

**THE NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB**

# **WIRELINE**

**MARCH 2021**



## **What's Inside**

**Guest Speaker:**

**Surf Fishing with Kelly Hoggard**

**Fishing Tips; Blue Catfish on the James, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey Rivers with Captain Scott Cannon, *Big Cat Guide Service***

**Fishing Reports;**

- Elizabeth River: Speckled Trout
- Freshwater/Lake Smith: Crappie
- Rudee Inlet: Striped Bass Cooperative Tagging Program
- Florida: Cero Mackerel, Grouper, Porgie, Yellowtail Snapper, Cobia

**Angler Interest:**

- Black Sea Bass February season closes - Don't forget your required reporting!
- Tilefish Permitting from NOAA/GARFO

# Leadership Notes...

Fellow Norfolk Anglers,

We're hoping some of you were able to get out and fish the February Black Sea Bass season. The weather was certainly a factor keeping most of us dockside. For those who hold the VMRC February BSB permit, remember to make your required report for your fishing trips even if no harvest was taken, as well as, a report stating you didn't participate if that's the case.

- Will



## On The Cover:

This month's Cover photo comes from Captain Alex Perez with *Hook Shot Fishing*. Alex and AJ were fishing the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel in their 23ft Southern Cross center console.



## Meeting

Our next Club meeting is scheduled for March 8 will be a video networked meeting on Zoom.

### Guest Speaker: Surf Fishing with Kelly Hoggard

For those who don't follow Kelly's surf fishing adventures, when he's not working you can usually find him somewhere between Virginia Beach and Cape Hatteras fishing. Many anglers would be surprised by the variety of fish you catch surf fishing. Kelly's registered a number of Roundhead (Kingfish) and Pompano citations this past year with the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament. Join us on March 8th as Kelly shares his expertise surf fishing our shores.



Join us on Zoom, Monday March 8th at 7:00pm. To request a link to the meeting just email Wendy at [NorfolkAnglersClubEditor@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClubEditor@gmail.com). Provide your name and email and she'll confirm and send a link a few hours before the meeting. She'll open the meeting about 30 minutes before the start time. It's easy, there's nothing to download and no access code to enter.

**Important:**  
**March 8 NAC Meeting will be**  
**on Zoom \*March 8th\***

## Publishers NOTES

Editor:

Wendy Bransom

[NorfolkAnglersClubEditor@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClubEditor@gmail.com)

## NAC OFFICERS

President:

Will Bransom

Vice President:

Henry Troutner

Treasurer:

Ned Smith

Secretary:

Ike Eisenhower

Events Coordinator:

Mike Hubert

Assistant Events Coordinator:

Vacant

Guard/Greeter:

Ben Capps

Member at Large:

Alex Perez, Sr.

Webmaster:

Pat Hirsch

[pfhirsch@yahoo.com](mailto:pfhirsch@yahoo.com)

**Contact us at;**

[NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com)

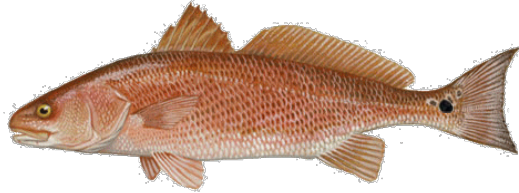
Norfolk Anglers Club

P.O. Box 8422

Norfolk, Virginia 23503-0422



# Club Members Tournament for 2021



## Redfish "Spots" Tournament

### Rules

- Must be a Norfolk Anglers Club Member
- Tournament for fish caught between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021
- 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.
- 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, 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)
- 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, 2021 and December 31, 2021
- Awards determined by Total Weight and then by date of catch
- Additional Award for Best Oyster Toad Photo
- Entries submitted by email to NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com in the form of a Fishing Report; who was fishing, stating total weight, with photo
- 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)
- 1st Place, 2nd Place, and Best Photo Winners get a Non-Tipping Oyster Toad Can Cooler from Oyster Toad Outfitters
- Winners will be determined by our Tournament Director

