



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

October, November, December 2019, January 2020

Writer/Editor: Roy Miller

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

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*indicates Board members retiring this fall

-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.

Oct. 6 – Coast Day, Lewes

Oct. 12 – Club One Fly Contest

Nov. 13 - Regular Club meeting, Rolling Meadows Club House

Nov. 9 – Fall pickerel fly fishing tournament

Dec. 11 – Regular Club Meeting, Roy Miller to give an ASMFC update

Dec. 15 – Annual Species Contest cut-off date.

Jan. 3, 2020 – Annual Holiday Dinner
Feb. 12 – Regular Club meeting, Rolling Meadows Club House, Capt. Kevin Josenhans, speaker
Feb. 22, 23 - Tie Fest, BWI airport Marriott Hotel
Mar. 7, 8 - Lancaster, PA Fly Fishing Show
Mar. 11- Regular Club meeting, Greg Mentzer to speak
Mar. 28 – Last fly tying session at Lewes Harbor Marina
Apr. 4 – Pickerel fly fishing tournament, DE public ponds
Apr. 8 – Regular Club meeting, Rolling Meadows, gear and rigging night
Apr. 22 – Henlopen Flats fishing with food, 6 PM
Apr. 24, 25, 26 – Delmarva Outdoors Expo., Harrington Fair Grounds
Apr. 25 – Outing with White Clay Fly Fishers, Landenburg, PA
May 6 – Henlopen Flats fishing, 6 PM
May 9 – SFAOD Club picnic, Gordon's Pond, Rehoboth.

SFAOD Meeting Oct. 9

Club Business and Announcements –

President John Lupinetti opened the meeting shortly after 7 PM at the Rolling Meadows Club House in Lewes. The first item of business was an auction of books authored by the late Lefty Kreh with John Lupinetti serving as the auctioneer. The prices paid were as follows:

- \$20 for Little Library of Fly Fishing (8 books)
- \$10 for Lefty Fly Fishing book
- \$5 for Lefty and Mark Sosin knot book
- \$10 for Lefty's book on fly tying
- Assorted DVDs by Lefty - \$10

The remainder of the books will go to the AMVETS. Bob Kutay will accept flies for the John Meagher fly tying contest and we all will vote in the December meeting on the winners. Mike Collier was recognized as our new membership chair and newest Board member.

Treasurer Ron Smith said that we had \$3,947 to start in September with \$3,934 left at the end of the month. The annual One-Fly Contest will be held this Saturday, with check in at 0800. Bring two matching flies, draw one and fish with it until you lose it. The contest ends at 3 o'clock and recognition and prizes will be awarded for the largest fish and the most fish caught. Loretta Smith made an announcement about the Nov. 9 Pickerel Fly Fishing Tournament. Tonight is the last night for sign-ups. There are three teams of 2 anglers so far. The September Martha's Vineyard Club fishing trip endured windy conditions, but it was fun.

Walt Clark said that the pavilion at Cape Henlopen is not available on our selected dates in May and June. We can get Gordon's Pond pavilion in May, so we will reserve that location for May 9. Tonight is the last night as a Board member for John Lupinetti and Ron Smith. Next month we will hold nominations for all Board of Directors positions for 2020. At Roy's urging the Club offered a standing ovation for John and Ron's long term service to the Club. Paul recommended that publicity be put out about our vacancies on the Bd. (four at present). Bob Kutay and Paul Temple also were recognized for their valuable service to the Club as Board members.

Fishing Reports – Christian caught three largemouth bass in a place off of Route 24. Loretta caught a black sea bass and a bluefish at Canary Creek. Ron said we had a good outing at Coast Day with Loretta, Joe S., Ron Smith, Frank D., and Clyde S. and we picked up 2 new members. Martha Vineyard – lots of wind, not a lot of fish caught. Bill L. and Ed B. hired a guide for 2 days, one day on a boat, each caught 4-5 stripers, saw albies but didn't catch any. They had a great time. The Island is bigger than you might think. Coop's Tackle Shop is worth

frequenting. Roy related how he and a friend took striped bass and weakfish in the L&R Canal at night a few weeks ago.

