

# Fishing & Hunting <sup>TM</sup> Journal



**Tarpon in  
the bay?**

**77.5 Pound  
White Marlin  
Wins \$3.7 Million**

FREE



On Tuesday, August 19, 2024, Former Governor and Senatorial Candidate, Larry Hogan(right), joined Talbot Watermen Association president, Jeff Harrison, (second from left) and Maryland Watermen Association vice president, Russell Dize, (left) to hear the watermen's concerns and meet Tilghman Island Seafood Company's owner, Nick Hargrove (center). Nick Hargrove has made much needed progress in eradicating blue catfish and restoring oysters to the Bay. The group toured Tilghman Island Seafood Company's spat-on-shell operation, two 100 year old oyster buy boats and the blue catfish processing plant. Special thanks to former DNR Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio for arranging the visit.



In late August, Billfisher released 41 White Marlin.



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# Fishing & Hunting Journal

Volume 34, Number 4

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### TARPON

PHOTO COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

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## BY INSPIRATION MINISTRIES

### A Disciplined Life

*“These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”—1 John 2:26 NASB*

Colonel Wilhelm Stieber was a master manipulator. Described as “one of the nastiest men who ever lived,” he revealed his character while a young member of the Prussian police. Even they dismissed him because of his abuses. However, the Russian government liked his methods and hired him.

Stieber learned that by controlling information he could shape reality to his own design. He doctored telegrams and spread false rumors. Typical of his methods, during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he planted a story that French troops were panicking and suffering “appalling losses.” The story was complete fiction, but his fabricated account accomplished his purposes.

In our time, many in business and politics have applied similar techniques. Believers need to realize the many ways information is manipulated by the media. The Bible warns us to be alert, so as not to be deceived “with empty words” (Ephesians 5:6) or well-crafted arguments (Colossians 2:4). We even deceive ourselves sometimes (1 Corinthians 3:18).

Most seriously, we must remember that Satan desires to deceive us by planting ideas in our minds and manipulating our thoughts. As Jesus warned, Satan “is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). Remember, in the world you will face many forms of manipulation. This is why you need to base your thoughts on God’s Word. Stay grounded in His Word. Be filled with the Spirit and sensitive to His leading. Always be alert.

*Reflection Question: How are you guarding your mind against the lies of the enemy?*



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# Anglers Report Multiple Sightings of Tarpon in Maryland Waters of Chesapeake Bay

Scouting for red drum near the Hoopers Island Lighthouse on Aug. 1, Capt. Tom Weaver saw something roll in the flat, calm waters a couple hundred yards away.

He looked for the wake and followed a disturbance in the distance. When he got close and shut the motor off, he saw huge shapes under the water. The fish looked familiar—and Weaver soon realized he recognized them from his years fishing in the Florida Keys. **Credit: Tom Weaver**



**Blurry shapes just below the surface of the Chesapeake Bay, multiple tarpon school together in waters near Hoopers Island Lighthouse on Aug. 1. Credit: Tom Weaver**

“When you run out of Annapolis, you don’t expect an hour and a half later to be running across a tarpon,” Weaver, who runs a charter business Fish With Weaver, said. “My brain took a few minutes to process.”

Tarpon are large, athletic fish renowned for how they fight the line, with both incredible stamina and an ability to leap out of the water, their bodies thrashing in the air.

In a video Weaver recorded, hulking 6-foot-long fish lurk motionless under the surface. They were tanks, he said, each maybe 80 to 100 pounds. He went after the group of seven or eight tarpon for a while and got a bite, though he didn’t have the right gear to pull one in. “Really, we were not ready to see tarpon,” he said.

Erik Zlokovitz, Maryland Department of Natural Resources’ recreational fisheries outreach coordinator, said the department is getting more reports of tarpon, usually associated with warmer southern waters, in Maryland this summer.

“We have seen tarpon in Maryland’s section of the bay historically, but the number of fish spotted recently is unusual,” Zlokovitz said. “This year is the first time we’ve gotten multiple reports of schools of tarpon, and not just a stray fish.”

Tarpon are known to come into the southern Chesapeake Bay in the summer, and anglers target tarpon in the coastal waters off the Eastern Shore of Virginia. But it’s usually rare for anyone to encounter a tarpon in Maryland waters.

In 2019, DNR staff sampling for striped bass netted and released a small tarpon near Kent Island. Angler Brittany Growe hooked a 6-foot-long tarpon near Smith Island and the Virginia border in July 2020. Her fishing partner touched the leader before the hook pulled out with the fish

next to the boat, making it an official catch and release.

Older references also note occasional sightings. In the 1927 publica-

tion for the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries “Fishes of the Chesapeake Bay,” authors Samuel F. Hildebrand and William C. Schroeder wrote that tarpon “was reliably reported by fisherman in the southern parts of Chesapeake Bay” and referred to an earlier list of fish species in Maryland from 1878 that reported a tarpon caught off Crisfield.

Weaver said when he told people about his find, two other guides said they had also seen tarpon in Maryland in the last week. He saw a school of tarpon moving fast in the Bay last year too, and people he’s spoken with have only seen tarpon in Maryland waters in the past two years.

Zlokovitz said it’s too early to tell if the apparent uptick in tarpon is an “anomaly or the start of a trend.”

Water temperatures have risen in the Chesapeake Bay in recent decades, and climate change is affecting Maryland’s biodiversity. A number of warm-water fish species—from Florida pompano to cobia, cutlassfish, and pompano dolphinfish—are becoming more common in the Bay

and the Atlantic coast.

Warming waters could be drawing tarpon farther north, or they could be traveling farther in pursuit of food sources like menhaden and shrimp, DNR scientists said. It could also be a larger northern migration this year. A surfcaster in Rhode Island caught a tarpon this summer.

Water temperatures have increased in the Chesapeake Bay over the last three decades, with most DNR monitoring stations showing an increase between 1 and 2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1999. This summer has been hot as well, with monitoring stations recording above average temperatures near Hoopers Island, according to DNR data.