"AJ" Perez, the Oyster Toadfish Tournament Director (OTTD)



### **OysterToads - Did you Know?**

✓ *The Oyster Toadfish lays the largest eggs of any Chesapeake Bay fish!*

✓ *It also has a distinctive "foghorn" sound used by males to attract females in the mating season, which is April–October. (It has to be true Wikipedia says so!)*

# NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB

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

# FISHING TIPS...



## Blue Catfish on the James, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey Rivers with Captain Scott Cannon, *Big Cat Guide Service*

If you've caught a catfish weighing over 100 pounds, it's pretty safe guess it was a Blue Catfish. They are the largest species of catfish in North America, growing up to 65 inches and weighing up to 150 pounds! They're native to the midwest, the Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Rio Grande river basins. Introduced into the James, York, and Rappahannock rivers in the 1970's and 1980's to establish a new recreational fishery, these big catfish have become an apex predator in many of the tributaries feeding into the Chesapeake Bay. In fact, Blue Catfish can also be found in other areas like the Northwest River and Keer Lake reservoir.



They're opportunistic bottom feeders that will feed on mostly anything from vegetation, clams, mussels, crabs, other fish species, and even other blue catfish. They feed more by taste and touch than eyesight in the turbid estuaries flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. They have few natural predators once they reach adult size, primarily from osprey and eagles.



Captains Scott Cannon and his father Joe Cannon, with *Big Cat Guide Service* target the big Blue Catfish year round in the James, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey Rivers. Fishing from their 21ft Carolina Skiff or the "Catfish Cadillac", a 22ft pontoon boat, have more than 25 years experience guiding anglers on the blue catfish.

They setup with Ugly Stik Tiger 7ft rod with either an Abu 7000 conventional reel or a Penn Squall™ reel spooled with 40-50 pound monofilament on the Abu Garcia reel or 65 pound braid on the Penn Squall™ reel. Scott shares that you'll be fishing a lot of structure such as rocks, ledges, trees, and other debris. You can expect a lot of snags when fishing for blue catfish. You have to get the bait to where the catfish are and that means dealing with a lot of structure.

The structure forces the river water flow to scour out areas of the river bottom creating holes and dips.



# NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB

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

# FISHING TIPS...

These scoured out areas are prime areas to fish. Catfish like to hide in these areas looking for smaller fish, crabs, and other sources of food to be swept into the eddies created by the river.

Capt Scott Cannon shared rigging for blue catfish is pretty straightforward with a fish finder rig. His choice for hooks are the Gamakatsu 8/0 Circle hook and can be the InLine or Offset hooks. His choice of leader is a length of 80# monofilament as short as 12 inches but never more than 24 inches. Tie the leader to a barrel swivel and the mainline monofilament or braid to the other end of the swivel. Be sure to add a sliding sinker clip and a small bead to the mainline. The sliding sinker clip will allow the rigged bait to slide away from the weight while also



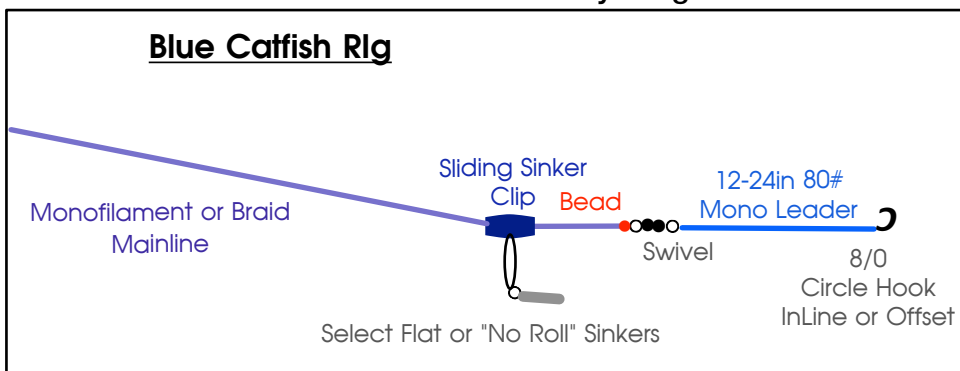
permitting an angler to change sinker weights as needed. The addition of a small bead prevents the sinker slide from rubbing on the knot tied to the swivel.

