

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



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*THIS ISSUE COMPLIMENTS OF*

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

- **A.P. GOOSE SEASON EXTENDED**
- **NEWARK MAN CATCHES DE STATE RECORD TIGER MUSKIE**
- **NEW STATE RECORD MD BLUE CATFISH 84.28 LBS**
- **\$1,429,092 WHITE MARLIN**
- **RECORD GROUPER CAUGHT IN MARYLAND**

# MARYLAND LATE WATERFOWL SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS 2012-13 HUNTING YEAR

**DUCKS, COOTS, and MERGANSERS • Regular Duck Season Oct. 13 - Oct. 20 • Nov. 10 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Jan. 26  
Black Duck Season Nov. 10 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Jan. 26**

Duck Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is 6. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 5 long-tailed ducks, 4 scoters, 4 mallards (max. 2 hen mallards), 4 scaup, 3 wood ducks, 2 pintails, 2 redheads, 2 hooded mergansers, 1 canvasback, 1 black duck (during black duck season), 1 fulvous tree duck, and 1 mottled duck. All other species of ducks (except harlequin duck) may be taken up to the 6- duck limit. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. In addition to the duck bag limit hunters may take 15 coots per day. No open season for harlequin ducks and swans.

## **YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS**

**Season Dates Nov. 3 & Feb. 9**

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The duck bag limits for the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days are the same as the regular season (above), except one black duck may also be taken. In addition to the duck bag limit youth hunters may take 2 Canada geese in AP Canada goose hunt zone or 5 geese in the Resident (AFRP) Canada goose hunt zone, 2 brant, 25 light geese, and 15 coots. For a description of each Canada goose hunting zone go to [http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/AP\\_RP\\_Hunt\\_Zones.asp](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/AP_RP_Hunt_Zones.asp). No open season for harlequin ducks and swans. Any licensed hunter 15 years old or younger may participate during these one-day hunts. Youth of this age who are exempt from Maryland hunting license requirements may also participate. Youth waterfowl hunters must possess a receipt showing they purchased a \$9 Maryland Migratory Game Bird Hunting Stamp. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult at least 21 years old that holds a valid Maryland hunting license or is exempt from the hunting license requirements. One adult may take one or more young hunters, and that adult may call waterfowl, assist with decoys and retrieve downed birds but may not possess a hunting weapon and not participate in other seasons that are open on the youth waterfowl hunting days.

**SEA DUCKS (Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Eiders) Season: Oct. 1 - Jan. 31  
(Only in Special Sea Duck Zone) Daily Bag Limit: 5 (no more than 4 scoters) per day**

## **ATLANTIC POPULATION CANADA GEESE**

**Season: Nov. 17 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Jan. 30**

**Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day\***

AP Hunt Zone: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Annes, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. \*Bag limit may include Canada geese, cackling geese, and greater white-fronted geese singly or in aggregate.

## **RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE (Regular Season)**

**Season: Nov. 17 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Mar. 6**

**Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day\***

Resident Hunt Zone: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery, and Washington Counties; and that portion of Carroll County west of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and west of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County west of Route 301 to the Virginia line. \*Bag limit may include Canada geese, cackling geese, and greater white-fronted geese singly or in aggregate.

## **ATLANTIC BRANT**

**Season Dates: Nov. 14 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Jan. 26 Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day**

## **LIGHT GEESE**

**Season Dates: Oct. 6 - Nov. 23 Dec. 11 - Jan. 30 Feb. 9**

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day and no possession limit\*\* \*\*Bag limit may include greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese singly or in aggregate.

## **LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER SEASON**

**Seasons Dates: Nov. 26 - Dec. 10 Jan. 31 - Feb. 8 Feb. 11 - April 13**

Daily Bag Limit: No daily bag or possession limits. CO Hunt Zone: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Annes, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area. Special Regulations during Light Goose Conservation Order Season: (1) Participating hunters must possess a \$5 Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit while hunting light geese during this season; (2) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; (3) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese; and (4) Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

## *Two New Castle men cited for tampering with commercial crab pots*

NEW CASTLE – Fish and Wildlife Enforcement agents cited two New Castle men July 25 for violations of state crabbing regulations including tampering with commercial crab pots, in connection with an incident on the Delaware River in northern New Castle County.

Anthony J. Black, 26, of New Castle, was cited for two counts of tampering with commercial crab pots, two counts of possession of undersized blue crabs, one count of operating a motor vessel without a boating safety certificate and one count of failing to have a fire extinguisher aboard.


Christopher Torres, 22, also of New Castle, was cited for two counts of tampering with commercial crab pots and four counts of possession of undersized blue crabs. Torres was taken into custody on a warrant out of the New Castle Court of Common Pleas and was released after posting bail, pending a future court date.

Delaware crabbing regulations require crab pot owners to set and tend them; no one is permitted to tend another person's crab pots, recreational or commercial.

For more information on crabbing regulations, please check the 2012 Delaware Fishing Guide, available online and at fishing license dealers throughout the state.


Citizens are encouraged to report fish and wildlife and boating violations to the Delaware Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Section by calling 302-739-4580.

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Mitch Quillen, Blaire Prickett and Tommy Perry caught this 31 lb. bull Dolphin out of Ocean City, MD. last month aboard the "No Limits".



## “HOOKED ON FISHING”

### Seeing Specs

By Lenny Rudow

This spring, we saw one of the best Chesapeake Bay shallow-water speckled trout bites in years. Points, holes, and bars in the rivers and islands in the Tangier Sound, in particular, produced double-digit catches week after week. With the waters cooling and fall in the air, this bite should ramp back up into rare form, providing us with red-hot light tackle action. Want to get in on it? Here's how.

#### THE HOW

Light tackle casting to specs is similar to fishing the shallows for stripers, but you'll need to hone your techniques and your offerings a bit. For tackle, stick with your favorite light-tackle striper gear in the eight to 15 pound range, appropriate for casting lures in the 1/4 to 3/4 ounce range. Braid is more effective than mono if you're casting jigs since you can set the hook in a heartbeat, but if topwater plugs are your offering of choice, mono will allow you to work the lure best. (Line stretch can be an asset with topwater, since it has less tendency to sling-shot the plug and won't cause as many tangles

when the plug does flip out of the water).

As is often the case with stripers, you'll usually catch more fish using jigs since you can quickly and easily alter depth, action, and color, but the thrill of a topwater explosion... WOW! Also remember that when fishing for specs, you'll probably have to follow the fish's feeding habits through the change of the tide. Regularly they'll shift from feeding at or near the bottom to feeding at mid-depth, and then the surface, as the conditions change. Just as often, the speed and/or regularity or erratic nature of your retrieve will also need to change to keep the fish interested. During which tidal condition will they feed best on lures retrieved shallow vs. deep, slow vs. fast, and steady vs. erratic? There are no hard and fast rules here – you'll have to alter your technique with every change in the bite, until you figure out what's working best at the moment. And, of course, as soon as you have it figured out, it'll change.

Hot lure colors will also change, usually as water color and turbidity or light-levels change. The old “if it ain't chartreuse it ain't no use” rule has some value with specs, but not as much as it does with stripers (which you'll usually catch in abundance, by

the way, while casting for specs). Along with chartreuse, day-glow white, yellow, and (in brownish water) root-beer are all good choices. Now, for the oddball: some days, bubble-gum pink is an absolute killer on specs—don't stake your reputation on the pinkie and if it isn't working ditch it, but never leave the dock without a bag of 'em onboard.

Four or five inch plastics are usually the best jig choice, rigged to a 1/4 to 3/4 ounce head. As a general rule of thumb, use the lightest head possible which still allows you to tick against bottom in the current. In many of the shallower areas, especially where a strong current creates a rip on a point, lighter is better to keep from snagging bottom. But when fishing holes and channels, you'll want enough weight to probe deeper.

#### THE WHERE

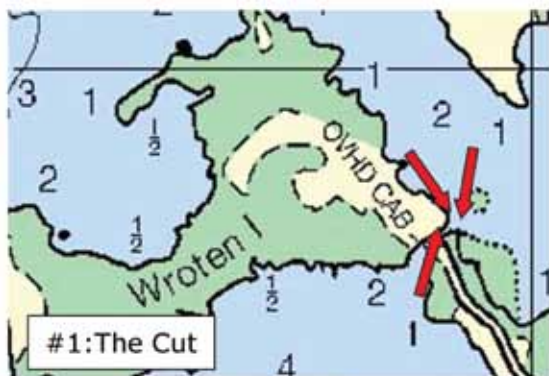
If the spring bite was any indication (and it usually is) you'll find these fish from the northernmost reaches of the Tangier (such as the Honga River), to the

southernmost outer islands (like Tangier Island). Hotspots will include creek mouths, points, holes, and channel edges. The key to finding the best spots usually is a matter of probing one after another, until you find the ones that produce. Approach all contenders slowly and quietly—loud talking, revving engines, and slamming hatches can shut down the bite like turning off a switch. Anywhere the current hits land, or an underwater hump or drop and forms a visible rip, should be considered a prime possibility.

As you work your way away from and then later back to the boat ramp or marina you departed, don't be afraid to try a second time at good-looking spots that were unproductive earlier in the day. Quite often a change in the tide can turn a stinker into a winner, and vice-versa. Here are a few top-quality hotspots (which are ID'd in my book Rudow's Guide to Fishing the Chesapeake, by the way) to get you started:

**HOTSPOT #1 – The Cut be-**

See Rudow Page 5



#1: The Cut



#2: Big Annemessex

#3: Spring Island

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Mike Travis guided this father and son duo, John Kirlin II, and "Johnny" Kirlin III this past spring at Cherry Blossom Farms.

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# Rudow ...

Continued from Page 3

hind Wroten Island, in the Honga River. Historically, this is one of the most reliable hotspots for specs in the entire region. I have to admit that this spring I had less success here than past years would suggest, but my best guess is that it was related more to the stages of the tide than a decrease in fish. Focus your efforts on the points at the eastern end of the cut, and at the visible rip that forms along the north side, about 75 yards in from those points. Note: when fishing the hole at the point on the south-east side, make sure you spend a good bit of time bouncing your jigs right on bottom—plenty of flounder lurk in there, on a regular basis.

**HOTSPOT #2** – Sandy Point, in the Big Annesmessex. The drop-off on the south-west side of this point is usually a good one for specs, though more for numbers than for size. Don't be afraid to push up shallow, and cast near the grass banks on a flood tide. It's only a foot or two deep in there but on a strong incoming, that won't deter the specs one bit. After you finish casting here, on the very beginning of an ebb tide (so there's still high water but the creeks are draining) creep up to the mouths of the numerous near-by creeks cutting into the marsh, and cast into them. The size of the fish that sometimes prowl around in those tiny creeks is amazing. (Note – you'll need a shallow-draft boat to get up to many of these spots, even with high water).