When Weaver saw the tarpon, he thought they were “slurping on blue

crabs” that were swimming nearby. Regretting that he didn’t have fly rods on board, he pulled out the smallest paddle tails he could find and did his best to hook one. Next time, he’s bringing crab flies and plans to be ready. He wants to catch a tarpon in Maryland, or even just get one to jump.

“I’m gonna have a dedicated tarpon setup on the boat—rig and fly,” Weaver said. “I’m not going to make that mistake again.”

Tarpon are generally considered undesirable for eating, and DNR officials recommend anglers only pursue tarpon for catch-and-release fishing.

Written By Joe Zimmermann, science writer with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



**Tony is on the meat now and expects a great Fall. Give him a call. Photo Courtesy of Saltwater Adventures**



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“Tackle Box Tim”

## MARSH MADNESS

For longer than I can remember now, I have vacationed at DelMarVa beaches in late summer and/or early fall. In many of those years, part of that respite involves a coastal bay fishing trip with Captain Mark Sampson. Early on, we concentrated on stripers in the inlet and at the Route 50 Bridge. There have been bluefish and flounder in the mix. Although I have boated and released my share of hard fighting salty stripers in the current, my quest for one of legal, 28-inch size, eludes me to this day.

Captain Mark is most renowned for his expertise in education, conservation, and catching shark in mid-Atlantic coast waters. He works in for light tackle trips that target stripers on back bay structure, and marsh locations for speckled trout and redfish. Try as he might, our success rate has been wanting at best in the marshes. We even spend one entire trip in the marshes south of Ocean City. Mother Nature spoiled that trip with a cloudy, dreary day from its onset. You can tell my reluctance of fishing the marshes, but I know the high potential of the fishery.

I still want a shot at that elusive coastal striper, but it’s always nice to have some table fare for all those casts. Prior to my September vacation last year, Captain Mark spent time honing in the marsh patterns and locked in my hopes for a good trip. Last year’s partner was Randy Yarnall. Randy is a former touring bass pro, an avid Chesapeake striper angler, a secretive catfish guru, and has a great understanding of tides and current. Both of us looked forward to having a good day of

speckled trout fishing.

Sampson plies the coastal back bays in his flats skiff that he uses during the winter months in Florida. The boat seems out of place in DelMarVa. In recent years he has increasingly added the backwater fishing to his Ocean City schedule. The shallow draft boat allows him to get to waters that many other anglers can’t access; and atop the poling platform, he can go into stealth mode to sneak up on the easily spooked fish.

Our morning trip started at the end of low tide. We were casting to points and islands to target the trout. Schools of baitfish were everywhere, yet we were not getting the bites. We were starting out slow as in years past, but patience is a virtue when it comes to marsh fishing. In years past, the abundance of baitfish was not this prevalent. Once the tidal current started a strong surge, baitfish schooled in current breaks and didn’t get swept up in the tide. Predator fish – in this case, speckled trout – knew these areas feeding zones and took full advantage.

We played the waiting game while exercising our casting arms. It took a bit of switching between colors and sizes of paddle tail swim baits. The trout shied away from the commonplace white and white chartreuse, but we soon found the right ones. We downsized our selection to smaller lures that were a similar size to the bait species. Randy’s swim bait was a generic 3 1/2-inch slender body in a sexy shad. I wound up getting bites on a 3.75-inch SwimFish in the Tennessee flash color. We chose 1/4-ounce jig



Tackle Box Tim shows a stout speckled trout from Sinepuxent Bay.

heads because of fishing so shallow.

Once we found the right lure, the action was relentless. The baitfish were bubbling in schools on the slack current side of the points. We could see the silvery flashes of the trout attacking from below. We got numerous bumps and strikes from each school. Randy was a bit worried about his small supply of swim baits ... and what it might cost to lease a SwimFish or two. While we were catching a lot of trout, we figured out that the bigger fish were staging on the outer edges of the baitfish schools rather than underneath them. We focused on the bigger rather than the numerous.

As we soldiered on from point to point, we cast to the waves of baitfish schools away from the banks. We did not get as many bites as we did along the shoreline, but the quality of the specks was better. It was also one of those rare days when we felt comfortable to search

your tackle bag for other lures that might catch fish. Captain Mark suggested trying some surface lures. I tried to no avail. Here, again, we also tried other paddle tails of similar size; but found ourselves switching back to the baits that were getting the all bites.

We wound down our trip back to the island and points where we started. The bait was present, but we didn’t see the constant slashing from below. The bites were better the second time around, but not as frequent as the ones farther south. We summed it up to the tidal current winding down toward the end of the flood tide.

My outlook of fishing Maryland’s coastal marshes was changed from skeptical to “Let’s Go!” I am much looking forward to my return trip later this month, and hoping for the same level of speckled trout Marsh Madness!



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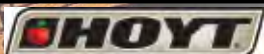


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John Collier Caught this 27 inch, 4.42lb chain pickerel off of my Crescent Ultralite in a creek along the Pocomoke River last month.

## DNREC Announces Opening of New Boat Ramp at Records Pond near Laurel, DE

Enhanced Facility Includes Courtesy Dock, Expanded Boat Trailer Parking and New Pier Decking for Fish Pier  
 The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control announced today the grand opening of a new boat ramp facility at Records Pond near Laurel in Sussex County. Construction began earlier this year on the new facility – which includes a new boat ramp with courtesy dock, expansion of existing parking lots to accommodate boat trailers, and new decking for an existing fishing pier on Records Pond. The main parking lot has eight boat trailer spaces and 10 car spaces.

In addition to the main parking lot there is an auxiliary lot on the opposite side of Willow Street that has 10 additional boat trailer spaces and four additional car spaces. Shoreline anglers can access the timber tidal fishing pier which was closed during ramp construction, but is now reopened.

The new ramp also features improved water depth for launching boats and should allow unimpeded access to the pond from the ramp regardless of the pond's water level. The old ramp at Records Pond, located on the east side of US Route 13, will also remain open, but is better suited for putting in canoes and kayaks due to the shallower water depths at that location.

For more information related to this project call the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Section at 302-739-9914.

