



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

May, June, July, August 2018
Writer/Editor: Roy Miller

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

For club-related questions, inquiries and suggestions, here are the **Board of Directors'** contact numbers and e-mail addresses:

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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.

May 12 – Club picnic with the White Clay Fly Fishers at Cape Henlopen Park
June 13 – Regular Club meeting with grand raffle drawing
July 11 – Outdoor fly casting venue with burgers and dogs at Rolling Meadows parking lot
Aug. 8 – Regular Club meeting
Sep. 12 – Regular Club meeting, Mark Sampson, speaker
Oct. 7 – Coast Day at U of D in Lewes
Oct. 10 – Regular Club meeting
Oct. 13 – One Fly Contest
Nov. 14 – Regular meeting and elections
Dec. 12 – Regular meeting, Roy Miller to speak on ASMFC matters

SFAOD Meetings

There was no Club meeting in May, 2018 because of our joint picnic with the White Clay Fly Fishers held at Cape Henlopen State Park on May 12.



Lloyd Purcell (left) and Roy Miller (right) with stripers taken on the Flats at Cape Henlopen this May.



Shawn Rakes took this bonefish off of Belize in May

SFAOD Meeting June 13, 2018

Vice President John Lupinetti opened the meeting at 7:05 PM for Shawn Rakes who was away. Alan Cairncross announced that he has a 16 ft. Tracker boat with a 40 hp. motor for sale for \$3,500 or best offer. New members that night included: Bert Ovide from PA, Mike Irvin, and Jeff Mills from Lancaster, PA, who had never been saltwater fly fishing before. Ron Smith's financial report showed that we started in April with \$4,186 in our Club treasury less expenses (\$427) for liability insurance and other things, leaving a balance of \$3,999. In May there were \$160 in deposits, expenses \$866, mostly for grand raffle prizes and \$190 for picnic, leaving a balance \$3,293.

Next month our meeting is outside featuring casting, so bring rods, and the Club will provide hamburgers and hot dogs starting at 6:00 PM. Bernie Stasko is selling saltwater flies, 1 for \$2, 3 flies for \$5, and 7 flies for \$10.

Fishing reports-

Bud Homelside has been catching stripers and shad at Ocean City Inlet, with the stripers running 18-20 inches. Bert Ovide has been catching some flounder and small stripers in the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal. Loretta Smith caught a cownose ray at the Cape last night. Mike T and Bill Licata caught bones at Andros Island accompanied by Ed Barry and his brother-in-law. They also caught some bones on shore on May 6 because of inclement weather. The place they stayed in was a dump, and he would rather not name it publicly. Youth member Cohen Betts caught a bass and white perch and crappie on his own tied flies.

The Annual Grand Raffle was held next with the prizes and respective winners listed in reverse order:

- 14 - Club t-shirt - Dave Johnson from PA
- 13 - Club cap - Mike T.
- 12 - Flies and rig from Don Avondolio (his book was out of print) - Matt Dammeyer
- 11 - Fly fishing blanket donated by Don Avondolio - Tom Arcoman
- 10 - \$50 gift certificate - Summer Crosby
- 9 - Polarized sunglasses- Walt Clark, Walt declined and one of the Dammeyers won it (prob. Micah)
- 8 - 3 books donated by Frank Danner- Jim Stephens (Frank Danner declined to take the books that he donated himself after being drawn for this prize, so another ticket was drawn)
- 7 - Stripping basket- Tim Drake
- 6 - Fishing pliers - Hans Feindt
- 5 - 8 wt. custom fly rod - Mike Orhalein
- 4 - Orvis fly reel - Bernie Stasko
- 3 - Orvis Clearwater 9 wt. fly rod - Donald Lushis
- 2 - ½ day fishing with Capt. Charles Cook - Walt Clark
- 1 - Orvis Recon 8 wt. fly rod and Hydros reel - Clyde Seibert, declined the prize, alternate selection- Daniel Obrien

The rest of the evening consisted of a live raffle of fly tying materials donated by long-time member Roger Hone.



