

# THE NORFOLK ANGLERS CLUB WIRELINE

JANUARY 2017



## What's Inside

Guest Speaker: Josh Andrews on catching big Blue Catfish in the Northwest River

### Fishing Reports:

- Deep Dropping for Tilefish
- Rockfish in the Bay
- Tautog at the CBBT
- Speckled Trout fishing
- Crappie fishing

### Angler Interests:

- ASMFC: Public Comments wanted for 2017 Flounder management actions

# Leadership Notes...

Fellow Norfolk Anglers,

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed the Holidays with Friends and Family. Thanks to your involvement and generosity contributing to the Seatow Holiday Toy Drive, many Hampton Roads children had a nice holiday too. Many Thanks to Ed & Karen Schrader, with Seatow Hampton Roads for coordinating the Stuff-A-Boat Toy Drive.

Our next meeting is January 9th and I hope to see you there. We've got our annual Board of Director elections, membership renewal time, and a fantastic speaker lined up.

There's a new fisheries issue to be aware of from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). It focuses on Summer Flounder and options to reduce the 2017 coastwide recreational harvest. You have the opportunity to comment to ASMFC on this issue but must do so soon. Check out the Anglers Interest section for more information. *Will*

## MEETING



### Guest Speaker: Josh Andrews on Blue Catfish

We've probably all tried fishing for catfish growing up but Blue Catfish is a whole different game. Blue Cats can weigh in 40, 50, 60+ pounds! With a Virginia DGIF record of 143 lbs (2011) you'd better bring your "A" game and get some expert advice before heading out after these river monsters.

Josh Andrews is joining us on Jan 9th to share his expertise catching these behemoth cats, or "Shoulder Hogs", as he likes to refer to them.



Photo courtesy of Josh Andrews

## Important:

Date of next meeting - Monday, January 9th at 7pm

## Location:

Teppanyaki Buffet & Grill

7525 Tidewater Drive, Norfolk, VA 23505

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# Marines collect boat-load of toys for needy kids



Photo and Article: 13News Now, Mike Gooding

The United States Marine Corps Reserve has distributed toys to children whose parents cannot afford them at Christmas since 1947.

The Toys for Tots program got a big boost today from Sea-Tow Hampton Roads.

The company, its employees and partners along with area fishing clubs and generous community members have been collecting toys since August, arriving at a grand total of 840 toys, enough to fill a 20-foot boat--not counting the bikes they couldn't fit on board the vessel.

"I look at this and I'm just blown away by the fact that we've able to collect this many toys and be able to provide a child something on the 25th, something for him as well as to support the Marines and their efforts," said Captain Ed Schrader of Sea-Tow.

The stated goal of Toys for Tots is to "deliver, through a new toy at Christmas, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, and patriotic citizens."

The Marines on hand today at Sea-Tow say, it is mission accomplished.

"This is amazing to have this many people actually care and to donate their hard-earned money that they work for and just to give little kids and put a smile on their faces for Christmas," said Marine Lance Corporal Edward Leshore. "It's great, so we really appreciated it, all the toys they donated. We appreciate it a lot."

Toys for Tots is an IRS-designated 501(c)3 non profit charity. Local campaigns are conducted annually in over 700 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Last year the organization receive and distributed \$210 million worth of toys.

We at Sea Tow Hampton Roads want to Thank all of you who donated Toys and Money this year for the Sea Tow Stuff-a-Boat Toy Drive. Without your generosity and support we would not have been able to provide over 800 Toys to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program for our local children.

On December 13 the local Angler Clubs arrived at the Sea Tow office to help stuff the boat. We had a great time filling the boat while enjoying hot apple cider and donuts.



What a wonderful feeling to see that Sea Tow boat overflowing with toys. With the boat overflowing with toys we had no other option than to fill the Sea Tow truck with bikes. The Marines arrived, enjoyed pizza followed by a photo shoot with local Angler Clubs and Mike Gooding from WVEC 13 News Now. Mike Gooding interviewed Lance Corporal Leshore and Ed Schrader for the 5pm news.

All toys were delivered by Sea Tow Hampton Roads and the various Angler Clubs to the Distribution Center at Towne Center in Virginia Beach to be sorted by age. On Christmas Day remember you made a child's holiday brighter by your generous donations.