**HOTSPOT #3** – Spring Island, between Bloodsworth and South Marsh. This tiny little island, for whatever reason, often holds gobs of fish. Hit this spot first and hit it early, because it is a "known" hotspot and lots of people fish here. Pay particular attention to the rip that forms along the south-west side on an incoming; even if you don't encounter specs here (and you usually will!) you'll commonly run into hordes of stripers.



Twin specs for twin brothers, caught during a flurry of activity in the northern Tangier this spring. Note the pink jig, which was the hot ticket that day.



This White Marlin spit the hook on the way into the boat nearly hooking the wireman in the head off of Ocean City, MD.



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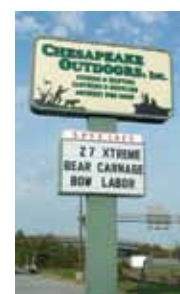
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## “TACKLE BOX TIM”

### Shimmy and Shake for Bass

By Tim Sherman

Over the past few years I have caught more largemouth bass on soft plastic baits than hard bodied lures. Admittedly, I love catching bass on crankbaits, spinnerbaits, poppers, and buzzbaits. Yet having had time to fish the soft stuff and actually catch bass with it, my confidence has grown. There are times when bass won't show interest in the power fishing baits. This is when subtle presentations with soft baits shines.

Gary Yamamoto set the bass fishing world afire several years back when he introduced his pen-shaped Senko stick worm. Seemingly every soft lure manufacturer has come out with a similar product since then. No other lure catches more fish with less action then a

stick worm. A stick worm is typically rigged Texas style or wacky style. The premise is that you cast it out and let it shimmy down to the bottom. Lift the lure off the bottom and let it seductively fall again. Sounds easy, and it is; but it take patience to learn. You get two types of strikes with a stick worm. A bass will either hammer the lure with the might of Thor, or you'll simply feel weight at the end of the line when you lift the rod tip.

A stick worm is most often used as a finesse lure. Its slow fall entices bass in a neutral or negative mood into striking. A Texas rigged stick falls flat and quivers as it drops through the water column. A wacky rigged worm shimmies down with both ends pointed upward. The lure is most effective when cast to obvious bass cover. Pier pilings, fallen wood, and submerged rocks all make good bass holding targets.

While a stick worm is thought of as a finesse bait, many anglers don't use it to its full potential. In mid-May I partnered with Penn-

sylvania pro Randy Yarnall in the Marines Helping Marines bass tournament. Randy shouldered a heavy load from an inept partner who couldn't get a bite. He caught all 16-plus pounds of bass on a 5-inch Senko -- but he did it differently.

Randy used the Senko as a power fishing tool. Because the Susquehanna Flats receives an extraordinary amount of fishing pressure from tournaments, Randy knows that bass become weary at the sight of a boat or its shadow. He made long distance casts to clumps of milfoil and let the bait sink next to it. Much like pitching and flipping presentations, he gave the potential bass one opportunity to take the bait. If no bite was had within a few seconds, he'd wind it

all the way back to the boat and fire it off to the next cluster of grass. He repeated this presentation the entire day. I tried other lures along with his tactic, but this is something he has mastered for springtime bass.

When summer rolls around and underwater vegetation grows thick, Randy does not put down the Senko. When bass are unwilling to strike a plastic frog hopped across the mats, Randy flings the stick worm and drags it across the weeds. He uses a dab of super glue to secure the leading edge of the worm so it doesn't wad up on the hook as it is pulled.

Plenty of strikes occur as it slides into a hole; yet there are many other instances when a bass will explode through the grass to grab



“Tackle Box” Tim shows a chunky bass taht he caught by pitching a shaky head crawfish lure to a pier piling.

See Sherman Page 7

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# Sherman ...

Continued from Page 6

the worm on top of the weeds like it would a frog.

Shaky head fishing came into its own in the middle of the last decade. The concept is to rig a worm weedless on a jig head. Such have evolved over the years where a jig head will incorporate a spike or small cork screw to help secure the head of the worm. I prefer the spike, as the cork screw degrades the head of the worm after the first rigging. I also use a drop of super glue on the spike to secure the worm. Most shaky head jigs are 1/16 to 1/4-ounce. Some weigh 3/8-ounce for anglers who fish the lure deep. The worm/jig head combo presents the lure in more of a vertical presentation than Texas

rigging.

Poll shaky head advocates and you will find that most prefer a straight tail worm. Most are in the 4 to 6-inch range. I prefer the Zoom Trick Worm. The 4-inch worm is mostly reserved for when bass are in a really finicky mood. The lure came into vogue by casting it out to open water structure, fishing it in place and merely shaking it. Much like the stick worm, the shaky head can be cast to lay downs, dock pilings, etc. with the shake-in-place application.

Like many lures the shaky head has found other uses. Fishermen have learned that other plastics can be fished on a shaky jig. Most prefer using crawfish imitators or small creature baits. I like using skinny bodied craws like the Luck "E" Strike Guido Bug and Gene Larew Salt Craw.

In as much as lures other than

worms are being used, the shaky head isn't just for finesse fishing. Many anglers use a shaky head as a downsized pitching lure. The prototypical pitch bait is a jig and pig or bulky Texas rigged creature lure. Bass in an off mood are mostly put off by these lures as they plummet to the bottom. Yet, this can be the perfect time to pitch a slow sinking shaky head in the same places.

The profile of a worm or craw is much less intrusive, and the slow fall gives a bass a chance to make up its mind. But, like pitching the big baits, a bass gets one shot to

strike. Let the shaky head hit bottom, shaky it once or twice, then pitch it to the next target if a bass doesn't strike. In the last two years I have caught more bass pitching shaky heads that I have with a jig.

It's taken me a while to get the knack for fishing with soft plastic lures. With every bass caught, more confidence grows. Learn how to shimmy and shake with a stick worm and shaky head. The lures were designed with finesse fishing in mind. However, so many more bites can be had with the shimmy and shake if you fish them with other presentations.



Billy Ho is at again with this Smallmouth Bass weighing in at 5lbs. with a length of 23 inches. Photo Courtesy of Clyde's Sport Shop.



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## "HUNTING PASSION"

### Hunting the Heat

By Mike Monteleone

The buzzing of mosquitoes filled my ears as my eyes strained into the dark woods. To the east, the pastel sky signaled morning's approach. My anticipation mounted as another hunting season was at hand.

Shortly before daylight, I had struggled to climb the large and twisted oak that held my stand. Perspiration dripped from my brow by the time I settled in.

After attaching my safety harness, my first priority was to douse myself with scent eliminator. I sprayed extra amounts to my hair and skin. Before settling in, I reached out to the overhanging cedar branches next to my stand. Knowing the cedar aroma would further mask my scent; I vigorously rubbed the boughs on my clothing.

#### Dealing with the heat

Early autumn bow seasons often present hunters with uncomfortable warm weather. Not only is it harder to mask human scent, but hunters must also devise strategies to deal with heat and its impact on deer behavior. The warmer it gets, the more sluggish whitetails become. In fact, deer often become nocturnal to escape extreme daytime heat.

Hunters must take several factors into consideration during warm-weather hunts, and they must change their tactics accordingly. For instance, in the hunt I described above, I chose the oak tree next to a cedar tree for my stand because deer seek cool,

comfortable areas during unbearable heat. The tree was in a small valley beneath hilly country. A creek twisted through the valleys center and provided the deer a cool drinking hole. Massive oaks that lined the creek's edge provided shade. I hoped the cooler environment would be irresistible to deer as the temperature rose.

Pre-season scouting had revealed several deer beds nearby. I had also found dark green deer droppings near my chosen stand site. This led me to believe the deer were feeding heavily on honeysuckle. My assumption was correct. I found a large honeysuckle patch bordering a nearby cow pasture. With this information, I concluded deer would travel from pasture to bedding area.

The assumptions were confirmed when I heard distant rustling in dry leaves. The rustling grew louder, and I could tell several deer were approaching. Slowly, I attached the release to my bow and turned my head. Excitement mounted as I peered through the oak limbs. Silhouettes of walking deer slowly came into view.

Despite the heat, my scent reducing efforts worked. Several small bucks wandered into the clearing in front of me. Within a few minutes, the tension again mounted as I heard a deer approaching from the opposite direction. A wide antlered buck appeared, and began browsing his way toward my stand. When he stopped within range, I drew the bow, aimed a released. I watched my fluorescent green nock disappear behind my 20-yard pin. The shot was perfect. He high-jumped, trotted about 20 more yards and fell over without a kick.

The noise and commotion startled the other small bucks but they never

caught a whiff of human odor.

#### Scent reducing tactics

Successful hunting in warm weather requires hunters to be extremely conscious of human odors for two reasons: Warm weather enhances a deer's sense of smell and, obviously, hunters perspire more when walking to and from their stands.

High humidity, which often comes with warm weather allows scent molecules to disperse farther and more quickly than in cold weather. These molecules also linger at ground level.

My hunting buddy Brian learned this lesson the hard way last season. The air was warm and humid as Brian and I walked in darkness to our tree stands. We moved slowly to minimize the squeaking of my rubber boots in the wet grassy ground. Brian and I laughed as we walked knowing that if a deer was within a half-mile; it would hear us and ruin our chances for the morning. As we walked Brian praised the stealthiness and comfort of



his leather boots. We soon separated and settled into our tree stands.

The morning was about an hour old when I noticed three bucks walking across the pasture. Golden sunlight reflected off their very large antlers as they traveled towards Brian's tree stand. I focused my binoculars and watched. The leader sported a wide 10-point rack with a lot of junk sticking out from the bases and the other two were very respectable 8-point twins. Through my binoculars I watched Brian sitting in his stand. I could see him readying his bow for a shot. However, the group stopped 60 yards from his stand, and the lead buck lowered his head.

I could sense the increasing tension

in my partner as the buck continued inspecting the 10-inch tall grass. Soon, the noses of the other deer were also scanning the ground. I knew the deer were smelling the trail Brian took to get to his stand. Moments later, the lead buck jerking up his head, stretched his ears forward, and glared in Brian's direction.

The bucks posed side by side by side, suddenly raised their tails and turned. Within seconds, all three bucks had bounded into the distance. With each bounce came a snort.

When we met in the pasture a short time later, Brian didn't have to say a word to describe his disappointment. His expression told me he had learned his lesson. Never again would he wear scent absorbing leather boots.

#### Warm weather magnets

I focus my hunting efforts in the late afternoon and early morning during early season. These hours are the coolest periods of the day, causing deer to be more active.

