



HARDLINES

Northern Neck Anglers Club Monthly Newsletter

What's inside this Issue:
Club News, Tournament Updates,
Fishing Reports, Boating Safety Tips
and more

Member Spotlight:
Ed Fortunato

**LEROY BUSSELS
MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT**
November 2020

WWW.NORTHERNNECKANGLERSCLUB.COM

Greetings NNAC Members,

Here we are in the late days of November and staring at a week of upcoming sub-freezing temperatures chasing the last of the leaves off the tree. We all have our fingers crossed as not only our club, but our country needs to get out of this COVID-19 quagmire. We see some good things coming on the medical front and it cannot happen soon enough so that we can get back to normalcy.

Club News

We have a full slate of programs planned to include a late spring fishing seminar date in Kilmarnock in late April, but we will monitor that and will update you as we get further into the winter. Even if we must push the seminar date back into late summer or early fall because of COVID-19, we will do everything we can so that we can have this event safely. We will have our normal slate of club meetings even if we have to continue to hold them outdoors under the pavilion at the Reedville Fishermen's museum until we are allowed to go back into our normal meeting place at Wicomico Parish Church.

We have been approached by several members with suggestions on how best to enhance the tournaments by reevaluating the schedule based on the tournament species. Other ideas on the table are a member fishing flea market, an end of year awards celebration and a possible club tournament that allows nonmembers to participate for a fee. All ideas will be considered by the board for approval and implementation as we move into the 2021 season. Suggestions are always welcome from the membership. Suggestions can be emailed or using the Contact Us page on the website.

Now is the time to start thinking about renewing your membership for the 2021 NNAC Season. You must complete a Membership Application/Liability Statement form to renew your membership. The Application form can be found on the NNAC website under the Membership menu item.

If you have a Boat US membership that needs to be renewed or wish to join, NNAC is a member of the BOAT US Cooperating Group Program which allows a discount to NNAC members. You must use the

Member Spotlight

ED FORTUNATO

Joined NNAC: 1997

Occupation: Ret. Army Colonel

Primary Home: Fredericksburg

Rivah Home: Edwardsville

Favorite Fish To Eat: Halibut & Wahoo

Bucket List Fish: Cobia

Joined NNAC: 1997

Cover Story – Ed recently caught a 20lb. king salmon (Chinook) in Lake Ontario, from Oswego NY, this past August on his first trip there. In 2 days they caught 5 kings between 20-25 lbs., plus a brown trout and a nice size smallmouth bass. Deep fishing using 4 downriggers, each with an electronic screen showing depth, amount of line down, water temperature etc. Ed plans to charter there twice in 2021.

Ed joins all types of fishing but primarily focuses on saltwater fishing. He has caught Silver and King Salmon trolling in Alaska and Lake Ontario. Although he does not have a favorite fish to target, he enjoys a hard-fought battle from any large fish like the 15-16 lb. class Bluefish in the Bay back in the 80s or a 35 lb. Dolphin offshore or a 20 lb. Salmon in freshwater.

unique NNAC program code when renewing/joining. The code can be found on the website under the **Members Only** section.

Club Fishing Reports

If you want to get your trout now you pretty much must go down to the Hampton area where the fishing has been on fire. Same with puppy drum. Cobia are long gone. Spot and Croaker have pretty much fled the rapidly cooling waters as well.

That being said, the bay rockfish fishing is heating up. I saw some amazing bites this past week and some slow times as well. While I am not aware of 30 inch plus fish being taken, they will show up soon enough. The next three weeks will be hit and miss but there will be big ones here. The gannets are arriving, more and more arriving daily and that means one thing. Larger rockfish are coming.



The Thanksgiving weekend was very crowded on the bay to say the least. We had perfect weather and light winds. I saw some areas where one could count 50+ boats with even small power binoculars. And at least 30 to 40 with just the naked eye. We did our best to stay out of that mess and did catch some fish on the fringes.

The bite was good with cloud cover, but the clear nights and full moon brought slow fishing at times. The rockfish could see the bay anchovies, small bunkers and had a field day all night. We just think that when the light came up, they were well filled of bait. We are also now in an area of winter tides, so the highs are high, and the lows are lower, especially during a full moon.

Most fishermen were out there trolling with 6-ounce baits and in-line sinkers or jigging with a super effective bait like the Sting Silver. We caught some

nice fish just spotting schools on the depth finder in the 30 to 40-foot level and just stopping to jig them. It made no difference with those deeper fish whether they were birds present or not. Of course, when you did find birds, there were fish under them but often they were 15- to 19-inch rockfish which are fun for a while, but you cannot make meals from those.