## Best Sinkers to Use



As mentioned previously, snags are a way of life when catfishing. You'll want to minimize the chance of snags by anchoring on a fishing site or letting out too much line when drifting. Another way to minimize hanging up is selecting the right sinker. The flat round shaped (River Sinkers) or flat oblong shaped (No Roll Sinkers) are the best weights to use in the river (Photo left). The "No Roll" sinkers come in two styles, with holes for your line or with a brass loop. Less favored for river fishing are the pyramid, bell, and bank sinkers. They tend to roll around and can easily snag the bottom.

## Blue Catfish Rig



## Less Favored Sinkers



# NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB

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

# FISHING TIPS...

## Sinker Slides

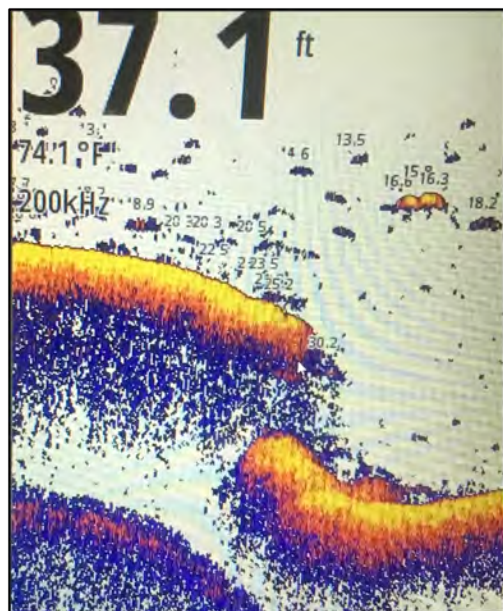
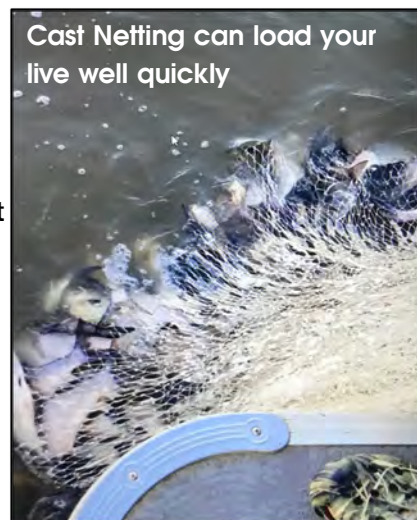


The Gamakatsu 8/0 Circle Hook (In-line or Offset) is an ideal hook for blue catfish. They are a strong hook that's designed to work its way into the corner of the fish's mouth and be self-setting with a hook-set that rarely ever fails or pulls free.

With rod/reel and rigging set the next task is acquiring your bait. Capt Scott Cannon recommends live or fresh cut gizzard shad/mud shad. You can use a cast net or use hook & line. While frozen bait is available and will work, fresh bait is the very best you can do, he added. He'll use it whole or vertically slice up the larger shad (>12 inches) and won't use the tail. White Perch and even eels will work for blue catfish, they'll eat just about anything, but fresh bait is the best!



Cast Netting can load your live well quickly



You'll want to focus on fishing areas with structure, the more natural areas where bait fish concentrate, select areas where drop offs occur and where natural scouring of the bottom happens. These areas produce eddies or areas where there's less current and bait fish will concentrate there.

Look to the bends in the river or natural overhangs (Photo left) caused by the flowing river. Areas with cover, structure, channel edges, drop offs, or eddies are prime locations for Blue Catfish.

