



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

Spring 2017

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On the internet at sfaod@outlook.com; our club message board is at www.TidalFish.com

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-A Note from the Editor-

As always, contributions of articles, comments, or pictures that I can include in subsequent newsletters are welcome. You can reach me at home (see above) or by email.

Club Happenings

Tentative Dates for Club Events in 2017

July 12 – Outdoor meeting and casting demonstrations, Rolling Meadows Club house.

Aug. 9 – Regular Club meeting.

Sep. 13 – Regular Club meeting.

Oct. 11 – Regular Club meeting.

Oct. 14 – One Fly Contest.

Nov. 8 – Regular Club meeting and nominations for new Board of Directors.

Dec. 13 – Regular Club meeting, Roy Miller to give update on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Final submission and judging of fly tying competition.

Dec. 15 – Close of 2017 “A Good Year” competition.

SFAOD Meeting 4-12-2017

President Rakes convened the meeting 7:10 PM. Eric Snyder, a commercial fly tier, was our speaker that night. Membership dues are due by the end of the month. Ron Deans is new to our Club but is not here tonight. Shane Smith also is a new member who started fly fishing the past two years under the guidance of Pat Quillen. Rick Masten and Fred Merk are visitors. Kurt Feigle also is a first timer to our Club meetings tonight who joined us during fly tying sessions this past winter. He is the former owner of an Orvis store.

Treasurer Ron Smith said we had \$3,133 at beginning of the month, with a balance of \$3,326 by the end of the month. In other announcements, The Salty Flyrodders Conclave was held this month. With regard to programs and scheduling, May 20 is our picnic at noon at Gorden's Pond pavilion. There will be no May meeting as a result of the picnic. We will meet at the Cape Henlopen pier for fishing, coffee and doughnuts until noon and then move over to Gorden's Pond by car. April 22 is the White Clay Creek outing on White Clay Creek. April 28-30 is the Delmarva Expo in the Quillen Center at the Delaware Fairgrounds in Harrington. We will be there for all three parts of the shows, and we need volunteers to help man the exhibits. We are doing a 25 minute demo on the stage on Saturday. June is a regular meeting and will be our swap meet in addition to the Grand Raffle. July 12 is an outside meeting with hamburgers, hot dogs, and casting instruction. The Pickerel Tournament was cancelled on Saturday because of the wind and was held on Concord Pond on Sunday instead. Good catches ensued. Member tied flies are available for purchase at 3 for \$5.

Apparently there is a beach coalition group trying to close the beach to vehicle access at Fenwick Island. Rich King says the local politicians are well-informed on this issue. Regarding our Club library, look at the list Steve Halstead has to see what you want from our DVD and book list, and he will bring it to the meeting. He will just bring the more recent books, plus some DVDs, as the whole library is too heavy to carry to meetings.

Fishing Reports – Matt Dammeyer and his brother Micah caught 40-50 small striped bass from the ocean beach on Saturday in spite of the wind. Rick Ranalli fished the north pocket and the fish were tight against the rocks. He used crab flies and caught stripers and a few blues. The water temperature in Lewes was 54 degrees today. White has been the hot color for Rick and some others. Ethan Rakes fished the Choptank R. and caught a hickory shad, a blueback herring, and a crappie.

We recognized Mac McNaught for hosting the fly tying at Lewes Harbor Marina on behalf of marina owner Amanda Morris. The regular monthly raffle followed the fishing reports.

Our speaker that evening was Eric Snyder of Warmwater Specialities. He tied his shimmering minnow fly, his foam shrimp, and twisted swinger flies.



Ron Smith with a nice bone caught in the Keys in April



On the left Roy Miller poses with his friend Bill Douwes who also caught a nice bone on a Clouser near Grassy Key in April.
On the right is a small yellowtail snapper Roy took on a Clouser.



Ron Smith with a big bluefish he caught towards the end of April. The second photo, taken by Ron, shows that big bluefish and small striped bass don't always play nicely together.

