



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

Late Fall/Early Winter 2017, 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:

Ron Smith – (301) 213-7637 (Flyaboutsmitth@comcast.net)
John Lupinetti – (302) 381-1521 (lupi51@aol.com)
Shawn Rakes – (302) 381-1871 (flyfishrakes@gmail.com)
Frank Danner – (302) 359-2916 (capt.frankdanner@comcast.net)
Bob Kutay – (302) 260-2430 (boblinbeach@verizon.net)
Roy Miller – (302) 645-7103 (fishmaster70@comcast.net)
Bernie Stasko – (302) 698-4070 (bstasko2@gmail.com)

-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

Fall Club Events in 2017 and early 2018

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.

Jan. 5, 19 – Club holiday dinner
Feb. 14 – Regular Club meeting
Feb. 24-25 – Lefty's Tie Fest, Annapolis, MD
Mar. 10 – Delaware Outdoor Expo, Harrington, DE
Mar. 14 – Regular Club meeting
Apr. 11 – Regular Club meeting
Apr. 27-29 – Delmarva Outdoor Expo, Harrington
Apr. 28 – White Clay Fly Fishers outing on White Clay Creek

SFAOD Meeting 10/11/2017

Our speaker that night was Club member John McMinn. It was announced that Jake Powell has stepped down as a Board of Directors member. Bernie Stasko will fill in for the time being until the election in December. Bob Kutay said that our present membership is around 140. Bob announced that Shawn Richardson is our newest member. According to Ron Smith, we have \$4,394 in our Club treasury. A total of \$367 was generated for Project Healing Waters last month by the auction of fly tying materials donated by Dr. Howard Priestley. The bids on the fly fishing equipment will be put off until next month.

The Club's One Fly Contest will be held this coming Saturday (Oct. 14). Each person will enter two identical flies. Then each entrant will draw a single fly in a blind drawing at 0800. If you lose your fly you are done for the day. Prizes will be awarded for most fish and the largest fish. All entries will be on the honor system, although pictures are desirable. There will be a Fly Tying Symposium in Lancaster, PA on Nov. 11-12. Roy announced that he is giving away some free spinning equipment for anyone who wants it. Bernie Stasko has taken over the sale of Club flies. Our 2018 Grand Raffle has already started and Ed Barry is selling tickets for the grand drawing in June of 2018. Ron Smith read off a preliminary list of prizes for the Grand Raffle with a lot of the same items as last year. Steve Halstead is our Club librarian. Check our Club website for books and dvds available for borrowing and send Steve an email so he can bring them to the next meeting rather than have Steve haul the whole lot to every meeting. Steve also announced that he arranged a fishing trip for the 25th of Oct. with Capt. Dan Harrison and needs a fishing partner.

Fishing Reports – One of the meeting attendees reported that he fished the Susquehanna River and caught hundreds of smallmouth bass up to 4.5 lbs., while fishing near Danville, PA. Allen Cairncross fished with Richie Gaines on Chesapeake Bay and Allen and his partner caught 50 stripers. Matt Dammeyer fished the Coast Guard Jetty and Outer Wall and has been catching lots of small bluefish. He caught some tonight at Bubble Gum Beach at Indian River Inlet. Albies (false albacore) were spotted off the jetties at I.R., but you need a boat to get to them. Bill Licata boated 6 albies at Stonington, CT. Ed Barry fished Montauk and caught a few bluefish and 1 albie. He said there were 30 boats in sight, but few were hooking up. It took him 13 hours of driving to get to his destination. Frank Danner fished Rock Hall, MD 2.5 weeks ago. He caught two and then the fish went deep. He also picked up a 36 incher on a spinning rod. Ron Smith fished IR at the Coast Guard Basin. He did poorly except that his nephew caught a 20" tautog on a swimming grub fished with a spinning rod. Shawn and Ethan Rakes caught 50 small bluefish at Masseys Landing. Paul Temple caught a silver perch. On a previous trip to Masseys, Ethan Rakes caught a small bluefish. Allen Cairncross caught 27 stripers using a floating Clouser under the Cape Shores Pier lights. Paul Temple caught a 19" striper on a pencil popper at Masseys Landing. Ethan Rakes fished the weekend near Pulaski, NY with his Dad starting on Sat. On his second cast he broke one off. He landed a 16-20 lb. king salmon on the Salmon River. The second day they visited the fish hatchery. They caught 14 fish total using chartreuse or orange comet flies. Shawn Rakes said that early in the run the fish bite aggressively. Shawn caught a nice coho as well. The king salmon were very abundant.