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## 77.5 Pound White Marlin Wins \$3.7 Million

The 51st Annual White Marlin Open has concluded, marking another thrilling chapter in the world's largest offshore billfish tournament. Despite rough weather conditions that extended the tournament by an extra day, 318 boats competed for a share of the \$8.59 million prize pool, bringing in five impressive billfish to the scales and delivering unforgettable moments on the water.

This year's tournament will be remembered for the incredible appearance of huge blue marlin and bigeye tuna in Ocean City, dominating the leaderboard. The historic first-place blue marlin secured its spot as one of the top five heaviest in WMO history.

### Leaderboard Recap

**In the White Marlin category**, Ven Poole from Raleigh, NC, aboard the boat Waste Knot, secured the top spot with a 77.50-pound catch, earning an impressive \$3,699,630.67. Just behind, Noah McVicker from Ocean City, MD, fishing on the Billfisher, landed a 76.00-pound white marlin, taking home \$1,797,119.13.

**The Blue Marlin division** saw a stunning 897.50-pound catch by Lance Blakemore of Horseheads, NY, on the Stone Cutter, which earned him \$520,374.07. Close behind, Phil Key from Millers Island, MD, aboard Moore Bills, brought in an 894.00-pound blue marlin, winning \$410,936.89. Rounding out the top three was Hershel Martin of Montross, VA, on Bobojo, with a 789.50-pound blue marlin that earned \$112,704.77.

**In the Tuna category**, Rob Jones from Cincinnati, OH, fishing on the Blue Runner, dominated with a 220.50-pound catch, securing \$1,007,012.32. Jeff Green from Cape May, NJ, aboard Warden Pass, claimed second place with a 193.50-pound tuna, earning \$154,751.27, while Dante Soriente of Little Egg Harbor, NJ, on MJ's, also caught a 193.50-pound tuna, taking home \$148,250.85.

**The Wahoo category** was led by Ian Horowitz from North Wales, PA, who landed a 70.00-pound wahoo aboard American Lady, winning \$66,094.09.

**In the Dolphin category**, Patrick Field from Stuart, FL, aboard Catch 23, took first place with a 32.50-pound dolphin, earning \$64,094.09, followed by Andy Geldmacher of Westminster, MD, on Double Nickel, with a 31.00-pound catch, earning \$2,409.09.

### Top Boats & Anglers

In the Billfish Points Division Bobojo claimed the top spot among boats with 1,033 points, followed by Sequel with 980 points, and Taylor Jean and Catch 23 each finishing strong with 770 points.

In the Release category, Sequel topped the leaderboard with 980 points, while Taylor Jean and Bobojo followed closely behind with 770 points each.

Hershel Martin, aboard the Bobojo, was crowned the WMO Grand Champion, leading the tournament with an outstanding performance and 753.17 points. In the female angler division, Kelly Weber on MaxBet claimed the top spot, followed by Heather Jaworski on Judge and Jackie Tenuto on Sequel.





# SPANNING THE GLOBE



Jeff and Hunter Rippeon fishing with Capt. Luke had a great day off shore landing a lot of Mahi, Black Sea Bass and some massive Blue Line Tilefish. These two citations weighed in at 11lbs 8oz and 16lbs. Great fish! Congrats. #chincoteague #OffShoreFishing



Here's August with his Speckled Trout caught in Hatteras.



A 13-year-old boy from Kemmerer, Wyoming, caught a tiger trout from the Viva Naughton Reservoir to break a state fishing record.

Jaxon Krall reeled in the 12.77 pound fish that stretches 31.25 inches long and has a girth of 16.75 inches, according to a press release from the Wyoming Game & Fish Department

Krall caught the fish using a Thomas Buoyant lure. The previous state record for tiger trout was 11.93 pounds and the fish was caught on the same reservoir.



Cearuh Reff 9.8lb Cat out of a little Virginia lake!



**“Tuna The Tide”**

**TAKE A KID FISHING II**

**By Captain Mark Galasso**

A few years ago I did a short article about taking kids fishing. It was based more on my experiences on my charter boat and what I learned after 25 years of taking people fishing and cruising around Kent Island. I had a charter this past Sunday of some friends that have been fishing with me for years. Two of the members of the trip were retired game wardens from Delaware and we got to talking about taking kids fishing (and hunting) to expose them to the great outdoors. Delaware like Maryland has seen a steady decline in the numbers of hunting and fishing licenses sold each year and it's a real concern. Much of the revenue license sales generate goes to funding the local DNR's and public access to enjoy our natural world.

The powers to be recognize this trend and are trying to reverse it. However, with the loss of habitat and decreases in fish and game it can be a hard sell to ask people to buy licenses (or go out on chartered fishing trips or guided hunts ) for more strict regulations like one Striper bag limits or one bird Goose hunts. And I'm not saying that these aren't needed to avoid complete closures but it takes it's toll on both recreational and charter efforts as well as outfitters. So the trick is how do you deal with new rules and regulations and still expose kids (and new people) to the great outdoors? Here is a little advice.

Teach them that it's about the experience and not just putting meat in the freezer. Watch and enjoy the sunrise or the sunset don't just complain it's too early or too late. Teach about why fishing or hunting is the way it is. Most people, especially kids are fascinated about fish or animal biology. Why else would they want to grow up and be a biologist? Take it from a former biologist, it's not the money! Get people to look around and observe your surroundings. Enjoy them. In Maryland were extremely blessed to have rivers, lakes and streams as well as mountains and wow, the Chesapeake Bay.

Before I get to sappy a recent event got me thinking about all this and why I love the outdoors like I do. My father recently passed away and the family has been pouring over photo albums stirring up old memories. And guess what? Photos of our

family enjoying the outdoors dominate everything including wedding albums, house building albums and even baby pictures! There's more pictures of my Dad holding up Tunas and Fluke then him holding me. And I'm good with that. In fact I'm great with that!

