



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

Summer 2017 **Writer/Editor: Roy Miller**

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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

Oct. 11 – Regular Club meeting.

Oct. 14 – One Fly Contest.

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

Nov. 12 – Pickerel Fly Fishing Tournament

Dec. 13 – Regular Club meeting. Roy Miller to give an update on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission decisions. Final submission and judging of fly tying competition.

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

SFAOD Meeting 7/12/17. The July meeting started outdoors with a grilled meal interspersed with fly casting instruction. A brief meeting was convened inside after everyone had their fill of hamburgers and hot dogs and casting practice. Ed Herksdell was introduced as a new member. He is a retired dentist who is a friend of Paul Case. It was announced that Rick Ranalli's mother had died in case anyone wanted to drop Rick a line of condolence. The Club sent a card to Rick. Ron Smith announced that we have \$4,139 in our Club treasury. Ron said that next month Captain Chuck Cook of First Light Charters will be our speaker. President Shawn Rakes provided an update on the "A Good Year" fishing contest. Ted Morlock remains comfortably in the lead. For fishing reports, Shawn said that he and Kyle Johnson got caught in a thunder storm at Indian River. Ted Morlock fished out of Ocean City Inlet under the lights. He said he had a good night of fishing. Ethan Rakes caught his first striper on a fly while fishing in the O.C. Inlet as well. Shawn reported that he caught some hickory shad, blues, and a few stripers at the I.R. Coast Guard Station, but he really had to work for them. Shawn Rakes also reported that earlier he caught a lizardfish, squirrel fish, and mangrove snapper from the dock of a cruise ship in Bermuda. The fall pickerel fly fishing tournament will be held on Nov. 11 (later changed to Nov. 12). Our librarian, Steve Halstead, said his goal is to set up categories on our Club website of what we have in our library, rather than attempt to carry the inventory of disks and books to each meeting. If you let him know what you would like to look at, he can bring it to the meeting.



Here's Ted Morlock with a nice striper taken at the OC Inlet

SFAOD Meeting 8/9/17.

The meeting was convened by Ron Smith for President Rakes at 7:10 PM. New members introduced that evening included Russel Martin, Brian Hollinger, and B.J. Pietryak.

Roy Miller said that he will be working on finishing up the spring newsletter. Roy also announced we will have some fly fishing equipment and stuff for sale next month that has been donated by a friend of his, retired dentist Howard Priestly. We will hold a silent auction of these items next month, and the proceeds from the auction will go to Project Healing Waters.

Fishing reports - Bill Licata caught three small stripers near the U of D vessel parked at Roosevelt Inlet. A moving tide at the mouth of Canary Creek near the Coast Guard station is good, especially during an outgoing tide according to Ed Barry. Matt Dammeyer caught some pickerel in Tuckahoe Creek, MD. Someone mentioned that the Blockhouse pond behind Beebe Hospital has bass and bluegill in it. Ron Tatman said there are lots of whales offshore while you are out fishing for marlin or other pelagic species.

Capt. Chuck Cook of First Light Charters gave the program that evening. Capt. Chuck said that he moved here 18 years ago and also has a landscaping business. Most of his charters are for fishing at night, and he is now doing

charters full time during the summer. He says there are five main factors determining fishing success in our area. They are water temperature (he considers 55-68 degree water temperatures ideal for striped bass, 62-66 optimal for flounder); wind speed, wind direction (east winds blow plankton into shore areas), time of day (he prefers pre-dawn and night, especially at Indian River Inlet), and water movement. He favors 8-9 wt. rods, and 275 grain sinking lines. He uses darker colors at night or in cloudy water.



Ethan Rakes with his first snook



and daddy Shawn with a tarpon, both caught in Puerto Rico in August before the hurricane

SFAOD Meeting 9/13/17.

The meeting commenced at 7:10 PM in the Rolling Meadows Clubhouse, our normal venue. The Club has two new members of which one, Mark Nelson, attended that evening. Mark lives near Seaford and is new to fly fishing. Dennis Lahiff invited a guest, Steve Kaminisky. We hope that Steve will join us as a member. Ron Smith says that we have \$4,201 in our treasury. Ron Smith would like some help from the membership with locating speakers for our monthly meetings. Ron reminded everyone that the Univ. of DE's Coast Day is coming up on Oct. 1. Our Club will have a table for fly tying and we will be doing casting instruction as well. Our next meeting will be on Oct. 11, and John McMinn will be our tentative speaker. Oct. 14 is our One Fly Contest. Plan to arrive here at the Clubhouse at 0800. You can fish anywhere in DE or MD in salt or brackish water. Submit two identical flies, and draw one and use that until you lose it. The person catching the largest fish wins the rest of the flies. The fishing is on the honor system, and no fishing from boats is allowed. There will be coffee and doughnuts in the morning and hot soup donated for lunch. Check in is at 3:30 PM. We will have another grand raffle in June, of 2018 with the usual nice prizes. Roy directed everyone to the fly tying gear that is being auctioned tonight by silent auction. Frank Danner is selling flies tonight, 3 flies for \$10. He also has hats for \$15, books for \$5, and shirts \$15 or \$18. He introduced Russell Martin who is a participant from the Project Healing Waters and is now a Club member.

