

HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER September 2021

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: 10 September

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members.

Can you believe Labor Day is upon us! I know time flies when you're having fun but this is crazy. Oh well at least the super hot and humid weather is behind us along with the large crowds - for the most part. As for the fishing, it's as good as it gets. All our summer species are here as well as our southern visitors. But that will change quickly so take advantage of their availability to catch them now before they migrate off shore or southward. Smaller bluefish are around - I caught a nice 2 lb specimen on Friday - and maybe their bigger siblings will show along with the striped bass migration. Tog opened on August 1st with a one fish limit but seabass is now closed until early October. Overall, there is an amazing variety of fish for the taking right now so make the most of the opportunity available to you.

Our next meeting will be at the Community Center on Friday September 10th. Please come out and say hello to your fellow club members. The speaker originally planned for the meeting is

unavailable but fellow member Bill Figley has agreed to present. Bill has a vast amount of knowledge and experience regarding everything related to our marine environment including our reefs, oceans and everything that inhabits them. He is a wonderful resource and always provides an interesting presentation.

Hope to see you at the meeting,

Ed

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 10 - VHFC Club Meeting

October 21 - Dinner at Kostas Grill (Details in this Newsletter)

October 22 (Tentative) - Club Bottom Fishing Trip (Details in this Newsletter)

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER - Bill Figley Bill will lead a discussion on trolling motors and answer questions on their effective use and operation in locating wrecks and catching more fish. Bill will also open the discussion to general fishing questions and answers.

NEW JERSEY FISHING REGULATIONS by Phil Simon - NJ Back Bays Coastal Storm Risk Management Study - Tom Fote of JCAA sent out a link to a recording of a meeting he attended where the Army Corps of Engineers presented a briefing to the Barnegat Bay Partnership on their planning for what looks to be a massive storm surge control project along the New Jersey Coast - the so-called NJ Back Bay Project. In a nutshell, storm surge barriers are being proposed for the major inlets along the coast (excluding Little Egg, which was deemed too difficult), and includes Manasquan, Barnegat, and Great Egg inlets. Also proposed are major dune enhancements along the beaches, and we are not talking about just the usual beach replenishment. The storm surge barriers are complex structures with gates that would be closed off during big storms, blocking all entry of water through the inlets. As you can imagine, for those of us who fish these areas this could change everything! No one knows what impact this could have on fish migration in and out of the back bays. It could be minimal or it could be very significant.

I have included the link to the recording of the briefing here if you would like to view yourself. https://ocean.webex.com/ocean/ldr.php?RCID=ebfcdd9728a7e01f3ec5205fbf79b224 The Password is NJbbs083121. It's a little hard to follow as a lot of it is quite technical, and the engineers speak the east coast dialect of Acronyse, which is similar to Vietnamese but harder to understand LOL!. While the project is still in the planning stages, they are already planning to solicit public opinion this month. Many of the conference attendees complained there was not enough time to go through all the documents and understand the consequences of what is

being proposed. The good news is that they have years to go before the project can be approved, so let's hope they arrive at a sensible approach. Costs are currently estimated at over 16 billion dollars, and I expect this is an underestimate. There is a website where if you are interested you can assess all the documentation – the primary document is hundreds of pages and there are thousands of pages in the various appendices. Here's the link: https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/New-Jersey-Back-Bays-Study/.

Regulatory News: The MAMFC and ASFMC held a joint meeting in August and among the many issues presented were the preliminary coast-wide fishing quotas for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. These numbers still need NOAA approval, but we may be seeing a little relief for the future. Of course, the estimates for recreational harvest have also gone up so I do not expect any improvement in the daily size and bag limits going forward. Bluefish will continue to be managed under a rebuilding plan as the stock was determined to be overfished. Here's the summary, but there will be more on this in the first newsletter of the new year:

	Commercial Quota millions of pounds		Recreational Harvest Limit millions of pounds			
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Summer Flounder	12.49	15.53	15.53	8.32	10.36	10.36
Scup	20.50	20.38	17.87	6.07	6.08	5.41
Black Sea Bass	6.09	6.47	5.71	6.34	6.74	5.95
Bluefish	2.77	3.54	4.29	8.34	13.89	22.14

As you might have heard the early numbers on striped bass indicate that the coastal states achieved a greater reduction in harvest than required under the current management plan, 28% vs 18%, suggesting to me that either the current regulations are too tight and the striped bass stock is worse off than we thought, or, the fish have moved into waters where we can't catch them. Studies are underway to address these questions. Again, I don't expect any changes in the near term on our size and bag limits for 2022. A new stock assessment for striped bass is also expected in 2022.

