



HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER April 2024

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: 12 April 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members,

Can you believe we've arrived at the start of the 2024 season and this is our first Newsletter! And what a season it's shaping up to be with lots of club improvements. With the addition last year of three new Board members - Jerry Nichols Treasurer, John Stuebing Recruiting / Membership and Bayside Dave Etelman Social Media - along with Phil Simon, Pat Presutto, Donna Harris and myself, there will be a lot happening with our club.

Here's a brief summary of the 2024 changes with more detail later in the Newsletter.

- **All club meetings will start 30 minutes earlier at 7:15 with doors opened at 7:00.**
- All out recruiting drive where you can earn gift cards for bringing in new members
- Additional contests and awards for both Junior and Adult members
- Additional Spring Bottom Fishing Trip
- Picture of the Month contest

Hopefully you've already begun getting your boat and fishing tackle ready or better yet, have even been out using them. I always remind everyone to bring your equipment to our local Bait & Tackle shops and marinas before the rush gets into full swing as the Memorial Day weekend (May 25 - 27) approaches. Don't expect your gear to be at its peak after spending many months lying around the house, basement or garage. At a minimum, remove your reels from your rods, wipe them down to remove any accumulated salts or grime, check your guides, remove several feet of braid or replace any older mono and lube your reels as recommended. For spinning reels, remove the spool and clean the inside of the spool and the reel shaft. Add some reel lube or petroleum jelly and you should be good to go. Otherwise, bring them in for service **now!**

Go through your tackle and discard anything not worth repairing or that you haven't used since the Y2K hype if you even remember that scare! Lure hooks are easily replaced or cleaned with fine grit sandpaper. I also color each hook with a black or red permanent marker for added rustproofing. If you're a fan of Gulp, buy or order them now before supplies and selections are limited. Another option, try one of the many other brands on the market from makers like Tsunami, Storm, DOA (Dead on Arrival), NLBN (No Live Bait Needed), BKD (Bass Kandy Delights), etc. I'm sure the Blowfish will enjoy the menu change!

Finally, it's time to get out there and fish! White Perch and Striped Bass are definitely here. Dave Puzak already entered a Perch from a BHW lagoon back on March 8th. Tony's B&T has reported action through March and today April 7 - ***Back-bay striper fishing is excellent around the Causeway bridges, sod banks & street ends. A high/low rig baited with bloodworm technique of choice for the bait angler. Soft & hard suspended plastics are producing hits, more success in the dark hours.*** Hopefully the weather cooperates to really kick the spring fishing into high gear.

I look forward to seeing everyone on April 12th at our first meeting for 2024. Once again, **meetings start at 7:15 and there will be pizza!** As always, be sure to take a photo of your catch for our awards and submit a report for others to enjoy and learn where the fish are biting.
Ed

UPCOMING VHFC EVENTS - For your long term planning and participation.

APRIL 12 CLUB MEETING - Pizza Meeting to kick off 2024

MAY - JUNE BATTLE ON THE BEACH - HS fishing contest on the Barnegat Light sands

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

FALL DINNER - Great time at Kostas Grill in Tuckerton

OCTOBER 8 BOTTOM FISHING TRIP - On the spacious Mary M IV out of Barnegat Light

NEW JERSEY FISHING REGULATIONS by Phil Simon - If you haven't already seen it, here is a link to the 2024 NJ saltwater fishing regulations: [2024 NJ Fishing Regulations](#)

FYI, **the fluke and scup regs will be for this year and next**. Black Sea Bass may change next year, pending a new stock evaluation. I think most anglers are happy with the general fluke regulations of 3 fish at 18" May 4 - September 25.

Department of I told you so: When the "new MRIP" (the recreational catch estimate system known as the Marine Recreational Information Program) was introduced to us in 2017, we were all suspicious of the new numbers showing extreme increases in the estimates of the recreational catch for a number of species. You may also remember that a study conducted by MRIP last year indicated that the Fishing Effort Survey (FES) questionnaire, which supplies half of the MRIP input data, was biased, and might be causing an overestimation of our fishing efforts. Two new studies are underway, with the data to be compiled at the beginning of 2025. Thus, no decisions will be made until the data is reviewed and presented to NOAA next year.

Also, the general methodology used to set the specific quota changes on a yearly basis, adopted in 2022 (the so-called harvest control rules), is now under review (again). You may remember that a number of new options were presented to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in early 2022, and one was selected. I noted at the time (to JCAA, the ASMFC, and the MAMFC) that the selected option was almost certainly going to result in a cycle of continuous restrictions and tightening of harvest. That is exactly what has happened! The system is based on whether we exceed our fishing limits, and not as much on the status of the stocks. In a stock where regulations are already tight, and the stock is large (above the target size), such as we see with black sea bass, the algorithm will still call for more cuts, regardless of whether they are needed. Apparently, this has finally gotten through to the scientists in charge, who are now reviewing things once again. Standby, but unfortunately don't expect anything to change in the short term.