John Lupinetti is listed as a Pro for Grizzly Coolers, so our Club can get a discount and he can take orders from Club members. Shawn Rakes said that Paul Temple has taken over our Social Media input and website

(webmaster) for the Club. He also will take over the email as well from Shawn. His email address is pauletemple@mac.com or sfaod@outlook.com. Our website will list Club books and DVDs that are available in our lending library, and it will have a link to our Facebook page. Dennis Lahiff suggested that we could compile member's experiences on fishing guides for the benefit of our members. Caution was urged, however, because one person's experience may not be viewed the same way by another client, and as a Club we do not want to hurt the likelihood of anyone's business success. There certainly would be no harm in listing available guiding services as we learn of them.

There was no update available on "A Good Year" fishing contest, but Ted Morlock is solidly in first place. Steve Halstead, our librarian, noted that he cannot bring 200 titles in DVDs and books to the meetings. Send him an email and he will bring whatever title you want to the meeting. He has a Charlie Meck book for sale. Our Club Fly Fishing for Pickerel Tournament will be held on Nov. 11 (the date was later changed to Nov. 12). Jake Powell graduated from college and took a job in the Baltimore area, so we need to replace him on the Board.

Fishing Reports –

Tim O'Neill and Shawn Rakes caught small blues on poppers and stripers and big hickory shad when the tide turned at Indian River. Dennis Lahiff visited the Yellowstone area and fished Henry's Fork and caught good numbers of fish of trout. Bill Licatta boated 18 blues in the 5-6 lb. range in Long Island Sound. He caught big blues and albies near Watch Hill. Bernie Dormer and Chris Cupas fished Tangier Island. The fishing that day was not good (windy), but they caught some fish near Smith Island. Steve Halstead and son caught smallies by canoe on the upper Delaware River. Ed Barry saw lots of small spot when he was fishing. Eric Dammeyer has been taking small blues in Canary Creek. Ted Morlock went to ME and found fantastic smallmouth fishing. Ted also has been fishing Ocean City Inlet. He suggested that you be there when they turn on the lights at night because 20" stripers are around. Steve Halstead will give up his jetty studded boots to anyone who wants them. Ethan Rakes went to Puerto Rico with his Dad in August. Papa Shawn caught some small tarpon and fire tiger cichlids. Ethan missed 6-8 tarpon, but did land a snook. Shawn noted at least 2 guides for fly fishing, but there may be more in Puerto Rico. (Note, this was before the hurricane hit Puerto Rico).

Our speaker that evening was Tim O'Neill of O'Neill's Fly Fishing. The title of his talk was A Tale of 3 Rivers. The rivers he addressed are the Brandywine and its two upper branches, the East Branch and the West Branch. He considers the Brandywine a beautiful river, full of history. The river offers fishing for such diverse fly rod quarries as smallmouth bass, bluegill, rainbow trout, and striped bass; as well as a number of other species like redbreast sunfish and rock bass. He considers the upper East Branch as caddis fly water, and it has a stretch that is managed as a delayed harvest area for trout. The West Branch which meets the main stem at Lenape is more of a warmwater fishery. The lower tidal portion of the mainstem holds such migratory fishes as striped bass, American and hickory shad, and even the occasional tiger musky and walleye which move downstream from PA.

The last event of the evening was a silent auction of fly tying tools and materials generously donated by retired Camden/Wyoming, DE dentist Dr. Howard Priestley. The rods and reels he donated will be auctioned later this fall. All proceeds from the auctions will be donated to Project Healing Waters. Thanks to Howard, \$367 was raised from the sale of the fly tying items.



First flounder of the year for Shawn Rakes



Dr. Jerry Groll sent this picture of a bluefish taken at Cape Henlopen Point. Sure it's small, but it still counts in the AGY contest.

Biologists Corner

Climate Change – As It Affects Our Fish and Our Fisheries

No, I have no intention of debating the reality of this politically charged topic. Instead I intend to focus on something I know about and have been receiving verifiable information on for a number of years. But first, it is a matter of record that the past several years have been among the warmest ever recorded. What effect has this had on our fish stocks? Fish are cold-blooded animals that for the most part (with a few exceptions for the largest tuna, billfish and possibly some large sharks) are incapable of self thermo-regulation. This means that when water temperatures exceed their normal comfort zone, fish tend to migrate to cooler waters. Those that are incapable of migration either seek out local thermal refuges or run the risk of losing weight and body condition, even to the point of perishing. The same phenomena would apply to colder than normal temperatures should this warming trend reverse itself.