Cape Henlopen Flats fishing on 6/12/2018



Loretta Smith lands a cow-nose ray on fly tackle in June on the Henlopen Flats

SFAOD Meeting 7-11-18

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 PM after many members practiced fly casting in the parking area and after burgers and hot dogs were served in the parking lot. Current paid membership is 140 for regular members. Irene Olsen of Lewes is a new member. She took a fly fishing lesson from Terry Peach and caught three fish in a stream on her first try with a fly rod. Jim Donato is looking for a used rotary vice if anyone has one.

Fishing reports – Jim Donato caught a Guadalupe bass and 4 other species including a Rio Grande perch, presumably in Texas. He also caught smallmouth bass, rock bass and a fallfish in WCC. Youth members Ethan Rakes and Christian Campagnone caught over 95 fish, more striped bass than anything, and a giant hickory shad at Indian River Inlet. Steve Halstead fished out of VA and caught bluefish and a bunker. Steve also caught a good-size houndfish on a fly. Ted Morlock fished the lower Nanticoke R. looking for redfish, but they wouldn't touch a crab fly. He caught a striper and a white perch. Ted says Ocean City Inlet is witnessing a cownose ray migration. He caught stripers and bluefish there as well. Joe Kilby fished Martha's Vineyard. He caught stripers and lost a lot of fish. He fished in a derby but couldn't catch any for the derby. John Lupinetti and Ron Smith caught lots of stripers and hickory shad at IR Inlet. Shawn recently fished IR Inlet with Eric Snyder. Spinner sharks were reported to be present off of Assateague now. There are reportedly 12-14 inch croakers in the lower bay. There are thresher sharks around as well.

Financial report-

Ron Smith says we are about \$1,000 down in our Club treasury funds. We may have to cut expenses or consider a dues increase for the future. We have about \$3,400 in our treasury now. Ron needs a volunteer to do drinks for the meetings now that Bill Licata has to give it up. We have 2 coolers and the Club will reimburse you for the expense. Shawn apologized for sending out a late notice of this meeting. Shawn announced that he will be resigning from the Board end of August because of his work schedule and a pending deployment next summer.

Frank has the usual Club shirts, books, hats for sale. Frank also is resigning from the Board of Directors as of Sep. 1. Both men received ovations for their service to the Club. Bernie Stasko said that Club's saltwater flies are selling 1 for \$3 and 2 for \$5 and 3 for \$10. According to John Lupinetti, the Board of Directors will be recruiting new members. John Lupinetti will serve as interim president in Shawn's absence. If anyone is interested in serving on our Board, let an existing Board member know. In November we will request nominations to replace the temporary folks chosen by the present Board between now and November. We try to keep our number of

Board members at 7. For our Club library we will explore options with the local library for a 4-ft. section devoted to fly fishing. Rich King announced that he recorded 10,000 visitors at the 3-day Delmarva Outdoor Expo held this past spring in Harrington, DE. Next year he probably will combine both the Delaware Show and the Delmarva show into one big show. There is a feature film on Joe Brooks coming out, so watch for announcements in this regard for local showings. As our final thing, we held the normal monthly prize drawing.

SFAOD Meeting August 8, 2018

The meeting started at 7:05 p.m.PM at the Rolling Meadows Club House in Lewes.

Board members present that night included: Ron Smith, John Lupinetti, Frank Danner. Absent were Roy Miller, Shawn Rakes and Bob Kutay

Our Speaker for the Evening was Captain Aaron Hurd, owner of Gale Force Charters

Captain Hurd retired from a 35 year career with the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Section in 2011. In 2012 he started working with Gale Force Charters out of the Indian River Marina and in 2013 purchased the business from Kenny Savage. The boat is 27 feet long with a center console and twin engines. Captain Hurd's clients are mainly half day trips with families and beginners to fishing. Aaron talked about the many changes to fishing in general he has observed over the past 5 years. 2011 was a big year for rock fish (striped bass) and blue fish. We do not seem to get the blitzes of blues any longer in the springtime. The rockfish are here, but not in the numbers they used to be. Captain Hurd suggested that when the new bridge was built; all of the dredging changed the whole bottom environment, which in turn changed the available fish habitat. Captain Hurd does fish outside of the Inlet a mile or two at the request of his clients. Cobia, kingfish, flounder and Spanish mackerel are all popular with his summer clients. He will also fish for false albacore when they are around. Discussion ensued with a number of club members asking questions and making comments. Capt. Hurd will take on fly fisher charters; however, only two people can fly fish at a time for safety reasons. For Club members interested in false albacore, the best months are in September and October.