NJ Fish & GAME - The R3 Program provides monthly newsletters filled with upcoming events, conservation news, division staff & mentor highlights, and resources to promote your hunting, fishing, and/ or shooting sport participation. Check out their September newsletter which includes upcoming events, a recap on last month's events and firearm cleaning tips at https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/pdf/education/r3_september21news.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

NJ Fish & GAME - NJ F&G has created the Marine Protected Wildlife Reporter Tool which enables users to report sightings and encounters with federally listed endangered or threatened marine species as well as prohibited shark species.

Compatible with smartphones, tablets, and desktop computers, users can report the species that was encountered and other pertinent information. This valuable data will be used by Division biologists to track habitat use and collect life history information to effectively manage the recovery of these important natural resources. Check it out at:

New Wildlife Reporting Tool for Protected Marine Species

BEACH HAVEN CHARTER FISHING ASSOCIATION REEF NEWS - In the August Newsletter, I reported that VHFC made an initial \$500 donation to the BHCFA Junior Mates reef project that deposited several vessels on LER. I also reported that VHFC made a second \$500 donation to support a follow-on reef effort to deposit reef balls on LER. As a result of all contributions, 32 reef balls were delivered to a dock site up in Forked River.where the Bureau of Navigation will bring them out to the reef literally any day now. Coordinates will be provided as available. See the photos below showing what the concrete reef balls actually look like.







Close up photos showing details of the reef balls. Easy to see how sea creatures of all sorts find refuge inside them. This program has been a wonderful success that will continue refurbishing reefs as funds permit. Everyone involved in the effort deserves our thanks. VHFC made a third \$500 donation this weekend from our reserve funds.

VHFC 2021 PARTY BOAT TRIP - Mark your calendars for October 20, as we are in the planning stages for a members+ party boat trip. The current idea is for a ¾ day bottom fishing trip on the Dauntless out of Pt. Pleasant, departing the dock at 7:30 and returning at 2:30. Expectations are we will see black sea bass, ling, tog, and scup coming over the rails and filling coolers. Costs are \$90 for adults, \$85 for seniors (62), \$40 for children 16 or under, and \$6 for rod rentals. Tips for mates for their help with the fishing and filleting are extra. We would like to get a preliminary headcount for the trip. If you are not coming to the October 10 club meeting, please send a note of your intention of participating to Phil Simon at sciman2@gmail.com. Here's a link to Dauntless' website: https://www.dauntlessfishing.com/

VHFC DINNER - Also mark your calendars for our annual dinner party planned for October 21 at Kostas Grill - a lovely restaurant featuring Greek cuisine in Tuckerton, NJ. See <u>Kostas Grill</u> Everyone can order off the menu and pay individually. Kostas is BYOB so bring your favorite libation. Bill Dabney is in charge and will provide more details as available.

HISTORY OF CHANGES TO NJ FISHING REGULATIONS BY ED VALITUTTO - The other day I was on the *Barnegat Fishing Hole* - a site I recommend as a good source of fishing information - and I came across a reference to a link that listed a summary of the changing NJ fishing regulations from 2004 through 2014. I found the article to be very interesting although somewhat disheartening and have provided the details below. For completeness, I downloaded and summarized the regulations for 2015 through 2021. I need to warn everyone that the results are fairly depressing and should be read perhaps with a suitable beverage - senior members only of course. The words accompanying the 2004 - 2014 regulations are from the article and not mine.

For reference, I've also listed the 2003 regulations to remind everyone of the 'good old days':

- Weakfish 8 fish at 13"
- Striped Bass 1 fish 24" but less than 28" and 1 fish greater than 28"
- Fluke 8 fish at 16 ½" with a season from May 8th to October 11th
- Sea bass 25 fish at 12" with a season from January 1st to November 30th
- Winter Flounder No catch limit with 11" minimum size
- Tautog 14" size limit with 4 fish 1/1 5/31; 1 fish 6/1-11/14 & 8 fish 11/15–12/31
- Bluefish 15 fish with no minimum size

2004

- 1. Fluke has a 1 week reduction in season length.
- Striped Bass Regulations remain unchanged year on year.
- NJ Striped Bass Regulations in 2004 were not in compliance with the Federal Striped Bass Management Program as such NJ was forced to change the NJ Striped Bass Regulations by emergency measures in September 2004.

