

THE NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB

WIRELINE

MAY 2019



What's Inside

Guest Speaker: Anthony Barker, *Oceans East Bait & Tackle*, Virginia Surf Fishing for Pompano

Fishing Tips: Largemouth Bass and Crossover Lures with Kenny Boulier, *Oceans East Bait & Tackle*

Fishing Reports:

- Eastern Shore/Wachapreague: Flounder
- Chesapeake Bay/CBBT: Tautog
- Rudee Inlet: Speckled Trout, Bluefish, Red Drum, Grey Trout and Rockfish
- Freshwater/Lake Whitehurst: Black Crappie and Gar
- Freshwater/Lake Tecumseh: Yellow Perch and Chain Pickerel
- Chesapeake Bay/Maryland: Rockfish and Blue Catfish
- Florida Keys: Bonefish, Mutton Snapper, Blue Stripped Grunt, French Grunt and Grouper

Leadership Notes...

Fellow Norfolk Anglers,

Congratulations to Norfolk Angler Greg Rogers who had his winning ticket drawn for the 2019 Cobia Charter with Captain Austin Hayne with FINAO Sportfishing.



We've got the Hunt for the Hardheads club tournament with the other southside angler clubs on Saturday May 18th. This is a bragging rights tournament with the proceeds going to Wish-a-Fish charity. Clubs may enter up to five boats to fish for Flounder, Bluefish, and Croaker. There's a cookout planned afterwards at Portsmouth City Park.

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN) is asking recreational anglers to participate in a brief survey and provide your input. We've included information on ocean acidification and how to participate in the survey in this edition of the newsletter.

- Will

Meeting



Guest Speaker: Surf fishing for Pompano with Anthony Barker, *Oceans East Bait & Tackle*.

Anthony will be our first surf fishing guest speaker and while he's talking about pompano fishing, he explained that there's a whole lot more you catch than just pompano. He'll share his expertise surf fishing and sharing rigs for catching different species.



Important:

Date of next meeting - Monday, 13 May at 7pm

Location:

Teppanyaki Buffet & Grill

7525 Tidewater Drive, Norfolk, VA 23505

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Club Calendar

May

Mon, May 13th, Club Meeting

Sat, May 18th, Hunt for the Hardheads Club
Tournament

Tue, May 28th, VMRC Meeting

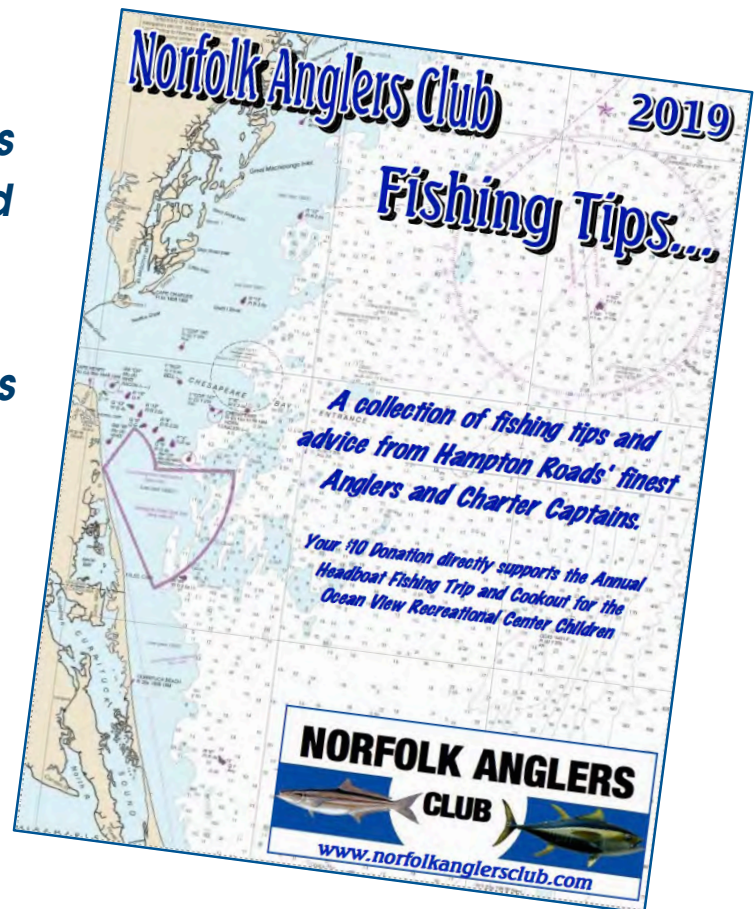
June

Mon, June 10th, Club Meeting

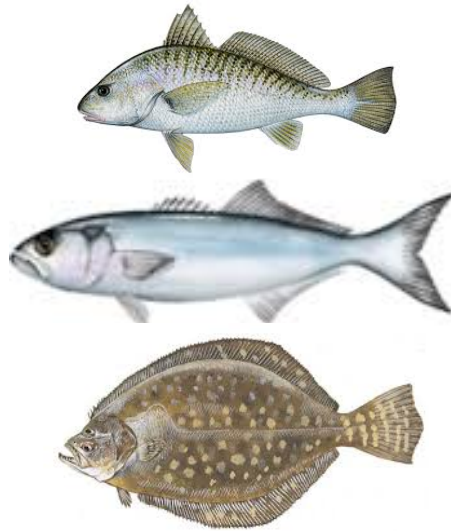
Tue, June 25th, VMRC Meeting

We've rolled out the 2019 Fishing Tips booklets! It's an information packed booklet with fishing tips from the areas best Charter Captains and Anglers. New for this year are pages of GPS locations for many of the areas fishing hot spots.

