



HARBOUR LIGHT

OFFICIAL VHFC NEWSLETTER October 2026

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 6:00; Meeting begins at 6:30 PM

Next meeting: 09 October 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello VHFC Members,

Well things have certainly changed since our last meeting and Newsletter! The Fluke season came to a dismal finish, our fishing trip on the Mary M happened, VHFC was instrumental in helping a former member's family do a memorial reef deployment and a nasty nor'easter occurred. There are articles on the Mary M trip and the reef deployment later in the Newsletter. But the nor'easter was the worst since Sandy and halted the last week of fluking! Flooding was everywhere and I hope everyone sustained minimal damages. Andy Tonneson (Tony's Bait & Tackle) told me he drives a nail to mark the water level for our major storms. This storm's surge was 3 1/2" higher than last year's storm (previously dubbed the worst since Sandy) but fortunately still 22" less than the Sandy high water mark!

What made this storm so nasty was the prolonged NE winds that preceded and remained during the storm's arrival. This drives water into our inlets on incoming tides and slows the return during

the outgoing, making the bay water level rise with each tide cycle. Exacerbating the situation was the accompanying rainfall and the full moon on September 26th.

Let me expand on the tide situation. During a full moon (the sun, earth & moon in a row) and a new moon ((the sun, moon & earth in a row), the gravitational pull of the moon and the sun align to create what are called spring tides, which result in the highest high tides and the lowest low tides of the month - providing the NE winds allow the waters to recede. Even though the moon and sun are on opposite sides of the Earth during a full moon, their gravitational forces act along the same line, stretching the Earth's oceans in a way that amplifies the tidal effect. The full moon did not cause the nor'easter, but intensified its coastal impacts by raising tides during the storm's peak contributing to the severity of flooding, beach erosion, and storm surge damage. Lastly, the term "**spring tide**" has nothing to do with the spring season. The term comes from the German word *springen*, meaning "**to leap**" or "**to spring forward**," describing the sudden surge in water levels.

Now back to fishing. Sea Bass expanded to 10 fish and anglers traveling to our reefs were rewarded with good catches. Stripers are making a showing and will certainly arrive in numbers as the weeks roll by and Blackfish will do the same as the waters cool. I fished at the north jetty red tower on Wednesday and the tog were plentiful, fat and aggressive. Another good indicator is the fish being entered into the LBI Surf Fishing Tournament - more details later on. So while the fishing is not raging just yet, the fall 'run' is starting for everyone to venture forth and enjoy the bounty our area has to offer.

As always, be sure to take a photo of your catch for our FOM / FOY and POM awards and submit a report for others to enjoy and learn where the fish are biting.

Ed

Helping Anglers Catch More Fish Since 1962!
Your one-stop destination before your next
fishing adventure
'On The Causeway'
280 W 9th St, Ship Bottom
609 494 5739



Visit [FHQ](#)

UPCOMING VHFC 2026 EVENTS - For your long term planning and participation.

- **October Meeting on Friday the 9th at the Stafford Community Center**
- **Club Dinner October 21 at Kosta's in Tuckerton**
- **Bottom Party Boat Trip Wednesday November 4**
- **Surf Tournament Saturday November 21**

OCTOBER MEETING by Ed Valitutto - Our next meeting will be back at the Community Center on Friday October 9th. Remember, we have a new earlier start time of 6:30 with doors opening at 6:00. Our speaker for the meeting is **Matt Sorentino**. Matt is the President of the **NJ Fishing Club**, an organization dedicated to hosting fishing tournaments and community events that bring anglers together throughout New Jersey. A lifelong saltwater fisherman, Matt has spent decades fishing the waters of the Garden State and is especially known for his expertise in inshore fisheries such as Tautog and Fluke. Matt's topic is **Targeting Tog in the Fall**.



That's our September speaker author and charter captain, Jim Freda. who gave a very informative talk on targeting fall Striped Bass. This was a special Tri-Club meeting held at the Forked River Tuna Club. The 50/50 winner was our own VHFC Treasurer, Jerry Nichols. Another VHFC member, Russ Minor, won the rod/reel combo raffle held by the Tuna Club.

**Home Is Where
The Anchor Drops!**



Your Community Real Estate Specialists
Cecilia "Ceil" Friedrich:
Broker/Owner/Property Management
948 Radio Rd
Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087
Office: 609-879-3502
Direct: 609-658-7254
Ceilfriedrich@yahoo.com
Anchorhomesrealestate.com



Go to [Anchor Homes](#) for more information

FALL BASS, BAITS, AND ARTIFICIALS by Captain Jim Freda - This is an edited version of the original presented at the Tri-Club September meeting.

To get the most out of the fall run, knowledge of the nature and behavior of the prevalent baits that drive our blitzes from September through December is very helpful to select the artificial that most closely resembles the natural.

In October, there will be a remnant of **mullet** that remains if September was void of any hurricanes. Predominantly a September bait, mullet will migrate south particularly on the downside of the full and new moons of the month. Mullet, *Mugil cephalus*, also known as the striped mullet, can easily be spotted in the surf zone as they will sketch a perfect trace of our coastline as they migrate from north to south along the beach. When the surf is calm, they will swim near the surface in the upper third of the water column making a characteristic wake as they move along. For this reason, I like to use poppers as my go to lure as bass will come up and attack them from below. Surface poppers such as the small Madd Mantis, Spro Popper50, Stillwater Smack-Its, Polaris, or Creek Chub poppers will all work well. You can also fish 4-6 inch shallow swimming plugs such as Bombers, Yozuris, and Megabaits. Soft shads such as the DuraShad and Flex Lure by Spro or Storm Wildeyes will also work. Best colors for all these artificials will be pearl, silver, blue, or green over white or all white and lastly yellow.

