

THE NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB

# WIRELINE

FEBRUARY 2026



## What's Inside

Guest Speaker: Henry Troutner, Planning a Fishing Vacation

Fishing Tips: Captain Bill Pappas, *Playin' Hookey Charters*,  
Bluefin Tuna Fishing

Fishing Reports;

- Costa Rica: Pacific Sailfish, Roosterfish, Tripletail, Mahi

Mid-Atlantic  
Boat Show  
January 30  
to  
February 1  
VB Convention Center

# Leadership Notes...

Fellow Norfolk Anglers,

The Mid-Atlantic Boat Show is here! Beginning on Friday January 30th at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. We look forward to seeing you at the show.

Want to get your fishing season off to a great start?! Remember that Valentine's Day is February 14th. Your fishing partner doesn't want fishing hooks on the 14th, she wants a new Norfolk Anglers Club Tee Shirt! We'll have them available at the Boat Show to bail you out.

Our next big Members's event this spring is our annual awards banquet. As in past years we're being hosted by the Norfolk Yacht & Country Club on March 21st. This is a members only and their invited guests event. Tickets (\$35 per person) are available through our club website or you send a check or pay at the February meeting. The deadline to sign up and pay is Friday March 6th.

Congratulations to Alex Perez and Mary Troutner for their Redfish "Spots" Tournament entries. Alex took top honors with his 16.75" 9 Spot Redfish caught on March 3 and Mary with her 25.0" 8 Spot Redfish caught on August 23rd. Congratulations also goes to John Curry for his 2.67# Oyster Toad entry caught at the JRB on Sept 13th. John beat out 6 other anglers in the hotly contested tournament and will get a coveted Oyster Toadfish Non-Tipping Drink Holder for his prize!

Will

## Meeting

### Guest Speaker: Henry Troutner, Planning a Fishing Vacation

We're happy to have our own Henry Troutner talking about planning a fishing vacation. Henry and Mary have taken a number of trips to Central America on "Fishing Vacations" to destinations like Mexico and Costa Rica. Join us on February 16th to learn how easy and fun these trips can be fishing with friends in exotic locations.



**Important:**  
**February 16th, 2026 at 7:00pm**  
**NAC Meeting at Boil Bay**  
**Seafood City, Norfolk,**

## Publishers NOTES

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Henry Troutner

**Treasurer:**

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[www.NorfolkAnglersClub.com](http://www.NorfolkAnglersClub.com)

## Club Calendar

### February

Sun, Feb 1st; Mid-Atlantic Sports and Boat Show, Virginia Beach Convention Center  
Mon, Feb 16th; Norfolk Anglers Club Regular Meeting Boil Bay Seafood City, Norfolk  
Tue, Feb 24th; Virginia Marine Resources Commission meeting, 380 Fenwick Rd, Ft Monroe, VA

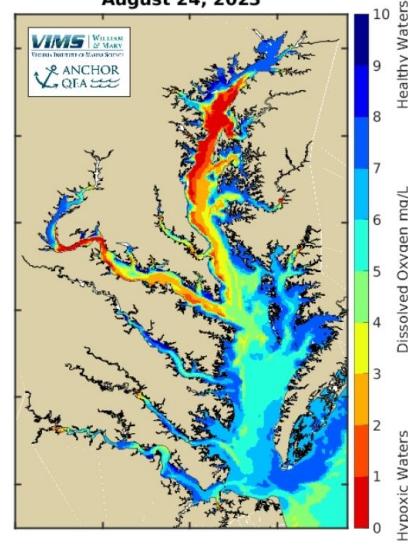
### March

Sat, Mar 7th; Fishing Flea Market, Virginia Beach Field House, 8:00am-2:30pm  
Sat, Mar 14th; Kiwanis Poquoson Nautical Arts & Crafts Flea Market, Poquoson High School 8:00am - 1:00pm  
Mon, Mar 16th; Norfolk Anglers Club Regular Meeting Boil Bay Seafood City, Norfolk  
Sat, Mar 21st; Awards Banquet (Members Event)  
Tue, Mar 24th; Virginia Marine Resources Commission meeting, 380 Fenwick Rd, Ft Monroe, VA

## **Chesapeake Bay Environmental Forecast System**

Use our forecasts and real-time "nowcasts" of temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, harmful algal blooms, waves and other environmental factors within the Chesapeake Bay to help plan your fishing! Based on observations and computer models developed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and partners, these tools accurately predict the current status of important environmental variables and how they are likely to change in the short-term. Check out this free resource to have a more productive day on the water!

