



# HARDLINES

Northern Neck Anglers Club Monthly Newsletter

**Member Spotlight:**  
**Bruce Belt**

**What's inside:**

**Club News, Tournament Updates,  
Fishing Reports, Boating Safety Tips  
and more**

**FALL EDITION**  
**October/November 2021**

[WWW.NORTHERNNECKANGLERSCLUB.COM](http://WWW.NORTHERNNECKANGLERSCLUB.COM)

## Greetings NNAC Members,



Welcome to cold weather fishing! Here we go ready or not. The next six weeks of the year will bring wind, cold, perhaps at times extreme tidal changes, and several fish species including speckled trout and redfish fleeing the Chesapeake Bay. But the good news is, it's game on for the striper/rockfish fall

populations. Starting now, these stripers are moving into areas where we can find them in large schools! It's much easier to locate fish when they are in pods of several thousand fish and their locations are being pointed out to us by hundreds of our feathery friends. You will follow the gulls, terns, pelicans and gannets to the silver and black striped torpedoes below.



We will chase them with light spinning tackle, trolling rods, jigs, hard baits, soft baits, spoons, live bait and more. And at the end of the trip, you will enjoy every bit of it with a silver fork and perhaps a glass of Chardonnay. These cold late fall and early winter days are magic on the Chesapeake.

## Club News

As we have now settled into our club winter pattern, there is not a meeting scheduled until April. You will hear more in the next few months about our Saturday fishing seminar to take place in April in Kilmarnock. Watch for upcoming news as this will be a five-hour seminar with top speakers!

## Member Spotlight

### BRUCE BELT

Although Bruce's origins go back to VA 1635, he grew up in Maryland, 30mi north of Baltimore. He started fishing with his family catching crappies, catfish etc. on Prettyboy Reservoir in the families 12' john boat. The family spent lots of weekends and summers on the eastern shore, crabbing, and fishing in the Choptank and near the Bay Bridge area. Back then it was rock fish, croakers and big blue fish, that we would stuff with crab meat we caught. He recalls the minimum size for rock was only 12"! After graduating from Western MD College, ROTC commissioning, he spent 23 years in the Army as a Signal Officer, retiring in 2002 as a Lt Colonel. After retiring from the Army eventually ended up working for Dept of Homeland Security in the Emergency Communications Division. Discovered the NNK around 2008, it reminded him of what the eastern shore was like growing up. He bought 13 ac on Gaskins Pond just outside of Reedville. He has an improved campsite with a 33' trailer as my home away from home. Enjoy kayaking out to the Bay from Gaskins or crabbing. Indulged his desire to homestead by growing grapes, blueberries, blackberries, honeybees, about 30 fruit trees, and a big garden! Best of all has been the fishing! He has a 24" Seafox kept at Buzzard Pt and love fishing the areas between the Wicomico and Smith Pt. Recently discovered the excitement of Cobia fishing with my first catch (thanks to Capt Ben!) and have also begun to appreciate the speckled trout and drum fishing this area offers. Eating the fresh trout this year might be his new favorite fish! Set personal records this year for cobia, and drum!



We have been scheduling fishing charters for the club membership this fall and they have gone over very well. Some of them were announced at our September meeting and signup sheets produced a full boat for three separate charters. The next

one is November 16 and the one following is December 1. Both are full. So, we have added another club charter on December 15 which will take place out of Smith Point Marina on the charter vessel Midnight Sun. This should be a fantastic time of year to catch rockfish as you can although the limit to take home is only one in Virginia waters or two in Maryland waters. But you should catch fish and learn a ton as far as technique for fall to winter rockfish fishing. If you would like to go with us on the December 15 charter, text us your name and contact information to Ben Ames 316-304-1475.

The trip is first come first served, it will be \$125 for each fisherman which includes the charter, mate tip and fish cleaning. The first seven club fishermen who contact me are in. You may take a non-member guest if you so desire.

We usually organize two trips to Hatteras for charters during the year and we just completed a very successful one. Six club anglers and guests caught five citation king mackerel and blackfin tuna off Cape Hatteras earlier in November on the fishing vessel



**Predator** with Capt. Chris Barnett at the helm and Deckhand Bobby. It's crazy to get five citations out of one trip but we did it.