*Happy Holidays to all! -Ed and Karen Schrader*



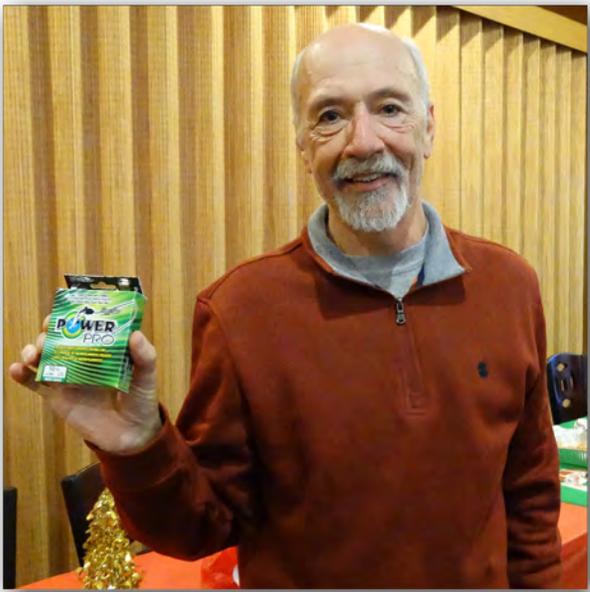
# Holiday Party

The 2016 Holiday Party was a lot of fun. Thanks to Sea Tow Hampton Roads for providing the beautiful Ponsettias and to Will and Wendy Bransom for setting up/decorating. Look at the next page for all the Grinches.....



We really enjoyed listening to N' Tune again this year at the party. Thanks to Kevin Synowiec for bringing in this fun group: Lead: Kevin, Baritone: Lawrence Hiebert, Tenor: Henry Hancock and Bass: Bill Banks. Our party just would not be the same without them!

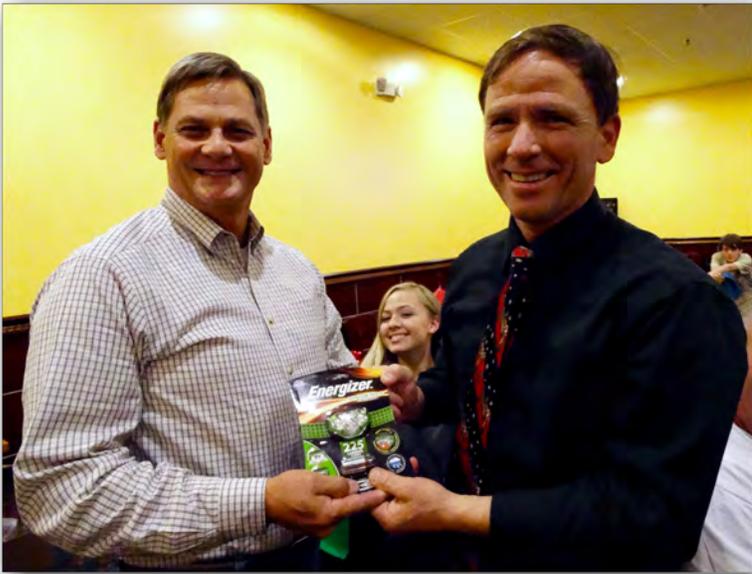




CONGRATS to Bert Sainz (not pictured) for winning the Sea Tow Membership!

# THE GRINCH'S





# Fishing Reports...



I caught and released this big speck (24.5 inches) while fishing in the Lynnhaven in mid-Nov. She hit a blue top/green bottom MR 27. The current was incoming and near high tide.

During the past two weeks, Bert Sainz and I spent 3 days fishing over on the eastern shore trying to find the elusive giant Stripers. We fished from buoy 44 to 36 in water depths from 40 to 75 feet and water temp between 44 and 47 degrees. We fished 7 rods with planer boards, a bobber and a 3-way rig with eels. Our eels were down 6 to 10 ft. using the planer boards and bobber. The eels were down 20 to 40 ft. on the 3-way rig. We saw a lot of bait balls and fish marks on the depth finder screen but had only two bumps on the planer boards in 3 days of fishing. *The bite was very discouraging but I was on the water fishing with my buddy which made it all good!*  
- Ned Smith



6 December: Got my limit on a Monday with a cold windy overcast. The little ones may have departed but it's nice to see the big ones hanging around.



22 December: I went last minute Christmas shopping!



27 December: They are getting harder to find. It was a very tough day. All and I have had to look everywhere several days for these small keeper specs. - Jimmy Robinson





21 December: I went fishing with my friend William Holmes on a cold Wednesday. William is a neighbor of my brother Gary and whom I am been meaning to take out fishing for some time. Wednesday presented the perfect time with calm winds which haven't been very calm or warm for two weeks. William was eager to go since he had never been Tautog



fishing despite being a fisherman for many decades. While it was 27 degrees when we awoke, by the time we got out there it had warmed to around 40 with a bright blue sky and warming sun. Water at the 1st Island of the CBBT was around 45 degrees, still within toggging range. We had trouble finding bait this morning since Ocean East had sold out of their live green and blue crabs and could only sell us frozen ones but they still looked good so we took the chance. Glassy bay was all we found as we headed out and anchored on the 2nd Island spine with an outgoing current starting to wane. After about a half an hour I hooked up with a 19.25 inch female the one in the picture, she was a great fighter. Shortly after that I had a 15 inch male on my hands so the frozen green crab proved to be very sturdy, as sturdy as the live ones. Then William caught his first tog ever which was the one in the picture at 16 inches. Then for the rest of the outgoing and then incoming current we caught a few more throwbacks but no more keepers. We moved more on the 2nd but didn't find anymore keeper fish, only throwbacks. *Couldn't have been better weather and Tautog fishing day for William's first Tautog catch!* The frozen green crab experiment was a success! - Dr. James W. "Ike" Eisenhower