The greatest concentration of baits during October however will most likely be **bay anchovies** and **spearing** that will trigger blitzes both along the beach and in the boat. Bay anchovies are commonly referred to as **rainfish** as they will dimple the surface of the water like raindrops

falling on it. They will be one to three inches long. Spearing on the other hand can be present in different sizes ranging from three to six inches long.

Both anchovies and spearing have a similar profile with a prominent iridescent stripe running along the lateral aspect of their body. Therefore, the same kinds of artificials can be used to imitate them. When casting artificials I like to throw any small thin profile metal. Deadly Dicks are my number one choice. But small Avas, thin Hopkins, or tin squids, or any of the new epoxy jigs from Tsunami or Hogy are also good choices. It is also very effective to fish a small teaser 18-24 inches above these artificials. Many times, double headers will result. When jigging from your boat in these schools of bait all the above artificials will work along with Ava 27's or 47's without tails.

As November approaches dropping ocean temperatures from 59-50 degrees will stimulate striped bass to feed voraciously and gorge themselves as they prepare to exit out of our area to Virginia and North Carolina. **Peanut bunker** will now take center stage along our NJ beaches. Peanut bunker are the first year young of adult **mossbunker** commonly known as **menhaden**. They are silvery in appearance on their dorsal surface but will have different hues of green, blue, and purple mixed in as well. Their underbellies are pearl to white and they have a single black spot under the pectoral fin. Their profile has length and height but lacks width. By November their length is three to six inches long. Liveling a peanut is one of the most successful methods to connect with a striped bass. To obtain baits you can either cast net them when fishing from your boat or snag them when fishing the surf. It's important to remember that snagging and dropping live baits for striped bass is now a thing of the past and circle hooks can only be used. Using a 2/0 Gamakatsu circle hook, place it just above the dorsal. Flip cast the bait into the pod and let it go. Get ready for a quick take as the bass will inhale the bait in one swipe.

There is a wide selection of artificials that will also work well when the bass are not finicky and zeroed in on the real thing. Four to six inch small swimming plugs, rattletraps, poppers, and soft plastics will all produce. For all these artificials white or pearl is the preferred color to use. Also, fish these with a pause to emulate a stunned or injured bait. If you are tossing metal the shorty Hopkins, one ounce Kastmasters, 3/4-to 1-ounce Krocodiles, and the 2-ounce Crippled Herring are the ones to use. For best results with your metals, impart a fluttering action to them on the retrieve.

The two baits that we look for that will make or break the end of our season are **sandeels** and **sea herring**. If either bait appears, our season can extend well into December. These two baits move inshore when surface temperatures range between 52-46 degrees. The sandeel, also referred to as the **sand lance, or lance**, is an inshore species not related to the common eel. Its scientific name "Ammodytes americanus" literally means sand burrower, a typical behavioral pattern of the sand eel when it is fleeing from a predator or resting. Sandeels are

recognized by their slender body with a pointed snout. They have a long dorsal and anal fin and are deep blue green to bronze on their back with a white belly. They are commonly found in the four to six inch ranges.

Sandeels may take up residence in the surf zone after moving in from deeper inshore waters. When they do you will find them rooting along a sandbar. By boat, one will have a much higher degree of success in locating sandeels as they concentrate in large numbers over sandy bottoms. When utilizing your fishfinder, sandeels will appear as tightly packed balls of bait near the bottom on your screen. There are a multitude of soft baits, metals, plastics, and wood that can be cast to imitate sandeels by either the surfcaster or boater. Surfcasters however will want to focus on achieving maximum distance with each cast. This will mean to spool reels with 40 lb braided line rather than monofilament to gain more distance with each cast. Many times, reaching the outer bar from the beach means the difference between hooking up or not.

To imitate sandeels the surfcaster will want to carry an assortment of artificials in their bag. Needlefish such as the Gibbs, Boone, Habs, or Superstrike are time proven favorites. Needlefish are a do nothing lure that is cast out and retrieved slowly with just a twitch of the rod tip every four or five turns of the reel handle. For metals use small Ava's 27-47 or 67's with tails, Deadly Dicks, Stingo PBJ's, A.O.K. T-Hex metals, Need-L-eels, long Hopkins, Jetty Ghost sandeel, and tin squids. All of these artificials can be fished with a teaser such as a Femlee eel, Red Gill, Vision sandeel, or fly, tied on with a dropper loop 18-24 inches above the artificial. Many times, this will result in double headers of striped bass on a cast. In the soft plastic arena, the Hogy Sandeel series, Skinny Hogy, and Ron-Z are my top choices used in conjunction with 1-3 ounce weighted jigheads. The weighted Tsunamis, Vision Surf Eel, Bill Hurley, Savage, Berkeley PowerBait sandeel can't miss either. All the above artificials will also work from the boat. From the boat deep water jigging has traditionally been one of the most successful methods as sandeels will normally be located down deep.

The **sea herring**, also known as the **Atlantic herring** (*Clupea harengus*), are the edible baits that are normally jigged in the winter around our inlets and then pickled and canned. They are steel to greenish-blue on their dorsal surface fading to silver on the sides and belly. They have a dark, oily, full-flavored meat. Small immature herring of one to two years are called sardines. By boat, sea herring can be located by looking for groups of diving gannets or gulls. These birds usually pinpoint their location when these baits are being pushed to the surface by marauding schools of big bass. We have witnessed some amazing sights in the cool December waters as schools of 20 and 30 pound bass can be seen savagely attacking these baits right next to the gunnels of our boats. There are many swimming plugs and stickbaits that can be bought over the counter that will work but at this time of year including the heavy weighted Tsunamis Shad in pearl and the 10 inch white Hogy are also deadly to use.