Best of all, your \$10 donation goes toward supporting the East Ocean View Community Center Annual Children's Headboat Trip and Cookout.



**"Hunt for the
Hardheads"
Challenge**



**Last
Chance to
Sign Up
at the
May 13th
Meeting!!**

**"Hunt for the Hardheads"
Saturday May 18, 2019**

Norfolk Anglers Club, Virginia Beach Anglers Club,
Portsmouth Anglers Club, and Great Bridge Fishing Association

A Croaker, Bluefish, and Flounder
fishing challenge among angler clubs.

Tentative Date: Saturday May 18, 2019

Location: Portsmouth City Park Lines In: 7:00am

Measure In: Starts at 12:30pm ends at 1:30pm

Entry Fee: \$30.00 per boat (includes 3 anglers,
additional anglers \$10.00. Includes Fishing,
Picnic, and Wish-a-Fish Donation)

Picnic Only \$5.00

Rules:

1. Clubs are limited to five boat entries. Team Captains must be Club Members.
2. Boats depart from any Virginia Port.
3. Eastern Boundary is 500 yards east of HRBT.
4. Measurement is length only. Girth measurement determines a tie.
5. Five Points awarded for longest fish, Four Points for second longest, etc. Up to five fish entries for each species. The Club with the most points wins!

Hunt for the Hardheads.....Saturday May 18th

Portsmouth City Park



Largemouth Bass Fishing and Crossover Lures with Kenny Boulter, Oceans East Bait & Tackle



In early mid-March and April in Hampton Roads a largemouth bass Angler is likely going to one of four types of fish; 1. too small to spawn, 2. already spawned, 3. pre-spawn fish, and 4. spawning fish. As Kenny Boulter, with Oceans East Bait & Tackle shared, you want to target the pre-spawn largemouth bass. They're the trophy-size fish and are most aggressive in defending their territory. Understanding largemouth behavior goes a long way to successfully targeting them.

Spawning Behavior

In the spring the adult male largemouth bass will begin by preparing a spawning bed in shallow water, usually in one to four feet of water. The spawning bed is prepared by the male largemouth bass by removing the sand, mud, and grass to expose the gravel or sticks on the bottom. Typically the spawning bed is two feet in diameter and appears as a bare spot on the bottom (photo right). When the bed is prepared and conditions are right a female largemouth bass will deposit her eggs in the center of the bed among the rocks, pebbles, or sticks for the male to fertilize. It's then the male's responsibility to guard the nest from other predators until the eggs hatch and the small "fry" bass are large enough to survive.



Photo Courtesy of BassGrab.com

The spawn can occur in March when the consistent water temperature is as low as 58 degrees (F) but is more common when the water temperature is in the mid-60's in April and as late as the end of May/June. During this time the bass will defend their nest against anything they perceive as a threat. While they may strike out at a lure their intent isn't necessarily to eat it but remove by bumping it or spitting it out away from the nest.

Fishing the Pre-Spawn Bass

Pre-spawn bass will be moving from deeper water toward the shallows to prepare spawning beds and spawn. The fish are looking for warm shallow water so checking along the points of land, sunny banks, and back inside the coves is a good strategy. Not all spawning beds will be easily spotted. They may be sheltered with fallen trees, branches, and other debris that provides protection for the small bass. Once established the spawning bass won't travel far from the spawning bed. When you locate a spawning bed keep far enough away that you can observe the nest and observe the bass.

Accurate lure placement is important when fishing a nesting bed. Even when making a perfect cast to drop the lure in the middle of the bed, you can expect to make a seemingly endless amount of casts before you set a hook. Each time you place your lure inside the bass' protective zone around their nest they'll force it away by bumping, nudging or spitting it out and away from the nest. You're trying to agitate and entice that trophy-size female about to spawn into attacking your lure and this may take a while. You can expect to find the pre-spawn bass very cautious and anxious with anything that invades their space.

Fluorocarbon fishing line is a necessity when fishing pre-spawn bass. Being nearly invisible in the water, it's less likely to spook the fish. Kenny prefers spooling his reel with 14# Berkley Vanish® fluorocarbon line over using a fluorocarbon leader.



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Fishing Tips...



The fluorocarbon fishing line casts smooth and is tied directly to the lure. When the line gets marked up from contact with debris it's easy to retie without dealing with a leader.

Not only does accurate lure placement and presentation matter but you'll need to minimize the splash as the lure lands. Kenny advised, to place a lure where no-one else will makes the difference between catching that trophy-size bass or not. Some of the most difficult casts will be under docks or low hanging trees where clearance to cast a lure is very small. To gain the confidence and accuracy to consistently make those challenging casts take lots of practice! To minimize the splash, which can spook the fish, Kenny uses an Abu Garcia Veritas® 7'0" rod (medium-heavy) paired with the Abu Garcia low profile baitcasting Revo® Winch reel. Kenny will use the rod to make an underhand "pitch" to the target without imparting a lot of energy, which makes for a softer landing and less commotion on the water.