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28 December: Ike, Chris, from the Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater, his dad, brother and I gave the CBBT a try. We had friends on several different boats that were striper fishing up the bay. We were ready to make the run if any decent reports came in The water temperature was 45 deg. We started at the 4th island. There were no other boats tog fishing so we figured everyone was striper fishing. Arriving at the 4th, we observed flocks of diving birds and lots of marks on the screen. The guys tried jigging but only hooked a bunker about 10" long. We saved him, and live lined him and an eel all day without a touch. The tide was incoming until about 11 am. By that time we had not had a bite, not even a toad fish. After checking with our striper fishing buddies, who were having the same luck as us, we moved to the 2nd island for the outgoing tide. Again NADA bite. At 1:30 pm while adjusting our position, the anchor pulled. We had only planned to fish until 2 pm but in frustration just called it a day. We were fishing blue and green crabs. Both Ike and I have had good luck over the last 2 weeks at the spots we fished. *The water temp has dropped a few degrees so I don't know if that shut the bite down or I just ran out of luck.*  
- Henry Troutner



11 December: A friend from Charlottesville, Scott Cox and crew, came down to drift eels for the big Rockfish. I was out of the box due to a funeral in Pennsylvania the next day. They caught one nice Rockfish at 46" drifting eels around the 40A buoy. The water depth was in the 40 feet range and the eel was in about 10 feet deep.  
- Henry Troutner



Oh well, at least we had pullage and nice weather!  
- Dr. James W. "Ike" Eisenhower



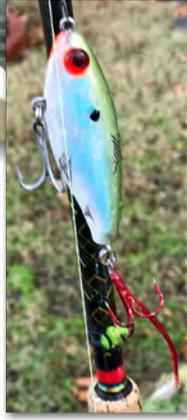
11 November: Ned and I found weather that looked pretty good after about a week of high winds. We started the jetties of the Little Creek inlet fishing in Louis's Carolina Skiff and of course found plenty of small Speckled Trout out there that would hit rubbery bodies on lead headed jigs and they preferred white. We also found the water was terrible dirty with only about 6 inches of visibility. But since the bay was calm as glass, we decided to leave the little Specks and try to find some Rockfish.

We traveled to the 1st and 2nd island and fished around the Yancy wreck looking for Rockfish. All we found was dirty water and ripping current since it was a Super Full Moon the day before. We gave that up and even noted the Tautog fishermen weren't catching much of anything with the ripping current.

Back at Little Creek we continued to catch small Speckled Trout but did manage to catch two Rockfish down at the end of the jetty both of which were only 17 inches long. It takes a 20 inch fish to keep them this year.

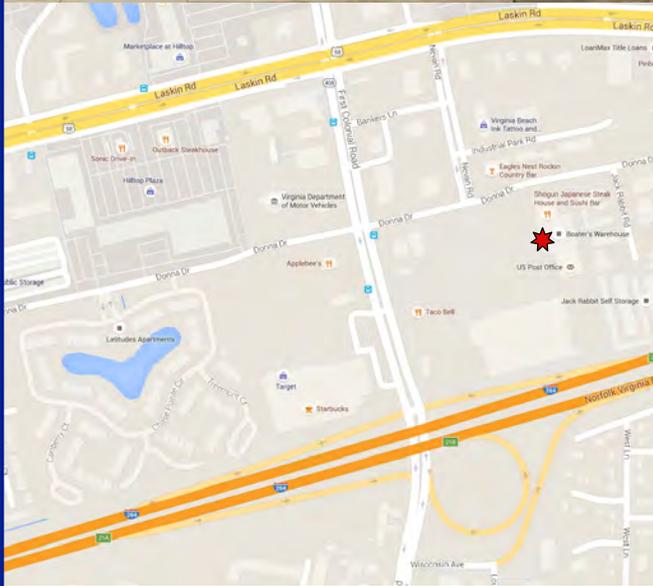
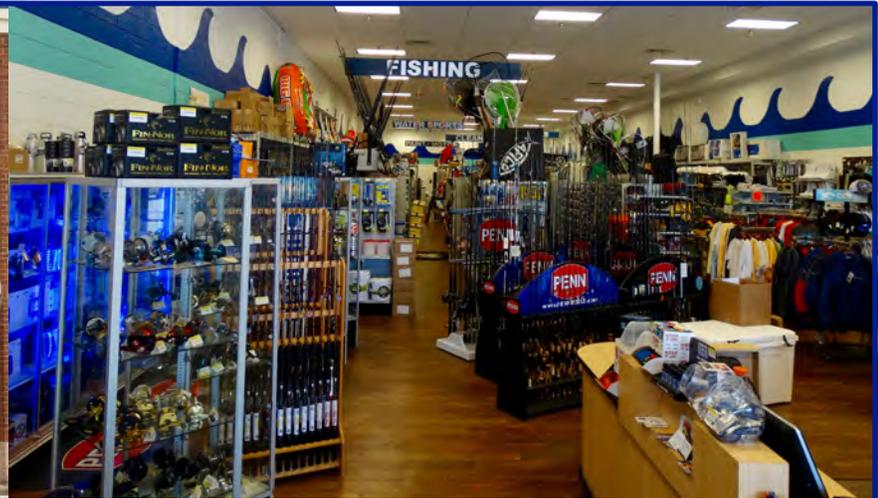