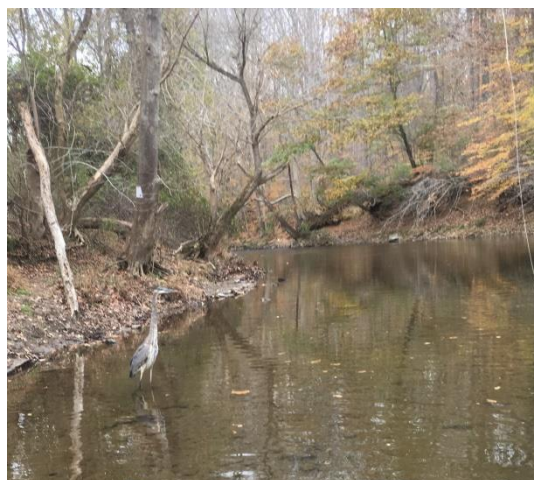
Program – Our speaker was Tony Friedrich from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Tony was representing the American Saltwater Guides Association that night. One of the founders of this organization is charter captain John McMurray of NY. Tony briefed our group on the economic value of saltwater sport fishing. Outdoor recreation in general is a \$2.2 billion industry in this country. Just for an example of the economic value of fishing, it is estimated that a 7-8 year old bonefish is worth \$8,000 to the economy of south Florida. Tony then discussed recent developments in the interstate management of striped bass and bluefish, both of which are currently classified as overfished, and their principal prey item, Atlantic menhaden. Important meetings concerning these species will be held the last week of this month at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in New Castle, NH. Tony urged everyone to stay informed on management developments for these three species as they are vitally important to our coastal recreational fisheries. He said that Don Young of AK is sponsoring legislation to extend the fish stock re-building schedule beyond 10 years that is the present backbone of the Magnuson/Stevens Act. He also said that Congressman Huffman is heading a Listening Tour to gather input for re-authorization of the Magnuson Stevens Act.

The usual monthly raffle was held and the meeting adjourned at 9:25.



Roy Miller with a hickory shad (left) and striper taken from Ron Smith's boat while fishing at Indian River Inlet.

Roy Miller took this picture of the Ed O'Donnell pool on White Clay Creek this fall. That's Ed's fishing buddy, the blue heron, on the left



SFAOD Meeting Nov. 13, 2019

Club Business and Announcements – President Ed Barry opened the meeting at 7:15 PM at the Rolling Meadows Club House in Lewes. The first item of business was to take nominations for the 2020 Board of Directors. John Lupinetti nominated Bill O'Connor for one of the Board vacancies created when Bob Kutay, Ron Smith, and John Lupinetti stepped down this fall after many years of service to the Club. Frank Danner nominated the present slate of Board members; namely Ed Barry, Bernie Stasko, Roy Miller, Walt Clark, Loretta Smith, and Mike Collier to carry over into 2020. This motion passed without objection. According to Treasurer Walt Clark, our Club had \$3,934 to start the month of October and finished the month with \$3,845.

Concerning upcoming events, we will hold our annual banquet dinner on January 3 at Lewes Presbyterian Church in Lewes. Admission to this affair is again \$10/person. Cathin Bishop will provide the desserts at the dinner. Attendees are encouraged to bring an item to be donated as a door prize. Hopefully there will be enough donations so that everyone will have something to take home. At 0900 Saturday morning January 4 fly tying will resume at Lewes Harbor Marina. These Saturday morning tying sessions will last until April 1 courtesy of Amanda Morris, Marina owner.