Hunting near food and water sources is especially effective during warm weather. To take advantage of these deer magnets hunters should put extra hours of scouting to determine the areas top attractions. To escape midday heat deer bed in cool shaded areas. The banks of creeks, rivers, large ponds and drainage ditches make ideal morning stand sites as deer return to daytime bedding areas. In the evening hours, whitetails venture from their beds to replenish their food and water needs. For these hunts keep watering sites in mind, but also check the intersection of a ditch and a succulent stand of corn.

Mature whitetails have numerous bedding sites within their home range. Hunters who hourly scout these sites will dramatically increase their chances because they'll know the routes to and from the beds. In addition, hunters should prepare alternative stand sites based on changing wind direction.

#### Conclusion

Warm-weather conditions can present one of the biggest challenges for whitetail deer hunters. However,

See Monteleone Page 9

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# Monteleone ... September Teal season dates announced for Maryland

Continued from Page 8

hunters can enjoy early-season success by paying close attention to details:

1. Log more low impact scouting hours to learn deer behavioral patterns.

2. Reduce human odors as much as possible. Immediately before your hunt, wash in a scent free, odor eliminating soap and dry off with a towel washed in scent free detergent. All clothes should be washed in a scent free detergent and hung outside to dry. Drying clothes in a clothes dryer burns contaminants into the fibers of your hunting gear. Only an activated carbon suit should be placed in a dryer. Transport your hunting clothes in sealed bag and change into them once you arrive at your hunting location. Spray all your hunting clothes, packs, boots and bow before you enter the woods.

3. Hunt food and water sources. The best stand location is usually within 200-250 yards from the bedding areas but in between water and food.

If you develop a game plan based on those three factors, the action around your stand can be as hot as "Hunting in the Heat".

Annapolis, Md. — The State's September teal hunting season will run from September 17 through 29. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has established a four teal daily bag limit (blue-winged, green-winged or combined) with hunting open in select counties and areas.

"The teal season provides a unique opportunity for hunters to pursue this early migrating game bird as they pass through the State before the regular duck season opens," said DNR Waterfowl Project Leader Larry Hindman.

The special teal season will be held only in the following areas: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties; and part of Anne Arundel (east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3), Prince George's (east of Route 3 and Route 301) and Charles (east of Route 301 to the Virginia line) counties.

September teal seasons are offered to states that derive more than 80 percent of their annual teal harvest from the prairie pothole region of the north central U.S. and southern Canada. During the 2012 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Waterfowl and Habitat Survey, about 9.2 million blue-winged teal were recorded; green-winged teal were at 3.5 million, 20 percent higher than last spring.

Only teal may be taken during this waterfowl season. Shooting hours are from sunrise to sunset to avoid the period when other waterfowl, particularly wood ducks, are most active.

All migratory game bird hunters, including landowners who are license-exempt, are required to purchase the Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp/HIP Permit. All waterfowl hunters ages 16 and over must possess the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (federal duck stamp). Hunting licenses and stamps may be

purchased online through <https://compass.dnr.maryland.gov/dnrcompassportal> or by phone at 1-800-918-2870. These services complement the hundreds of retail vendors currently selling licenses, permits and stamps.



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**"ON THE SCENE"**

**First Bow Hunt of the Season**

By Andy Aughenbaugh

Robby's backyard resembled a zoo. A whitetail buck stood under the oak tree at the left back property corner. An Elk stood proud in the center of the yard. Two black wild pigs roamed along the chain-link fence along the right side of the yard. A cougar watched it all from his position next to the Elk.

Bobby pulled into Robby's driveway in his yellow Maryland State Highway van. He had spent most of his day driving around the upper part of the county taking inventory of road signs needing repair. Robby stood on his deck. Sweat ran down his cold beer sitting on the picnic table and down his forehead into his eyes.

"Hey, I'm back here. Grab two beers from the fridge on your way." Robby yelled in response to the knock on the front door.

Bobby walked through the front door into the bachelor's home. You could always tell what season was coming by the stuff lying around the house. Robby enjoyed his toys. Organized in sorts, he kept his fishing and hunting tools, as he

called them, in tubs mark well marked on shelves in the garage. As one season ended he stored his tools away and pulled the required stuff for the next upcoming season. To the onlooker, the inside of the house may have appeared to be a mess of gear tossed about, but to Robby, it was a method of preparation and he knew where every item laid.

Bobby walked past the fletching jig and arrows in various stages of reconstruction on the kitchen table. He opened the refrigerator that resembled more of one belonging to a college frat house than a middle aged man. Bobby pushed the pizza box aside and grabbed two beers.

Robby stood on the deck at full draw, sighting the elk when Bobby swung the screen door open. "Don't miss," Bobby chuckled, popping open his beer. Robby never flinched. His arrow nailed the elk in the ten ring.

"You were always better shooting foam than real targets," Bobby said.

"Where's your bow, robinhood?" Robby asked, reaching for his beer and taking a long draw.

"Its' in the truck."

"Well go get it."

"I will, but I've got some good news first. While out on my monthly run check-

ing signs, I was glassing three really good bucks in that new neighborhood off Jenny Drive, when this woman walked by with her dog. We started to talk and when we were done talking, she had given me permission to hunt in her backyard. She lives in one of those new houses that backs up to the county park. She said the deer come into her yard every night and the deer are eating her flowers and bushes."

"Robby responded to his buddy's news, "I thought we were going to hit the mountains again this year like we always do for the opening week of bow season?"

"You should have seen the size of those bucks, dude. Fish in a barrel, backyard hunting." Bobby said, after a draw of his beer.

"Just get you bow," Robby responded.

The two spent that evening and two or three nights a week over the next month shooting at the foam targets grazing in Robby's yard. Between arrows, they discussed the September opener.

One afternoon, Bobby introduced Robby to the woman whom he had met, allowing them to hunt her backyard. She and Robby had gone to high school together and they spent an hour remembering old times. Bobby wandered off and scouted the new hunting grounds.

The back of the three acre lot ran along the boundary of the county park. The developer had left four large oak trees standing in her yard. Bobby had chosen the two closest to the property line for their stands. He had the second ladder stand almost set before Robby and Sue finally walked down to check on him. "How's it going partner?" Robby asked.

"Just fine, Romeo." Bobby said as he looked down from the elevated platform tightening the last of the straps. Sue and Robby looked at each other and giggled like school kids.

The week before the season opened Robby scouted the three acres every evening. After work he would drive by the house and visit with Sue. They would walk the dog together and sit on the deck with binoculars watching the deer wander from the woods into the yard.

Bobby rode Robby hard for not sporting

his annual whiskers. Instead of growing his hunting beard which he proudly explained made him a better hunter as his face did not reflect the sun scaring the deer and ducks of the season. He had even gone so far to shave almost daily instead of the normally weekly Sunday chore.

The day before opening day Bobby stopped by Robby's house for one last practice session. The summer heat remained on the mid-September evening. "It's going to be a hot one tomorrow." Bobby said.

"Yep," Robby replied. "It will be weird going to work tomorrow, even if only for half a day. I can't remember the last time I worked on opening day."

"Yea, me too. But no use hunting her yard in the morning. The deer don't come out 'till the evening," Bobby replied, landing an arrow in the eight ring of the buck standing 45 yards away under the oak tree.

Robby was standing in the driveway talking to Sue when Bobby pulled up in his Yellow work van. Robby's old Chevy hunting truck dripped oil on the driveway. Bobby wasn't surprised to see the old truck there. Even if they were hunting in the suburbs, he knew Robby had to drive the truck. It just wasn't a hunt any other way.

"Let the games begin," Bobby proclaimed, as he walked up to Sue and Robby talking. Robby replied, "Yep, let the games begin, another season is upon us. Shall the hunting Gods bless us with another season full of dead animals?"

Sue's puzzled look at the two middle aged boys, made Robby and Bobby laugh. She left them to their hunt and went inside the house.

"The big eight point should be out about a half hour before dark and the monster I've been seeing may not come out till the edge of shooting light," Robby explained to Bobby. "Now there are two groups of does that will come out early and a few young bucks that will follow, don't get antsy and shoot one of them, wait for the big boys."

"Hey, it is the first day of the season and my trigger finger is twitching, I need to shoot something." Bobby proclaimed.

"Dude, plenty of time for that, wait it

See Aughenbaugh Page 11

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## Aughenbaugh ...

Continued from Page 10

out tonight.”

“Sure.”

The two wished each other luck and walked across the yard to their stands. The freshly mowed lawn was a far cry from the greenbrier patches they were accustomed to trudging through on way to their stands.

As he walked across the manicured lawn, Bobby was beginning to wonder if this suburban hunting was his kind of thing.

Robby waved to Sue from his perch in her backyard. She stood in the kitchen window watching and waved back. She had plans to feed him dinner after the hunt.

Bobby looked over his hunting grounds. He knew about the large bucks, but started to re-think their decision not to go to the mountains. Two lawns down the street, a crew of three mowed the lawn and freshened the landscape. Out in the street he could hear kids playing. He watched Robby wave to Sue and chuckled.

Just as Robby had predicted early in the evening a series of does paraded out into the yard and began feeding on acorns under Bobby's stand. Bobby wanted to shoot, but he could feel the stare of Robby. He would have to wait.

The sun came to a rest in the west. The air cooled, if only slightly. Bobby watched as Robby reached for his bow and stood up on his platform. Bobby could not see what Robby could. Intently he watched the event unfold.

A large buck Robby had never seen before stood at the edge of the woods scanning the area. For a full five minutes the buck did not move. He stood motionless. Robby held his bow in hand ready to draw. His arms and legs twitched with excitement. The buck was of every hunter's dream. The long brow tines would measure at least 11 inches. The main beams swept wide of his ears by several inches. Robby talked himself into believing the buck before him was of Boone and Crockett caliber. Bobby could not see the buck, but he kept an eye on Robby and he himself searched for a deer to shoot.

Finally with only a few minutes of shooting light remaining, the buck of dreams took those last few steps into the yard. Bobby could not believe what he was

seeing. He watched as the buck stopped twenty five yards from Robby and turned to look toward the does feeding under his tree.

Robby drew his bow. He settled the sight pin on the buck's heart. His finger tightened on the release trigger. Robby was about to shoot the buck all hunter's dreamed about. Bobby was going to watch it happen. Sue stood in the window watching. The arrow left his bow. Right at the buck's front feet the arrow harmlessly stuck in the ground.

The buck jumped straight up in the air, came down in a full run covering the fifty yards towards Bobby's stand in an instant. There he stood attempting to assess the situation. There he stood ten yards away under Bobby. Robby slowly tried to remove another arrow from his quiver. Bobby above the deer, stood and drew his bow. Acting on auto pilot, rested the sight pin on the deer and released his arrow. The crimson covered arrow laid on the ground. The buck again burst away for a few feet then stood still.