My father exposed my brother and I to fishing when we were still in diapers. He would rent little row boats on Long Beach Island so we could go clamming, Fluking or crabbing. Sometime all three in a single day. Early on though his real love was Tuna fishing. He would go every Saturday and we ate a lot of fish as kids. I can't even say we were exposed to fishing, we were immersed in it. And when we moved to Maryland in the mid 70's we got immersed in hunting as well.

My father new all the gun shops in Maryland. They were his clients. He also knew most of the outfitters who worked through the local sporting goods stores. He sold them all hunting and fishing supplies. He was a factory rep. for Weatherby, Bushnell, White Stag, Nikko and Gerber knives. He lived and breathed hunting and fishing so my brother and I did too. We shared time between Maryland's Eastern Shore and the Jersey Shore. Fishing all summer. Hunting all Winter. I think we had jobs but I don't remember that as fondly I guess.

I can honestly say I started working on the water as a commercial clammer at 12. That's about the same time I started Tuna fishing. Talk about getting sea sick. Those old wooden Tuna boats were slow and rocky. It seemed I lived a lot of mornings curled up in the fetal position trying not to puke while Pop and the other guys rigged baits and worked on reels. Not sure why they brought me. I was to small and weak to reel in big Tunas and spent a lot of time trying not to embarrass myself. I think he knew all along I could take it and it was HIS way of exposing ME to the great outdoors. I guess as a Marine you didn't expose people to things GENTLY.

I'm not saying you should use a military approach to exposing kids to fishing and hunting but we ALL should be taking the time to make sure kids have the opportunity to hunt and fish. If you have

young ones figure out how to get them involved. Don't wait for them to come to you. Kids are distracted now a days. There is a lot of other stimuli out there. Figure out how to get them away from the computer, phone or laptop. Make it a privilege not a punishment. See what "Floats their boat". Every kid is different. I think you could have whipped me with a fishing rod and I'd still love

to fish. Not everyone is like that. But we need to help people enjoy nature in one way or the other. It's a fact that we have as many waterfowl as we do MOSTLY because of waterfowl hunters. Well if you think about it in a broader sense we have the nature we have because of nature lovers. And a good portion of them are hunters and fisherman.

So take a kid hunting or fishing.

# Norwegian company looks to build major salmon farm in Cecil County

PORT DEPOSIT, Md. — Cecil County's Port Deposit area could gain 300 jobs in the next few years, as a Norwegian salmon-farming company is planning to move into the long-vacant Bainbridge Naval Training Center.

AquaCon, which wants to develop Atlantic salmon production facilities on the East Coast, would be the first official tenant at Bainbridge.

The company would build on a 160-acre site at Bainbridge, and would bring more than 300 jobs in everything from manufacturing to logistics to research/scientific work.

AquaCon is proposing a \$320 million capital investment, with the first phase potentially breaking ground early next year, said the Cecil County Office of Economic Development.

But Toni Sprenkle, executive director of Bainbridge Development Corporation, noted there are still many hurdles to overcome for the project to happen, including possible environmental remediation.

The development corporation has been working with AquaCon for a few years, Sprenkle said, because the agency wanted to fully understand the details and the potential impact.

She said the salmon farm would mean state-of-the-art technology, "well-respected research," and an operation that's "cutting-edge in terms of environmental sustainability."

AquaCon had previously wanted to build the salmon farm in Caroline County, near the Delaware border, but pulled out of that area over environmental concerns.

Sprenkle said the issue there was over water temperature, which will not be a concern at Bainbridge because it will be at a much larger body of water, the Susquehanna River.

Sprenkle noted that "there's a big push to get away from fish farming in the ocean," and said developing the site is important to Port Deposit and the larger area.

Regarding Bainbridge, she said: This would just be another step closer in getting the full site developed.



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# Boy reels in colossal 118-pound white marlin on Nantucket, possibly breaking junior world record

A 12-year-old boy from Weston, Massachusetts, reeled in a massive white marlin off the coast of Nantucket on Aug. 16.

Stone Fornes caught the 118.2-pound fish, potentially breaking a junior world record, while fishing with angler Elliot Sudal.

The current record for a white marlin is 102 pounds, which was caught off Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in 2011, according to the International Game Fish Association.

Fornes said, it was a tough 90-minute battle reeling in the fish. "This marlin was an acrobat," he said.

Elliot Sudal, who has been a captain on Nantucket for 12 years, works with various shark research organizations.

"It's wildly impressive that Stone was able to catch this fish ... from spotting it to getting it to eat a bait, let alone fighting it for an hour and a half," Sudal said.

"It was an epic battle, with the marlin jumping completely out of the water several times and super technical keeping the boat positioned correctly."

Sudal said he is grateful to the fishing community for coming together to transport the fish and assist with the necessary paperwork associated with the world record.

"I feel like most 12-year-olds are playing on iPads, while [Stone's] off catching world records," Sudal said. "He got some serious street cred on the docks for this one."

Fornes said he typically releases most of what he catches, but this fish was cooked with the help of local restaurant CRU Oyster Bar Nantucket.

"Unfortunately, in order to confirm a world record, you need to keep the fish," he told Fox News Digital.

"We spent a few days getting all the measurements and a scientific review before sharing it with a bunch of people and eating it. It was the best meal of my life."

"He's poured everything into this passion," Don Fornes said. "And he's learned that, some days, you come up short, but if you stay after it, you can eventually win big."

Lauren Fornes pointed out the entire Nantucket team worked to get a certified scale, keep ice on the fish and find a scientist to confirm the species.

"I had no idea that logging a world record would be such a complex and expansive process," she said. "Stone has grown in ways he never imagined through this experience."

Fornes enjoys reading fishing reports and making friends with more experienced fishermen, he said.

"Stone's not just about the catch; he's deeply concerned about the future of our fisheries," Don Fornes noted.

"When he does keep a fish, he's passionate about sharing the meat with the wide range of people he's befriended in the Nantucket community.

"Lauren and I think about how this experience might transfer to

other life pursuits when he grows up, but we know this kid is going to chart his own course. He may be an old man on the sea."

An International Game Fish Association representative said the record confirmation process typically takes between four and six weeks.

"Once received, the application will be pending and will enter the official review process," the representative said. "Once it has been reviewed, a decision will be made on the approval of the record."