There is a fly tying symposium that will be held on Nov. 23-24 in Parsippany, NJ (north of Morristown) if anyone is interested in attending. Loretta Smith announced that she has cancelled the upcoming Pickerel Fly Fishing Tournament which was going to be held on Nov. 9 because of predicted bad weather. Loretta is selling tickets for our June 2020 Grand Raffle and also has flies for sale that were donated by Club members. Mike Collier was announced as our new membership chair. New members who joined recently include Ethan Orhelein (Mike's son). There will be the usual Club raffle later this evening. Don't forget the John Meagher Memorial Fly Tying Contest. The judging will be held following the business meeting next month and everyone in attendance gets a vote. The rules state one fly per entrant and it must be a saltwater pattern.

Fishing reports – Jim DiDonato fished a tributary to the Susquehanna River in Pa and was unsuccessful. Bernie Stasko and Jim fished the Boy Scout Pond in Dover and had better luck. They also caught a few rainbow trout at Tuckahoe Creek in MD. Bob Kutay said there are stripers in Love Creek at Mulberry Landing. Dr. Jerry Groll said that his grandson caught two small stripers off the Cape Shores pier using a Spec rig. Stripers also have been caught off the pier and dock at Massey's Landing near Indian River. Bob Hammond caught Snake River cutthroats while on an elk hunting trip in Wyoming. Walt Clark fished at Cape Hatteras. He said that in spite of storm damage there were sharks and kingfish in the surf. Jerry Groll fished Ingrams Pond with Alan Cairncross. They caught 3 bass plus redears and bluegills. Rich Seagraves said there are stripers in Indian River Inlet, also some speckled sea trout. He also has been doing well on snakeheads at the Blackwater Refuge in MD.

Club members discussed some ideas for Club activities in 2020 such as boat and/or shore fishing tournaments, snakehead excursions, having a swap meet, panfish contests (bluegills, redears), holding a gear session at one of our meetings, fly casting 101 instruction, overnight fishing trips like to Pulaski, NY, and group day trips to Delmarva locations. One suggestion was to re-institute the Wed. evening get togethers at the Cape Henlopen Pier parking lot.

Program – Our program that night was provided by member Jim DiDonato with assistance by some other Club members. Jim recounted this September's Club trip to Martha's Vineyard in MA and showed slides from pictures he took and those taken by Mike Orhelein. Eleven Club members made the trip to MA. It was a 7 hour drive from DE, plus the ferry trip to the Island. They used the Vineyard Haven entry. Jim said that Edgartown Light is a very scenic location, but parking can be a challenge. Bill Licata and Ed Barry fished for a day with guide Abby Shuster. Jim said that a favorite non-fishing location was Coop's Bait and Tackle Shop. Their flies were

expensive, but their tying materials were reasonable. In general Jim used Clouser minnows with bead-chain eyes. Attendees spent about \$400 each, exclusive of any guide fees. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

SFAOD Meeting Dec. 11, 2019

Club Business and Announcements – President Barry opened the meeting at 7:15 PM at the Rolling Meadows Clubhouse. Jim DiDonato moved to approve all the existing Board of Directors to another term. After being seconded, the motion passed unanimously. Treasurer Walt Clark said that we began the month with \$3,845 with \$3,829 left by the end of the month. Membership renewals are starting to be received. Walt said he had 46 reservations for the annual dinner in January so far. He will need help at 10:00 in the morning on Jan. 3 to help set up. Jan. 4 will be our first fly tying session at Lewes Harbor Marina from 0900-12:00 noon. Mike Collier says he has two pedestal vices for sale. He encouraged members to renew their memberships as soon as they can. For our Jan. 3 banquet we have lined up two members of the local Nanticoke Indian Tribe to talk to us about their history and culture. Loretta Smith has both saltwater flies and Grand Raffle tickets for sale. Bill O'Connor will be taking care of our email correspondence with help from Paul Temple. Send any emails to Bill and use your personal email rather than your work email.

At the close of business all members present joined in the judging of the entries of the John Meagher Fly Tying Contest.