Robby, Sue and Bobby watched as the buck began to sway back and forth, falling to the ground giving one last kick then lying motionless.

“You shot my buck!” Robby yelled across the yard.

“You had your shot, buddy, and missed,” Bobby yelled back. Bobby didn't even bother to lower his bow to the ground using the rope. He just tossed it to the ground and flew down the ladder, rushing over to put his hands on the biggest buck either of them had ever seen.

Robby walked over his buddy and the buck. “That sure is a monster,” he said. “Don't know how I missed such an easy shot?”

“Buck fever, I guess, Bobby replied, “I always said you shoot foam better than live targets.”

“It was cool to watch you shoot him though,” Robby said.

Sue walked out into the yard and carrying two beers handed them to Robby and Bobby as the two stood over the buck, staring. “I stood in the kitchen window watching the whole thing, wow.” She said. She stood next to Robby and put her arm around him. She looked at him and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Robby smiled to his hunting partner, “You may have just shot a buck of a lifetime dude, but I got the girl.”

## Newark man catches state record tiger muskie

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries biologists have confirmed that a 16-pound, 4-ounce tiger muskie caught on July 26 set a new state record for the species.

Recreational angler James R. Stewart of Newark caught the fish in the Brandywine River about a mile upstream from the Christina River. He used 6-pound test line to reel in the record fish, which was attracted to an artificial minnow baited beneath a bobber. Stewart plans to have the fish mounted.

The record catch was initially confirmed by Fish and Wildlife Enforcement agent Sr. Cpl. Jeff Howell, who responded to a report of a potential state record at Eastern Marine in Newark. Certified scales at Eastern Marine were used to weigh the tiger muskie.



Stewart's record-sized catch tops the previous record, a 15-pound, 2-ounce tiger muskie caught by angler Richard Harris in 1991. The new record holder will be entered in the books for the 2012 Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament.

Tiger muskies are the sterile hybrid of muskellunge (muskie) and northern pike. This hybrid does occur naturally. However, the record-holder was most likely one of the hatchery-produced fish stocked by the State of Pennsylvania in the upper Brandywine River. Due to hybrid vigor, tiger muskies grow rapidly and thrive in warm water.

For more information on the Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament, please consult the 2012 Delaware Fishing Guide, available at your local tackle shop or license dealer, or online at [www.fw.delaware.gov/fisheries](http://www.fw.delaware.gov/fisheries), or call the Fisheries Section at 302-739-9914.




Angler James R. Stewart holds the state record tiger muskie he caught on July 26 in the Brandywine River.



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## “FISHIN’ BACK EAST”

### CHASING POTOMAC BLUE CATS

By Jim Gronaw

There are not many places on planet Earth where an angler can go to a freshwater fishing destination and have a reasonable shot at catching a thirty pound fish, and maybe several, of any species. For

those who don't mind a little bit of wrk and slime, the current state of the tidal Potomac River blue catfish fishery offers one of the best 'big-fish' opportunities in the East. The Potomac is an amazing fishery for many species, but for those catfish fanatics who like 'em big, this waterway remains under the radar as one of the top destinations in the



Patrick Korn, of Keymar, MD, with a nice 27 pounder he caught on cut bait.

nation for burly blue cats.

I have been doing the blue cat gig off and on since 2007, and found that it was an amazing, overlooked and underfished option for Mid-Atlantic anglers. Where as Virginia's James River has been the epicenter of East Coast cat fisheries, the Potomac has, for some reason, lagged behind in popularity for the big catters. I don't know whether it is that the James has small, working-class towns in and around it as opposed to the Potomac being next to white-collar professionals of the nations capitol or not. The tidal Potomac is still one of the top largemouth bass fisheries in the nation and gathers that group of anglers year 'round. But the truth is, big fish are there to be had, all year long.

Evidence to this ongoing/emerging fishery is the recent state-record 80 pound, 12 ounce blue cat caught back in February of 2012 by Shawn Wetzel, of Ortanna, Pennsylvania. Over the past 18 months, several other 70 to 75 pound fish have been at least photo-documented and released by anglers in quest of the giant cats. Twenty to forty pound cats are by no means rare, and most anglers who have spent some time on the river have PR's that are in the 50-pound range. My personal best from the Potomac is a 42-pounder and my son, Matthew, wrestled a 50-pounder from the Fort Washington area of the main river...a noted 'big fish' location.

I recently joined my good friend and angling buddy Patrick Korn for a revisit on the Potomac blues. He had been catching lots of smaller, 5 to 10-pound cats on his past several trips. I think small baits and lighter gear may have been a reason to attract the kitties. We hit the river at Marshall Hall ramp and motored up to the mouth of Piscataway Creek and set up on the channel edges near green cans 77 and 79. Everywhere we went we got some cats, but nothing over 10-12 pounds. With 40-50 pound baitcasting gear and 8 ounces of weight, such fish seemed relatively small. About 8 am one of our rods loaded up and pegged down to the waters edge. Patrick wrestled the rod out of the holder and proceeded with a long and cautious fight on 30- pound braid. Several minutes later, I dipped a nice 27 pounder and Patrick let out a war-whoop... it was his new PR!

Although a 27 pounder is a nice cat on the Potomac, it would raise few eyebrows among the big-cat crowd who routinely boat 30 to 50 pounders during prime months of October through March. Hot summer times tend to see lots of

smaller fish, and some of the local experts do the night gig to get some relief from the heat. We have taken them up to 44 pounds in the stillness of the summer nights.

Tackle for big blues is simple, and most saltwater anglers may already have gear that will do nicely. Most prefer 6000 or 7000 series baitcasters on fiberglass, 7-foot rods that will handle 30 to 50 pound monos as a mainline. Many catters prefer mono due to the stretch and forgiveness when big blue cats do that final dive and surge at boatside. Fishfinder rigs with 6 to 8 ounces of weight will be needed to keep baits down in the heavy current. Flat, in-line sinkers are also used and a short, 12 to 18 - inch, 50-pound leader, snelled to the hook, completes the Carolina-style rig. Hook sizes are 8/0 to 10/0 Kahle or circle hooks. Preferred baits are cut gizzard shad that are netted the morning of the trip. Check all regulations before you attempt to net gizzard shad in the tidal Potomac and it's tributaries. As a back up bait, cut bluegills, crappies or white perch can catch



Jim with a 34 pounder he caught and released.

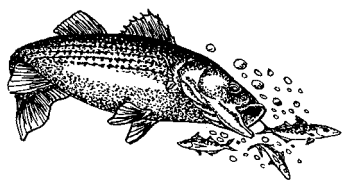
the cats as well.

Boat positioning and tidal phases are critical. Always anchor upcurrent from marked fish and allow them to come to you. Toss baits out, let them settle to the bottom, and tighten up on them in the rod-holders. You will likely get a lot of tentative bites from smaller fish. However, when the rod pegs over and stays down, it's almost always a big boy. Hooksets will not be needed, but have your drag set so that it will take some effort for the fish to run. Favored structures are channel drops and edges and small dips or rises in the river bottom that can conceal cats dur-

See Gronaw page 13

September 2012

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# Gronaw ...

Continued from Page 12

ing tidal currents. We have found that the last 2 hours of incoming or outgoing tides produce well.

Recently, there has been some regulatory efforts made by both



Jim always uses caution when releasing these Blue Cats.

Maryland and Virginia concerning both the blue and flathead catfish populations in the Potomac and all Chesapeake tributaries that involve the reduction of the current populations. The ongoing terms 'non-native' and 'invasive' continue to crop up in the language of these current concerns. Talks of 'total eradication' to 'significantly reduced numbers' are also being batted around by governing bodies of both states. Without getting into a whole lot of political commentary, I just want to say that I find it astonishing that fisheries managers are not more savvy in promoting large, aggressive gamefish like the blue cats of the Potomac and the James. Many of our most popular sportfish in the region are non-native, and some are invasive. The blue cat fishery on the James has brought lots of money into a very depressed area for many years through guide services and related industries. Although that has not followed suit on the Potomac, it is still one of the top big-fish, freshwater bites in the nation. Enjoy it while you can.

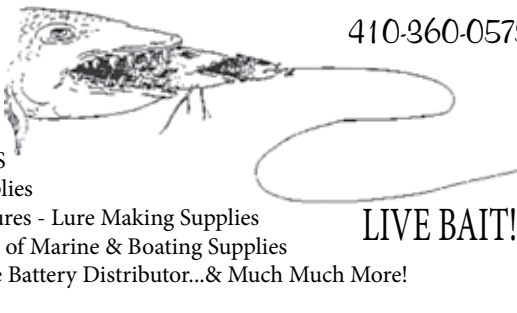


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Caught by: William Woody on the *Blew Bayou*. A 72.0 lb. White Marlin, caught on 08/08/2012.



## THE WINNING TUNA WAS WORTH \$324,516

The Right Hook from Heathsville, VA with angler Norman Pulliam of Yorktown, VA with his winning Tuna.

from Capt. Dale Britt website.....

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## BIG COUNTRY BRINGS HOME THE BACON

Three Carteret County boys got a lot richer over the past five days.....a week and a half ago, Big Country called me and said that his pal T Harris was taking a 50 ft Hatteras to the Ocean City White Marlin Open, that he needed another mate in addition to Thomas Bennett, and that the boat was not at all rigged up to fish.....Without hesitation, I told Country that he needed to fish that tournament and that it would be a great experience for him....,so the next day Country got aboard the Blew Bayou and off they went....,the second day they topped the leaderboard with a 72 pound White Marlin that held on to win a whopping 1.41 Million Dollars.....,the the three Carteret County boys, Big Country, Thomas Bennett, and T Harris are coming home with pockets full of money -

CONGRATULATIONS BOYS !!!!  
Good Stuff !!



Ronnie Hall was in 1st. place aboard the *Keep Er Wet* with Captain Dave Sumpter in the Tuna division after day one.

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The Chincoteague Island Charter Association hosted "Take A Kid Fishing Day" on Aug 1, 2012. Eight Captains from the Association donated their boats to take 25 kids fishing and then provided fish cleaning, lunch, T-Shirts, Combos and Tackle to further their fishing skills. They also learned about navigation and safety on the water from each Captain. Local tackle shops Capt Bob's Marina and Capt. Steves Bait & Tackle donated several door prizes. Two tackle boxes were awarded for the biggest and most fish caught. Other door prizes were given out by drawing names. The trips were helped with costs with a grant from the VA Marine Resources Commissions with monies from the Va Saltwater Development Fund.

