



HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER April 2020

Editor: Ed Valitutto VHFC Website: <http://www.vhfishingclub.com>

VHFC meets the second Friday of each month from April through November

Location: Manahawkin Community Center 775 East Bay Ave

Manahawkin, NJ

Doors open at 7:30; Meeting begins at 7:45 PM

Next meeting (Online via Zoom): 03 April

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members,,

By now, most everyone on the planet has heard of the Coronavirus aka COVID-19 and has felt the impacts caused by it. Yes this pandemic is serious but with the recently passed USG aid bill, new treatments under development and closures / social distancing in place, perhaps we are close to seeing some relief and eventually a return to normal. But until that happens, we all must do our part and try to follow the guidelines - use gloves, masks, wipes, keep a 6 ft separation and only travel as necessary. Stay safe and hopefully this will all be behind us.

Lastly, I look forward to 'seeing' everyone at our first online Zoom meeting on Friday April 3rd.

Ed

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2 - Practice session for Zoom app installation. See details below.

April 3 - First VHFC Club Meeting for 2020 using Zoom app. See details below.

ZOOM Practice Session - Due to the closure of the Community Center, VHFC will hold club meetings using Zoom and will hold a practice session on Thursday evening April 2nd starting at 7:30 for anyone interested in trying it out before the regular meeting. This will allow members to download the app onto their device and verify that both video and audio are available. Once completed, you will just click on the **separate link** for the Friday meeting.

Special thanks to Phil Simon for doing the work in setting up Zoom for VHFC use!

Zoom Practice Meeting: Thursday April 2 07:30 PM Eastern Time

Use this Link to Join the Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/218787143>

Meeting ID: 218 787 143

If Dialing by Phone: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 218 787 143

Any questions, call Phil Simon @ 908 656 4086 or Ed Valitutto @ 609 994 1311.

ZOOM Membership Meeting - Friday April 3 07:30 PM Eastern Time

Use this Link to Join the Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/489170460>

Meeting ID: 489 170 460

If Dialing by Phone: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 489 170 460

Any questions, call Phil Simon @ 908 656 4086 or Ed Valitutto @ 609 994 1311.

APRIL SPEAKER - Kaitlin Gannon – Kaitlin will present “Exploring the Jacques Cousteau Reserve and Their Derelict Crab Pot Prevention Efforts.” Kaitlin earned a B.S. in General Biology from the University of Findlay in 2009. She is now the Education Coordinator for the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve in Tuckerton, NJ, where she conducts and coordinates education and outreach efforts for community members, students, and formal and informal educators. Kaitlin also assists with education efforts on research grants and manages part time education staff at the Reserve.

NEW JERSEY FISHING REGULATIONS by Phil Simon - JCAA did not hold their monthly meeting due the coronavirus pandemic but has plans for a Zoom meeting in the next week or so. Any significant news will be reported out. However, there is some action being taken on Menhaden by the ASMFC:

“For those who have been closely following the menhaden compliance issue, the Commission received good news last month when the Secretary of Commerce concurred with our finding that the Commonwealth of Virginia is out of compliance with Amendment 3 to the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Menhaden. Specifically, the Commonwealth failed to implement the 51,000 mt Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap (cap). In accordance with this finding, the Secretary declared a moratorium on the Atlantic menhaden fisheries in Virginia waters, effective June 17, 2020. In order to avert the moratorium, the Commonwealth must effectively implement and enforce the cap prior to June 17th. This action was taken pursuant to the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (Atlantic Coastal Act) of 1993.”

We can hope that this will eventually have a positive impact on our striped bass situation, as menhaden stock health directly impacts the striper stock. As you know, we are now in a re-building program for stripers, which will mean some years of heavy restrictions as the stock recovers.

The bluefish situation, where things went from status quo to emergency in a heartbeat, was induced by the new MRIP estimates of recreational fishing effort announced earlier. To say that the fisheries regulators over-reacted to the new data is an understatement. Without first confirming from fishery independent data that the stock had declined significantly, draconian regulations were implemented. Bluefish are now listed as overfished (depleted).