2024 VHFC CHANGES AND RECAP OF CLUB BENEFITS by Ed Valitutto

- 1. Earlier meeting start time. Club meetings will start 30 minutes earlier at 7:15.** Doors will open at 7:00 with refreshments available. Since most everyone is local, why wait around until 7:45 to start. Besides, an earlier finish will make it easier for folks fishing on Saturday.
- 2. Extra Pizza nights!** Usually, only our final yearly meeting is our pizza night. This year, we've added pizza for our April meeting - to attract more members and hopefully pay their dues early, and for our July meeting before the Fluke Tournament kickoff. BTW, since Veteran's Day will be on November 11th, the

Community Center will be open for our final yearly meeting and we will not have to reschedule it into December.

3. **New reward (bounty) for club members who get someone to join VHFC.** The reward is a \$20 gift certificate for each new adult member signed up. So get your friends and neighbors to join our club and earn yourself rewards. Look for our ad in the April Sandpaper (Tuckerton edition) as well as posters in many locations.
4. **Social Media presence to get more club exposure and also to have more timely information available to our members.** Bayside Dave Edelman has set up club accounts on Instagram [**@villageharbourfishingclub**](#) and Facebook at [**VHFC**](#). Please visit them and post your fishing news. John Stuebing is working on establishing a YouTube Channel.
5. **Melanie Boytos Award** - For 2024, we've broadened the requirements so more anglers will have a chance to qualify for this coveted award. More details later on.
6. **Fish of the Year (FOY)** - No changes to a great contest for the anglers who land the largest of six species and receive a lovely engraved personal plaque.
7. **New Junior Angler Program** - Our Young Angler program (Bill Figley's original idea) for \$25 gift awards for the largest of four species for anglers 12 years and under has been discontinued. Bill Figley suggested that VHFC needed to do more to encourage all our younger Anglers to participate more. Therefore, for 2024, there will be **Junior Angler awards for \$50 each for five species!** Also new, if a junior has the largest fish and wins an adult contest, they may enter a second fish for a junior award. Junior Anglers are members who have not reached their 18th birthday by the May meeting and cost only \$10. So sign up your kids and grandkids now for some fun competitions. Specific details appear later in the NL.
8. **Additional Adult FOM (Fish of the Month) contests** - Last year we had 26 awards including two half year awards for White Perch. In 2024, there will be one year-long White Perch award reducing 26 to 25 awards. Wait, don't boo just yet. Last year, we had one award for either a Red or Black Drum. In 2024, we will have separate awards for each. We also added three new awards for Porgy, Triggerfish and Striped Bass over the 31" slot size bringing the total adult award count to 29! Most award certificates will continue to be for FHQ, but we are also planning on having some awards available to our other sponsors. Full details of all 29 adult contests appear later.
9. **Great Club Events for members and their families to enjoy:**
 - a. **New Spring Bottom Trip** on *Mary M IV* on May 21.
 - b. **Battle on the Beach** - Club volunteers judge this fishing competition between several local high schools on the Barnegat Light sands. Winning school gets bragging rights, year long trophy display and a \$1,000 scholarship donated by the LBI Surf Fishing Committee. No date yet but stay tuned.

- c. Fluke Tournament & BBQ on July 13. Great day on the water and fantastic free BBQ for contest members and families.
- d. Club Dinner in early fall at Kostas Grill in Tuckerton. This is a fun gathering off the water with members and their families to enjoy a lovely dinner made even better with wine and appetizers provided by VHFC!
- e. Fall Bottom Trip also on **Mary M IV** on October 8

10. New Picture of the Month (POM) - Send in your photos sharing the fun you have with friends and family while fishing or just spending time on the water or at the shore. More details later in the NL

11. Great Fishing Information Dissemination

- a. Nine (April - December) Monthly Newsletters filled with all the latest local, club & JCAA fishing news as well as club member news.
- b. Fantastic website [VHFC Website](#) with all the latest contest entries, rules, standings, forms. archived newsletters, our members' reports and more.
- c. Member distribution of NJ F&W bulletins, JCAA Newsletters and the latest seminars offered by Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

12. Great Monthly Meetings with Speakers, Fishing Discussions, Snacks / Pizza -

Here's the speaker lineup with only one TBD. Topics are still being discussed.

