

**November, 2022 – January, 2023**

**Writer/Editor: Roy Miller**

On the internet at [www.sfaod.com](http://www.sfaod.com), our club message board is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sfaod/> For club-related questions, inquiries and suggestions, here is the **Board of Directors** contact information:

Roy Miller – (302) 381-3760

Loretta Smith – (302) 236 0894

Jim DiDonato – (302)-270-4884 (resigned from the Board in November)

Bill O'Connor – (302) 530-8253

Walt Clark – (610) 937 9535

Ron Smith – (301)213-7637

Shawn Rakes – (302)381-1871

Ed Hill – (484) 883-3326

#### **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).

#### **SFAOD Meeting November 9, 2022**

Start: 7:10 p.m.

Board members present: Walt Clark, Jim DiDonato, Bill O'Connor, Loretta Smith, Ron Smith, Shawn Rakes (via zoom).

Absent: Roy Miller

Program: Our presenter was Captain Justin Nguyen via Zoom from South Florida.

Captain Nguyen spoke about flyfishing for peacock bass and other exotic species in S. Florida. He provides fly fishing and light tackle equipment; however, clients can use their own rods and flies if they wish. He will also supply an exotic lunch during a 6 or 8 hour guided day.

Captain Justin Nguyen is a United States Coast Guard licensed Captain. He moved to the Fort Lauderdale area from Northwest Indiana in 2017, leaving behind a successful steelhead fishing guide operation for over a decade. He cut his teeth targeting freshwater apex predators in skinny waters where you have to deal with endless trees and undergrowth. His skill with casting flies through, around or under vegetation adapted well to the urban fishing jungle of South Florida. He fishes freshwater as well as salt water species. Some of the other species you can expect to catch are Mayan cichlid, tiger oscar, bowfin, bullseye snakehead and largemouth bass. Biscayne Bay and Florida Bay are where he can guide you to tarpon, bonefish, permit, and barracuda. He uses 12-to-20-pound leaders, mostly floating lines on 6, 7 or 8 wt. rods. You can reach Captain Nguyen online at <https://castalineflycharters.com>.

Board Nominations: Jim DiDonato has decided to resign from the Board as he has taken on more responsibility with Project Healing Waters. However, he will continue to be involved in planning club events. We thank Jim for his time on the Board. Bernie Stasko made a motion to nominate Ed Hill to take Jim's place on the Board with Hans Feindt seconding the motion. The rest of the Board members are staying on if elected to do so in December. Jack made a motion to keep the remaining Board members and Hans Feindt seconded it. Elections will take place at the December meeting.

Treasurer's report: Contact Walt Clark for a full report.

Membership: We have 103 members at present.

SFAOD Shirts/Hats are available from Ron Smith. New hoodie pull-overs are available to order.

50/50 Raffle – The winner was Hans Feindt.

Swap Meet: We had 6 tables full of various fishing equipment.

Fly Tying contest: The contest will be at the next meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Hand in your best saltwater fly, in an envelope, to Loretta Smith. The results will be announced at our annual dinner.

Saturday Tie and Talk: Lewes Harbor Marina has been sold and we are negotiating with the new owner to continue our Saturday morning tying sessions.

Fishing reports: Jim DiDonato and Bernie Stasko fished the Lewes Coast Guard Station with no bites. Jim took Project Healing waters veterans to White Clay Creek, and they did catch some trout which were freshly stocked.

Ron Smith and Loretta Smith fished a canal in the Bethany area and caught white perch.

Steve Halstead won the One Fly Contest. He went out on the Lewes Pier at Cape Henlopen and started jigging his fly. Low and behold he felt some weight and set the hook. He had to hand over hand pull the line up slowly to find an oyster cracker (toadfish). There were no other catches.

Adjourn: 8:45

Minutes courtesy of Loretta Smith

### **SFAOD Pickerel Fly Fishing Contest Winners – November 19, 2022**

1st place – Roy Miller and Loretta Smith, 6 pickerel, 113.25 total inches, Millsboro Pond

2<sup>nd</sup> place – Bill O'Connor and Terry Peach, 3 pickerel, 47 total inches, Millsboro Pond

3<sup>rd</sup> place – Jim DiDonato and Ron Smith, 3 pickerel, 45 total inches, Wagamons Pond

Largest pickerel – Loretta Smith, 24 inches. Largest bass – Jerry Groll, 11 inches  
10 contestants (five boats) in all.



The upper left photo shows Loretta Smith with her first place 24” pickerel from Millsboro Pond. Upper right is Roy Miller with his 22” pickerel from Millsboro P. All of the contestants went for a meal at Bella Capri in Georgetown after the Tournament. Not shown is Ethan Rakes.

