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COASTAL FISHERMAN

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The team of the "Honor" brought home the big money at the 12th Annual Huk Big Fish Classic. Their 82 lbs. yellowfin tuna earned them a total of \$458,642.50. The team's yellowfin put them in first place for Heaviest Fish B2, Heaviest Fish WTA, Heaviest Yellowfin, Heaviest Yellowfin WTA, second in Heaviest Fish B1, third in Heaviest Tuna, and swept the Heaviest Billfish and Heaviest White Marlin categories as no boats in the calcutta weighed any billfish. Captain Mike Edwards and mates Nick Sampson and Max Soistman fished with angler Matthew Hills during the second slot of the tournament. Despite their yellowfin tuna not being in the top three heaviest fish overall, the crew put in the money to be in the calcuttas and earned the top prize money.



Kevin McNelis won the Ocean Pines Flounder Tournament with a 26.63-inch, 7.3 lbs. catch. His dad took second place with a 6.4 lbs. flounder, while his wife earned third place in calcutta weight with a 4.8 lbs. catch and won the Lady Angler Award—almost a clean sweep for the family! They also hit the three-man limit and landed two triggerfish. Kevin was told his catch was the biggest flounder in tournament history and earned the largest payout to date, with his team bringing in \$8,500.


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Jayden Harriday of Gettysburg, PA, reeled in this flounder at Worcester Street using shrimp for bait. It wasn't quite a keeper, but it was a great start to the day!















Russell Lederman headed out for an early morning fishing trip – without any bait – and still found success. He landed several sporadic kingfish, four sandbar sharks (two around 4 feet and one close to 5 feet, all safely released), and a southern stingray. His favorite catch of the day was this impressive 46-inch red drum, landed on a chunk of kingfish.

2025

MARYLAND REGULATIONS

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 <p>BLACK SEA BASS 13" minimum / 15 per person/day May 15 - September 30 October 10 - December 31</p>	 <p>BLUEFISH 8" minimum 3 per person/day or 5 per person/day Charter</p>	 <p>BLACK DRUM 16" minimum 1 per person/day up to 6 per boat/day</p>	 <p>COBIA 43" minimum 1 per person/day 6/15 - 9/20 Boat limit 2 for up to 2 anglers</p>
 <p>CROAKER 9" minimum 25 per person/day</p>	 <p>RED DRUM 18-27" minimum 1 per person/day</p>	 <p>SHEEPSHEAD 4 per person/day 12" minimum</p>	 <p>SPECKLED TROUT 14" minimum 4 per person/day</p>
 <p>STRIPED BASS 28-31" Less than 3 miles from shore 1 per person/day</p>	 <p>SUMMER FLOUNDER 4 per person/day 1/1 - 5/31 - 16" 6/1 - 12/31 - 17.5"</p>	 <p>TAUTOG 16" minimum 4 per person/day 1/1 - 5/15 2 per person/day 7/1 - 10/31 4 per person/day 11/1 - 12/31</p>	 <p>WEAKFISH 13" minimum 1 per person/day</p>

eregulations.com



Gene Arantowicz, owner of the "Mrs. Crabs II" and founder of the Military Ministry of St. Mark's in Birdsboro, PA, took several veterans and active-duty service members on a tuna trip this past week. Although the fishing was slow, the group managed to land this yellowfin tuna during the evening bite in the Baltimore Canyon using Ballyhoo. Pictured from left to right are Chris Bizkarra of Fredericksburg, VA; Jason Somers of Schuylkill Haven, PA; Andrew Garland of Mechanicsburg, MD; and boat owner Gene Arantowicz of Birdsboro, PA.

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Welcome to another week of the offshore fishing report!

This past week brought decent weather and a scattered white marlin bite. We started things off with our final dedicated tuna charter of the season before making the switch to targeting billfish and mahi. We spent the day inshore, working over lumps that had been holding sand eels, and managed to land four nice yellowfins out of several bites, along with a white marlin encounter.

As the week went on, local boats shifted focus

to marlin fishing offshore in preparation for the upcoming Big Fish Classic and the tournament stretch that August always brings. In keeping with the trend this season, fish were caught sporadically up and down the line, with boats finding success in a range of areas and able to put together solid days on the water.

As the major tournaments approach, many traveling boats have begun arriving in town and getting out on the water to practice and get a feel for what's happening offshore of Ocean City. What started as

the occasional white marlin sighting while tuna fishing has now turned into three or more white marlin shots a day, along with a few tuna bites and some mahi found on floating debris. Just as the leaves change color and the daylight shortens, this shift in fishing signals the changing of the season—and hopefully offers a glimpse of what's to come.

This weekend marked the 12th Big Fish Classic, with 89 boats competing for a total of \$1.2 million in prize money. This unique tournament allows anglers to fish overnight and weigh a stringer of multiple species, giving teams the chance to travel farther, fish longer, and target whatever they may come across.

Good weather—aside from the absolute beating dealt by the Wilmington Canyon on Saturday evening—had boats stretched from up north all the way down to the southern boundary below the Norfolk. Some boats found decent tuna fishing both around the

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100-fathom line and out in the deep, while others experienced the best white marlin fishing of the year, with many boats getting 10+ shots at fish.

Top honors of the tournament went to the team “Full Service,” who brought in a 239 lb. bigeye that took home heaviest fish and a \$146,242.50 payday. Second place went to the crew aboard the “Teaser,” who made the run in a 21’ Parker center console and returned to Talbot Street with a 164.5 lb. bluefin, earning them \$28,857.50. Third place heaviest fish was claimed by “Good Vibrations,” whose 160 lb. swordfish brought in \$163,770.

Now, while this next fish may not have cracked the top three heaviest, the 82 lb. yellowfin brought onto the deck by the team on the “Honor” was the heaviest fish for many calcuttas, as well as receiving rollover money from other species. This fish won the crew a healthy \$458,662.50 worth of cardboard checks!

Plenty of other teams took home a piece of the pie as well. Final results are printed in this week’s issue and are also available




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Next up on the tournament schedule is the doubleheader of the Marlins for Mason charity tournament and the Heels 'n Reels ladies tournament. These tournaments raise money for an amazing cause while giving teams a final tune-up before the "Super Bowl" of fishing the following week.

Marlin flags coming through the inlet should start stacking up fast as one of the most exciting times of the summer kicks into gear. I hope everyone can get in on the action—whether it's going fishing, strolling the docks to see what everyone brings in, or just keeping up with tournament news online.





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Joseph "Cobia Killer" Cosgrove and his friend Rob landed these two monster cobia, weighing 75 lbs. and 30 lbs. They were fishing 35 miles offshore at an undisclosed structure on a private boat.

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Ethan Irons landed this 7.2-pound sheephead at the start of the incoming tide while fishing the North Jetty at Indian River Inlet. He was using green crab for bait.



Mary McHugh Leiby landed this solid flounder! (Photo taken at Hook Em & Cook Em).

2025 MARYLAND • DELAWARE • VIRGINIA				CITATION ATLANTIC COAST SIZES			
	MD	DE **	VA		MD	DE **	VA
Atlantic Spadefish	24"	-	22" or 8 lbs.	Wahoo	60"	20 lbs. or 50"	35 lbs.
Black Drum	48"	50 lbs. or 45"	80 lbs. or 46"	Weakfish	24"	3 lbs. or 20"	30"
Black Sea Bass	20"	3 lbs. or 17"	5 lbs.	White Marlin*	Any Size	Any Size	Any Size
Bluefish	34"	12 lbs. or 29"	16 lbs. or 36"	SHARK:			
Blue Marlin*	Any Size	Any Size	Any Size	Blue Shark*	Any Size	100 lbs. or 66"	72"
Cobia	44"	45 Lbs. or 48"	55 lbs. or 50"	Hammerhead*	Any Size	100 lbs. or 66"	72"
Croaker	18"	3 lbs. or 19"	3 lbs. or 20"	Thresher*	54"	100 lbs. or 66"	72"
Dolphin	45"	15 lbs. or 41"	25 lbs.	Tiger*	Any Size	100 lbs. or 66"	72"
Flounder	24"	7 lbs. or 25"	6 lbs. or 26"	Swordfish	Any Size	Any Size	100 lbs.
Golden Tilefish	35"	35 lbs. or 40"	30 lbs.	TUNA:			
Kingfish (Northern Whiting)	14"	1 lb. or 13"	1.5 lb. or 16"	Longfin Albacore	36"	30 lb. or 32"	40 lbs.
King Mackerel	40"	10 lbs. or 26"	20 lbs.	False Albacore	24"	12 lbs. or 26"	32"
Red Drum*	36"	45"	46"	Bigeye***	60"	70 lbs. or 48"	70 lbs.
Sailfish*	Any Size	-	Any Size	Bluefin***	55"	100 lbs. or 60"	100 lbs. or 60"
Sheepshead	20"	8 lbs. or 22"	10 lbs. or 24"	Yellowfin***	50"	70 lbs. or 48"	70 lbs.
Spanish Mackerel	22"	5 lbs. or 22"	4 lbs. or 26"	* Only released fish are eligible in Maryland program			
Speckled Trout	24"	-	5 lbs. or 24"	** DE - Lengths only apply to Live Release			
Striped Bass	40"	44"	44"	*** Use curved-fork-length measurements			
Tautog	24"	7 lbs. or 25"	9 lbs. or 23"	eregulations.com			



George Zacepilo and Michael Lupiwok Jr., both of Berlin, MD, along with Andrew Lippe, visiting from Portland, OR, landed this nice haul of bluefish while fishing with Capt. CL Marshall of Tangier Sound Charters. The group was fishing in the Chesapeake Bay near Smith Island.

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OCEAN CITY

FISHING REPORT

by Capt. BJ Pietryak



This past week in Ocean City brought more very hot weather. We finally got a break and didn't have to deal with any major storms. A west wind did bring biting flies to the beach and a lot of jellyfish to the surf, but the nearshore waters were calm most days. The water—both inshore and in the back bays—remains pretty dirty, which has slowed the bite a bit. Flounder are on most wrecks, with tons of shorts and a few big ones, usually found on the down-current side.

The bass pots are holding a few mahi, but until the water clears up, most of the bite remains limited to very small peanuts. The shoals are holding cobia and Spanish mackerel, with a few straggling redfish thrown in. It's very late in the season for these big reds to still be around, given the water temperatures, but they are a welcome surprise.

Nearshore Wrecks and Reefs

The nearshore wrecks are holding some decent flounder, along with lots of undersized fish. Jack's Spot and the Great Eastern Reef were the hotspots in this week's report. The African Queen has also been producing some nice flounder. A few cobia are being found near the southern shoals by the Virginia line.

The Worcester County Chamber of Commerce Flounder Tournament was held this past weekend out of its new location at the Ocean Pines Swim and Racquet Club. Final results are as follows:

1st Place: Kevin McNelis with a 7.6 lb flounder

2nd Place: Kevin McNelis Sr. with a 6.39 lb flounder

3rd Place: Kevin Donalds Sr. with a 4.81 lb flounder

Congratulations to all the winners and anglers who participated!

"Over-Board Sportfishing" trolled up two false

albacore and then jigged up some sea bass, along with a ton of ribbonfish. Wyatt Hinkle was out with Grace Schariest, who not only caught her first flounder but also a slob of one measuring 26.7 inches. She followed that up with another fluke measuring 20 inches. "Fish Bound Charters" had a few good trips, bringing in coolers full of fish. The crew caught flounder, sea bass, and even trolled for some Spanish mackerel.

Back Bays and Inlets

The back bays and inlet areas are full of small flounder, providing tons of action even though keepers are hard to come by. Fishing with live spot or large Gulp baits appears to be keeping the smaller fish at bay. A few rockfish and sheepshead are being caught along the rocks at the mouth of the inlet.

The "Miss Ocean City" hosted their Make-A-Wish trip last week, along with other party boats,

landing several fish for the participants and raising money for a very worthy cause.

The "Tortuga" had several solid trips, delighting anglers with lots of fish ready to eat an offering. Jim Waller caught several flounder this past week, reporting that while most were undersized, a few keepers made it to the cooler.

"Baitwatch Fishing" found some nice bluefish in the inlet, with the biggest measuring 28 inches.

Surf Fishing

Surf fishing has mostly yielded croaker and spot, though a few big drum have been caught recently. The surprise of the week on Assateague Island was the appearance of several big redfish—very rare this late in the summer.

A few big sharks, along with croaker and kingfish, have also been caught off the beach.

John Manchester caught 12 nice spot and a few croaker using pompano rigs and Fishbites.

Kevin Fitzke finally landed his first big redfish,

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a whopping 43-inch specimen.

Julie Rakic hooked her first fish on Assateague Island—a solid kingfish on a pompano rig and Fishbites. She says she's hooked and can't wait to get back out there.

David Moore had a memorable day, catching four blacktip sharks and then two redfish measuring 45 inches and 47 inches. David's always had good days on the water, but this one was truly once-in-a-lifetime.