The best times for Blue Catfish begins in the fall, around October when the water cools and continues throughout the fall, winter, and into late spring. Capt Scott Cannon targets Blue Catfish in shallower water in the spring with live bait and in deeper water later in the year. He shared that a typical depth for Blue Catfish is 25-35 feet however, depending on structure and natural bottom features he's fished them in as little as 3 feet to as deep as 80 feet from Hopewell to as far south as Surry. He advises when there's been lots of rain the river can flow quite fast in places. Always be aware of floating debris coming down the river as well as ship traffic.



# Fishing Reports...



17 JAN: I was able to fish in the Elizabeth River. I fished the outgoing tide and found a good class of trout. Ended up catching around 25 with most being 18-22 inches with the biggest going 23 inches.

Most were caught trolling Z-Manns on 1/8 jig heads. Water was 45-47 degrees.

Tripp Seed  
Captain



Sea Tow Services International, Inc. ©2012. All rights reserved.


## GETTING STUCK IS A HASSLE GETTING HELP SHOULDN'T BE

We're here for you. And there for you. And everywhere else for you.

**Trust the local experts.**

Sea Tow Hampton Roads

757-496-1999 \ 800-4-SEATOW

\$15 Discount for Fishing Club Members 

 Join now.

**SEA TOW**

6-13 FEB: Mary and I spent a week in Marathon Key, Florida. Weather was beautiful; sunny, low 80's and only rained Friday morning for a couple hours. My Smithfield neighbor's brother, Craig, lives in Marathon. We fished with Craig and his neighbor, Mitch for 2 days. Craig's boat was waiting on a part, so we fished Mitch's 26' SH with twin 150 Yamahas. Both days we met the bait boat, loaded up with pilchards and headed to a wreck to drift. At the wreck, we caught Cero Mackerel (about twice as big as our Spanish), grouper (out of season), and porgies. The boat next to us was pulling up a bottom fish when a Sailfish grabbed it. We were entertained for a few jumps before it got off. After a couple hours drifting the wreck, we anchored on a reef, put out a chum bag, and started fishing for yellowtail snapper. The yellowtail were thick, and we caught about 50, releasing all but what we wanted for our fish taco dinner. While fishing for yellowtail, a couple rods were kept on the bottom with live pilchards. As we were about to end the day, a rod bent over, Craig grabbed it, and was into the biggest cobia I have ever seen, even in pictures. He fought the cobia to the boat and just as it was about in gaff range the line broke, the rod snapped back and hit the T-top and also broke. Mary got a couple pictures, but the cobia doesn't look anywhere as big as it was.

On the 2nd day, while I was bringing in a yellowtail, something big grabbed it and took off. We figured it was a shark, but when it didn't bite through the 20lb leader. We decided to fight it out. After 2.5 hours and 2 miles on the GPS, it finally started up, saw the boat, turned and broke off. Never did see it, but figure it was a shark that got foul hooked after taking the snapper and therefore didn't bite thru the leader. - Henry and Mary Troutner



**Chic's Beach Rental & Fishing**  
*everything you need to enjoy the beach.....  
..... & catch your dinner!!*

**Daily, Weekly & Monthly Beach Rentals**  
**All Beach & House Accessories Provided**  
**Beach Rental/Charter Fishing Packages**

[www.chicsbeachrentalandfishing.com](http://www.chicsbeachrentalandfishing.com)  
[grif4408@verizon.net](mailto:grif4408@verizon.net)  
*follow the fishing on facebook!*