- a. **April 12: Captain John Kalias**, Reel Fun Sportfishing
- b. **May 10: Jenni Ackerman**, The Fisherman Magazine
- c. **June 14: Greg Cudnik**, Fisherman's Headquarters & Fish Head Charters
- d. **July 12: Jim Hutchinson Jr**, Fisherman;s Magazine
- e. **August 9: "Bayside" Dave Etelman**, Surf Fishing LBI
- f. **September 13: Captain Brett Taylor**, Reel Reaction Sportfishing
- g. **October 11: TBD**

13. New Logo Decals - Quality decals are now available along with our hats and tee shirts for you to enjoy and proudly display your club affiliation.

14. New Multi-Club Tournament Participation - We are working on this idea with the Fish Hawks and Forked River Tuna Club. We hope to get something in place soon.

NEW JERSEY SALTWATER RECREATIONAL REGISTRY - Individual saltwater anglers ages 16 and older MUST register with the State of New Jersey. Registrations expired on 31 December. So if you are now age 16+ or you have not yet renewed your registration for 2024, go to [NJ Fish & Wildlife Electronic License System](#) and complete the appropriate form. Registration / renewal is free and is required if you fish NJ waters. Also, your registration number is needed if you plan to apply for a Striped Bass Bonus Tag.

NEW JERSEY STRIPED BASS BONUS PROGRAM - NJ F&W has not opened the Striped Bass Bonus Program (SBBP) applications but it should happen soon since the bonus tagged bass season opens May 15. As soon as applications are open, we will notify all members.

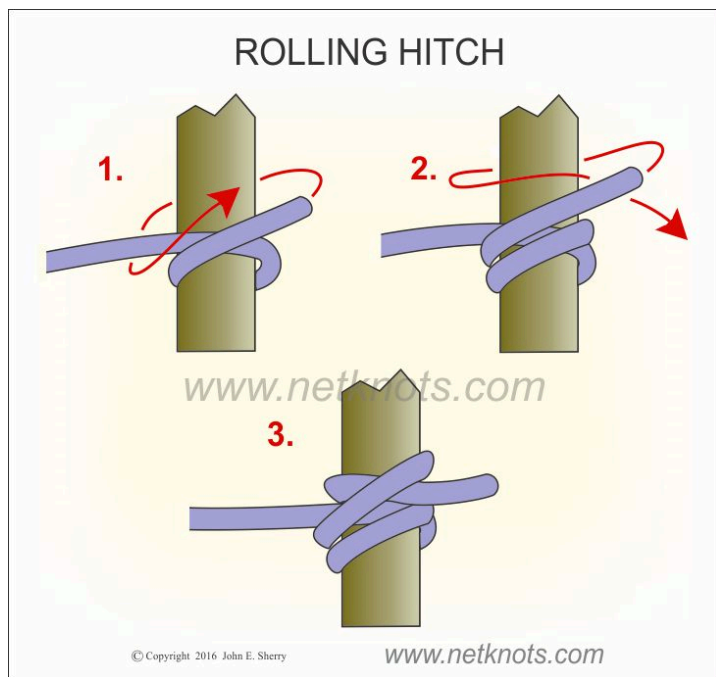
CLUB DUES - VHFC yearly dues are \$40 for adults and \$10 for junior members and worth every penny! Junior members must be 18 or less by the May 13 Meeting. Dues are required by the May meeting but can be paid ahead at our April meeting or preferably mailed to our PO Box below. **Mailing your dues to our PO Box is highly recommended to minimize the chaos and time consumed at meetings.**

Please fill out the [Membership Form](#) and mail with a check to:

**VHFC MEMBERSHIP
PO BOX 1026
MANAHAWKIN, NJ 08050**

Remember: Dues must be paid at least 24 hrs ahead of any entry into our contests and there are 12 adult FOM contests and 2 Junior Angler contests already open!.

ROLLING HITCH INSTRUCTIONS - This has appeared in past Newsletter issues but for our new members or just as a reminder, it's repeated here.



This is a very secure and easy method of fastening a rope to a post. I keep my four boat lines attached to my pilings using it with loops on each rope end for the boat cleats. Never had a problem and it's easy to tie! They've remained in place for many years.

See [Rolling Hitch Instructions](#) for animated details.

SALTWATER FISHING EXPO 2024 TRIP REPORT by Phil Simon - I attended portions of two days of the Saltwater Fishing Expo held at the NJ Convention and Expo center March 15, 16, and 17, and managed to find time to attend a few of the seminar sessions in between buying gear and schmoozing with friends, vendors, others. The crowds were back to pre-pandemic levels - Tod Alberto, who runs the show, was a happy camper. All the usual suspects showed up, including at least 4 of our 2024 club speakers, many bait and tackle vendors, charter captains, fishing organizations, fishing publications, an assortment of unrelated sales tables, boat gear, and the ever-present pickle booth. More lures for sale than you can imagine ... some of which might actually land a fish or two. Fishing seminars were running all day for all three days and I wish I had attended more.