After our usual monthly raffle, our speaker, John McMinn was introduced. John is a member of our Club and is a retired chemical engineer who fishes many different places, including FL. John is a friend of the late Captain Bob

Marvin who has spoken to our Club in the past about fishing in FL. John talked about fishing for tarpon in the back country of FL near the 10,000 Islands region. The water in this part of the state is stained by tannic acid and sometimes cloudy. John likes to cast tight to structure and believes in following the bubble paths left by tarpon in shallow water. He feels that shallow, slow rollers are the best targets for fly fishermen. For laid-up fish he likes a quiet, smooth delivery with a slow retrieve. Never stop retrieving or the tarpon will lose interest according to John.



Ethan Rakes caught his first flounder on a fly at Masseys Landing in early October

SFAOD Meeting 11/8/2017

Vice President John Lupinetti opened the meeting at the Rolling Meadows Club House for President Rakes who was absent. Ron Smith said our speaker tonight will be Russell Martin. Russell is a veteran and will tell us about his experiences with Project Healing Waters.

The first item of business was to solicit nominations for officers of our Club. The present slate of officers was re-nominated to serve again in 2018.

Russell Martin, our speaker, said that he was in the U.S. Army and he was wounded in Iraq. In addition to 10 surgeries he also suffered from PTSD and was treated at Walter Reed where he met Ed Nicholson of Project Healing Waters. He feels that Project Healing Waters helped save him. He attended three of their events this year: Stars and Strippers, fishing in the PA Poconos on private water, and fishing at Pulaski, NY. He stayed at Tailwater Resort in Pulaski on the Salmon River where he was lucky enough to land a couple of steelhead.

After Russell spoke, Bob Kutay introduced new members Shawn Richardson and son Devon of Lewes. They have fished in Erie, PA and WV. Bob will be sending out membership renewal notices soon. Ron Smith gave an oral report on the One-Fly Contest. There were 15 people entered, but only three caught fish. Paul Temple caught 6 fish of 3 species and Shawn Rakes caught a 17.5" striper, the largest fish of the day. Steve Halstead caught a small black sea bass that day as well.

Our Club treasury has \$4,723 in it. So far we have accumulated \$367 for Project Healing Waters from the sale of donated fly tying equipment. Roy Miller will be our speaker in December and he will give an update on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission happenings and management decisions. He also will show some slides of his experiences fly fishing in FL. Ron Smith said that our Holiday dinner will be on Jan. 5 at Lewes Presbyterian Church. Club fly tying starts the next day at Lewes Harbor Marina at 0900 until noon. Ron said to submit your best saltwater fly by next meeting for the John Meaghre Fly Tying Contest.

Captain Holly Ann Firuta has a Sage 13 weight fly rod and matching Islander reel for sale. She will let each go for \$250. Frank Danner has two Project Healing Waters rods for sale this evening as well. Roy Miller brought 4 rods and reels donated by retired dentist Howard Priestley. The proceeds from these rods and reels will be donated to

Project Healing Waters. Holly Ann said that if her rod and reel sell tonight, she will donate \$100 of the proceeds to PHW.

Paul Temple said that the Club pickerel fly fishing tournament will be held this Sunday on Haven Lake. Some discussion ensued as to whether these pickerel tournaments are an appropriate Club function since there is a charge to participate. The entry fee pays the expenses of trophies plus a pizza lunch, so they are self supporting and no Club funds are used to finance the pickerel tournaments.

There followed a number of fishing reports. Alan Cairncross made three guided trips to the Chesapeake this past month fishing with guides Ritchie Gaines and Gary Nietzy. They caught lots of stripers (over 60 fish) including several over 20 inches. The third trip the fish were not hitting on the surface, but they still caught good numbers up to 24 inches. Dr. Jerry Groll fished the Cape Shores pier on Sunday and there were some stripers caught on fly rod and spinning rods. Paul Temple fished the pier at Seaside where there were lots of small bluefish. He couldn't get his fly past them to reach any stripers. Ron Smith thinks the little blues are still thick at Cape Henlopen Pier. There being no further business, the meeting was ended a little after 9 PM.