Fishing Reports – Mike Orhelein and Jim DiDonato went to just south of Miami, FL where they fished urban canals, ponds, and the Tamiami Trail. They caught peacock bass, largemouth bass, Oscars, Mayan chichlids, and spotted sunfish. Loretta Smith fished Diamond Pond from shore and caught a nice pickerel. Walt Clark said that Greg Wagner's son Chris caught 15 stripers outside of Indian River Inlet in the ocean on trolling gear. They kept 6 and released 9. Dennis Lahiffe said his neighbor has a 21' Carolina Skiff for sale for \$8,500. The boat is 10 years old.



Here is Mike Orhelein with an oscar taken on a fly rod along the Tamiami Trail in south FL.



This largemouth bass was taken by Jim DiDonato in south FL on the trip with Mike Orehle.

Program: Roy Miller, retired Fisheries Administrator with the DE Div. of Fish and Wildlife, and since 2009, the DE Governor's appointee to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) presented an update on recent decisions and meetings of the ASMFC. The Commission decided that the states would submit measures to reduce fishing mortality 18% in order to arrest overfishing of striped bass. States have until the February ASMFC meeting to submit proposals for review to meet the required reduction. States may submit proposals that are alternatives to the recommended standard of a 28-35 inch slot as long as the proposals are judged to be conservationally equivalent to the coastwide slot limit. The coastal daily harvest limit in 2020 will be 1 fish/person/day. Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions are expected to comply with a minimum size of 18" and one fish/person per day, or equivalent. Bluefish also have been subject to overfishing and are presently considered overfished, although the rate of fishing in 2018 was not excessive. States collectively must reduce removals 28.6%. Once again conservationally equivalent measures may be taken as long as they collectively result in the same reduction as the pre-approved 3 fish harvested per day by shoreline and private boat anglers and 5 fish/person/day for those fishing on boats for hire like charter and head boats. The ASMFC is scheduled to be briefed in February on the results of the multi-species stock assessment of menhaden that takes into account the needs of menhaden predators like striped bass, bluefish, spiny dogfish, and weakfish. Following his presentation and time for questions and answers Roy presented Power Point slides on some fishing trips he took in 2019. These trips included one day of guided fishing in the FL Keys, a short in-shore trip in Costa Rica, and a week of fishing in southwest Montana. Roy urged everyone to exercise caution if you are planning a trip to Central America. A local guide he and Bill Licata have used on previous trips to Ambergris Cay in Belize was murdered while fishing this past summer, along with his client, a heart surgeon from VA. The murders appeared to have been committed by drug gang members, but no arrests have been made.

January 3, 2020

There was no regular meeting in January. Instead we held our annual banquet on January 3 at the Fellowship Hall at Lewes Presbyterian Church. Jerry and Carol Brown served as our caterers for the event, and there was plenty of good food for all. Our program that evening was presented by three representatives of the Nanticoke Native American Tribe. They presented a very interesting program on the history of the tribe and native Americans in DE and demonstrated native dress, customs, and dances. After the program the John Meagher Saltwater Fly Tying winners were announced for the 2019 contest. Roy Miller's fly won first place, with Shawn Rakes finishing second, and Don Avondolio third. Roy received a plaque to commemorate his achievement, as well as all the flies (11) entered in the tournament. Recognition was given in remembrance to a member who passed away during 2019, namely Bill Smith, a longtime DE surf casting champion who frequently attended our Club events and fly tying. John Lupinetti, Ron Smith, and Bob Kutay were asked to come forward and receive recognition plaques for

their long service to the Club and the Board. All three stepped down from the Board this fall after many years of service to the Club. The evening wrapped up with the distribution of all of the donated door prizes. Everyone in attendance took home a door prize.

Here is Walt Clark posing with our native American speakers (Herman Jackson, Mike Harman, Ragi Rain) at the SFAOD annual dinner on Jan. 3, 2020. That's Walt holding the feather.



Ron Smith (left), John Lupinetti (center) and Bob Kutay (right) are recognized for their many years of dedicated service to the Club. That's Ed Barry with the microphone.