### SFAOD Meeting 12-14-2022

Shawn Rakes was absent. Ed Hill joined the Board of Directors, replacing Jim DiDonato. All other Board members were present. Attendance was 22, which was a quorum.

**Holiday Dinner January 6, 2023.** There are 32 signed up so far. Please bring a gift for each person that attends. Our speaker that night is Col. John Trunzo, speaking on the Battle of Gettysburg.

**Walt Clark:** We had \$5,902.09 in our Treasury at the end of the previous month.

**Election for Board of Directors** – Ed Hill has filled the vacancy on the Board for Jim DiDonato. The existing Board of Directors including Ed Hill was re-elected to the Board for 2023 by unanimous vote of the membership.

**Bill O’Connor-** Bill said that we are having problems getting email messages to some Club members. There is a problem with Comcast.net in that forwarded emails from groups tend to go automatically to the Junk file. He

suggested those having trouble receiving Club emails try to select SFAOD as a safe sender and not to block this address. He is working on updating the 2023 calendar on our website.

**Ron Smith** – He has jackets and vests for \$60. Microfiber shirts have been slow to come through. He also has Club caps for sale. If you don't see something that the Club sells on the table, ask to see if it can be ordered.

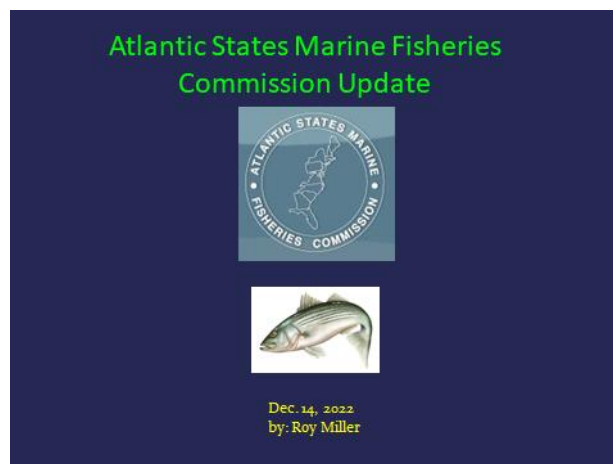
**Loretta Smith** – She is having a Christmas sale at \$1/fly. Loretta stated that she has relatively few entries in the annual John Meagher Fly Tying Contest so far. Club fly tying will start the first Saturday morning in January. Lewes Harbor Marina will be closed to us over the winter to allow for renovations. We can tie flies on Saturday mornings at Lewes Presbyterian Church beginning on Jan. 7 and lasting until spring. The tying room is downstairs, and the room is good sized. Bill at Lewes Harbor Marina has stated that the Club is welcome back next winter.

**Club activities** – Ron asked for hands for those who have boats. Quite a few hands went up. Bill added a boat fishing inquiry to the Club applications for membership.

**Fishing Reports** – Ron Smith fished Indian River this month. The air temperature was 27 degrees when he was there. He fished the mouth of the Inlet and just outside in the ocean. He never marked a fish, nor did he have a bite. Ed Barry fished Key Biscayne in FL and only saw one fish. It was a full moon when he fished.

#### **Program –**

Our speaker was Club member and Board of Director Roy Miller. Roy gave an update on the meeting decisions reached by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) over the last couple of quarterly meetings of the Commission. Roy has been the DE Governor's Appointee to the Commission since 2009. Prior to that he represented the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife at various ASMFC meetings beginning in 1978.



Striped bass stocks continue to be in an overfished state, but overfishing (the rate of removal) is not presently excessive. At current rates of removal, the striped bass stock should be re-built by 2029. There should be no changes in Delaware's striped bass recreational regulations in 2023.

Summer flounder and black sea bass are neither overfished, nor is overfishing occurring. Bluefish, like striped bass, are still overfished (meaning the standing stock is less than we want), but the rate of removal is not excessive (not overfishing). The allocation percentages for summer flounder, scup (porgy), and black sea bass have been adjusted somewhat to increase the percentages for recreational fishermen with a lower percentage going to commercial fishermen. This came about because of a re-calculation of historical recreational fishing landings using updated angler effort determinations.



American shad populations continue to be depressed in many major river systems, but not all. There is now a major project to study the effects of invasive catfishes like flathead catfish and blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries including the Nanticoke system.

Roy ended his talk with brief slide shows of bonefishing in Turks and Caicos, trout fishing at the South Holston River Lodge in TN, and the SFAOD Fall 2022 Pickerel Fly Fishing Contest.