Joe McNeil found the flounder munching when he hit the beach on Wednesday.

Clams and Crabs

Crabbing has remained steady, with 5-8 keepers per pot. Many crabbers report a recent shed, leaving some crabs light on meat. The average size of keepers is around 6.5 inches. Bunker and chicken are working about the same, based on reports I've received.

How To: Clamming in Local Waters

This week, we're focusing on clamming. The main tool you'll need is a clam rake, available at most tackle shops or online. You'll also want a basket or dive bag to store your catch while raking.

Any shallow, sandy area works well, and some of the best spots can be found in state and federal parks. These areas are clearly marked with signage indicating where clamming is allowed. Simply wade out knee-deep and start raking.

On Assateague Island, the first right turn after entering the park is a great place to start if you're new to clamming. This shallow bay area holds plenty of clams, usually just below the surface, making them relatively easy to find. The clams make a distinct sound when the rake scrapes across the shell. You can either scoop the clam with the basket part of the rake or bend down and grab it by hand.

Most anglers can gather 50-100 clams in an hour. The larger clams of summer are best used in chowder or for stuffed clams—both of which have plenty of recipe tutorials on YouTube.

Maryland residents: Limit of 100 clams per day

Non-residents: Limit of 50 clams per day

In Delaware: Holts State Park and the drive-on bay areas of Rehoboth Bay are great clamming locations.

Till next week...

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Species	OCEAN CITY	DELAWARE	Species	OCEAN CITY	DELAWARE
Bluefish 	June 6 Brian Reynolds Rt. 50 Bridge 10 lbs. 9 oz.	May 11 Ronin Jehl Fenwick Beach 10 lbs 14 oz.	Weakfish 		January 8 Jim Hitchens Roosevelt Inlet 2.4 lbs.
Black Drum 		May 8 Billy Mister Delaware Bay 64 lbs.	Bigeye Tuna 	July 26 "Full Service" Crew Undisclosed Location 239 lbs.	June 12 Hank Brucker Undisclosed Location 230 lbs.
Cobia 		July 15 Raymond Young Undisclosed Location 63 lbs.	Bluefin Tuna 	July 27 "U Teaser" Crew Inshore 164.5 lbs	July 11 Will Hall Washington Canyon 216.25 lbs.
Flounder 	July 13 Tracey Droccl Undisclosed Location 10 lbs.	June 25 Jeff Moraco Ocean Structure 8.2 lbs.	Longfin Tuna 	July 12 Following Seas Crew Undisclosed Location 35.5 lbs.	
Sea Bass 	May 26 Eli Hasco Great Eastern Reef 4.06 lbs.		Yellowfin Tuna 	June 26 Spring Mix II Crew Inshore (20 fathoms) 97.5 lbs.	
Sheepshead 	June 22 Charles Breon Ocean City Bay 4.09 lbs.	July 25 Ricky Vincent Undisclosed Location 13lbs 10 oz.	Dolphin 	July 19 Bryce Huyett Undisclosed Location 39.5 lbs.	
Striped Bass 	June 21 Gary Ward Ocean City Bay 8.15 lbs.		Swordfish 	July 28 "Good Vibrations" Crew Undisclosed Location 160 lbs.	
Tautog 	March 28 Kevin Twilley Ocean Structure 16 lbs.	May 17 Eamonn Carey Indian River Inlet 17 lbs.	Blue Marlin 	July 15 Luke Mitchell Wilmington Canyon 510 lbs.	
Wahoo 	July 12 "Reel Chaos" Crew Baltimore Canyon 75.5 lbs.		White Marlin 		

To report your catch, call the Coastal Fisherman at 410-213-2200 or email to coastalfisherman@comcast.net



Jack Dorman, 22, of Mount Airy, MD, was recently recognized as the new state record holder for false albacore in the Atlantic Division. His 26 lbs. catch set a new state mark for the species just eight days after the previous 30-year-old record was broken with a 23½ lbs. fish. Jack was fishing offshore near the Jackpot and the 20-fathom line aboard the "Game On" with Capt. Scott Stapleford. It was his first offshore trip, and while he was hoping for a yellow-fin tuna, the false albacore hit while trolling a skirted Ballyhoo.



Ricky Vincent landed this large 13 lbs., 10 oz. sheephead. He was using fleas and Chong Chae jigs and now takes the lead for heaviest sheephead in Delaware.

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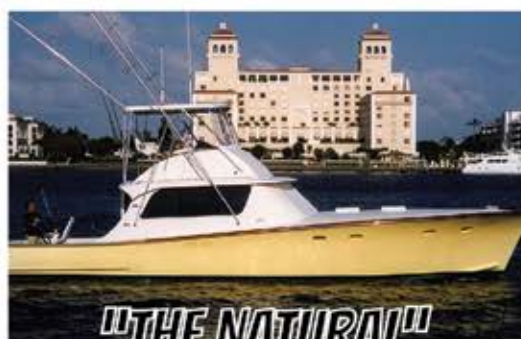
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This crew had a great overnight trip aboard the "Finatic." The 30-hour journey marked this young lady's first offshore fishing experience. On day one, she released her first white marlin, and early on day two, she caught her first mahi. The crew also landed two yellowfin, some black sea bass, and a four-person limit of blue line tilefish. What a great first offshore trip!



This crew had a solid day of fishing, landing this haul of flounder. They were fishing aboard the "Lucky Break."

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Check out these smiling faces! These two landed this flounder while fishing aboard the "Happy Hooker."



Aiden Webster landed this solid yellowfin while fishing the Baltimore Canyon! Aiden was fishing aboard the "Spring Mix" with Capt. Chris Watkowski.

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The "Morning Star" has been reeling in sea bass left and right lately. Capt. Monty had hoped to target mahi, but with surface temperatures ranging from 80.3 to 82.2 degrees, it was a bit too warm. So, he took his passengers reef fishing instead, where they landed a massive haul of sea bass.



This crew had a great day fishing aboard the "Boss Hogg." Morgan Gilligan, Conor Gilligan, David Katz, Craig Pensabene, Redmond Beam, and Anthony Clark were fishing out of Washington Canyon, where they had six white marlin releases and landed a tuna along with a massive haul of mahi.

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Molly Sears of Downingtown, PA, spent the afternoon fishing aboard the "Judy V" with friends and family. Together, the crew landed five black sea bass, including one solid keeper.



This crew had a fun day with "Ocean City Girl Fishing Charters." They landed a solid haul of ribbonfish—their first big catch of the season.

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Beach Talk

by Skylar Snead and Chris Taylor



If you've spent any real time surf fishing down at Assateague Island, especially after dark, you know there's something special about those nights when the ocean feels alive. The waves roll in easy, the air's thick with salt, and every now and then, a shooting star rips across the sky like it's chasing your cast.

But every so often, something happens that stops you in your tracks—like the water starts glowing. It ain't your headlamp or some leftover fireworks. That

glow is real. It's from tiny critters in the water called bioluminescent algae—dinoflagellates, if you wanna get scientific. When they get stirred up, they flash a quick bluish light. Walk through the wash, and your footprints light up behind you.

Y'all know the sand flea—some call 'em mole crabs. Little buggers that burrow in the swash zone and drive the kingfish and drum crazy. When I was a kid, we'd dig for 'em by hand, fill up a bait bucket and go to work.

Thing is, when these fleas dig around, they kick up all kinds of sand and water, and that's what sets off the bioluminescence. But sometimes, it seems like those algae actually cling to the sand fleas themselves. You pick one up and, for a second, it'll glow just a little—kind of like a lightning bug, but from the sea. I've only seen it a few times, and it doesn't last long. But it made me think: If we can see that glow, maybe the fish can too.

You know those big red drum, stripers, even

flounder—they feed in close at night, especially when it's calm. They're used to chasing down mole crabs and other stuff in the wash. If those fleas are glowing for a few seconds while they're digging or flipping around, that might be just enough to get a fish's attention. We already use scent—clam juice, Fishbites, shrimp flavor. Why not add a little glow to the mix?

Folks use glow baits offshore and for deep-drop stuff, but I've started messing with it right here in the surf. Glow beads on my rig. Some soft plastics that charge up with a flashlight. I even saw a fella dip a piece of cut bait in one of those UV

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jellies. Might sound silly, but on those nights when the beach is lit up with glowing water, it just makes sense to match what the fish are already seeing.

Not every night is like this. You want warm water, usually late summer into early fall. And if it's a clear night with no moon—or close to a new moon—that's when you really see the glow. Walk out into the wash and drag your foot. If you see sparks in the water, it's game on.

That's your sign the dinoflagellates are thick, and the food chain's lit up—literally. Mole crabs are moving, the algae's flashing, and chances are, there's fish not far

behind.

I'm not saying glow baits are magic. You still gotta read the beach, find the cuts, and know your tides. But adding a little glow when the water's lighting up? Could give you an edge, especially on a slow night.

Next time you're out there and the shoreline starts sparkling under your boots, think about what's going on under the surface. Fish don't see the world like we do—but they know when something's moving, glowing, or looking like an easy meal. And if that meal just happens to be a glowing sand flea? Well, you might be holding your rod a little tighter.

See you on the sand!



David Moore was at it again at Assateague, this time landing a monster red drum. He caught two back-to-back reds measuring 47 and 45 inches. The evening got even wilder when he encountered four aggressive blacktip sharks—one even tried to take a finger! "Luckily, I was quicker," David said.

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It was a day of big time fishing for anglers Rick Steinfeld, Zach Brinkman, Josh Brinkman, and Chad Thompson. They were fishing with Capt. Mike Cameron and were part of the 2025 Coastal Fisherman Cover Print. They were fishing in the 1000' column when they caught 2 red drum, one 47" and one 45". They also caught 2 blacktip sharks, one 117" and one 119". They also caught 2 blue crabs, one 10" and one 11".



J.R. Griffith of Milford, DE, landed this impressive 44-inch red drum while fishing at Assateague, using cut spot for bait.

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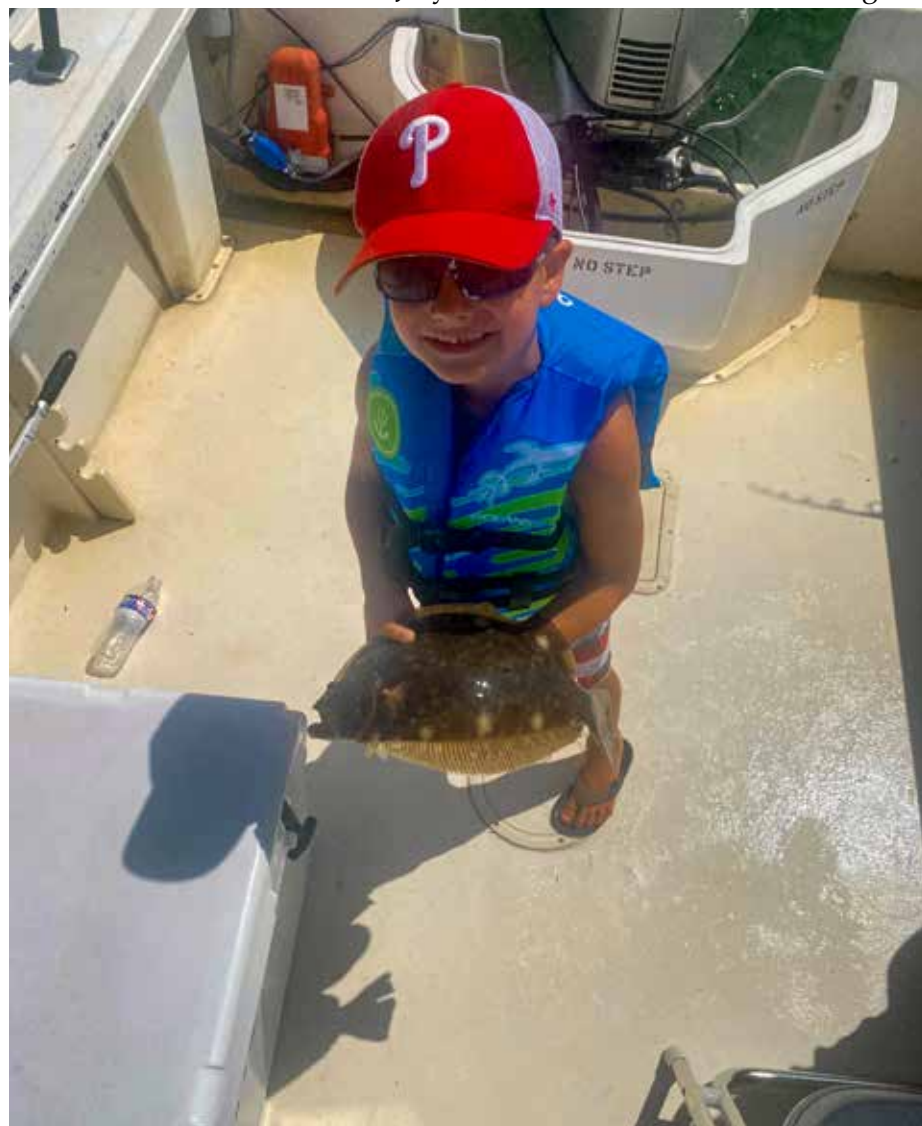



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Christian Glielmi of West Chester, PA, landed a 17½-inch flounder and a couple of croakers while fishing aboard the “Tail Chaser” out of Lewes, DE. He made his catches using squid and Gulp near Starsite Reef in the Delaware Bay.