2005

- 1. Sea Bass regulations show good news with no closed season adopted.
- 2. Striped Bass regulations changed to protect fish in the 28 34 inch range
 - a. 1 fish 24" but less than 28"
 - b. 1 fish greater than 34"

2006

- Winter Flounder Fishing sledge hammer reduction 10 fish per person at 12 inches.
- Striped Bass Regulations change to 2 fish per person over 28 inches.

2007

1. Fluke Regulations increase size a half inch to 17" and lose ~1 month of fishing time.

2008

1. Fluke fishing regulations disaster. Minimum size set to 18 inches

2009

- 1. NJ Fluke Regulations insanity prevails with 6 fish at 18 inches. This cut seems insane to the general public as 18 inch Fluke are very difficult to come by for the typical bay or surf fishermen.
- Seabass size limit increased by a half inch to 12.5".

2010

- 1. Recreational fishing for Weakfish is completely destroyed by a 1 fish limit. Weakfish become a 'by-catch 'only.
- 2. Winter Flounder fishing as a recreational target takes a great hit as regulations now limit it to 2 fish per person.
- 3. Seabass now has a closed season during the summer.
- 4. Shark Regulations reduced from 2 fish to 1 per vessel.

2011

Seabass further under siege with seasonal closures.

2012

- NJ Blackfish Regulations changed to increase minimum size from 14 inches to 15 inches. Season shortened as well.
- 2. NJ Seabass Regulations cut the season into 3 segments.
- 3. Fluke size cut to 17.5 inches but catch limit also cut from 8 to 5

2013

- Sea Bass Regulations become daunting. Better keep your reg card with you or have a great memory regarding the split seasons and limits based on each season.
- 2. Fluke Regulations remain at 17 ½ inch fish and a five-fish bag limit. This option was chosen from a possible choice of six options available. Other options included a longer season, a bag limit of eight fish and an increase in size to 18 inches

2014

- 1. Fluke size limit increased to 18 inches.
- Winter flounder season has expanded.

- 3. Striped Bass require equivalency to a 25% reduction
- Sea Bass management defies explanation with yet another 'plan'

2015

- 1. Striped Bass changed to 1 fish 28" but less than 43" and 1 fish greater than 43'
- 2. Sea Bass harvest must be cut by 32.8% in 2015 as per NOAA Fisheries resulting in almost 3 months of closed season. Crushing effect on NJ party boats

2016

- 1. Sea Bass early season reduced from 15 fish to 10
- Sea Bass later season size increased from 12 ½ to 13 "

2017

- 1. Fluke catch limit decreased from 5 fish to 3 at 18 inches
- Fluke season shortened to September 5th
- 3. Sea Bass later season size reduced from 13" back to 12 1/2"

2018

- 1. Fluke season end date extended to September 25th
- 2. Sea Bass later season split
 - a. October season was reduced from 15 fish to 10.
 - b. November season increased back to 15 fish but size increased to 13"
- 3. November December tog season limit reduced from 6 fish to 5

2019

No Changes to report!

2020

- 1. Striped Bass reduced to 1 fish at 28" to less than 38"
- 2. Bluefish limit decreased from 15 fish to 3 for individual anglers and 5 fish for For Hire vessels

2021

1. No Changes to report

I know some very educated people are doing their best to preserve our fishery for future generations but the trend so far has been larger minimum sizes, shorter seasons and smaller

limits! Let's hope we start to see some reversals in this trend in the near future. Can't wait to see what 2022 brings! Here's the summary of changes from 2004 to 2021

Species 2004 Regulations 2021 Regul

Weakfish 8 fish at 13"		1 fish at 13"		
Striped Bass	1 fish 24' to 28" & 1 fish >28"	1 fish 28" to <38"		
Fluke	8 fish at 16 ½"	3 fish at 18"		
Sea Bass	25 fish at 12" 1Jan - 30 Nov	10 fish at 12.5" 15 May 15 – 22 June 2 fish at 12.5" 1 July 1 – 31 August 10 fish at 12.5" 8 - 31 October 15 fish at 13" 1 Nov 1 -31 Dec		
Winter Flounder No limit at 11"		2 fish at 12"		
Tautog	14" size limit; 4 fish 1/1 - 5/31; 1 fish 6/1-11/14 8 fish 11/15–12/31	15" size limit; 4 fish 1 Jan – 28 Feb; 4 fish 1 – 30 Apr 1 fish 1 Aug – 15 Nov 5 fish 16 Nov. 16 – 31 Dec		
Bluefish	15 fish no minimum size	3 fish no minimum size		

