoliner Origin called on the Port of Baltimore for a second time. Photo: Port of Baltimore

total sail area. Under the right conditions, the vessel can get 60% to 70% of its propulsion from the wind. Hybrid diesel-electric engines are used when needed. Its goal? To reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly. According to computer models, the ship's propulsion system is capable of reducing carbon monoxide emissions by up to 80% (compared to a conventional ship of the same size).

We told you about the Neoliner Origin when it made its first visit to Baltimore on Oct. 30. That was also its first ever transatlantic journey (France to Baltimore by way of the French island Saint-Pierre, off the coast of Canada). And on Tuesday, Dec. 16, the ship made its second voyage to Baltimore, the only U.S. port it is calling on. After all of the cargo was unloaded Tuesday morning, Chesapeake Bay Magazine was invited on board to see the inner workings of the unique ship.



The ship's aft mast towered above port leaders, even while it was folded down with sails stowed.

We toured alongside leaders from the Port of Baltimore and the public-private partnership Ports America Chesapeake. Maryland Port Administration Executive Director Jonathan Daniels and Ports America Chesapeake President Mark Schmidt were also getting their first look inside the Neoliner Origin, seven years after discussions between Neoline and Baltimore first began.

"Proof of concept" is the phrase that came up again and again as Neoline President Jean Zanuttini led us on our ship tour. After a decade of development, Neoline is watching its cutting-edge concept play out on a real shipping route with real cargo on board.

Approaching the ship, the first thing we noticed was the massive ramp and garage. It's designed to hold all kinds of cargo, including oversized project equipment, ro/ro farm and construction vehicles, and containers. The soaring ceiling, which Zanuttini refers to as "the church", can accommodate cargo up to about 32 feet tall. There are smaller decks for pallets and other cargo. As we climbed the ramp to visit them, Schmidt noted the smell of fresh paint still lingered inside—the equivalent of that new car smell.

The living quarters in the Neoliner Origin are similarly pristine. Along with crew quarters and a crew mess,

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there is a mess for officers and passengers and passenger staterooms complete with private balconies. Yes, we said passengers. The ship can carry up to 12 guests in addition to its cargo and crew of 13. While the Neoliner Origin follows a rather chilly northern route, the spectacle of two behemoth carbon masts unfurling their sails is enough to draw adventurous ocean-going tourists.

The captain and crew on board were carefully hired based on not only their mariner credentials, but their motivation to trailblaze a green solution to shipping with the use of sails. The captain has experience with large motor vessels, but has also worked on a historic three-masted barque cargo ship. “This is a community of seamen who are really willing to use wind for shipping,” Zanuttini said.

Standing on what Zanuttini jokingly called “the spa deck” up top, we could see the ship’s huge masts. They are each supported, down below, by four motors. They are capable of being tilted to allow the Neoliner Origin to pass under bridges like the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. After all, the Bay Bridge’s maximum clearance of 186 feet wouldn’t even come close to accommodating the ship’s 295-foot-tall masts. The tilting process, on paper, should take about 90 minutes, but Neoline says it currently takes closer to three hours, as the ship’s operators learn the system. The masts are intended to be up at sea, only coming down for bridge passages and while at port.

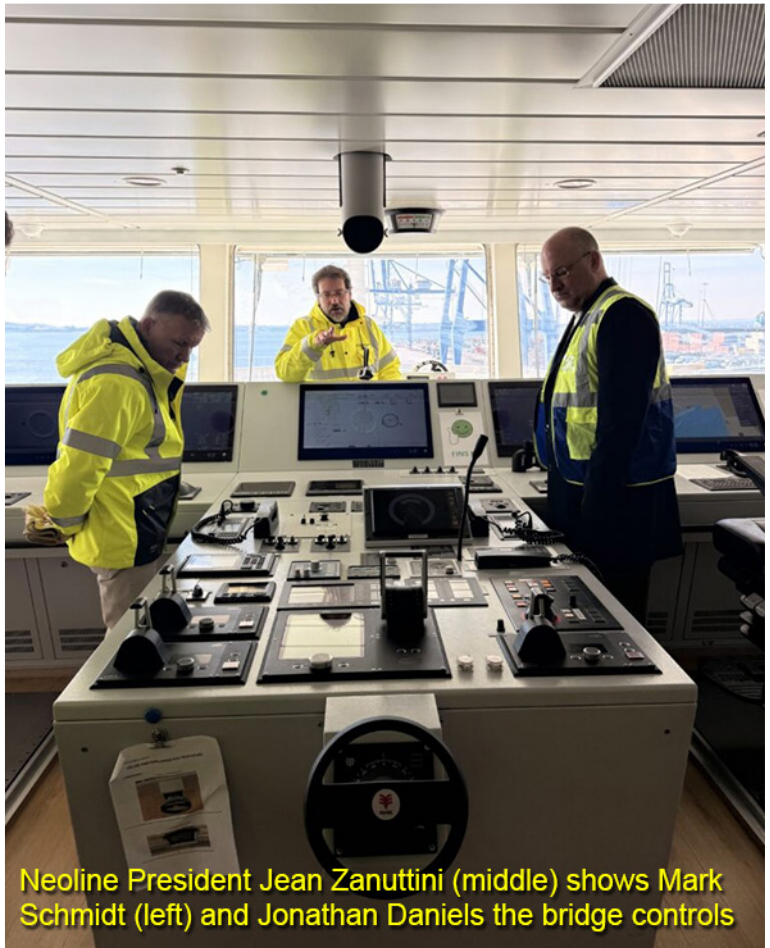
Each mast has a mainsail and a jib, which can be raised, lowered, and trimmed with the push of a button from the bridge. The sails are designed to withstand harsh conditions, but there may be some kinks yet to be worked out. On the ship’s first passage to the U.S., the upper panels of the aft sail were damaged. After some preliminary repairs in Baltimore, the ship’s sails made it back to France in one piece, but Zanuttini said there were more small issues on the passage back to Baltimore, too. The Neoliner Origin will undergo more significant repairs in France to address the problem fully.

