



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW

The heat is on!!! The recent heat wave has really kept anglers inside over the past week (can you blame them?); however, some of those that sweated it out were rewarded. Several large cobia were reported this week from the lower Chesapeake Bay area and the Eastern Shore. Don't forget to donate your cobia to the Marine Sportfish Collection Project (see page 8 for locations). And remember, each angler who provides a fresh whole cobia for biological sampling at the Wallace's Bait and Tackle Cobia Tournament, June 26, will receive one of the project reward shirts in return (and after a few minutes wait, their cobia will be returned to them less a pair of otoliths for ageing).

A few super-sized flounder were also hooked last week, along with speckled trout and some bluefish. Croaker reports are finally trickling in. Spadefish have also made a showing this week, with several catches at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Cell.

Finally, under a new federal law, most Virginia recreational saltwater fisherman MUST register with the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Please see pages 10 through 12 for more details to register for FREE.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

According to Donna, at Captain Bob's, the Chincoteague Channel was the flounder hot spot this week. A nine-pounder was brought in from that area on the June 23. Queens Sound is also producing flounder, and the Assateague Channel bite has slowed. The surf produced kingfish, skate, and dogfish. Offshore, the mako action continues, despite the warm water. Yellowfin and bluefin tuna were reported at the canyons, and the wrecks are hot with spadefish and black sea bass. Staff expects to see tautog

catches come in soon. Bluefish were biting in the Parking Lot area, and the bluefin tuna should follow.

Wachapreague

Flounder are everywhere, according to staff at Captain Zed's. Anglers are doing really well in just about all of the usual hot spots. Offshore, yellowfin tuna, bluefin tuna, and dolphin were reported from the Washington Canyon.

Cape Charles

Staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle report that anglers were catching good amounts of cobia off of Buoys 16 and 13 last week (the largest was 65 pounds). The Cabbage Patch and Concrete Ships have produced croaker and spot, and flounder were found near Oyster and the pilings of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spadefish have also come from Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Cell.

Fishing remains consistent in Cherrystone, according to Captain Ray Cardone. While a few cobia were reported around Buoy 36A, most of the local fishing has consisted of kingfish and croaker. A few black tip sharks were also hooked.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

At the Sunset Boating Center, a few undersized flounder have been reported in the area this week.

A citation cobia was reported from Salt Ponds Marina this week (55 pounds, 5 ounces, and 56 inches). Cobia and flounder were the main catches of the week.

Kathy, at Wallace's Bait and Tackle, reported that anglers were finding cobia in the area near Wallace's Bait and Tackle. An 82-pound cobia and a 66-pound cobia were caught by two junior anglers from Fox Hill this week. Flounder have been reported near the Eastern Shore and the High Rise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spadefish were reported as well.

At the York River Fishing Center, a citation flounder was caught at the Baltimore Channel (9 pounds, 13 ounces) this week. Large cobia caught at the York Spit, with the largest weighing 57 pounds. The flounder bite has picked up in the area, and the croaker bite is fantastic in the York River, from the mouth of the River to West Point. Folks at the Gloucester Point Pier have reported croaker, flounder, and bluefish catches.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

The time has finally arrived for the Flounder Bowl and the flounder bite has heated up along with the summertime temperatures. Large flounder are being caught by anglers working structures, in the bay, with live bait or jigs. The 4th island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel has been a good flounder spot this week. Fish are being caught around most of the wrecks and artificial reefs in the bay. Flatfish are also found near Buoy 36A and at the Buoy 42 area. There should be some impressive flounder weighed in at the Flounder Bowl this weekend. Spadefish are being caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, the islands and the high rise of the

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, at the Cell and at Wolftrap Light. The bite has not been great and the fish have been on the small side. Sheepshead are available at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, but again that bite has been slow. Large red drum continue to roam the shoals at the mouth of the bay and around Fisherman's Island. Large schools of red drum are being encountered by anglers cruising the lower Bay, looking for cobia. Black drum can be found around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, especially the 2nd and 3rd islands. It has been a good cobia season, and it continues to be so. Anglers anchored on chum slicks are catching fish in the Bluefish Rock area, York Spit, and in the Inner Middle Ground area. Sight-casters are spotting roaming fish from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel to York Spit. Large, hungry amberjack are waiting at the southern towers. Offshore action has really heated up off of Virginia. Some bluefin tuna are being caught on the inshore hills. Yellowfin tuna are a rare catch so far. The fish that have really turned on are dolphin and billfish. The blue marlin bite has been particularly impressive.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Summer officially started this week, and the rising summer heat is confirming this fact. Although folks may complain about the heat, they are not complaining about the fishing. Calm winds and a good variety of species are encouraging boats to get out and test the fishing grounds, with good results.