Treasurer's Report for July:

Starting balance \$3924.83 Ending Balance: \$3864.04

A full report is available by request.

Club News

Our September speaker will be Capt. Mark Sampson, who will talk about fishing for spinner sharks.

Our October speaker will be Andrew McGowan, an Environmental Scientist with the DE Center for the Inland Bays who will talk about the quality of the Inland Bays and the Inland Bays fish surveys.

John Lupinetti announced again that there will be changes to the Board of Directors. Frank Danner and Shawn Rakes are retiring from the Board, and the Board will be looking for replacements between now and the November election. Potential new member Harry Orben from PA is eager to learn fly fishing.

A moment of silence was offered for the recent loss of long time club member, Capt. Jim Stephens.

Bernie Stasko announced that he submitted Clyde's Ugly Fly to the Fly Tyer magazine which they featured in their last edition. This fly was originated and named by member Clyde Seibert. Frank Danner has the usual Club hats, shirts, books and flies for sale. Club librarian Steve Halstead reported that no requests have been made since the book/video list went up on the Web.

Fishing Reports:

Walt Clark reported on the fishing trip he won from the SFAOD raffle. Capt. Chuck Cook started the evening fishing at the end of the North IR Inlet jetty and then moved to the Coast Guard wall. They did well on tripers. Walt also reported that he had fished at Rock Hall and did well on white perch.

A number of members have been freshwater fishing for largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, redbreast sunfish, crappie, bluegills and golden shiners.

Ed Barry fished for stripers at the Indian River Coast Guard station and at Roosevelt Inlet near the CG station dock on incoming tide. He did well in both places.

The meeting adjourned by 8:45 p.m. Many thanks to Club member **Loretta Smith** for compiling these minutes in my absence (ed.)



Loretta had a good night catching schoolie-size striped bass aboard Ron Smith's boat at Roosevelt Inlet the week of 8/26



Walt Clark and John Lupinetti also fished on Ron Smith's boat that same week.

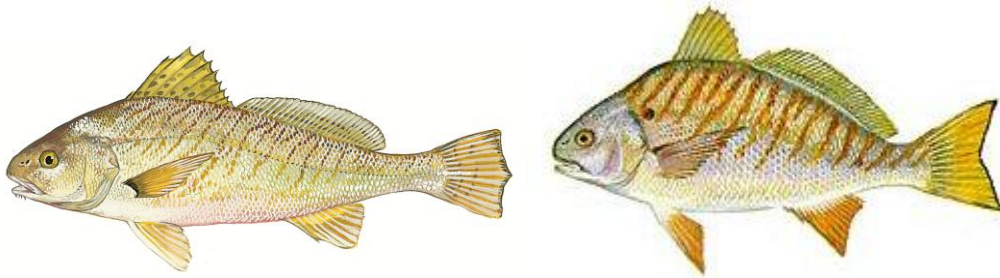


Ethan Rakes (left) got in on the same action on Roy Miller's boat.



Shawn Rakes caught this redfish in FL this month

Biologist Corner



So what is happening with the stocks of Atlantic croaker and spot, two of our favorite small members of the drum family common in our area? Even casual fishermen have probably noticed that both croaker and spot, at least edible sized ones, have been somewhat scarce in our area in recent years. The days of going down to the Henlopen Flats during summer evenings and catching a dozen or more croakers on small Clouser minnows while wading seem to have gone by the wayside. Most fishermen know that these two species favor warmer southern waters, so why has their abundance apparently decreased when warmer waters seem to be the norm rather than the exception? I wish I could say for sure, and the truth is that the answer probably is complicated. Juvenile croaker are known to be negatively impacted by colder than normal winters in the Mid-Atlantic area, but except for an intense cold snap this past January, our winters have been gradually getting warmer.