With fully functioning sails, Neoline Technical Manager Guilhem Péan told me the goal is for the ship to spend 80% of the time under sail. “The idea is to be under sail all the time, until we get to port,” he said. But it will take additional trips and more time to optimize sail propulsion.

Despite being a monohull sailboat, the Neoliner Origin does not have a keel. Instead, there are two anti-drift fins, nearly 20 feet long each, that can be angled using controls on the bridge. The ship’s skeg and long rudder also help with drift. But the hull itself is flat-bottomed like a traditional cargo ship.



Containers being unloaded on Tuesday, Dec. 16
Photo by Yann Trémerbert



Neoline President Jean Zanuttini (middle) shows Mark Schmidt (left) and Jonathan Daniels the bridge controls

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Neoline's choice to team up with Baltimore for its proof-of-concept liner service fits with the port's goals of reducing emissions. "Baltimore provides an entire green solution," says Ports America Chesapeake Commercial Operations Manager Kevin Dowling. Moving towards a goal of net zero emissions by 2050, the port is already using electric vehicles, hybrid electric cranes, and green stevedoring equipment.

Baltimore also made sense because Neoline's first two committed customers were French boatbuilder Beneteau and construction/farm equipment company Manitou. Both were already shipping at the Port of Baltimore, and have been able to keep their chain consistent.

So far, Neoline does not have any exports to ship out of Baltimore. The vessel left empty of cargo. That's something the Maryland Port Administration and Ports America Chesapeake are working to change. During our tour, Daniels, Schmidt, and Ports America Director of Operations Tim Beall brainstormed with Zanuttini about the possible types of cargo the Neoliner Origin could carry. The size of the garage and stern ramp make the ship useful for oversized cargo. Being enclosed and protected from the elements, the cargo space would be ideal for new boats or repositioning mid-sized private yachts, Daniels said.

"I'd love to see this whole thing filled door to door," Beall told us after the tour, looking at the cavernous cargo space. For now, the ship will continue shipping limited cargo: double-stacked containers with French luxury items inside, refrigerated containers, and small ro/ro vehicles. Oh, and the ship's passengers.

The guests staying aboard the ship as it leaves Baltimore will be at sea for Christmas this year. The ship is bound for Saint-Pierre on its way back to Saint Nazaire, France, with expected arrival in France on Dec. 30. The Neoliner Origin is leaving the Chesapeake Bay the same way she came, by rounding Cape Henry.

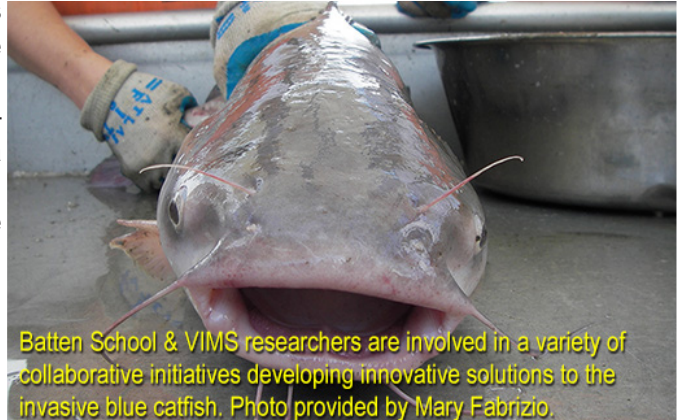
If you missed her coming and going this time, never fear: the Neoliner Origin will be back in February, March and April as Neoline continues working to test and improve their "proof of concept" and establish regular liner service.