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Species	2025	2024	Species	2025	2024
Bluefish 	April 9 Mike Powers Fenwick State Park	April 19 Aiden Sparano Assateague	Weakfish 	May 8 Jim Hitchens Roosevelt Inlet	May 2 Jim Hitchens Delaware Bay
Black Drum 	April 6 Chris Taylor Assateague	March 31 Chris Taylor Assateague	Bigeye Tuna 	June 5 Jack Disney Restless Lady II Baltimore Canyon	May 31 Tyler Lanza "Canyon Crew" S. of Poor Mans Canyon
Cobia 	June 24 Michael McGoeey Indian River Inlet	June 1 Chuck Guerra OC Beach	Bluefin Tuna 	January 1 Kenny Schoen "Chasin' Tides" Hambone	May 31 Andrew Link "Marli" Poor Mans Canyon
Flounder 	April 4 Rick Gorsuch Thorofare	April 8 Paul Musser Jr. Thorofare	Longfin Tuna 	July 12 Following Seas Crew Undisclosed Location	June 18 Mark Steiner "Don't Ask" Baltimore Canyon
Sea Bass 	May 15 Mike Depalma "Bet Sea Sport Fishing"	May 17 Bob Houser Ocean Structure	Yellowfin Tuna 	May 25 Matthew Abbonizio "Boy's Toy" Poor Man's Canyon	May 18 Chris Mentlik "Full Service" Washington Canyon
Sheepshead 	May 8 Mike Ahlfeldt Thorofare	May 7 Joe McNeal Ocean Structure	Dolphin 	May 25 Francesca Gessler "Boy's Toy" Poor Man's Canyon	May 28 Finbar Rishko Baltimore Canyon
Striped Bass 	January 29 Richard Harpel Indian River Bay	January 3 Brian Reynolds Rt. 90 Bridge	Swordfish 	June 19 Norm Wallis "On The Hunt" Poor Man's Canyon	June 1 Bobby West "Relentless" Poor Mans Canyon
Tautog 	January 6 Anthony Emerick "Chasin' Tides" Great Eastern	January 8 Anthony Emerick Ocean Structure	Blue Marlin 	July 1 Crew "Reel Current" Undisclosed Location	June 12 Tom Healy "Elizabeth Ann" Poor Mans Canyon
Wahoo 	June 26 Nick Klederline "Bad Habit" Washington Canyon	June 17 Greg Stansky Poor Mans Canyon	White Marlin 	June 14 Hannah Melvin "Wrecker" Washington Canyon	June 1 Jake Emche "Fish On" E. of Baltimore Canyon

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Terry Murray, Steve Wagner, Roy, Evan, and Alan had a great day aboard their 39' Yellowfin. They went 0 for 1 on white marlin but made up for it by landing 24 mahi, including a standout 24-pounder.



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17th ANNUAL FRANKY PETTOLINA "HEELS & REELS" TOURNAMENT *
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 Registration: August 28, 6:30 - 8:00pm
 Fishing Days: (1 of 3) August 29, 30 & 31
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45th ANNUAL CHARLES KRATZ & SCOTT SMITH CHALLENGE CUP
 Registration: Sept. 10, 6:00-8:00pm
 Fishing Days: (2 of 3) Sept. 11, 12 & 13
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Capt. Mike Vaughn and mate Bob helped Richard Hoenes land his first canyon white marlin while fishing in the Poorman’s Canyon. The fish hit the only blue plug on board –but it stayed tight. The crew wrapped up the day with three mahi and three yellowfin tuna, each weighing around 50 lbs.



Ryan Bethel of Yardley, PA, and Ky’iere Rankins of Morrisville, PA, landed some great catches aboard the “Miss Ocean City.” Ryan caught an 18-inch flounder, while Ky’iere landed a 14-incher.





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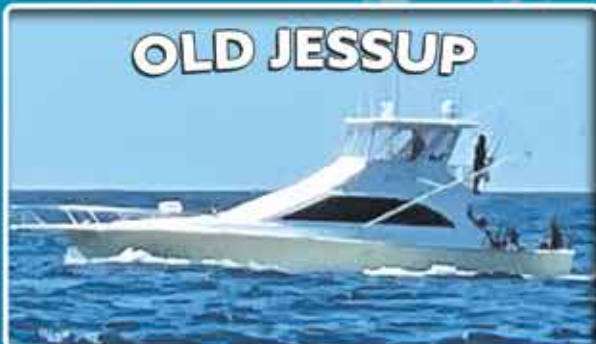
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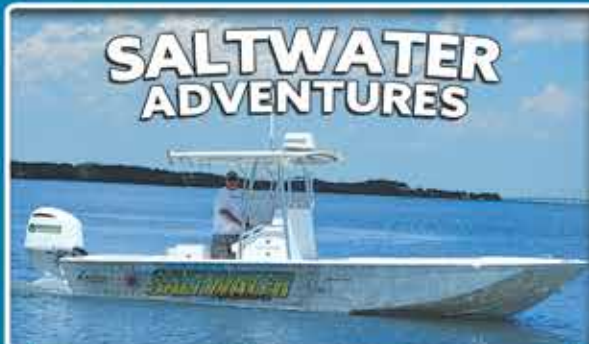
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Rich and Jordan Painter of York, PA, and Ryan Painter of Mocksville, NC, caught so many sea bass aboard the "Morning Star" that they lost count. Fishing with clams and jigging, the group landed nine keepers – with the biggest measuring 17 inches – while each released a flounder, and Jordan also caught a sea robin. Although Rich did the least fishing, he still impressed his sons whenever he took the reel.



Steve Kirkwood of Dallastown, PA, landed this 18-inch flounder on white Gulp and squid. Steve was fishing the East Channel on the "Dirty Oar."

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FISHING REPORT

by Capt. BJ Pietryak



This past week in Delaware we had lighter winds and less storms helping to clean up our water a bit. The water remains very green nearshore causing the mahi bite to be slow despite the very warm water temperatures. Flounder are all over the coral grounds and wrecks. The ratio is around 15 throwbacks to every keeper. Many anglers are heading to deeper wrecks and finding larger flounder holding just off the wrecks. If you find yourself in an area that has tons of throwbacks try moving to a new spot. Many times a small move can change the type of bottom relief and make catching keepers more of a reality. Too often anglers stay in an area just because they are getting tons of bites and fail to realize more often than not the same general size fish will school together in an area. I personally would rather catch one big doormat than 20 fish I had to throw back. The Fenwick shoals has tons of Spanish macs on it, along with big quantities of triggerfish on the wrecks. Spadefishing on these wrecks has been hit or miss however when anglers do find a spadefish bite it usually is a good long lasting one. The back bays have been showing

good fishing in the channels producing some big fluke as well as bluefish and trout in the evening hours. The Delaware Bay is loaded with croaker and spot. The breakwall and ice breakers near the mouth of the bay have been producing some quality sheepshead and tog along the rocks but we are still not seeing as many giants as we have in past years.

Nearshore Wrecks and Coral

Nearshore fishing has been tons of fish with a few keepers thrown in. The key seems to be moving around different spots until you find keeper fish. If you're in an area that is loaded with small fish...move. Trolling for Spanish on the shoals has been very productive up until 9 am. Cobia are found on the shoals just south of the inlet and will take bucktails and eels thrown in their direction. The "Captain Bob" and the "Judy V" are making some good trips providing their clients with tons of opportunities to hook fish. Many of these fish are undersized however due to the quantity of fish providing anglers with tons of strikes. Billy Mister from the Lewes Tog Club

had a good day on the wrecks catching triggers, spadefish and a few throwback tog. He reports the spadefish put up a great fight and were a ton of fun to catch. Tommy Arms reported he fished the Fenwick shoals and landed a few Spanish but the bite on his day out was spotty. Noah Cox also hit the shoals and found the Spanish more willing to bite. Andy Wright also had a few good days trolling the Macs with small spoons. Richie and Scott fished with "Gale Force Charters". The group started out looking for cobia and ended up landing a nice striper which they released. Later in the morning they landed two weakfish which made it to the cooler along with a nice 21 inch fluke. They ended the afternoon drifting for blue and landed three 4 lb ones. David Quigley went to the Old Grounds and after using 12 oz to hold bottom found one keeper fluke as well as landing 15 sea bass and 6 flounder total. Dennis Newman couldn't find that big ten pounder but did land 2 nice fish at 27" and 24.5".

Back Bays and Inlets

The main channels of the IR inlet are holding some keeper

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flounder which can be caught on Gulp as well as minnow/squid combos. The DE Bay has tons of croaker as well as kingfish. Some flounder can be found on the shallower shoals. At the ice breakers and wall sheepshead and tog are being caught on a fairly steady scale although we are not seeing the huge ones yet that we have seen in past years. Paula Jenkins had a good day of fishing catching a bucket full of spot fish and a few croakers from the DE Bay. Tony Walls had a fun day fishing the wall and pulled in a few tog. The biggest one was 14" and all fish were safely returned to the water. Jim Osborne and Dave English landed a couple big sheepshead from the ice breakers using sand fleas and fish bites. These were some of the biggest sheepsheads I have seen so far this year. Roxanna Laughlin fished Bowers Beach and landed some nice sized croakers on her outing. She was using small pompano rigs and fish bites. Rich Morgan found a couple black drum that must have gotten lost on their way up north and stuck around down here. Catching not one but two of these black beauties in July is quite a rarity. Nick Garcia and grandpop hit Rehoboth Bay on an incoming tide. Their drift produced a nice 24.5 inch flounder which weighed just over 5 lbs. Later in the week he had a couple throwback cobia and a few more short flounder. He reports the water is very

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dirty, almost being a form of red tide. The water temps were right around 81 degrees. Ryan West found a good one landing a keeper tog off the rocks in IR Inlet. Greg Allen and Herman Guzman also had a good day at the bridge catching a nice 24" rockfish. At the inlet Keith Kautz caught his first sheephead measuring 19.5 inches. Jacob Glotzbach caught two tog at the inlet drifting sand fleas. One was a keeper and the other safely returned. Old Inlet Reports Josh Sheets weighed in a nice 7 pound 8 ounce slot striper he caught at the inlet.

Surf Fishing

The surf is full of croaker and spot fish with some kingfish and small blues thrown in. Evening hours are the best time for fishing the surf. Peter Kalasky fished the Woodland Beach Pier and landed a nice doormat using squid and shiners. Stephanie and Alisa Porter caught a nice kingfish while fishing fish bites at Key Box Drive on. Rick Palmer caught his first striper of the year on the south side of

IR Inlet. John Marble had a nice day fishing off Dewey Beach landing a nice over slot rockfish in the early morning hours.

Clams and Crabs

With the warmer less oxygenated water crabbing has slowed a little with pots yielding between 6-8 keepers per pot. Bunker is still the most productive bait however many shops selling full flats of bunker are only getting the smaller bunker in and if you want the larger fish for your pots you will need to buy the ½ flat boxes that many of the tackle shops sell. Although more expensive the fish are usually bigger, requiring only one fish per pot instead of the 5 smaller ones with the fresher full flats. Clamming is in full summer mode and finding smaller clams has become very difficult. Tons of large soup clams are around if you're looking to just enjoy the day on the water and bring something home to eat.

Until next week
Tight Lines and Fins Up



Evan Dorris of Malvern, PA, reeled in this 21-inch flounder while fishing aboard the "Tail Chaser" out of Lewes, DE. He was fishing the Old Grounds using cut spot for bait.

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Shrimp Stuffed Garlic Bread:

Golden ciabatta boats loaded with Creole-spiced shrimp; a twist on your favorite appetizer.

Ingredients:

- 14 oz. ciabatta loaf
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp minced garlic, generous
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ½ stick butter
- ½ medium green bell pepper, diced
- ½ medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 lb. large raw shrimp, tail off,

- peeled, deveined
- 1 tbsp Creole seasoning
- 4 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese (separated into 1 ½ cups + ½ cup)
- Juice from ½ lemon
- Chives and red pepper flakes

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400F.
2. Using a bread knife cut around the edges of the ciabatta bread and pull out the center of the bread to create a hollow or boat. Whisk together olive oil, Italian seasoning and garlic. Brush olive oil mixture on the inside bottom and sides of the bread boat and



around the outside edges. Place bread on a baking sheet and bake in a preheated oven for 10 minutes.