2021 AUGUST FOM ENTRIES - There were 7 entries for August shown below:

08-01-21	Fluke	24 3/4"	Cheri Hebert Surf off old north jetty mussel beds
08-02-21	Blowfish	10 1/4"	Vinnie Rossi Off he artificial island below Oyster Creek
08-07-21	Fluke	25 1/2"	Marty Friedrich Red Tower
08-07-21	Seabass	16 1/4"	Larry Leary Ocean Wreck
08-07-21	Fluke	23 1/4"	Bill Figley LER
08-18-21	Seabass	18 1/4"	Bob Dodds Ocean Wreck
08-19-21	Fluke	25 1/4"	Cheri Hebert Barnegat Inl

2021 FISH of the MONTH (FOM) Winners - Congratulations to our two FOM winners for August with their impressive catches. They are:

18 August	Sea Bass	Bob Dodds	18 1/4"	
07 August	Fluke	Marty Friedrich	25 1/2"	

This is the full list of the 17 FOM Awards for 2021. 5 awards are now open as shown in Bold.

2021 FOM Categories (17 Awards)

Time Period Species Angler

1 March - 30 June	Striped Bass	Pat Presutto won 35 1/4"	
1 Water 60 date	Chiped Bass	Tat i resulte won oo 1/4	
1 March - 30 June	Bluefish	Cheri Hebert won 24 1/4"	
1 April - 31 October	Weakfish	Ron Roshelli leads 15 1/4"	
1 April - 31 October	White Perch	Dave Spendiff leads 14 1/4"	
1 May - 31 October	Blowfish	Vinnie Rossi leads 10 1/4"	
1 May - 31 October	Kingfish	Cheri Hebert leads 14 1/2"	
15 May - 22 June	Seabass	Nathan Figley won 18"	
22 May - 30 June	Fluke	Bob Dodds won 22 3/4"	
1 - 31 July	Fluke	Tyler Leary won 24 3/4"	
1 - 31 July	Seabass	Nick Salamone won 18 1/2"	
1 - 31 August	Fluke	Marty Friedrich won 25 1/2"	
1 - 31 August	Seabass	Bob Dodds won 18 1/4"	
1 - 19 September	Fluke	No Entry to Date	
1 October- 30 November	Blackfish		
1 October- 30 November	Bluefish		
1 October- 30 November	Striped Bass		
8 October - 30 November	Seabass		

For contest entry, take a photo of your catch with a ruler visible from the nose to the end of the tail for all species entered. There are L shaped rulers that make this an easy task to show your catch. Send your picture to our Weighmaster Pat Presutto at pat1016pat@aol.com with a copy to me at edvalitutto@gmail.com for backup.

RECIPE SUBMITTED BY ED VALITUTTO - Mediterranean Fish

INGREDIENTS:

1 lb roma tomatoes, chopped or a 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes

2 tablespoons olive oil

½ onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, chopped

Pinch italian seasoning

1/4 cup white wine

24 kalamata olives, pitted and chopped

4 tablespoons capers

1 teaspoon lemon juice

6 leaves fresh basil, chopped

3 tablespoons parmesan cheese

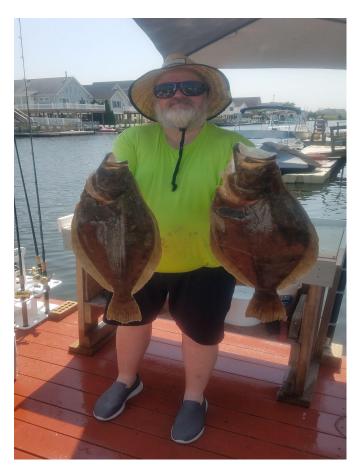
1 lb flounder or any firm fish

DIRECTIONS:

- 1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
- 2. Prepare tomatoes if using fresh by plunging them into boiling water, immediately removing them to a bowl of ice water and peeling the skins. Or you can chop them with the skins on or use canned.
- Heat olive oil over medium heat.
- 4. Add onions and saute until tender.
- 5. Add garlic and Italian seasoning, stirring to combine.
- 6. Add tomatoes and cook until tender.
- 7. Mix in wine, olives, capers, lemon juice and half of the basil.
- 8. Reduce heat, blend in Parmesan cheese and cook until the mixture is hot and bubbly. If you prefer a thick sauce you can cook until the sauce has reduced, about 15 minutes.
- 9. Place fish in a shallow baking dish. Cover with the sauce mixture and bake in a preheated oven for 15-20 minutes depending on the fish used and thickness. Fish should flake easily with a fork when done.
- 10. Enjoy!