Can Virginia stop the blue catfish? New research shows the Chesapeake Bay's top invader is hard to control

By Ethan Smith 15 Dec 2025

For decades, the Chesapeake Bay's rivers and tributaries have been home to a troublesome guest whose presence continues to ripple through the ecosystem. The blue catfish — first introduced in the 1970s for recreational fishing — has since become an ecologically disruptive force in Virginia waters. In response, scientists at William & Mary's Batten School & VIMS are making critical discoveries about blue catfish biology, impact and commercial market potential, and playing a key role in advising how the commonwealth can address the challenge.



Batten School & VIMS researchers are involved in a variety of collaborative initiatives developing innovative solutions to the invasive blue catfish. Photo provided by Mary Fabrizio.

A growing ecological toll in the Bay

Through the long-running juvenile finfish trawl survey, Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences & VIMS Professor Mary Fabrizio, along with her students and colleagues, has documented both the spread of blue catfish and the corresponding decline of native species. “As the blue catfish population started to increase in our tributaries, we saw a decline in the native white catfish and white perch, which is likely due to predation or competition for resources,” she said. “And some of our colleagues in Maryland have evidence suggesting the blue catfish may be impacting striped bass, likely preying on the eggs and the juveniles.”

According to Fabrizio, another icon of the Chesapeake Bay may also be threatened: “The other effect is that blue catfish, especially the medium sized fish, are preying on blue crabs. And because there are so many medium sized blue catfish, that translates into a lot of removals. They're eating a lot of blue crabs.”

To investigate that interaction, Fabrizio recently led a two-year diet study, published in *Marine and Coastal Fisheries*, which quantified blue catfish predation on blue crabs. “We worked with a commercial waterman who was setting gillnets out in the James River. He would bring back the catch, and we would examine the stomach contents,” she said. “We looked at predation year-round, which hadn't been done before.”

The results were sobering: “It turns out blue catfish are eating the same things in winter as in spring and fall, so there's blue crab predation happening year-round,” said Fabrizio. Stomach content analysis also showed that blue catfish are specifically targeting juvenile crabs. “Older, larger crabs may be too feisty and fight back, or perhaps they're faster and able to escape. Either way,” she said, “blue catfish are eating the juvenile crabs that Virginia counts on to sustain the [future blue crab population](#).”

Helping Virginia respond to — and eat — blue catfish

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science serves as a non-partisan advisor to the commonwealth, with a statutory mandate to provide unbiased data to the lawmakers and regulators who ultimately determine policy. As such, several Batten School & VIMS researchers are involved in a variety of collaborative initiatives developing innovative solutions to the blue catfish issue.

One key contributor to this important work is Marine Business Specialist Shelby White Ph.D. '23, who led the Batten School & VIMS' participation in the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (VDACS)

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Blue Catfish Work Group. “It’s a broad collection of researchers, fishermen, processors and state agencies,” she said. “We’re trying to increase the market, while balancing stakeholder interests and minimizing impacts to the Chesapeake Bay.”

Within the Marine Advisory Program (MAP) at the Batten School & VIMS, White is the primary investigator studying how to expand the commercialization of blue catfish in Virginia. Working with Associate Professor Andrew Scheld, a marine resource economics expert, White has explored commercial watermen’s interest in what is currently a relatively small fishery, even though watermen can harvest blue catfish year-round with more flexibility than other commercial species.

In a pair of recent publications, White and Scheld, along with additional co-authors, found that while low dockside prices and limited processors were the biggest barriers for watermen to harvest blue catfish, a majority of consumers have eaten or would be willing to eat blue catfish. They also found that messaging centered around the positive ecological impact of eating the invader significantly increased consumers’ willingness to try it.

Batten School & VIMS researchers have additionally collaborated with VDACS’s Marine Products Board, which markets the state’s seafood. “We’ve worked with them a lot on our research and helped create outreach materials,” said White. She compares current marketing for “Virginia wild-caught blue catfish” to the once-disregarded Patagonian toothfish, which was rebranded in the 1970s and is now sold as the high-end “Chilean sea bass.”

“People sometimes think of catfish as the muddy bottom fish, but we’ve been working hard to transform that perception,” she said. “We need people to eat blue catfish, chefs to prepare it, processors to process it and watermen to catch it. Trying to do all those simultaneously is the trick.”

Recent changes in recreational policy

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) has attempted to get recreational fishermen involved in removing blue catfish from the water by eliminating a size limit on trophy fish of the invasive species. Fabrizio advised the agency, recommending “that they track the size and age of fish that were being captured following these changes,” she said. “That will help them know if the recreational fishery is actually reducing population size, or if they’re just skimming off the top.”