The South Atlantic Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has been keeping track of these two species for many years now. However, to date, there have been no management requirements for either of these

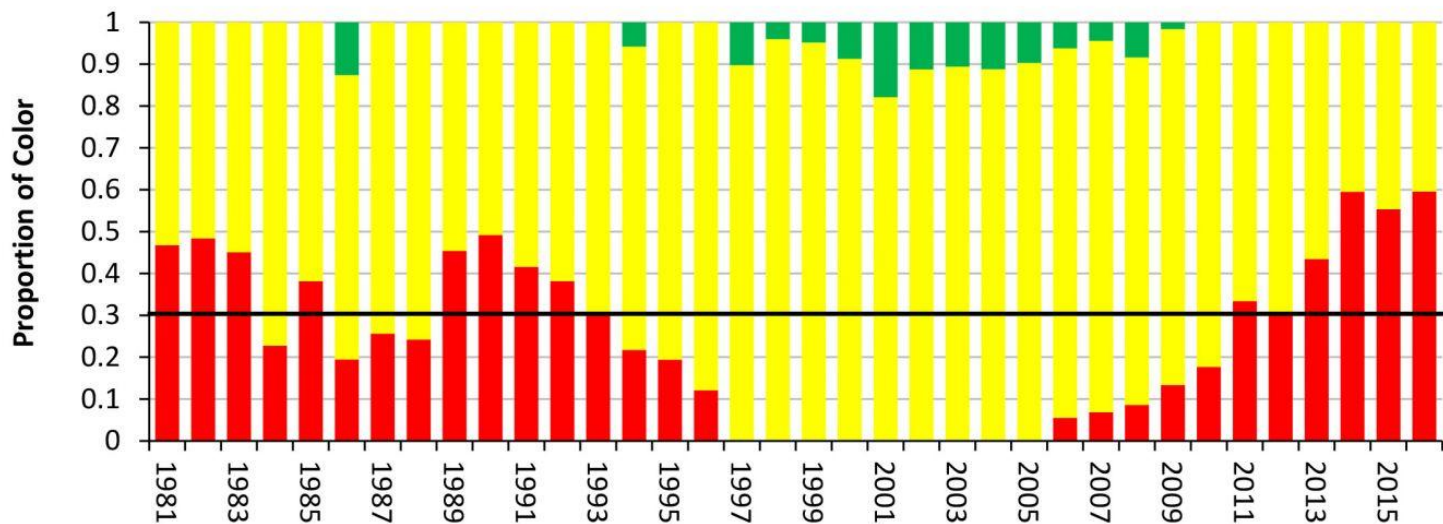
two species. Some states like Delaware instituted minimum size limits for croaker (8 inches) a number of years ago, but other states have not taken this action, and no state has a minimum size limit for spot. Spot, in particular, are popular bait fish, so the states have avoided minimum size limits for this species to protect bait uses. A few states also have daily recreational harvest limits for croaker, known as bag limits (Delaware does not have such a limit on croaker, but South Carolina, for example, has a limit of 50 per person/day).

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission lists the status of these two stocks as unknown because the available biological and catch data on these two species is insufficient to support a standard mathematical stock assessment. Instead the Commission has been employing what is known as a traffic light analysis to keep tabs on the status of the stocks of these two inshore species. It is called a traffic light analysis because this graphical technique uses three colors: red, yellow, and green to characterize both abundance and harvest relative to the 30% threshold. A predominance of green indicates the stock is in great shape. When the proportion of red exceeds the threshold value of 30% for three years in a row, then there likely is a problem that deserves further management consideration. Since both species occur from FL up to and including New York, some attention has been paid recently to characterizing the Mid-Atlantic stocks versus the South Atlantic stocks for both species.

What management measures could be taken based on the results of the traffic light analysis? These measures could include restrictions on seasons, trip limits, and size limits for croaker, but probably only trip limits and seasons for spot. With croaker, it is believed that all croaker belong to a single stock and that the aforementioned regions are only artifacts of the sampling for croaker. Similar reasoning may apply to spot as well. The traffic light analysis has raised some concerns over the abundance of this resource, and this has been borne out by angler surveys conducted in the mid-Atlantic area. If we examine Fig. 1 from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission most recent program overview document on croaker, you can see that the red color exceeds the 30% level for the past four years when looking at combined commercial and recreational landings. However, if you examine Fig. 2, the abundance measurement in two federal fisheries surveys, the red color is well below the warning line of 30%.