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13 December: I smoked these Specks! Took over an hour and a half to find them. Finished with a double limit. Culled out trout to 17 inches. Tagged a total of 16. This is my productive lure for the catch.

17 December: I went fishing on a cold, heavy fog , morning. I only got 2 keepers, Area 52. - Jimmy Robinson



Mon – Sat: 9:00am – 7:00pm  
Sun: 9:00am – 5:00pm



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# CHRISTMAS LEAVE SC FISHING

I spent much my Christmas leave back home in SC and took advantage of a strong late season bite. I did well over Thanksgiving Speckled Trout fishing in my kayak. This time around, the patterns are harder to figure out. However, I had a better overall fishing experience.



I did my usual-kayak troll with Mirrolures. As expected, the bite picked up as the water lowered. The fish were very similar sized- as shown left.

## Day 2

I had an offer to go out on a boat. I was hesitant at first because with the size of this inlet, I can access more places in my kayak than a power-driven vessel. However, sensing the possibility of running to some nearshore reefs as well, I agreed. Apparently, he tracked me down from my Thanksgiving trip when he noticed my stringer of specks as I was recovering my kayak at the launch and my Navy cap- he is a West Point grad.

We went to a nearshore reef and targeted black sea bass. As expected, they bite on every drop. However, most were not keepers. We did manage 6 keepers after releasing 120+ fish. We also landed 2 weakfish- 14 and 17 inches. Then, we headed back inshore to work the jetties. Using slip floats and live shrimp, we got into a steady bite of specks, reds, and black drum. All the specks were right at 18.5-19.5 inches. Also, they were all males.

## Day 3

We decided to go 20 miles out to hit a deeper reef. We were getting bigger Black Sea Bass, but it was nearly impossible to stay above reef for more than 2 quick drops. I managed to hook a 25 inch red and a keeper Black Sea Bass on a single drop. This was on my striper jigging outfit- Daiwa Lexa 100/ Abu Garcia Vendetta combo.

Having 10 pounds of fish+ ripping current on light tackle was a blast! After I released my red (over slot size and outside state waters), my friend hooked an overslot red of similar size. After a while of struggling to

position the boat, we decided to return inshore. Back at the jetty, it was the same deal as Day 2. We quickly picked up a few reds and 1 speck. I ended up releasing the reds since they were so lively in the livewell at the ramp. Seven fish to clean is enough for a day.



## Day 4

From the beginning, I saw dolphins in the creek. I should have immediately wandered into small creeks/ditches instead of the larger waterway. I went to my usual 2 creeks and hooked up on 6 trout, 5 landed, and 3 keepers. The 22 incher came off a hot pink 52MR. The other 2 came off a Z-man Minnowz in space guppy.

My first keeper came off trolling in the small creek. Apparently some trout were schooled in a deeper slough behind a sandbar and probably facing the outgoing current. I hooked 3 trout in that area, but lost 1 in the 16-17 inch range right at the kayak. A Mirrolure might have 3 trebles, but trout still manage to shake it off sometimes.



From the pictures, it seems like a good day. However, it was slow until I recognized some patterns.

I went inside another creek and found a similar setting. I got the other 19 inch speck and then the 22 from the same slough. The 22 specks pulled like a red at first-diving down deep versus head shaking.

The reds came off the same artificial structure. Three fish came within the same 100 square ft area on 3 casts. Then I wandered to another similar structure and got a 4th, 20 inch red (pictured above). I released that one since I already limited out. The 3 reds I kept were all right at 17-17.75 inches. This has been the pattern from the past 3 days. I tipped off a boat next to me after I got my 3 reds and they proceed to land 2 black drum on live shrimp in that same area. I guess both species were hanging out together. - Brian Tsai

29 December: The boat has been in the shop most of December so no fishing but I did get the results back of a tagged Tautog.

I caught it in November and wanted to share the tagging information. On November 19th, 2016, while fishing on the Cape Henry wreck, I caught and released a 14.5 inch Tog that was tagged.

I submitted the tag number and information online and the results were that my same Tautog was caught 570 days earlier on April 29, 2015 and was 12.5 inches before being tagged and released by angler Rob Collins.