3. While the bread is baking, dice bell pepper, onion, and celery. Roughly chop shrimp into

2-4 pieces each. Toss shrimp in creole seasoning, coating each piece and set aside.

4. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add vegetables and cook until onions are soft.

Add shrimp. Cook 3-4 minutes, just until all shrimp are pink. Remove from heat.

5. In a medium bowl, stir together mayo, cream cheese, lemon juice and 1 ½ cups mozzarella cheese. Add to shrimp and veggies in the skillet and fold together until all

ingredients are well

and a sprinkle of red pepper flakes.

6. Place bread back in 400F and bake for 20 minutes. Remove shrimp stuffed bread from

the oven and allow to cool for 5-10 minutes before slicing. Top with chives and serve.

The Brunch That The Crew's Craving

Seafood Quiche:

Put leftover seafood to use in this creamy, herby quiche – perfect after a weekend on the water.

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp butter
- 8 oz. cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups half and half
- 8 oz. seafood, ideally raw (Your choice!)

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½ cup onion, chopped

½ cup chopped asparagus

1 tsp dried thyme

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

1 cup gruyere or swiss cheese

Directions:

1. (Optional) Blind bake the

6. Top with remaining ½ cup cheese.

7. Bake at 350 until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean, 30-45 minutes.

Summer's Best Side for Fresh Seafood

Mediterranean Grilled Vegetables:

Grilled, herby, and zesty –



crust if using. Fit the crust to a 10 inch tart pan, deep pie pan or

the equivalent. Poke holes in the bottom, line with parchment and pie weights, then bake

at 375 for 15 minutes. Remove the parchment and bake for about another 10 minutes

until the bottom is dry and just starting to brown. Remove from the oven. Crust can be filled warm or cooled.

2. Sauté sliced mushrooms in butter until they turn golden. Let cool.

3. Beat eggs and half & half together.

4. Mix in remaining ingredients (including cooled mushrooms), except for ½ cup of the cheese.

5. If going crustless, spray a 10 inch quiche pan (or deep pie pan) with non-stick cooking spray. Pour in filling to a pan or pre-baked crust.

the ideal complement to your seafood spread.

Ingredients:

1 zucchini, sliced into ½ inch rounds



1 yellow squash, sliced into ½ rounds

1 cup cherry tomatoes

1 red onion, quartered

1 orange bell pepper, sliced into ½ inch pieces

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp kosher salt

1 tsp dried oregano

½ tsp garlic powder

½ tsp dried thyme

1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 tbsp finely chopped parsley, optional

Directions:

1. Preheat the grill or grill pan to medium-high heat.

2. Toss the zucchini, squash, tomatoes, onion, and bell pepper with the olive oil, salt, oregano, garlic powder, and thyme in a large mixing bowl.

3. Thread the vegetables onto skewers.

4. Place them on the grill and cook them for 3 to 5 minutes or until grill lines have formed.

Flip them over and grill for another 3 to 5 minutes until charred. Remove immediately and place on a large plate or cutting board. Allow vegetables to cool for 1 to 2 minutes.

5. Remove the vegetables from the skewers. Drizzle the lemon juice over the top. Top with

optional parsley, if using. Serve immediately.

Southern Fried Flounder Made Simple

Crispy Fried Flounder:

With the consistent flounder hauls, this classic crispy fry is a must-try.

Ingredients:

16 oz. flounder fillets

1 ½ cup panko bread crumbs

½ tsp sea salt

1/8 tsp black pepper

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- ½ tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp grated Romano cheese
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup cold water or milk

Directions:

1. Dip the flounder fillets in

the egg wash (beaten eggs with water or milk) and allow them

to drain the excess egg wash off for a few seconds.

2. Dredge the flounder in the seasoned bread crumbs,

completely coating the fillets.

3. Heat a deep frying pan with enough oil to cover the flounder while it's cooking. About an

inch depth of oil should be enough. Too little oil and the fish will stick to the pan. It should

be able to float as it cooks. Gently press the flounder down to get the top of the fish

cooked properly. If you are able to turn the flounder without breaking it, go for it. But

remember the flounder is a very delicate fish.

4. When the flounder is floating (about 6-8 minutes depending on the thickness of the

fillets) it should be fully cooked.

5. Allow the flounder to drain on paper towels briefly, then serve and enjoy.

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**Fresh From the Sea
and Garden**

Grilled Swordfish with Basil
Pistachio Relish and Tomato
Salad:

Fresh swordfish paired with vibrant garden flavors for a light, delicious meal.

Ingredients:

- 1 large handful of basil, stems removed
- ¼ cup pistachios
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 lemon juicing
- Olive oil as needed
- Salt as needed
- 3 small golden heirloom tomatoes
- 10 small cherry plums, or 3 plums
- ½ small red onion
- 1 small handful fresh dill and mint
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 10 oz. swordfish halved into

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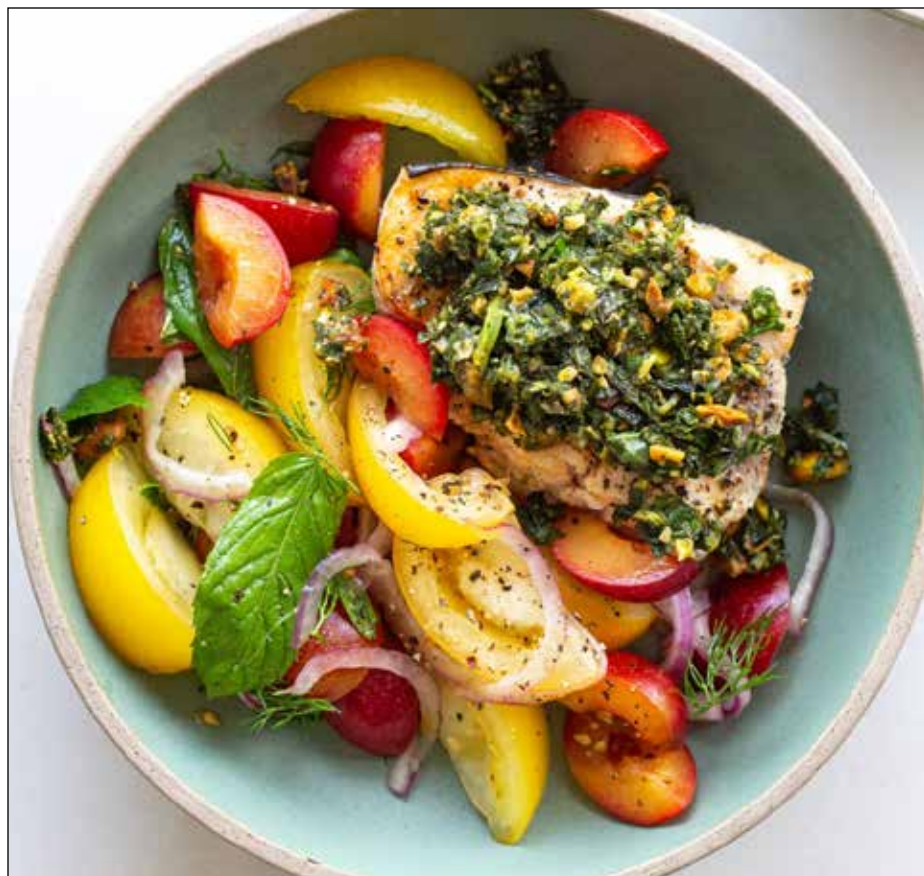
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two fillets

2 tbsp avocado oil

Directions:

1. Begin by making the basil relish. Finely chop the basil. Use your knife in a rocking motion to mince it into very small pieces, you want the herbs to be as fine as possible.

2. Add the pistachios to the cutting board and chop them into the basil, leaving no piece larger than the tip of a pencil eraser.

3. Add the basil and pistachios to a bowl. Grate in the garlic and squeeze in the juice from one lemon. Pour in a generous glug of olive oil, stir and season with salt to taste. You want the mixture to be thick but still viscous, like an herby salsa. Set this aside.

4. Remove the stems from the tomatoes and cut them into large pieces. Do the same with the cherry plums. Add both to a large bowl.

5. Thinly slice the red onion, tear the mint and dill with your hands. Add both of these into the bowl with the tomatoes and cherry plums and gently toss everything together. Add a drizzle of olive oil and salt and pepper to taste.

6. Lastly, bring a cast iron or grill pan to medium heat.

Add in the avocado oil. While the oil is heating up, season the swordfish fillets with salt and pepper on each side. Grill the swordfish for 5-6 minutes or until it releases from the pan. Then flip and cook for an additional 3-4 minutes.

7. To serve, add a heaping portion of the salad to a plate, then add the swordfish. Top the swordfish with the basil pistachio relish and enjoy!

A Fresh Finish to Any Seafood Feast

Lemon Cheesecake Mousse Parfaits:

Creamy, citrusy, and no-bake—the perfect dessert after seafood.

Ingredients:

For the Mousse:

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup lemon curd
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1-2 drops yellow food coloring, optional

For the Crust:

- 3 graham crackers, crushed to fine crumbs
- 1 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp butter, melted

Directions:

1. Using a hand or stand mixer, beat the cream on high speed until stiff peaks form. Transfer the whipped cream to a second bowl and set aside.

2. Add cream cheese and powdered sugar to the original mixing bowl. Again using the hand or stand mixer, beat them together until smoothly combined and slightly fluffy. Add the lemon curd, juice, and zest. Beat for about 30 seconds on medium, then for 2-3 minutes on high speed, until mixture is smooth. If using food coloring to brighten the yellow, beat it in now.

3. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the whipped cream, and mix just until no streaks remain. Set aside.

4. To make the crust, combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and melted butter. Divide evenly among serving dishes, then top with the mousse. Refrigerate for at

least 2 hours, or overnight, until ready to serve. Garnish as desired with additional whipped cream, lemon zest, or fresh berries.



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Jacob Glotzbach landed two tautog at the Inlet using sand fleas, with no weight, dead drifting in the eddies by the rocks. His second catch was a keeper!



Avery Golden of Ocean City, MD, reeled in this 23-inch flounder. His catch was made while bucktailing at the Thorofare on his kayak.



OCEAN CITY INLET TIDES & MOON PHASES

WED. JULY 30	High 12:12 am High 12:45 pm	Low 06:31 am Low 07:00 pm
THUR. JULY 31	High 12:51 am High 01:33 pm	Low 07:10 am Low 07:55 pm
FRI. AUGUST 1 First Quarter	High 01:34 am High 02:28 pm	Low 07:50 am Low 08:52 pm
SAT. AUGUST 2	High 02:24 am High 03:28 pm	Low 08:31 am Low 09:51 pm
SUN. AUGUST 3	High 03:19 am High 04:28 pm	Low 09:16 am Low 10:50 pm
MON. AUGUST 4	High 04:15 am High 05:23 pm	Low 10:07 am Low 11:46 pm
TUE. AUGUST 5	High 05:08 am High 06:13 pm	Low 11:01 am Low -----
WED. AUGUST 6	High 06:00 am High 07:00 pm	Low 12:35 am Low 11:54 am

source: usharbors.com

Add 1.5 hours for bay tides at the Rt. 50 Bridge.

Indian River Inlet - add 25 minutes to high tide

Delaware Bay Entrance - subtract 1 hour 25 minutes to high tide
- subtract 45 minutes to low tide

Wachapreague, VA - add 4 minutes for high tide - 21 minutes for low tide

Quinby Inlet, VA - subtract 6 minutes for high tide

These tides are only meant to be a guide, as tides can be affected by storms and weather fronts.



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David Seaman, Nick Seaman, and Rich had a great day fishing the Nearshore Wrecks. They limited out on flounder, with David landing a 6 lbs. 3 oz., 26-inch fish and Nick's biggest measuring 24 inches.

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Kristin Follum landed this flounder while fishing the Chincoteague Channel with Capt. Joe Truitt on the "Reel Adventures." She was using Captain Steve's minnows and Gulp for bait.















Seth Price was fishing around some rocks when he found this nice sheephead, along with a few others.

2025

DELAWARE REGULATIONS

STATE WATERS ONLY

 BLACK SEA BASS 13" minimum / 15 per person/day May 15 - September 30 October 10 - December 31	 BLUEFISH No minimum size 3 per day / 5 per day Charter	 BLACK DRUM 16" minimum 3 per person/day	 COBIA 43" Minimum • 2 per person or 2 per vessel
 CROAKER 8" Minimum • 50 per person/per day	 RED DRUM 20-27" minimum 5 per person/day	 SHEEPSHEAD No limit	 SPECKLED TROUT 12" minimum No creel limit
 STRIPED BASS 28-31" except 20-25" only from 7/1 - 8/31 in DE Bay 1 per person/day <u>Catch & Release only from</u> 4/1 - 5/31 on Spawning Grounds	 SUMMER FLOUNDER 4 per person/day 1/1 - 5/31 - 16" 6/1 - 12/31 - 17.5"	 TAUTOG 16" minimum 4 per person/day 1/1 - 5/15 4 per person/day 7/1 - 12/31	 WEAKFISH 13" minimum 1 per person/day

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One in a Million—or Maybe Ten Million!