The same reasoning applies to spot. Neither Figs. 3 nor 4 for spot show the red exceeding the 30% level for three years in a row, yet the commercial and recreational landings have exceeded the 30% level in three of the last 5 years, thus signaling signs of trouble. Whether management measures will be adopted remains to be seen and it may take additional years of analysis before mandatory management is implemented.

**Figure 1. Atlantic Croaker TLA Harvest Metric
(Recreational and Commercial Landings)**



**Figure 2. Atlantic Croaker Adult TLA Abundance Metric
(NMFS and SEAMAP Surveys)**

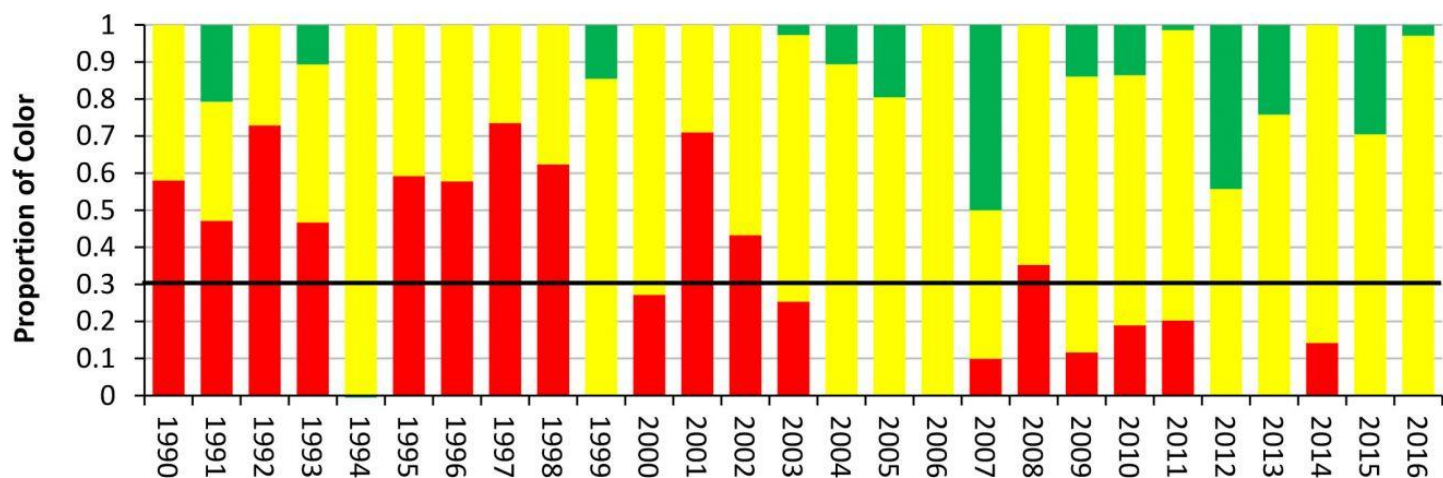


Figure 3. Spot TLA Harvest Metric (Commercial and Recreational Landings)