Cobia are still the main target for most anglers. The bite is still good for both chummers and sight casters, although the very large fish seem to have made their way into the rivers for their seasonal spawn. Cobia catches are coming from all over the lower Bay, with most fish ranging from 30 to 60 pounds. The best areas are Bluefish Rock, the Inner Middle Grounds, the Nine-foot shoal, and Latimer shoal near Buoys 13 and 16. Fresh cut bait such as bunker is out producing live bait lately for chummers.

Flounder action is remaining steady this week. Although anglers are still working for their limits, plenty of keepers with scattered doormats are available in the usual flounder spots. According to the folks at Bayside Bait and Tackle, drifters are finding flatties weighing around 4 pounds along the edges of the Baltimore Channel on scented squid strips. Those dragging baits near the 1st and 3rd islands of the Bridge Tunnel are also lucking into some decent fish this week. Fish are also coming from the Cell, Buoy 42, Back River Reef, and Oyster. According to the folks at Ocean's East 2, the flatfish bite within the inlets slowed somewhat. The biggest fish are falling for live bait around the structure of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, where several fish pushing to 9 and 10 pounds were boated over the last few days.

The Spanish mackerel bite from Cape Henry to False Cape is very good lately, with boats filling their limits with nice fish ranging from 16 to 22 inches. Small gold and silver Clark spoons trolled at 6 to 8 knots with an inline sinker or small planer is enticing the best response. Taylor bluefish are also taking these lures in the same areas. One captain reported sightings of king mackerel along the ocean front recently. It's only a matter of time until reports of catches roll in.

Spadefish action picked up some at the Chesapeake Light Tower and around the islands and the

high rise area of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel this week. Folks are still fishing hard for limits of smallish fish, with a few nice fish scattered in the mix.

The sheepshead bite also improved in the lower Bay this week. Although tricky, anglers are finding cooperative fish pushing to over 14 pounds. Pier anglers fishing from the Seagull Fishing Pier are also pulling in sheepshead using fiddler crabs. If you happen to catch a tautog while fishing these same areas, you are in luck since the season reopened this week.

Scattered black drum hook-ups, are coming from all four islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. These fish require extra time while reviving them in order to increase their survival rate. According to the folks at Chris' Bait and Tackle, plenty of red drum are still taking baits along the Eastern Shore shoals, especially on the Nine Foot Shoals, and off Fisherman's Island. Many reds are taking the fresh bait intended for cobia. Schooling reds near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel can provide great top water action.

Small croaker are hitting in the Thimble Shoals Channel, near the 1st island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Larger croaker weighing 1 to 1.5 pounds are lurking around the James River Bridge, and the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel. Spot ranging around 6 to 8 inches have also shown within Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets.

Amberjack are enticing a few anglers to make the long run to the Southern Towers lately, where a few big fish will gladly test your back. Deep droppers are still going strong with catches of tilefish, wreckfish, grouper, and rosefish. Several citation blueline tilefish pushing up to 15 pounds and snowy grouper pushing to 50 pounds came from private boats trying their luck offshore this past week.

Offshore Virginia is heating up. Although yellowfin tuna are scarce, a few bluefin tuna are available, with most fish ranging in the 90-pound class or smaller. Billfish are also showing, with several reports of blue marlin hook-ups. Good numbers of gaffers are also available, and mako sharks are still a good bet.

Virginia Middle Bay

Jetts' Hardware reports that the heat has been putting a damper on the fishing for the last few days. A few boats have been going out early in the mornings to try and find a few croaker before the heat of the day.

Smith Points Marina staff also report that the number anglers have diminished since this heat wave started. Early morning croaker have been the target of these anglers as well.

Butch, with Garrett's marina, reports the croaker fishing had been really good with a 3-pound, 4-ounce citation landed on Sunday. Since then, the number of anglers and landings has dropped as the temperatures rise.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, contributed the following:

Flounder fishing in the Buoy 42 and Cell areas continues to produce fair numbers of fish

of with a keeper ratio of about one in three. It seems to be feast or famine as they turn on one day and disappear tomorrow. No citation flounder were reported this week. Small spadefish have been caught at Wolftrap and the Cell, but no citation fish have been seen here yet; in fact, there had been no spadefish citations reported state-wide as of June 16. The croaker bite in the Rappahannock and the Piankatank remains hot. Spot weight up to three quarters of a pound are being caught in the Piankatank and surrounding creeks. Bluefish are busting schools of menhaden in the creeks and in open waters, and Spanish mackerel should make a showing soon. Cobia are now be available around New Point Light and on York Spit.