Spring Pickerel Fishing Tournament

The Club's spring 2017 pickerel fishing tournament was held on April 9 on Concord Pond because of inclement weather on pre-scheduled date of April 8. The team PA Posse composed of Ed Hays and Ron B. won first prize with 25 pickerel totaling 865.5 cm in length. The Old Farts team consisting of John Lupinetti and Ted Morelock came in second and team Little People consisting of Ethan Rakes and Shawn Rakes came in third. The Old Farts caught the largest bass (36 cm).



Here's Shawn Rakes (center) with the winning team of Ed Hays and Ron Beans Jr.

There was no meeting in May because of our Club picnic at Gordens Pond Pavilion on May 20.

We had the usual good turnout among Club members with a smattering of friends from the White Clay Fly Fishers.



Allan Cairncross with a nice 29" striper caught May 18 on a Ches. Bay charter. Picture by Jerry Groll.



Ed Barry (left with the striper) and Bill Licata (right with the bluefish) caught these beauties on the Henlopen Flats.

SFAOD Meeting 6-14-2017

The meeting opened at 7:05 PM with the Grand Raffle. The prizes were drawn in reverse order and the winners were as follows:

Prize Number:

11. Book on saltwater fly fishing authored by Don Avondolio, **Jerry Groll**
10. Fly fishing blanket, **Bernie Stasko**
9. \$50 Orvis gift certificate, **Phil Gutkin**
8. Pair of polarized sunglasses, **Bernie Stasko**
7. Fly Tiers Bench Reference Guide book, **Phil Gutkin**
6. Orvis stripping basket, **Jim Walpole**
5. Orvis aluminum pliers, **Joe Schmoyer**
4. Orvis Clearwater 9 wt. fly reel, **Nick Scarff**
3. Orvis Clearwater 9 wt. fly rod, **Ted Morelock**

2. ½ day fishing trip with Capt. Chuck Cook of First Light Charters, **Len Iorio**
1. Orvis Recon 9 wt. fly rod with reel & line, **Phil Gutkin**

Our thanks to all who donated prizes, and those who purchased tickets. Special thanks to Ed Barry for heading up ticket sales. Phil Gutkin must have bought dozens of tickets, or else it was his lucky night.

Don Avondolio gave a report on the NY Flyfishing Conclave, a 3-day affair on the North Shore on Long Island. It was the 50th anniversary for this get-together. This year there were 41 attendees, and costs were \$425 for days including room, some meals, and a banquet. Ed Jaworowski was the speaker. They had FFA instructors present for those needing tips on their casting. The biggest fish was an 18" striper, so fishing from shore was not very productive during the Conclave this year.

Bob Kutay said that we now have 137 members. New members included Mike Toomey, who is new to fly fishing. John Kitchen, also a new member, caught his first two saltwater fish on a fly last week. Ron Smith said that we now have \$3,634 in our treasury. Mike Schwander is our speaker tonight. In July we will meet outside at 6 PM. Grilled hot dogs and burgers will be served. Joe Capp will give casting instruction at our outdoor meeting. On Aug. 9 local guide Chuck Cook will be our speaker. In September, Gary Nietzy, a guide from the Chesapeake, will be our speaker. The University of Delaware's Coast Day returns to Delaware on Oct. 1 this year after a two-year hiatus.

Fishing reports – Jerry Groll fished Kent Narrows for some catch and release fishing with guide Gary Nietzy. He caught about 2 dozen fish. Two weeks ago Jerry Groll fished the Cape Shores Pier with Allen Cairncross and Allen caught a flounder and a trout. Jerry caught some nice blues. Dennis Lahiff was visiting in Jamaica Bay NY and caught a couple of small stripers, blues, and flounder. He also caught a flounder at the Cape Henlopen Pier here. Bill Lacata caught a 24" and 30" striper on the Henlopen Flats and Ed Barry landed a very nice 34" striper in June. Bill also caught a 32" blue. Last week Bill caught two more blues and a nice flounder. The other night it was reported that the water boiled at the mouth of Canary Creek. Folks there couldn't catch them, and that it probably was a worm hatch that brought the fish up. Ron Smith happened upon a worm hatch on the Lewes/Rehoboth Canal this month at the railroad bridge but couldn't catch any fish. He admitted that he didn't have any worm flies with him. Frank Danner said that non-member Skip caught a nice sea trout the other night on the Henlopen Flats, but the rest of the group caught nothing but blue crabs. Walt reported that he fished Swan Creek and caught 6 white perch.