Fabrizio’s research has indicated that preserving a trophy fishery would be incompatible with protecting native species. A 2025 publication in *Marine and Coastal Fisheries*, coauthored by Fabrizio, confirmed the predicted correlation between a recreational fishery and the predation on blue crabs. “You can’t continue a trophy fishery that maintains large fish in the population and not have an effect on native species like blue crabs and others,” she said.

However, Fabrizio also warned of unintended consequences: “Removing a certain number of large fish reduces the competition for resources in the ecosystem,” she explained. “With less competition, the fish that are left can grow faster, reach maturity earlier and lay more eggs — and that includes all the remaining medium sized blue catfish.”

Complex choices across the Bay system

Coordination across the entire Chesapeake watershed remains difficult. “We need to make some progress on getting managers to agree on what we need to do for the Chesapeake Bay as a whole, and that’s been slow,” Fabrizio said. “There are three different goals — control the species, maintain a trophy fishery and build a sustainable commercial fishery — and they’re not always compatible.”



Batten School & VIMS Professor Mary Fabrizio studies the spread of blue catfish and the corresponding decline of native species. Photo provided by Mary Fabrizio.

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In pursuit of a holistic approach to watershed management of blue catfish, a diverse interstate working group meets twice a year to exchange information and coordinate their efforts. The Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team, organized by the Chesapeake Bay Program, includes representatives in research, policy, nonprofits, recreational fishing, commercial fishing and the culinary industry from across Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia.

“This is where we report our findings and talk about what we know, what’s new and what we need to consider,” said Fabrizio. “It’s a lot of viewpoints and, because of that, it can be hard to agree on what we want, what we value and what we need to do for our system.”

When asked if the blue catfish can ever be eradicated, Fabrizio doesn’t hesitate. “Not possible,” she said. “No question, we cannot get rid of them all. I’m sorry it’s not a happy end to the story, but there’s not enough money, not enough people, not enough time to do what would need to be done. And with climate change, these fish are pushing north; they’re already in Delaware Bay.”

Scheld similarly cautions that any expansion of the commercial market will likely be gradual. “The market will probably remain relatively small. Yes, there’s some increase in consumer awareness and that may contribute to seafood dealers expanding sales, perhaps outside of our immediate region, but it will be slow.”

Still, new research continues. White and Scheld are currently working with North Carolina to test blue catfish for contaminants, meet with processors to understand factors influencing their participation and dig deeper on consumer preferences by having individuals sample products and provide feedback. They also have proposals under review to expand that work into Virginia. Meanwhile, Fabrizio is working with fellow professor Grace Chiu to study how predator-prey overlaps have shifted over time in the Bay.

There are also promising experimental solutions, beyond fishing removals, that could still be attempted. Fabrizio identified the “Trojan Y Male” method as a theoretical strategy for reducing the population over time by genetically influencing the fish to produce all-male offspring. However, she remains pragmatic: “You can’t just do one thing; what you want to do is combine multiple methods. It’s gotten out of control for too many years for there to be a single silver bullet, easy answer.”

Asked what success might look like decades from now, Fabrizio paused. “It would look like lowered ecological impacts of this species on our native species, but I’m not optimistic. We’re the cautionary tale,” she admitted. “People who really identify with and value this system need to speak up about what they want. It’s not up to science; we only provide the data. It’s up to the people who live and work and play in this area to decide what they want and if we will try to minimize the impact of blue catfish on the Chesapeake Bay.”

Blue catfish are here to stay

A confluence of species characteristics has made the blue catfish a nightmare for ecological preservation, including dietary flexibility, a long lifespan and a protective nesting strategy. Energetic modeling work, led by Batten School & VIMS alumnus Vaskar Nepal Ph.D. ’20 and recently published in *Ecological Modelling*, revealed that the species can thrive — and reproduce — even when food is scarce. Still other studies have indicated an increasing tolerance of brackish conditions, which could allow the species to further expand from freshwater into estuarine habitats. In short, it’s a perfect storm of invasive advantages.



From top to bottom: the invasive blue catfish, channel catfish (also introduced into tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay) and native white catfish. Photo provided by Mary Fabrizio.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Breaks Ground on 49-Mile Rail Trail

By Meg Walburn Viviano

The Eastern Shore Railroad was a game changer for Maryland's lower Eastern Shore and the Eastern Shore of Virginia when it was finished in 1883. A direct lifeline from Pocomoke City to Cape Charles, it made Accomack and Northampton counties the wealthiest rural counties in America. Incredibly, the railroad (later operating as the Bay Coast Railroad) ran all the way until 2018, when the tracks had finally deteriorated too much to continue.