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 9 reports submitted in August. Please take a moment after your fishing trip and provide a report for other members to enjoy.





The left photo is Marty Friedrich's pal Wil holding a 5 and 6+lb fluke and the 6lb was with a double! Marty's biggest was 4lbs and they had a 2 man limit by 1:00. The right picture is from Larry Leary's 7 man trip on *The Jen-Jen* where they caught over 100 fluke including 17 keepers to 25 1/2"! That's a day to remember!





Photo on the left shows another two man limit by Marty Friedrich and his pal Wil.

Photo on the right is Larry Leary with a beautiful bluefin tuna. Larry and son Brian left their dock at 4:30 AM and headed out past Little Italy. After trolling for some time they went back to jigging and hooked up around 8:15. "What a great fight on a Shimano Talica jigging rod", commented Larry. On the return home, they caught a few nice sea bass and then after one last time in Seaside they caught and kept 2 nice fluke. What a trip!





Another photo of Marty Friedrich from Saturday August 7th outside North of the red tower. They caught 5 keepers all over 20 inches. Marty caught one just over 6 lbs that measured 25 1/2 inches and took the August FOM honors! Way to go Marty!

Al Goracy and I booked a charter with our grandsons, Nick and Chayton, on Brett Taylor's Reel Reaction Fishing for a 4 hour bay trip. We had a blast enjoying nice weather, no bugs and caught probably 50 shorts with 6 keepers to 22.5". Brett is a good friend of VHFC and runs a first class charter service! Be sure to book early as Brett books up quickly. Our trip was actually due to a cancellation he had.



Dave Spendiff made a solo trip to the BL reef that yielded 11 shorts and 2 keepers at 18 & 21 1/2". The rod in the picture was not a two piece rod originally, but a stick that snapped when he set the hook with 5 ozs of lead holding the bottom.



That's my grandson Vinnie holding his FOM entry blowfish that went 10 1/4 inches. We were fishing near the artificial island just south of Oyster Creek and before we ran out of bait and chum had 72 beauties in the cooler.



The final report for August was from Larry Leary and crew on *The Jen-Jen*. They started at Axle Carlson with minimal results but then fished several spots along IBSP. The crew of 6 limited out with the largest caught by Tyler that went 24-3/4".

BoatUS / BOATING SAFETY by Jeff Orsoe - VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS - No cost, no penalty vessel safety checks (VSC) at launch ramps, boat clubs and marinas are back. Contact your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons to see if there is a VSC event scheduled at a marina, boat club or launch ramp. VHFC Jeff Orsoe can also perform the VSC. Call Jeff at 732 672 5530.Leave a message if he doesn't pick up or email him at jorsoe786@gmail.com

VHFC Shirts - VHFC T-Shirts are available for purchase but we need to order a 12

lot minimum. Sizes range from XS (Extra Small) to 6XL and are available in nine colors. Shirts have long sleeves and feature UPF 50 Sun Protection. Let us know



your size and color preference. These are quality shirts to be worn proudly. White is shown below with the ordering info. Sizes/Cost: XS, S, M, L & XL @ \$31, 2XL @ \$32, 3XL @ \$33 4XL @ \$34, 5XL @ \$35 & 6XL @ \$36. Colors: White, Pale Green, Sand, Pale Orange, Pale Yellow,

Pale Teal, Aqua, Lime & Medium Blue. For a slightly loose fit, order your normal shirt size. For a tight fit, order one size smaller than your normal shirt size. Contact Dave Spendiff at dnspendiff@netscape.net for placing an order.

VHFC Hats - Hats are khaki colored and feature a high definition VHFC patch on the front. They are available at club meetings and sell for \$20.



CLASSIFIED ADS BUY, SELL or TRADE

Classified ads may be placed free of charge by any club member for non-commercial fishing related items. Please contact Ed Valitutto via email at edvalitutto@gmail.com to place your ad.

FISHING WITH CLUB MEMBERS - Members may place free ads in this section if you wish to find someone to fish with. Maybe you need to find someone with a boat or you are interested in finding someone to share expenses on your boat.

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.uscq.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 - The following sponsors 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 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.

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

D & S Marine Service 10% discount on parts with VHFC card6 460 Dock Rd, West Creek NJ 08092 **609-296-0309**

Fisherman's Headquarters 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 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 10% discount with VHFC card 387 Route 9, West Creek, NJ 08092 609-857-3516

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