Complete Website Design with web hosting and domain names.

Merchant services with low-cost credit card processing options.

Pack and Ship Store, FedEx, UPS, and USPS

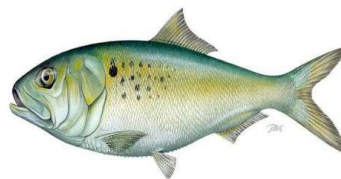
Free Website and Merchant Services Review

Visit [Web 2.0 Business Center](#)

WHAT IS GOING ON WITH BUNKER by John Stuebing

There has been a lot of talk about changes in the regulations for commercial fishing of Menhaden. To start, let's look at who manages what:

"The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) coordinates Atlantic menhaden (Brevoortia tyrannus) management in state waters (0–3 miles from shore) under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act and has done so through an Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) since 1981. The states of Maine through Florida have a declared interest in the fishery and are responsible for implementing management measures consistent with the FMP. For the purposes of this draft addendum, the term "state" or "states" also includes the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC). Management authority in the Exclusive Economic Zone (3-200 miles from shore) lies with NOAA Fisheries."



The ASMFC has made the following statement identifying what they think "**may**" be a problem. Of course this is from a marine fishery point of view. Other agencies and organizations are pointing to other issues with species like the Osprey.

"The availability of menhaden in Chesapeake Bay may be affected by changes in total abundance, size distribution of the population, and timing of spatial distribution in the Bay, which can be caused by fishing pressure, environmental conditions, habitat suitability, and/or changing predation pressures on a limited spatial and temporal scale. Such changes in menhaden

availability may affect the species' ability to fulfill its ecological and/or economic functions. Recent observations of below average commercial fisheries landings and concerning population trends in several species that use menhaden as prey within Chesapeake Bay suggest that availability of menhaden in Chesapeake Bay may be changing due to one or more of the above drivers. Of the predator species included in the ecological reference point (ERP) assessment, which accounts for menhaden's role as a forage fish, the latest coastwide assessments indicate striped bass is overfished, bluefish are presently rebuilding, weakfish are depleted due to high levels of natural mortality, and spiny dogfish reproductive output is declining but stabilizing (ASMFC, 2024)."

All of the recent conversations are not about reducing the total commercial harvest of menhaden but rather how much of that harvest can come from the Chesapeake. Keep in mind that the commercial harvest of menhaden is divided into two sectors, Reduction Fishery and the Bait Fishery. The Reduction Fishery relates to those companies (and their fleet) that reduce these fish into fish oil and fish meal. So far, I have not been able to find exact numbers of what percentage of the commercial harvest is coming from the reduction fleet. I was able to identify that about 90% of Virginia's commercial harvest is coming from the Reduction efforts. Virginia represents 75.2% of the total commercial harvest coastwide. Suffice to say, the Reduction Harvest has a large impact on the availability of menhaden.

The conversations and Public Hearings currently taking place are centered around "Draft *Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Atlantic Menhaden Interstate Fishery Management Plan*" As mentioned earlier this is not about the Total Harvest of Menhaden, it is about how much of it comes from the Chesapeake and when it is taken. The harvest that comes from the Chesapeake is called the Bay Cap. Here is a look at historical catches (Total Allowable Catch Coastwide TAC) and Bay Cap.

Table 1. History of coastwide TACs and Bay Caps. Note: mt is metric tons

Year	TAC (mt)	Bay Cap (mt)	Bay Cap as % of TAC
2006	-	109,020	-
2007	-	109,020	-
2008	-	109,020	-
2009	-	109,020	-
2010	-	109,020	-
2011	-	109,020	-
2012	-	109,020	-
2013	170,800	87,216	51.06%
2014	170,800	87,216	51.06%

Menhaden are a pelagic species that migrate along our coast. The primary spawning activity occurs in the winter (December – February)

As waters warm in the spring both younger adults and juveniles migrate inshore and into the estuaries.

While younger cohorts migrate inshore in the spring, older larger adults travel north as far as Maine.

2015	187,880	87,216	46.42%
2016	187,880	87,216	46.42%
2017	200,000	87,216	43.61%
2018	216,000	51,000	23.61%
2019	216,000	51,000	23.61%
2020	216,000	51,000*	23.61%
2021	194,400	51,000	26.23%
2022	194,400	51,000	26.23%
2023	233,550	51,000	21.84%
2024	233,550	51,000	21.84%
2025	233,550	51,000	21.84%
2026	186,840	51,000	27.30%

***2020 Bay Cap was reduced from 51,000 mt due to 2019 overage.**

I am not going to discuss all options to this Amendment. If you want the details, Go To [Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II](#).

Top Line, the ASMF is looking to explore the following actions:

- One-time reduction in the Bay Cap. The reduction options range from a 10% reduction to a 50% reduction in the harvest from the Chesapeake.
- Set the Bay Cap as a proportion of the TAC (Total Allowable Catch). Depending on the portion of the TAC that is portioned to the Bay Cap (13.6% to 27.3%) the 10% to 50% reduction in the Bay Cap can be achieved. The key to this option is that the TAC does not change. While less fish are harvested from the Chesapeake, more fish can be harvested from open waters.
- Implement Quota Periods to the Bay Cap. Currently the Reduction Fleet concentrates their efforts when the fish are entering the bay. Since the fish have not had a chance to disperse throughout the bay, it is more efficient. The same thing happens as they exit the bay. By implementing Quota Periods, it gives the fish a chance to disperse and provides more access for game fish and wildlife. Below is an example of three options being explored:

Option	Description	Length of Quota Periods	2027 Time of Year Example*	% of total Bay Cap
B1	Even Length & Even Harvest	9 weeks	May 3–Jul 4	33%
		10 weeks	Jul 5–Sep 12	33%
		9 weeks and 5 days	Sep 13–Nov 19	34%

B2	Even Length & Uneven Harvest	9 weeks	May 3–Jul 4	25%
		10 weeks	Jul 5–Sep 12	25%
		9 weeks and 5 days	Sep 13–Nov 19	50%
B3	Uneven Length & Even Harvest	11 weeks	May 3–Jul 18	33%
		6 weeks	Jul 19–Aug 29	33%
		11 weeks and 5 days	Aug 30–Nov 19	34%

Also, under consideration are Quota Period Overages and Underages. *“There would be no payback for exceeding the allocation of a quota period unless it causes the Bay Cap to be exceeded. An overage of the total Bay Cap would be deducted from the following year’s total Bay Cap before it is allocated into the quota periods. Any underage of Quota Period 1 or 2 can be used in any subsequent quota period within the year”.*

Most of this was presented at the last New Jersey Marine Fishery Council Meeting. I believe New Jersey will follow what happens with the Chesapeake. The same changes would be applied to the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay. I am sure Delaware will also follow for their side of the Bay.

There is a virtual Public Hearing scheduled for October 1st but that date has passed. This will all be discussed again at the ASMFC’s annual meeting on November 9th. At that time a recap of the Public Hearings should be available. This is a painfully slow process. Hopefully we will see some action in early 2027. Stay Tuned!

Creekside Outfitters delivers premier customer services, quality products, and fair pricing.

**Family owned and operated
403 Rte 9, Waretown, NJ 609-242-1812**



Go To [Creekside Outfitters](#)

THE DAN LUDWIG MEMORIAL REEF by Jerry Nichols

**Dan
Ludwig
with a
beautiful
Striper
November
2023**

Former VHFC member Dan Ludwig died of cancer in March 2024 at the age of 61. He is remembered by friends as a devout Catholic, committed family man and avid fisherman. Since Dan's death, his wife, Cindy, has pursued the idea of creating a memorial reef in the waters where Dan fished that would show up on the charts and where Cindy and her family could fish in Dan's memory.

After Peter Clarke, head of the NJ Reef Program for Fish and Wildlife, presented at our August meeting, I set up a call with him to explore the possibility. As luck would have it, Pete was in the

process of coordinating a memorial at the Barnegat Light Reef for the Pley family and suggested that he could add a second deployment for Cindy. Because the project was already scheduled and surplus reef balls were being held in Forked River, Cindy would get a bigger bang for the buck and a larger amount of structure than if done as a stand-alone project. I told them both that this might fit with VHFC's objective to support reef expansion in our area and that I would explore with our board the possibility of donating \$1,000 to supplement Cindy's generous donation. The board agreed and Cindy and I gave Pete the green light to add us to the deployment schedule.

Pete gave us four possible deployment dates: September 22, 23, 30 and October 1 depending on first available weather conditions. The first two were a blow out due to the prolonged nor'easter that came through but on Tuesday afternoon Pete confirmed that Wednesday, September 30 was a go. We had two boats out of Grand Bay Harbor Marina that cruised out to meet up with Pete on his NJ research boat, **Reef Bound**, and the US Coast Guard's **Aids to Navigation** boat doing the deployment. Joining me on the **Break and Run** was Cindy, Kerry, Steven and Bob Osborn. On Phil Simon's boat, the **Bay Filet**, was Chuck Dishian and Bill Dabney. We left the docks a little after 8:00 am and at the mouth of the inlet we passed the **Aids to Navigation** loaded with reef balls and just heading out.

About 20 minutes later we rendezvoused with Pete and Phil. On Pete's boat were members of Elaine Pley's family there to witness the deployment of a memorial reef in her honor. In typical VHFC fashion, Phil and his crew had arrived early (and stayed late) to do some black sea bass fishing on the reef but they took a break and joined us to witness the deployment.



The deployment itself was very impressive. Pete was the quarterback of the operation. He had surveyed the sites and placed buoys at the exact locations for both reefs. The **Aids to**

Navigation crew deployed the reef balls for the Elaine Pley Memorial Reef and then relocated and deployed Dan's. In total, 17 new reef balls are now on the bottom of the reef we refer to as **The Tires** and will soon attract invertebrates and ultimately form robust ecosystems that support multiple fish species including fluke, tog and black sea bass.



Cindy asked that I relay her gratitude to the club for our support and for working with Pete to make it happen. In her own words, "I always thought it would be great for my family and I to be able to pay tribute to Dan by fishing on a reef bearing his name. This is the realization of my vision and a wonderful tribute to my husband."



Cindy Ludwig watching the last of the reef balls being deployed on the Dan Ludwig Memorial Reef.

For All Your Boating Needs
756 East Bay Avenue, Manahawkin
609-597-1271



Visit [The Boat Shop](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA by Bayside Dave Etelman - Our VHFC sites are [VHFC FB](#) and [VHFC Instagram](#). The FB site has 302 followers with each post reaching thousands of people; our Instagram account has 706 followers. Dave shares Members Reports, club activities, tournaments, monthly meetings as well as tips for fishing and boating on both social media networks. VHFC also has a YouTube channel at [VHFC YouTube](#) where you can send in your videos on anything related to fishing: tying rigs, how you set up your boat or car for surf fishing, tackle tricks or days on the water catching fish. **It's important to Like and Comment on each post to help boost distribution.** Here's a recent post:



September Tri-Club meeting attendees at FRTC listening to Jim Freda's presentation

