



HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER December 2023

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: 8 December 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members,

Hi everyone,

This will be the last Newsletter for 2023! Wow, that seemed like a quick year. I hope you had an enjoyable and successful fishing season. As with everything in life, there are highs, lows and in between. Bluefish and weakfish were almost nonexistent, fluke were okay but you had to work for them, stripers were hard to find most days but other times were epic, bottom fishing for tog & seabass as well as bay fishing for white perch, blowfishing and crabs were generally very good. At least that's my assessment of this year but your results may have been vastly different.

The coming winter months offer a good opportunity to inspect all your fishing tackle. At a minimum, remove the reels from your rods so you can clean & lube the reel seats. Inspect your rods for damaged or worn guides and have them replaced for a few dollars or get yourself a new rod. Determine if the line on your reels needs replacing due to age, wear or loss of line. Braid

lasts a long time but it does eventually need replacing at least the first 30 yards or so. If you have the time and ability, service your reels or drop off one or two every few weeks at one of our local tackle shops. They will service them quickly once the holidays are done. Go through your tackle and rediscover all the items you bought over the years and rearrange their storage. Discard, repair or replace rusted hooks and lures. You will be amazed at what you can do with permanent marker pens, emery cloth, new trebles, deer hair, braid or dental floss and epoxy. Not your thing - then trash them and buy new. You deserve it but do not put it off until the next time you need to use your tackle!

Just a reminder, later this winter, on Saturday, February 10th, Southern Regional High School will hold their annual fishing flea market fundraiser. Held in the Southern Regional Middle School cafeteria, doors open at 8:00 AM and close at 2:00 PM. This is a great place to purchase some needed supplies at reasonable prices. VHFC will be there actively recruiting new members so stop by and say hello!

Lastly, have a wonderful holiday and come on out to the Community Center next Friday December 8th for our final club meeting for 2023. **This is our pizza meeting!** So come on out and enjoy a few slices while you swap fishing stories with fellow anglers. We do not schedule a speaker for our last meeting but for the third year in a row, Phil Simon will have a slide show of all our VHFC photos taken in 2023 from your fishing reports and our special events. Be sure to attend and provide your colorful comments for a fun final meeting for this year. BTW, Veterans Day will be celebrated on a Monday in 2024 so we will have our final meeting in November as normally scheduled.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting but continue to make the most of late season fishing. As always, be sure to take a photo of your catch for our FOM / FOY awards and submit a report of your success for others to enjoy.

Ed

UPCOMING NEAR & FAR TERM EVENTS - VHFC events with definite dates are provided for your long term planning and participation.

DECEMBER 8 CLUB MEETING - Pizza Meeting with 2023 Photo Show

FEBRUARY 10 FISHING FLEA MARKET - At Southern Regional HS

APRIL 12 CLUB MEETING - 2024 Kickoff Meeting

MAY 21 BOTTOM FISHING TRIP - On the spacious Mary M IV out of Barnegat Light

JULY 13 FLUKE TOURNAMENT / BBQ - Great day for family fun and fishing competition

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION WEBINAR - One Man's Opinion - VHFC Board Member John Stuebing signed up for the webinar broadcast on November 15. The ASMFC presentation summarized specific recommendations on recreational fishing options regarding the 3 inch striped bass slot window. John's reaction to the meeting was as follows:

1. **Meeting was well organized. Emilie Franke - Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Striped Bass - was prepared and answered questions with respect**
2. **About 85% of participants agree there is a problem with Striped Bass and agree to tighter regulations**
3. **In my opinion, the estimates on size of Biomass are based off both weak and dated information**
4. **In my opinion, the actual size of the Recreational Harvest (largest harvest take) is estimated and based on what is highly suspect data. Let's just call it poor data**
5. **No one really knows what the effect of forage loss, predator increase, degrading water quality and warming water is on Stripes Bass. In reality, the regulations may be affecting the smallest of problems**
6. **While this Agency can change the regulations, they really do not have the authority or ability to enforce the regulations**

As presented, the change in regulations appears to be strictly "stop-gap". It should be part of a much bigger management approach. The ASMFC needs to get better data on a more timely basis. That data needs to include the environmental issues as well as the stock status and harvest rates. Improving the data from which decisions are made should be the priority and needs to be immediate. The decisions are affecting people's lives and businesses.