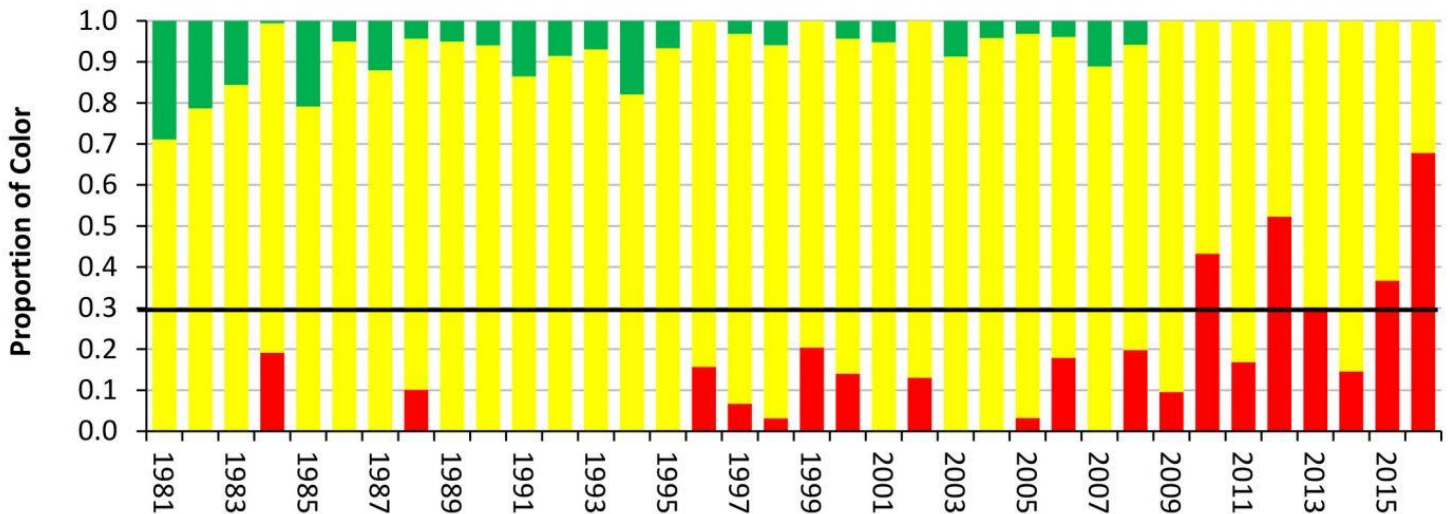
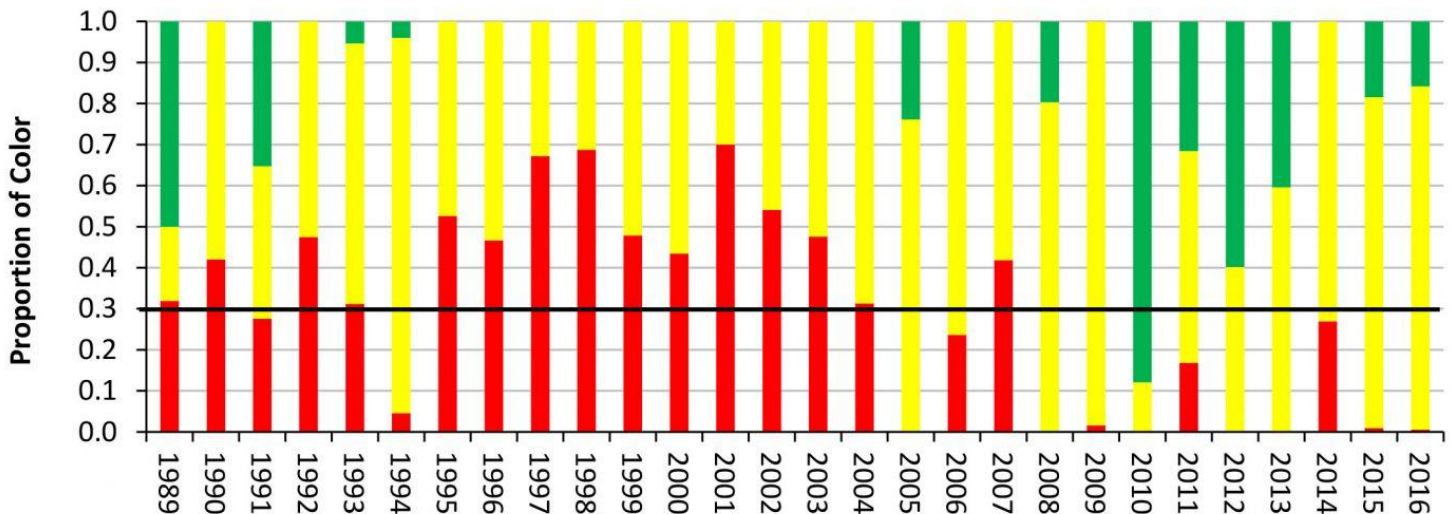


Figure 4. Spot TLA Adult Abundance Metric (NMFS and SEAMAP Surveys)



Locally, I have not taken a decent size croaker on the Henlopen Flats with my fly rod in several years. This is not to say there are none, and recent reports indicate that some are available to pier bait fishermen this summer, but the action has been a lot less than what we grew used to in the early to 2000s. As for spot, I never caught very many of these small fish on flies. Although some may consider it sacrilege, rumor has it that spot will more readily take a small fly that is tipped with Fish Bytes or a strip of some other edible substance. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the recent reports of more abundant croaker are not a short term shift in abundance of remaining stocks, but instead are the first indication of improvements to the coastal stock. Both the images of Atlantic croaker (left) and spot (right) were painted by NC artist Dwayne Raver, courtesy of the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife.