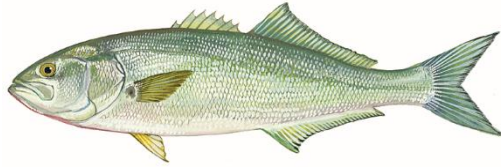


Here are the winners of the annual John Meagher Memorial Saltwater Fly Tying contest. That's Roy Miller in the center with the winner's plaque, Bob Kutay (left) holding the second place award for winner Shawn Rakes, and Don Avondolio (right) with his third place award.



These are the entrants in the 2019 fly tying contest. The three winning flies are shown on the left.

Biologist Corner



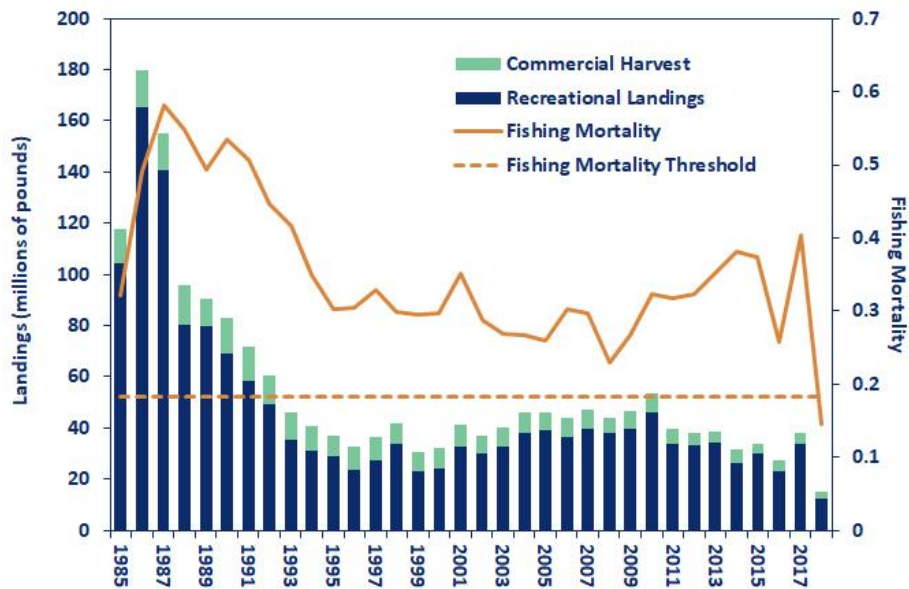
Artist rendering of bluefish by Duane Raver, from DE DNREC files

Is there a problem with bluefish? Like most issues, it depends on who you ask. There are two agencies, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, who share management authority over bluefish, and therefore their decisions are critical. The prevailing opinion is that bluefish stocks along the Atlantic Coast are overfished, but that overfishing did not occur according to the latest stock assessment of this popular species. How come we haven't heard about this before? Is this overfished status something new? The answer is yes and no. Yes, the overfished status is new, but mainly because the above named management bodies elected to revise the previously used methodology for estimating recreational catch and effort. The previous surveys employed since the early 1980s were referred to as MRFSS (Marine Recreational Fishing Statistical Survey). It was conducted using phone interviews to estimate recreational fishing effort and dockside interviews in person to estimate catch per trip. A growing problem was that fewer and fewer Americans maintain a landline phone, thus making it hard to interview a statistically valid number of people to estimate fishing effort. So after a long and involved evaluation procedure, the National Marine Fisheries Service switched to a mail-based survey of fishing effort using the angler data base provided by state FIN numbers or license addresses. This new survey, known as the Marine Recreational Information Program or MRIP was judged more accurate than attempting to estimate effort via landline phone numbers.