The Eastern Shore Rail Trail will run through picturesque locations like this one in Exmore. Photo by Lauren Schultis

Now, the rail line will have new life as the Eastern Shore Rail Trail project, a 49-mile-long paved path for pedestrians and cyclists. Construction got underway last month on the first two segments of the 10-foot-wide, shared-use path in Cape Charles.

On Friday, May 22, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Friends of the Eastern Shore Rail Trail, and community members broke ground on the initial two sections of the Eastern Shore Rail Trail. They will connect Cape Charles and Cheriton, a town of just 486 people at the last U.S. Census. Cheriton is home to Eyre Hall, a colonial plantation house that has been in the same family since 1668 (that's 12 generations!).



An Eastern Shore Railroad train. Photo: Cape Charles Historical Society

In the late 1800s, the railroad provided an economic boom for the Eastern Shore of Virginia that led to the arrival of towns like Cape Charles, Exmore, and Parksley. The railroad brought wealthy visitors in comfort and style to the Eastern Shore, where they frequented hotels and hunt clubs and enjoyed abundant game, produce, and seafood.

After the Great Depression, the Eastern Shore of Virginia struggled to recover. Amid decades of steady decline of railroad business and the poor condition of the tracks, the railroad section between Hallwood, Virginia, and Cape Charles, was abandoned. It was a great opportunity for the corridor to be preserved for use as a rail trail.

The Rail Trail construction will take place mostly within right of way managed by railroad operator Canonic Atlantic, with minor sections built in VDOT's right of way. The 2.1-mile Cape Charles section and the 1.4-mile Cheriton section will cost \$6.55 million. The railbanked, primarily flat and straight right of way will allow for a connection between communities, businesses, and state and federal park land. That connection is promising for tourism opportunities and economic growth.

The Cape Charles and Cheriton trail segments are expected to be finished by fall 2026.



At a boat show last year, we listened to a major boat builder's able sales manager explain in clear detail how the company's design team had carefully crafted a new express cruiser's amenities and performance around what their research told them their customers were looking for. One thing that strikes us about the best builders is their attention to detail. In this case, it was impressive, with much talk about how carefree those details would make a day of cruising, sunning, swimming, cooking, eating, and otherwise enjoying being on the water with family and friends.

But we were also struck by the fact that the emphasis was first on amenities and second on performance, with not much said about how the hull responds when wind and seas kick up. Most striking of all, there was little attention to the kind of daily maintenance that should go into ensuring safety, reliability, and durability in a vessel worth well up in six figures.

If you're shopping at one of this winter's indoor shows where sea trials aren't available, the challenge is even trickier. You can still learn a lot, though. First, think hard about what it would be like to live with this particular boat. Go aboard and visualize what a typical day would feel like underway in both calm and gnarly seas, on the hook, or at a sandbar.

If you're so inclined, how would she fish (drifting, jigging, bottom fishing, casting, and/or trolling)? Are there dedicated spaces for all of the gear you'd want to carry? Can you and your passengers move around safely? Are there secure handholds everywhere someone might reach for one?

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Carefully study the shape of the hull (it might require crawling around underneath). Imagine the boat running at cruising speed. What does the running surface that's carrying you look like? How sharp is the part of the hull that first hits oncoming seas? How will the running bottom change shape at different speeds, trim levels, and loads?

What kind of speeds are you looking for? In most cases, top speeds above 40 knots (46 mph) aren't useful on the Chesapeake's choppy water, for comfort as much as safety or fuel economy. More valuable are efficient cruising speeds of 15-25 knots (17-28 mph). In the open Bay, it's especially useful to know the boat's minimum planning speed when afternoon seas kick up. Don't underpower, but don't go over either. Some hulls balance better with smaller engines. Most boat and engine manufacturers publish speed/fuel performance profiles for specific models and power choices. Maximum power may or may not be the way to go. Think carefully about what you want to do with the boat first.

How well is the boat built? Sight along the hull to see if it is fair. Look carefully at joints where hull, deck, transom, and cabin meet. How well are its operating systems rigged? Is wiring accessible, neat, secure, and well labelled? Engine mount(s) and control systems? Steering system? How about plumbing, especially including bilge pump(s)? Does the cockpit have adequate drains? Open hatches and doors. Do they swing freely? Are there magnets or latches to hold them open? How well are hinges fastened? Look and feel around inside the anchor locker at the bow. How consistent and secure is the hull-to-deck joint? How neatly is the compartment finished? Is there a secure eye for tying off the bitter end of the anchor line? Is there adequate space for an appropriate anchor over a proper coil of rode and chain? Does the compartment drain overboard or to the bilge? How secure is the hatch?