**Game Fish Tagging Program**  
Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Virginia Institute of Marine Science



Tag Number: 344711

**Tagger: ROB COLLINS**

Hometown: NORFOLK, VA  
Date Tagged: 2015-04-29  
Species: 4380 - Tautog  
Location: 1008 - Cape Henry Wreck  
Fork Length: 0.00  
Total Length: 12.50  
Release Weight: 0.00  
Bait Type: Dead  
Bait Other:  
Fish Condition: good  
Hook: Removed  
Double Tag No.:  
Remark:



**Recapture Information**

Date	Release Location	Length	Fate	Condition
1. ALEXANDER PEREZ - NORFOLK VA 2016-11-19 Cape Henry Wreck		TL 14.50 in.	RELEASED WTAG	Excellent

Remark:  
Species: Tautog      Days Out(344711): 570

TAG NO: 344711

It was also caught on the Cape Henry wreck. **Great information from a great program!**  
**Happy New Year! - Alex Perez**



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# ETA: PRONTO

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Magic Carpet had two trips recently. We went to the triangle wrecks on Dec 20 and Dec 26 for Sea Bass.

20 December: Mike Delbridge, Gregg Rogers and I planned to leave the docks at 6am. As usual I stopped at Hardee's for biscuits for the crew. I'd called an order in but it wasn't ready and lost about 10 minutes.

We got the boat ready and pushed off about 15 minutes late. The temperature was below freezing and it caused some mechanical problems that were not there the day before.

On the way out of the inlet the port engine was surging so we had to drain some water out of the fuel filter which corrected the issue. I assume the cold caused problems with the port engine steering as well because the seals were leaking where there was no evidence of a leak at the gas dock the day before.

The steering was major annoyance all day. Luckily I has steering fluid and a way to get it into the helm so we just toughed it out.

We were rewarded with a 3 person limit of Sea Bass and Mike caught a 23 inch Flounder too. Our bait was blue crab and squid.

The bite was consistent and Mike Delbridge did a great job of keeping the boat on fish. We hit several wrecks in the area, all had fish on them.

We had to fish through a lot of shorts but caught our limit by 1:30pm and were back at the dock cleaning the boat and fish by 4:00pm.

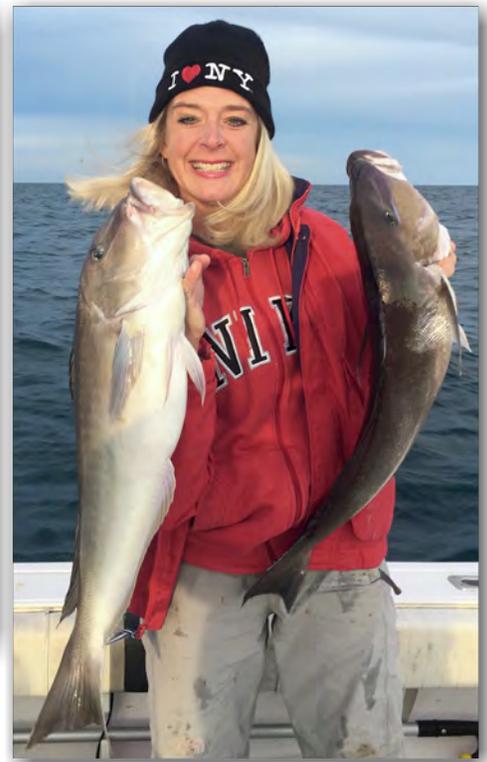


26 December: Mike Delbridge, Jim Ceclic, Gregg Rogers and I planned a trip back to the triangles before the season closed.

The weather people at NOAA must have gotten crack in the stocking on the 25th because the sun (sunny and 60), wind (N 5-10), wave (2-3 ft that was close) and period (11 seconds inshore 8 at the triangles) forecast was not even close to correct! We took a beating all the way out with overcast sky's all day. I was shocked at the poor conditions when we stopped and I could see the size of the seas. I estimate we were in 6' seas with 2' to 3' waves on top of them and a short period maybe 4 to 5 seconds.

As before Mike Delbridge kept the boat on the fish and we had keeper fish on the first drop and most drops all day. Jim Ceclic had the hot hand and caught big (14 +) fish all day (in fact, after out first 20 or so keepers we stopped keeping fish under 14"). All we caught were Sea Bass and a few Dogfish. We'd hopped for some flounder but found none.

As usual we had a great day on the water even if it was a little rough and the fish were just icing on the cake!  
- Mike Hubert



11 December: Kevin and I went to check out the Blueline Tile scene. The ride out was very nice and fairly smooth . We got to the location and dropped our lines and caught our limit on some really nice Blueline Tiles with weights up to 10 lb 15 oz . More then half of those were 7 lbs or over.

Also boated some nice nice Bluefish up to 15 lbs and some decent Sea Bass in the mix as well. Hot bait was cut bait, while the squid did 'ok'. We headed back home around 2pm. The ride in was smooth until we got past the tower and closer to the Rudee Inlet then it got bumpy.