OVERVIEW of NJ SALTWATER REGULATIONS (*Courtesy of The Fisherman website*)

Black Drum: 16" minimum size, 3/angler, no closed season

Black Sea Bass: 12-1/2" minimum open 5/15-6/22 (10 fish); 12-1/2" minimum open 7/1-8/31 (2 fish); 12-1/2" minimum open 10/8-10/31 (10 fish); 13" minimum open 11/1-12/31 (15 fish)

Blue Crab: 3" minimum size for peeler/shedder 3-1/2" for for soft shell 4-1/2" hard shell Limit one bushell

Bluefish: No minimum size, 3/angler private, 5/angler aboard for-hire trips. No closed season

Cobia: 40" minimum size, 1/angler, no more than 3 per vessel. June 1 to September 30.

Cod & Haddock: 21" minimum size, no creel limit, no closed season

King Mackerel: 23" minimum size, 3/angler, no closed season

Pollock: 19" minimum size, no creel limit, no closed season

Porgy: 9" minimum size, 50/angler, no closed season

Red Drum: 18"-27" slot size, 1/angler, no closed season

Spanish Mackerel: 14" minimum size, 10/angler, no closed season

Striped Bass: Starting 4/1/20, one fish from 28 inches to less than 38 inches. No closed season 0-3 miles from shore; Delaware River from Trenton to Salem River open 3/1-3/31 and from 6/1-12/31; all other marine waters open 3/1-12/31 except beyond 3 miles which is closed year-round. For Striped Bass Bonus Program go to www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/bonusbas.htm

Summer Flounder: (*Set to be approved by NJDEP for 2020*) 18" minimum size, 3/angler, May 22 - Sept 19 (17" minimum size, 3/angler west of COLREGS on Delaware Bay; 16" minimum size, 2/angler at IBSP)

Tautog: 15" minimum size, January 1 - February 28 (4 fish), April 1 - April 30 (4 fish), Aug 1 - Nov. 15 (1 fish) and November 16- December 31 (5 fish)

Weakfish: 13" minimum size, 1/angler, no closed season

Winter Flounder: 12" minimum size, 2/angler, Mar. 1- Dec 31

There is certainly nothing funny regarding Covid-19, but I thought a little lighthearted humor couldn't hurt. This assumes you have your boat in the water. Compliments of Vince Sibona.



2020 FISH of the MONTH (FOM) - What used to be one specific species per month has evolved into multiple species over several months to provide more awards for our members. If anyone has a better name, please let me know. Meanwhile, here are FOM changes for 2020:

1. Winter Flounder will be expanded from the present 1 March - 30 April to 1 March - 30 November
2. Weakfish will be expanded from the present 1 - 30 September to 1 April to 30 October
3. A new award for Sheepshead will be added running from 1 July to 30 September

Our rationale was that there were several flounder caught in the fall while anglers were out bottom fishing that could not be entered. Once again, boats must depart / return to Ocean County. Point Pleasant boats are fine; Brielle boats are NOT.

Weakfish are few and far between so just one month seemed too limited for entering them.

Sheepshead are becoming more common in our area especially around bridges and rocks. They are great fighting and wonderful eating fish. Be the first to enter one in our contest!

A full list of 2020 FOM Awards follows on the next page.

2020 FOM Categories (22 Awards)

Time Period	Species
1 March - 30 April (2 Awards)	Striped Bass & Bluefish
1 March - 30 November (1 Award)	Winter Flounder
1 - 30 April (2 Awards)	Striped Bass & Bluefish
1 April - 30 June (1 Award)	White Perch
1 April - 30 October (1 Award)	Weakfish
22 May - 30 June (1 Award)	Fluke
15 May - 22 June (1 Award)	Seabass
1 -31 July (2 Awards)	Fluke & Seabass
1 July - 30 September (1 Award)	Sheepshead
1 -31 August (2 Awards)	Fluke & Seabass
1 - 19 September (1 Award)	Fluke
1 - 31 October (3 Awards)	Blackfish & Bluefish & Striped Bass
8 October - 30 November (1 Award)	Seabass
1-30 November (3 Awards)	Blackfish & Bluefish & Striped Bass

Only paid up members can enter fish into any contest. So be sure to send in your dues before you catch a winner!

All fish must be caught off land / surf in Ocean County NJ or from a boat departing and returned to Ocean County NJ. Fish caught on Brielle party boats do not qualify for entry.

All fish must be legally caught and a legal size fish per NJ F&W rules. Bluefish must be 5 lbs minimum for award entry. Bonus tag bass can be entered for awards.