Finally, what maintenance will the boat require beyond a good cleanup after each trip? How accessible are plumbing, wiring, steering, and throttle/shift controls? How much of the regular in-season and annual maintenance can you handle, and how much will you have to rely on the dealer or other service providers?

Questions, questions. Yes, the list is long and requires serious thought. Better think through now than become disappointed later. Bringing a boat into your family is like getting a new puppy. It will bring serious pleasure, but it also will require care and feeding. Make sure you know both sides of that equation ahead of time. Then go forward for a great 2026 on the Chesapeake!



Virginia Beach Sport Fishing



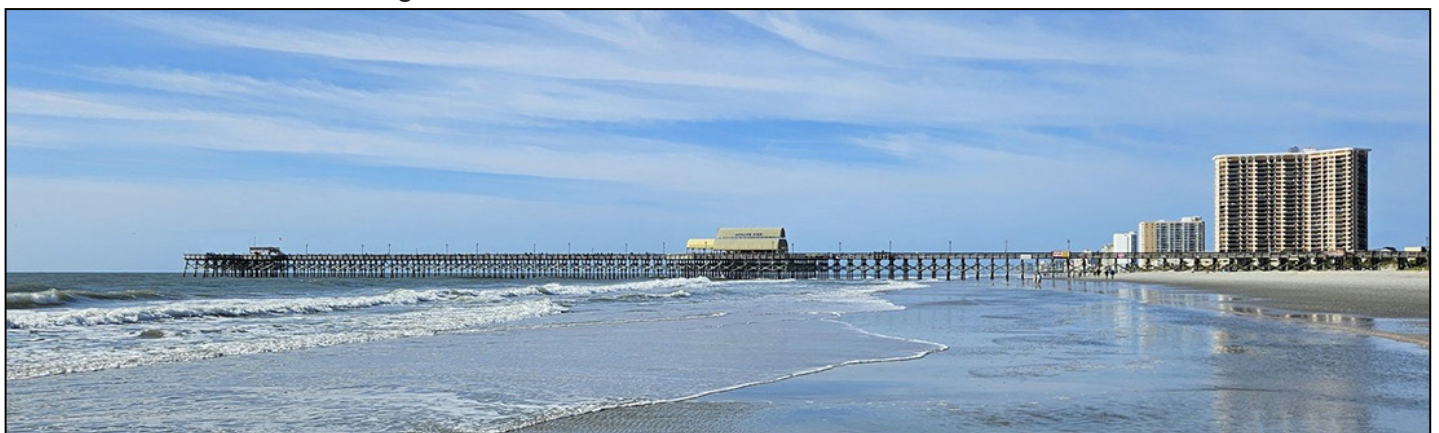
A local Virginia Beach angler Mike Rogerson has just reeled in a massive 835.8-pound bluefin tuna that is poised to obliterate the current state record—by over 130 pounds!

This epic catch happened on Saturday, January 10, while fishing in dense fog off the Smith Island Flats near the Eastern Shore. Rogerson was aboard the 58-foot charter boat High Hopes captained by David Wright and operating out of Rudee Inlet at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center. At just 23 years old and relatively new to this level of big-game fishing, with only one prior charter trip in Cabo under his belt, Rogerson stepped up for what turned into a 90-minute adrenaline-fueled battle!

The tuna measured an impressive 108 inches long and tipped the scales at 835.8 pounds—dwarfing the existing

Virginia state record of 708 pounds, set by Jake Hiles back in February 2020. Before that, the mark stood at 606 pounds from 2007. Certification through the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament is expected soon (likely just a formality in about a week), and it will officially make this the new benchmark for bluefin in the state.

This is the kind of legendary moment that gets the whole fishing community buzzing—congratulations to Mike Rogerson, Captain Wright, mate Andrew Flory, and the High Hopes crew on an absolute monster catch that's set to rewrite Virginia's record books!