rwm

DNREC's White Clay Creek State Park sustains flood damage

NEWARK (Aug. 13, 2018) – DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation has announced that White Clay Creek State Park sustained damage from flooding due to heavy rain this morning, forcing closure of some parts of the park and cancellation of affiliated activities as follows:

- The Chambers Rock Road parking lot is inaccessible due to heavy flooding and is closed until further notice. The park’s day camp has been cancelled for the week.
- Creek Road, north of Hopkins Road, offering access to the park’s Nature Center will be closed to all traffic until further notice. The bridge spanning one of the tributaries feeding the White Clay Creek has moved off its abutments. Parks officials advised that no bridge crossing should be attempted by any means.
- Multiple trees have fallen across trails, along with erosion occurring on some trails. Trail users should exercise caution when visiting the park within the next few weeks.
- Hopkins Road was closed by New Castle County Police this morning, allowing parks staff to clear heavy debris from the roadway. The Delaware Department of Transportation cleared the roads and installed barrels as barriers in heavily-eroded culverts.
- Park users can contact the park office at 302-368-6900 to report issues. Division of Parks & Recreation staff are assessing further damage at this time.

As always with flooding events, park visitors should access the water for fishing, swimming, canoeing, or any other recreational activities until flood waters subside.

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<In Memoriam>

Our Club lost two fine members recently, **Capt. Jim Stephens** and **Paul Saneholtz**. The Club sends its sincere condolences to their surviving loved ones. These two gentlemen will be sorely missed and both left us much too soon.

PHWFF

Our local Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing liaison is Russell Martin 302-535-9896 and his email address is rtlmartin1980@gmail.com. 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 Russell for more details on dates and times. You won’t be sorry that you donated your time and talents to this very worthy cause.

President’s Report

Members,

Fall is on our doorstep and is my absolute favorite season of the year. All around us things are happening in nature, especially our waters. In our ponds, streams, estuaries, and the ocean, fish are fired up, on the take and on the move. Salmon and steelhead are beginning their fall migration with reverse migrations happening along the Atlantic coast as albies, stripers, blues and a myriad of other species head back to warmer climes. In the fresh

water the fish are feeding heavily to pack on the needed protein to carry them through the cold winter months. Certainly September and October are the best months to be an outdoorsman!

Many members have had productive “fishing seasons” this past spring and summer and I would encourage all of our members to keep going out as often as you can. We have the annual One Fly tournament coming up soon. It is always a fun day with lots of good food, fishing, and camaraderie. I think eating may be the only thing we are better at than fishing at SFAoD. Ethan and I look forward to seeing you at the One-Fly.

I recently read the book “The Feather Thief” after seeing it reviewed in The Drake Magazine. This book is a new release and at the moment is only available in hardback (I picked it up at Barnes & Noble). The author, Kirk Johnson, outlines an incredible true story of one of the most bizarre museum heists in history. This heist was perpetrated by an obsessed classic salmon fly tier named Edwin Rist from up-state New York. I really enjoyed the book as it covers several subjects including the history of the bird skins Rist stole which dated back to the time of Darwin.

Alas this is my last message out to you as the president of SFAoD. I want to thank all of you for your unwavering support over the last few years. The BOD have been amazing and the general membership has been so supportive that I feel guilty leaving my position. Ethan and I love fly fishing and it is our lifestyle. We will continue to support SFAoD and will be making as many events, meetings, and outings as we can. You are all in good hands with our BOD and with former president Lupinetti stepping back in until a new president can be found to lead the club.

Lastly, I was shaken by the recent loss of member Capt. Jim Stephens who was a faithful member of our club and friend to many. Please keep his family in your prayers. We will be sure to remember him at our annual dinner in January during our Bell Ceremony. I look forward to seeing all of you at the September meeting in a couple weeks!

Fish long and prosper,
Shawn

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The lead picture is one of our fish nurseries at Herring Creek Nature Area in Rehoboth Bay and the closing picture of sunset was taken at Lewes Beach, both by Roy Miller.