



SALTY BYTES

The quarterly newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware

July, August, September 2019

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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.

Jul. 10 – Outdoor casting, and refreshments at Rolling Meadows Club House, Lewes, starting 6:00 PM

Aug. 14 – Outdoor casting plus regular meeting, Rolling Meadows Club House, Lewes

Sep. 11 – Regular Club meeting Rolling Meadows Club House

Sep. 16 – Club member trip to Martha's Vineyard

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

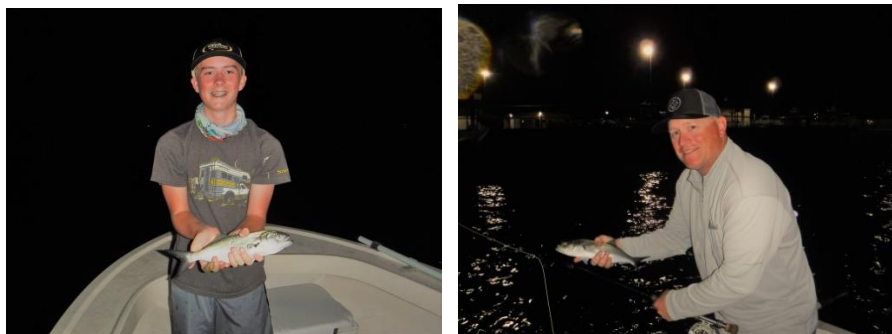
Dec. 15 – Annual Species Contest cut-off date.

Jan. 3, 2020 – Annual Holiday Dinner

SFAOD Meeting July 10

Club Business and Announcements - The July meeting began outside at the Rolling Meadows Clubhouse in Lewes where Club members enjoyed a grilled meal of hot dogs and hamburgers interspersed with fly casting opportunities on the lawn adjacent to the parking lot. Members brought new tackle and those in need of casting instruction received advice from the more experienced members. Shortly after 8 PM the action moved indoors and we held an abbreviated business meeting headed by President John Lupinetti. Bob Kutay said that we have 133 paid members and 33 did not renew from last year. The Club continues to sell off its library of books and DVDs for \$0.50 each. Treasurer Ron Smith said we still have \$4,474 in our Club treasury. We had expenditures of \$818 for grand raffle items and \$256 for our Go-Daddy membership for our website. Next month's meeting (August) also will start outside. Rich Seagraves will present the September program wherein he will provide details on his record setting "A Good Year" fishing contest win in 2018. Ed Barry said he will be disposing of his remaining inventory of Club t-shirts. We will still offer Club hats and fishing books for sale. John re-iterated that we still need someone to step up and serve as Club President in 2020 since he is stepping down this fall. Paul Temple will take over for Bob Kutay as membership chairman. Ed Barry will keep the Club calendar and do scheduling.

Fishing Reports – Paul said he caught 2 small stripers from Rehoboth Bay. Ed Barry and Bill Licata fished in front of the Coast Guard Station at Indian River. A Coast Guard member warned them that no one can fish within 50 feet of the bulkhead at the Station. Ron Smith and John Lupinetti also fished there on July 1. They had some luck at 11 PM on hickory shad, bluefish, and some small stripers on an outgoing tide. Shawn Rakes said that two weeks ago he took Jim DiDonato and his young friend Santiago and they caught a few blues and small stripers at IR Inlet as well. The stripers were tight to the wall while the bluefish and hickory shad were further out from the wall. Ethan Rakes related his success while fishing in FL. He caught snook and barracuda at night. Father Shawn caught 2 bonefish and both Rakes caught some small peacock bass in the freshwater canals of south FL. Ted Morlock has been fishing for and catching snakeheads in the Salisbury area. Loretta Smith participated in a show at Milton and some of our Club members demonstrated fly casting.



Both Ethan (left) and Shawn Rakes (right) had some luck with bluefish near the Coast Guard Lights at Indian River Inlet aboard Ron Smith's boat back in July.