Spinner Baits, Jigs, and Crank Baits

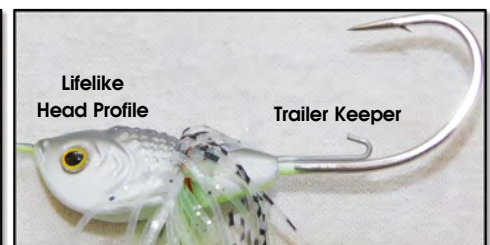
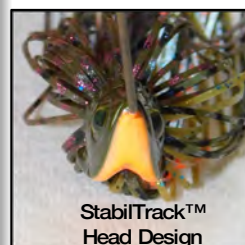
For fishing pre-spawn bass nothing works better than Spinner Baits, Jigs, and Crank Baits. Mentioned previously, pre-spawn bass are aggressive at defending their nesting beds and what's more offensive than a lure with lots of flash and action invading their territory? Cast your lure just beyond the bed and then start working it with a retrieve-pause-retrieve action across the nesting bed. With each pass the protective bass will become more anxious about the invading lure. As with most jigs and baits the momentary pause and drop of the lure initiates a reactionary strike.

Z-Man® makes a series of jigs, slingblades, and chatterbait lures that are ideal for multiple species. These are quality lures with heavy duty VMC and Gamakatsu hooks and 100% silicone skirts.

The Z-Man® CrossEyeZ™ Snakehead Swim Jig features a snake head design with a flat bottom, a heavy duty 4/0 VMC black nickel hook, a molded plastic split grip keeper to keep your plastic trailers in place after multiple strikes and a weed guard to minimize snags. Its unique design allows anglers to skip it under a dock or work it through the weeds and grass.

The Z-Man® SlingBladeZ™ SpinnerBait is *not* your typical spinner bait. It

incorporates the StabilTrack™ head design to eliminate the most prevalent problem with spinner baits - rolling the lure during the retrieve. StabilTrack™ head design has a grooved underbelly and lifelike profile with a low center of gravity. With its great design, 5/0 O'Shaughnessy VMC hook, custom blades, and a wire trailer keeper the SlingBladeZ has a lot to offer anglers on the water.



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Fishing Tips...

The Z-Man® ChatterBait® Elite is another great lure for multiple species. Its 5/0 heavy duty, long shank Gamakatsu hook, silicone skirt, molded trailer keeper are typical of the quality construction by Z-Man. The ChatterBait® line of lures comes in ten different styles and only one, Project Z™ ChatterBait® Weedless, comes with a weed guard. As Kenny described the ChatterBait® Elite is a heavier jig that's great for covering a larger area. He cautioned about not throwing it under docks, stumps, and other known snag areas and prefers using it in open areas and along grass lines.



Plastic Trailers

All of the Z-Man® jigs, SpinnerBait, and ChatterBait lures mentioned may be rigged with a seemingly endless amount of soft plastic trailer styles. Kenny recommends trying the Z-Man® ElaZtech® line of soft plastic trailers. They're exceptionally pliable, soft and impart a more lifelike action. They're buoyant so they float off the bottom and

present more of a target to game fish. The degree of stretch is incredible and they'll hold up to strike after strike. Many styles come in a scented variety and whether your choice is their SwimBaitZ™, JerkBaitZ™, WormZ™, GrubZ™ Finesse BaitZ™, Trout Trick®, or Turbo CrawZ™ (pictured left), Z-Man® has you covered.

One note of caution, while the Z-Man™ line of ElaZtech® soft plastics contain a proprietary material and are non-toxic, DO NOT store them mixed with other soft plastic materials. Kenny recommends you store them in the bag they came in. What happens if you store them with other plastics? Well, it turns into a gooey mess that doesn't fish well.



Kenny shared another rig, VMC's Tokyo Rig (photo right), that's a virtually weedless rig. Construction is centered around a one piece welded ring connected to a swivel, a 2 / 2 inch stainless steel dropper arm, and a wide gap VMC hook from 2/0 to 5/0. An angler may customize their weight setting by adding one or more bullet weights to the dropper arm and bending the end to secure the weights. A key advantage to the Tokyo rig is the dropper arm keeps the weight separate from the bait and allows for the bait to remain horizontal and in a natural presentation. Adding one of Z-Man's buoyant trailers is especially effective to keep the bait off the bottom and presenting naturally. Kenny added an angler can work this in the weeds, grass, or drag it on the bottom without much of a chance of snagging. He added, when rigging a curly tail, creature bait, or paddle tail be sure to insert the hook up



from underneath and leave the tip of the hook exposed and lying along the top of the soft plastic tail. Leaving the hook exposed like this will result in more hook sets than embedding it inside the bait.



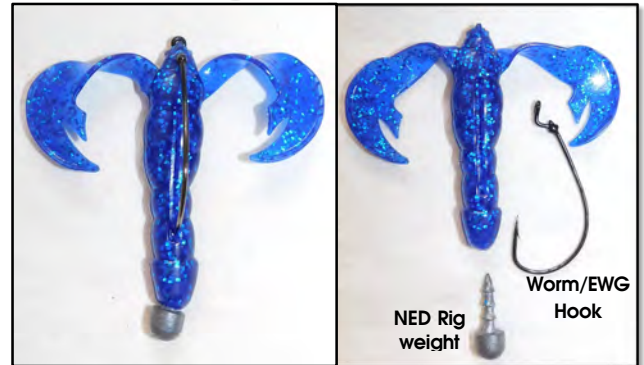
www.FishOceansEast.com

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Fishing Tips...

