



HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER MAY 2022

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: 13 May 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members,

I don't know about you but I'm glad April is behind us. This year had to be the windiest and coldest April on record! Fishing opportunities were tough with most reports coming from the bay. The weather had to be a factor in the slow arrivals of most of our game fish. So far, May hasn't been much better but it will change shortly - we hope. As of today, 9 Striped Bass and 1 bluefish have been entered into the LBI Spring Derby and boat reports are sparse. White Perch are a few weeks behind schedule but are now starting to make a decent showing. Unfortunately, the jury is still out regarding a spring Bluefish run but I have read that 'gators' were caught outside Manasquan inlet. Let's hope they make an appearance further south!

Finally, it is May and both the air and water temps are slowly rising. Summer Flounder (Fluke) opened last Monday and like them or not, the new fluke regulations certainly provide ample opportunity to fish more and take home a few filets for some fine eating. Try to fish the outgoing tide and favor shallow water for the best chances to connect. If wreck fishing is your

thing, Seabass opens on May 17 and runs through June 19 with a 10 fish limit at 13". BTW, channel marker buoys in Double Creek as of opening day have not been reinstalled.

So before the weather really heats up and the summer crowds arrive, get out there and do some fishing - once this Nor'easter leaves and please share your reports for fellow club members!

Ed

UPCOMING NEAR TERM EVENTS

May 13 Friday - VHFC Club Meeting 7:45

May 14 - Surf Fishing Outing

May 19 High School Battle on the Beach (May 26 Rain Date) Details below

MAY MEETING - Our second meeting for 2022 features Dr. Doug Zemeckis - County Agent with Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Doug's topic appropriately is ***"Biology, Assessment, and Management of Black Sea Bass"***. Mark your calendars and bring a friend.

BATTLE ON THE BEACH – This year's annual high school surf fishing contest is scheduled for Thursday May 19th starting at 4:00 PM on 9th Street in Barnegat Light with May 26th as the rain date. Each school gets one entire block to fish and since VHFC officiates the event, eight volunteers are needed. One person does the tape measurement and one person records the entries for one of the four schools. We meet at 3:30 and will walk in together from 9th St.

Please let me know if you would like to volunteer for this event. If your spouse would also like to be a judge, you can both enjoy a nice afternoon on the beach.

NEW JERSEY JCAA & FISHING REGULATIONS by Phil Simon - In case you missed it, here are this years regulations for Fluke, Black Sea Bass, and Scup:

Summer Flounder

Season: May 2 – September 27

Possession and size limits:

Delaware Bay: 3 fish at 17"

Island Beach State Park: 2 fish at 16"

All other State marine waters: 2 fish 17" to less than 18", and 1 fish 18" or greater.

Fish can be harvested in any order.

Black Sea Bass

Minimum size limit: 13"

Possession limits and season:

- 10 fish May 17 – June 19;
- 2 fish July 1 – August 31;
- 10 fish October 7 – October 26 and;
- 15 fish November 1 – December 31

Scup

Minimum size limit: 10"

Season: January 1 – December 31 (no closed season)

Possession limit: 50 fish

As part of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Spring meeting held in Arlington VA, the ASMFC striped bass board held its long awaited session to finalize Draft Amendment VII to the Fisheries Management Plan for striped bass. The amendment, the first to be presented since 2003, was drafted to deal with a variety of issues surrounding the future management of the fishery including:

1. Management triggers - how the levels of stock size and mortality are used to make harvest decisions
2. Recreational release mortality
3. Rebuilding plan - required as fishery has been declared experiencing overfishing / overfished
4. Conservation equivalency - where the individual states alter the rules while keeping within the harvest rules

The document was released for public comment in February and included a laundry list of potential changes with multiple options. A series of webinars and meetings were held to solicit public comment, often with non-binding polls taken. Written comments were also submitted by many organizations and individuals. All the comments were reviewed by the board, and the board took actions on what to include in the final draft of the amendment during a 7 hour long meeting on May 4. The striped bass board staff will now take all the results of the voting and incorporate them into a new draft to be reviewed by the board in August. There were so many items voted on not all of which can be presented here, but these are some of the results of interest to striper fisherman in NJ:

1. Management triggers - The board voted for the most part to stick with the status quo. However, there was wide agreement that the target levels for the spawning stock biomass and fishing mortality were probably unrealistic and will cause repeated triggers of overfishing and overfished status with resulting ever tightening regulations. This may be resolved when the results of the new stock assessment are presented in October, when new thresholds and targets for stock size and fishing mortality will be considered.
2. Recreational release mortality - This accounts for about half of the dead stripers and as you could imagine was a hot topic. While everyone agrees we need to fix this problem,

finding a way is tricky. Seasonal and/or spawning area closures are the obvious tactics that could be used to cut down fishing effort, but each state has different situations when and where this could work, and ultimately the board voted to kick the can down the road until the review of the stock assessment in October. There was unanimous consent to outlaw the use of gaffs for striped fishing coastwide. There was support for outreach and education, but also a call for a more precise definition of what this means.