My experience tells me that "Decisions made with poor information always produce poor results".

Thanks John for taking the time to listen to the presentation and share your opinion with us.

NEW JERSEY JCAA & FISHING REGULATIONS by Phil Simon - New striped bass regulations are on the horizon as the ASMFC intends to take action in an attempt to restore our striper stocks by 2029. Though 2023 regulations are listed as an option, JCAA believes that there is no chance of the ASMFC keeping the status quo for 2024. At this point it's hard to tell whether the striped bass SSB (Spawning Stock Biomass) is recovering, or has at least stabilized. As I pointed out during the meeting the data through 2021 seems to indicate a slow trend in improvement. I suspect that the 2022 SSB numbers will show this trend is continuing. It may be an anomaly due to the growth of the 2015 class, or it may be a broader improvement in

stock status. We just don't have enough data yet. But the striped bass board is pressured to do something, so they chase the harvest numbers rather than the status of the stock. And in the case of the "emergency" reduction to a 3 inch slot, they re-adjusted their long term projections of stock rebuilding based on a single data point, the 2022 recreational harvest numbers. Remember, up through 2021 everything was on track to rebuild by 2029.

I am putting together a club position that captures what I think is the right approach for striped bass management and will send it out to everyone via separate email for your comments before I submit it to JCAA as our VHFC recommendation.

Atlantic Striped Bass Board Draft Addendum II Public Hearing Date Set for

December 5th - The in-person Striped Bass hearing will be held on December 5th, 6-8pm at the Stafford Township Municipal Building (260 East Bay Avenue, Manahawkin, NJ). JCAA hopes for a big turnout to let the ASMFC & New Jersey know of our displeasure with this Addendum. Stop by and hear for yourself what is happening to our Striped Bass regulations.

BOTTOM FISHING ON THE MARY M IV by Phil Simon- We are now scheduled with Capt Sam (Resigno) for a bottom fishing trip on Tuesday, May 21 2024, on the Mary M IV. The average cost per person should be about \$100 including tip. The only glitch is that we do not yet have the starting date for the black sea bass season, so I took a chance and scheduled it for a week after the 2023 start. We may have to reschedule if the season starts later but for now keep the date open for some great early season Seabass fishing..



The 62' Mary M IV is Barnegat Light's largest charter boat and has the speed and range to get you to the best fishing grounds on the Jersey Coast! She has a large heated cabin where you can stow your gear or eat your lunch.

The decks are fully walkaround and can accommodate up to 38 anglers on fishing trips.

ANNUAL LBI SURF FISHING CLASSIC - The 69th Annual Fall Surf Fishing Tournament kicked off on October 7 and will end in less than a week on December 10th. Full details at [LBI Fall Classic](#). For all the latest daily weigh-ins and to see who has the largest fish to date, go to [Live Weigh-In Results](#). With the new 3" Striped Bass slot requirement, the number of participants was down this year but as of today, 428 anglers have entered 149 fish:

- Tog 69 entries
- Striped Bass 42 entries
- Kingfish 29 entries
- Bluefish 9 entries
- Red Drum 0 entries

As Jim Hutchinson Sr said in a recent article *"A quick look at the striped bass weighed in the past two weeks for the Classic shows an increasing number of fish caught on artificial offerings. Notable is the number being beached on Avas and diamond jigs. This is not to say that bait is out as fish have also been chewing on bunker and clam baits. It appears that sand eels are showing up, and offerings that match the appearance and movement of the bait are catching fish."*

2023 FOM CONTESTS - Please see the following table for all FOM contests. There are presently 7 **Open contests shaded in blue that will run until 31 December**. Amazingly, there have been no entries for Bluefish boat boat and surf and Striped Bass from the surf. There were no contests that closed this month.