Kenny shared another rig for catching largemouth bass by rigging a creature bait with a worm hook or Gamakatsu Offset EWG Hook and a trimmed end of a NED rig. The EWG hook is rigged opposite from what you normally would and the trimmed NED rig weight is inserted into the opposite end. Like rigging most creature baits the hook is rigged through the bait leaving the hook point partially exposed. When jigging the bait off the bottom the creature bait will present upright with plenty of movement to entice a reactionary strike.



Crossover Lures

Many of the lures and jigs anglers use have application with other species and largemouth bass lures are no exception. The Z-Man® jigs mentioned previous and the ElaZtech® trailers work equally well on speckled trout, puppy drum, and flounder. Though this edition of *Fishing Tips* primarily covers targeting pre-spawn largemouth bass following the spawning period when the bass move back into deeper water many crossover lures will successfully target these fish.



The Rapala® Ripstop® Minnow (RPS-12) (pictured left) is a lipped jerkbait designed to swim in the 4-5ft depth range. It's long (4 3/4 inch) body features a downward tail turn for enhanced swim action and hard stopping. Slender with flashy sides and lots of action this jerkbait would work well on the late season bass, striped bass, and speckled trout.

tungsten weight transfer system where 20% of the lures weight shifts during casting to increase casting distance. The 4 1/3 inch, 1/2 ounce lure casts more like a Wind Cheater than a lightweight jerkbait.



Kenny described Jackall Lures' Rerange 110 (pictured right) as one of the very best casting jerkbaits an angler can use. It incorporates an internal



The Berkley Choppo90 (pictured left) is a topwater cupped propeller tail bait that makes lots of noise and commotion sure to draw the attention of predatory fish and aggressive strikes. It includes a twin set of Berkley's Fusion 19 treble hooks. Chunk and wind this lure anywhere you want topwater action like largemouth bass, striped bass, speckled trout, and puppy drum.



The Livingston Lures Pro Sizzle (pictured right) is another topwater walking-style lure with lots of features. Its EBS Technology™ provides illumination in the tail section that fades in & out during the retrieve. But there's more to this high tech lure, it also emits a croaking sound to mimic a panicked baitfish, incorporates a rattle, and comes with a trailing feather.



Hate losing lures in snags?

Kenny recommends attaching a coastlock swivel onto a 4 ounce bell sinker and sending it down your line. Get your line vertical and jig it a couple of times to work it free.



Ocean Acidification and Recreational Fishing

Ocean acidification occurs when surface ocean waters absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. The CO₂ combines with water molecules to form a weak acid. In turn, this lowers the pH of seawater, changing the chemistry of the sea.

In the Mid-Atlantic region, ocean acidification may be compounded by nutrient runoff due to fertilizer use, wastewater treatment, and land use changes. In the spring and summer months, an excess of nutrients can lead to algal blooms in coastal waters. As the blooms decay, carbon dioxide is produced, leading to seasonal decreases in pH in excess of the acidification driven by changes in atmospheric CO₂.

25% of human-caused CO₂ emissions become sequestered in the ocean.

How Might Acidification Impact Recreational Fishing in Mid-Atlantic Waters?

The long-term impacts of acidification on recreational fisheries are difficult to predict. To date, only a half dozen Mid-Atlantic fish species, including flounder and weakfish, have been examined. Laboratory experiments have focused on the earliest, most sensitive life-stages of fish to determine their responses to varying carbon dioxide levels that may mimic future oceanic and coastal conditions. In summer flounder, survival rates of eggs were lower under high CO₂ levels, but elevated CO₂ accelerated growth and development in juveniles. Faster growth could potentially affect



survival rates. Research is also underway to determine whether existing genetic variation might allow some species to adapt to future high-CO₂ conditions.

Food Web Dynamics

Acidification could impact food web dynamics. Forage fish, like Atlantic silversides and sheepshead minnows are important to Mid-Atlantic food webs. Adults typically spawn during the spring and summer and their offspring can be

exposed to extreme daily variability in CO₂ and dissolved oxygen levels. Their offspring may also experience extremely high summer water temperatures. Researchers have found these fish to be at risk to elevated CO₂ levels, either acting alone, or in combination with other environmental stressors.



Habitat Changes

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) provides vital habitat for fish and shellfish. It has been the focus of extensive restoration efforts in the Mid-Atlantic's estuaries. Although future climate conditions may be stressful for heat-intolerant SAV, habitat loss may be partially offset by acidification. Research has shown that wild celery, widgeon grass, and eelgrass can increase their rate of photosynthesis in an acidified coastal environment.



Oyster reefs also provide important habitat for recreationally important fish species.

Oyster shells are made of carbonate, a material that can be vulnerable to low pH or acidified conditions. The larval stages of

bivalves are especially sensitive to changes in pH and alkalinity. Learning more about how acidification may impact oysters at various life cycle stages can help inform restoration efforts that support recreational fisheries.