Here are my notes on two of the fluke seminars. Despite many years of attending these types of presentations, and many pages of notes in my files, I still managed to learn a few new tips. I also attended the striper panel session on day 2. The emphasis here was on reducing release mortality, which accounts for nearly half of the recreational community's contribution to overall striper fishing mortality.

Chasing Big Fluke; Fast or Slow, Captain Geoff Cerelli (M3 Tackle) Mar 15

This seminar emphasized selecting the right gear and approach, depending on the speed of the drift when fluking from a boat while promoting using M3 Tackle spoons.

Slow drift (less than 0.5 knots) - Cerelli uses 10 -15 pound braid and 10 to 20 pound FC leader with a 2 oz bucktail, sometimes in combination with a teaser. He recommends casting up current to the drift, letting the lure hit the bottom, and then hop it back along the bottom to the boat. He lets the lure pound the bottom to attract the fish. Either spinning or casting gear works. Add Gulp twister tails or 4 -5" swimming shads on the hooks

Moderate drift (0.5 to 1 knot) - Again, spinning or casting gear, 15# braid, 10-20# FC leader, with a medium bucktail 2 – 4 oz, or a 3" spoon tied to an 8" dropper loop 90 degrees off the FC with a bottom weight. Here it's the traditional approach of keeping the line near vertical, applying some twitch to the lure. Same Gulp bait as above.

Moderately Fast drift (1 – 1.5 knots) - Conventional casting gear for this speed, 20# braid, 20# FC leader, 4-6 oz bucktail, same Gulp as above. **Avoid scoping the line.**

Fast drift (1.5+ knots) - Here Cerelli switches to what I would call trolling for fluke. Conventional casting gear, 15-20# braid, rigged with a 6" spoon tied 2 -3 feet off the FC leader and a bottom sinker heavy enough to get down to the bottom. Using M3 spoons, which will twitch and not spin when trolled. He recommends testing the rig at the surface to verify the action is correct. No jigging here, 30 to 60 degrees of scope is ideal. Spoon color is less important than size. Don't go smaller unless you put together a rig with 2 – 3" spoons similar to a standard high/low. On bright sunny days the shiny metal spoons are better than the painted ones. He will also rig a double hook on the spoons (stinger).

Some other general tips: use 4/0 to 8/0 wide gap bait holder hooks on the spoons on either homemade or purchased high low rigs with a 4" dropper for the teaser and 8" dropper for the main lure. But, single hook rigs have less drag, so may be preferable in faster conditions. He uses just a bare hook for the teaser, no skirts etc. and a perfection loop for attaching hooks and spoons to the rig, with a snap at the top. Try different lengths 2-4' for the spoon leader. This trolling approach with spoons is what Bill Figley uses in the ocean. However, inside the bay it may lead to a large haul of green slime.

Bucktailing Structure for Jumbo Fluke, Capt Erwin Heinrich (Shimano) Mar 15

Capt Heinrich sails out of the Twin Lights Marina in the Highlands, next to our April speaker John Kolias, so they often trade tips. Capt Heinrich fishes only the ocean, and at depths from 65 to 105 feet. He favors either fresh bait or Gulp, nothing else, using primarily white bucktails, round headed Spros with no feathers or swing hooks. He will send down a Sabiki rig to sample what baitfish are present and collect fresh bait. But his favorite baits are fresh mackerel strips, bluefish strips, fluke ribbons from bled fish, or fresh squid strips. He favors **15"** long strips with stinger hooks on the main hook with 4" strips on a bare hook teaser. Also, fresh caught bunker, gutted and hooked through the eyes. If using Gulp, 6" grubs: white, pink shine, orange, newpenny (not chartreuse) or nuclear chicken. Change the gulp on every drift with drift speeds 0.9 to 1.3 kts.

Fish only structure – you will lose rigs! Structure includes sand hills, mussel beds, slopes & wrecks. He favors a medium/heavy 7' rod, 20 to 30# braid, 40# FC leader & 2 oz bucktails. If you need more weight add a 2 oz egg sinker in front of the bucktail. He feels bigger bucktail hooks are too big. For a high/low rig, make the teaser with a 4/0 to 6/0 bare offset hook with a stinger hook. Best to add a stinger to the bucktail as well with those long strip baits. Current / movement is a must and clear water is not favorable. For a really fast drift, try a cannonball rig. He finds that the big fish do not mix with the smaller fish, so if you are catching small fish, move. When reeling in a fish, point the rod tip at the fish and reel it slowly, no pumping & no bent rod. If you find you are fishing an outgoing tide after a heavy rain, go further offshore to avoid the low salinity water.