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# Angler arrested after catching 14 oversized fish: 'Caught red-handed'

A fantastic example of teamwork between anglers and law enforcement!

Many anglers are finding great success in their pursuit of Striped Bass recently due to the amount of bait fish in our waters. At around 3 pm yesterday afternoon, tips started flooding in through direct calls to our coastal conservation officers and through our tip line (NH Operation Game Thief) reporting that a single boat with a Massachusetts hull number was catching and keeping oversized Striped Bass off the coast of New Castle and Rye. The boat in question fled the area in an unknown direction after multiple anglers yelled to him that they were calling NH Fish and Game. As our officers searched, they included Maine Marine Patrol, Massachusetts Environmental Police, and local police to BOLO (be on the lookout) for the suspect vessel and operator. Portsmouth Police Department successfully located him after he had loaded his boat onto a trailer and was in the act of ditching the fish - 14 oversized Striped Bass ranging from 37 to 47 inches! New Hampshire only issues a recreational license for saltwater fishing, which allows for one Striped Bass per angler per day that must be 28 inches to less than 31 inches.

NH Fish and Game officers conducted a thorough investigation and lengthy interview with the individual that resulted in a "caught red-handed" confession! His intent was to sell his catch under his Commercial Striped Bass Permit in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. On behalf of the NH Fish and Game Department, Law Enforcement Division, a HUGE thanks to the angling community for reporting details promptly and to our colleagues in law enforcement, who all jumped into action to curtail this abuse of natural resources. The individual is charged with fines for licensing violations and each fish taken and possessed illegally. Upon conviction, the seized fish will be

donated.

This case exemplified the importance of reporting natural resource violations quickly and with as much detail as possible. For more information on how you can help, log on to [NHOGT.ORG](http://NHOGT.ORG) and learn more about New Hampshire Fish and Game Operation Game Thief.



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**Gideon Stoltzfus and family had a limit of rockfish and a mess of cats with captain Wayne Gatling out of Rock Hall, MD**



**Sherri Saunders with the winning Mahi in the Poor Girl Open out of Ocean City, MD**



## Pennsylvania's Elk Cam Now Streaming Live from Elk County



ELK COUNTY, PA — Wildlife enthusiasts can now experience real-time glimpses into the wilderness of Elk County with the return of Pennsylvania's Elk Cam, which is now streaming live online. The camera offers viewers the chance to observe a variety of wildlife, including elk, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, and coyotes.

The live stream, available 24/7, captures the natural beauty of the area, with the best viewing times typically at dawn and dusk. Even when no animals are visible on camera, viewers can still enjoy the tranquil sounds of nature, such as crickets chirping, distant bawling of bulls, and occasional coyote howls.

Viewers are advised that gunfire from nearby target shooting or lawful hunting may be audible, and to keep in mind that nature can sometimes be difficult to watch.




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## “Montana Grant”



By Grant Soukup

### CATCHIN CATS

Catfish are angler friendly fun fish to catch and eat. The Chesapeake Bay, and local Maryland waters, are full of BIG CATS!

Channel Cats average 14-20 inches long. These “catties” are great eaters. Maryland waters also host Flathead Cats, and Blue Cats.

Facebook groups that I visit brag and debate about the best baits for catching cats. Fresh Chicken Liver is Catfish Candy. A big glob of worms is also popular. “Fish heads and cut fish baits are popular for the Bigguns!”

Back in the day, I used to fish for BIG Catfish off the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River, in Maryland. One angler nicknamed “King Kat” was there every day. He hauled in monster Flathead and channel cats all day. King Kat had all kinds of Catfish patches sewed onto his coveralls for trophy catches and equipment advertisements. Now there are also Big Blue Catfish and Snakeheads in the mix. We used cut fish bait and liver. Thirty plus pounders were common all day, every day. The huge drop net we used was often too small to hold the big cats, so we had to walk them down to the shore.

Maryland waters are the home of White catfish, Channel Cats, Flatheads, Blue cats, smaller bullheads, and smaller yet stone rollers. The 1-3 lb. Cats are the best eaters. The state record tops a hundred pounds, but the smaller fish are the tastiest, and healthiest to eat.

White Catfish are Native to tidal waters of the Bay but also live in ponds and other waters. The Channel, Blue, and Flathead Cats are all introduced species.

The Maryland State Records for Big Cats will continue to grow. Currently the records are. Channel Catfish 29.10 lbs. Blue Catfish 84 lbs. This record has stood for 12 years. Virginias Blue Cat record is 143 lbs.

Flathead Catfish Josh Dixon tackled the state record with a 57 lb. 50-inch-long monster near Harve De Grace in 2020.

There is a huge menu of baits for catfish available. Truly resolute Cat Men make their own tasty stink bait concoctions.

**DIPBAITS** This bait has the consistency of peanut butter. Anglers dip this concoction onto ribbed rubber worms and plastics. Small pieces of porous sponge are also put onto a hook. The texture of these surfaces holds the stinky paste in place. Some catfish guys prefer a soupier blend, but I prefer the thicker and stickier mass. I use a wide tongue depressor to apply it. Once on the bottom, the scent stink bait slowly dissolves and puts out a scent trail.

**PUNCHBAITS** This tasty bait has the consistency of canned dog food. A fibrous additive helps it to cling onto bare treble hooks. You can buy it in tubs or buckets. You “Punch” the treble hook into the sticky mass and lift out a loaded hook. The idea of not needing a fancy rubber or plastic worm makes this bait popular.



**DOUGHBAITS** Cubes and rolled balls of dough help keep the bait on a hook. We used to use old bread, but now other congealed products form the dough. You can get this product as nuggets or a tub to make monster balls. The key to Dough balls is the stink or sauce added to them. The scents in the opened tubs intensify with age.

Rubber gloves are not a bad idea when dealing with stink baits. The Secret Sauce odors soak into your skin and last for days. Smearing stink baits onto other baits and hooks is like adding icing to a cupcake!