That's John Lupinetti with a striper taken on Ron's boat at the same location earlier in the month.

Meeting August 14, 2019

Club Business and Announcements - The August meeting began outdoors again at 6 PM with grilled hot dogs and burgers and lots of casting practice and instruction. The members moved indoors at 7:45 for a short business meeting. Walt Clark volunteered to take over the Treasurer duties for Ron Smith after this month. Ron said that we have \$4,039 in our Club treasury at the start of July with \$3,987 remaining by the end of the month. We had \$130 of expenses for the 2 outdoor dinners in July and August at our monthly meetings. Rich Seagraves is still on tap to present a program on his win of the 2018 "A Good Year" fishing contest at our September meeting. In October, Tony Friedrich from MD will talk about the relatively new organization, American Saltwater Guides Association. Ron reminded everyone that Coast Day at the University of Delaware Earth, Ocean, and Environment Lewes campus will take place on Oct. 6. Club members are needed to man a table to demonstrate fly tying and fly casting for this open house. Club member donated flies were on sale that night for \$1 each.

Fishing reports – Jerry Groll caught a 12" flounder and a spot at the Henlopen Pier. Dennis Lahiff caught rainbow trout while fishing with a guide on the Little Truckee River in CA. Jim DiDonato made an RV trip to Utah and caught a brook trout in CO on this same trip. He warned members that the rod replacement warranty at Cabela's is going to change to a 90 day replacement policy under Bass Pro ownership. Ron Smith told members that if you have a new Orvis rod, that you need to send in the warranty card or register it on-line in order to receive the benefits of the Orvis warranty. Young Arthur Egolf caught a nice striper while fishing in Crisfield, MD. Bernie Stasko caught 3 nice pickerel over 20" including one that was 25 inches in his usual "secret spot" that many seem to know about. A person new to our area, Bob Chin from NJ, introduced himself and said that he has had many years of experience saltwater fly fishing while living in NJ. He has a 3-rod roof rack for sale for \$200 if anyone is interested.



This white perch was caught in the spillway below
Waggamons Pond by Jim DiDonato in August



This weakfish was caught on a small Clouser at night in the Lewes/Rehoboth Canal.
Is this a sign of some incipient recovery of this venerated species? Or is
it just another tease?
Photo by Roy Miller.

SFAOD Meeting September 11, 2019

Start: 7:00 p.m.

Board members present: Ron Smith, John Lupinetti, Bob Kutay, Bernie Stasko,
Paul Temple, Ed Barry

Absent: Roy Miller

Speaker for the evening: Richard J. Seagraves, retired in 2018, was a Senior Scientist with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Dover, De for 27 years and prior to that he worked 10 years for DNREC as a Fisheries Biologist.

“A Great Year – 63 species on the fly rod”

Mr. Seagraves summarized for the Club his quest to catch as many species in a year as possible during 2018. He hauled his boat to many places and also used a few guides. Fishing started in Cabo, Mexico in January where he caught only two fish in 3 days: a rooster fish and a mackerel. He traveled to Alaska where climate change is devastating the environment and causing a major impact on fisheries. Seagraves said he has been to Alaska many times over the years and has seen a huge decline in fisheries. He suggested if you want to fish in Alaska, better get there now. He caught 10 species in Alaska. Other places he fished were the Florida Keys (two trips). Some of those species were: jacks, lookdown, common snook, peacock bass, cichlid species, barracuda, and redfish. He said the most exciting first time catch was a blue runner in the Atlantic off the De coast. If you want a snakehead visit the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge in Md. He was able to catch snakehead from the bank and broke his six weight doing it. All told, he broke 9 rods while catching 63 species! His species totals were as follows: Delmarva only = 25 species; Open Division = 38 species

Club Business

Our membership is 136 regular and 14 honorary members. We have one new member tonight – Carmon Matielo.