MACAN's Recreational Fishing Survey

The [Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network](https://midacan.org/) (MACAN) is conducting an outreach survey for recreational fishermen. We'd like to understand how coastal and ocean acidification might affect your recreational fishing activities now or in the future. We'd also like to hear your thoughts about actions that can be taken to prepare for and adapt to acidification. By gaining a better understanding of the recreational fishing community's concerns, we hope to align MACAN's future research priorities with current information needs and identify opportunities to engage you in future monitoring programs or educational partnerships. To access the survey, go to: <https://midacan.org/outreach-survey> and select **Recreational Fishermen Survey**.



Stakeholder Outreach Survey for Recreational Fishermen in the Mid-Atlantic

Dear Recreational Fisherman,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN). We are a collaborative network of scientists, industry stakeholders, federal and state agency representatives, and resource managers who work together to coordinate regional research and monitoring efforts related to coastal and ocean acidification. One of our goals is to raise awareness about changing ocean conditions; another is to gain a better understanding of perspectives from the recreational fishing community and other industry stakeholders in the region.

As an avid recreational fisherman in the Mid-Atlantic, we would like to hear from you. We would like to understand how coastal and ocean acidification might affect your recreational fishing activities now or in the future. We'd also like to hear your thoughts about actions that can be taken to prepare for and adapt to coastal/ocean acidification. By gaining a better understanding of the recreational fishing community's concerns, we hope to align MACAN's future research priorities with current information needs and identify opportunities to engage community members in future monitoring programs or educational partnerships.

Please help us in these efforts by participating in MACAN's Stakeholder Outreach Survey.

The survey can be accessed by clicking on this link: [Recreational Fishermen Survey](#)

It should only take 5-10 minutes to complete. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous. **Please respond by June 14, 2019.**

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact survey coordinators Kirstin Wakefield at Kirstin.wakefield@gmail.com or Grace Saba at saba@marine.rutgers.edu. If you'd like to learn more about MACAN, please visit www.MidACAN.org, or send an email to: info@MidACAN.org.

Sincerely,
Kirstin Wakefield

This survey is a collaborative effort with MACAN and Rutgers University. For more information, please contact Dr. Grace Saba, Assistant Professor, Center for Ocean Observing Leadership, Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University, 71 Dudley Rd, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Email: saba@marine.rutgers.edu

Fishing Reports...



6 April: I heard they were "starting" to catch flounder at Wachapreague. So Mary, my daughter Kate and I trailered our little skiff down on a nice Sunday to give it a try.

A beautiful day but obviously a little early in the season since none of the bait shops had opened yet.



Fortunately, there was a guy at the ramp selling minnows from the back of his truck to the few boats that launched.



We fished flounder belly, minnows, and jigs with various trailers. Kate caught the only flounder. Although it doesn't look like it in the picture it was a fat 19 inches. The water temp ranged from 58 to 60 degrees. We saw another half dozen boats fishing but didn't see any other catches.

- Henry Troutner

15 April: Greg Rogers and I took the "Magic Carpet" to the CBBT to try a little tog fishing. We had about 2 dozen blue crab and started at the north end of the bridge. We found it difficult to anchor there so we tired fishing the islands and tubes.

We had some success catching but all the fish were short.

We started fishing in about 20 feet of water without much to show for our effort. We paid line out to about 30 feet, still with no action. When we pulled line in and were in about 13 feet of water was when the bite turned on.

All in all we caught about 10 fish, 9 were very fat females, all were about 15 1/2 inch fish and released in good condition. The bite was not consistent so we moved around a lot. It was a fun day and the boat ran well.

- Mike Hubert

25 April: Bert took Steve (Bert's friend) and me speckled trout fishing in the Rudee.

We started late, 10:00 am, with an incoming tide and stopped fishing around 2:30 pm. For the first two hours we hit several places catching small a speckled trout and a bluefish. Then Captain Bert decided to electric troll.

Within a few minutes we started catching speckled trout on 3/8 oz. jigheads with 4-inch electric chicken paddletails. By the end of the day we caught 20 plus speckled trout; 10 were 14 1/2 to 18 inches (Steve is showing on the right the 18 inch speckled trout).

We also caught 2 grey trout and a hickory shad. The water temperature was 64 to 66 degrees.

Thank you Bert for a great day.

- Ned Smith



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Florida

April: Mike and I headed to the Florida Keys for 2 weeks of sun, fishing and sight seeing. Unfortunately, we had east winds 10 to 20 mph every day. Jimmie and Fran Robinson joined us for the 1st week. Jimmie and Fran fished for Bonefish on the flats with Captain Pat and caught 10 Bonefish and several other species. A few days later the four of us went wreck fishing with Captain Beau for Yellowtail Snappers but didn't do very well. We had a great chum line and saw Yellowtail behind the boat but could not get a bite. Fran did catch a nice Mutton Snapper. Captain Beau fileted our catch and we had the restaurant at the marina prepare a meal for us using our catch. We sat on the deck overlooking the marina drinking beer and having a fabulous meal.



Captain Pat took Mike and I out twice. Day one was for Bonefish using live shrimp. We caught 12 Bonefish and a few Bonnethead and Nurse sharks. (Pictured are bonefish Mike and I caught). The second day we fished the first 3 hours for Tarpon in a channel using green crabs but no bite. The next 3 hours we fished on the flats (2 to 3 feet deep) and caught 3 Bonefish. Jimmie and I fished the No Name Key bridge once and I fished the bridge a few times more after Jimmie and Fran headed home. We caught triggerfish, several different species of snappers and grunts. (Pictured is a Blue Striped Grunt).