*"Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt." - Abraham Lincoln  
(paraphrase from the Bible, 'Proverbs' 17:28)*



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**Beth Lidsay makes the crew proud with this Striper caught aboard the *Miss Kristen* out of Rock Hall, MD. with Captain Dave Lindsay at the helm. First mate Chuck Crouse assisted in on the catch.**

## *Flounder is worth \$625 per pound*

The 2nd annual Beach N Boat Flounder tournament kicked off on Sunday, August 25th with 106 anglers casting in search of the winning flounder. The Maryland Saltwater Sportfishing Association (MSSA) once again hosted this event at Ake Marine located in Ocean City, Maryland. While the weather was less than desirable, the dedicated anglers of Maryland and other Mid-Atlantic states showed up to test their angling skills in the back bays of Ocean City. Wisely, nobody left the inlet to fish

the wrecks. Since this tournament is open to shore anglers as well, competitors were able to fish from any location, boat, bridge, pier, or beach.

First place went to Mike Miller of Parkton, Maryland. Miller weighed in a 5.6 pound flounder measuring 22 7/8 inches. Miller took home \$3,500 for his efforts.

Dave Tolbert of Arnold, Maryland took second place by one-tenth of a pound with his 4.85 pound flounder, measuring 22 1/8 inches. Tolbert received \$500 for his flounder.

Third place went to Pat Pope of Kent Island with his 4.75 pound fish, measuring 22 1/2 inches

The Beach N Boat Flounder tournament is the third tournament in the MSSA Tournament Series. MSSA hosts four major tournaments every year consisting of two Chesapeake Bay rockfish tournaments, one offshore tuna tournament, and one inshore flounder tournament. Captains and anglers earn points in each for participation and catches. The 20th annual Chesapeake Bay Fall Classic will take place on November 17 & 18. This will be the last chance for Captains to get points for the Captain of the Year contest.



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**2nd. Place crew**

## Eleven members of the Boone and Crockett club are on advisory panel to Obama administration regarding wildlife and sporting issues

MISSOULA, Mont.- Of the 18 conservation leaders selected to advise the Obama Administration on wildlife and sporting issues, 11 are members of the Boone and Crockett Club. That influence is good news for America's hunters because it ensures strong advocacy for high standards in fair-chase sportsmanship, habitat stewardship and science-based wildlife management.

Founded by Theodore Roosevelt, the Club has long maintained the highest standards for North American hunters—and documented the conservation benefits through big-game records that date back to the late 1880s.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Aug. 17 announced appointees to the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council.

The council will include the following Boone and Crockett Club members:

- David Allen (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation)
- Jeffrey Crane (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation)
- Jonathan Gassett (Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources)
- Thomas Franklin (Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership)
- Winifred Kessler (The Wildlife Society)
- Robert Model (chairman of Boone and Crockett Club)
- Joanna Prukop (former New Mexico Secretary of Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources)
- Stephen Sanetti (National Shooting Sports Foundation)
- Christine Thomas (College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin)
- John Tomke (Ducks Unlimited)
- Steve Williams (Wildlife Management Institute)

"It's gratifying to see so many Boone and Crockett members on the council," said Club President Ben Wallace. "Each was selected as a federal advisor for the same reasons that he or she was selected as a regular or professional member of our organization—their professionalism, education, background, leadership, vision and passion for the future of wildlife, hunting and shooting sports."

Traditional sporting pursuits continue to fuel the primary funding mechanisms for conservation and wildlife management. It's a system

that must be preserved, said Wallace.

He added, "I'm confident that our President and his staff will receive the highest level of guidance from this group. Congratulations to all the appointees on their selection."

Some selectees will be serving their second term (three years) on the council, launched in 2010.

The council was formed to promote and preserve America's wild-

life and hunting heritage for future generations by identifying issues and proposing solutions that advance sustainable use conservation.

Six federal agencies playing a key role in America's outdoor heritage—U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency—and the As-

sociation of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, will also have representation on the council.

For the full list of recent appointees and more info about the council, see the Department of Interior's press release at the link below:

<http://www.doi.gov/news/press-releases/Salazar-Vilsack-Announce-Members-of-Wildlife-and-Hunting-Heritage-Conservation-Council.cfm>

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**Do you want to help the less fortunate in these difficult economic times?**  
**If you said yes to any one of the above, you'll want to participate in the 2012 Doe Harvest Challenge!**

**Rules:**

1. Each doe donated entitles you to 1 entry card.
2. Only does harvested within legal seasons and bag limits qualify (No DMPs).
3. There will be 5, 3-week contest cycles in each region with winners drawn at the conclusion of each cycle. Entries collected throughout all 5 contest cycles will be entered into a drawing in each region for a grand prize valued at over \$500!
4. Entries accepted beginning September 7th through December 29th.

So. Maryland participating counties: Anne Arundel, Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Prince George's.  
 Eastern Shore participating counties: Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Wicomico.  
 North Central participating counties: Carroll and Frederick.

By donating your legally harvested doe to a participating Farmers and Hunters, Feeding the Hungry processor in North Central, Southern MD, or the Eastern Shore and filling out a brief entry card, not only will you help provide quality protein to local food banks and help reduce agricultural crop losses, but you'll be eligible for prize packages valued at up to \$300 and a grand prize of over \$500 in value!!

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# Fishing Terms

Reel - A weighted object that causes a rod to sink quickly when dropped overboard.

Rod - An attractively painted length of fiberglass that keeps an angler from ever getting too close to a fish.



Cory Travis, the new man behind the scenes at Don Travis Taxidermy with his assistant in the photo is his daughter -- the Fishing Queen. Cory will be assisting the taxidermists. Cory was fishing with Captain Bob Gears out of Rock Hall, MD. when he caught this nice Striper.



Brett Patchett Jr. was aboard the *Catch 22* with Captain Mitch Quillen when he trolled up this nice Striper.

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## Coastal Report

By Capt. Mark Sampson

A while back one of my clients told me about the big stripers he hooks on the Chesapeake Bay and how, "They're so big they keep snapping my line." When I asked him what pound test he was using he said, "Twenty. So I guess those fish are a lot bigger than that"! In the same breath he pointed to one of the rods we had set out for sharks that morning and asked what pound test was on the reel. When I said "twenty" he got a real strange look on his face and asked, "How do you expect to catch anything big on that"? After I gave him a quick lecture on the working of a fishing reel's drag system and how when properly used allow anglers to land very large fish on very light line, I went on to mention that if he was breaking 20-pound line on striped bass that it wasn't that the fish were too big - it was that he was doing something wrong.

There can be a lot of reasons why a fishing line breaks during a fight; there is a nick in the line, a weak knot, the line hits something in the water, the fish "spools" the reel by taking off all the line, so much line is out that it breaks from increased water pressure, or there is some kind of malfunction in the reel like a backlash or locked-up drag. But if an angler does everything right, the tackle works as it should, and there are no unforeseen glitches in the process, it doesn't matter if someone has a blue whale on 2-pound test, a fishing line will

never break simply because the line is too light for the fish.

Of course, that's not to say it's possible to land a blue whale on 2-pound test, it's not, but in that hypothetical battle, "when" the line breaks it's going to be for one of the other reasons, "not" just because it's 2-pound test line, and that's because the drag on the reel simply won't let it happen.

Understanding how to set and use the drag on one's reel is one of the most important aspects of saltwater fishing. The drag on a reel does two things, it applies pressure to a fish and it keeps the line from breaking by allowing it to slip before snapping. It's all very simple, but as any charter captain or fishing guide will tell you, the improper use of drags is rampant among novice and sometimes even experienced anglers.

We see it all the time, someone who maybe has a lot of fishing experience but have never caught a fish that had the size or strength to actually pull out drag, hooks into a decent saltwater fish that immediately takes off on a long run. Seeing line pouring off their reel when they expect to be cranking it in, anglers will often conclude that something is wrong, panic, and try to stop it by either thumbing the spool or cranking down the drag. With option "one" destined to end in a painful burn to the thumb, and option "two" sure to conclude in a broken line, either way the angler loses, and the fish swims free.

In most cases drags should be set and then left alone, which puts the burden on the fisherman to decide ahead of time how much pressure they want to put on the jaw of the fish, the hook, the leader, the swivels, and every knot before the line slips. It's not all about the breaking strength of the line, because if there's a

failure in any of those other factors the fish can be lost just as easily as if the line itself parts. For instance, putting too much pressure on a soft-mouthed fish like a seatrout is going to end in lost fish. However, putting too little pressure on a fish like a tuna that needs to be slowed down and controlled quickly can drag out a fight too long and enhance the chances of the fish being lost due to sharks, a worn out angler, or the line getting fouled in someone else's anchor or fishing line.

The strength of the terminal tackle must also be taken into consideration when setting drags. Somewhere between the fish and the rod tip is a weak link that is going to fail under pressure before anything else. When using really light line that link could be the line itself, but most likely it will be the knot that links the line to the leader or swivel. However, in situations similar to when anglers are chunking for tuna and need to use very light leaders to fool finicky fish, the weak link could very well be the leader. If you're using 50-pound line but 30-pound leader you'd better set the drag to accommodate the 30-pound leader or you'll be popping off every bite you get! Similarly, if an angler is using thin-gage or very small hooks that don't take a big bite out of the fish's jaw, they'll have to lighten the drag to prevent straightening or tearing out the hook in the heat of the battle.

Anglers need to set their drags taking all these things into consideration and then leave the drag setting alone and fight the fish with what they've got. If they know that the drag was set right but fear the

fish is taking too much line and might spool the reel a better option to tightening down is to regain line by getting the boat moving in the direction of the fish. Chase it down and stay on top of it, keep applying a reasonable amount of pressure and sooner or later victory will be yours. Unfortunately too many anglers don't let the drag do the work and make the critical error of tightening the drag or thumbing the spool or the line against the foregrip to slow the fish.

Anglers should keep in mind that as line is lost and the diameter of the spool gets smaller the drag of a reel actually increases on its own due to the higher RPM's of the spool. Therefore, under such situations it actually makes more sense to back the drag off a little than to increase it. A tough thing to do when you're worried about a fish taking all your string!

Setting drag pressure can be done using a scale or just by feel. Many big game anglers can get away with using a scale because the terminal tackle they use and the fish they pursue are always the same. I never use a scale because our target species and the terminal gear we use for them is always different and so I need to constantly reset the drags to accommodate what we have, or hope to have on the end of our line. I might also change drag settings if the angler is a child or anyone else who might not have the physical strength needed to hold onto a rod if there is too much pull on the other end. But once the fish is hooked up, unless you really REALLY know what you're doing - don't touch that drag!

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## Mid-Bay Report

By Chuck Prahl

After suffering through a long, hot summer during which a day on the water was often almost painful, we are finally slipping into a more pleasant time of year. Though the perch cooperated throughout the summer, they can never really pull your string like a hefty rockfish.