The net result of this switch in survey methodology is that coastwide effort went up, as did recreational catches for a number of species like striped bass and bluefish. Hence, we find ourselves confronting overfishing when the new survey was used to back-calculate corrected recreational landings of bluefish. Whether or not this overfished status agrees with your own personal observations is kind of immaterial. We have been informed that we all must cut back in order to restore bluefish and prevent future overfishing. Accordingly, the same two management agencies decided to lower the allowable daily harvest limits for bluefish in 2020. Recreational anglers fishing from shore or private boats will only be allowed to keep 3 bluefish/person/day instead of the former 10 fish/day limit. Anglers aboard for-hire vessels like charter and head boats will be allowed to keep 5 bluefish/person/day. These restrictions were deemed necessary to meet the goal of a 28.6% reduction in total removals (commercial plus recreational harvest and discard losses). States may submit alternative measures that will result in the same conservation savings, but Delaware has elected to meet the reduction using the coast wide standard daily harvest limits. In terms of the commercial versus recreational split, prior practice (since 1991) has been to allocate 87% of the allowable landings to recreational fishermen and 13% to commercial fishermen. This allocation will be reviewed in the next year and may be revised using the updated MRIP numbers and fishermen input derived from scoping hearings being conducted up and down the coast. Since recreational catch and effort has gone up and commercial catches have been relatively static, one can make an argument to increase the recreational percentage of the total allocation. A graph copied from recent ASMFC reports shows that the fishing mortality rate (orange line) has dipped below the fishing mortality threshold (dotted orange line), thus constituting overfishing.

Bluefish Commercial and Recreational Landings

Source: Bluefish Operational Stock Assessment, 2019



This measure won't likely affect my own fishing effort as I seldom keep more than 3 bluefish during any given fishing trip. I like my bluefish fresh because in my view, it does not freeze well. Others may feel differently about keeping bluefish, and I have witnessed boats keeping every bluefish they catch until I wonder if the bluefish haven't filled their ice chests and are flopping around on the deck. This is a decidedly hazardous practice if you have ever examined the dentition on a bluefish. With a harvest limit of three, a good day of bluefishing will involve some catch and release to remain legal, or otherwise packing it in early and heading back to port after keeping your daily limit. Fortunately for us bluefish are a fine fly rod target and catch and release anglers should not see their sport adversely affected by the new harvest limits.

It remains to be seen as to whether these new restrictions will result in a timely restoration of the bluefish stocks. Part of the problem is that larger bluefish are highly mobile, here one day and gone tomorrow. Whether we in Delaware will witness a spring run of big bluefish is highly uncertain, and in many years we did not. Smaller bluefish are much more dependable and we usually can count on snapper size bluefish (6-10 inch) and blues up to 14-15 inches to appear in our shorezone by late summer. Just don't plan on keeping too many and get ready to practice safe catch and release.

rwm



Picture of a bluefish taken for consumption by Roy Miller

PHWFF

Our local Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing liaison is Russell Martin (cell: 302-535-9896; email: rtlmartin1980@gmail.com). Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a Club-sponsored program and all club members are invited to help with this join the group at one or more of the Milford. The group meets every other for details. You won't be sorry that very worthy cause.



exciting and rewarding program. Please periodic programs at the Veterans Home in Tuesday evening in Milford; contact Russell you donated your time and talents to this

The Project Healing Waters Crew
At Silver Lake Park in Dover in August.

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OUR LOCAL SPONSORS

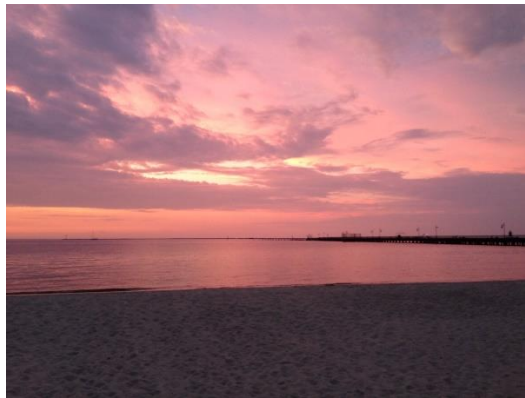
- A MARBLEHEAD FLYFISHER
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- WRIGHT & MCGILL, CO.



This shot of the Henlopen Flats at sunset was taken by Roy Miller.
The opening photo of Rehoboth Bay also was taken by Roy.