PRESIDENT TRUMP ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE ORDER ELEVATING RECREATIONAL SALTWATER FISHING (Excerpted from OTW) - The order establishes a national policy to elevate marine recreational fishing in federal fisheries management and directs federal agencies to pursue better data and more modern management approaches, strengthen State-Federal partnerships, remove unnecessary barriers to access and advance

innovative solutions for American anglers. Under the Executive Order, federal agencies are directed, consistent with existing law, to:

- **Modernize recreational fisheries data collection** by evaluating outdated survey methods, expanding electronic and mobile reporting and incorporating real-time catch, effort and observational data into federal fisheries management;
- **Strengthen State-Federal partnerships and improve the use of state data**, including consideration of more precise state recreational catch-and-effort data in federal management decisions;
- **Improve recreational fisheries economic data** so the economic value of recreational fishing, for-hire fisheries and shoreside businesses is more fully considered in federal fisheries management decisions;
- **Advance technology-based approaches to marine mammal avoidance**, including directing NOAA to work with the private sector to integrate new technologies that can improve marine mammal detection and avoidance;
- **Fast-track artificial reef and habitat creation**, including establishing a federal Reef-in-Place Program for eligible offshore structures and streamlining permitting for qualifying artificial reef projects, and
- **Address shark and pinniped depredation and their impacts on recreational fishing** by improving research and coordination among federal and state fisheries managers, anglers and the recreational fishing community and advancing management strategies to reduce harmful interactions.

This Executive Order recognizes the significant economic contributions of America's outdoor recreation, noting that the sector generates more than \$1.2 trillion annually, supports 5.2 million jobs and accounts for 2.4 percent of U.S. GDP. Recreational boating and fishing are the nation's largest conventional outdoor recreation activity, contributing \$38.4 billion in value added to the U.S. economy. Saltwater recreational fishing alone generates \$145.4 billion in sales impacts and supports nearly 700,000 jobs nationwide. Go To [Restoring American Angling and Recreation](#) to read the details of the Executive Order.



**A Full Service Boating and Fishing Store
Serving Manahawkin, LBI and Barnegat Bay**

Visit [The Boat Shop](#)

VHFC LIBRARY DISCONTINUED by Ed Valitutto - After many years providing reading material (Books, magazines, and videos) managed by Bill Dabney, the VHFC Board has unanimously agreed to discontinue this service to our members. The reasons are varied but are primarily driven by non-use of the service. Yes, it costs money for the materials and yes, it is a PITA to layout and put away the library material at each meeting, but no one has been making use of it. At our October meeting, all books (magazines and obsolete videos have already been disposed) will be placed out for members to take and keep. Any left on the table will be donated so take a look and see if there is something of interest to you. **And a special THANK YOU to Bill Dabney for his efforts over the years!**



Kayak sales, rentals, accessories, rigging and repairs as well as bicycle and e-bike sales and repair. Discounts of 5% -10% for VHFC

Visit us at [Great Bay Outfitters](http://www.GreatBayNJ.com)

OCTOBER 50 / 50 DRAWING PRIZES by Jerry Nichols - New for 2026, VHFC added some nice prizes to the 50 /50 ticket holders.



The photo shows our October items up for grabs:

9" Drifter Doc, Magictail Ahab, 3 SP Minnows and 4 packages of Tog jigs

Remember You Gotta' Be in It to Win It

Watercraft**Rentals, Parts & Lessons****Store Phone 609 494 0111****Rentals 609 494 1033**

CLUB DINNER by Ed Valitutto - Last reminder for one of our most enjoyable club events! Once again, Bill Dabney has done all the leg work and coordinated our dinner event for **6:00 PM Wednesday October 21st at Kostas Grill in Tuckerton**. Kostas serves Greek cuisine - see [Kostas Menu](#) for details. Everyone pays for their own selections off the menu but VHFC wine expert, Bill Dabney, (I'm not kidding, Bill has really worked in the wine industry), will select an assortment of wine complements of VHFC. VHFC will also provide appetizer platters for your enjoyment. Kostas's is BYOB so if you prefer to bring your own favorite libation, certainly do so. There are no space problems but please let Bill know if you will attend so he can coordinate with Kostas Grill. This is always a fun event for members and their spouses to get together.

Sign up sheets will be available at the meeting or contact Bill at dabney372@outlook.com or 609-709-5093.



Martek Marine Electronics is a full service marine electronics equipment dealer

We can help you decide on the best piece of equipment to suit your needs. We provide sales, service, and installation.

Visit [Martek](#)

VHFC SURF FISHING TOURNAMENT & BBQ by Bayside Dave Here's everything you need to know for this fall fishing event.

Club Members Only

Date: Saturday, November 21st

Registration Fee: \$20 - All Fees Returned as Prize Money

Location: LBI Beaches & Jettys

Fishing Time: 6 AM - 11 AM

BBQ - 12:00 at Surf City Bait & Tackle

Targeted Species:

Striped Bass: 28" - 31" Weighed in at BBQ

Bluefish: 16" Minimum Length

Prizes:

Largest Striped Bass: 50% of fees collected

Largest Bluefish: 50% of fees collected

Sign up sheets will be available at the October and November meetings.