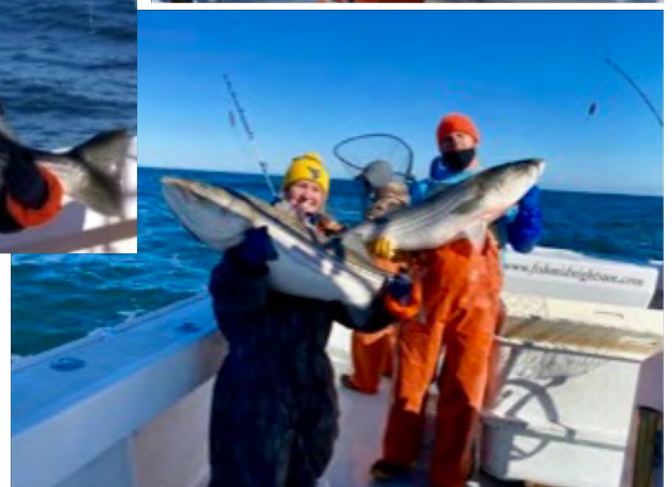
**Capt. Mike Griffith**  
**USCG Licensed**  
**757-687-9093**



24 FEB: Russell and I finally got out in decent weather to fish Lake Larsen/Smith. We tried the day before but Russell's 9.9 still had carb trouble which ended that. So, we went out with my Tracker V14. It was a little windy, but sunny and 52 degrees when we started. Before we were fully set up with our lines in the water, Russell had one on, but it was too small for eating. He promptly hooked another throwback in the same place. We thought that meant we were going to tear into a bunch, but instead it was slow catching with mostly throwback sized crappie. Russell got the biggest which was 1.07 lbs on my scale. I caught two keepers, one 12 inch on the bobbbers and one trolling. We threw back about 8. Water temperature was 52 degrees. It was a beautiful day after such a wet and cold February. - Dr. James W. Ike Eisenhower



8 FEB: Striped Bass Cooperative Hook and Line tagging for 2021: First 11 trips were from Ocean City Maryland, last two from Rudee. Left at 7:00 am, went 34 miles out past the Windmill Farm. We were trolling double MOJO rigs off a 32 oz weight. My first time on a rod was a double with TWO huge stripers. Needed help to get them in. They were at least 30 lbs each. We caught and released 124 stripers. Lots of HUGE fish. The researcher said these were the biggest of all trips taken. I probably caught 20 plus. Exhausted! *This is the third time I've done this!*  
- Jerry Hughes



Striped Bass  
Cooperative  
Anglers  
Program

# Norfolk Anglers Club

# Angler Interests

## Virginia Recreational Black Sea Bass season: Time to make your required reporting



Don't forget to make your report to VMRC on your February Black Sea Bass fishing. Each trip must be reported including a "Did Not Participate" report if you didn't get a chance to go out. Permit holders have until March 15th to submit reports through the Saltwater Journal or using forms provided by the VMRC. When you submit your report you'll see it listed on your Virginia Saltwater Journal page and you'll receive a confirmation email from VMRC.

Failure to make your report will prevent you from acquiring a permit the following year,...when the weather will be fantastic, calm, and perfect conditions in February 2022. So don't miss out, remember to complete your reporting requirement.

## National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) Tilefish Permitting:



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



Recreational fishing for Tilefish requires a NMFS Permit and comes with a reporting requirement. While Golden Tilefish are open all year in our waters, Bluefin Tilefish are only open May 1 through October 31st. Last year's Permit is valid through April 2021, but be aware that processing your new permit may take a while. *My renewal came in the mail about 30 days after I reapplied - Will*

To get your NMFS Tilefish Permit web search or go to the NOAA Fish Online portal at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login/login>. You can log in or create your account to get to Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office (GARFO) and request your permit.

Reporting your Tilefish efforts is easy through another APP called eFin.



NOAA  
Fish OnLine  
APP



eFin  
Tilefish  
Reporting APP

## Wanted: Fishing Photos for the Wireline

We're always looking for photos for the cover of the Wireline! Here's a few tips to take great photos of your fishing adventures;

- Vertically orient the camera (portrait)
- Remember to remove your sunglasses/buffs
- Avoid the shadows from rods and rigging
- Take photos with and without camera flash
- Avoid cluttering the photos, keep it simple
- Action photos landing the fish are great!
- Keep the sun behind the camera
- Scenic shots are great too!
- **Take LOTS of PICTURES!**



## Norfolk Anglers Club

# Angler Interests

### Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network; Educational Mini-Series



Are you curious about what ocean acidification (OA) is? Are you curious about what a more acidic ocean could mean for the fish you target? Would you like to learn how seagrass plantings can buffer changes in water chemistry and help with oyster reef restoration? Are you eager to try out a new app that provides short-term forecasts for pH and hypoxia in coastal waters?