Treasurer's Report for August:

Starting balance \$ 3987.27

Ending Balance: \$ 3947.27

A full report is available upon request.

Club News

October 6st is Coast Day. The Club will have a table for SFAOD.

The speaker for next month, October 9th is Tony Friedrich from the American Saltwater Guides Association.

The Club's One-Fly Contest will be October 12th. The Club's next pickerel fly fishing tournament will be Nov. 9 with Nov. 16 as the rain date. Loretta Smith gave an overview of the upcoming pickerel tournament which will be a one-day event on a Delaware public pond. Check your email for registration information.

Roy Miller will be the speaker on December 11th. He will provide an update on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meetings this year. He also will show some Power Point slides of some of his 2019 fishing trips.

The annual SFAOD holiday dinner is January 4th, Friday night at the Lewes Presbyterian Church in Lewes. The cost is \$10 per person.

Paul Temple reports that our website is working well. He requests that members send him new email addresses or they will not receive any information from the club.

Bernie Stasko is still selling flies. T-shirts were on sale for \$10 each to clear them out. Ed Barry will be working on developing a new clothing item for Club members to purchase.

All remaining Club videos and cd's were free for the taking.

Ed Barry stated a mentoring program will be developed for new members. Present club members will be asked to volunteer to be mentors to new members to make them feel welcomed and help with any beginning fly fishermen.

Board

John Lupinetti announced that four board members would be leaving their positions this fall. According to our Club By-Laws, the present board can appoint members who are willing to fill in on the board prior to the November meeting. If there are other nominees for the same board positions at the November meeting, a vote (ballot system) by members at the December meeting will determine the new board members.

Fishing Reports:

Loretta stated that unless you have a boat to saltwater fish, there really are not a lot of saltwater fish accessible locally to someone on foot, especially after the spring season. She has felt uncomfortable talking at meetings about catching freshwater species. Some of the other members also confirmed this. Bill Licata encouraged the reporting of freshwater catches and John Lupinetti stated just because our club

name says “saltwater” fly anglers does not mean that we do not report freshwater catches. Going forward, members are encouraged to report on freshwater fly caught fish as well as saltwater species.

Ed Barry and Bill Licata caught stripers, weakfish and blues at Broadkill, Canary Creek and Roosevelt Inlet areas on both outgoing and incoming tides.

Steve Halstead and his grandson fished the Shenandoah with a guide for smallmouth bass but did not catch fish. He said he would not recommend the guide.

Frank Danner fished the Indian River Inlet and caught many 3 to 5 pound bluefish on the incoming tide.

The usual Club raffle was held after the meeting which adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Many thanks to Loretta Smith for taking these meeting minutes for me in my absence).



Five Club members (Bill Licata, Dennis Lahiff, Bernie Stasko, Paul Jimenez, and Mike Collier flanking Bob Popovics in the center of the picture) on Martha's Vineyard in September.



Mike Orhelein (left) and Jim DiDonato (right) with some stripers they took at night at Martha's Vineyard during the Club trip in September.



Biologist Corner

Catch and release mortality. What are the facts and what should we do as responsible anglers? Let's use a familiar species as an example so we can examine this issue and come up with some do's and don'ts. In the most recent striped bass stock assessment (ASMFC 2019a and b) it was determined that recreational fishing accounted for 88% of the total fishing mortality on this species in 2018. In numbers, this total mortality amounted to 5.8 million fish removed from the population. This total mortality includes fish harvested as well as fish that died after release. Of these total removals, catch and release mortality was estimated to be 49%. I say estimated because we cannot be sure how many striped bass die after release. For assessment purposes, the figure of 9% is used to account for the catch and release mortality rate. In other words, if you catch and release 100 striped bass while recreational fishing, approximately 9 will subsequently die as a result of the experience of being caught and released. This 9% figure was derived from some scientific studies of hook and release mortality conducted in salt ponds in Massachusetts a number of years ago (Diodati and Richards 1996) and is considered the best available estimate.