Club member John McMinn with a very nice redfish he took in Louisiana in mid November



Here's a shot of noted Lewes restaurateur Matt Disabatino with a nice striper he took off the New Jersey coast this fall.

SFAOD Meeting 12/13/17.

Vice President Lupinetti opened the meeting for President Shawn Rakes and introduced our speaker, Roy Miller from our own Board of Directors. Roy spoke about happenings in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Roy serves as Governor Carney's appointee to the Commission, a role he has fulfilled for Delaware's governors since he retired from the State in 2009. Prior to 2009 he attended Commission meetings for many years in his capacity as Program Manager and Administrator of Fisheries for the DE Division of Fish and Wildlife. Each state sends three Commissioners to Commission meetings including the head of each state's fisheries management agency, a member of each state's legislature, and the Governor's appointee. The

Commission meets on a quarterly basis and approves fishery management plans that can include harvest limits for 27 species of finfish and shellfish important in near-shore ocean and estuarine waters from Maine to Florida. Some of the species managed by the Commission that are important to Delawareans include striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, summer and winter flounder, black sea bass, scup, Atlantic sturgeon, American shad, river herring, horseshoe crabs and a host of others. After completing the ASMFC management update, Roy presented slides of his 2017 fly fishing experiences in FL and in the Keys. After Roy, Ed Barry showed everyone slides of fly fishing for bonefish at Andros Island in the Bahamas.

Fishing Reports – Our youngest members (Christian Camponone and Ethan Rakes) caught 8 blues and 6 stripers under the lights at the Coast Guard Station on a Sunday night. Ethan related the story of a 4 lb. bass that ate a bluegill he was landing from a farm pond. He also fished the Marshy Hope on a scout camp out, and caught two stripers off the dock. Ted Morelock reported that his neighbors caught some big stripers off of the NJ coastline. Micah, Matt and Eric Dammeyer fished with Capt. Chuck Cook and only caught a couple of fish at IR Inlet. John McMinn had great fishing at Harkers Island, NC after Thanksgiving. The albacore were feeding on bay anchovy and he managed to land quite a few albies fishing with Capt. Brian Horsely.

Bob Kutay says that we now have 167 members in the Club. Paul and Christian joined tonight. Martin Moretto is visiting with us tonight. He is a former ranger who grew up in Islamorada, FL. We sent \$852 to Healing Waters generated from silent auctions of donated fishing equipment. In addition Frank Danner made \$400 off of rod sales and donated all of it to Project Healing Waters and Cathin Bishop donated \$100 for a total of \$1,352 sent to PHW from our Club. The Club's banquet is scheduled for Jan. 5 at a cost of \$10/person. There will be menu changes this year. Everyone is encouraged to bring items that can be given as door prizes. Our goal is for everyone to go home with something. Dale Clifton who owns the Shipwreck Museum in Fenwick Island is scheduled to be our speaker. He will talk about area wrecks and what is found there. Tie Fest is scheduled for Feb. 24 and 25 in downtown Annapolis at the Loew's Hotel (see announcement below). Frank Danner has club hats, shirts and where to fish books. The judging for the John Meaghre fly tying contest will be held sometime soon before the banquet. Beginning Jan. 6, Club members will again begin fly tying at Lewes Harbor Marina on Saturday mornings thanks to the generosity of owner Amanda Morris. Bernie Stasko has new Club flies for sale, 5 for \$10. Bernie also has some freshwater flies if anyone is interested. There will be no business meeting in January because of the banquet.

It is pretty well known in fly fishing circles that beloved fly fishing guru and mentor Bernard (Lefty) Kreh is coping with some serious health issues. To honor Lefty, I am taking this opportunity to repeat a true story of a day I spent fishing with Lefty many years ago.