Virginia Beach

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, there is a big blue marlin bite, along with large tuna and dolphin, offshore. Citations for last week alone included 5 blue marlin releases, a white marlin release, and several dolphin weighing 25 to 28 pounds. In the Inlet, anglers found flounder, speckled trout, croaker, and small bluefish. Inshore, a 9-pound, 4-ounce citation spadefish was caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower.

Offshore, there was good gaffer dolphin and blue marlin fishing last week, according to staff at Fisherman's Wharf Marina. Inshore, spadefish has been the hot fish of the week.

Virginia Piers

Slow fishing was reported this week from the Virginia Beach Pier. A few croaker, small flounder, and roundheads were hooked last week.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier, at Sandbridge, fishing was slow this week with a few roundhead and a few spadefish caught.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, a 41-inch, 18-pound cobia was hooked last week. A 19.5-inch flounder was also caught at the pier. In general, catches consisted of speckled trout, spot, croaker, Spanish mackerel, and small flounder.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to have very good action with most boats catching their limits of dolphin. Yellowfin, blackfin, bigeye, and skipjack tuna were being caught in lesser numbers, as well as wahoo, king mackerel, bonito and amberjack. Billfishing has been good, with blue marlin and a few white marlin and sailfish in the mix. Deep-bottom dropping produced vermillion and red snapper, snowy and yellow-edge grouper, and black sea bass last week. Striped bass can be found eight miles offshore. Those fishing the artificial reefs have been catching tautog, triggerfish, black drum, and sheepshead. People fishing near shore and from the beaches and piers have been catching bluefish, Spanish mackerel, sea mullet, spot, croaker, pompano, and flounder. Fishing in the inlets and sounds has produced numerous flounder with a keeper to throw back ratio of 1 to 4. Speckled trout fishing has fallen into the summer routine of early morning and late evening bites around the bridges in the Sound. Croaker and spot could be found in the channels and deeper holes last week.

Surf fishing south of Oregon Inlet produced good flounder action around the jetties, Ramp 49, and

Ramp 55. Pompano and bluefish were caught near Avon.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras has seen dolphin dominating the catches. The sailfish bite was pretty good during the beginning of the week, and Spanish mackerel and bluefish were in the nearshore and sound waters.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION











***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

You catch it, you fillet it,

**but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.**

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:



| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| COBIA | SHEEPSHEAD | RED DRUM | BLACK DRUM | TAUTOG |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| KING MACKEREL | SPANISH MACKEREL | TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN) | WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPE, WARSAW GROUPE | BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES) |
|  |  |  |  |  |

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT, HAT, BOAT WHISTLE OR MEASURING TAPE FOR EACH PARTICIPANT, PER MONTH of the DONATION.

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

- Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)**
- Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)**
- Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**
- Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**
- Virginia Beach Fishing Center (Virginia Beach)**



VIRGINIA SALTWATER Fisherman's Journal



Get Hooked!

Report at

www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.

The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing

experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Individual measurement of caught, and released, on the most highly prized fish, such as red drum, striped bass, and summer flounder, provides a greater benefit to everyone. This past year, data from volunteer angler surveys were an important component in the calculation to reduce size limits for summer flounder in Virginia. However, Virginia data from Virginia anglers have not yet reached the level needed to stand alone. If the ability to reduce the size limit occurs in the future, the catch-and-release information on undersized summer flounder would be of great benefit.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions, and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal" and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

◆ Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:

- Fish
- Birds
- Marine Mammals
- Boaters and swimmers

◆ Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

◆ Contact the VMRC to sponsor additional bins your area



VMRC Managed Locations*

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague
Lancaster County (multiple locations)
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Newport News (multiple locations)
Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton

*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation and the Virginia Aquarium.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