Homemade Stink Bait cooking can be fun. Backyard brewing is best, so you don’t stink up the house. Consider what natural foods are on the local catfish menu. Begin there then add hot dogs, Kool Aid, dead minnows, garlic and anise oils, vanilla, chicken chunks, and fatty butters. Remember that your homemade deal does not have preservatives so use a container that really seals. These are best used fresh and may require refrigeration. I have also used chum bags attached to my anchor or just tossed out into the Catfish fishing hole to stimulate a bite. These marinated homemade special stink blends work well. You can use a plastic bottle of can with holes cut into them as a scent container. You Tube videos share a variety of scent blend ideas.

Biologists have researched which Catfish Stink works best. The whiskers and scent receptors on catfish seek out unique odors that humans do not perceive. Certain proteins and amino acids stimulate feeding in catfish. It’s these key chemicals that make their proprietary recipes special.

My fishing mentor Lefty Kreh was a great fly angler but also loved “catchin cats”. He enjoyed fishing the Monocacy, Potomac, and other Maryland waters. Lefty was serious about the presentation. The purpose of stink baits is to put them in a place where the catties can smell them. This means understanding currents and water flows. Putting the baits upstream or currents is important. Lefty would have loved catching the monster Blue Cats that are relatively new to the Bay.

Catfish are a popular eating fish, but they also eat everything in the Bay. Crabs, small fish, and anything that they can catch are on their menu. Catching and keeping these predators, along with Snakeheads will help to protect other desirable, Native Bay species.

As a sports angler, we all try to find the best formula and recipe for hooking up. I find that using a combination of scent and baits works best. Set out the rods with an assortment and then focus on what is getting eaten the most. Maybe a smear of peanut butter like dip bait, onto a doughball with a punch of ... You need to be the Catfish Chef to become the King Kat!!

GO CATS GO!!!

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# Girl, 12, wins Maryland's top fishing prize — to the chagrin of some 'older male anglers'

Lucy Moore is the 1st girl and the 1st kid to reel in a Master Angler Milestone Award

When Lucy Moore, 12, was asked who is better at fishing — her or her dad — she did not hesitate to claim her crown.

"Me," Lucy replied immediately during an interview with *As It Happens* guest host Catherine Cullen.

Her father, Nick Perez, paused for a moment when asked the same question, but ultimately conceded that his daughter had long surpassed him in fishing prowess.

"He doesn't have a Master," Lucy quipped.

She's referring to Maryland's prestigious Master Angler Milestone award, the state's top fishing prize, which she snagged in May.

Only 11 others have claimed the title since its inception in 2019, and they're all grown men. That makes Lucy the state's youngest, and only female, Master Angler.

"I really felt like I did something that was like a really great accomplishment for me," she said.

The 'black belt' of Maryland fishing

The award is part of the FishMaryland program, launched five years ago to encourage people to explore the state's waterways and diversity of fish species, says Erik Zlokovitz, recreational fisheries outreach coordinator for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

There are several prizes that anglers can claim, he says, but the Master Angler is, by far, the hardest. It requires catching 10 different species of "trophy-sized" fish.

The eligible fish come from all over the state. Some are freshwater and some are ocean-dwellers. Some are native and some are invasive. Some are catch and release, and others are keepers.

"I call it the black belt of the Fish Maryland program," Zlokovitz said.

The fishing community, he says, has largely been supportive, but he admits there's been "a little tinge of jealousy" from some more experienced anglers who have thus far fallen short of the prize.

"She's a young girl who out-fished a lot of older male anglers that thought they kind of dominated the sport," he said with a chuckle.

Lucy has been hooked on the sport since she was six years old and tried fly fishing for the first time.

"I definitely do love fishing," she said. "Everything about it."

One of her favorite things about fishing, she says, is exploring the outdoors and the different habitats

fish call home. When she grows up, she says she wants to be a marine biologist.

"Sometimes you gotta bring the fish out to do some studying," she said.

She was bullied for her love of bugs. Now, this 11-year-old has written a picture book about it 'Papa, I found a sword': Swedish girl discovers pre-Viking blade in lake

Her father says the fish seem to just come to her.

"She has this knack for just coming across unique things," Perez said. "I've never seen one person catch so many trophy quality fish by sheer happenstance." "By mistake!" Lucy piped in.

"Like half the fish for her Master Angler, she was just goofing around with some little fish — just, you know, slow day, trying to catch something — and next thing you know, she, like, turns around and goes, 'Hey, look what I caught!'" Perez said. "You're like, oh my God, where'd that come from?"

Reeling in a shark bigger than her

But it's not all luck. Lucy also relishes what she calls "the fight of the fish" — the fierce battle to reel one in once it takes hold.

Her best fight, she says, wasn't with one of the fish she caught for the Master Angler award. "It's the one where I caught my shark," she said.

For her 11th birthday, she and her dad travelled to Broadkill Beach in Delaware on a shark fishing expe-

dition. Lucy reeled in a two-metre-long sand tiger shark from the shore, a feat that took 30 minutes. (She promptly released it afterwards.)

"I got in the water with it," Lucy said. "That was definitely one really cool and hard fight."

And where was Dad when Lucy was in the water wrestling with a shark?

"I was just on the sideline cheering her on," Perez said.

Lucy got some help from Perez's friend, a fishing guide, to support the sand tiger's weight while she reeled it in, her dad says.

But her award-winning Maryland fish, he says, were all hers — no matter what anyone says.

"Somebody's always going to be a hater. It's just the way it is. Some people say, 'Oh, there's no way she did this,'" Perez said.

"But so many people know who she is in the community that we have here. Everybody comes to her defence, like, 'No, you don't know this kid. You've never seen her out there. Like, don't assume her dad's doing this. She's doing it all.'"

While her skill is all her own, Lucy says having her dad by her side is an integral component of a good fishing trip.

"When I'm fishing, one of the best parts is doing it with my dad," she said. "It's like our special thing."