Live-lining in the Main Bay has been fun, but it requires a lot of preparation, like gathering bait (spot), keeping it alive and then the long trek to the fishing grounds.

September in the Middle Bay means that stripers will be migrating back into the estuaries. No more long trips, no more live-lining. Trolling and casting artificials is now the way to go as stripers begin to seek their traditional fall forage, the menhaden.

In September, shoreline casting becomes more productive, but it is also a time to look deeper, on the river channel edges where stripers gather to intercept schools of young-of-the-year menhaden.

These are places that have always been active feeding spots. The old-timers know them well. When we had the great schools of

menhaden, hundreds of birds could be sighted, diving and screaming over the feeding rockfish. The menhaden were attracted to these places probably because the bottom structure was conducive to a welling of plankton that concentrated the schools of menhaden.

These places are still there, but there's a lot less menhaden and it seems a lot less stripers to harass them. Still, if you know where to look, three or four, maybe ten birds sitting on the water in the right place tells you all you need to know to "make your day".

In these days of menhaden scarcity, a wise angler might take a look with the meter just to see if the stripers are there, waiting for an unsuspecting passing school of menhaden. The great traditional places will usually have a dramatic bottom structure where a deep channel rises sharply to a rip-producing shallow.

The dormant stripers will lay just to the deep side of the rise. When they feed they may be found anywhere in the vicinity as they chase down their prey. By that time the birds will be showing the way.

Down the Bay, Tangier and Pocomoke Sounds have been experiencing their best speckled trout season in many years. We are hoping their northward migration will bring them well into the Middle Bay. These beautiful fish would help enhance our fall fishing that needs a little diversity with the absence of our departed yellow

fin trout and a poor showing of croaker.

Spotted sea trout are primarily caught in the shallows, but are sometimes found in deeper water. They take both bait and artificials well, which makes them a true gamefish. Small, (4-inch) paddle tails and grubs as well as spoons, suspending plugs, and streamer flies are widely used. Soft and peeler crabs are prime live baits used here in Maryland. Live shrimp are the traditional live bait



on the south Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

It's much too early to predict more speckled trout because of global warming, but there is plenty of evidence that points that way, like last year's warm winter.

Another puzzle is the surprise showing of small redfish in the Middle Bay waters. Anglers who've never seen them before are catching good numbers of them in the Big and Little Choptank rivers.

At this writing, most are under 15-inches but growing fast. There is little hope that some might reach legal size (18") by the time they depart. We can only hope they will return next year and maybe become a welcomed permanent addition to Maryland's Middle Bay fisheries.

You might remember the glowing reports of a great winter dredge sampling of blue crabs, like we were going to have wall-to-wall crabs. The DNR survey is pretty accurate, but a prediction of record numbers of small crabs and adequate numbers of females for reproduction does not necessarily translate into big numbers of #1's. DNR is happy to report plentiful crabs, but they're not always the ones we like to eat.

Actually, we are now beginning to see many of those young crabs coming into the fishery. Just in time for a late season crab feast.

I can pretty much tell how good the Big Choptank crab population is in August by the doublers and sooks I see on the Choptank River Bridge pilings.

See Prahl Page 23

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# Prahl ...

Continued from Page 22

I can truthfully say I've never seen more. True, many are paper shell sooks, but a great number are doublers. Recreational crabbers need to let the sooks go or better yet, don't even net them. Their red claws and broad apron are a dead giveaway.

A word about rods. My favorite rod of all time is my St. Croix 7 1/2 ft. Inshore Tide Master. It matches my type of fishing to the "n"th degree, but there are times when it simply will not fit. I mean as in cars, and sometimes even in boats. The answer is a 2-piece rod.

There was a time when 2-piece casting rods were verboten. The old metal ferrule put a flat spot in the rod. This detracted from the total action. Graphite spinning and fly rods seem to have made the transition to 2-piece rods, but try to find a high quality bait caster in 2-piece.

The glass or graphite ferrule does not seem to hurt the action and they don't corrode and become welded together like metal. As long as the two pieces are bottomed out, the rod will not break at the ferrule.

I'm looking for a 2-piece 7 1/2 footer. Even an 8-footer makes sense in 2-piece. Remember, long rods cast farther.



This young lady is all smiles after catching this summer time Striper aboard the *Canvasback* with Captain Bob Ritchie out of Rock Hall, MD.



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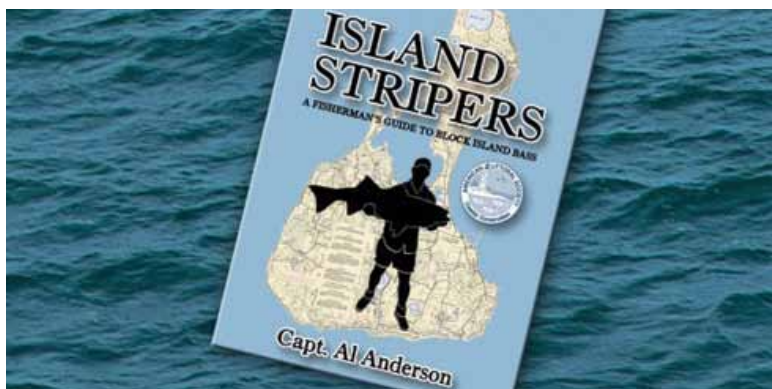



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## Book of the Month

### BOOK REVEALS SECRETS OF BLOCK ISLAND STRIPER FISHING



Renown Rhode Island charter skipper Al Anderson has released a new book on fishing the world-famous waters of Block Island for striped bass. According to Anderson, *Island Stripers: A Fisherman's Guide to Block Island Bass* was written in part to refute unsubstantiated claims regarding various biological aspects of the striper.

Aside from solid, how-to advice on striper-fishing tactics and techniques, the book contains some surprising information, including: Block Island was once 6 times larger than today.

Block Island's natives were consuming net-caught stripers thousands of years ago. Near-identical striper species from European and Asian waters are presently marine and not fresh-water spawning fish.

Evidence exists that our present day striper evolved from a marine ancestor millions of years ago.

Atlantic stripers utilized freshwater-fed estuaries for spawning to elude marine predators.

"Genetic memory" has accounted for the author recapturing dozens of stripers he tagged and released at the very same spot they were marked years earlier.

The book will help guide boat and shore fishermen through night and daytime techniques for fishing Block Island. It also explains where and how to fish live eels for trophy bass, and how the tides and currents dictate success.

Anderson has fished the waters off Block Island for nearly 5 decades, has tagged more stripers for science (42,000+) than anyone nationwide, thanks to help from his charter clients. He will also be the first New England charter skipper inducted into the IGFA's World Fishing Hall of Fame. - *Island Stripers* sells for \$19.95 (plus shipping & handling) - Order direct from: Capt. Al Anderson 7 Jean St., Narragansett, RI 02882 - Email: AHATuna@aol.com

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## Dove Bites in the Goose Blind

Sent in by Ron Steidle.

~ dove breasts ~ bacon ~ teriyaki sauce ~  
beer ~ green onions, cut into 2" - 3" pieces  
~ garlic powder ~ toothpicks

Fillet meat off the breastbones. Wash well  
and remove all shot.

Cut bacon slices in half. Place a piece of on-  
ion on each breast and wrap with the bacon. Se-  
cure with toothpicks.

In a bowl, mix together equal amounts of  
teriyaki sauce and beer.

Place the wrapped breasts in a bowl and cov-  
er with the teriyaki sauce mixture.

Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Remove from the marinade. Sprinkle with  
garlic powder.

Grill over medium-high heat until bacon  
is cooked. When bacon is done, dove is done.  
Serve and enjoy.



## Maryland DNR Announces 2012-2013 early migratory game bird seasons

Annapolis, Md. (August 8, 2012) — The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced the 2012-2013 early migratory game bird hunting season.

Dove, split season:  
September 1- October 6  
November 3 - 23  
December 22 - January 3

“Doves benefitted from the mild winter and long nesting season this spring and summer,” said Bill Harvey, DNR’s game bird section leader. “We expect hunters will encounter more birds than in recent years.”

Woodcock, split season:  
October 26 - November 23  
January 11 - 26

Early resident Canada goose season:  
Eastern zone: September 1 - 15  
Western zone: September 1 - 25

During the September resident Canada goose season: Hunters are allowed to use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; shooting hours are extended to one-half hour after sunset; the use of electronic calls is prohibited.

Teal, September season:  
September 17 - 29  
The September teal season hunting zone is located at [dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/tealchart.asp](http://dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/tealchart.asp).

Official shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset for all migratory game bird hunting EXCEPT for:

- Mourning doves during the first season segment, when shooting hours are from noon to sunset;
- Teal during the September season, when shooting hours are sunrise to sunset; and
- During the early September resident Canada goose seasons, when shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Nontoxic shot is required for hunting rails, snipe, waterfowl, and coots. In Maryland, no hunter may take these species while possessing shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for use in muzzleloader shotguns) other than non-toxic shot approved for waterfowl by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Further, hunters may not use or possess non-toxic shot larger than size number T (0.20 inches in diameter) or any style of shotgun slug while hunting waterfowl, coots, rails, and snipe. Approved types of nontoxic shot and other information on migratory bird hunting is listed in the 2012-2013 Maryland Guide to Hunting & Trapping issued with each hunting license or at [http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/hunt\\_trap/gamebird/non\\_toxic.asp](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/hunt_trap/gamebird/non_toxic.asp)

## NICE RED DRUM CATCH AND RELEASE



**Anna E. scored this catch and release red drum Sunday, July 29th on the South River fishing for the MSSA Youth Angler of the Year contest. She was using bloodworms on a top/bottom rig.**

**Many small red drum seem to be appearing in the bottom feeder fishing this summer in the Chesapeake Bay.**

*Photo courtesy of Maryland Angler's Log.*

## TRACTOR & TRUCK PULL



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at  
6:00 P.M.