One of our members was trolling and was surprised when a boat came his way towing spring rockfish gear including large planar boards. He had to scramble to get out of the way. The boat was also trolling 9-inch baits like it was May. So, you can't let your guard down trolling around anyone even though it's fall and you don't suspect planar boards in the fall.

As always, as water temperatures continue to drop, please be safe and be aware that if you go in the water you most likely will not get out. Even with several people on your boat it will be a struggle. So be safe and be careful. And always wear your life jacket.

The following are a couple links to local fishing reports:

Lower Bay Fishing Update:

<https://www.fishtalkmag.com/fishing-reports/lower-bay>

Potomac River News:

<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/potomac-river-health-grade-sees-first-decline-in-a-decade/>

We have one more tournament starting the first weekend in December. This Bonus Rockfish tourney over our characteristic three weekends should see some nice fish taken but also some much colder weather. Beware of ice on the decks and sub-freezing weather. And that will be it for a challenging 2020.

Leroy Bussells Memorial Tournament Updates

Congratulations to Earl Pierotti for finishing in 1st place in the Rockfish Division weighing in a rockfish at Smith Point Marina tipping the scales at 5lbs. 8ozs followed by Stuart McKenzie with a fish weighing 5lbs. 6ozs weighed in at Lewisetta Marina.

Rounding out the top 3 was Troy Durvin with an even 5-pounder also weighed in at Smith Point Marina.



Earl also took 1st place in the Speckled Trout division while Troy Durvin finished 2nd. Earl and Troy were the only 2 members lucky enough to weigh in some trout for the tournament. There were no puppy drum recorded for the tournament.

Earl's victories in the two divisions seals his bid for the 2020 Angler of the Year Contest. Earl gained 10 points for his 2 victories giving him a lead of 16 points over 4-time Angler of the Year Jan Jamrog. In 3rd place is Stuart McKenzie trailing Jan by only 2 points.

The following are the top 3 finishers from each division in the club's November Leroy Bussells Memorial Tournament. All 3 finishers in each division will receive a gift certificate/card from the **Tackle Shop at JW Seafood** and the 1st place finishers will also receive a plaque.

Rockfish Division

Place	Angler	Date	Weight
1	Earl Pierotti		5lbs. 8ozs.
2	Stuart McKenzie		5lbs. 6ozs.
3	Troy Durvin		5lbs. 0ozs.

Speckled Trout Division

Place	Angler	Date	Weight
1	Earl Pierotti		
2	Troy Durvin		

Congratulations to all the members that participated in the tournament. Thanks to all our tournament

sponsors and weigh stations for their continued support for the club and its members.

December is the club's final tournament for 2020, the Bonus Rockfish tournament sponsored by **Butler's Bait and Tackle**. The targeted species is rockfish only.

Fishing Safety

Out with the old and in with the new. Marine safety



equipment keeps getting better. The new electronic SOS Distress Light does just that. Traditional

flares, although effective, became dangerous to handle and difficult to store and discard. The SOS Light replaces the traditional flares and has many benefits over the traditional flares:

- meets all U.S. Coast Guard requirements
- no expiration and no discard requirements
- non pyrotechnic device so no open flame
- floats
- seen up to 10 nautical miles away
- easy twist on - off operation.

The device runs for up to 6 hrs. @ peak intensity on 3C alkaline batteries. Just remember to always check it before leaving the dock and replace the batteries at least once a year. That is something you could not do with traditional flares.

I have 2 of these devices on my boat. Last year, I was stopped by Marine Police for a fish and safety check. When asked to see my flares, I whipped out this device. The Officer said it was the first time anyone has ever shown him one, but he seemed impressed. Do not leave home without one.

Fishing Tips, Techniques and Tackle

By Tom Hedgpeth



Although many anglers will have moved to trolling tackle for rockfish, now is a great time of year to get out and put your jigging skills to work. Birds give up the schools of fish. Get your binoculars out or turn your radar on and find the schools of birds and you will find the fish.

Or look for a concentration of boats.



You can also use your fish finder to locate schools of fish. It will look something like the picture.

Once you find the fish, stop the boat and drift over the school. If you are fishing under a flock of feeding birds, do not drive into the middle of the flock of birds. This will spook the fish and they will speed away quickly. You will spend all your time chasing them instead of catching them. You can also

jig around structure such as one of the reefs in the area.