If no entry is made for a species for a specific award period, the award will be added to the next period that species is offered. This will repeat until the end of 2020.

2019 Melanie Boytos Award

The prestigious honor of having your name engraved on a memorial plaque is awarded to the angler who earns the most points based on weight / length for one fish in each of four species - Striped Bass, Bluefish, Fluke and Weakfish. If no one enters a weakfish, seabass is the alternate species. For the third time since the award was established and for the second consecutive year, **Bill Figley** captured the 2019 award and was the only angler entering fish in all 4 categories including a weakfish entry. His catches were; a 6 lb 2 oz striped bass, a 5 lb 1 oz fluke, a 1 lb 6 oz seabass and a 6 lb 0 oz bluefish. **Congratulations Bill!**

2019 VHFC Fish of the Year Trophy Winners

Fish	Name	Size	Date
Bluefish	Marty Friedrich	12 lbs 14 ozs	5/19/19
Fluke	Cherie Hebert	6 lbs 13 ozs	9/01/19
Sea bass	Carmine Tocci	2 lbs 10 ozs	5/15/19
Striped Bass	George Guerin	32 lbs 1 oz	11/06/19
Weakfish	Cherie Hebert	3 lbs 9 ozs	9/16/19
Blackfish	No Entry		

As a reminder, although there are no FOM awards for December, fish can still be entered for FOY or MBA consideration. Case in point, yours truly went fishing on a charter for Blackfish - see the story and photo later in the Reports section - and landed an 11 lb+ blackfish. That's me in the table above listed as No Entry!

For a complete list of all fish entered for 2020, go to the VHFC Web Site:

<http://www.vhfishingclub.com/conteststournaments/vhfc-standings/>

ROD & REEL RAFFLE - Our two yearly rod & reel raffles are usually held in June and September. Let's hope we're back to in person meetings at the community center by then. Our raffle items this year are:

1. Shimano 7' Medium power / Fast action GLF spinning rod with a Penn Pursuit III 2500 reel
2. Tsunami 5 Star 6' 6" Medium heavy power spinning rod with a Penn Pursuit III 3000 reel

RECIPE - Bill Dabney submitted this recipe. Try it and let Bill know how it turned out.

Fish - Thin white fillets like fluke or tilapia with salt & pepper

Sauce - Mix the following ratio in a bowl depending on the amount of fish: 3 TBSP Soy, 1 TBSP rice wine vinegar or sherry, 1 heaping TBSP each grated ginger and minced scallions, one minced garlic clove, chile oil or sesame oil are optional.

Directions - Heat a pan in a 425 oven until very hot. Remove from the oven and add some oil. Add the fish and return to the oven for two minutes. Remove and brush the sauce over the fish. Return to the oven until cooked through - one or two minutes or longer depending on the thickness of the fish. Serve over rice.

Bill recommends a flavorful Italian white wine like a Inama Soave Classico or a La Cana Albarino from Spain. Both are about \$14 at your local store.

CLUB DUES - VHFC dues are required by our May meeting with most folks paying at the April or May meetings. However, with the Community Center closed for April and perhaps even May, it might be easier for everyone to just mail in their dues. Please remit your check payable to VHFC for \$40 per adult / \$10 per junior member. Send it to

VHFC MEMBERSHIP
PO BOX 1026
MANAHAWKIN, NJ 08050

Please include a completed membership form if possible with your check. The form was an attachment to the email with this Newsletter. Just a reminder, dues must be paid up to enter fish into any of our award contests.

BoatUS / BOATING SAFETY by Jeff Orsoe - Village Harbour is a “Cooperative member of BoatUS” and many of VHFC members are also members of BoatUS. But whether you are a member or not, I highly suggest that you place the BoatUS boating App on your cell phone. The new BoatUS App puts all the BoatUS features right at your fingertips. Still the fastest way to get a tow, the App combines the features that every boater wants and needs before hitting the water. **Download it for free** from the App Store® for iPhone® or iPad®, or on Google Play for Android™ to start taking advantage of all it's helpful features including TowBoatUS CONNECT, the fastest way to connect to the TowBoatUS fleet for assistance. Go to <https://www.boatus.com//> for additional details.