National Saltwater Angler Registry



New Law In

2010

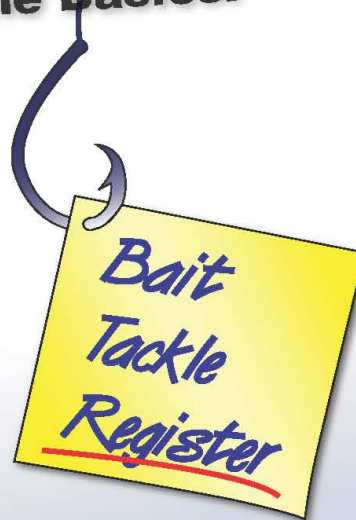
ATTENTION Virginia Saltwater Fishermen



**Before You Drop
Your Line in the
Water, Remember
the Basics:**

**Under a new Federal law,
most Virginia recreational
saltwater fisherman must
register with the National
Saltwater Angler Registry.**

Registration is an important tool that will help NOAA and anglers work together to conserve our oceans and preserve our nation's rich tradition of saltwater fishing. Registering is **quick, easy and FREE** in 2010.



To learn more or to register

www.countmyfish.noaa.gov

1-888-MRIP-411

ARTICLE FOR MEDIA REFERENCE OR DIRECT PLACEMENT
SOURCE: NOAA FISHERIES

NOAA CONTACT
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TEL: (301) 713-9501
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New Law: Most Virginia Saltwater Fishermen Need to Register with NOAA Before They Fish

Virginia Registrations Lagging Behind Other States

MRIP – According to the latest numbers from NOAA Fisheries, Virginia saltwater recreational fishermen appear to be lagging behind their peers in other states when it comes to complying with a new Federal law to help conserve our oceans and maintain vibrant, sustainable fisheries.

Under the law, most Virginia saltwater fishermen are required to register with the new National Saltwater Angler Registry before they go fishing this year.

As of January 1, 2010, Virginia fishermen need to register if they:

- Fish for or catch anadromous species in tidal waters; these are fish like striped bass, shad or river herring that live in the oceans but spawn in fresh water, OR
- Fish in the Federal waters more than three miles from the ocean shore or from the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, OR
- Don't meet any of the exceptions in the law.

Those exceptions include anglers who are under the age of 16; only fish on licensed charter, party or guide boats; hold a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit; or hold and are fishing under a valid commercial license. In addition, out-of-state saltwater anglers who are already registered with NOAA do not need to re-register to fish in Virginia.

Fishermen are reminded that regardless of their registration status, it is important to learn and follow the rules where they are fishing. The registration requirement is in addition to, and has no bearing on, existing or future fishery management regulations such as size and bag limits, closed seasons and areas, *or saltwater fishing license purchase requirements*. For example, no person, whether or not registered by NOAA, is permitted to harvest or possess striped bass in the US EEZ.

Registration is quick and easy and will be free in 2010. Anglers simply need to log on to **www.countmyfish.noaa.gov** and click on the Angler Registry link, or call the toll-free registration line at **1-888-MRIP411** (1-888-674-7411). Anglers will need to provide their name, date of birth, address and telephone number, and will receive a registration number that will allow them begin fishing immediately. After approximately 30 days, they will receive a registration card in the mail.

Virginia is lagging behind many other East Coast states in the number of anglers who have registered, as required. Over the six months the registry has been in effect so far, only 26,000 Virginia saltwater anglers have registered, compared to 75,000 in Maryland and 137,000 in New Jersey. In fact, the smallest state in the country, Rhode Island, has seen almost as many saltwater anglers register (23,000) as Virginia.

The registry is an important tool that will help fishermen and policy makers work together to better account for the contributions and impacts of saltwater anglers on ocean ecosystems and coastal economies. It is part of a national overhaul of the way NOAA collects and reports recreational fishing data. The goal of the initiative – known as the

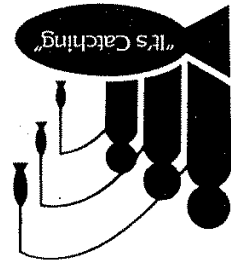
Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP – is to provide the most accurate information possible that can be used to determine the health of fish stocks. Reliable, universally trusted data will in turn aid anglers, fisheries managers and other stakeholders in their combined efforts to effectively and fairly set the rules that will ensure the long-term sustainability of recreational fishing.

For more information, visit www.countmyfish.noaa.gov.

In 2011, Virginia will implement its own free saltwater registration program, under a new state law that goes into effect July 1. The Virginia Fisherman Identification Program will collect the information necessary to exempt saltwater anglers from having to register annually with the federal government and pay any future federal registration charges. The free, annual state registration will be in place by Jan. 1, 2011.

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Practice

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