3. Rebuilding plan options - The board voted to use more recent data on recruitment when performing calculations on rebuilding plans, and also to expedite the implementation of rebuilding plans. The stock is currently overfished i.e. too low a stock size and the upcoming stock assessment is expected to trigger rebuilding the stock by 2029.
4. Conservation Equivalency - The board voted to not allow the use of conservation equivalency when the stock is overfished. This could impact NJ, as our current slot fish size range is wider than the NOAA recommended size of 28 to 35 inches.

Overall, the striped bass board did reasonably well in making decisions on a very technical set of options and problems. Just to give you a sense of what was going on, here's one of the motions that was presented during the meeting for a vote:

"Move to approve in section 4.2 option C2: CE proposals would not be able to use MRIP estimates associated with a PSE exceeding 40 and move to approve section 4.6.2 option D1: proposed CE programs for non-quota managed fisheries would be required to include an uncertainty buffer of 10%, except D2 a buffer of 25% would be required when MRIP estimates PSE exceeds 30% (Motion by Dr. Armstrong)". Thankfully, this was voted down!

Are you kidding? Does anybody even know what this means? And they wondered why no one was showing up for the comment meetings. Some things are just better left to the scientific and technical committee to deal with, yes? With the upcoming stock assessment report in October, we can probably expect bad news (again) regarding the status of the spawning stock, and some further tightening of the regs would be on the table. Low recruitment of new fish into the stock is the main problem, and as I have said before, recreational fishing mortality is not a major factor driving this. Until we find a way to improve the quality of the nurseries for these fish (the coastal estuaries) things will be difficult.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO - If you have not already done so, please do the following:

1. Renew your NJ Saltwater Registry - Go to [NJ Saltwater Registry](#)
2. Apply for your Striped Bass Bonus Tag - Go to [Striped Bass Bonus Tag](#)
3. Enjoy the 2022 NJ Marine Digest - Go to [NJ Marine Digest](#)
4. Send in your VHFC Dues - Send your check for \$40 to

VHFC Membership
PO Box 1026
Manahawkin, NJ 08050

NJ OPERATION GAME THIEF (NJ-OGT) HOTLINE - If you witness or suspect a wildlife violation...REPORT IT...24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** You can remain anonymous and you may be considered for a reward.

Call: 1 - 855 - OGT - TIPS That's 1 - 855 - 648 - 8477 Be sure to add it to your Speed Dial

Go to [NJ Operation Game Thief](#) for more information.

2022 April FOM Entries - The first FOM contests close on June 30. Here's our paltry list of entries to date but things will definitely pick up with the opening of fluke once the winds calm down!

04-08-22	White Perch	14"	Dave Spendiff	BHW Lagoon
04-13-22	White Perch	15"	Dave Spendiff	BHW Lagoon
04-22-22	Black Fish	19"	Bill Figley*	Near LE Reef

* Presently, Blackfish does not have an open FOM contest. However, Bill's impressive catch will be in contention for FOY honors.

This is the full list of 30 FOM awards for 2022. Currently, there are 9 contests open including 1 Young Angler award. Open contests are shown in Blue in the following table.

2022 Bill Figley Young Angler FOM Awards (4)

1	1 April - 30 June	White Perch
2	1 June - 31 August	Blowfish
3	1 June - 31 August	Kingfish
4	1 June - 31 August	Fluke

2022 Regular FOM Awards (26)

1	15 March - 30 June	Striped Bass
2	15 March - 30 June	Bluefish
3	15 March - 30 June (Surf Only)	Striped Bass
4	15 March - 30 June (Surf Only)	Bluefish
5	15 March - 30 June	White Perch
6	1 April - 30 June	Weakfish

7	1 April - 30 June	Blowfish
8	1 April - 30 June	Kingfish
9	17 May - 19 June	Seabass
10	02 May - 30 June	Fluke
11	02 May - 27 September (Surf Only)	Fluke
12	1 - 31 July	Fluke
13	1 - 31 July	Seabass
14	1 July - 31 October	White Perch
15	1 July - 31 October	Blowfish
16	1 July - 31 October	Weakfish
17	1 July - 31 October	Kingfish
18	1 - 31 August	Fluke
19	1 - 31 August	Seabass
20	1 - 27 September	Fluke
21	1 October - 31 December	Blackfish
22	1 October - 31 December	Bluefish
23	1 October - 31 December (Surf Only)	Bluefish
24	1 October - 31 December	Striped Bass
25	1 October - 31 December (Surf Only)	Striped Bass
26	07 October - 31 December	Seabass

SOME INTERESTING ARTICLES FROM MINN KOTA - Although mostly intended for fishing with a trolling motor (theirs of course), these articles still offer some good insights into fishing without one.