Now is the time that we are preparing our vessels for the upcoming boating season. I visited the BoatUS website to get a few tips that may be of interest to our members:

1. The most important topic when we are out on the water, besides the fish, family time or just plain having a good time, is SAFETY. I go by a saying that I've used for the last couple of decades, “I go out with ten fingers and toes, I come back with ten finger and toes.” Whatever works for you, stay with it. If you can make boating safer, then do it.
2. Recently BoatUS tested 5 different Man Overboard safety devices and came away with useful observations on their value. These are MOB wearables, wireless safety devices that detect and alert when someone falls overboard. Follow this link to see the observations and comparisons.
<https://www.boatus.com/expert-advice/expert-advice-archive/2020/april/5-man-overboard-safety-devices-tested>
3. In the DIY department, one of the most frequent failures are those having to do with electricity. Lights, bilge pumps, whistles, depth sounders, radios, radar and trailer lights all require electrical power. The safest thing to do is to make that repair or connection correctly. The last thing any of us needs is to end up with non-functioning equipment or a fire on board. On their website, BoatUS has an article entitled “Choose the Correct Wire Size”. One of the common questions DIY boaters ask is what size wire they need when performing an electrical accessory installation. This is a good question to ask for safety as well as for performance reasons. Electrical equipment simply cannot deliver its best performance if it's not getting enough power. Wiring too small for the task is a surefire way to ruin an installation and limit the capability of the equipment. From the safety side, wire too small for the job creates excessive electrical resistance which produces heat. Enough heat can will start a fire! Follow this link for some interesting reading
<https://www.boatus.com/expert-advice/expert-advice-archive/2020/february/choose-the-correct-wire-size>

4. After spending all our hard-earned cash on boat prep, we all like to find ways of saving some money. BoatUS has some suggestions. They have collaborated with boating experts and have many smart ideas that could save you thousands of dollars a year. Go to <https://www.boatus.com/expert-advice/expert-advice-archive/2020/february/save-big-boating-bucks> One I thought of but never tried was saving this year's shrink wrap and reusing it next season. At ~\$20 / ft, it might be worth the effort for smaller lower profile boats.

As many VHFC members may already know, Geico Insurance has partnered with BoatUS for marine insurance. I found a section on the website showing some interesting claims. They must be true as you can not make them up. Enjoy <https://www.boatus.com/expert-advice/expert-advice-archive/2020/april/craziest-boat-insurance-claims>

FISHING REPORTS - Please go to the VHFC website at <http://www.vhfishingclub.com> to read fishing reports submitted by fellow club members. Please submit your own reports using the simple form on the pull down menu. If you do not feel comfortable using the form, please email Ed Valitutto @ edvalitutto@gmail.com or call 609 994 1311 and I will submit a report for you. There were six reports from December 2019 through March 2020.



For our last trip of 2019, Bill Dabney, Dave Spendiff, Alan Goracy and I booked an afternoon tog / striper trip on Captain Brett Taylor's Reel Reaction charters. Weather conditions were great despite several days of blowout tides, very strong winds and rain. Our plan was to hit the blackfish first and then look for birds for some stripers.

We started out on the Barnegat reef and after fishing several spots with just a few shorts and keepers, Brett decided to move south to the Garden State North reef and see if the action was better there. Unfortunately that was not the case.

We ended up with 8 hard earned keepers. The high point for me was a personal best 11.25 lb tog caught on the jig which I had read about but never used.



Down in West Palm Beach for two months, Ed Valitutto went on a bottom trip. Along with several shorts, I had the three keeper snappers in the photo. That's a mangrove snapper on the bottom, a yellowtail in the middle and a vermillion snapper on top. Especially exciting was the appearance of several 8' reef sharks swimming alongside the boat and taking their share of the catch!



My daughter and her sons came down for a short visit to Florida. The boys had fun catching small snappers which despite our best release efforts often became meals for the pelicans. But we did get two nice keepers. A very nice Mangrove Snapper and a very impressive 16" Sheepshead! The second picture shows our breakfast the following morning. The Sheepshead is the four pieces on the bottom.



Shown on the left are some of the plugs Basil Dubrosky uses down in Florida to catch Spotted Sea Trout



That's Basil holding one of a number of trout caught in the thick fog in Sarasota Bay. Basil said they also caught and brought home 4 Spanish Mackerel. The fish were caught mostly on soft plastic jigs but several trout and Spanish were caught on Mirror-Lure suspending plugs.