The weather got a little rough in the afternoon and it chased us back to the mainland, but it was an excellent trip. If you want to talk about doing that next year we will organize some more and let me know your desire to go with us. Great time! Great crew! Great Anglers!

## Club Fishing Reports

Many of you probably subscribe to Lenny Rudow's online fishing magazine already but it is a decent source of fishing information arranged in handy geographic Bay fishing zones. Here's a link to latest report from the mid Bay area. If you like what you read here and you've not been exposed to Rudow's report before, I suggest you subscribe to it and find out for yourself whether you think it's something you want to read often. It's up there with "Tidal Fish" as something I look at weekly. Both are free!

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

<https://www.tidalfish.com/threads/mid-bay-thursday.553151/>

## Octoberfest Tournament Results

Congratulations to Earl Pierotti for finishing in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Rockfish Division, Speckled Trout and Puppy Drum Divisions. Earl was the only member to place in the Rockfish and Puppy Drum divisions. Tom Hedgpeth weighed in a nice 3lb 8oz Speck with Ben Ames a close 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 3lb 7oz trout. Jan Jamrog rounded out the top 4 with his 2lb 13 oz entry.

The following are the top 3 finishers from each division in the club's Octoberfest Tournament. All 3 finishers in each division will receive a gift certificate/card and the 1<sup>st</sup> place finishers will receive a plaque.

### Rockfish Division

Place	Angler	Date	Weight
1	Earl Pierotti	10/23/2021	3lb 4oz

### Speckled Trout Division

Place	Angler	Date	Weight
1	Earl Pierotti	10/23/2021	4lb 8oz
2	Tom Hedgpeth	10/23/2021	3lb 8oz
3	Ben Ames	10/23/2021	3lb 7oz
4	Jan Jamrog	10/23/2021	2lb 13oz

### Puppy Drum Division

Place	Angler	Date	Weight
1	Earl Pierotti	10/23/2021	6lb 10oz

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.

This month is the club's Leroy Bussells Memorial tournament. The targeted species are Speckled Trout, Redfish (puppy drum) and rockfish.

## Angler of the Year Standings

Congratulations to Earl Pierotti for wrapping up the AOY contest. Earl is 28 points ahead of 2<sup>nd</sup> place Robin Cunningham who has 18 points and Tom Hedgpeth who is in 3<sup>rd</sup> with 13 points followed by Jan Jamrog in 4<sup>th</sup> with 10 points. With 2 tournaments remaining, the race is on for 2<sup>nd</sup> between anglers in positions 2 – 6.

## Boating Safety

Sadly, I've read of seven fatalities in the past several months regarding drownings in Maryland and Virginia. The common denominator is the lack of a life preserver. Six out of the seven fatalities were not wearing a life vest. We hark on it constantly but it's true. Especially now, if you go in the water with heavy clothes on and cool temperatures, and you don't have assistance, you probably aren't coming home. And if you think it won't happen to you it will. Because it just happened to me two weeks ago.

I was standing on the casting platform on the back of my Carolina Skiff, with our VP Tom Hedgpeth on the bow. We were having a great day catching puppy drum and trout. I think I had just netted a fish for him and hopped back up on the stern platform to get my share of what he just caught. I tripped and started to fall but then I just jumped into about waist deep water. I knew it was fairly shallow and I knew I was going to get wet, but the water was not that cold. I had been wearing my vest all day and because it was getting warm, I took it off. Yes, idiotic.... the vest does me no good lying on the helm. I came back on board via the swim ladder but for us tall guys, you've got to remember those steps do not extend down very deep and just getting on that first step will most likely require some assistance, a helping hand and that's what I had with Tom. It was a good lesson for me I can tell you.

Please, please don't let it happen to you. A good drill in the summer when it's warm, your boat is tied to your dock and you have people with you, try jumping off it and coming back aboard the step ladder on your boat. It's harder than it looks but it would be better for you to know that now rather than later.

Another sad drowning:

<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/body-of-cobb-island-crabber-firefighter-recovered/>

## Regulations Changes

No regulation changes to report.

## Fishing Tips and Techniques

OK, I know what you're thinking: "This guy writes a lot about trout and redfish". And that is true. Those are two species I really like fishing for, and they are found throughout our Northern and Middle Neck areas about six months out of the year.