# September 15, 2012

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For More Information Call 410-822-9868 or visit [www.tuckahoesteam.org](http://www.tuckahoesteam.org)

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Antique Furniture, Stoneware, Decoys, and Firearms

**Saturday, September 8, 2012 @ 9:00AM**

*Preview: Friday, September 7, 2012 3-7PM*

Location: Crumpton Auction Barn, Corners of RT 544 & RT 290 in Crumpton, MD

**Decoys:** Collection of over 60+ decoys, Madison Mitchell, Charlie Joiner, John Glenn, Heverin, Urie, Bryant, John Meredith, Bryan, Lockard, Graham, 2 prs. Of sink box decoys by Litzenberg/Gibson, Jobses, Coll. Of oyster cans, 300+ silhouette decoys, goose/turkey prints, Various goose/turkey/duck calls

**Firearms:** Collection of 20 clean shotguns and rifles, Remington, Winchester, Mossberg, Charles Daly

**Lawn Tractor/Go Cart:** Troy-Bilt Riding lawn mower, Large Yerf Dog Go Cart, John Deere wagon

**Furniture:** Ant. Cherry QA Highboy, 2 Ant. slant front desks, Var. Ant. chests, red painted kitchen cabinet, Ant. stands/chairs, 2-Ant. grandfather clocks, Dining room table and chairs, 20+ oriental carpets

**Smalls/China:** Collection of Blue decorated stoneware, 1 Gal. incised crock "E A Fulcher", Var. sterling pcs., Ant. oil paintings, Ant. bisque head dolls, Coll. Of food molds, half hull ship models

**Terms:** Cash or Good Check/ 6% MD Sales Tax/10% Buyers Premium on all purchases.

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Trophy Hunter gets 'Er Done at the White Marlin Open 2012

# Catch Reports

The Trophy Hunter had 1855.0 points and 1855.0 release p



Angler	Day/Time Released?	Species	Late?	Points	Yes	No	Points
Michael Killelea1	09:08AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Richard Vigue	1 09:12AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Robert DeFebo	1 09:20AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Geoff Pence	1 10:26AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Robert Bavar	1 10:28AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Greg Reynolds	1 11:34AM	White Marlin	No	70.0			
Robert DeFebo	1 12:23PM	Blue Marlin			Yes	No	175.0
Richard Vigue	1 3:20PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Michael Killelea2	08:41AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Geoff Pence	2 09:17AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Robert Bavar	2 09:27AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Greg Reynolds	2 10:04AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Richard Vigue	2 12:16PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Robert DeFebo	2 12:20PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Michael Killelea2	1:18PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Geoff Pence	2 1:23PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Greg Reynolds	2 1:35PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Robert Bavar	2 1:36PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Robert DeFebo	2 2:37PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Richard Vigue	3 10:01AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Michael Killelea3	10:18AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Richard Vigue	3 10:19AM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Geoff Pence	3 12:12PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Robert Bavar	3 2:11PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0
Greg Reynolds	3 2:16PM	White Marlin			Yes	No	70.0



## H G-Neff Realty HUNTING PROPERTIES FOR SALE

### Dorchester County

**380 acre farm: 60+/- tillable acres** and the remainder in marsh and mature timber. Three waterfowl impoundments and multiple other ponds. Offering includes hunting lodge and navigable waterfrontage. One of the best Sika properties around with Whitetail and Turkeys. Asking \$685,000.

**72 acre Taylor's Island farm:** Mostly tillable ground with two large 5 +/- acre waterfowl impoundments, and two small holding ponds. Excellent Waterfowl Property with some sika, whitetail, and turkey. Asking \$499,000

**158 +/- Acre Property:** Located in Crapo, Md comprised of woodland and marsh, one flooded impoundment for ducks, and one permanent pond in woods. 5 acre open space allows for another pond. Perfect habitat for waterfowl, whitetail, sika, and turkeys. A real sportsman's paradise. Asking \$499,000.

**270 Acre Dorchester County Marsh** that is boat access only. This property is an excellent waterfowl and sika deer property. Asking \$295,000

**390 Acres Timber:** Bucktown RD/ Stone Boundary RD, Dorchester County. The tract of timber consists of .3 acres of ponds, 1.5 acres of food plots for Deer and Turkeys. Perfect investment for Timber Harvesting or Deer and Turkey Hunting. Asking \$1,200,000.

### Talbot County

**135 acre Talbot county Farm** with Roughly 70+/- tillable acres with the remainder in woods. great location for goose, duck, deer, and turkeys. Asking \$938,250.

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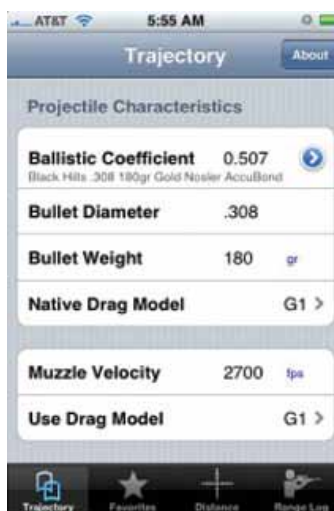
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Captain Brian Councill aboard the *Sea Dux* out of Rock Hall, MD. has had an excellent summer of fishing for stripers. Pictured above is the Kevin Kinney crew.

### Atlantic Population CAGO banding - UNGAVA results

Ungava Bay - over 6 days of banding (lost 1 day due to inclement weather) the crew made 26 catches and banded 632 adults and 703 goslings (for a Ad:IMM ratio of 1:1.25), for a total of 1425 geese.



Hudson Bay - over 11 days of banding (lost 0 days) the crew made 47 catches and banded 803 adults and 1324 goslings (for a Ad:IMM ratio of 1:1.65), for a total of 2127 geese.

In all, therefore, 1435 adults and 2117 juveniles were banded, for a total of 3552 geese.

In general, reproduction seemed very good along Hudson Bay and moderately good along Ungava Bay. The goslings also seemed 1-2 weeks older along Hudson Bay.

*Courtesy of Richard Cotter, Canadian Wildlife Service*

### Browning introduces the Zombie Apocalypse Knife

When the ammunition has run out, be prepared for up close fighting during the zombie outbreak with the new Browning Zombie Apocalypse Knife. This well balanced razor sharp knife should be included with your zombie outbreak survival gear should this outbreak ever occur.



For cutting, slashing and hacking, the Browning Zombie Apocalypse Knife features a razor sharp 7" drop point blade. It also features a full tang construction and ultra secure grip for optimum balance and control. The Zombie Apocalypse Knife comes with a durable nylon sheath with belt loop for quick access when the knife is needed.

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### 1178 LBS. OF YELLOWFIN TUNA!



The crew from Ground Hog Tackle will not be going hungry anytime soon. They were fishing aboard *Marli* out of Ocean City, Md this past summer. Photo Courtesy of Bowley's Bait & Tackle



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ACCOKEEK, MD Beretta USA and Hard Core Decoys have joined forces to turn everyday waterfowlers into Xtreme waterfowlers—those who live to hunt in frigid rain, driving sleet, blinding snow and relentless salt spray—with the XHCD promotion. Purchase any A400 Xtreme shotgun now through December 31, 2012 and receive your choice of Hard Core Decoy's 4-pack of Full Body Canada Goose Resters or a 6-pack of Mallard Floaters w/ Slot Bag free of charge—a \$129 bonus for living the Xtreme lifestyle.

Beretta's A400 Xtreme, the go anywhere, know no limits shotgun dominating flyways across the nation, drives this hardcore promotion

with its industry leading 70% recoil reduction, keeping hunters in the field from dawn until dusk settles on the last day of the season. Its exclusive Aqua Technology, the proven corrosion proof barrier protecting all internal and external metal components, and chambered to feed everything from the lightest 2 3/4" 7/8 oz. shell to the heaviest 3 1/2" magnum load. The A400 Xtreme instills absolute confidence in hunters who hunt sea ducks on the coast, the flooded timbers of Arkansas, or the wheat fields of Southern Canada, knowing their Xtreme is the most rugged and durable shotgun on the market today.

To redeem the free decoys promotional offer, customers must down-

load the redemption coupon at [www.berettausa.com](http://www.berettausa.com), then mail the coupon along with all necessary documentation by January 31, 2012. All A400 Xtreme shotguns must be purchased new at retail between August 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012 and only purchases made in the United States are eligible.

The Xtreme's never quit, show no mercy attitude, coupled with Hard Core Decoys that withstand the most hardcore conditions, will reign in waterfowl blinds across the nation. Own the waterfowl shotgun duck fanatics have only dreamed about.

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## Young angler lands Maryland record Grouper out of Ocean City, MD.

Ocean City, Md. — Two anglers caught Maryland record setting snowy grouper fish last month, earning each of them recognition as 2012 State record achievers. Robert Purcell, from Bishopville, caught a 56-pound snowy grouper on July 22 over the Norfolk Canyon, about 75 miles southeast of Ocean City, and held the state record for a week until he was replaced by 14-year-old Gregory Benn from Great Falls, Va. who reeled in a 66-pound grouper on July 30.

"The fish took Gregory almost to the rail at the strike," said the boy's father, Richard Benn. "At one point, I thought the rod might break with the drag on so hard to pull the fish out of the rocks."

Gregory Benn and his father were aboard their boat on July 30 for a deep-drop grouper trip in about 600 feet of water when he caught the fish. Captain Dave Warren rigged a 12-ounce diamond jig to an 80-pound braided Spiderwire line, spooled on a Shimano Torium reel, on a 30-pound class rod and handed it to Gregory Benn. He later felt the fish bite.

Benn fought the big grouper for more than a half-hour before the fish came to the surface. Crewmate Robert Belcher



lip gaffed the fish and brought it over the rail. On board, the fish measured more than 47 inches with a girth of 38 inches.

The fish was weighed and certified at Sunset Marina by Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Service biologist Steve Doctor to be a new snowy grouper record.

This was not the first big snowy grouper for Gregory Benn. On July 1, he reeled in a 50-pounder from the same area. On the return to Sunset Marina, the crew learned that there was no Maryland State record for this species, but the catch could not be accepted because it had already been cleaned, cut up and packed away.

Purcell caught his record fish on July 22, while fishing with the Bennis on their boat.

"The first 15 minutes were the toughest — the fish kept diving into a hole to get away," said Purcell.

The current all-tackle world record is a 70-pound, 7-ounce snowy grouper caught by Roger Burnley of Virginia Beach from the Norfolk Canyon in 2011. It is also the Virginia State record since it was checked in and weighed in Newport News.

Gregory Benn and Robert Purcell will be recognized as 2012 State record achievers at the 2012 Maryland Fishing Challenge Finale and Grand Prize Drawing on September 8 at the Maryland Seafood Festival at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis.

The Maryland Fishing Challenge is a year-round contest for all anglers in Maryland. Anglers who catch and register any of the more than 80 Maryland Angler Award eligible sport fish species receive certificates of achievement and invitations to the Grand Finale. This year's Celebration will include chances to win a Tracker boat package boat, a tropical vacation package from the

World Fishing Network, tackle packages from Bill's Outdoor Center and Bass Pro Shops, Under Armour gear and gift cards from various sponsors.

Now in its eighth year, the Challenge showcases Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay as a premier sport fishing destination with accessible, affordable, diverse and high quality fishing for anglers of all ages—from the crystal mountain streams, to the central Maryland lakes and the mighty Potomac River, down to the Chesapeake Bay, the Coastal Bays and the Atlantic Ocean.

Marylanders can keep up with DNR fisheries information through Twitter (@MDDNRFISH) and on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/MDDNRFisheriesService>.