1. [Importance of Marine Battery Maintenance](#)
2. [Put More Fluke in the Boat](#)
3. [Lithium Battery Facts](#)

ROD & REEL RAFFLE - Our first Rod & Reel raffle is planned for the June meeting and tickets are \$5 each. June's raffle offering is for a Tsunami rod Model # TSCS701H with a Penn Pursuit IV 3000 reel 6.2 to 1. This combo is a great bay and inshore outfit suitable for fluke, sea bass, tog, and stripers. See photo below.



WHITE PERCH INTERESTING FACTS by Ed Valitutto - Since a fair number of our members fish for white perch, I realized in talking with them that there were a lot of unanswered questions regarding this species. I decided to do some research and here are my findings from various NJ F&W articles.

The White Perch, Morone americana, is not a true perch but a member of the temperate bass family and resembles their much larger relative, the striped bass. As water temperatures rise in the spring, adult perch begin their spawning run and move upstream into brackish and fresh waters. Females will release 50,000 to 150,000 eggs over a period of 10 to 21 days. After fertilization takes place, eggs hatch in one to six days. Juveniles remain close to their hatching grounds through much of the summer and fall. During winter months, they tend to move into deeper waters of the bays. White perch spend most of their lives in close proximity to the area where they were hatched. White perch are schooling fish and feed both during day and night, but are generally more active in low light. White perch populations spend the day in deeper waters then move to the shallows and inshore waters at night.

White perch are one of the finest eating fishes found in New Jersey's waters. The filets when cooked are succulent, sweet and firm in texture. Easily caught in fresh or brackish water, eating-size white perch range from 10 to 12 inches. White perch are caught in the deeper pools of lakes, rivers, streams and in our local lagoons. The ebbing tide is the better time to go.

In the spring, rising water temperatures and increased daylight length trigger schooling / spawning behavior. Schools can be located by trial and error by shoreline anglers or with an electronic fish finder by boat anglers. Depending on the time of the year, they can be caught from the shoreline, boat or through the ice. However, early spring is the most productive time to catch them since they are tightly schooled and ravenous.

Be careful grasping and removing white perch from the hook. White perch flare out their dorsal spines as a defense mechanism. Your basic terminal tackle for bait fishing is simple: a weight, dropper loop and a gold-colored #1 baitkeeper hook. Baits such as bloodworms, small minnows or grass shrimp are proven favorites. Any light fishing outfit with 8 - 12# test line is a good choice. A small bobber can be added to keep baits at the appropriate level. Casting small artificial baits such as spinners or small Rapalas is also effective to catch them.



That's a view looking into my cooler after a so-so day fishing with Dave Spendiff in his lagoon. We only caught 6 fish but the largest was 14" - my personal best. Dave had already entered a 14" perch for the FOM weeks ago. He then entered a 15"

beauty which currently has the lead for the category. Neither one of us had the foresight to weigh our fish just to know their weight. **The official NJ record was caught in 1998 and weighed 2 lbs 12 ozs.** According to Wikipedia, white perch can reach a maximum of 19.5" and weigh almost 5 lbs.

Dave and I prefer to fish for them by casting small lures. They are really scrappy on light tackle and their eating quality is superb!

ANOTHER LESSON LEARNED THE HARD WAY by Ed Valitutto - Two Stroke Engine

Owners should read this! I have a Sea Pro 239 with a 300 Evinrude ETEC. This is a 2 stroke fuel injected engine with a 2 gallon oil tank. I use XP100 Synthetic oil by Evinrude. Anyway, my boat went in the water 2 weeks back after service from Causeway Marine and the engine ran great on the trip from The Boat Yard to my dock. When we finally got some ok weather, I decided to load all my gear and run the engine to make sure the batteries were fully charged. I had a lot of things to stow and I would estimate I ran the engine close to an hour before turning off the battery switch and covering up the console.



Two days later, I went to take the boat out for a run and despite cranking full force, I could not get the engine to start. Frustrated, I called Causeway and complained. During the discussion, they said they had checked the plugs and despite ~600 hrs were fine. I agreed and told them how great the engine ran two days back for almost an hour. They said, "YOU RAN IT FOR AN HOUR"! Evidently, running a 2 stroke at idle for an extended time will foul the plugs with oil due to the low internal engine temperature. Wow, somehow my inch thick manual in 4 languages never mentioned that!.