Lucy caught a 2.1-metre sand tiger shark in Delaware for her 11th birthday. (Submitted by Nick Perez)

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## Coastal Report

By Capt. Mark Sampson

### Stealthy Fishing September 2024

In the winter I work as a backcountry guide down in the Florida Keys. Those who know about that type of fishing are aware that it's a "visual thing" where anglers pole their boats around the shallow flats looking for fish and when the quarry is sighted the boat is moved to a position where the angler can "hopefully" pull off an effective cast and hook the fish. When I first got started in flats-fishing it didn't take too many failed encounters to realize how easily a fish can be spooked by the wrong approach and how challenging it can sometimes be to go from spotting one to actually hooking it. Having the opportunity to see the way in which fish react to a boat, and the efforts directed upon them by the anglers aboard, has been an invaluable lesson that can be drawn upon to help catch fish anywhere, including our home waters of Delmarva.

After witnessing a multitude of reactions from many different species under various situations, it has become obvious that every fish has its own tolerance level and will allow a boat only so close before it decides it has had "enough" and decides to get the heck out of there! Just how much a fish will put up with depends both on the species, as well as the individual fish. Down south it's not uncommon to encounter either bonefish or permit up on the flats, the problem is seeing them before they see you and then getting close enough to make a cast count for something because those two species are notorious for fleeing from the slightest hint that a boat might be near. Other fish such as barracuda, sharks, and snapper will often allow a boat to get very close to them before taking flight. Then there are the tarpon, jacks, redfish and a few others might go either way.

But just because a certain species is known to be easily spooked - or not easily spooked, doesn't mean that all the members of its family will react in similar fashion when a boat is near. Just as sharks are sometime known to literally bang up against a boat to get at a chum bag hanging off the side, other times, at the first sight of the boat they pull a quick 180 and zip out of the area at warp speed. Same type of shark, similar conditions, totally different reaction - go figure! And this is not unique to sharks, I've had bonefish in a foot of water swim almost right under the boat just a I've seen barracuda 100-yards away take off when someone thumps the butt of a rod on the deck.

So if any fish has at least the "potential" of being scared off by the presence of a boat it would stand to reason that anglers should be able to increase their chances of success if they employ stealthy tactics to whatever type of fishing they do, no matter where they do it, and that includes right here on the good old Delmarva Peninsula. Know also that stealth can be just as advantageous to anglers fishing for flounder in six-feet of water as it can to those vying for billfish or tuna in 600-feet.

Adding stealth to a fishing routine starts with the knowledge that sound travels far underwater and that fish have evolved to be very alert to sound because it can indicate both the location of food just as they can be a tip-off to the presence of danger. Anglers should also know that different boats transmit sounds into the water differently. Drop a soda can on the deck of a wooden boat and the sound is not likely to be noticed by as many

fish as if it's dropped into the bottom of an aluminum Jon-boat. The sound transmission of fiberglass is probably somewhere in-between that of wood and metal.

Engine noise is something else to consider when trying to slip in on unsuspecting fish. While some fish might grow rather immune to the sound of boat motors, many times I've seen them flee from an area at the start of an engine or when another boat cruises past. Whenever possible anglers should shut off their engine and drift up to their fishing spot rather than come in under power and risk spooking away all the fish.

Whatever type of craft you're in, always strive to keep the banging and clanging to a bare minimum. Anglers should particularly keep that in mind when they set their anchors which should be readied before getting close to the fish and then quietly slipped into the water and lowered to the bottom. That's a whole lot better than letting it splash into the water and then freefalling to the bottom with a resounding "clank-clunk!" When possible, anglers should anchor far up-current and then let the boat silently fall back to the fish on a very long anchor line.

Shadows are something else to consider. So many times I've witnessed fish casually swimming close by until a shadow from the boat passes over them and causes them to spook. Many fish are constantly on the lookout for danger from above, which could come from another fish or from a dive-bombing bird, and it's likely fish

know that a sudden shadow is the first warning sign of danger approaching and reason to bolt out of there. Even if the water is murky and the angler cannot see the fish but has some idea where they might be holding it can help to try and keep the shadow off that patch of water. It can also help to keep the sun at your back because you don't want it to reflect your presence back to the fish. Of course, if you're directly between the sun and the fish your shadow might be falling directly on them if they're close and your shadow long. In that case anglers can cover both issues by positioning themselves slightly off to one side or the other.

When anglers find fish that are schooled up on the surface they should always try to avoid getting any closer than they must to get their baits or lures in the strike zone. When trolling, fishermen can let their lines out extra long and then make a big wide turn around the fish so that the lines pass near the fish but the boat never does. When casting, anglers should start-off throwing to the school from as far away as possible and only work in closer if absolutely necessary. Pulling up close to surface fish will likely result in putting them down and ending the opportunity.

Whether anglers are fishing in clam crystal clear water, or the murky chocolate-milk we often see after a storm, stealthy techniques will always provide more and better opportunities to hook any type of fish anywhere.

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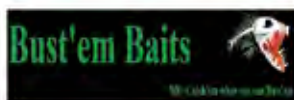


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**“Somebody behind you while you are fishing is as bad as someone looking over your shoulder while you write a letter to your girl.”**



\*excluding select items



**“The Last Word”**

**THIRTY YEARS AND A GREAT DAY**

**By Steve Huettner**

In today’s society, few things seem to last. If something breaks, it is easier to purchase new than fix it. Nowadays, people switch jobs multiple times without accumulating any history. Friendships and personal relationships disappear as quickly as tapping to unfriend someone on social media.

As I pulled into the parking lot of the marina, I realized that this was my thirtieth year fishing with Captain Phil Gootee Jr. Three continuous decades of friends and family on the Chesapeake Bay, non-stop laughs, full coolers and days when we couldn’t buy a fish.

I came about fishing with Phil and his father Henry from a friend who has recently purchased a boat from the marina. He said, “If you’re looking to do a charter, these guys have a nice boat, know the area, and know how to catch fish.” A few years removed from college I was looking to do a trip with some friends, so I called down to the marina and booked. There was no website or cell phone to book a trip, you had to call and talk with the actual person. Since there were no hotels at the time in Cambridge, (unless you counted the Shoals which is where the Wawa now stands), I booked an afternoon trip.

