

Northern Neck Anglers Club

January 2020 Newsletter

(www.northernneckanglersclub.wordpress.com).

Greetings to all NNAC members, sponsors, and friends as we break into a new decade of fishing activity. There were some great highs and serious lows during the 1990's.

We congratulate Jan Jamrog for again winning the NNAC Angler of the Year competition. Jan is the consummate fishing professional in a number of ways. He is a student of techniques and tackle and adheres to the adage that "time on the water trumps all" when pointing to fishing success. Way to go Jan!

As fisherman and bay conservationists, we can be thankful for the general progression (albeit slow) of water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Certain species have responded well and some are struggling. At this date in January, Chesapeake rockfish seasons are in transition and partially unknown at this point. All signs point to a May 1 start in the Potomac, Maryland and Virginia, but again, this has not been finalized nor released as of yet.

Atlantic croaker, flounder, grey trout and larger bluefish were difficult to come by as the decade came to a close. Speckled trout seemed to make a strong resurgence in 2019 and our hopes are for a mild winter to continue this trend for 2020. Certainly, the loss of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) in certain areas due to water salinity issues was not helpful. But grasses have a way of coming back quickly at times and we hope that will be the case this year.

Other species including cobia and Spanish mackerel provided excellent angling successes. Spanish mackerel season in 2019 was off the charts in most of the areas fished by members of the NNAC. Limits were plentiful and several big fish were taken. While it seemed to be difficult to actually both a keeper cobia during the two cobia tournaments we offered in 2019, nevertheless there were some very nice cobia taken during the week and on the off weekends which were not considered as catches during the tournaments.

The previous decade saw the tragic loss of Leroy Bussels. That certainly was a low point without question for all of us in the NNAC. We can honor Leroy by carefully adhering to a few principles so that nothing like this will ever happen again to any of our membership. If you must venture forth without a fishing partner on certain days, at least let some of us know what your plans are as far as a fishing plan. We are exploring opportunities currently about installing just such an area on our website whereby you can file fishing plans that can be easily accessed if we need further details as to more information regarding an overdue fisherman.

Vibrio remains to be a real issue for those of us fishing the bay and it's tributaries. I'm not aware of all the cases of vibrio up and down the Chesapeake but I am very familiar with a fellow boater out of Buzzards Marina who passed away quickly due to vibrio and or a vibrio type condition he contracted in August. We cannot stress enough the precautionary procedure of always keeping in date hydrogen peroxide handy on board your vessel. Consider wearing gloves and various mechanical gripping devices when handling fish and for gosh sake's don't run around barefoot on your boat!

As a general reminder, we had club members who have had to deal with significant skin cancer issues due to the hot summer sun. We should all know by now but as pointed out by those who have contracted this potentially deadly disease, wear significant quantities of the appropriate skin sunblock cream, refresh often, and wear appropriate sun clothing when out on the water. We will continue to discuss and remind members during our upcoming meetings this year.

And now onto the New Year! You may notice the new look on our website as we have decided to pay a small fee to have all the nuisance advertising removed. Tom Hedgpeth is doing a great job updating sections and that will continue. We want to make it fun and easy for you to use and get information. All 2020 meeting dates and fishing tournament schedules are on the new site. In addition, we will sponsor a fishing seminar on April 18 to take place at the Lancaster County Library in Kilmarnock. So mark your calendar now! The seminar will run from 9 AM until 1 PM and coffee and donuts will be available. Cost will be \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers. We will have four outside speakers, door prizes, vendor displays, etc. The club will not be providing lunch but will most likely decide to pick a lunch spot in the area and as many as want to come and share lunch together can do so.

We will continue the “take a member fishing day”, the “take a kid fishing day”, will continue to participate in area Chesapeake Bay councils and conservation activities. We have expanded our sponsorship program with the addition of Butler Bait and Tackle in Reedville and will continue to sign up new sponsors. We have some exciting considerations for new tournament twists, member fishing trip possibilities to Hatteras, the Eastern Shore, etc., and new tackle and boating seminars. We are considering adding a fun weekend fishing for invasive species including blue catfish and snakeheads. In closing, we certainly thank John O’Conner, Jan Jamrog, and Lee Pulling for their dedication and hard work in steering the club the past few years. All were tireless in their duties. Those of us who are new to the management of the NNAC have huge shoes to fill and we know it. Please join me in welcoming new board member/treasurer Tony Russo, Steve Cunningham as secretary and Ivor Van Heerden as director of scientific and political outreach. Best wishes to you all in 2020. Let’s have a safe yet wonderful time on the water this year!

Fish on!!

Ben Ames
President