Back in the late 1970s former Division of Fish and Wildlife colleague and part-time outdoor writer Fred Bonner asked me to go fishing with him on Delaware Bay using Fred's 17 ft. aluminum boat. I was pleasantly surprised to see that Fred had arranged for someone else to accompany us that day. That someone turned out to be Lefty Kreh. Even back then, I had heard of Lefty Kreh. Lefty's goal that day was to catch a world record weakfish on his fly rod. Fred and I fished with the usual lead-head bucktails tipped with rubber worms that were in vogue at that time for the big weakfish which were so plentiful in Delaware Bay. During the ride to the Cedar Creek launch ramp, Lefty kept up a steady patter of stories and jokes, one right after another. I was frequently in stitches all the way to the launch ramp. As it turned out, Fred and I caught some fish on our spinning rods, and Lefty kept fly casting and trying for that world record. He failed to land one large enough to enter as a record. What he did hook, however, was his own back. It was windy that day and one of his casts in that relatively small boat managed to get the best of him, and Lefty had to take his jacket off to extract his fly from his back. When I suggested to Fred that he take Lefty's picture while he was trying to back his fly out of his rain jacket, Lefty said "don't you do that!" He meant it, but we all had a laugh over it nonetheless. In retrospect, I wish I had taken the opportunity to get some fly casting instructions that day, no matter how challenging the conditions. In those days I only fly fished for trout or

freshwater panfish, so I didn't know what I was missing by not trying saltwater fly fishing. I didn't buy a saltwater capable fly rod until the late 1980s, and by then the big weakfish were beginning their catastrophic decline. Plus, sadly, I never had another opportunity to fish again with Lefty. He might not remember me, but I imagine he remembers Fred, since Fred was a bit of a character in his own right. I have enjoyed this opportunity of sharing this personal remembrance of Lefty, a revered individual who did so much for the sport we all love.

Roy Miller



I got Lefty to pose for a picture with me at a Tie Fest in MD in Feb. 2015.
I believe Lefty was 91 years of age when this was taken.

Our annual banquet in January 2018 had to be postponed this year because of snowfall. Instead of January 5, it was held on January 19 at Lewes Presbyterian Church. As usual attendance was good and the food was generally acknowledged to be excellent thanks to our caterers Jerry and Carol Brown. The evening included awards for the winners of the Open Division of "A Good Year" fishing contest which this year was won by Ted Morlock who managed to land an amazing 40 species on a fly rod in 2017, a considerable achievement. Second place went to John McMinn with 36 species and third place to Shawn Rakes with 32 species taken on flies. Ethan Rakes won first place in the Youth Division with 20 species taken on a fly rod. Bernie Stasko entered the most species in the Danner Division (20 species). The Danner Division only includes fishes caught on the Delmarva Peninsula, whereas in the Open Division, fishes caught anywhere on planet Earth count. The winners of the 2017 John Meaghre Fly Tying Contest were recognized as well. Ron Smith took first place with his crab fly, Shawn Rakes came in second, and keeping it in the family, young Ethan Rakes took third. Our program that evening was a magic act presented by Randy Forster of Dickens Parlor Theatre in Millville. Kyle Johnson prepared a Power Point show using a compilation of fishing pictures donated by Club members in 2017. All in all it was a terrific evening. Many thanks to Ron and Lorraine Smith for serving so capably as our hosts at Lewes Presbyterian Church.



Here is Ted Morlock showing off his prize for winning the “A Good Year” fishing contest.



In addition to Ted on the left, here are other winners of the “A Good Year” contest: Shawn Rakes (Youth Division) and Bernie Stasko, Danner Division.



Frank Danner (on the right) recognizes the three winners of the John Meaghre Fly Tying Contest. From left to right are Shawn Rakes (Second place), Ron Smith (first place), and Ethan Rakes (third place).



These are the door prizes at the banquet.