The actual mortality rate on any given day of fishing depends to a great extent on several variables: such as water temperature, salinity, the type of hook used, where the fish was hooked, the size and age of the fish, and how the fish was handled prior to release. In general as water temperatures rise, hooking mortality rates rise. The lower the salinity, the higher the hook and release mortality rate. The type of hook used also is very important and a number of studies have shown that use of bait (alive or dead) can increase hooking mortality because there is an increased likelihood that the hook will be swallowed. Hoisting the fish up for hero camera shots also can be conducive to hook and release mortality, especially with larger fish that are more likely to have soft tissue damage when lifted from the water. At times the hook and release mortality rate at the base of the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River has come under regulatory fire because 1) the water is mostly fresh 2) the fish are sometimes lifted a long way up to the

catwalk and fall a long way down when released and 3) the fishing can continue into the late spring when water temperatures are rising. In circumstances like these, hook and release mortality rates can exceed 35% or even much higher. The same principles hold for fishing on the striped bass spawning grounds on the Delaware and Nanticoke Rivers, and that is why the State of DE requires the use of circle hooks for anyone fishing with bait on these spawning grounds during the spawning season. Scientific studies have shown that use of in-line circle hooks reduce hook and release mortality.

So what advice can a fly fisherman take away from all of the above? One thing in our favor is that swallowed flies are a somewhat rare event and even when it occurs, the single hook often can be worked out without damaging the gills or other sensitive tissue. How about flies tied on circle hooks? I don't know about you, but I don't have much confidence in my ability to hook a striped bass on a fly tied on a circle hook. You don't use a traditional hook set with circle hooks and fish may not hang onto a fly long enough for that circle hook to lodge in the corner of the jaw, like they do with natural bait. You may have other experience with flies tied on circle hooks, however, so don't let me discourage you from using them if they work for you.

The biggest contribution we fly fishermen can make to striped bass conservation is to avoid fishing during the hottest part of the day and year and to be aware of the fact that the fresher the water, the more a striped bass is likely to become stressed. Don't handle a fish if you don't have to and minimize time out of the water by using a release tool. (Incidentally, I'm as guilty as the next guy of wanting that occasional hero camera shot). Also, don't be greedy. Call it a night after you have caught several. Don't stay out there and handle 50 or 100 fish during those occasions when everything seems to come together. Know that our releases will result in somewhere north of a 9% mortality rate and limit your catches accordingly. Don't assume that all of the hook and release mortality can be attributed to those bait guys. Also, the next time you hear someone rail about those commercial fishermen, remember that available statistics verify that it is the recreational anglers, no matter how well intended, that account for most of the annual removals of striped bass.

References

Atlantic Striped Bass Plan Review Team. 2019a. 2019 review of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fishery management plan for Atlantic striped bass. Arlington, VA. 33 p.

Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission. 2019b. Summary of the 2019 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass. Arlington, VA. 26 p.

Diodati, P.J. and R.A. Richards. 1996. Mortality of striped bass hooked and released in saltwater. Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. 125:300-307.

Artist rendering of striped bass by Duane Raver, from DE DNREC files

PHWFF

Our local Project Healing Waters Fly
535-9896; email:
Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a Club-
are invited to help with this exciting



Fishing liaison is Russell Martin (cell: 302-
rtlmartin1980@gmail.com). Project
sponsored program and all club members
and rewarding program. Please join the

group at one or more of the periodic programs at the Veterans Home in Milford. The group meets every other Tuesday evening in Milford; contact Russell for details. You won't be sorry that you donated your time and talents to this very worthy cause.

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

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Thank you to Chris Bason of the DE Center for the Inland Bays
for this shot of Bubble Gum Beach at sunset.

The opening picture is the East End Light from
Cape Henlopen, taken by Doug Smartt, a friend
of Roy Miller's.