On that first trip down, driving through the marsh of south Dorchester County, I was seriously wondering where the hell

I was going while reading the printed directions from Mapquest. There at the end of the road was the marina, which looked like it had been transported by helicopter and dropped in the marsh.

A first-time charter reminds me of a first date. Both parties engage in small talk, perhaps learn a little bit about one another and see if they like one another enough to do it again. Looking through my photo album (taken with a camera and film )from that first trip, we caught a limit of rockfish that afternoon while chumming and came home happy with full coolers. The date went well and after thirty years we are still doing it.

Over those three decades, I’ve fished with over 150 friends and family, some have been coming for more than fifteen years. We have chummed, trolled, and live-lined for rockfish from Virginia ( we used to run there when it was a two-fish limit and Maryland was one). I was fortunate enough to experience the resurgence of rockfish and fish the trophy season at its peak, and now its valley. Photos attest to several years of trophy croaker fishing, with smiles holding up 20” fish. I will always say a croaker on light tackle punches above their weight and puts a largemouth to shame.

Most trips thankfully occurred during decent or nice weather, except for one that no one who fished will ever for-



**The author and his friends on his 30th year fishing with Capt Phil Gootee Jr.**

get. The forecast called for 15-25 mph out of the west, rain, and building seas. I had relatives from New York coming down, and buddies from school, and we decided what the hell. The ride out was snotty but we were able to shelter a bit from the wind. We were rewarded by being the only boat on the Bay and fish that were practically jumping in the boat. I will never forget my friend’s wife in the stern, 7 months pregnant, laughing as the boat rode the six to eight-foot waves. The ride back reminded me of the opening to Victory at Sea, with waves crashing and running over the top of the boat like a waterfall.

As we headed out on this most recent trip, the weather was perfect. Light and variable winds, abundant sun, and few boats on the water. We made a quick stop at the Honga Island Bridge for some bottom fishing. We were rewarded with

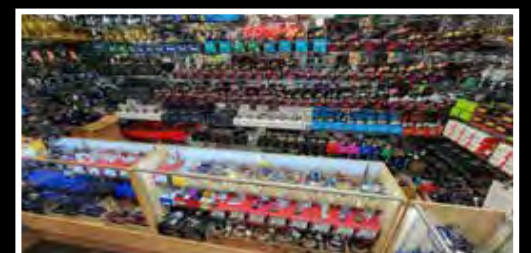
six different species of fish, albeit nothing of size. We pulled up and headed south with hopes of cobia and perhaps a tarpon sighting. Passing the target ship, we set our lines and were snagged, or so we thought. The snag ended up being an exceptionally large cobia who despite our best intentions, decided he enjoyed the bay and broke the line six inches from the net in my hand. The next hour was quiet, and then it happened. To the east, a bluefish blitz measuring six hundred across was coming toward us, and it looked like whitecaps on the flat water. The next hour was controlled chaos on fish, blood, scales, off-color humor, and laughs. After the end of the blitz and the ride back, I reflected on how fortunate I’ve been to fish with my friend Captain Phil for thirty years and look forward to the future.



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1987 38' x 10' Lempke. One of 13 38 foot glass hulls built in Trappe, MD between 1983 and 1995. 100% glass hull  
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### FOR SALE

and filter changes. Always starts at first push of button.  
Block heater installed, runs of standard 3 prong electrical outlet.  
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Comes with stainless exhaust dry stack that could be installed in place of wet exhaust. Transmission is a ZF 280-1A ratio 1.5:1 with trolling valve. Transmission was brand new in July 2023 (1200+/- hours on it)  
This transmission has a pto output available on it for hydraulic pumps, accepts a "B" style flange.  
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# Monkton Angler becomes 12th FishMaryland Master Angler

Ben Halfpap is first to nab all three invasive species in pursuit of designation

Ben Halfpap, of Monkton in Baltimore County, has earned a Master Angler Milestone Award under the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' FishMaryland program. The award recognizes recreational anglers who catch ten trophy-sized fish of different species in Maryland. Halfpap is the 12th Master Angler since the program began in 2019.

Halfpap targets a variety of fish species in Maryland's tidal and non-tidal waters, including invasive blue and flathead catfish and Chesapeake Channa (Northern snakehead) in the lower Susquehanna River and Potomac River, striped bass in the lower Patapsco River and Baltimore harbor, Chesapeake Channa on the Eastern Shore, and land-based shark fishing on the ocean beaches. Halfpap is the first Master Angler to have caught all three of Maryland's invasive fishes at trophy size in his pursuit of the award.

"I have been fishing since I was five years old, but I didn't get really serious about fishing until 2020," said Halfpap.

The FishMaryland program includes dozens of species from both salt and freshwater. Halfpap submitted entries for all ten catches and received individual certificates for each catch. Halfpap caught and released his tenth FishMaryland eligible fish, a sand tiger shark, on a Maryland ocean beach, and his Master Angler certificate was awarded on July 12, 2024, about two weeks before his 21st birthday on July 31.

#### Halfpap's qualifying catches, in order, were:

- Chesapeake Channa (northern snakehead) – 32 inches
- Blue catfish – 42 inches
- Flathead catfish – 41 inches
- Channel catfish – 30 inches
- White perch – 13 inches
- White catfish – 21 inches
- Striped bass – 45 inches
- Hickory shad – 18.25 inches
- Carp – 30 inches
- Sand tiger shark – 84 inches

"I always have good things to say about the FishMaryland program, and



**Ben Halfpap, of Monkton, poses with a blue catfish he caught. Halfpap was the 12th person to become a Maryland Master Angler.**

I learned a lot about fishing for a diversity of species in Maryland's waters, including fishing for carp in tidal rivers, which I had not done much before," Halfpap said. "I have always been a multispecies angler, but while working towards the Master Angler milestone, I expanded my range of target species even further".

FishMaryland is Maryland's recreational fishing award program and is a fun way to explore year-round recreational fishing and enjoy affordable, accessible, diverse, and high-quality fishing opportunities. More information on the Master Angler Milestone Award and the FishMaryland program is available on the program's website.





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