The weapon of choice should be a 7' medium spinning outfit with a reel spooled with 20lb. test and loaded with a StingSilver. It comes in various sizes. Choose the size to match the depth of the school and size of the fish. Drop the jig down into the school and

start jigging it up and let it flutter down back in the school. Fish will generally hit the jig on the way down.

Photo of a vintage-style pink StingSilver compliments of Jan Jamrog, the club guru of jigging. Jan caught over 40 rockfish on this bait on Sunday alone. Do not

ask him how long they were but that doesn't matter. 40 fish are 40 fish!



This method of fishing is extremely exciting and can be rewarding. You can catch your limit in no time. Get out and give it a try.

Regulations Changes

Remember that Maryland Rockfish season closes Dec 10 in the Bay. Potomac River and Virginia seasons are open until Dec 31. Only 1 fish between 20 and 36 inches is allowed in Virginia and 2 fish with a minimum size of 20 inches are allowed in Potomac River.

Now on the Menhaden front lines from the Virginia Menhaden Alliance.

Disappointed – Good news and Bad news

The 2nd VMRC Menhaden Management Advisory Committee (MMAC) meeting was held today.

The Good news is the Chairman and Vice Chairperson that were elected, and both should be impartial. Rob Latour, a professor at VIMS was elected chair, and Shanna Madsen, VMRC staff, was elected vice chair. Both have considerable time and experience in menhaden management matters.

A good part of the meeting was spent on the history and background relative to Ecological Reference Points (ERP's) and future procedural matters. Procedurally, the committee will meet a minimum of twice a year, March, and November. March in advance of the harvest season, and November following the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Menhaden Management board meeting in October. They may and should add another meeting during the summer.

The bad news is the two (2) big issues that recreational fishermen want addressed were not. Recreational representative Steve A sent an email in advance of the meeting requesting discussion on two (2) issues. His email was distributed to the entire committee in advance of today's meeting.

First, moving the line of demark for the Chesapeake Bay and Ocean and second, consider reducing the bay cap on the industrial harvest of menhaden by 10%. This would follow line with the recent ASMFC decision to reduce the total allowable coast wide catch (TAC) by 10%. Unfortunately, both issues were rebuffed for this meeting. The Chairman and VMRC staff want 30 days advance notice to put an item on the agenda to allow adequate committee and VMRC Staff preparation time. Thirty days seems a little excessive to me, but OK. The line of demark issue is a safety issue. VMRC staff did say that moving it away from the bay bridge tunnel will require an amendment to the ASMFC Fishery Management Plan, since the demark is defined as the bay bridge tunnel in ASMFC documents. I say, so what, this is a safety issue and VMRC needs to pursue this change. Secondly, the bay cap should be reduced by a minimum of 10% considering ASMFC just reduced the overall coastwide total allowable catch (TAC) 10%. Moreover, considering the failing Striped Bass fishery, we need more and continued conservation in the Chesapeake Bay. Additionally, here we are on Nov 11, and the industrial fishery still has not even achieved the reduced penalty Bay Cap for 2020.

Let us hope this meeting was not a classic case of "kick the can down the road." Both of these issues were documented in advance of today's meeting. Both issues need to be formerly on the agenda for the March 2021 meeting, and both issues addressed.

Menhaden News Link:

<https://www.nationalfisherman.com/mid>

Now for an update on Virginia cobia news:

https://mrc.virginia.gov/news_releases/2020/2020-Cobia-Survey-Results.pdf

Club Social Media

We have over 400 people following our Facebook account which is super. We have about 100 dues

paying members right now so you can see many more people follow us than just our active members. But that's OK because some of them are from as far away as England and used to live in Virginia. There are several good Facebook accounts for those of you who want to follow them to pick up tops now and then. They are generally Virginia fishing clubs and provide some good info:

- 1) Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Kayak Anglers
- 2) Virginia Anglers Club Group
- 3) Speckled Trout Fishing
- 4) Northern Neck Bass Anglers Community
- 5) Chesapeake Bay Fishing
- 6) Chesapeake Bay Light Tackle
- 7) Chesapeake Bay Fishing Reefs
- 8) Fish Talk Magazine
- 9) Speckled Truth

Fish on!!



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If you would like to contribute content or photos to be included in the newsletter or on the club website, please forward it to the club's email address at: fishNNAC@gmail.com and we would be more than happy to publish it.

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