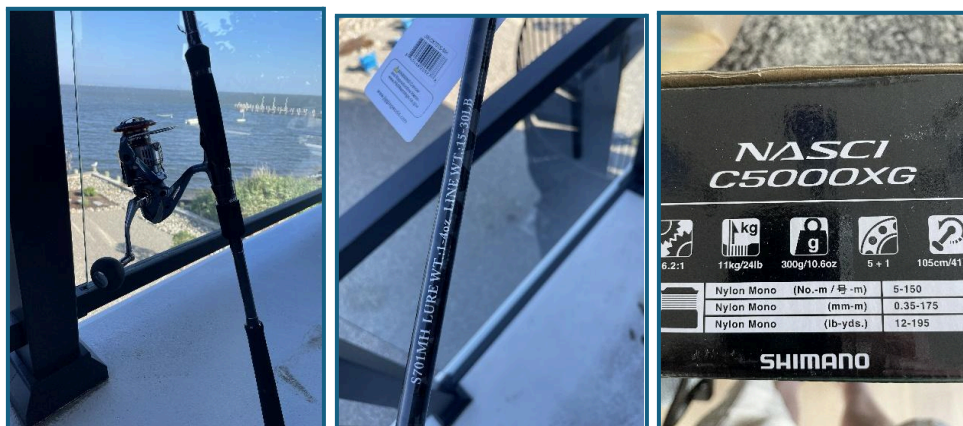


**Your Source on LBI for Quality
Bait & Tackle
317 Long Beach Blvd, Surf City, NJ
609 494 2333**

Visit us at [Surf City B&T](#)

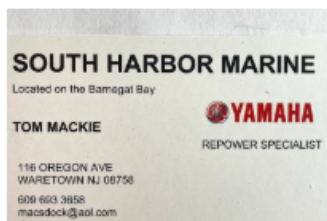
ROD & REEL RAFFLE by John Stuebing Our final 2026 Rod & Reel Raffle is ready to go. Thanks to Creekside Outfitters, we have a great spinning outfit for jigging Fall Stripers and much more. This outfit consists of a Jigging World Rod (MH – rated for 15 – 30 lbs. line) and a Shimano NASCI5000XG Reel rated for 20 – 40 lbs. Line. **Total combo value is ~\$275!**

Tickets will still be available at the October meeting but a winner will be drawn that night!



This will be the last Rod & Reel Raffle for the 2026 season. Don't miss out!

**FAMILY OWNED AND
A FULL SERVICE
MARINA**



**OPERATED SINCE 1968
Call 609 693 3658**



LBI SURF FISHING CLASSIC by Dave Edelman - Registration for the 72nd Annual LBI Surf Fishing Classic is now open!

The Derby kicked off early again this year on August 29th and runs through **November 29th**. This legendary event, one of the world's oldest and most prestigious surf fishing tournaments, offers anglers a shot at over \$25,000 in prizes for landing **Striped Bass, Bluefish, Fluke, Kingfish,**

Blackfish, Weakfish, and Red Drum. The Surf Master Award category returns again this year with prizes offered for the largest striped bass 38" or larger entered via catch, photo, and release. There is also a weekly photo contest for great merchandise for registered entrants.

The registration fee is \$40 for adults and \$20 for juniors (under 18). Register on their website www.lbisfc.com. You can also register in person at Fishermans Headquarters, Jingles Bait & Tackle, and Surf City Bait & Tackle. A free tournament hat and sticker is included with all registrations.

As of today, October 4th, there are 28 registered clubs including VHFC and 233 registered anglers. Entries to date: 23 Kingfish, 3 Weakfish, 12 Bluefish, 10 Fluke. 4 Stripers and 9 Blackfish. No Red Drum have been entered to date. See all results at [2026 Live Results](#)

Still plenty of days to fish and win some great prizes. Sign up today!

Special Discounts to VHFC

Sign Up Sheets Available



Sign up Required

at Club Meetings

PICTURE OF THE MONTH by Phil Simon & Jerry Nichols



**Here's our September POM winner
submitted by Pete Begley. Congratulations
Pete!**



For all your Bait & Tackle needs, visit
Knot Easy Bait & Tackle
945 Radio Rd, Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087

Formerly [Scott's](#)

SEPTEMBER FISHING TRIP by Bayside Dave Our fall Fluke Fishing Trip occurred on September 17th, on the Mary M IV with CAPT Sam taking us out to Garden State North to drift a few wrecks. Many short and keeper Fluke and Sea Bass were caught. Bonito were also spotted and a few fish were caught on epoxy jigs. John Barrett not only won the pool with a 22" fluke. he also caught his three fish limit!. Everyone had a fun day on the ocean!



John Barrett proudly shows his three fish limit including his pool winner!



Weighmaster Pat Presutto holds the final contenders. John's fish is on the right but Ed V's fish is longer and unfortunately skinnier. No money for second place!

**Sara's Salon****220 Ocean Gate Dr. Bayville, NJ****732 269-2522 4.8 Stars | 58 reviews****Barber Shop, Beauty Salon, Manicure**

FOM ENTRIES by Ed Valitutto- Here's our list of entries for the month of September / early October. Go to [2026 FOM Standings](#) for the complete list of entries.

Angler	Species		Class	Date	Size “	MBA	Location
Rocky Vendetti	Fluke	Boat	September	8	24	5	Wreck
Dave Etelman	Sea Bass	Boat	September	8	16.5	3	GSN
Ed Valitutto	Triggerfish	Boat	September	9	16	N/A	Barnegat Inlet North jetty
Ed Valitutto	Fluke	Boat	September	17	21.5	2	Mary M Trip
Larry Gonnello	Sea Bass	Boat	September	18	17.5	3	Wreck
Glen Minor	Sea Bass	Boat	October	2	17	3	GSS

Some recent FOM entries appear on the next page:



**That's Larry
Gonnello's FOM
leading 17.5" Sea
Bass!**



**While Toggling at
the North Jetty, Ed
V caught this FOM
leading 16"
Triggerfish**

11 E Main St Tuckerton

640 281 9433



**BOGIN'S
BAIT & TACKLE**
KEEPING LINES TIGHT
640-281-9433

Keeping Lines Tight

boginbassman@aol.com

2026 CONTESTS by Ed Valitutto - VHFC has three year-long contests: Melanie Boytos Award, Fish of the Year and Fish of the Month. Go to [VHFC Contest Rules](#) for full details.