Over the last eight weeks, we've written about some of the world's most incredible fishing destinations. Traveling to fish has been a passion of mine for many years. I've taken trips to places I knew wouldn't outproduce the bite just 10 miles behind the Washington Canyon—but I hopped on the plane anyways. I want to experience it all. I'm ready to travel every single week of the year...except one:

White Marlin Open week in Ocean City, Maryland, USA.

This is the week the sportfishing world converges on Ocean City. There's a buzz of excitement that is truly unmatched. I've been walking down the docks of Sunset Marina since the day it opened. That first full week in August holds an energy that's completely unique in the world of sportfishing. Sure, there are other big tournaments—but none like the WMO. You can feel it all over town.



Take a stroll down C-Dock on Sunday before Day 1 and watch the preparation. Crews stand behind the world's best sportfishing vessels, practicing their craft to perfection. A friend of mine always says, "Big fish are caught the day before"—meaning success starts with preparation. Show up at the inlet at 4:00 a.m. to witness the parade of hundreds of boats heading out to sea. There is no other tournament in the world that draws thousands of spectators to line the inlet in the dark.

Join the crowd at Harbor Island for the weigh-in madness. I've seen the crowds pour in like it's the Big Rock or Bisbee, simply because the coconut telegraph has released news of an incoming big fish on the way in. At the White Marlin Open, the weigh-in is the event. The gathering is the main attraction. Sure, there's usually a big fish to see, but people show up just for the atmosphere.

The WMO is the largest gathering of traveling sportfishing teams in the world. The chance to catch a multi-million-dollar fish draws anglers from everywhere. They're chasing the most elusive thing in all of sport fishing: a parking spot at Sunset Marina. (If you know, you know!) Seriously though, the richest tournament in the world might hand a \$10 million check to one lucky crew. Just imagine what it feels like to hook, fight, and land that fish.

Imagine for a minute: It's 1:00 p.m. You've had a good day—released three white marlin that'll be contenders in another year or two. Spirits are high. A little Allman Brothers is playing in the background. The sky is offshore blue,

www.coastalfisherman.net scattered with the white puffy clouds. The following sea slaps the transom, and a bit of exhaust water sprinkles up. The ocean is clean, scattered with weed. The swell rolls in, and you start dreaming of that white marlin surfing down the front of a wave.

Any second now.

Waiting.

A marlin gull sweeps in from the left long, his wings inches from the water. He jets up over the following sea and disappears behind the next wave. The boat settles in the trough. The next wave lifts you, and—you swear—you saw something. But then you're back down. The next rise—there! Two powder-blue pectoral fins glide down-sea toward the right long bait.

Am I day dreaming? Should I say something? Why hasn't anybody else said something...The call comes from the bridge—"Right long!" He doesn't eat. He fades. Where the hell did he go?

He's on the plug—lit up like a Christmas tree.

Pull the plug!

He's on the outside now. I can't see him. Anybody? He's coming back, but he's deep.

Right flat! Right flat!

The powder-blue pecs reappear behind the bait. Then the dorsal fin pops up, quivering. You're ready. Rod out. The bill rises a tiny bit. You're on top of the wave now, but you've lost sight. You swing your rod to the fish and release your thumb. He turns.

Please, God, make this spool go faster.

He's got it. The line starts peeling off. Four people are yelling but it's just background noise now. You're having a one-on-one conversation with this fish. It feels like 30 seconds, but in reality, it's only been two.

Should I? Now? Too late? The spool picks up speed. You



inch up the drag on the reel. Please, please—keep going out. You inch up the drag again. The rod bends. You're tight. The fish rockets right across the short rigger line.

"Bring down the short!" five people yell.

He jumps—HOLY \$&@!! Did you see her?

She's the one!

The fish is greyhounding. The line is rubbing on the short rigger line. You see the short rigger coming down. Then you see a gap. The line isn't rubbing anymore. The captain throws the boat into a turn. No one is talking now. The electric reel starts singing. The fish is cartwheeling, sky-rocketing. The tail is as thick as the mid-section.

STOP JUMPING!

You think to yourself, "If the captain tries to catch a double, I'm gonna shoot him. This is the one!"

The mate's told to grab a gaff. The Talica isn't responding. The fish won't stop jumping.

PLEASE STOP JUMPING.

The dredges are hanging, Squidnation dredges of course. The captain reverses hard to chase her down. A wave hits square on the transom. Buckets float in the cockpit. Your hat is gone. Your sunglasses are on sideways, hugging your ears. The fish finally settles, paddling away slowly.

You see an orange trace of leader. The mate grabs it.

Is she too green? Let go if you have to.

Somehow, the fish is alongside the boat. The 50-lb leader is clenched in the mate's calloused palm.

Let go if you have to.

All these words are thoughts; no one's speaking. Everybody knows—this is THE ONE.

"I think I can bill 'em," the mate finally says.

The captain replies, "One shot. Then gaff her if you can't. She's thick."

The mate reaches for the bill. He's got it.

He hoists her—she thrashes—SPLASH. She's back in the water.

Silence. Hearts stop.

But somehow the mate catches her again—grabs the bill with the other hand. Someone grabs his feet. With both feet in the air, belly on the covering board, two hands locked around the bill—he launches.

The bill clears the transom. Head. Pecs.

This fish is not ending.



Before she hits the deck, two guys are on her with a tape.


IS SHE THE ONE?

You'll know in about 2.5 hours.



Good luck, everybody!






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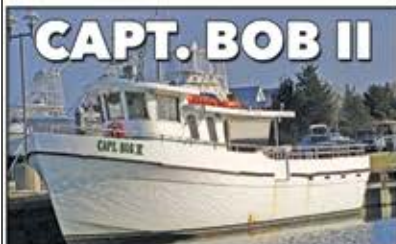
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Hooked The Story

by Anna Williams



Q&A with Tommy Hinkle: Two-Time White Marlin Open Champion

As the 52nd Annual White Marlin Open approaches (August 4-8), anticipation is building across the docks of Ocean City. With high stakes and top crews from around the world, it remains the largest and richest billfish tournament in the sport. And no one knows the thrill of winning it quite like Tommy Hinkle – the only angler in tournament history to win the White Marlin Open twice.

A Baltimore native and longtime Ocean City fisherman, Hinkle first got hooked on offshore fishing in his early 20s after tagging along on a trip with his friends. He quickly fell in love with the adrenaline and began working as a mate on the “Volcania” with Capt. John Dahl. By 2000, he was fishing in his first White Marlin Open – and has entered nearly every year since.

Aboard the “Fish Whistle,” Hinkle reeled in an 81-pound white marlin

in 2008 (just shy of \$1 million) and a 79.5-pounder in 2019 (worth over \$1.4 million). He was on the rod for both wins. This year marks his 24th WMO – and his first time fishing the tournament aboard the “Reel Fun” with owner Scott Gettier and Capt. Rob Skillman, a former dockmate of his.

Despite the historic wins, Hinkle stays humble, often crediting “luck and good karma” for his success. “Do good things, and good things will happen to you,” he says. I caught up with him ahead of this year’s tournament to talk pressure, local pride, and the moments he reeled in his tournament winning-catches.

Q: You’re the first angler ever to win the White Marlin Open twice. What does that accomplishment mean to you personally?

A: First of all, I feel blessed in the way that, you know, now, there are only 51 people in the world that could have won that – and to do it twice – indescribable. The money’s great, of course. But being

a local here and having people root for you is the best part. One time after the 2019 tournament, I was in Home Depot, and this woman that I didn’t know came up and said, “I’m so happy that you won it again because we just wanted someone local, someone involved in the community.” Having people in my community root for me – to me, this meant more than any other part of it.

Q: What do you remember most about landing that 81-pound white marlin in 2008?

A: It was a Monday, the first day. We caught it somewhat earlier in the morning and kept fishing all day long. We were in a smaller boat, a 31-footer. We ran out of gas, so we pulled up to the MR Ducks dock. The Coast Guard came up next to us and said, “We’re going to give you an inspection.” We’re freaking out. We’re like, “Look in that bag, man, we’ve got a marlin in there.” After two and a half hours, we made it. Since it was a Monday, we had to wait all week – that was the toughest part. My phone was blowing up. I turned it off. That’s the superstition about fishing – don’t count your eggs until they’re hatched.

Q: How was the story different from your winning catch in 2019?

A: We fished Monday, Tuesday, and we were supposed to fish Wednesday. We were like, “Come on, just give us one day to recoup and catch our breaths.” I had to be the one to send that text, so the captain said, “Sure, but if there’s a marlin, you’re going to be on the pole. It’s your tournament. It’s your karma.” I still have that text screenshotted. Well, Thursday, something came right up off the center shotgun out of the water. That’s it – he hands the pole right to me. Boated it. It took like an hour. We were the first ones at the scale that year because we didn’t want to waste time. We learned our lesson. I thought it was going to weigh maybe 70 pounds, and when they said 79 and a half, I was like, “What? 79?”

Q: Can you describe what was going through your head while reeling in a tournament-winning marlin?

www.coastalfisherman.net

A: It was weird. I was thinking about a former teacher of mine – his name’s Augie Miceli. I taught with him at Calvert Hall; he was my football coach and a friend of mine. He died that May that year at 81, in 2019. He taught up until the day he died. I remember fishing, trying to concentrate, but for some reason, I just kept thinking about Augie. I don’t know if it made me focus or gave me inspiration, or if he was watching from above... At Calvert Hall, our nickname was the ‘Cardinals.’ And at the White Marlin Open, I noticed the scale was called the Cardinal Scale. It gave me goosebumps.



Q: What keeps bringing you back to fish the White Marlin Open for what will now be your 24th year?

A: Just the fact that you’re putting yourself amongst the best people in the world at their trade and what they do. I don’t do this full time. I’m not a full time captain. I’m not a full time mate. And that’s one of the allures of the white marlin open. You go back and look at the winners, and people aren’t like professional anglers. There are a few in there, but most people are just, you know, common Joes that got friends together and like to fish.

Q: Do you feel any pressure now that people definitely know your name in this industry?

A: I think the fishermen know what it takes and how lucky I am. You know, I’ve got very good friends who are professional mates and captains. They’ll say, “Hey, you’re the best fisherman in the world.” I say, I’m a good angler. You know, that’s what it boils down to. There are people who are much better fishermen. I’ve got a friend who always says, “Hinkle, you’re a good angler. Don’t let it go to your head.” And I don’t. But I think I’m more than just lucky. You have to be able to be a personable person to be on a boat with somebody for 12 hours a day, for three days a week. I just remember: do good things and good things will happen to you. I call it good karma.



Q: Tell me about "Reel Fun" and the crew that you'll be fishing with this White Marlin Open.

A: I've maybe fished with these guys two times, but it feels like I've known them for 10 years. They're good people to fish with. We hit it off like we've been friends for years.

Q: What is your favorite thing about being out on the water, especially during a tournament week in Ocean City?

A: The ride out, if you can keep yourself up for sunrise. There's nothing like it. Seeing that sun come up because you're out there at five o'clock in the morning. That never, ever, ever gets old. Other than that, just during the day, just seeing all the sea life — things you see out there. You'll see sharks, you'll see pilot whales, you'll see flying fish. You'll see all sorts of marine life.

Q: What do you think makes the White Marlin Open tournament so unique?

A: It's bringing in the biggest and the best, yet anyone can win it. I'm sure for past winners, it might have been their second, maybe third time offshore fishing. That

makes the playing field level. Competing with Michael Jordan on the basketball court, he would have us, but when we're out there on the water, I'd say we're all even.

Q: Have you noticed shifts in tactics, gear, or competition over the years?

A: The invention of the Omni side sonar scanning really made a difference, especially for larger boats. When you know where a fish is and you can track him, that really is a game changer. In terms of competition, I think that more people understand that you don't need to be on a big, fancy, million-dollar boat to win.

Q: What advice would you give to anglers heading into the White Marlin Open?

A: Make sure you have fun. Don't go in there stressed with a lot of pressure on you. While you're gambling, you have no effect over what happens out there. If a fish decides to bite, you're good. Once it starts becoming stressful, you're not having fun, people are yelling, don't fish it. Remember, at the end of the day, you're here to have fun fishing.



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While fishing with her husband aboard the "Black Pearl," Pat Fendryk of Ocean City, MD, landed this 18-inch flounder in the East Channel near Fishtales. She was using a top-and-bottom rig baited with live minnows and flounder belly.