Eric Feigle reported that around the time of the meeting last month he caught some big blues on the Flats using a snake fly tied in black. Ted Morelock fished upstate NY for steelhead. He caught six fish the first day and then three the second day (3-10 lbs.). He used a local guide for \$175/day just outside of Buffalo and fished in some small tributaries off Lake Erie. Ted expects there will be browns in the fall as well as steelhead available. Bernie Dormer fished the White River in Arkansas in April. The average trout was 15-16". He also had some good luck on nice size fish on the West Branch of the DE River, and managed to witness a green drake hatch while he was there. He also fished near Smith and Tangier Island. The striped bass averaged 16", plus friend Chris caught six specs.

Shawn Rakes fished a reservoir near Little Rock, Ark. He caught wipers (striped bass/white bass hybrids) and white bass, fishing the blitzes.

Ron Smith and John Lupinetti caught seven stripers and a 5 lb blue in the Broadkill R. Ron says there are a lot of hickory shad available at Roosevelt Inlet.

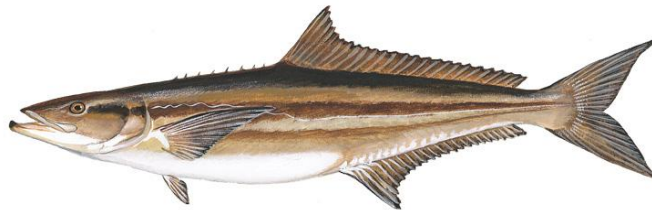
Clyde Seibert caught a 30+ inch blue, 5-7 nice stripers, and some decent flounder while fishing the Henlopen Flats. The stripers were taken on his "ugly fly" which was pictured in one of previous Club newsletters.

Shawn Rakes gave an update on the “A Good Year” fishing contest. Bernie Stasko is leading the Danner Div. with 15 species taken on the fly. Ted Morelock leads the open division with 33 species. Bernie Dormer and Roy Miller are tied for second with 19 species. Frank Danner has the usual Club items for sale, including shirts, hats, stickers, and books about local fishing spots.

Our speaker tonight is Mike Schwander. Mike specializes in fishing for snakeheads, that invasive species so much in the news a few years ago. He says there even is a Facebook page on snakeheads, originating from New Castle, DE. The species found in our state and in Maryland and Virginia is the northern snakehead. He cited Delaware regulations that state that it is illegal to possess a live snakehead. If caught and kept, snakeheads must be killed, and the DE Division of Fish and Wildlife would like to hear from you as to where you caught your fish. Even though they are an invasive species, the Division has included them in the Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament to gain additional insights on their distribution in the state, although again, the fish must be dead if retained or it will not count in the tournament. Mike says that to catch snakeheads, remember the four Ss. Specifically the conditions the species favors include shallow, slow water, stanky (weedy and nasty looking), and low to no salinity. He likes to cast parallel to shore and use a fast retrieve. He does most of his snakehead fishing with conventional gear, but they certainly are an interesting fly rod quarry. He says they are fine eating in spite of their less than pristine habitat preferences.



This picture of young Ethan Rakes with a striper he caught at Indian River Inlet was taken in June by his Dad Shawn.