The MBA winner receives a \$200 Visa gift card name plus their name engraved on a trophy they display at a place of their choosing for one year; FOY winners each receive a

\$100 Visa gift card plus an engraved plaque; FOM winners receive a \$50 gift card to a local Bait & Tackle shop.

Melanie Boytos Award (MBA) - Here are the top 5 Leaders

Angler	MBA Points
Glen Minor	18
Rocky Vendetti	16
Dave Etelman	15
Pat Presutto	14
Perry Hoagey	12

Fish of the Year (FOY) Leaders

Species	Angler	Size Inches
Bluefish	Glen Minor	32
Fluke	Perry Hoagey	28
Sea Bass	Ed Valitutto	19.5
Striped Bass	Glen Minor	42.25
Weakfish	No Entry	
Blackfish	Rocky Vendetti	19.25

FOM CONTESTS by Ed Valitutto - There are 28 FOMs open at present: 7 Junior & 21 Adult FOMs: 4 Surf, 9 Boat, 4 Boat / Surf and 4 Offshore.

Four FOM contests closed in September (Jr Fluke, Surf Fluke, Boat Fluke & Boat Sea Bass) and 1 FOM contest opened (Boat Sea Bass). Here are the September FOM winners:

Jr	Fluke	Bryson Wyatt	20.5"
Boat	Fluke	Perry Hoagey	28"
Boat	Sea Bass	Larry Gonnello	17.5"
Surf	Fluke	Tyler Leary	20.75"

Congratulations to our winners!
Congratulations to Perry Hoagey for also winning the Fluke FOY!

A Full Service Marina

Call: 609-296-5660



More Than 'Just a Bait Store'

Located on the Bass River

Go to [Allen's Dock](#)

FOM CONTEST STATUS by Ed Valitutto Go to [VHFC Contest Rules](#) for full details.

Open FOM Contests shaded Green; Closed Contests shaded Red

Junior Angler FOM Leaders					
Species	Start	Finish	Leader/Winner	Size Inches	Status
White Perch	1/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Bluefish	1/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Kingfish	3/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open

Blowfish	3/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Fluke	5/4/26	9/25/26	Bryson Wyatt	20.5	Closed
Sea Bass	5/15/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Striped Bass	1/1/26	12/31/26	Bryson Wyatt	29	Open
Spring Blackfish	1/1/26	4/30/26	Gaige Grant	16.75	Closed
Fall Blackfish	8/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open

Surf FOM Leaders

Species	Start	Finish	Leader/Winner	Size Inches	Status
Striper	1/1/26	7/31/26	Dave Etelman	31	Closed
Striper	8/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Striper No Size Limit	1/1/26	12/31/26	Glen Minor Leads	42.25	Open
Bluefish	1/1/26	6/30/26	Glen Minor	32	Closed
Bluefish	7/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Fluke	5/4/26	6/30/26	No Entry		Closed
Fluke	7/1/26	9/25/26	Tyler Leary	20.75	Closed
Blackfish	1/1/26	4/30/26	No Winner		Closed
Blackfish	8/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open

2026 Boat FOM Leaders					
Species	Start	Finish	Leader/Winner	Size Inches	Status
Striper	1/1/26	7/31/26	Jim Healy	30.75	Closed
Striper	8/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Striper No Size Limit	1/1/26	12/31/26	Rocky Vendetti Leads	40	Open
Bluefish	1/1/26	6/30/26	Doug O'Brien	28.75	Closed
Bluefish	7/1/26	12/31/26	Tyler Leary Leads	29	Open
Blackfish	1/1/26	4/30/26	Rocky Vendetti	19.25	Closed
Blackfish	8/1/26	12/31/26	Ed Valitutto Leads	17.5	Open
Weakfish	1/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Ling	1/1/26	12/31/26	Marty Friedrich Leads	17.25	Open
Triggerfish	5/1/26	12/31/26	Ed Valitutto Leads	16	Open
Porgy	5/1/26	12/31/26	No Entry		Open
Sea Bass	5/15/26	6/21/26	Ed Valitutto	19.5	Closed
Sea Bass	6/22/26	9/22/26	Larry Gonnello	17.5	Closed
Sea Bass	9/23/26	12/31/26	Glen Minor Leads	17	Open
Fluke	5/4/26	6/30/26	Jim Witczak	25.75	Closed
Fluke	7/1/26	7/31/26	Cheri Hebert	25	Closed

Fluke	8/1/26	8/31/26	Cheri Hebert	26.25	Closed
Fluke	9/1/26	9/25/26	Perry Hoagey	28	Closed

2026 Boat or Surf FOM Leaders

Species	Start	Finish	Leader/Winner	Size Inches	Status
White Perch	1/1/26	12/31/26	Dave Spendiff Leads	13.75	Open
Blowfish	3/1/26	11/30/26	Dave Puzal Leads	11	Open
Kingfish	3/1/26	11/30/26	Luis Salgado Leads	13.25	Open
Black Drum	1/1/26	12/31/26	Dave Etelman Tied with Bill Bond Leads	40.5	Open

2026 Offshore FOM Leaders

Species	Start	Finish	Leader/Winner	Size Inches	Status
Bluefin	4/1/26	11/30/26	Andrew Thomas Leads	32	Open
Yellowfin	5/1/26	11/30/26	Tim Naples Leads	53	Open
Mahi Mahi	5/1/26	11/30/26	Gage Grant Leads	26	Open
False Albacore	9/1/26	11/30/26	No Entry		Open

Voted Best Italian Restaurant in Manahawkin

712 E Bay Ave (609) 597 - 6708



Visit [Pietro's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria](#)

STEAMED FISH with CORN and TOMATO SAUCE by Ed Valitutto - I saw this recipe in the Southern Ocean Times. It's an easy recipe despite the list of sauce ingredients. The original called for cod but any thick white fish - tog or striper - should work. You can make the sauce a few hours ahead, so the fish just needs to poach in the sauce before serving.