**Bottom Oxygen: Nowcast**  
August 24, 2023



<https://www.vims.edu/cbefs/>

# Club Members Tournament for 2026

## Redfish "Spots" Tournament

### Rules

- Must be a Norfolk Anglers Club Member
- Tournament for fish caught between January 1, 2026 and December 31, 2026
- Must have the Norfolk Anglers Club decal in the photo with the fish on a measuring device\* showing the total length of the fish. See NAC Prize Fish Contest Rules for measuring info. \*Entries received with decal and no measurement can only be judged by number of spots. Photo entries without a decal or measurement tape are not accepted.
- Red Drum/Redfish up to 26 inches in length only and caught in Virginia and North Carolina waters
- Awards determined by 1st: number of Spots (on one side), 2nd: Largest Fish up to 26 inches, 3rd: Date of Catch
- Entries submitted on the Club Prize Fish Entry Form with photo (can be sent electronically to; [NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com))
- No entry fee except the cost of the decal (\$1)
- \$50.00 Gift Card to the 1st Place Angler, \$25.00 Gift Card for the 2nd Place Angler.



## Oyster Toadfish Tournament Rules

- Must be a Norfolk Anglers Club Member
- Tournament for fish caught between January 1, 2026 and December 31, 2026
- Awards determined by:
  1. Total Weight
  2. Date of catch
  3. Date of entry submission
- Entries submitted by email to [NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com) in the form of a Fishing Report; who was fishing, stating total weight, with photo of the fish on the scale
- Weighing need not be on a certified scale and may be done by the angler, just try to avoid weighing fish on a pitching boat
- No entry fee (we would never charge a fee for catching Toads)
- Winners will be determined by our Tournament Director

Alex "AJ" Perez, Jr.  
Oyster Toadfish Tournament Director (TOTTD)





# premium membership MATTERS

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Offer only valid with automatic renewal enrollment.

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THE MEMBERSHIP THAT MATTERS

## Bluefin Tuna Fishing

Captain Bill Pappas, *Playin' Hookey Charters*

Late 2025 and early 2026 will be remembered as one of the best bluefin tuna fishing coastal Virginia has ever seen. With Trophy size fish (73 inches and greater) being caught everywhere off the coast. Large bluefin were caught right off the Virginia Beach oceanfront, as far out as 45nm, and along the inshore waters of Virginia's Eastern Shore. A new Virginia State Record for bluefin tuna was set on January 10, 2026 by Mike Rogerson of Virginia Beach caught off the Eastern Shore measuring 9 feet in length and weighing 832.6 pounds! The fish was caught fishing on *High Hopes* charter vessel guided by Captain David Wright out of Rudee Inlet.

Capt Pappas shared fishing for bluefin takes an entire team on the boat and the most valuable asset is a good Mate. Bluefin can hit suddenly and with a force that surprises many anglers. A Mate can control the chaos that follows by directing angler on lines to clear and give the Captain the situation awareness on what the fish is doing behind and under the boat. Capt Pappas added that good communication and coordination is needed during the fight and especially alongside the boat. A fight with a bluefin could be an hour fight or much MUCH longer! He recommends having the crew coordinated to fight the fish together, when one angler tires from reeling have a plan to change out an angler while continuing the pressure on the fish. One of the most common mistakes fighting a tuna is to relax the pressure while handing off the rod to another angler and allowing the line to go slack and the rod to straighten. Giving a bluefin an opportunity to rest for a moment is like giving them a chance to recharge. He added, always control your fish!



Photo courtesy of Playin' Hookey Charters

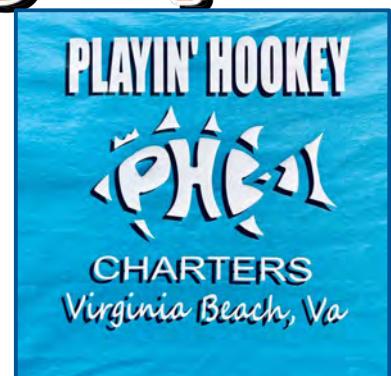


Photo courtesy of Playin' Hookey Charters

Capt Pappas shared, during the fight with a large bluefin your gear and rigging is going to be tested. You're either going to land the fish or it's going to get away from you. Sometimes the best gear, best rigging, and the best hook set isn't enough and a line breaks because of constant chafe or rubbing on another line. It's important to clear other lines and keep your line free of any entanglements with fishing line or buoy floats.