Gregory Benn and his 66-pound grouper with his father Richard Benn

## Delaware adopts new 15-inch minimum size limit for tautog

DOVER — Effective Aug. 11, 2012, anglers catching tautog in Delaware waters are now able to keep fish of 15-inch minimum length. DNREC adopted the reduction from the previous 16-inch minimum size limit in response to new management guidelines from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

"This new 15-inch minimum size limit is welcome news to many recreational anglers. The measure provides more protection for the tautog population, but allows for some additional harvest by anglers fishing in Delaware waters," said Fisheries Administrator John Clark.

The current season and bag limits will remain in place as follows:

Jan. 1 through March 31	5
fish possession limit	
April 1 through May 11	3
fish possession limit	
May 12 through July 16	
Closed season	
July 17 through Aug. 31	5
fish possession limit	
Sept. 1 through Sept. 28	
Closed season	
Sept. 29 through Dec. 31	5
fish possession limit	

For more information on Delaware fishing regulations, please check the 2012 Delaware Fishing Guide, available online at [www.fw.delaware.gov/fisheries](http://www.fw.delaware.gov/fisheries) and at fishing license agents throughout the state.

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## “WOMEN HUNTERS”

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It was November and the week before Thanksgiving so the timing was right for grunting & rattling in a buck, as it was pre-rut in our area with rut just at the doorstep. I had staked out a place where I knew that the bucks would be coming through, hopefully the next morning. I spent some time that afternoon clearing the spot I had chosen of leaves & sticks and made a makeshift ground blind out of roll out camo material and branches for the next morning. I checked for shooting lanes out from behind the blind and did what minimal trimming was necessary. It was a perfect location 12 yards from a trail which was along a rub line. It was between a bedding area and the field below the ridge was a prime feeding area.

There were also some major scrapes within 100 yards of this spot on trails leading into it. The area was what I would describe as a funnel; partially secluded by large trees yet on the inside edge of a tree line in an area that did not have dense undergrowth. The outside edge of this tree line was a known staging area for bucks. Through the years I had heard bucks up fighting on this ridge. The trail I would be off of ran up against and along a ridge, giving my silhouette a perfect way to be hidden in the shadows and out away from the north wind.

The next morning in darkness I carefully sneaked into my spot from the backside of the ridge and made myself as comfortable as possible, as I waited for first light. The weather had everything covered in frost and the air was cold and damp. I could see my breath and tell that the wind was blowing my sent in a direction that would not be detected, as the ridge created somewhat of a barrier from the northwest wind. I remained as still as possible until the sun began to rise.

I then strapped on my release, got my bow and arrow ready and began my first attempt to see what handsome buck in the neighborhood might be curious enough to come into my call. I did 3 doe bleats each about a minute apart and then stopped for 10 minutes. Then I did a couple soft, non-threatening buck grunts. I waited another 10 minutes and decided to do a

different type of buck grunt, using 2 different grunt calls and both with a louder tone. I was planning to start rattling next if that got no action, but no sooner than that thought entered my head than it went right out the window, as I was in for a surprise. From nowhere it seemed, 2 huge mature bucks were instantly in front of me where there had just been nothing but air, trees and low brush a second ago. I did not even see them coming nor hear the slightest twig snap.

These two giants (each no less than a 10 point or 5x5 what ever you prefer to say) rushed straight in at each other, directly in front of me as I knelt there on both knees inside my blind. They were about 2-3 yards (6-9 feet) away from me and I had no time to react or do anything. The fight was intense and about equally matched. I would guess the age of each of them to have been about 5 ½ or 6 ½ year olds based on their body mass. The buck that came in from my left hit the one that came in from the right first, and with such force that it created a tail spin on the buck he hit. In their violent struggle each of them began to whip their bodies (like a bass does on a hook when you are trying to pull it out of the water) as they were locked together.

The buck that began dominating the fight pushed the other one into a dense up growth of briars and ground him into it. Then he got him down and began to push his head and neck into the ground with his upper body at his mercy, with the similar sentiment we have when smashing a pop can with our foot. The other buck did not give up though, struggling with his back legs to regain himself. They lost their horn lock in this struggle, but when the other one managed to get up they went at it again. This time the one I thought was weaker, gouged the other in the neck and head with his horns and pushed the other one into a tree.

Then they hit and locked horns again, this time one pushing the other back almost into me. Now I had a full rear end view of one of them within 2 feet of the end of my arm if I had it stretched out. UP to this point this was the only clear shot that ever presented itself. I guess if I would have brought some brass with me I would have reached out and poked him in the rear just to see his reaction, but I left my brass home that day. They struggled and twisted that close to me for what seemed like more than a minute.

One more step backward or lost footing would mean I was going to

get stomped or rolled on. The whole time I was terrified that one or both of them could end up on top of me and I had no where to go to get out of their way. Then their bodies turned again simultaneously, almost in a midair rolling motion. Now one of them decided he had enough and started to pull away from the other, running backwards in full reverse trying to get away, as he whipped his head to pull his horns out. One free he turned and ran to my left, with the winner in pursuit. The fight seemed to be over having lasted I would guess no more than 3-4 minutes.

Even if I could there was no way to get my bow up to take aim at anything during the fight, as the only shot that ever presented itself for more than a few seconds was the rear end shot. But with a bow there was no way I could have pulled it back without almost touching the buck's rear end with the end of my broadhead.

This reminds me of a saying from an old western “Never bring a knife to a gun fight”. In this case it would have been better to have had a gun, as I could have placed a shot in the head of one of the bucks, but then again how ethical is that really considering “Fair Chase” if both bucks were locked together?

As the victor was chasing the other buck off I now had a chance to get my bow and was trying to knock an arrow, not sure of what would hap-

pen next. I heard him as he made an unusual grunting sound, which made me look up in that direction. When I did I saw the buck as he came rushing straight back toward me from about 20-25 yards away. I lost focus at knocking my arrow, as I think my heart stopped beating at that moment. He had sensed that I was there during the fight maybe, or had heard me as I was picking up my bow and came back to decide if I was a threat or not.

Within a fraction of a second he was in front of me, and stop just short of about 3 feet. He stood there almost panting and I could smell his steamy breath from that distance. The only reaction I had time for was to put my bow in front of me and not make eye contact, as he stood only for a few terrifying seconds studying me and then he quickly vanished. This was one experience

I will never forget. Did I ever get more bang for my buck that day! I learned many lessons from this that day; that I needed to consider a way out in the future for my own safety, that the sequence I used with my calling was perfect and that the length of the fight does not have to last long to be effective when trying to imitate a fight with rattling horns. The other thing I was able to confirm, which is my constant prayer, is that God was along side me in the woods that day.

Article courtesy of [www.women-hunters.com](http://www.women-hunters.com)

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*New state record MD blue catfish weighs in at 84.28 lbs*



*For the second time this year, the Maryland state blue catfish record has fallen!*

*Aloha, Oregon resident Ed Jones landed an impressive 84.28 lb. blue catfish on August 13, while fishing the tidal Potomac River with professional catfishing guide Captain Josh Fitchett. This beautiful fish, which was certified by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, was 52 inches long and had a girth of 37 inches. Captain Josh, owner of River Cat'n Guide Service ([www.rivercatn.com](http://www.rivercatn.com)), subsequently released the fish back into the river, alive and well.*

*A former Maryland state record holder himself and the winner of over 40 regional catfishing tournaments, Captain Josh has earned a reputation for consistently guiding clients to trophy-sized blue catfish. He can be reached by phone at 804-836-5220 or by e-mail at [captainjosh@embarqmail.com](mailto:captainjosh@embarqmail.com).*

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## “THE LAST WORD”

### Let the Season (and shopping begin)

By Steve Huettner

As hunters begin to get ready for the upcoming season, another season starts before hitting the woods and fields. Like birds on their annual migration, they usually start to arrive in early August. Some small and specific some encased in leather and heavy enough to act as an anchor. I am talking about none other than the hunting catalogs from our favorite outdoor retailer. While many have lamented the death of print and books, the outdoor mega stores have not gotten the memo.

Many a hunter looks forward to their arrival same with the same excitement as an 8 year old awaiting Christmas. What new product will arrive this year that will ensure I get my limit of ducks, get my 180” buck, and shoot enough varmints to make Jeremiah Johnson jealous.

When it comes to gear, I appreciate stuff as much as any sportsmen. Good boots, a sharp knife, clothes that keep you warm, and flashlights that can signal aircraft on AA batteries are things that I have come to enjoy. After I set aside 3 hours to read through the latest offering from my favorite outdoor gear pusher, I always make a special list.

This is not the list of things I need for the upcoming season, nor is it the list I

will leave around the house hoping some of them will wind up under the tree at Christmas, but a list of items that simply defy logic on why we need them.

Yeah those items that you wonder, who in their right mind would buy these things.

The topic of scent control has gotten a bit out of hand nowadays. If you look through the catalogs it would seem if you wear anything less than a level 5 biohazard suit stepping in the woods is a waste of time since the deer will

smell you immediately. When did we need mouth spray and gum to prevent deer from smelling our breath in order to kill them? I’m hunting them, not taking them on a date and hoping to French kiss them. I can hear the talk in camp. I had old drop time coming in on

a string and then I took a breath and he was out there. If only I hadn’t forgotten my gum in the truck. How about the boom box looking device that you haul out and attach to a tree that sprays out streams of ozone to hide

your scent. I almost considered one but could not get the latte machine option to go with it. When it comes to scents, sprays, wafers, sticks, and bombs some of the guys have some much stuff it makes their wives makeup bag look small.

How about an electronic looking ice cream cone that is supposed to tell you the direction of the wind (\$120 for the combo pack). Wow I guess the bottle of baby powder I’ve been using the last few years has cost me at least 2 pope and young bucks. Somebody better send a memo to trackers in Africa that the cloth filled with ash from the fire last night they’ve been using for the last 300 years doesn’t work.

If you are lucky enough to take a deer, there are so many things you need to need to field dress it. Field dressing gloves (made especially for hunters) the one’s your heart surgeon uses aren’t good enough, scented field wipes to keep your hands soft, a butt out tool (don’t even get me started), and a rib spreader (cutting a stick or having a buddy help are so last decade). I’m amazed that our prehistoric ancestors managed with just a sharp rock.

Venturing afield for some ducks in the morning and you better not forget your set of synchronized swimming flock of ducks (explorer decoy propeller kit optional). They will dip, dive, fly, shake and shimmy for you as their unsuspecting brothers crash in around you. Make sure every article of clothing and gear is camp dipped and you have the minimum six calls around your neck. Before placing that delicate, fully flocked life like decoys back in the truck don’t forget the protective socks for their heads.

So as the September hunting season near, best of luck afield and shopping.



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