Guess we left at the right time and I can't complain especially when bringing home a box full of fish! - Beth Synowiec 😊

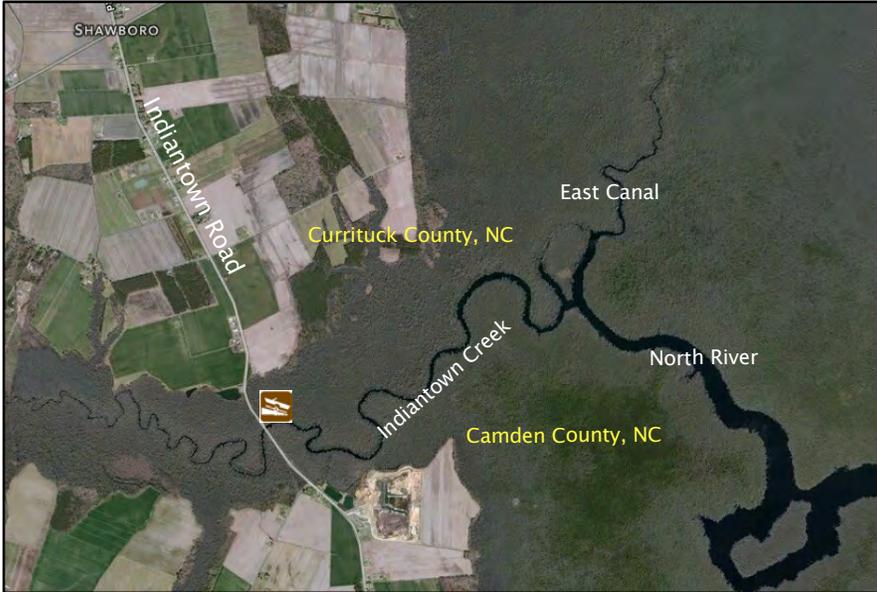


25 December: My family and I celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve this year, then the following day, I went to pursue a big Rockfish with a good friend of our family, Mike Patterson. We had great time on the water as we slowed trolled the Chesapeake bay near the Cape Charles area on Christmas Day. Although we marked various areas indicating bait and fish, it started out pretty quiet which paired with the calm conditions. Then suddenly something hit the conventional set up on the planer line with live eel, and it was game on. The fight was awesome and this feisty gal did multiple runs around the boat before we could get her into the net. I must admit, that I know I looked like a little kid at Christmas when I saw this 46 lb citation beauty hit the deck! She had one of the biggest Rockfish bellies I had ever seen for her size. She measured 45 inches long and had a girth of

31 inches. It was the only fish that bit that day but it was the right one! Hope everyone had a Very Merry Christmas and Wishing you all a very Prosperous, Blessed, & Wonderful New Year. Tight Lines Everyone!- Beth Synowiec

# FISHERMAN CURED OF DEPRESSION

After being in a sad state of mind for the past month because of not fishing and having read every recent freshwater publication I could find; I decided to review my fishing log books for the last 30 years to set a plan for my next fishing experience. I picked a day with a temperature in the 60's, winds 15-25 mph, water temp in the 50 's, barometer falling, little rainfall, bait minnows fully trained and boat/gear ready to go. Now comes the hard part, finding a fishing partner to go with. I called every fisherman I knew to no avail. It was like selling ice water to a Polar Bear this time of the year. I finally found somebody while shopping at the grocery store. This person was looking at frozen fish "Mrs. Pauls". I explained to him that fresh fish would be better. It was tough to convince him we would catch fish this time of the year.



The adventure started in Moyock, N.C. trying to find a place to get a fishing license. We found a place 20 miles south, "Currituck Sports". The fun began at Indian Town Creek, deep in the boondocks of Camden and Currituck County. We launched and started to navigate its dark muddy water dodging stumps and fallen trees. We traveled past the first bend of the many miles of this twisted creek to the North River. Civilization was lost, no roads, no farms, no cars or signs of people. The swamp had a mystical eerie feeling, no sounds, not even a bird twirp. For some reason, wildlife was absent. The woods full of fog played tricks on your imagination, expecting an Indian or Big Black Bear to

jump out of one the giant hollow Cypress Trees. The trees with spanish moss and mistletoe had a special effect on how remote we were. Many of the trees had holes from woodpeckers. Upon entering the North River, we were escorted all day by buzzards, "hoping for a big meal". We saw a few eagles, otter, hawk and no fishermen. We made it to the famous Island and started to fish. The wind was blowing at 25mph. We could not troll or drift at a slow enough speed to keep the baits down. We caught a number of small fish. Late afternoon, we found the fish way down river. We ended the day with 20 Crappie and one Yellow Perch, another Great Day! - Steve Harding



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# The Basics of Cold Water Safety



When planning a fishing trip we think about all the things to make the trip successful. There's all the rods & reels, fishing tackle, bait, fuel for the boat, food & drink, and the list goes on. And, while we'll give a thought to the outside temperature and dress for it, seldom do we consider how cold the water is and what it means IF you find yourself in it.