Biologists Corner

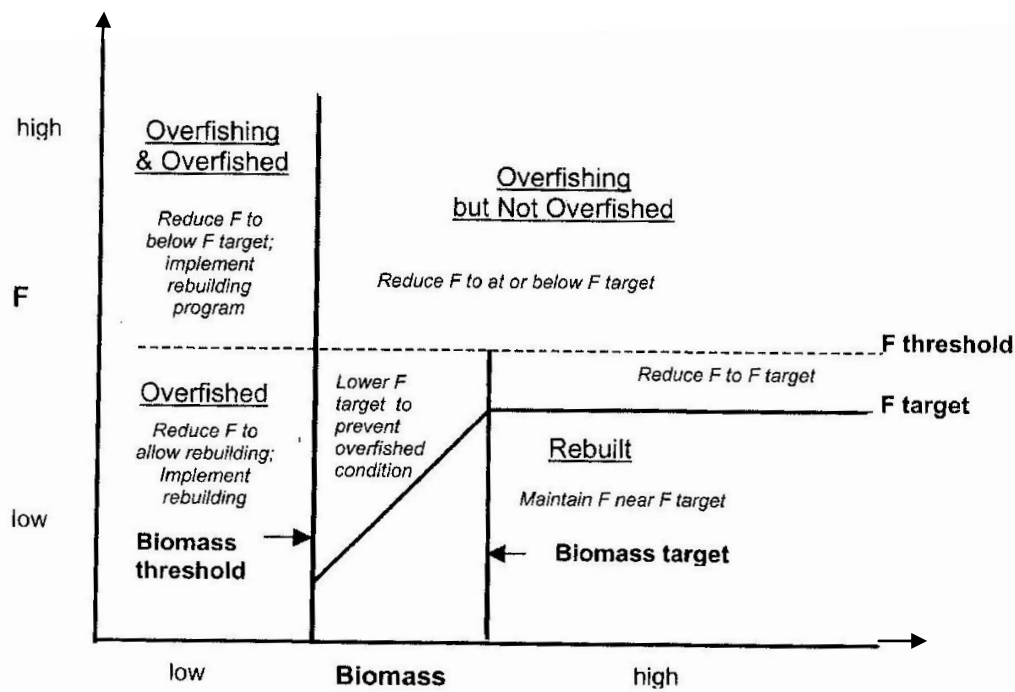
If you attend any meetings concerning management of our fisheries in Delaware or neighboring states you will hear the term “stock assessment” used a lot. What exactly is a stock assessment anyway? It is a way to mathematically describe the status of a population of fish and usually refers to individuals of the same species living in the same area. For example, the East Coast population of migratory striped bass are usually referred to as the striped bass stock. If you attempt to do an assessment of this population, then you are attempting to describe either the abundance of this stock in terms of numbers of striped bass or its total biomass or weight and you will be comparing these values to some standard. If the population is overfished, it means that the biomass or total weight of the striped bass stock is below some reference value, hence the stock is overfished. If striped bass are being removed from the population at a rate that is not sustainable, that means they are being removed faster than they can be replaced by reproduction. This rate of removal is referred to as the fishing mortality rate or exploitation, and if it is too high, then overfishing is taking place. Some reference points for striped bass are the target and threshold mortality rates and target and threshold spawning stock biomass. The threshold mortality rate should not be exceeded and if it is, the mortality rates should be reduced to the target, which is even less than the threshold. Conversely as managers we strive to achieve or exceed the biomass target. If biomass falls below the target and approaches the biomass threshold, then further management such as reducing mortality should be considered. If biomass falls below the biomass threshold, then management action is necessary to re-build the stock (see graph below that illustrates these terms).

In order to conduct a stock assessment, two types of data typically are needed. The first is fishery dependent data, or in the case of striped bass that would mean data on the numbers and weights of striped bass removed from the population by sport and commercial fishing. This number includes both the striped bass kept and taken home to eat and those that are thrown overboard that eventually die as a result of handling stress, also called by-catch losses. By-catch mortality rates are usually estimated from special studies that look at hook and release mortality or commercial discards. The second type of data needed is fishery independent data. That would include data from special surveys of striped bass abundance like the Maryland seine surveys of juvenile abundance or the research bottom trawl surveys conducted at regular intervals in the winter from NC up to VA that target older striped bass that spend the winters offshore of the VA/NC coasts.

Since we cannot count all of the striped bass along the Atlantic Coast, we are drawing inferences about this population from what we can count and assuming our samples are representative of the population as a whole. There is error associated with these estimates of course, otherwise it wouldn't be a survey, it would be a census. A true census is difficult for aquatic animals that are hidden from our view most of the time, unlike waterfowl counts where scientists can fly over flocks of ducks and geese and actually count all of the individuals in a given area.