2023 Bill Figley Young Angler FOM Awards (4)

1	1 April - 30 September No Entry to Date	White Perch
2	1 June - 30 September Hunter Mayo 9"	Blowfish
3	1 June - 30 September Mila Ellis 13"	Kingfish
4	2 May - 27 September Braddock Cline 18 3/4"	Fluke

2023 Regular FOM Awards (26)

1	15 March - 30 June Dave Puzak 37 3/4"	Striped Bass
2	15 March - 30 June (Surf Only) Pat Presutto 37 3/4"	Striped Bass
3	15 March - 30 September Brian Leary 26 3/4"	Bluefish
4	15 March - 30 September (Surf Only) Pat Presutto 31 1/2"	Bluefish

5	15 March - 30 June Dave Spendiff 14 1/4"	White Perch
6	1 April - 30 June Tyler Leary 27 1/4"	Weakfish
7	1 April - 31 October Dave Puzak 11"	Blowfish
8	1 April - 31 October Phil Kaplan 13 3/4"	Kingfish
9	1 April - 31 December Ron Nachmann leads 37 1/2"	Red or Black Drum
10	1 - 30 April & 1 Aug - 30 Sept Marty Friedrich 22 1/4"	Blackfish
11	2 May - 30 June John Barrett 24 1/2"	Fluke
12	2 May - 27 September (Surf Only) Cheri Hebert 22 1/2"	Fluke
13	17 May - 19 June Bill Figley 21 1/4"	Seabass
14	1 - 31 July Marty Friedrich 24 1/2"	Fluke
15	1 - 31 July Marty Friedrich 20 1/2"	Seabass
16	1 July - 31 October Dave Spendiff 13 1/2"	White Perch
17	1 July - 31 October Steve Scharaldi 19"	Weakfish
18	1 - 31 August Alan Goracy 24"	Fluke
19	1 - 31 August Brian Leary 18 1/4"	Seabass
20	1 - 27 September Cheri Hebert 25"	Fluke
21	1 Oct - 31 Dec No Entry to Date	Bluefish
22	1 Oct - 31 Dec (Surf Only) No Entry to Date	Bluefish
23	1 Oct - 31 Dec Larry Leary leads 30 15/16"	Striped Bass
24	1 Oct - 31 Dec (Surf Only) No Entry to Date	Striped Bass
25	1 Oct - 31 Dec Marty Friedrich leads 20"	Blackfish
26	1 Oct - 31 Dec Pat Presutto leads 19"	Seabass

2023 FOM ENTRIES - Here's our list of recent 2023 entries since last month's Newsletter. Go to [VHFC Standings](#) for the complete list of entries.

11-03-23	Blackfish	20"	Marty Friedrich	Wreck
11-05-23	Blackfish	17 1/4"	Dave Puzak	Barnegat Bay
11-16-23	Striped Bass	30 3/4"	John Barrett	Off IBSP
11-16-23	Striped Bass	30 15/16"	Larry Leary	Off IBSP
11-24-23	Striped Bass	30 1/2"	Bill Figley	2 Mi outside BI

2023 FOY ENTRIES - As baseball great Yogi Berra said *"It ain't over until it's over"*. Our Fish of the Year (FOY) contest runs until 31 December for all species except Fluke but here are the leaders to date. Striped Bass entries are from the spring before the 3" slot was imposed

Fish	Angler	Size
Bluefish	Pat Presutto	31 1/2"
Fluke	Cheri Hebert	25"
Seabass	Bill Figley	21 1/4"
Striped Bass	Pat Presutto	37 3/4"
Striped Bass	Dave Puzak	37 3/4"
Weakfish	Tyler Leary	27 1/4"
Blackfish	Marty Friedrich	22 1/4"

Be sure to check out the following photos!



Dave Puzak submitted this wonderful 17 1/4 " blackfish caught in Barnegat Bay.