**1 - 10 - 1** is the US Coast Guard's Cold Water Survival Rule and it helps to understand the phases of cold water immersion. Simply put, it's **1** (first minute and Cold Water Shock), **10** (Ten minutes and Cold Water Incapacitation), and **1** (One hour to succumb to Hypothermia).

## 1 Minute - First Minute and Cold Water Shock

Rapid immersion in cold water causes the body to gasp and hyperventilate. The risk of breathing in water during this initial and uncontrolled phase is high and accounts for roughly 20 percent of deaths from drowning.



## 10 Minutes- Cold Water Incapacitation

The next ten minutes is critical for a person in the water to self-rescue. As the body decreases blood flow to the arms & legs to preserve body heat to vital organs you lose meaningful arm & legs movements. Your ability to self-rescue diminishes and if you're not wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) that will float you head up, you drown.



## 1 Hour - Hypothermia

Hypothermia is the cooling of the body core temperature. It happens more slowly than you might imagine and varies among individuals depending on a number of factors such as, physical conditioning, body fat, etc. Hypothermia symptoms can range from confusion to unconsciousness and develops in the hour after immersion.

So, how cold does the water have to be? Well, our fishing grounds are already cold enough at 47 degrees (CBBT water temperature on 29 Dec). Though generally, water colder than 60 degrees is considered cold.



There's another Coast Guard Rule to think about...the 50/50/50 Rule; In 50 degree water for 50 minutes you have a 50 percent *better* chance of surviving wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

It's important to remember if you've gotten dunked you must get dry and warm as soon as possible. Toughing it out because the fishing's good can spell disaster. Hypothermia can quickly become a medical emergency. Calling the Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16 is one of your best options for getting assistance quickly.



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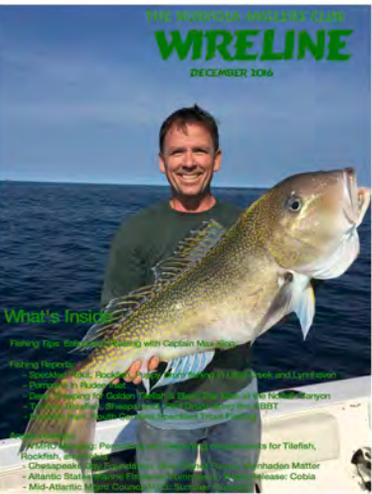


We deliver the Wireline to more than 150 Direct Emails, Club Webpage, Regional Fishing Forums, several Hampton Road Marina Offices, Bait & Tackle Shops, and Marine Supply Stores. We also highlight the Wireline on our Facebook page that has 884 Likes and our Post Reach is over 2,000 weekly. Our Wireline gets read by many Anglers in the Hampton Roads area; if you go to one of the local Tackle Shops you'll see the Wireline at the end of the month, it will resemble a well read paperback.

Wireline for 12 months:

- Full Page = \$200.00
- Half Page = \$150.00
- Quarter Page = \$100.00
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You can change your ad month to month or just keep it the same for 12 months. If you are interested contact the Wireline Editor, you can find the POC information on page 2 of this Wireline edition.



## Member's Fishing Board

*Have a boat and looking for crew to fish with?  
Or looking to go fishing with another member?  
Send your name and info to the Wireline Editor*

*Always lookin for people to fish with.  
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**Rules:** *Member's Fishing Board* is for Norfolk Anglers Club Members to communicate with other Members for recreational fishing opportunities. Email addresses are provided to facilitate contact between members and are not to be used for any other purpose.

# Angler Interests

## Norfolk Anglers Club Canned Food Drive....We never stop collecting



The Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore was pleased to receive the non-perishable food items we've been collecting at the meetings. As a club, we can certainly do more for those who could use our help.

Items always in need; Lean Canned Protein (Peanut Butter, Tuna, Chicken, Turkey, Beans), Canned Fruits and Vegetables, Fruit Preserves and Dried Fruit, Whole Grains (Pasta, Oatmeal, Rice, Crackers), Other Meals (Stew, Boxed Meals, Canned Pasta), and Baby Products (Formula, Baby Food, Diapers, and Wipes).

We'll have a box for your donations at the door. So take a moment while you're out shopping to pick up a few of the items and bring them to the meeting. We'll take care of getting them to the Food Bank. Thank You for all you've contributed so far.

## ASMFC Seeks Input on 2017 Recreational Summer Flounder Fishery Management



Dec 22, 2016: The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board announces the availability of Draft Addendum XXVIII for public comment. The document, which was approved by the Board in early December, presents a suite of management approaches, including regional options, to achieve the 2017 recreational harvest limit (RHL). The Atlantic coastal states of Massachusetts through North Carolina have scheduled public hearings to



gather public comment. A hearing is scheduled in our area on Thursday, January 12th at 6:00pm at VMRC, 2600 Washington Ave, 4th Floor, Newport News, VA. Anglers are encouraged to attend and voice their opinion on fishery issues. Written comments can be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Summer Flounder Draft Addendum XXVIII).