Ingredients:

4 6 oz fillets of white fish

For the Sauce

3 Tbsp. Olive Oil

3 ozs bacon cut into 1 inch pieces

2 leeks or 1 bunch of scallions part finely chopped

1 red or yellow pepper chopped

3 garlic cloves minced

1 cup dry white wine

1 14 oz can diced tomatoes and juice or 1 lb skinned and diced fresh tomatoes

1 Tbsp tomato paste

1/4 cup chopped basil

1 1/4 cups fresh corn off the cob or use frozen

Salt, pepper and smoked paprika

2 Tsp balsamic vinegar

1 cup clam juice

Directions:

- 1) Heat 1 Tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Saute bacon until crisp and remove.
- 2) Add remaining oil and saute the leeks and peppers until soft but not brown.
- 3) Add the garlic for 30 seconds then add the wine. Heat on high heat for a few minutes.

- 4) Add the tomatoes, paste and 2 Tbsp basil. Lower heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Add the corn for another minute of cooking. Season to taste with salt, pepper and smoked paprika. Add the balsamic vinegar and mix well.
- 5) Just before cooking the fish, add the clam juice, remaining bacon and basil. Bring to a simmer and taste for seasoning.
- 6) Season fish with salt and pepper and place in the skillet. Cover and cook gently for 10 minutes until the fish starts to flake or insert the tip of a knife and feel for warmth.
- 7) Serve with rice or other grain and of course, a nice chilled glass of white wine.

On The Water Towing

Family Owned & Operated

\$50 Off Yearly Membership



Use Promo Code VHFC50 & Show your Membership Card

Visit [Join Sea Tow](#)

VHFC APPAREL by Chuck Dishian - As previously reported, we have an online store for an assortment of apparel including knitted beanie style hats. However, we still have our 'baseball' hats with a khaki cap, dark blue brim and a mesh back. Hats are available at all meetings. Hats have our logo on them and cost \$25. If you would like a hat, purchase one at our meeting. But for a huge selection of club apparel purchased directly from the supplier that you can either pick up at their store in Barnegat or have shipped directly to your home, visit [Artist Tees](#). You also have the option to customize your apparel with either club logos or your name.

NOVEMBER FISHING TRIP by Bayside Dave Our Winter Bottom Fishing Trip is planned for **November 4th, on the Mary M IV** with CAPT Sam taking us out to his favorite spots for bottom dwellers like Sea Bass, Tog, Porgy, Triggerfish, Ling and who knows what else. Put it on your calendars, bundle up and join us for the day. Hot coffee and doughnuts compliments of VHFC!



New Scent Emitting Soft Product

Most Effective Bait Available

Use Code VHFC15 for 15% off

[Click here for the Q8 website](#)

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 have been **2** reports since the last Newsletter.



Marty and pals Wil, Mario & Paul had a great time on GSS. 7 keeper Fluke and 3 keeper Sea Bass. Marty always manages to find fish!



Ed V and pal Anthony aka Rig a Tony had a good day on the North jetty. Two Tog and a nice Triggerfish.

VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS By Jeff Orsoe - Give me a call in the spring for your vessel safety check. Contact: Jeff Orsoe Cell / Text: 732-672-5530 or email: jorsoe786@gmail.com.

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.

[Allen's Dock](#) (10% discount on bait & tackle w/ VHFC card)

5698 US-9, New Gretna, NJ 08224

609-296-5660

[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.

[Bogin's Bait & Tackle](#) (10% discount w/ VHFC card)

11 E Main St Tuckerton, NJ 08087

640-281-9433

[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

Great Bay Outfitters (5% off Kayaks and 10% off Accessories with VHFC Card)
955 Radio Road, Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087
609-848-3657

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

Knot Easy Bait & Tackle (10% discount w/ VHFC card)
945 Radio Rd, Little Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08087
609 294 1300

Martek Marine Electronics Specialists (10% discount w/ VHFC card)
701 Old Avalon Blvd, Unit 4, Avalon, NJ 08202
609 390 3355

Pietro's Pizza
712 E Bay Ave, Manahawkin, NJ
609 597 6708

Q8 Super Baits
30540 SR 44 Eustis, FL. 32736
352 357-0902 Members use Code VHFC15 for 15% off

Sara's Salon Barber Shop, Beauty Salon, Manicure
220 Ocean Gate Dr. Bayville, NJ
732 269-2522

Sea Tow (\$50 off yearly membership)
Call your local Sea Tow provider, use promotion code VHFC50 along with your membership card

South Harbor Marine A FULL SERVICE MARINA Located on Barnegat Bay
116 Oregon Ave, Waretown, NJ 08758
609 693 3658 FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1968

[Surf City Bait & Tackle](#) (10% discount w/ VHFC card excluding worms)

317 Long Beach Boulevard Surf City, NJ 08008

609 494-2333

[The Boat Shop](#) 10% discount with VHFC card

756 E. Bay Ave, Manahawkin, NJ 08050

609-597-1271

[West Marine Pro Team](#) (Varied Discount by Product Purchased) You must sign up to be part of the West Marine Pro Team. Sign Up Sheets will be available at our Meetings. You can also contact John Stuebing (stuebs@comcast.net) to sign up and get access to our West Marine Account.