Roy with a nice bone caught in Turks and Caicos  
in February, 2022



South Holston River near Bristol, TN in July 2022

### **Club Holiday Dinner January 6, 2023**

The Annual Holiday Dinner was again held at the Lewes Presbyterian Church. This year we rang the bell for two long-time members who passed on in 2022, namely Val Fox and Bill Licata. We had an excellent catered supper

followed by a presentation by our Guest Speaker, U.S. Army Colonel John Trunzo. Col. Trunzo gave a slide presentation on the Battle of Gettysburg, a passion of his.

Following his presentation the winners of the John Meagher 2022 Fly Tying Contest were recognized and their winning flies were on display. The winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> Place - James Will; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Hans Feindt; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Don Avondolio.

Lastly we had the drawing for door prizes and each person attending the banquet received a donated prize. The annual dinner took the place of a meeting in January.



Photo upper left shows the winning flies entered in the John Meagre Fly Tying Contest. The picture in the upper right shows the dinner table arrangement. Bottom photo is the door prize table at the Banquet.

### Schedule of Club Events

**Nov. 9** – Regular Club meeting at Rolling Meadows Club House, Capt. Justin Nguyen, speaker, this is a swap meet

**Nov. 19** – Pickerel Fly Fishing Contest

**Dec.14** – Regular Club meeting at Rolling Meadows Club House, Roy Miller speaker; judging of Saltwater Flies

**Jan. 6, 2023** – Annual holiday banquet, Lewes Presbyterian Church

**Jan. 7** – Start of Saturday morning fly tying sessions, 9 AM Lewes Presbyterian Church

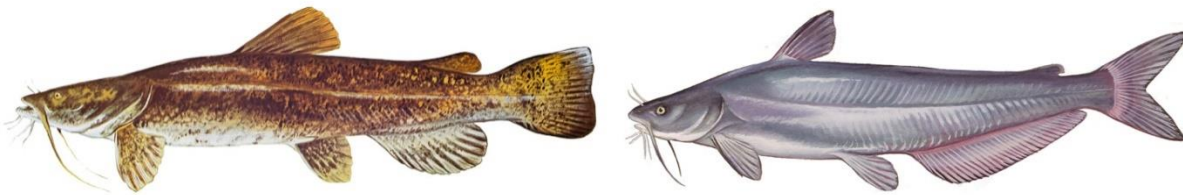
**Feb. 8** – Regular meeting at Rolling Meadows Clubhouse, speaker Don Avondolio, Club founder

**Mar. 8** – Regular meeting at Rolling Meadows Clubhouse, State Fisheries Scientist Edna Stetzer, speaker

**Apr. 12** – Regular meeting at Rolling Meadows Clubhouse

**May 13** – Annual Spring Picnic, Cape Henlopen State Park.

### **Biologist Corner:**



#### **Invasive Catfishes**

There are a number of native catfish species in Delaware as well as some that were stocked in our area a long time ago and have thus become naturalized (channel catfish), and two others that have invaded our state from elsewhere that have never been stocked in Delaware. Among the native species, the most prominent are the white catfish (*Ameiurus catus*) which is found in many freshwater ponds and low salinity tidal areas, and a couple of species of bullheads, the brown (*Ameiurus nebulosis*) and the yellow bullhead (*Ameiurus natalis*). The bullheads can be distinguished from white catfish by color and the shape of the tail. The white catfish has a somewhat forked tail while the bullhead species have tails that are squared or rounded off. The white catfish often is blueish or grey with a white belly. White catfish can reach 10 lbs. and I caught one on a fly in Red Mill Pond (see below) that was close to 6 lbs.

Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), which resemble white catfish in color, have a tail that is more forked than the white catfish, and when they are younger, they have fine scattered black spots on the body. Their heads are narrower than white catfish. Channel catfish are native to mid-America and the Mississippi drainages up into Canada and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. Of all the catfishes in Delaware, the channel catfish is the most inclined to take a fly. They are omnivores that eat a variety of aquatic life, including surface insects if they are very abundant like white flies and cicadas. Channel catfish can attain large sizes, and the world record is 58 lbs., although any channel catfish over 20 lbs. is rare. They are found in a number of Delaware Ponds and in the low salinity areas of tidal streams and the Delaware River.