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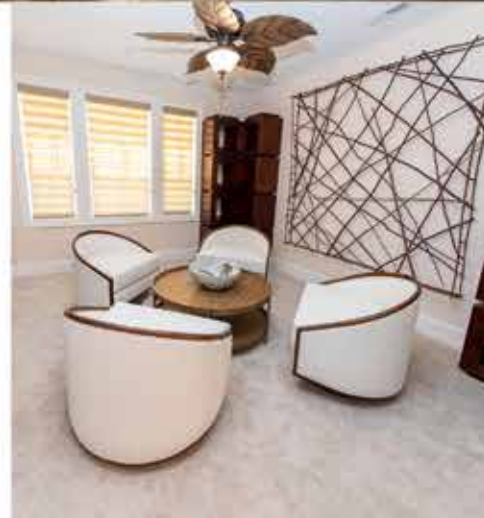
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STEVE'S MARINE SERVICE
by Steve Katz



"Tournaments, Tech, and Trouble: Staying Ahead of Mid-Season Mishaps"

The tournament season is in full swing, and I want to congratulate all the recent winners and wish the best of luck to those participating in upcoming tournaments. It takes a lot of hard work, preparation, and expense to compete, but the camaraderie and rewards make it a truly valuable fishing experience.

A Wake-Up Call from Above

Last week brought a major reminder of technology's limits when Starlink experienced its first global outage. Starlink has quickly become a favorite for offshore connectivity, but the incident underscored a critical truth: it should never be your

sole means of long-distance communication.

Satellite phones, satellite messengers, and emergency beacons like EPIRBs and PLBs remain essential. In a true emergency, they are the only tools designed to work in remote conditions—even in the water.

While the preparation of fishing gear, bait, rigs, and teasers is quite visible, much of the essential safety, mechanical, and electrical system work often goes unnoticed, as it's typically below deck. The best captains have a standard routine and process for preparing their vessel and crew for a fishing trip.

We've been fishing for a few months now in the Mid-Atlantic, and with spring boat

maintenance behind us, fishing is top of mind for most captains, crew, and anglers. However, this part of the season is often when issues can arise with on-board systems that have been in frequent use and may require attention.

Here are some key areas to check:

Bilge Pumps

Bilge pumps are a critical component of your boat and must always be 100%

switch, leading to constant running or impeller jams. It's a good practice to inspect your bilge pumps, ensure no debris is nearby, and verify that the float switch operates smoothly.

If you're adding an additional bilge pump, it's generally a good idea—but proper installation is crucial. Each bilge pump requires its own dedicated wiring circuit and fuse. You cannot share existing pump wiring with a second pump; a new, properly fused circuit is necessary. Similarly, discharge hoses cannot be shared. Each pump must have its own discharge hose and not rely on a check valve to direct water. ABYC only permits check valves in bilge



operational. This time of year, we often find issues with previously functional bilge pump systems. Fishing debris and other bilge contaminants can accumulate or get caught in the intake or automatic

pump discharges to prevent pump cycling caused by water draining back after shutdown.

While you're in the bilge area, it's also wise to check the high-water alarm's proper operation, which is a requirement for

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any boat with an enclosed accommodation space. Test the float switch on the high-water alarm and ensure it can be heard loudly and clearly. The high-water alarm's float switch should be installed slightly higher than the normal amount of water pumped out by the bilge pump. This provides an immediate warning if the pump fails before the water gets too high.

Batteries

Remember that 12.6 volts is the resting voltage of a fully charged standard lead-acid (traditional, sealed, or AGM) marine battery. For a 24-volt system, 25.2 volts indicates a fully charged bank. If your battery reads 12.0 volts at rest, it is 50% discharged. If a battery remains discharged, sulfation can occur.

Sulfation—the buildup of lead sulfate crystals—is the primary cause of early battery failure in lead-acid batteries. It happens when a battery is deprived of a full charge, causing crystals to accumulate on the battery plates, which impedes chemical-to-electrical conversion. Sulfation can be prevented by properly charging and recharging your battery.



When your engine is running or your battery charger is on, the voltage should be between 13.7 volts and 14.7 volts. If your battery area smells like rotten eggs, you have a battery problem. Batteries contain an electrolyte of water and sulfuric acid. When overheated, sulfuric acid converts into hydrogen sulfide gas, which smells like rotten eggs. Overcharging a lead-

acid battery can also produce this colorless, poisonous, and flammable gas. If you detect this odor on board, turn off the charger, ventilate the area, and stay away until the odor dissipates.

Electronics

Backup your data!

If you haven't recently backed up your waypoints and other chartplotter or system data, take a few minutes to do it now. Numerous events—voltage surges, overheating, or even an accidental button press—can cause the loss of valuable data. The small cost of a backup data card and a few minutes of your time is well worth avoiding that kind of aggravation.

Most marine electronics manufacturers have released software updates this summer. Always create a verified backup before installing any updates. Read the release notes carefully—if your system is working just fine and none of the new features or fixes apply to you, you might not need to update right away. However, if a known issue is resolved or a feature you need is added, it could be worthwhile.

Pro tip: Don't attempt a software update on a Friday

night before a Saturday fishing trip. If something goes wrong, it'll be tough to get help in time.

Final Thoughts

Developing a personalized maintenance routine and technical checklist for your boat will allow you to confidently head out to the fishing grounds and focus on what matters most: catching fish.



Mark and Janet Debinski, of Bluewater Advisory, wrapped up a great day on the water with six keeper flounder caught on live bunker at the Inlet, along with a rare keeper Key Inlet sea bass landed on sand fleas. They were fishing aboard the "Lucky Break" with Capt. Jason Mumford and mate Wyatt.

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RaShae Poole and Caleb Greenleaf of Coatesville, PA landed some nice flounder while fishing with Capt. Will of Local Hooker Fishing Charters. RaShae scored a personal best with a 23-inch flounder – congrats, RaShae!



Shaun Flaherty, along with Conner and Jeremy, landed this solid 20½-inch speckled trout. They were fishing near the Route 50 Bridge.

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Reel Women

by Loren Manzione



Well, this summer has surely flown by. We're already at the end of July, and what a fishing season it's been! The tuna bite has stayed steady, but now the billfish are finally here—and you know what that means. Over this past weekend during the Big Fish Classic, the sight of riggers lined with release flags was a beautiful thing. It's a promising sign as we head into August's marlin tournaments.

One of those is just a few days away: the 3rd Annual Marlins for Mason Tournament, which coincides with the Marlin Club's Heels N Reels Tournament. Both events will take place August 1-2, 2025, at the Ocean City Marlin Club and Sunset Marina in Ocean City, Maryland (yes, you can enter both). Marlins for Mason is a 501(c)(3) non-profit marlin release tournament benefiting the Dravet Syndrome Foundation.

This tournament is especially dear to my heart because of the story behind it—and the community that has rallied around one incredible little boy. Before this tournament began, I had never even heard of Dravet

Syndrome. But after getting to know the Prather family, I'm certain this purple-bleeding Marlins for Mason tribe is going to help find a cure. They've raised awareness across social platforms, and they've moved people—including me. (I even found myself sweating through a hot yoga class to support the cause after seeing it promoted on social media!)

Marlins for Mason was founded in May 2023 by Amanda and John Prather, along with a close-knit committee of friends and family, in honor of their son Mason Prather. Mighty Mason, as he's lovingly called, is a 7-year-old member of the Ocean City fishing community who lives with Dravet Syndrome—a rare, catastrophic, and lifelong form of epilepsy that affects nearly every aspect of life.

Mason endures frequent, severe seizures, developmental delays, and significant feeding and mobility challenges. In his short life, he has faced hundreds of seizures, countless ER visits, and frequent hospitalizations. Treatments are limited and often ineffective. Tragically, nearly

25% of children with Dravet Syndrome do not survive to adulthood. Right now, there is no cure.

"We launched Marlins for Mason to help find a cure and raise awareness in honor of Mason and the others who suffer from this life-shattering condition," Amanda shared.

What started as the idea for a small fishing tournament has grown into something incredible. Since its inception, Marlins for Mason has raised over \$820,000—funding two major research projects. It is now the largest contributor to Dravet Syndrome research in the country, and a leading force in the Dravet world—thanks in large part to the support of the Ocean City fishing community.

But the event is more than just a tournament. It includes a cocktail party, a silent and live auction, and a Sunday awards brunch. And it's no surprise the Ocean City community showed up the way it did. Both Amanda and John, as well as Mason's grandparents, the Matarese family, have been deeply involved in local fishing for decades. From the earliest days of Mason's diagnosis, they've had a loyal army of fishing friends cheering them on—celebrating the good days and standing strong during the hard ones.

"When Mason was born, we had dreams of Mason fishing offshore with his dad, grandfather, and uncles. But once he was diagnosed, some of those dreams had shifted and we were unsure if we would ever get to take him offshore fishing," Amanda said.

"Despite Mason's condition, there is no doubt that the love for fishing runs in his blood, and his favorite thing to do is go fishing or on boat rides. We were fortunate last year to take Mason wreck fishing for the first time on his grandfather's boat, the "Reel Chaos." He caught his first mahi and tilefish, and

www.coastalfisherman.net it was a day we all will forever cherish."

Amanda explained how a simple day to most meant the world to their family. As for the future of Marlins for Mason, Amanda says the goal is to keep growing the tournament year after year.

"Our goal is to make Marlins for Mason a tournament that everyone looks forward to—for the hospitality and camaraderie—bringing our Ocean City fishing community together for a great cause. We hope one day we can look back and say that Marlins for Mason helped Catch a Cure for Dravet."

How You Can Help (Even If You Don't Fish)

Want to support but can't make it to the tournament? Head over to Sunset Grille in West Ocean City and order the Tito's Strawberry Lemonade. It's a refreshing drink with subtle basil notes, homemade strawberry lemonade, and Tito's Vodka. Proceeds from the drink go to the foundation—and Tito's Vodka matches every donation.

Not a drinker? No problem. You can always order a non-alcoholic version and still contribute.

Prefer to give directly? You can find Marlins for Mason on Facebook, Instagram, or visit their website.

If there's one thing I ask of you, it's this: Donate to this cause.

What many of us take for granted—simple days, boat rides, or even the chance to go fishing—is something this family fights for every single day.

Let's help Mason, and every other child living with Dravet, find hope—and a cure.

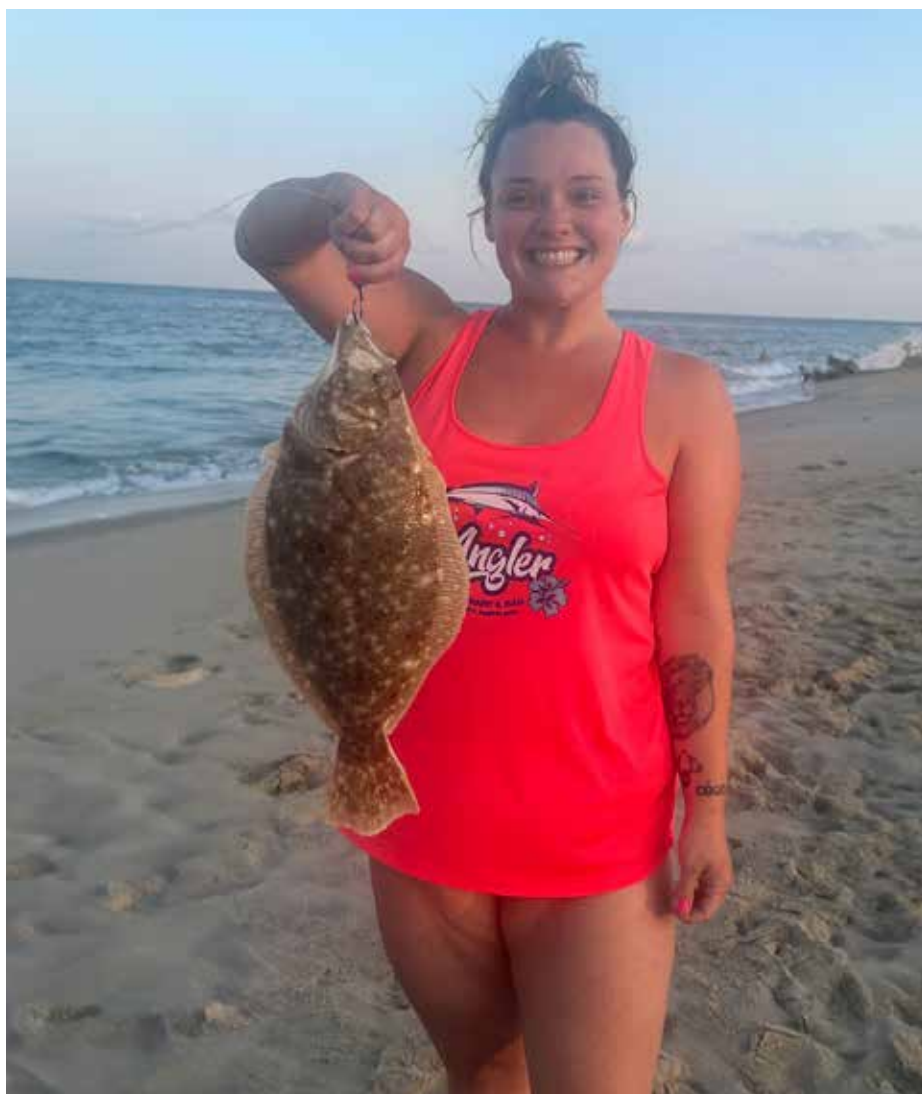
P.S. Scan the QR code below to donate now. Every dollar makes a difference.