While in Key West we went to the usual places...Southernmost marker...Duval Street etc. Mike was taken by the hens and chicks (it was spring) so had to take a picture. It was 85 degrees and sunny every day. Our cottage was on Little Torch Key a few miles east of Key West. Another picture below of an iguana sunning himself on our back deck by the canal. All-in-all the 2 weeks were great and just flew by. We've already scheduled our 2020 stay in the Keys.

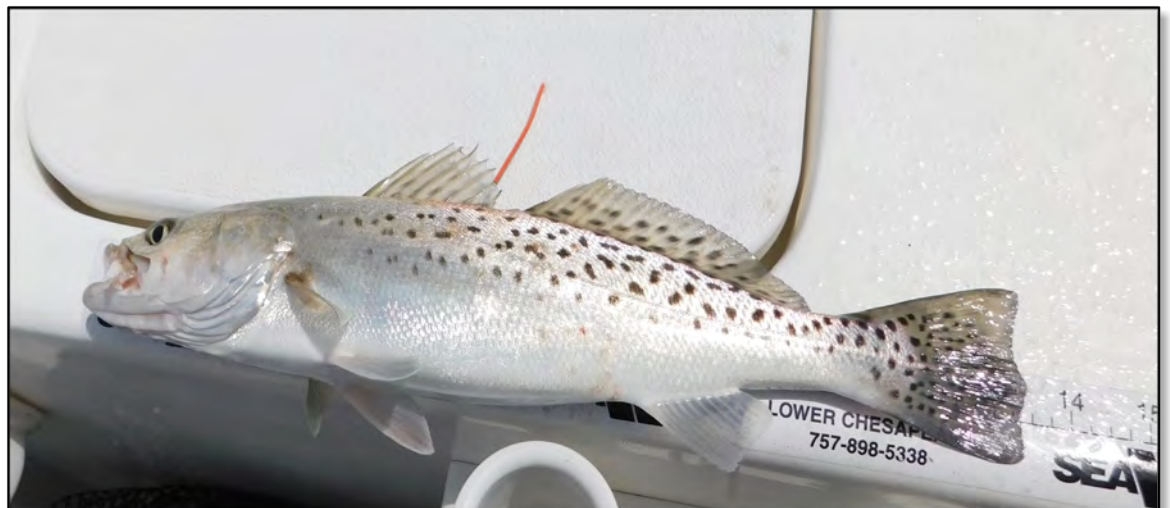
- Ned and Mike Smith



28 April: I decided to take the skiff to Owl Creek and try my luck with the early season speckled trout. I launched about three hours before low tide and initially fished the end of Owl Creek by the Virginia Aquarium. Only one small speckled trout and the kayakers fishing around me mentioned the bite was slow. I trolled up to the jetties with MirrOlure 52's and Gotcha Plugs fully expecting the bluefish to make an appearance. As I approached the bridge, I had my first bluefish on but it wasn't that large and hit on the plug. The next few hook ups were around the bend heading outbound in the channel. For the rest of the way to the jetties it was one bluefish after another with only a couple up to 18-20 inches. I fished Lake Wesley with one single speckled trout before heading back down toward Owl Creek with the tide about to turn.

With the flood tide now running 30 minutes the speckled trout bite was on. I switched over to MR17 and MR19 suspending lures and caught 8 speckled trout before heading back to the ramp.

- Will Bransom





8 April: We had a epic day with Captain Pat on "Fish Overtime," catching these silver bullets.



We had 10 bones, plenty of bonnet head shark's and a few large skates. This was a four hour trip, hard to top that. My wife Fran caught her first bonefish off the day. We were down in the islands fishing the pilings catch of the day.
- James Robinson

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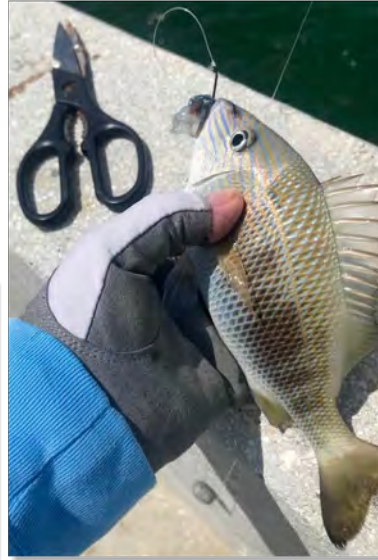
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14 April: Here are a variety of small ones from No Name Bridge on Big Pine Key.

Fran saved the day with a nice Mutton Snapper. A few small yellow tails rounded us off.

- James Robinson



11 April: I wonder how many times we've had a photo taken here over the years. *It's always good to be back!*

- James Robinson

I am sharing a report from my Mom and Dad who live in Florida. It's rare to get photos from them, (especially of them together!). I received a phone call from my Mother with the good news of how they took a spur of the moment trip to the Florida Keys to fish for a few hours. It's a trip they take every couple of weeks. Mom and Dad live in Pompano Beach, Florida, the same city where I grew up. They are both in their early 80's, retired, and possess a love for fishing in which they thankfully instilled in me. On Sunday, March 31, 2019, they decided to grab their fishing stuff and make the three hour drive South to Big Pine Key. This is the same drive they used to drag me on hundreds of times growing up.