So among our fish stocks, what are we seeing? The most recent Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting included a keynote address on these phenomena by Dr. Roger Mann of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Dr. Mann avoided the politics of this issue and stuck to the observed phenomena concerning fish stocks. Relatively rapid changes in ocean temperatures can have profound effects. One example he cited is the massive ocean fish kill of tilefish documented by ocean going vessels in 1882 in response to cold water. This huge fish kill

(millions of fish) suppressed tilefish stocks for nearly 100 years. In addition the Commission has formed working groups to specifically deal with the effects of climate change on specific species managed by the Commission. This is a real challenge as fishery managers have no control over climate change, only what and how many fishes can be taken of the 40 plus managed species in the mid-Atlantic and northeast. A prime example is American lobster. The portion of those lobster stocks that normally occur from the southern part of New England southward to the Mid-Atlantic is experiencing a drastic decline. The Long Island stocks of lobster between Connecticut and New York have all but collapsed. Toward the extreme southern end of the range of lobster, the remaining lobsters seem to be holding their own by seeking deeper, cooler water, plus there are only a few dedicated fishermen heading far enough offshore to encounter these lobsters. The lobsters that once were abundant at the Outer Wall off of Lewes are just not there anymore and the small directed commercial fishing effort for these lobsters has disappeared as well.

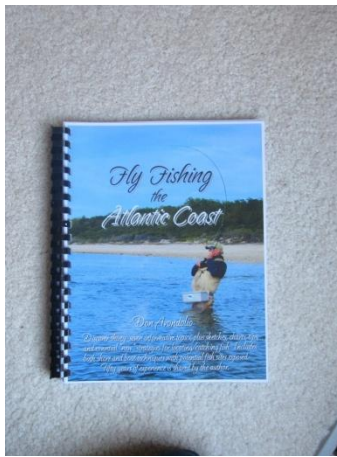
Does Maine still have lobsters – you bet! Maine is up to its armpits in lobsters and they represent Maine’s most valuable fishery by a considerable margin. It’s a long slog for lobsters in our area to head north to Maine, but if there is no or very little successful recruitment of young lobsters in our region because of relatively high bottom water temperatures, then it will not take too many years before it looks like they all moved north.

So what other species in our area are showing the effects of climate change? Certainly summer flounder and black sea bass are prime local examples of adaptation to climate change. Anyone who fishes Delaware Bay knows that large flounder have been in short supply in our Bay during the summer after the fish have abandoned inshore waters in the late spring. If you want to catch keeper size flounder in the summer and fall, you had better plan on heading well offshore to the artificial reef sites or the Old Grounds. There the habitat is more suitable for keeping larger flounder comfortable. So our larger flounder have been moving offshore and northward seeking cooler water. That is why New York State has had to increase their minimum size limits and reduce their season so as to not grossly exceed their summer flounder quota. The same phenomenon is happening with black sea bass. Massachusetts has found itself awash in black sea bass, and they are eating whatever is available, including baby lobsters, thus exacerbating the problem with their lobster stocks. We are seeing other examples of the effects of climate change on our fisheries. It is not unusual anymore to expect spotted sea trout and red drum to make an appearance in our coastal waters at some point in the summer. I suspect we will see more cobia and perhaps even tarpon during the summer should the local food supply be adequate. Tarpon have been taken as far north as New Jersey recently, perhaps even up to New York. In the inshore nursery areas it is no longer unusual to take pompano, juvenile permit, striped mojarra, pigfish, and other southern migrants in the shoreline seine samples that I and others volunteer to conduct in Delaware’s Inland Bays. Are lion fish expected next? God forbid. I think you get the idea. Fish don’t recognize political boundaries, and they are going to continue to seek favorable temperatures that match their evolutionary development. Let’s just hope that when the southern migrants get here they have enough to eat. For more on this I suggest reading: Hare JA, Morrison WE, Nelson MW, Stachura MM, Teeters EJ, Griffis RB, et al. (2016) A Vulnerability Assessment of Fish and Invertebrates to Climate Change on the Northeast U.S. Continental Shelf. PLoS ONE 11(2): e0146756. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0146756>

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.



Don't forget to pick yourself up a copy of founding member Don Avondolio's book, Fly Fishing the Atlantic Coast. You can obtain a copy from Don directly by calling him at 302-947-9487 or email him at donnavon@verizon.net. The book retails for \$17 for Club members or \$20 for non-Club members.

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Sunset at the mouth of Roosevelt Inlet, DE Bay, photo by Roy Miller.
 The lead picture is from Angola Neck on Rehoboth Bay at the end of Camp Arrowhead Road, photo by Roy Miller.