Basil said they were fishing grass flats near an inlet and he was reminded of the time weakfish were plentiful in NJ. These trout love similar patterns to those used on weakfish back in the days.

Unfortunately, there is still a moratorium on keeping trout due to the red tide invasion last year.



That's Caesar Pesarini smiling from Longboat Key near Sarasota where he enjoyed a few weeks of sun and fun this winter. He did find time to do some fishing and caught a nice Mangrove Snapper and Black Seabass.



That's not the *Man in the Iron Mask*! It's Basil sporting his sun protection face shield with another one of many Spotted Sea Trout he's caught down in Florida. Basil is catching on the patterns pictured on the right as well as on white and hot green. He suggests folks try soft plastics for fluke to save money on Gulp. He feels we went from bait directly to Gulp in NJ and never gave regular soft baits a serious try.

Gulp is a great product but I think the company spent all their research money on product development at the expense of packaging. No matter how hard I tighten the container, some of the expensive, smelly magic liquid still escapes!

I will definitely give Basil's suggestion a try this summer as soon as the blowfish and bluefish bite the tails off the \$200 worth of Gulp I have on hand!

VHFC Shirts - Shirts have long sleeves and feature UPF 50 Sun Protection. We now have orders for 8 of the required 12 minimum lot buy.

VHFC Hats - The new hats have been delivered! Hats are khaki colored and feature a high definition VHFC patch on the front. They are available at club meetings and sell for \$20.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

Boat/US: <http://www.boatus.com/>

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary: <http://www.cgaux.org/>

Notice to Mariners (District 5):

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=InmDistrict®ion=5>

Fisherman's Headquarters: <http://www.fishermansheadquarters.com/>

The Boat Shop: <http://theboatshoponline.com/>

The Bass Barn: <http://www.thebassbarn.com>

Barnegat Fishing Hole: <http://www.barnegatfishinghole.com/ubbthreads/ubbthreads.php>

Animated Knots: <http://www.animatedknots.com/>

Long Beach Island Water Temperature & Winds:

<https://seatemperature.info/long-beach-island-water-temperature.html>

VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS: Call Jeff Orsoe @ 732-672-5530 and leave a message or email him at jorsoe786@comcast.net

SPONSORS / (WEIGH IN STATIONS) : (Until NJG lifts the closure due to COVID-19, all sponsors and weigh in stations remain closed.)

The following sponsors / Weigh In Stations (shown in red) offer a discount with the presentation of your current VHFC Membership Card. Discounts normally do not apply to items that are fair traded or items on sale.

BHW Marine Center (Weigh In Station) 10% discount with VHFC card
857 Mill Creek Rd Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609-709-5424

Boat U.S.

Special membership price call Jeff Orsoe. Forms for members' use will be at VHFC meetings or call Jeff Orsoe 732-672-5530. Also, VHFC members only pay \$9.50 for a year of Boat U.S.

Causeway Boat Rentals 10% discount on bait & tackle with VHFC card
2200 E. Bay Ave., Manahawkin, NJ
609-494-1371

Creekside Outfitters (Weigh In Station) 10% discount with VHFC card
403 Rt. 9 Waretown, NJ 08758
609-242-1812

D & S Marine Service 10% discount on parts with VHFC card
460 Dock Rd, West Creek NJ 08092
609-296-0309

Fisherman's Headquarters (Weigh In Station) 10% discount with VHFC card
280 West 9th St, Ship Bottom, NJ 08008
609-494-5739

JB Awards 10% discount on engraving and trophies with VHFC card
609-290-5851

Jingles Bait & Tackle (Weigh In Station) - 10% discount with VHFC card
1214 N Bay Ave, Beach Haven, NJ 08008
609-492-2795

The Boat Shop 10% discount with VHFC card
756 E. Bay Ave, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609-597-1271

Viking Outfitters 10% discount with VHFC card
W.19th and Bayview in Viking Village, Barnegat Light, NJ **609-361-9111**

West Creek Bait and Tackle (Weigh In Station) - 10% discount with VHFC card
387 Route 9, West Creek, NJ 08092 **609-857-3516**

West Creek Kayak and Canoe (Weigh In Station) 10% discount only on accessories with VHFC card
224 Route 9, West Creek, NJ 08092 **609-296-8030**