SCAN TO DONATE NOW!





Maddie Milanese of Lutherville, MD, landed this 17½-inch flounder and a 10-inch croaker while fishing with her father and captain, Mike Milanese. She also released two more flounder, contributing to the group's total of eight released that day. Maddie was using squid and minnows for bait aboard the family boat, "Reel Salty," on the Indian River Bay.



While enjoying an evening of surf fishing on her day off from The Angler, Shannon Fuchsluger of Ocean City, MD, landed this 18-inch flounder at 22nd Street. She was using a bottom rig baited with squid and mullet.





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Kevin Fitzke finally landed his first big red drum—two of them, in fact! He caught a 43-inch and a 45-inch red while fishing at Asateague. Congratulations, Kevin!

2025

FEDERAL SIZE & CREEL LIMITS

3-200 Miles

 BLUE MARLIN 99" Lower Jaw Fork Length No Retention Limit	 YELLOWFIN TUNA 27" Curved Fork Length 3 per person/day	 BIGEYE TUNA 27" Curved Fork Length No Retention Limit	 GOLDEN TILEFISH No minimum • 8 per person/day
 WHITE MARLIN 66" Lower Jaw Fork Length No Retention Limit <small>NOTE: Blue Marlin, White Marlin and Roundscale Marlin combined 250 Limit</small>	 BLUEFIN TUNA 27" to <73" curved fork length 1 per vessel/day or trip 27" to <73" curved fork length 1 per Charter/day or trip 27" to <73" curved fork length 1 per Headboat/day or trip	 SWORDFISH 47" Lower Jaw Fork Length 1 per person / 4 per vessel (Rec) 1 per person / 6 per vessel (Charter) 1 per person / 15 per Headboat	 BLUELINE TILEFISH 5/15 - 11/14 3 per person (Recreational) 5 per person Uninspected (Charter) 7 per person Inspected (Charter)
 DOLPHIN No minimum Length Boat Limit 54 Limit Daily 10 per angler		 SAILFISH Minimum Length 63" • No Retention Limit	 WAHOO No Minimum Length • 2 per person/day

SHARKS

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

No Minimum Fork Length

Atlantic Sharpnose, Bonnethead

54" Minimum Fork Length

Atlantic Blacktip, Bull, Lemon, Nurse, Spinner, Tiger, Blue, Common Thresher, Porbeagle, Finetooth, Atlantic Blacknose

78" Minimum Fork Length

Great Hammerhead, Scalloped Hammerhead, Smooth Hammerhead

NOTE: Only 1 shark from the lists above may be retained per vessel per trip. In addition, 1 Atlantic Sharpnose, 1 Bonnethead and 1 Oceanic Whitetip may be retained per person per trip. If a hammerhead shark is retained, no tunas, billfish or swordfish may be retained.

PROHIBITED SHARKS

Atlantic Angel, Basking, Bigeye Sand Tiger, Bigeye Sixgill, Bignose, Caribbean Reef, Caribbean Sharpnose, Dusky, Galapagos, Longfin Mako, Narrowtooth, Night, Oceanic Whitetip, Sandbar, Sand Tiger, Sevengill, Shortfin Mako, Silky, Sixgill, Smalltail, Whale, White

Resources: eregulations.com & NOAA.gov



Eric Badorrek of Selbyville, DE, landed this 18-inch flounder at the Rt. 90 Bridge after a few thunderstorms. Eric was using a combination of minnow and Gulp.



Brian "Big Nurse" Lamb of Leesburg, VA landed this sheephead while fishing on the "SS DS" with friend, John Scherr. He was fishing at the Inlet while using a 5-inch swim bait.



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 <p>FISH BOUND Capt. Kane Bounds</p>	 <p>SKEETS Capt. Stu Windsor</p>
 <p>FIN CHASER Capt. Dan Stauffer</p>	 <p>DOUBLE TROUBLE Capt. DJ Churchill</p>



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Chum Lines

by Capt. Mark Sampson



Do Your Homework!

At the start of every fishing season, anglers gear up for what they hope will be many fun and successful times ahead. Boats, tackle, equipment, bait—there's so much to attend to before the first line can be dropped into the water. But sooner or later, folks get it done and are able to get down to the business of chasing fish. As much time and effort as we spend getting our "stuff" ready for the summer crusades, I'm often surprised how little time some anglers spend preparing their minds for the season ahead.

Don't get me wrong—I've never noticed any lack of enthusiasm from anglers. So when I say they need to

"prepare their minds," I'm not suggesting they need to work on getting psyched up. What I'm talking about is education—actually doing their homework by putting in some study time so that, when they're out there on the water, they'll be better armed with the kind of knowledge that makes them better fishermen.

Hop aboard almost any fishing boat and it's likely the skipper will be well-versed not only in the operation of the vessel but also in all the onboard systems, tackle, and equipment, as well as the many features of whatever electronics are installed. That kind of knowledge usually starts when someone takes the time to read and learn from the instruction manuals.

Then, as the boater heads out and puts to practical use what they learned on paper, they become more confident in their abilities—and, therefore, better boaters.

When it comes to fishing, anglers seldom falter when it comes to acquiring the right bait and tackle. Maybe that's because it's often as simple as walking into a tackle shop and asking the person behind the counter, "What do I need?" But having all the right stuff will only take an angler so far up the ladder of success. For someone to really make the transition from being just "lucky" to being a skilled fisherman, they need some level of knowledge about all the things that have to happen in nature before a fish ends up on a hook. As with most things in life—knowledge is power. And those who have it will always have an edge over their counterparts who rely mostly on dumb luck. At a minimum, anglers should have a general understanding of three things: biology, food, and habitat.

Learning about the biology of the fish they pursue is often a real eye-opener for many anglers. Some folks are just dumbfounded to discover that the fish they've been catching in their home waters each summer migrate thousands of miles each year (tuna), start life as one sex and then change to another as they age (sea bass), are some of the fastest-growing fish in the ocean (dolphin), or undergo a dramatic transformation of body shape early in life (flounder). Learning about a species' physical biology, migrations, feeding habits, and anything else one can discover provides fishermen

with a clearer understanding of the why, when, and where fish might be found. This kind of information is readily available in books and online resources. When it comes to biology, the most accurate info typically comes from scientists who actually study fish, rather than from fishermen who may misinterpret what they observe from the decks of their boats.

One of the greatest assets a fisherman can have is knowing what their target species is naturally feeding on. Biology books will usually list a species' typical prey, but nothing beats the firsthand, up-to-the-minute insight that comes from cutting open the stomach of a freshly caught fish. From seahorses to sand dollars—it's amazing what the fish we thought we knew so much about have been eating. Knowing what your quarry has been munching on provides valuable clues to the locations and depths where the fish might be found. It might also prompt some further study to learn where those natural bait species are coming from.

Though some might claim the best way to find fish is to look for other fishermen, the truth is, only by knowing the locations of shoals, bumps, channels, ledges, sloughs, cuts, inlets, and everything else on a chart can a fisherman make informed predictions about where to find fish. I've fished Delmarva's waters since I was a child, but I still spend a lot of time staring at local charts to keep that knowledge fresh. Both offshore and inshore fishermen should have a solid understanding of their environment—especially the topography of the bottom in the areas they fish. Which way do the prevailing currents flow? Is the bottom sandy, muddy, clay, grassy, shelly, rocky? There's so much beneath the waves that we'll never know—but it really helps to stay informed

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on what we can know. By the way, nothing beats slowly cruising around the inshore waters in the spring when the tide is low and the water is clear. Being able to look down and actually see the bottom, the fish, the crabs, the rocks, the mussel beds, and more is a fantastic educational experience. It'll pay off later in the year when you're trying to fish the same area under murkier conditions.

Finally, just like taking notes in school, anglers who keep a fishing log—including details like time and location of catch, weather and tide conditions, bait or lures used, and any other relevant observations—end up with a valuable resource to refer to days, weeks, or even years later. Logs not only remind fishermen where and how they caught fish on a specific day; over time, they reveal trends in a fishery and help predict what to expect as the season unfolds.

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UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

AUGUST

Marlins for Mason

August 1-2 • Ocean City Fishing Center • 410-213-1613

17th Annual OCMC Franky Pettolina "Heels & Reels" Tournament

August 1-2 • Ocean City Marlin Club • 410-213-1613

18th Annual Worcester County Chamber of Commerce Flounder Tournament

August 2 • Ocean Pines Yacht Club • 410-641-5306

52nd Annual White Marlin Open

August 4-8 • Harbour Island Marina • 410-289-9229

Paradise Grill Flounder Pounder

August 13-17 • Long Neck, DE • www.FlounderPounderOpen.com

32nd Annual Capt. Steve Harman Poor Girl's Open

August 14-16 • Bahia Marina • 410-289-7438

The MidAtlantic

August 18-22 • Cape May, NJ & Ocean City, MD

67th Annual OCMC Labor Day Tournament

August 29-31 • OC Marlin Club • 410-213-1613

SEPTEMBER

20th Annual Bahia Marina Flounder Pounder

September 7 • Bahia Marina • 410-289-7438

47th Annual OCMC Charles Kratz & Scott Smith Challenge Cup

September 11-13 • OC Marlin Club • 410-213-1613

24th Annual Ocean City Fishing Center Spot Tournament

September 13 • OC Fishing Center • 410-213-1121

Delaware Seashore Fall Surf Fishing Classic

September 27 • Old Inlet Bait & Tackle • 302-227-7974

For complete tournament coverage results, pick up the Coastal Fisherman every week from May through September or go to our website at

www.coastalfisherman.net



Jack Arblaster of Yardley, PA, caught two nice flounder—measuring 18 ½ and 20 ½ inches. Jack was fishing on the outside of the South Jetty using Gulp. He was fishing aboard the "Reel Addiction" with Mike and Margaret Orchulli of Nazareth, PA.



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Capt. Paul Menzi
Ocean City, MD



“It was a tough tournament weatherwise. We used both current and wave direction and recommended fishing areas to determine where we'd fish all three days of the tournament. On the second day, we hooked this winner around noon. Thanks again to SiriusXM Marine and Fish Mapping.”

Capt. Paul Menzi, Winner of the 2024 White Marlin Open Tournament



Learn more at siriusxm.com/fishmapping or scan the QR code to watch how George uses the SiriusXM Fish Mapping service.



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Fish Mapping does not guarantee finding fish.

Photo credit: Paul Menzi.

12TH ANNUAL HUK *BIG FISH Classic*

\$1,158,500 DOLLARS PAID IN 2024!
JULY 25TH-27TH, 2025

TOURNAMENT RESULTS - JULY 25-27, 2025

BOATS ENTERED - 89 • TOTAL PURSE - \$1,256,150

BASIC ENTRY - DIVISION A

HEAVIEST FISH - BASIC ENTRY - PURSE 20,000

1	FULL SERVICE	BIG EYE	239 LBS	\$15,000
2	TEASER	BLUEFIN	164.5 LBS	\$3,500
3	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$1,500

BIG FISH CLASSIC - DIVISION B

HEAVIEST FISH - B1 - PURSE \$26,550

1	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$17,258
2	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$6,637
3	BILLFISHER	YELLOWFIN	61 LBS	\$2,655

HEAVIEST FISH - B2 - PURSE \$47,700

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$31,005
2	BILLFISHER	YELLOWFIN	61 LBS	\$11,925
3	BACK N BLACK	YELLOWFIN	49 LBS	\$4,770

HEAVIEST FISH - B3 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$56,700

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$56,700
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HEAVIEST FISH - B4 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$144,000

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$144,000
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TALBOT STREET STRINGER - DIVISION C

HEAVIEST FISH STRINGER - C1 - PURSE \$23,850

1	BILLFISHER	TUNA	228 LBS	\$15,503
2	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$5,962
3	RESTLESS LADY	TUNA	152.5 LBS	\$2,385

HEAVIEST FISH STRINGER - C2 - PURSE \$41,400

1	BILLFISHER	TUNA	228 LBS	\$26,910
2	FISHIN FEVER	TUNA	222 LBS	\$10,350
3	TOM CAT	TUNA	187.5 LBS	\$4,140

HEAVIEST FISH STRINGER - C3 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$36,000

1	BILLFISHER	TUNA	228 LBS	\$36,000
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BILLFISH DIVISION - DIVISION D

HEAVIEST BILLFISH - D1 - PURSE \$22,050

1	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$14,333
2	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$5,512
3	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$2,205

HEAVIEST BILLFISH - D2 - PURSE \$37,800

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$24,570
2	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$9,450
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$3,780