Tyler and some friends back in mid November got this beauty of a Bluefin on the troll. The Tuna measured 60”!

The photo on the left clearly shows the simple jig and soft bait that turned the beast into Sushi. This shows sometimes you don;t need those expensive multi lure rigs.



That's Larry Leary's FOM leading Striper at 30 15/16". There's still time but not much length to beat him! Just a reminder, you can keep Stripers from 28.0 to 31.0" to the end of the pinched tail.



I hope that's Striper Blood on Bill Figley's fingers! Nice fish but check out Bill's monster catch on the next page.



Not a FOM entry but a once in a lifetime catch and a PB for Bill Figley. Bill said the Striper measured 55”.

Bill and son Nate were fishing just south of BI and had a truly memorable day catching and releasing 9 jumbo bass.

I reviewed several charts and the best estimates for a 55” Striper are ~20 years old and weighing 56 to 80 lbs. NOTE: Present world record is 81 lbs 14 oz.

MONTHLY RECIPE - Roasted Fish with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce Submitted by Bill Dabney

This recipe originally called for cod but any thicker white filet like tog or striper should work, Be sure to remove any red meat before you cook.

Ingredients:

- 4 (6-8 oz) boneless, skinless filets (1 1/2 to 2 lbs total)
- 1 Bunch Scallions
- 3 TBSP EVOO plus more for drizzling
- 1 1/2 tsp Soy Sauce
- 1 tsp Fish Sauce
- 2/3 cup plain Greek Yogurt
- 2/3 cup Cucumber finely diced or shredded
- 1 TBSP fresh Dill or Mint finely chopped
- 2 tsp fresh Lemon juice
- 1 clove of Garlic mashed or grated
- Red Pepper flakes, Sea Salt & Black Pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 450. Finely chop scallion greens to equal 2 TBSP and put aside. Halve remaining scallions lengthwise to form ribbons. Place in a bowl with 1 TBSP oil and season with S&P.
2. Season fish with S&P and place on a baking sheet. Drizzle fish with a little oil, soy and fish sauce.
3. Place in the oven and bake for 2 minutes. Add scallion ribbons to the pan in a single layer. Bake 6 - 10 minutes longer until the fish is done to your liking.
4. While fish bakes, make the sauce. In a small bowl, mix together remaining 2 TBSP oil with 1 Tbsp minced scallion greens, yogurt, cucumber, dill or mint, lemon juice, garlic and S&P.
5. Arrange fish and scallions on a serving plate with lemon wedges and yogurt sauce. Garnish with remaining scallion greens and red pepper flakes. 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 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 provide me with the details so I can 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 4 reports since the October Newsletter.



**Epic Striper
fishing on the
Jen-Jen for the
Leary clan!**

**Larry and son
Brian showing
some beautiful
fish but not to be
outdone,
grandson Brian
has his own
monster catch!**





Marty and Friends had a great time with Blackfish and ended up with 18 keepers before they ran out of bait after starting with 9 dozen crabs! Check out their monster tog on the next page!



Marty's friend Paul with a 10 lb 1 oz tog which was released for another day!



Family fishing with Jerry Nichols and crew on Thanksgiving weekend had great results just 1 - 2 miles north of the inlet. Nine year old nephew, Jake, caught his first stripers and had the best time that he will long remember.



Those Smiles Say it All!



Jerry Nichols and Ed V spent a cold Thursday on the water but we managed two nice 30" and 31" keepers.



VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS (Wait Until Spring 2024) - 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.

A fire extinguisher is one of the items that is required. Last year, a new law regarding them went into effect. The extinguisher now has a 12 year qualifying life cycle. If you look at the bottom, you will see the year it was made. Just add 12 years to that date to figure the expiration date.



VHFC STOCKING STUFFER 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 Stocking Stuffer Shirts - Only 3 are left before we order a new 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,



Custom Clubs Performance Wear www.rattlinjacks.com

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=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>

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 card

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