Wow! If this all works for him, that's great but it is nothing like John Skinner's approach to big fluke fishing. Really big baits, relatively small hooks on lighter bucktails & working directly on the structure is not how John fishes. But changing out the Gulp is something Skinner does now as well. As we all know there are multiple paths to success. However, I will give it a try this summer in the deep water. You just never know!

Stripers for the Future Roundtable Mar 16

This was a two session, two-hour expert panel discussion on the need for and best practices of catch and release, primarily focused on Atlantic Striped Bass. The first hour was organized by Steve Liesman of [Save a Million Bass](#) and John Tiederman (Stripers for the Future, Monmouth University), with panel members Doug Zemeckis (Rutgers), Ben Gahagan (Mass Div of Marine Fisheries), and Andy Danylchuk (UMass Amherst). The second panel, organized by Jim

Hutchinson Jr (*The Fisherman*), consisted of striped fishing experts Chuck Many, John Kravchak, and “Crazy” Alberto Knie. I will try to summarize the data presented and the discussion.

It is estimated that nearly half of all striped deaths by recreational fishermen are due to fish dying after they are released. The other half are the fish harvested for the table. With a 9% estimated mortality rate from release, this means for every 10 or 11 fish you catch and release, statistically, one of them will likely die from injuries sustained from catch and release.

I say ‘estimate’ and ‘may’ because we don’t have an accurate number. Current estimates are soft and based on some limited controlled experiments conducted years ago that determined the 9% mortality rate. Nevertheless, due to poor handling by the recreational community, fish are dying. Causes include fish stress from the landing process, too much time out of the water, damage to the slime layer, damage from hooks, damage to the gills from handling, gaffing, and damage to internal organs by improper support while out of the water. Luckily, Strippers for the Future distributed literature with a list of Do’s and Don’ts for striped bass catch and release:

Do

- Release fish without taking them out of the water when possible
- Limit air exposure in fish removed from the water to less than 10 seconds
- Handle fish with wet hands
- Cradle fish with one hand under the belly and one under the shoulder
- Resuscitate bass by pulling them forward or in a figure 8 through the water by the lower lip; never move them backwards
- Use barbless hooks when fishing with bait, or crush the barbs
- Use circle hooks when fishing with bait (required in NJ)
- Leave deep hooks in the fish and cut the leader off closest to the hook

Don’t

- Lift bass by the mouth or tail; this can cause serious internal injury
- Handle bass with dry hands
- Drag fish across dry sand or excessively handle fish in a manner that removes their protective mucous coating
- Kick or step on fish; you will damage their organs
- Touch the red gill rakers or gill area; they are equivalent to your lungs
- Gaff a fish you intend to release
- Release a bass without first resuscitating

Some other key tips:

- More striped deaths occur in warm water (75 degrees) than cool water
- More damage happens using lures than with bait and circle hooks
- Long fights with light gear cause more stress and deaths

- Use single hooks; replace the trebles on your lures, but check the action of the lures in the water before you use them (red hooks work best, so say our experts)
- Do you really need another picture?
- Use a big net; nets without knots are less damaging
- Think in advance how you will land the fish; have everything you need ready and easily available

BOTTOM FISHING ON THE MARY M IV by Phil Simon- We are now scheduled with Capt Sam (Rescigno) 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 depending on the total number of anglers. I took a chance and scheduled it for a week after the 2023 start and luckily, the 2024 opening dates will be the same as last year - 10 fish at 12.5 inches May 17 - June 19. So we will be hitting the wrecks just days after opening. Keep the date open and sign up for some great early season bottom fishing. VHFC will provide coffee and donuts for your enjoyment.

Per Ed V - I have been out twice on the Mary M IV with the Elks. This is a full size party boat with plenty of space. Captain Sam and first mate Sammy provide a great day on the water.



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.

Picture of the Month (POM) - We are starting a new monthly contest in 2024 called Picture of the Month. While we all enjoy the pictures submitted with fishing reports and lots of pictures of dead fish on a ruler for the FOM entries, we are really missing out on sharing the fun we have with friends and family while fishing or just spending time on the water or at the shore. So, please, send in your favorite photos each month, and our expert panel of judges (including a professional photographer) will select the winner. Winners and submissions will be posted on

our website, and on our Facebook page and Instagram accounts. Winners get bragging rights and entry into a drawing at the November meeting for a \$5000 gift certificate - oops missed a decimal point - I meant \$50.00! Send your photos to Phil Simon at sciman2@gmail.com