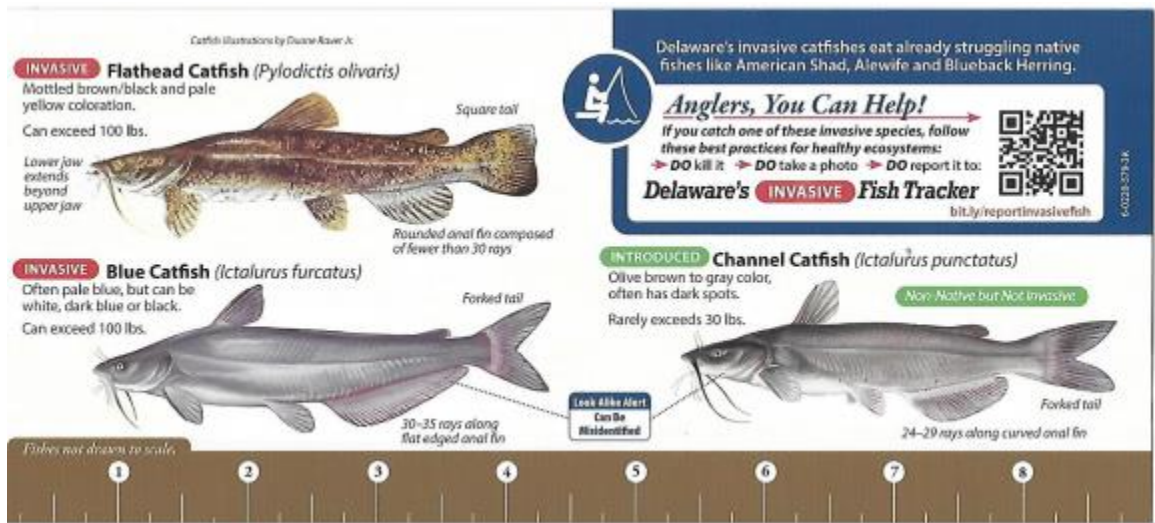


Here's a white catfish I caught in 2004 (left) and a channel catfish I caught in 2022 from Red Mill Pond.

In recent years, two large species of invasive catfishes have shown up in Delaware waterways that directly connect to tidal waters. These two species are the blue catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*) and the flathead catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*). Both of these two can exceed 100 lbs. in weight. Thus far the blue catfish is most common in the Nanticoke River drainage in Delaware while the flatheads are more confined to the lower Delaware River and its tidal tributaries. These two are easy to distinguish from each other as the blue catfish resembles the channel catfish in that both have forked tails, except that the blue cat has an anal fin with 30-36 rays while the channel catfishes' anal fin typically has 26-27 rays. The anal fin of the channel catfish is more rounded, while the anal fin of the blue catfish is sharper and longer. The blue catfish has no spots at any point in its life cycle. Blue catfish also are native to the Mississippi River Basin and have been widely stocked as a food or sport species. They attain trophy sizes and feed voraciously on a variety of aquatic life including American shad juveniles and river herring.

The flathead catfish also are native to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi but have been introduced widely. As its name implies, the flathead catfish has a very flat head and is typically a mottled olive in color with a rounded off tail that is not forked. Flatheads are ambush predators that like to attack their prey from submerged cover. There are concerns in both the Chesapeake and Delaware system that these invasive predators may be negatively impacting shad and river herring restoration and even competing for food with striped bass. For these reasons the DE Division of Fish and Wildlife is trying to track their spread and encourages anglers to kill them, take a photo, and report it to Delaware's Invasive Fish Tracker website (see below). I'm not aware of either one being fly rod targets since, for the most part they are bottom dwelling, but blue catfish probably would chase and take a fly that resembles a herring, menhaden, or other bait fish. A flathead probably would take a fly as well if you were able to put it in front of its nose.





Fish illustrations by Dwayne Raver courtesy of the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

**PHWFF:** Club member Jim DiDonato is the manager of the local chapter of Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, an international charitable organization that uses fly fishing as an outreach to assist disabled military veterans. At one point, PHWFF was sponsored by our club, but now there is no formal connection – although several club members continue to volunteer their time.

Veterans don't need to have any fly fishing experience; PHWFF provides expert guidance and equipment. The camaraderie these veterans share through PHWFF is just as important as the fishing skills they acquire. The local chapter usually meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month in Milford. In addition, fishing events are held in local waters. Jim invites all SFAOD members to become involved as volunteers, and also to refer disabled veterans to him for possible participation in the program. His email is [didonato57@gmail.com](mailto:didonato57@gmail.com), and his phone is 302-270-4884.

### Please Stay Safe

## SFAOD SPONSORS

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The lead photo was taken by Roy Miller at Cape Henlopen Point on a blustery fall day in November 2022.

The closing photo is of flats on the south side of Turks and Caicos by Omar's Restaurant in January, also taken by Roy Miller.