Playin' Hookey Charters fishes four to six lines for bluefin tuna. Trolling at a speed around 5 knots they will stagger two lines off the transom; one rigged with an artificial shad (9-12") and the other with an 80oz, 64oz, or 32oz inline sinker trailing a 20oz Mojo lure. The length behind the boat and sinker weight are adjusted to get these baits down in the water column. The inline sinker is rigged with a bridal setup so that when the sinker reaches the transom it can be quickly unclipped and the remaining line retrieved on the reel. The remaining rigs are set up off the outriggers and away from the boat and the trailing rigs off the transom.

# Norfolk Anglers Club

[www.norfolkanglersclub.com](http://www.norfolkanglersclub.com)

# Fishing Tips...

The rigs off the outriggers are Joe Shute 3 ounce skirted lures rigged with a large ballyhoo. The Joe Shute lures come in various colors and a version that's keel-weighted for ballyhoo rigging (photo right). Popular colors this season have been the Blue/White and the Candy Apple Red lures. Just like the rigs off the transom, these will also be staggered but remain in the upper water column. Capt Pappas explained, four rigs is all you need to the cover the water column. When tuna feed near the surface there's likely going to be birds diving to finish off the leftovers. Be on the lookout for diving or feeding birds and maneuver the boat and lure spread to the area.

Once you get the tuna alongside the boat it's your choice whether you gaff, harpoon, or flying gaff to initially secure the fish. This is when crew communication and calmness prevail in getting to a position where a tail rope can be rigged. Capt Pappas recommends bleeding and cooling the fish down as quickly as possible taking care to not allow the fish to thrash around and bruise the meat.

To bleed the fish an incision is made perpendicular to the lateral line and directly behind the pectoral fin on each side. Following the lateral line is one of the main arteries of the fish. Removing the gills and guts is the next step before placing the fish in a cooling bag with a slurry of ice and seawater. Bluefin tune must be landed whole with their head and tail intact. This will rapidly cool the meat and preserve the freshness of the fish while eliminating much of the "fishy" taste. Capt Pappas explained that depending how the bluefin is handled and processed in the boat can affect the taste. Likewise, different parts of the fish have varying texture and tastes.

He recommends checking the current NOAA catch limits and having the correct Angling Permit issued by NOAA. These permits are available online from NOAA. Recreational and Commercial regulations and seasons differ. A Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling Permit is normally required for the average recreational angler with a retention limit of a single bluefin tuna per vessel per day greater than 27". Bluefin tune 73" or greater are consider "Trophy" size and that season closed on January 13th.



Photo courtesy of Playin' Hookey Charters



Photo courtesy of Playin' Hookey Charters



Photo courtesy of Playin' Hookey Charters

**Captain Bill Pappas  
Playin' Hookey Charters  
757.619.3530**

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**Find us on:  
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# SAVE THE DATE!

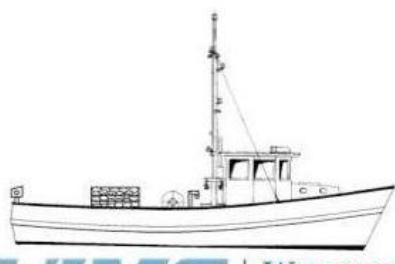
March 21, 2026

## Virginia Charter Boat Workshop

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Register here:

<https://forms.gle/V2b6ZesV7YJtr8Td7>



VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE  
MARINE ADVISORY PROGRAM

Do you run a charter boat, or have you ever thought about taking folks out fishing professionally? The annual Virginia Charter Boat Workshop will be March 21, 2026 at VIMS and is the perfect opportunity to make sure you are operating your business safely and are up to date with the latest fishery regulations.

Registration is open to anyone, but space is limited:

Questions? email [susanna@vims.edu](mailto:susanna@vims.edu)

Interested in club membership, visit our new [website](#) to find out more!