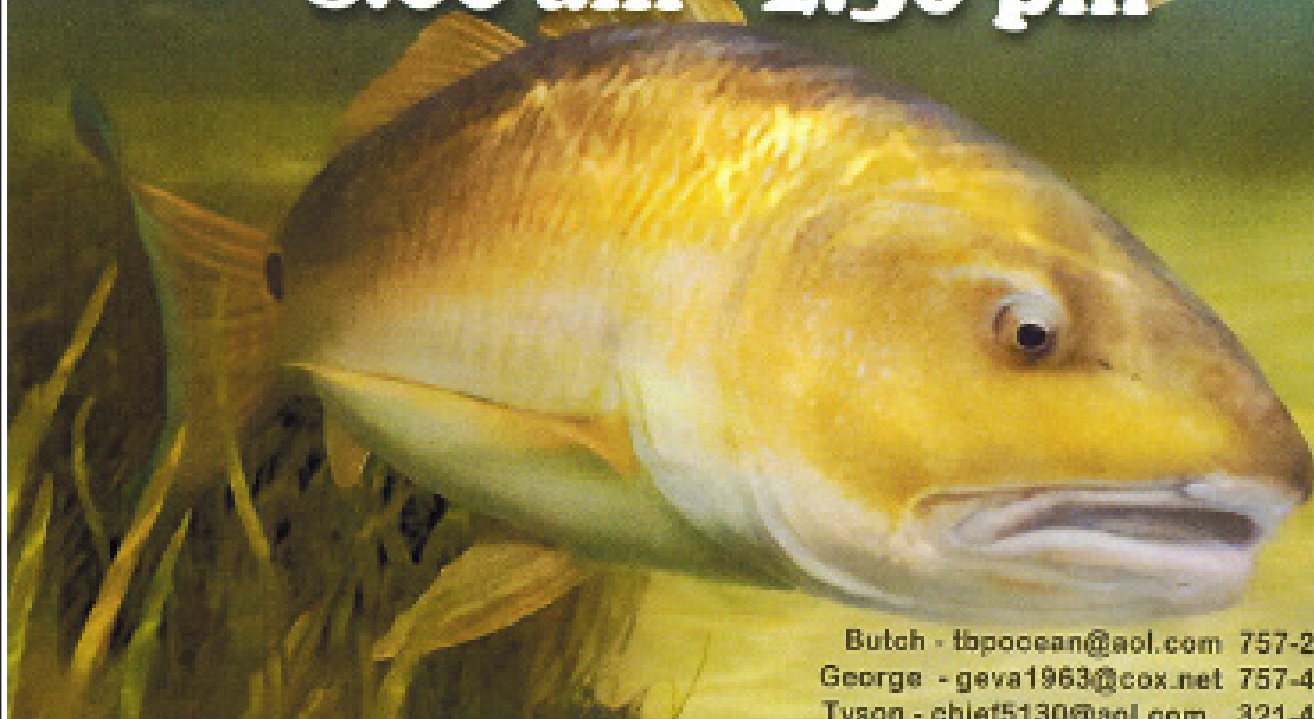
ANNUAL Fishing Flea Market

**17th
YEAR!**

MAJOR
SUPPORTERS



**March 7, 2026
8:00 am - 2:30 pm**



Butch - fbpoccean@aol.com 757-287-0330
George - geva1963@cox.net 757-421-7333
Tyson - chief5130@aol.com 321-405-7977

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Or Visit 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 Scholarship Awards Presented

Way South Chesapeake Bay Fishing Report, January 15 Update:

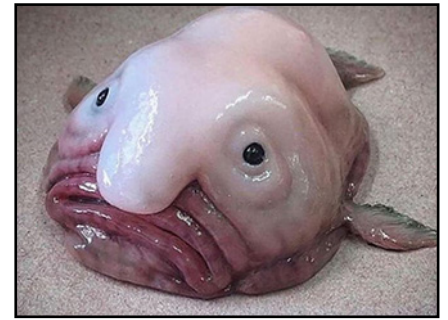
There are several good reasons to brave the cold in this region of the Chesapeake Bay. The red drum were active this week in the Way South tidal tributaries. We had several reports of puppy drum cruising the shallows feeding on bait at depths of four feet or less. One angler caught a limit of reds, keeping three fish in the upper range of the slot, and releasing several others. Fresh shrimp was the hot bait. Another angler reported that he has had no problem finding reds in the shallows, but that not all the schools are willing to eat. You may come across one school that is not interested in feeding, while another school is fired up and all the fish are willing to eat. The best thing to do is cover water, locate the schools, and try several different baits or lure presentations.



Speckled trout are roaming around the tidal creeks in the branches of the southern Bay tributaries.

Speckled trout are also overwintering in most of the same tributaries as the red drum. The specks can be found in Rudee Inlet, Lynnhaven Inlet, the Elizabeth River, Linkhorn Bay, and just about any tributary in the Norfolk or Virginia Beach area. Anglers wading the smaller tidal creeks are having luck casting slow sinking and suspending jerkbaits for specks. They are lethargic this time of year, so you will want to be very methodical with your retrieve. Cold water temperatures typically make these fish school up in deeper waters, but they tend to hold near areas with shallow flats and creeks nearby. They move into the shallows to feed and take advantage of warm weather or sunny conditions. Striped bass catches have been more consistent in the lower James River and Yorktown area. Bridge structures and docks with lights are great places to find stripers this time of year.

**The December
Mystery Fish was:
Blobfish or Blob Sculpin**



The scientific name of the fish in the famous blobfish photo is *Psychrolutes microporos*, from a family of fish called Psychrolutidae. However, the term 'blobfish' is sometimes used more broadly to describe other members of the Psychrolutidae family such as *Psychrolutes microporos*.