### Statement of the Problem

A fundamental goal of Commission FMPs is to provide recreational anglers with fair and equitable access to shared fishery resources throughout the range of each managed species. The Commission's ISFMP Charter establishes fairness and equity as guiding principles for the conservation and management programs set forth in the Commission's FMPs. While the current FMP for Summer Flounder does not include a goal pertaining to this concept, the Board and Council are considering a new goal for inclusion in the forthcoming Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment: "Provide reasonable access to the fishery throughout the management unit." With these principles and goals in mind, the challenges facing the Board (and Council) involve determining what is meant by fair/equitable/reasonable access, and how to achieve it. Complicating the access issue for 2017 is the significant reduction to the coastwide recreational harvest limit (RHL) set by the Board and Council in August 2016 in response to the most recent Stock Assessment Update. The 2017 RHL is 3.77 million pounds, an all-time low. By way of comparison, the RHL for 2017 is approximately 30% less than 2016, 48% less than 2015, and 68% less than 2011, when it peaked at 11.68 million pounds. Using a projected recreational harvest in 2016 of 6.38 million pounds (subject to change), harvest in 2017 must be reduced by roughly 2.6 million pounds to not exceed the 2017 RHL.

This draft addendum addresses the issue that available management approaches are not viewed as providing a fair and reasonable way to constrain the 2017 recreational summer flounder fishery harvest to the RHL. The Board recognizes the management options within this draft addendum will also have shortcomings with regards to addressing this problem, and thus intends the selected option to be an interim program while focusing on the development of a more comprehensive solution for the future.

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## Proposed Management Program

Analysis of options is based on an estimate of the 2017 RHL in numbers of fish. Using preliminary 2016 MRIP data to generate an average harvested fish weight of 3.04 lbs, the 2017 RHL of 3.77 million pounds is equivalent to 1,239,286 fish. This value is subject to change as additional 2016 data become available. Analysis of options is also based on 2016 projected harvest, calculated from MRIP preliminary 2016 harvest data through October, and projected harvest for November–December (Table 3). The results will change between now and when final 2016 recreational harvest information is released in spring 2017. Based on a 2016 coastwide projected harvest of 2,099,410 fish, and the estimated 2017 RHL of 1,239,286 fish, a coastwide harvest reduction of 41% is required. \*\*\*This reduction rate is preliminary and will change as 2016 data are updated.



## Default Management Approaches

The Board and Council selected to continue conservation equivalency for Summer Flounder recreational fishery in 2017 at their Joint Meeting in December 2016. Unless an alternative management approach is selected for implementation via this addendum, management of the 2017 recreational Summer Flounder fishery will default to state-by-state allocations/regulations based on 1998 harvest in order to restrict harvest to the RHL. Under this scenario, states would implement regulations based on their individual harvest allocations. *[Under this Default Management Approach Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina would receive significant increase in harvest {a liberalized management measure} while other Atlantic States receive reductions. The ASMFC Working Group has recommended no state liberalize their management measures in 2017 due to the need for coastwide reductions]*

## Alternative Management Approaches

The following options were developed with the goal of providing more equitable access and less disparate regulations between states than state by state allocations under the Default Management Approaches. Other approaches were considered and rejected for insufficiently advancing this goal. Because of the all-time low RHL for 2017, there is no option that could be viewed as truly equitable to all.

All options fall under the category of Adaptive Regional Management, and would establish a one-year harvest "target" for each region that deviates from the sum of the 1998-based allocations that would otherwise be attributed to the state(s) in the region by sharing potential harvest across regions.

### Option 1: Fish Sharing

For each region, the included states' combined 2016 projected harvest is compared to the sum of their 1998-based allocations for 2017. Virginia would have no reduction in size/possession limits and no closed season {16in/4 fish}

### Option 2: One-Inch Size Increase as a Minimum Reduction

This option starts by applying a one-inch minimum size increase to all regions, and projecting the regional harvests that would occur in 2017. Virginia would have an example size/possession limits of 17in/4 fish and no closed season.

### Option 3: 30% Reduction as a Minimum

This option starts by applying a 30% harvest reduction to all regions' 2016 projected harvest (based on the 30% reduction in the 2017 RHL). Virginia would have a size/possession limits of 17in/4 fish and no closed season.

### Option 4: One-inch Size Increase and 30% Reduction as Minimums

This option starts by applying a one-inch size increase to all regions, and projecting the regional harvests that would occur in 2017. For Virginia, it means size/possession limit of 17in/3 fish and no closed season.

### Option 5: More Coastwide Consistency

This option applies a near coastwide one-inch size limit increase and bag limit reduction to 4 fish or less (NC would be exempt). Virginia would have an example size/possession limits of 17in/4 fish and no closed season.