2024 FISHING CONTESTS - VHFC has three yearly fishing contests: Melanie Boytos Award (MBA), Fish of the Year (FOY) and Fish of the Month (FOM). Full rules and details are on our website at [VHFC Contest Rules](#) and standings to date are at [VHFC Standings](#). As a quick reminder, all fish entered must be caught in Ocean County either from land or by boat departing and returning to OC. **Fish caught on head boats leaving from Pt Pleasant are legal; fish caught on boats leaving from Brielle are not!** Take a picture showing the entire fish with the measuring device, preferably a hard ruler, visible. Mail or text your photo to Weighmaster Pat Presutto (pat1016pat@aol.com or 609 994 8361) with a copy to Ed Valitutto (edvalitutto@gmail.com or 609 994 1311). All fish must be IAW NJ F&W size limits and in season. Bluefish must be 14" minimum and bonus stripers must have the tag visible to enter.

Melanie Boytos Award (MBA) - Originally limited to four species (Weakfish, Striper, Fluke & Bluefish), we added Sea Bass a few years back as Weakfish became scarce. Now, Bluefish are hit or miss and so for 2024, we've added Blackfish and modified the rules. The angler with the highest point total for any or all species will have their name engraved on a special trophy displayed at a local Bait & Tackle store or elsewhere per their request. Points are awarded for your largest catch per species IAW the table listed on our website [VHFC Contest Rules](#)

Congratulations to our 2023 MBA Winner Pat Presutto

Fish of the Year (FOY) - Each angler with the largest striper, bluefish, fluke, seabass, blackfish & weakfish will receive a lovely laser engraved plaque with their name, fish picture and catch length. Congratulations to all 2023 winners. Your plaques will be awarded at our April meeting.

| 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" |

***Caught before the 28" - 31" slot restriction**

Fish of the Month (FOM) - The largest fish caught during the specified period will be awarded a \$50 gift certificate to a local tackle shop. For 2024, there are 29 FOM adult awards and 5 Junior Angler Only awards each for a \$50 certificate. **Open contests are shaded Green.**

Junior Angler FOM Contests

| Month | Species | Name | Size |
|------------------------|-------------|----------|------|
| 1 April – 30 September | White Perch | No Entry | |
| 1 April – 30 September | Bluefish | No Entry | |
| 1 June – 30 September | Kingfish | | |
| 1 June – 30 September | Blowfish | | |
| 4 May – 25 September | Fluke | | |

Adult Angler FOM Contests

| Month | Species | Name | Size |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| 1 March – 30 June | Striped Bass | No Entry | |
| 1 March – 30 June (Surf Only) | Striped Bass | No Entry | |
| 1 Mar – 31 Dec (No Size Limit) | Striped Bass | No Entry | |
| 1 March – 30 September | Bluefish | No Entry | |
| 1 March – 30 Sept (Surf Only) | Bluefish | No Entry | |
| 1 March – 31 October | White Perch | Dave Puzak Leads | 10 1/2" |
| 1 March – 31 December | Red Drum | No Entry | |
| 1 March – 31 December | Black Drum | No Entry | |
| 1-30 Apr & 1 Aug – 30 Sept | Blackfish | No Entry | |
| 1 April – 30 June | Weakfish | No Entry | |
| 1 April – 31 October | Blowfish | No Entry | |
| 1 April – 31 October | Kingfish | No Entry | |
| 1 May – 30 November | Triggerfish | | |
| 1 May – 30 November | Porgy | | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 17 May – 19 June | Sea Bass |
| 4 May – 30 June | Fluke |
| 4 May – 25 Sept (Surf Only) | Fluke |
| 1 – 31 July | Fluke |
| 1 – 31 July | Sea Bass |
| 1 July – 31 October | Weakfish |
| 1 – 31 August | Fluke |
| 1 – 31 August | Seabass |
| 1 – 27 September | Fluke |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec | Bluefish |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec (Surf Only) | Bluefish |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec | Striped Bass |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec Surf Only) | Striped Bass |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec | Blackfish |
| 1 Oct – 31 Dec | Sea Bass |

2024 FOM ENTRIES - Here's our list of 2024 entries to date. Hopefully warmer weather will encourage more anglers out on the water. Go to [VHFC Standings](#) for the complete list of entries.

03-08-24 White Perch Dave Puzak 10 1/2" BHW Lagoon

LBI 22nd Annual 2024 Spring Derby - See [LBI Spring Derby](#)



STARTS: Saturday, April 6nd, 2024 @ 12 AM

ENDS: Sunday, June 23th 2024 @ 6 PM

\$20 - Registration Fee For All Anglers

100% Payout Prize Structure

Striped Bass 50%/25%/10%

Bluefish 15%



Dave Spendiff went to Georgia to visit son Garth and family. Of course they did some fishing while down there. In addition to some Spotted Trout and a few small Redfish, Garth landed this monster Sheepshead that weighed 14+ lbs. It would have been a record in Alabama but was about a lb short for the Georgia record!