Other terms that are useful in stock assessments include the growth rate of the fishes in question and their reproductive maturity rate. In any description of the mortality rate of a fish population, there are two components that have to be estimated: the fishing mortality rate or rate of removal by fishing at any point in time which is usually abbreviated by a capital F, and the natural mortality rate or rate of removal by sources other than fishing like predation, disease, and old age. The natural mortality rate is abbreviated with a capital M. Together the two rates of fishing mortality F plus the natural mortality M equal the total rate of removal or Z. The equation for this is $F+M=Z$. This natural mortality rate can vary over the life of a fish. A young striped bass can be eaten by many things, hence the natural mortality rate is higher for a juvenile striped bass than it is for an adult. However, many of the mathematical models employed by stock assessment scientists assume that the natural mortality rate is constant, thus introducing yet another source of potential error in the estimation procedure. Using the numbers of fish caught at each age and plotting those numbers on a graph yields a line whose slope gives us an estimate of the total mortality rate or Z. If we have an estimate of M or the natural mortality rate, then by subtraction we can estimate F or the rate of fishing mortality. This estimate of F can then be compared to some benchmark or reference point like what it was in 1995 when the striped bass stock was first declared to be restored. Then we can say whether our population of striped bass is being overfished or not. Simple right? Well as you may have guessed, it is not simple, nor are the mathematical models employed to describe these fish populations usually simple. A mathematical model often used to describe fishes like striped bass is called a statistical catch at age model. For this type of model the bare minimum estimates needed are the catch at each age and an index of relative abundance. There are even models to be employed when we don't know all of the mortality components that are called data poor models. Another term you will hear in fisheries meetings is recruitment. That is the term used to account for the number of fish that enter the stock as a result of successful reproduction and subsequent survival. If recruitment is good, that means that the numbers of young striped bass produced that year are relatively high. The Maryland seine index is one of the best indicators we have of annual recruitment success for the migratory striped bass population.

There are lots of references available on understanding stock assessments and one of the best is published by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. It is called a "Guide to Fisheries Science and Stock Assessments" and is available from the Commission at the following address: 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201. But if you choose not to pursue this topic any further, at least now you will know what those fisheries managers mean when they talk about fishing mortality rates or F and natural mortality rates or M.



Source of figure – ASMFC Guide to Fisheries Science and Stock Assessments, 2009

rwm

President's Report

Members,

We are almost around the winter turn headed into spring. Although March and April weather can be highly unpredictable (and freakishly windy) it is one of my favorite times of year to fish, closely followed by fall (it may be a tie). Ethan and I hit Millsboro Pond last Monday evening and managed to get into some pickerel. It was a fun session and we were able to get in two hours after he got off of school as the days are slowly getting longer. Ethan has been out a few other times in the bitter February cold and managed to catch a couple of largemouth in our local pond. I have heard a few fishing reports from some members (I think Paul T. and Jack S.) that they got into some bluegills on a warm afternoon the first week in February. I am anxious to try my two-handed rod under some spillways for some perch and shad. Ethan has been tying shad-darts on his new Norvise non-stop since he got it. I am excited to put his flies to the test.

Ethan and I made it to the first fly tying session at Lewes Harbor but have been tied up each weekend since with shows, BSA campouts, and National Guard training. Hopefully we can get to a few more sessions. I heard they are being well attended and we are gaining new members there. The club is planning to participate in both of Delmarva's outdoors shows as we did last year. The BOD will update you at the next meeting. If you see Rich King around, thank him for working so well with us for these shows.

I have been to a few fly fishing shows this winter season and there are a lot of great new products and trips out there. I picked up the Jamie Howard film "Running the Coast" at Edison, NJ

and was blown away by it. I would encourage all of you to watch it. The film starts on Chesapeake Bay, specifically the Susquehanna Flats at Havre De Grace (my home turf). They show the catch and release of big cow stripers on a fly throughout the film, mostly sight fishing. There are some stick men and bait guys (huckers and chuckers) covered in the film, but it has a good balance. The film covers the entire migration of the fish from the Bay around Cape Charles, VA up to Maine. It is visually stunning and you are introduced to many characters that chase our patron fish. Go to Howardfilms.com if you would like to secure a copy for yourself.

Our annual dinner was well attended in January and though our speaker cancelled on us at the last moment Michael Orhlein was able to get comedic magician to fill in. I must admit that I was skeptical, but man did the guy turn out to be a total hoot. The food was amazing as usual and the program went off without a hitch. If you have not attended before mark your calendar for next January. You will love it

For those not following online, Lefty Kreh is doing better than expected. His granddaughter has been making updates on her FB page. Not sure if he will make Tiefert or not, but I would not be surprised if he dropped in for a visit. Though it sounds like his capacity it reduced some, it seems his overall health has improved. He is certainly a National Treasure and we wish **him** All The Best.
Shawn

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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Picture credits – Shawn Rakes took the opening photo and the one of Ethan Rakes. I don't know who took the picture of John McMinn with the redfish or Matt Disabatino with the striper. The other photos were taken by Roy Miller, except the one of Lefty and I think John Lupinetti took that one.