If so, we'd like to invite you to join us for a new virtual educational mini-series, Hooked on Ocean Acidification. During four Thursday evening sessions, we'll provide you with the latest scientific research and mobile apps to understand how ocean acidification may affect your local fisheries and what can be done to reduce the impacts. You'll also have a chance to win a \$25 Bass Pro Shops Gift Card during our weekly raffle!

Featured speakers and topics include:

- March 4: Dr. Emily Rivest, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, "Ocean Acidification and Shellfish: Can Seagrasses Provide a Local Solution?"
- March 11: Fei Da, PhD Student, and Dr. Marjy Friedrichs, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, "Chesapeake Bay Water Quality: From Short-term Forecasts to Long-term Trends"

### Operation Paddle Smart: "If Found" Stickers available



When the Coast guard or local emergency responders receive a report or discover a paddle craft adrift, there is no way to determine if the vessel was washed off of a beach during high tide or was separated from its owner during the course of a boating accident. In these situations, the Coast Guard has to assume the owner is in trouble and needs assistance until it can find evidence to support otherwise. As a result the Coast Guard and local harbor masters spend hundreds of thousands of tax dollars per year searching for potential people in distress when there was no one in danger to begin with.

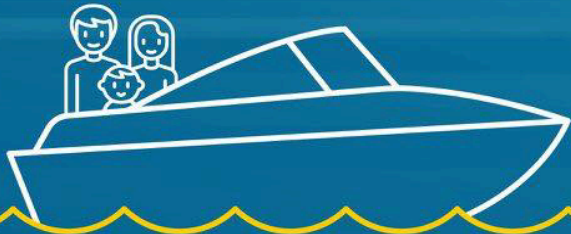
To combat this growing problem, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary have launched Operation Paddle Smart. The cornerstone of Paddle Smart is providing owners of kayaks, canoes, standup paddleboards, and other unregistered watercraft a free "If Found" sticker for their boat to help reduce the number of unnecessary search and rescue cases.

The stickers are weatherproof, reflective, and provide room for the vessel owner's name and two phone numbers using a waterproof marker. The "If Found" sticker should be placed in a highly visible location inside the vessel's cockpit or near the operator's station. The stickers are weatherproof, reflective, and provide room for the vessel owner's name and two phone numbers using a waterproof marker.

The Norfolk Anglers Club was provided some of these "If Found" stickers by the USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 5-9 from Smithfield, VA. If you would like to have one just send us an email with your name & address to [NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkAnglersClub@gmail.com). We'll send it to you free!

The image shows a sample of the "If Found" sticker. It is an orange rectangular sticker with a black border. At the top, it reads "Vessel Identification Sticker for Canoe, Kayak or Rowboat" in small black text. Below that, in large, bold, black capital letters, is "IF FOUND - CONTACT". Underneath, there are three lines for contact information, each preceded by a label: "Name:", "Phone:", and "Phone:". At the bottom, there is a small circular logo on the left, the text "Use waterproof marker" in the center, and another small circular logo on the right.

# Social Distancing When Boating



Only boat with those in  
your immediate household.



No beaching  
your boat  
right next to  
someone else.



Maintain your distance  
at the fuel dock –  
and remember to  
wash your hands.



No rafting up  
– keep your  
distance on  
the water.

## **No guests on your boat!**

This includes family members  
not in your immediate  
household or your closest  
boating buddies.

## **Go right from your house to the boat and back –**

no unnecessary contact  
with anyone.

**Enjoy your boat, the water and the fresh air;  
but enjoy it while boating responsibly.**

**Social distancing is the best way to stay safe.**

**SEA TOW**