FISHING REPORTS by Ed Valitutto - 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 10 reports since the December Newsletter with all but three from members down in SW Florida..



That's Ed V, John Stuebing and Jerry Nichols after our last trip for 2023 on my boat *Set The Hook*. We had a blast filling our three bonus tags and getting three slots. Then it was a wrap for 2023!



My wife and I rent a house in Cape Coral for January through March. SW FL was cooler than normal but warmed up for this trip in late January. I had several spotted trout and redfish including this beauty that was over the 18 - 27" slot by several inches.



Joe Filice went to Marco Island (60 Miles south of Cape Coral) for February and had blast fishing off the beach. Besides the Pompano shown here, Joe had several puppy Black Drum from 15' - 22" that he said were delicious fried and fileted!



It took two Pompano this day to get Joe to smile. He took them to Cocomo's on Marco Island and had them prepared Francais style for a delicious meal!



My second charter mid February once again was a blast catching Reds that were all just shy of the 18" minimum except for this beast. What a fight on light tackle in shallow water!

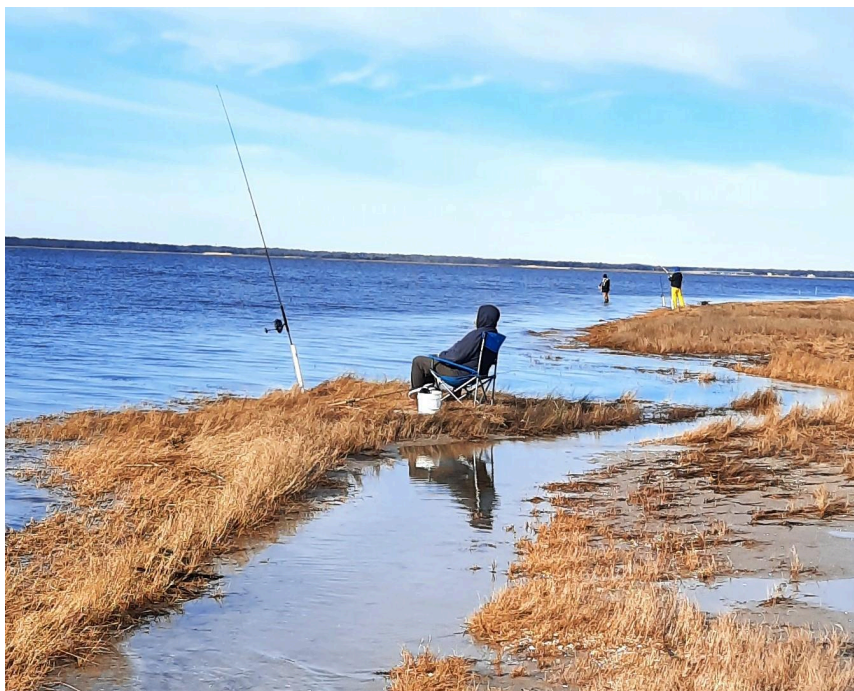


Joe was out again on the Marco Island sands and this time he caught a 23 ½" Redfish. Joe also landed a 14" Sheepshead. Joe wrote "Not as big as Ed's fish, but I got to eat this one"!



That's Basil Dubrosky who winters with his lovely wife in Sarasota, FL about 60 miles North of Cape Coral. He and his pal murdered the sea trout (15 each) and Basil got two Spanish Mackerel. The Macks were 25" and 29" and the largest trout was 19". All were caught on paddle tail jigs.

Basil is one of the founding fathers of VHFC and he has member number 004!



That's John Stuebing (or a body double) fishing the outgoing tide at Graveling Point the first week of March. John said four other anglers were fishing and one short Striper was caught on Bloods. Water was very clean but it was also very cold!



Undaunted by his first trip to Graveling Point, John Stuebing returned twice and each trip produced Stripers catching two stripers on one trip and three on the second with the biggest at 20". John remarked that he saw two or three keepers caught each trip with all the action on bloodworms.



Just when you thought you'd seen enough of Ed V, here he is on his 3rd charter on March 25. What a trip that was. Three oversized Reds (32 - 34"), two oversized Snook (32 - 33") and one Crevalle Jack that fought like hell!

A WORD ABOUT SEA SAFETY by Jeff Orsoe - While many club members know me from performing your yearly Vessel Safety Checks (VSC) on your boats, I would like to spend the next few minutes talking about how you can be safer out on the water.