**The Kiwanis Club of Poquoson Presents**

**BOATING - FISHING**

— Nautical Arts & Crafts —

**Flea Market**

**SAT MARCH 14, 2026**

Raffles  
Vendors  
Speakers  
Food  
& More



**Poquoson High School**  
**8:00 am to 1:00 pm**



**Vendor Reservations and Tickets, Click [Here](#) or Scan!**

Admission to Market: \$5.00 | Add On: \$5.00 for Speakers | 12 & Under: Free

For more info or for pickup of donated items, contact Rick Neff

**Poquoson Kiwanis Boating and Fishing Flea Market**

17- 24 Jan: - Mary and I spent the week in sunny, warm Costa Rica with Deb & Pete, relatives from Pennsylvania. Our week was coordinated through Quepos Fishing Adventures, a first class outfit, and included 2 days of offshore and 1 day of inshore fishing. Our 1st day offshore we landed 8 Pacific Sailfish and a 4' Mahi. We couldn't keep track of the number of fish that came into the spread. Talk about excitement. Pacific Sailfish on average weigh twice what an Atlantic Sailfish weights and we caught some big ones. Our 2nd day fishing we targeted Rooster fish. After spending an hour catching bait, 6"-10" Moonfish, we slow trolled live bait right behind the surf. We caught 11 Roosters and 1 Tripletail. These fish are very hard to hook as you have to drop the bait back to them for 7-10 seconds before coming tight on a circle hook. Again so many drop backs that didn't come tight. A Rooster fish over 36" is consider a good fish. All but 1 of ours were 37 to 47". Guess who caught the 47? The 3rd day we were back offshore for Sailfish. Although a warm 85°, it was cloudy and a little rougher than the smooth seas we have become use to in C.R. 3' swells and only a few scattered white caps, the Costa Ricans thought it was rough. We ended up catching 5 Sails and 2 Mahi. Pete caught the biggest Mahi I ever saw, 67". It was huge. Again, so many fish coming into the spread, at times shear madness. Twice Mary & I were hooked up at the same time. If you have a bucket list be sure to put Costa Rica on it. It's fantastic and we're planing to head back in 2027.

- Mary & Henry Troutner



# Angler Interests

## February Special Recreational Black Sea Bass season opens with required reporting



All recreational anglers (private and for-hire) targeting or catching black sea bass during the special February season (February 1-28) must be covered under the corresponding species permit and must report for Virginia to be given permission to keep opening this special season.

The captain or operator of the vessel (whether private or for-hire) and every individual in the case of shore, pier, or kayak fishing. Guests on private boats and for-hire boats do not need permit, and the captain must also report for their activity.

These free permits can be obtained online or from a VMRC Licensing Agent. For a list of agents, please refer to the website below or call the VMRC at (757) 247-2200. Sign up for your permit online:

<https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/mpermits/index.php>

Visit a VMRC Licensing Agent: <https://mrc.virginia.gov/mrcagents.shtm>

You may meet your reporting requirements by utilizing the VA Saltwater Journal found at <https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com>. The VA Saltwater Journal has a dedicated section for reporting for these mandatory species. You must also report your non-participation if you did not fish during their respective seasons. Alternatively, paper forms may be found on our website at <http://mrc.virginia.gov/forms/index.shtm> which will allow you to mail in your reports. Please call if you need one mailed to you. If fishing for black sea bass during the February season, permittees are also responsible for contacting Law Enforcement Operations at 1-800-541-4646 before or immediately after the start of each fishing trip to coordinate sampling efforts by VMRC staff. The Operations Station is staffed 24 hours a day and is always available for your call. The permittee shall provide the dispatcher with their name, VMRC ID, point of landing, description of their vessel, approximate time of arrival and a contact phone number.

## Attention Tilefish Anglers! Golden Tilefish season is open/Blueline Tilefish is closed

If you decide to target Golden Tilefish while fishing for Black Sea Bass during the Special February Season and you own or operate a private recreational vessel and target tilefish from Virginia northward, you are required to possess a free recreational tilefish permit and submit a trip report within 24 hours of returning to port from a tilefish trip. Here's how to stay legal. Blueline tilefish season is currently closed.

### **\*\* Get a Tilefish Permit \*\***

- The free annual permit helps managers understand the potential "universe" of tilefish anglers. It is required for both private vessels and for-hire vessels fishing privately.
- This is a vessel permit; you do not need to obtain it if fishing on some else's vessel.
- To obtain the permit, visit the NOAA Fisheries' Fish Online website, create an account, and apply for a Private Recreational Tilefish Permit.

### **\*\* Submit your Reports \*\***

- Vessel owners/operators must submit electronic trip reports for all trips on which tilefish are targeted, even if you didn't catch or keep any fish.
- A mobile app called eFin Logbook has been developed for tilefish reporting.
- Download the app to your smartphone or tablet and log in using your Fish Online credentials.
- After each trip, submit key information such as: number of anglers, time spent fishing, and number of tilefish kept/discard.

# 73RD ANNUAL MID-ATLANTIC SPORTS AND **BOAT SHOW**

JANUARY 30 –  
FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Virginia Beach  
Convention Center

The Mid-Atlantic Boat Show brings together leading boat dealers & marine vendors from all over the region for a can't-miss showcase.

GET TICKETS ONLINE:  
[VBBOATSHOWS.COM](http://VBBOATSHOWS.COM)