The photo shows the first of my 6 fouled plugs. Last November, Bill Figley joined me for a day of striper fishing. The day before, I ran my engine for ~30 minutes just to make sure everything was ready to go. When he arrived, I bet I spent 20 minutes before I could get the engine to idle. Now I know what the problem is - **me!**

SPRING BEACH TOURNAMENT by Pat Presutto - VHFC will host our first ever spring

beach tournament next Saturday May 19th. No registration is necessary but if possible, let Pat know that you will participate. There is no cost to be a part of the fun. Rules are simple:

- 1) Fish from land / jetty anywhere on LBI on Saturday May 19 between 6:00 AM and noon
- 2) Send your photo showing the length to Pat Presutto by 12:30 PM on Saturday
- 3) Prizes are \$25 FHQ certificate for largest legal striper, fluke and bluefish (>14")
- 4) Members and their spouses are eligible to participate
- 5) We will meet at 6:00 AM at St Francis Church on 46 St in Brant Beach and go to the beach. You may join us there or fish wherever you prefer.

MONTHLY RECIPE SUBMITTED by Ed Valitutto - While looking for White Perch articles, I found this simple recipe called **Southwestern Fried Perch** by Kevin Belton. Kevin is a New Orleans chef often seen on PBS. I'm sure fluke or seabass would also work as well.

Ingredients:

1 envelope taco seasoning
1 pound perch filets or other white fish
1 egg
1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
Oil for frying

Directions:

- 1) Place taco seasoning mix in a bag; add filets, one at a time, and shake to coat.
- 2) In a shallow bowl, lightly beat the egg.
- 3) Combine cornmeal and flour in another shallow bowl.
- 4) Dip seasoned filets in egg, then coat with cornmeal mixture.
- 5) Place in a layer on a plate and refrigerate for 15 minutes to set the coating
- 6) In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Fry filets for 2-3 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Enjoy with tartar sauce or use them for fish tacos with all the usual fixings. Enjoy!



A platter of Southwestern Fried Perch above and a plate of Fish Tacos on the right.



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 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 do a report for you. Please take a moment to provide a report for other members to enjoy and gain some valuable fishing insight. There were four reports submitted since the April Newsletter.



That's Jeff holding one of the two 29 inch Red Groupers caught out of Punta Gorda on Florida's Southwest coast. Red Grouper are excellent eating.



Two hours of casting resulted in the eight white perch caught by Dave Spendiff off his dock. The largest was a 14" fat female that was entered into our FOM only to be replaced by an even fatter 15" fish caught a week later! Dave said he and his wife Emily enjoyed fish tacos. He will have to try the recipe earlier in the NL and report back!



No stranger to big fish, Pat Presutto caught this impressive Black Drum off of Graveling Point in mid April. After a few quiet hours, as he went to bring in his second pole, he saw the tip moving a little bit. He thought he had the bottom but then it started moving. It took a while to land this beautiful black drum which he released. Pat estimated the fish weighed close to 40 lbs!



Opening day fluke season didn't yield the results Dave and I expected - not one fluke! But still, there are things to be learned:

- 1 Double Creek buoys were not installed as of May 2nd
- 2 Blowfish are out and hungry!
- 3 Fluke are being caught in High Bar Harbor!
- 4 Better days are coming!



VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS - By Jeff Orsoe Both the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons have certified vessel examiners who will perform a free Vessel Safety Check ("VSC") at your boat, at a time of mutual convenience. There is no charge and no consequences if your boat doesn't pass. Our goal is simply to help make boating as safe as possible for you, your family and your friends. Personal pleasure craft, only.

I am available to perform a Vessel Safety exam on your vessel. As stated above, there is no charge for the exam and if you do not qualify for the sticker, the results will not be reported to any agency. Contact: Jeff Orsoe Cell / Text: 732-672-5530 or email: jorsoe786@gmail.com



VHFC Hats - Hats are khaki colored and feature a high definition VHFC patch on the front. They are high quality and available at club meetings for \$20. If you would like a hat,, please contact Dave Spendiff for details.

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 dnspeidiff@netscape.net for placing an order.

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. With gas prices reaching the sky, helping out with fuel costs is almost a necessity.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

See the full list on our website [Links](#)

Wave Information (Height, Period, Direction and Water Temperature) from a Buoy 15 Miles Outside Barnegat Inlet Updated Every 30 minutes: [Buoy #44091](#)

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=lnmDistrict®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>

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

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**