We are at the beginning of April and our thoughts are more about preparing ourselves rather than preparing our boat for the season. Some of those tasks include bottom painting, getting the electronics working as intended and deciding if the flares are not up to date, do you purchase new ones or switch over to the electronic battery flares. Here's the big one, is my fishing gear ready for this year's season.

But how many of you spend time going over and reviewing your Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). We all have read the stories of a vessel breaking down at sea, crew falling overboard and maybe the vessel taking on water with the possibility of sinking. Now is the time to check the condition of your personal protection and review the list of what is needed to continue to be safe.

Is your PFD in good condition without tears and working straps and snaps? Do you have a whistle and personal marking light attached? Do you have the proper type of PFD for the conditions you boat in? Remember that State and Federal law requires a PFD for everyone on board. If you have an inflatable, it does not count as a PFD UNLESS it is being WORN. For example, if boating on the ICW, you can use a type 3 PFD since the water is generally calmer and with more boats in the vicinity to help if needed. In the Atlantic Ocean, with fewer boats and any chance of receiving assistance quickly, you would have on board Type I PFDs. I remember a November several years ago, when traveling from Manasquan Inlet to Barnegat Light Inlet. As I cleared Manasquan, there were a few boats. But as I traveled south past Seaside and IBSP, there were no boats around and my thoughts switched to hoping nothing went wrong.

As a Coast Guard Auxiliarist involved in Surface Operations, we constantly check our PPE prior to leaving the slip. Onboard, we have an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) and/or a PLB (Personal Locating Beacon). These devices could save your life in an emergency but must be checked before you venture out and both need to be registered with NOAA at www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov or beacon.registration@noaa.gov. They should also be tested monthly to ensure they are functional.

On my vessel, ***"Tough Decision"*** I carry an EPIRB and on both my wife and my inflatable PFDs, attached to the waist band, I have a pouch that holds a whistle, marking light, signal mirror and a PLB. The PLBs get tested each month and the results recorded on a log sheet. Our PLBs are made by ACR and come with instructions that you should follow.

Why am I telling you this? Well, it may just save your life. Late last year, I noticed that my wife's PLB wasn't testing properly. In December, I reached out to ACR but since it was the holiday season, their response was slow. With the warranty close to expiring. I then reached out to the vendor where it was purchased for their help. Within a couple of weeks, I got an email stating the

unit had failed and ACR was replacing it. After that experience, I continue to test all my PPE. Had I not done this and IF my PLB DID NOT WORK when needed, the results could have been life threatening. Conclusion: What is your life worth? Continue to check all the safety equipment as part of your regular routine. **The life you save may be your own or someone on board your vessel!**

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 any time after May 8th and have the VE stickers (Vessel Exam decal) that is placed on the vessel upon successful completion of the checklist. 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. The boat owner just needs to take care of the problem and reschedule another exam for the decal to be awarded. **Contact: Jeff Orsoe**
Cell / Text: 732-672-5530 or email: jorsoe786@gmail.com.

A fire extinguisher is required onboard and all fire extinguishers now have 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. Also, NJ law now requires a PFD be worn by all occupants if your vessel is less than 26 feet while underway between Nov 1 and May 1.

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.

Member Bill Kleimenhagen sold his big sportfishing boat so he has no use for two huge coolers any more. Bill has both the 200 Quart and 320 Quart SSI Coolers for sale. Bill would like \$200 for the 200 qt and \$320 for the 320 qt. See the links for the new cost and a description.

<https://www.marineboatingsupply.com/10ssibigco20.html>

<https://www.marineboatingsupply.com/10ssibigco32.html>

Bill is also looking to sell five (5) Steve Goione framed prints. Please see the attachments.





Contact Bill at 215-760-2285

or by email at

compleatangler@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, come to a meeting to purchase one.

VHFC Shirts - Only 3 are left on hand - White 3XL, Blue & Aqua both Medium. We must order a minimum buy of 12 and prefer to have ~6 spoken for before we place an order. So

please let us know your size and color preference. Sizes range from XS (Extra Small) to 6XL and are available in nine colors. Shirts have long sleeves and feature UPF 50 Sun Protection. These are quality shirts to be worn proudly. White is shown in the photo. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL, & 6XL. Colors: White, Pale Green, Sand, Pale Orange, Pale Yellow, Pale Teal, Aqua, Lime & Medium Blue.



Contact Phil Simon at sciman2@gmail.com for placing an order. Last order prices were from \$30 - \$36 depending on size.

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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

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

Empire Fishing & Tackle 10% discount with VHFC card
11 East Main St Tuckerton. NJ 08087
609 857 5291

Scott's Bait & Tackle 10% discount with VHFC card
609 294 1300

Surf City Bait & Tackle 10% discount with VHFC card
317 Long Beach Blvd, Surf City, NJ 08008
609 994 2333