The first specimen of *P. microporos* was found by a research vessel off the coast of New Zealand in 1983. It was another decade before the fish was formally described and given its scientific name.

Blobfish species live in some of the deepest pockets of the ocean, at depths between 600 and 1,200m. Down there, the pressure can be more than 100 times what the atmospheric pressure you feel right now. Blobfish have a variety of adaptations to live in high-pressure habitats, including a squishy body, with soft bones and very little muscle.

On the bottom they look like this:





Virginia Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Last Revised
May 2025



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

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: 43 inches
- Recreational Bag Limit: 1 per person or 2 per vessel, whichever is more restrictive.
- Season: June 15 - September 20
- 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, corrosion-resistant, 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

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



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: May 15-July 15, Aug 5-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,

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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2025 Sheepshead Tournament



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FISH TALES



Stan with 24.5" Speck



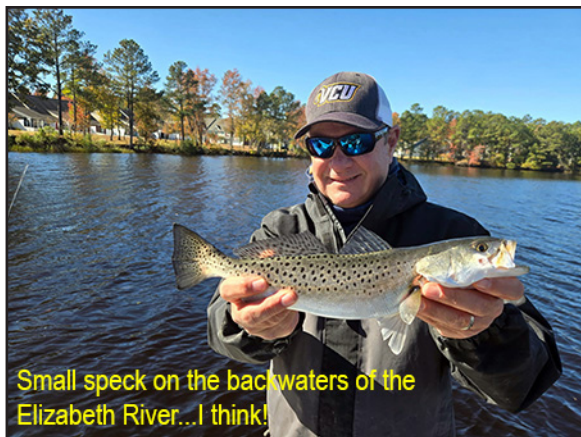
Dave Brabrand and 49" Bass caught on 1st cast fishing for Specks with Stan



Paul with 27" citation Speck



Chris with 22" Speck



Small speck on the backwaters of the Elizabeth River...I think!



Rick Wineman and 44" Striper

Monthly Tournament List November 2025

Golden Tilefish
Wally Veal 43"

Sea Bass
Wally Veal 19.75"

Channel Bass
Nick Hite 51"

Speckled Trout
Stan Simmerman 24.75"

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



- Four Ways to Turn in your Forms:
- Hand deliver to monthly meetings or Board Meeting
 - 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: _____

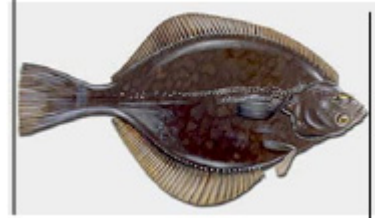
Optional Information:

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

Why choose French Guiana for a fishing trip?

French Guiana is a paradise for sport fishing enthusiasts. This wild territory is home to exceptional aquatic biodiversity, whether in the sea or on the river. Here, you can come across emblematic species such as the arapaima, the piranha or the tucunare, renowned for its spectacular fight, but also red carp, giant tarpon or groupers. And let's not forget that French Guiana is also an ideal destination for immersing yourself in an unspoilt natural setting, far from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

Fishing in French Guiana is more than just an activity: it's a real adventure. From majestic rivers to secluded coves and coastal areas, every outing is a unique experience.

In French Guiana, the right equipment is essential. A sturdy rod and a reel capable of withstanding powerful fish are essential for fishing ultra-powerful fish in the sea. You'll need a variety of baits, both artificial and natural (even flies for freshwater).

My advice is that, given the diversity of conditions, you should trust a good guide and check that he or she has all the equipment needed to face the sea and the river. Don't hesitate to ask for an inventory of your gear, because not all guides are serious. The advantage of a guide is that you can travel light and avoid plane fares and overweight lures. Finally, you'll maximize your chances of success with a good local guide. These experts know the fishing areas perfectly and can introduce you to the techniques specific to the territory.

A fishing trip to French Guiana is much more than just a holiday: it's a total immersion in spectacular, authentic nature. With careful preparation and respect for the environment, you're guaranteed an unforgettable experience.



So you think you know your Fish

Name this Fish?
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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.

Scan Link with your phone to Pay Dues. It costs a bit extra though.



WHAT'S UP NEXT & BEYOND



Virginia Beach Boat Show - Jan 30 - 1 Feb 2026



Awards Banquet is 28 February 2025 at our usual meeting place at the Peninsula Baptist Church



Great Bridge Fishing Flea Market - 7 March 2026



First meeting of 2026 is March 17th

NEW ADDRESS

PENINSULA SALT WATER SPORTS FISHERMAN'S ASSOC.

P.O. BOX 1056

YORKTOWN VA 23692-2878