They arrived at the No Name Key Bridge around 8:00 am and began bottom fishing the incoming tide using cut Squid. They both ended up catching over 30 Blue Striped and French Grunt which are some of their favorite saltwater panfish. They also caught and released a couple of short Grouper throughout the morning.

Once the bite slowed down, they decided to make the trek back home before the afternoon thunderstorms rolled in. They pass dozens of closer fishing spots on their way to the Keys but there is something about the emerald water that keeps them going back. I'm glad they continue to take full advantage of the area.

- Alex Perez



Butterflied Grunt.

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4 April: Russell and I went crappie fishing on Lake Whitehurst on a beautiful day with light North winds so the drift was perfect. Our first fish was a Gar that Russell got to the boat and it broke off right as he tried to pull it in the boat by the leader. We both were glad it bit through the leader, since it was almost a yard long. Then the catching got serious, at least for me mostly. On each drift I was getting in one release (at club minimum size 12") after another. It was sometimes two at a time with Russell getting one as well. I ended up with 7 releases between 12 inch and 14 inch. Russell had one club release. I couldn't seem to get a 15 inch state release this time but I didn't care, it was a ball catching one after another on each drift. We were drifting with bobbers and I was fishing 3 rods using a bobber stopper at set depths that seemed to be the right zone. The bottom was covered with fish and on Russell's side scan we could clearly see beds for spawning being made at 15-20 feet. I had small shiners on 1/32 lead headed jigs with Bobby Garland soft bodies.



We went back five days later and the fish were gone. We searched all over in shallows and only caught a few small ones. Oh well, post spawn fish are not easy to find.

- Dr. James W. "Ike" Eisenhower



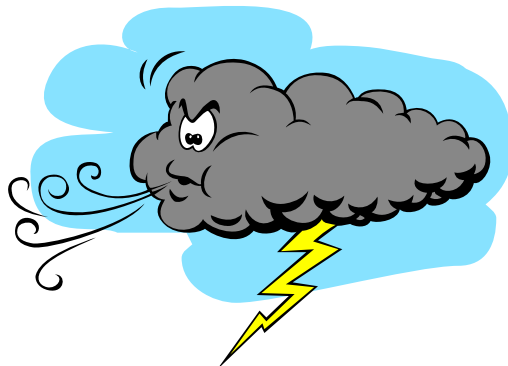
26 April: Almost forgot to send this big report.

On a Friday, Mary and I went to check on the boat due to the high winds predicted for the weekend.

As always Mary dropped a line in Little Creek while I made my rounds. She ended up catching a *Giant* flounder.

I guess they are here!

- Henry Troutner





7 April, Chesapeake Bay, Maryland: I took a trip with Greg Shute of IFishMd charter out of Solomons, Maryland with the hopes of jigging up a trophy stripers for catch and release. Despite historical potential, we never found any big fish nor seen any caught. However, we did get some action from stripers up to the upper 20s jigging with light tackle. The real surprise of the trip were 2 blue catfish I jigged up in the middle of the bay. Blue Catfish have been caught during the past several winters near the mouth of the Potomac, Patuxent, and Choptank Rivers. However, these fish were 15 plus miles north of the Patuxent River. This is more evidence of them continuing to invade the bay.

11 April, Freshwater - Lake Tecumseh, Virginia: I took my kayak into Lake Tecumseh after class and started working the shoreline with Texas rigged weightless plastic worms and a light action with a bobber and jig. I caught a few fliers and one tiny yellow perch on the bobber and jig combo. After spotting some surface activity, I managed to go 2 out of 3 hits on bass. On my paddle back, I caught a pickerel to finish the afternoon. They were some bedding bass that were lock-jawed.



12 April - Rudee Inlet: Since the water temperature has been warming up nicely in the shallows, I figured the speckled trout bite had to finally take off. After work, I took the kayak into Rudee Inlet and starting trolling the grasslines at high tide. The water was very murky-coffee color. Less than 5

minutes after setting out my lines, I got a nice bend on my middle rod rigged with a 1/4 jighead and pink plastic Striper Sniper Tackle Snake (essentially a plastic worm). I pulled it in and got it in a the net, 20 inch speckled trout! That was my first keeper trout of 2019.

Unfortunately, the bite never took off. Over the next two hours, I managed 3 more trout that were about 14 inches. I did see another guy get his limit and more plus two bluefish, using live gudgeons under a float. I believe live bait probably would be more effective for these early season fish. VMP was at the ramp checking the catches and busted that guy for keeping over the limit. They mention that it has been a slow day overall. - Brian Tsai



19 April, Rudee Blues: After seeing the other guy catch a few bluefish the previous weekend, I went out after work armed with wire leaders, spoons, and topwater plugs. I had a 36 inch plus bluefish hit my spoon 10 feet away from the kayak and dragged me around. Three minutes later, it shook the spoon off right at the yak. My yellow Hawg Trough measuring stick maxes out at 30 inches and I realized that fish was far longer. I knew I needed to bring a bigger net next time. I did land several smaller bluefish up to 21 inches between the spoon and Mirrolure He Dog topwater. In other oddities, I also landed a hickory shad on the spoon.

April 20, Rudee Inlet Double Report: I expected the topwater action to be hot at sunrise and sunset so I fished for about 3 hours a piece around those times. Sure enough, I landed 3 bluefish up to 22 inches on topwater in the morning and had several other blow-ups that never converted. As for the evening bite, it happened as well. I also landed 2 stripers in the upper teen range on topwater. They were feeding near sunset by the grasslines.