HEAVIEST SWORDFISH - D3 - PURSE \$39,600

1	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$25,740
2	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$9,900
3	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$3,960

HEAVIEST SWORDFISH - D4 - PURSE \$46,800

1	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$30,420
2	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$11,700
3	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$4,680

HEAVIEST SWORDFISH - D5 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$30,600

1	GOOD VIBRATIONS	SWORDFISH	160 LBS	\$30,600
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RELEASE DIVISION - DIVISION E

MARLIN RELEASE - E1 - PURSE \$17,100

1	LIGHTS OUT	MARLIN	2000 PTS	\$11,115
2	TAYLOR JEAN	MARLIN	1600 PTS	\$4,275
3	REMIX/MAVERICK	MARLIN	1000 PTS	\$1,710

MARLIN RELEASE - E2 - PURSE \$58,500

1	LIGHTS OUT	MARLIN	2000 PTS	\$38,025
2	TAYLOR JEAN	MARLIN	1600 PTS	\$14,625
3	REMIX/MAVERICK	MARLIN	1000 PTS	\$5,850

SWORDFISH RELEASE - E3 - PURSE \$9,000

1	BROAD BILLS	SWORDFISH	150 PTS	\$5,850
2	BROAD BILLS	SWORDFISH	150 PTS	\$2,250
3	BROAD BILLS	SWORDFISH	150 PTS	\$900

BILLFISH DIVISION - DIVISION D

HEAVIEST WHITE MARLIN - D6 - PURSE \$19,350

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$12,558
2	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$4,837
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$1,935

HEAVIEST WHITE MARLIN - D7 - PURSE \$30,600

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$19,890
2	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$7,650
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$3,060

HEAVIEST WHITE MARLIN - D8 - PURSE \$50,400

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$32,760
2	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$12,600
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$5,040

HEAVIEST WHITE MARLIN - D9 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$99,000

1	REFUND	REFUND	REFUND	\$99,000
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TUNA DIVISION - DIVISION F

YELLOWFIN TUNA - F1 - PURSE \$47,700

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$31,005
2	BILLFISHER	YELLOWFIN	61 LBS	\$11,925
3	FULL SERVICE	YELLOWFIN	51.5 LBS	\$4,770

YELLOWFIN TUNA - F2 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$35,100

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$35,100
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HEAVIEST TUNA - F3 - PURSE \$19,350

1	FULL SERVICE	BIG EYE	239 LBS	\$12,578
2	TEASER	BLUEFIN	164.5 LBS	\$4,837
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$1,935

HEAVIEST TUNA - F4 - PURSE \$42,300

1	FULL SERVICE	BIG EYE	239 LBS	\$27,495
2	TEASER	BLUEFIN	164.5 LBS	\$10,575
3	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$4,230

HEAVIEST TUNA - F5 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$63,000

1	FULL SERVICE	BIG EYE	239 LBS	\$63,000
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HEAVIEST TUNA STRINGER - F6 - PURSE \$36,000

1	FULL SERVICE	TUNA	336 LBS	\$23,400
2	BILLFISHER	TUNA	228 LBS	\$9,000
3	FISHIN FEVER	TUNA	222 LBS	\$3,600

MEATFISH DIVISION - DIVISION G

HEAVIEST DOLPHIN - G1 - PURSE \$33,300

1	OFF THE HOOK	DOLPHIN	27 LBS	\$21,645
2	SURF BUM	DOLPHIN	25.5 LBS	\$8,325
3	PILE DRIVER	DOLPHIN	21 LBS	\$3,330

HEAVIEST WAHOO - G2 - PURSE \$27,000

1	OFF THE HOOK	DOLPHIN	27 LBS	\$17,550
2	OFF THE HOOK	DOLPHIN	27 LBS	\$6,750
3	OFF THE HOOK	DOLPHIN	27 LBS	\$2,700

BIG FISH DAILY - DIVISION H

HEAVIEST FISH - H1 - DAY 1 - WINNER EACH DAY

1	BOAT	FISH	LBS	\$0
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HEAVIEST FISH - H1 - DAY 2 - WINNER EACH DAY

1	PRIMARY SEARCH	YELLOWFIN	41 LBS	\$9,900
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HEAVIEST FISH - H1 - DAY 3 - WINNER EACH DAY

1	HONOR	YELLOWFIN	82 LBS	\$9,900
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SMALL BOAT DIVISION - DIVISION I

HEAVIEST FISH - I1 - PURSE \$15,300

1	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47.5 LBS	\$9,945
2	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	46 LBS	\$3,825
3	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	45 LBS	\$1,530

HEAVIEST FISH - I2 - WINNER TAKE ALL \$13,500

1	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47.5 LBS	\$13,500
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HEAVIEST STRINGER - I3 - PURSE \$17,100

1	FISHIN FEVER	TUNA	222 LBS	\$11,115
2	TOM CAT	TUNA	187.5 LBS	\$4,275
3	BLACK MAGIC/BUSTIN LIPS	TUNA	72.5 LBS	\$1,710

HEAVIEST BILLFISH - I4 - PURSE \$14,400

1	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47.5 LBS	\$9,360
2	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47.5 LBS	\$3,600
3	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47.5 LBS	\$1,440

HEAVIEST TUNA - I5 - PURSE \$15,300

1	TEASER	BLUEFIN	164.5 LBS	\$9,945
2	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	47 LBS	\$3,825
3	FISHIN FEVER	YELLOWFIN	46 LBS	\$1,530



The crew of the “Full Service” hauled in the largest fish of the Huk Big Fish Classic to the docks at Talbot St. Pier. These anglers weighed a 239 lbs. bigeye tuna and yellowfin weighing in at 45 ½ lbs. and 51 ½ lbs. Their fish earned them first place for Heaviest Fish in the basic calcutta, Heaviest Tuna, Heaviest Tuna Stringer, and third place for the Heaviest Yellowfin division. These prizes earned them a total of \$146,242.50.



Captain Robert Bowie and mate Mike Samtmyer, of the “Off The Hook,” brought out anglers Robert Thayer, Sam Nicolette, and Jason Willis. These anglers weighed a 27 lbs. and a 16 lbs. mahi. The team won first place in the Heaviest Mahi division and swept the Heaviest Wahoo category, as no wahoo were weighed. This collectively won the crew a total of \$48,645.



Canyon Beirch, Jame Harmstead, and Ryan Herman went out in their 21' Parker with a single Yamaha 150 motor and brought back the heaviest bluefin tuna Big Fish Classic has ever seen. The three anglers caught the 164 1/2 lbs. bluefin while fishing inshore. This bluefin placed team in second for the Basic Entry Heaviest Fish, Heaviest Tuna, and first for Heaviest Tuna Small Boat for a combined total of \$28,857.



The team on the “Good Vibrations” weighed the only billfish of the weekend with their 160 lbs. swordfish. Capt. Chris Petrovia and mate Ray Irwin fished with Nick Sohn, Ryan Williams, and Brinley Fried. Their swordfish placed them in second for the Heaviest Stringer, first for the Heaviest Fish B1 division, and swept the Heaviest Billfish and Heaviest Swordfish categories, earning a total of \$163,770.



The crew of the “Billfisher” weighed five yellowfin tuna for their stringer for a combined weight of 228 lbs. This fish placed them in third for Heaviest Fish B1, second in Heaviest Fish B2, Heaviest Yellowfin Tuna, and Heaviest Tuna Stringer, and first in the Heaviest Stringer division. These placements awarded the boat \$113,918.



The “Fishin Fever” caught a total of 15 yellowfin during their time offshore and weighed five at the scales for a combined stringer of 222 lbs. The heaviest of the five fish weighed 47 ½ lbs. The yellowfin tuna put the team in second for Heaviest Strainer, third for Heaviest Tuna Stringer, second for Heaviest Tuna Small Boat, third for Heaviest Fish Small Boat, first for Heaviest Stringer Small Boat, and swept the Heaviest Billfish Small Boat division, due to no billfish being weighed. These placements earned the boat \$73,620.



The "Primary Search" was one of four boats to come to the scales on the second day of the Big Fish Classic. The crew had five white marlin releases, two qualifying yellowfin tuna, and one mahi that was not weighed. The two qualifying yellowfin weighed 35 ½ lbs. and 41 lbs. The 41 lbs. yellowfin won "Primary Search" \$9,900 for the second day's daily.



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 <p>\$75,000</p> <p>2020 Pathfinder 2300 HPS Yamaha VF250 SHO w/617 Hours Ameratrail Trailer Included</p>	 <p>\$299,000</p> <p>2023 Cobia 320 Center Console Twin Yamaha 425XT0 w/ 55 Hours Yamaha Warranty Until 6/14/2031 - No Trailer Included</p>	 <p>\$239,500</p> <p>2020 Pursuit S288 Sport Twin Yamaha F300 w/ 117 Hours, Tandem Axle Trailer Included</p>

VIRGINIA

FISHING REPORT

by Capt. Matt Abell



While late July on the lower Eastern Shore mainly revolves around beach BBQs and watching wild ponies wash up on the east side of Chincoteague, fishing tends to slide a bit out of the spotlight. However, never fear, the ESVA still has a few opportunities for those of us who'd rather cast a line than sit and watch the waves (no matter how good the burgers are)!

The seaside once again steals the attention of anxious anglers with slow but steady action. Offshore activity has centered just shy of the Norfolk canyon, where a mixed bag of yellowfin and mahi has brought smiles all the way to supper time. Most of the action has come on trolled baits like Sidewinders and skirted Ballyhoos. Sidewinders are a planing spreader bar that

keeps baits well off the beam in clean water-without taking up outrigger rod spots. For whatever reason, purple and black have been a productive palette, but the classics-blue, white, pink, and green- should always have a place on your pelagic picnic table. If the trolled targets are delinquent at the point of the gaff, drop off for a deepwater tile. Both blue and golden tilefish have done their part in subsidizing subpar trips to ensure overall success.

The nearshore scene has gotten a bit more selective, as reef residents aren't quite as cooperative as they were earlier in the season. Flounder, while still pretty prevalent, have slowed a bit under the weight of fishing pressure. Not all boats are heading home

with a limit of fillets, but most are at least dirtying up the frying pan for a somewhat satisfying meal. Thankfully, Eastern Shore sweet corn is finally in-so there's something tasty to help fill our bellies. The best technique has been twitching 2-4 oz jigs tipped with Gulp or strip baits right off the structure. Productivity has been best with colors like orange, pink, chartreuse, and good ol' white.













If the flatfish aren't cooperating, you still have options: spadefish and triggers on small chunks of clam, blues and Spanish mackerel on trolled Clarkspoons, and the occasional cobia on brightly colored jigs or live eels. If you're ready for whatever opportunity is thrown your way, you'll be ready for

The Chesapeake, unfortunately, has been on the quieter side. Highlights include schools of solid blues and a few reds in the main stem of the bay. Finding them has been challenging, but when located, the rewards are worth the effort. Hopefully, some long-awaited puppy drum will finally show up in the shallows-though so far, they've been MIA. That said, there are still some exciting opportunities on the horizon for big reds and other fisheries that just need a little cool-down to kick into gear.

Fishing may not be at its best this very moment, but try to make the most of the opportunities we've got. Whether it's gathering with friends and family to watch the 100th Anniversary Pony Swim or slipping out on the Pocomoke for a relaxing bass trip (like Michelle and I did last evening) to try something new-there's still plenty to do on the water around this wonderful place we call home.

2025 VIRGINIA REGULATIONS

STATE WATERS ONLY

 BLACK SEA BASS 13" minimum / 15 per person/day May 15 - July 15 August 4 - December 31	 BLUEFISH No minimum 3 per person/day or 5 per person/day headboat All Year	 BLACK DRUM 16" minimum 1 per person/day All Year	 COBIA 43" minimum / Only 1>50" 1 per person/day • 2 per boat/day 6/15 - 9/20
 CROAKER No minimum 50 per person/day All Year	 RED DRUM 18-26" minimum 3 per person/day All Year	 SHEEPSHEAD No minimum 4 per person/day All Year	 SPECKLED TROUT 14" minimum 5 per person/day All Year Only 1>24"
 STRIPED BASS 28-31" 1 per person/day 1/1-3/31 & 5/16-12/31	 FLOUNDER 4 per person/day All Year 1/1 - 5/31 - 16" 6/1 - 12/31 - 17.5"	 TAUTOG 16" minimum 4 per person/day 1/1-5/15 & 7/1-12/31	 WEAKFISH 12" minimum 1 per person/day All Year

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Call Mark Pagano

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2011 44' Garlington by Conch Boatworks
Call Joe Crawford

\$990,000
WOODCUTTER - 2000 56' Custom
Carolina East Bay - Call Jeff James

\$795,000
2023 41' SeaHunter
Call Jimmy Fields

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2015 54' Wesmac
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PRODUCER - 2020 46' CTS Seahunter
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Call Joe Crawford

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Call Jeff James

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MEGABITE - 1984 41' Custom Carolina
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