Cobia
Artwork by Duane Raver

Biologists Corner

Although you seldom hear of them being caught in Delaware waters, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) of which Delaware is a member state, was urged to consider adopting a fishery management plan for cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*). Cobia are the only member of their family, Rachycentridae. They are distributed world-wide in tropical to warm-temperate waters. They are abundant in coastal waters from Chesapeake Bay south and in the Gulf, and they seek out water temperatures from 68-86° F. Stocks that occur from Georgia to New York presently are managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, but that will change to management by the ASMFC in the coming year as soon as the cobia fishery management plan is approved. A recent problem has been that the allowable landings of cobia in federal waters (waters outside of 3 miles along the coast) have exceeded the total allowable federal landings limit, and as a result, federal waters were closed in 2016 to the harvest of cobia in late June of 2016 for the rest of the calendar year. This caused some

southern states to enact more restrictive regulations so that they could keep state waters open for the rest of the fishing season. Recent statistics show that 82% of cobia landings take place in state waters. A draft cobia management plan was released for public comment by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in August 2017.

Cobia are a pelagic fish that are found over the continental shelf as well as around offshore natural and artificial reefs. Cobia are attracted to any structure that interrupts the open water such as pilings, platforms, and buoys. Cobia also frequent bays, inlets, and mangroves. Cobia spawn between June and August in the Atlantic Ocean, near the Chesapeake Bay and off North Carolina in May and June, and in the Gulf during April through September. During spawning, their body changes color from brown to a light horizontal-striped pattern. Cobia also have been observed spawning in estuaries and shallow bays with the young heading offshore soon after hatching.

Weighing up to a record 135 pounds, most cobia we might see range up to 50 lbs. They reach normal lengths to 47 inches, up to a maximum of 79 inches. They grow quickly and have a moderately long life span. The oldest cobia observed off of North Carolina were 14 years. Females mature at 3 years of age and males at 2 years in the Chesapeake Bay region. They migrate south and offshore during the fall and winter, and then back north in the early spring.

On average, from 2010 through 2015, the recreational fishery landed approximately 793,000 lbs of Atlantic cobia. This exceeds the allowable landings of 670,000 lbs. and is why the fishery was closed prematurely in 2016. North Carolina has been the lead state in recreational landings of cobia, followed by Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. Cobia landings north of Virginia are relatively rare and sporadic. The recreational annual catch limit currently is 620,000 lbs and the commercial limit is 50,000 lbs.

It is very likely that states from MD northward including Delaware will opt to be considered *de-minimis* (meaning that landings in that state are negligible) for purposes of cobia management, but *de-minimis* states will have to adopt the size and daily harvest and possession limits in the plan, once approved. Presently state minimum size limits range from none to 40", but no state has a minimum size limit of less than 33". Delaware has no minimum size limit for cobia for the time being. Option 2 of the draft cobia management plan specifies a 36" FL (fork length) minimum and a 1 fish/person retention limit with options of 1-6 fish/vessel.

Cobia are said to be vulnerable to flies, although I have never had the opportunity of taking one. Their fight is known to be strong and spirited, not unlike the swifter types of sharks.

Comments on this draft fishery management plan should be sent to Dr. Louis Daniel, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200-A-N, Arlington, VA 20201 or by email to comments@asmfc.org referencing the cobia plan. The plan itself can be viewed on the ASMFC website. Comments will be accepted until Oct. 6, 2017. The Commission will vote on the draft plan at the annual meeting that will be held this year in Norfolk, VA the week of Oct. 16, 2017.

rwm

PHWFF

Our local Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing liaison is Frank Danner. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a Club-sponsored program and all club members are invited to help with this exciting and rewarding program. Please join the group at one or more of the periodic programs at the Veterans Home in Milford. See Frank Danner for more details on dates and times. You won't be sorry that you donated your time and talents to this very worthy cause.

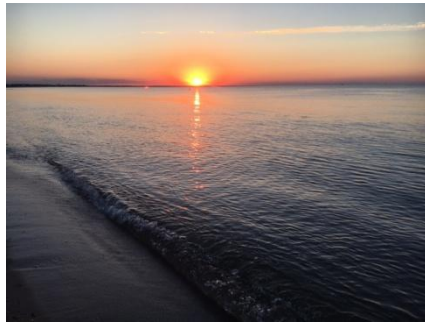
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Sunset at Lewes Beach, photo by Roy Miller. The lead picture is Ron Smith with a bonefish in the FL Keys, picture taken by Mark Sampson