27 April: Success! I got an offer to go fishing in a friend's johnboat. I took the offer and we fished the Rudee Inlet like I normally would in a kayak, slow troll for a little bit and work my usual hotspots fan casting. Sometime right after high tide, we doubled up on monster bluefish. By luck, both fish were landed despite being hooked on speckled trout setups, jighead and Z- Man paddle tail without wire leader. They were 30 and 33 inches. We also picked up a few speckled trout. Around sunset, we were still zero on topwater hits. I had one cast where a fish boiled behind it twice but never got hooked. A few casts later, I see a huge boil behind my lure. It missed, but quickly followed up again. On the third boil, it was hooked. This was 60 yard cast into the middle of nowhere. After 2 pumps, the fish rips 15 yards of drag. I was able to pump the rod again and the fish takes off again. After the third time, I realize I am down to about 50 yards of 15# braid left on my Shimano Saros 3000. We used the trolling motor to follow the fish. Three minutes later, we got the fish to circle along the side of the boat. With my cobia net onboard, we got it in. It went for 38 inches on a measuring tape. I will now bring a meter stick next time because the Hawg Trough isn't long enough! That is now my inshore light tackle personal best and biggest bluefish I ever seen in person. The next step would be to land a fish of this size in a kayak. - Brian Tsai



25 April, Rudee at Sunset: It is now my mission to land a citation bluefish on topwater. I know they will be in Rudee in full force at some point. Ninty percent of the small boat and kayak fisherman are targeting speckled trout and the "hardly existant" puppy drum (not as many as usual this spring).

Once bluefish are in, my focus is on the bluefish. I fished for just 70 minutes and managed 1 bluefish around 17 inches and my first topwater speckled trout that was a respectable 20.5 inches. I finally realized some of these splashes are trout feeding, not just bluefish and shad.



29 April: I fished a second day with the falling afternoon tide at Rudee Inlet. I met up with Norfolk Angler Brian Tsai at the Owl Creek boat ramp and got underway at 5:30 pm but not after being checked by the Virginia Marine Police for my Safe Boating Card and Fishing License. *I'm always glad to see them on the water!*

We fished the areas around the basin targeting the grass beds and drainage channels with the outgoing tide. We worked topwater lures initially after Brian's successes over the weekend but shifted to suspending lures. We started catching small (12-13 inch) speckled trout which were all tagged and released for the Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program.

We noticed a few splashes and a tail swirl near one of the drain channels and used the trolling motor to quietly approach. We made a number of casts and then my line took off. I figured it was one of the large bluefish Brian was catching a few days earlier or a striper prowling the shallows. After a few turns and runs I started thinking it was a nice sized Red Drum which Brian was able to confirm when it fought to the surface. Brian worked the net and I had my first Red Drum for the season. It was caught on a *Pauls Rip-n-Splash 70mm Unfair* suspending lure and measured in at 29 inches.



It too was tagged and released. As the sun set we worked the grass lines along the main basin with topwater lures for the large bluefish but they didn't show.

- Will Bransom



Norfolk Anglers Club

Angler Interests

Norfolk Anglers Club Food Drive.....We never stop collecting



The Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore was pleased to receive the non-perishable food items we've been collecting at the meetings. As a club, we can certainly do more for those who could use our help.

Items always in need; Lean Canned Protein (Peanut Butter, Tuna, Chicken, Turkey and Beans), Canned Fruits and Vegetables, Fruit Preserves and Dried Fruit, Whole Grains (Pasta, Oatmeal, Rice and Crackers), Other Meals (Stew, Boxed Meals and Canned Pasta), and Baby Products (Formula, Baby Food, Diapers and Wipes).

We'll have a box for your donations at the door. So take a moment while you're out shopping to pick up a few of the items and bring them to the meeting. We'll take care of getting them to the Food Bank. Thank You for all you've contributed so far.

Blueline Tilefish Season Opens May 1st to October 31st:



Blueline Tilefish season opens May 1st and closes October 31st. The recreational possession limit varies on the class of vessel you're fishing from. For Recreational vessels the limit is 3 Blueline Tilefish per person/per day, 5 fish per person for Uninspected For Hire vessels, and 7 fish per person for Inspected For Hire vessels. VMRC recently eliminated the requirement for recreational vessel landing permits and reporting. Reporting requirements for For Hire vessels remains.

Golden Tilefish remains open year-round with a recreational limit of 8 fish per person per day with no permitting or reporting requirement.

Black Sea Bass Season Opens May 15th to May 31st and June 22nd to December 31st:



The recreational Black Sea Bass season will open for two weeks on May 15th before closing on June 1st for three weeks. The three week closure was necessary to account for the earlier February recreational harvest of 10,082 pounds toward the 2019 recreational harvest limit.

Virginia Spring Striped Bass Trophy Season eliminated:



The Virginia Marine Resource Commission at their April meeting voted to eliminate the Spring Striped Bass Trophy Season. Stock assessments and fisheries data indicate over the last few years that Striped Bass are being overfished and overfishing is occurring placing the future of the species in jeopardy. For the Chesapeake Bay Spring Season recreational anglers may still possess 2 Striped Bass 20-28 inches per person per day.

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