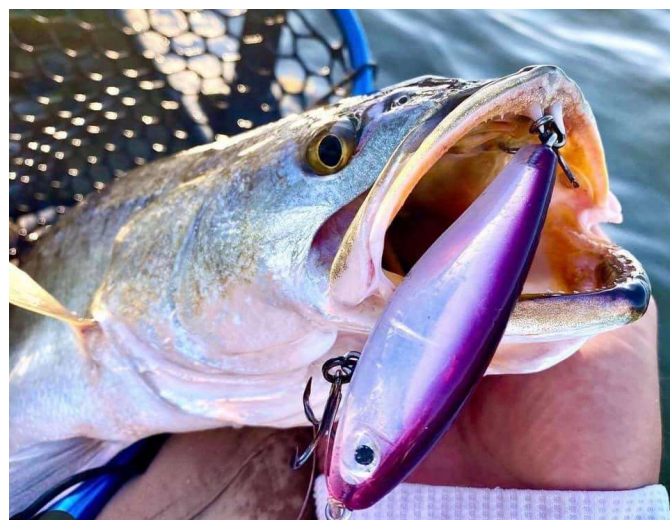
In our newsletters, seminars, club meetings, etc., we have discussed techniques, baits, tackle, good places to find said species, and a host of other topics to help you with those two fish. I'm hoping everyone in the club has at least a couple of Mirrolures at their disposal. But did you know that by modifying Mirrolures, certain designers have kicked their modifications/designs into high gear and there are baits available that are head and shoulders above. In fact, they are taking the standard Mirrolure and modifying it to produce a bait which really does catch more fish than the common Mirrolure designs, which are excellent.



One company, based in speckled trout heaven along the coast in Texas, is called Waterloo Rod Company. They have a deal with L&S Tackle in Florida, who produce Mirrolures, to build these modified designs Waterloo calls the Double D.



The result is a bait which runs a little differently in the water, different colors, different finishes, blood red hooks, etc. The body is made in Costa Rica and then the heavily molded Mirrolures are finished in Florida before shipping to Waterloo Rod company in Texas.



They aren't cheap, \$15/each, but I can tell you they are tremendous fish catchers for both trout and redfish.

You can also purchase Double D baits from Johnny's Sport Shop in Texas and Neuse River Bait and Tackle in North Carolina. If one shop doesn't have what you are looking for, check one of the other shops. This lure sells out quickly.



And then there's another outlet for an even further handcrafted bait which I've caught a few fish on and they look promising, but they are pure artistry. These are available from Jeff Brown in Pensacola, Florida.



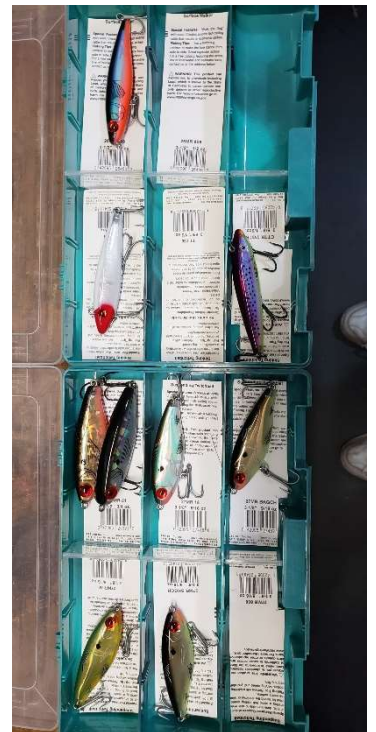
## Get Organized

Other than MirrOlure, there are several other manufacturers that offer saltwater resistant lures for trout and puppy drum. For example, some of the most popular are Rapala X-Rap series, Bomber Badonk-A-Donk series, and Yo-Zuri 3D Inshore series and all come in an array of size and color choices.

Each series comes in 3 different actions. The first is the suspending twitch bait which sinks between 0'-2' and is used in shallow water when grasses are a couple feet below the surface. Second is the sub walker which sinks 0'- 5 'and is used when fishing deeper water over grasses. Finally, top water or surface walkers are used when fishing over grasses that are just below the surface. All 3 styles are to be retrieved using a reel and twitch action at varying speeds depending on how the fish are feeding.

Now that you have a plethora of these lures in various styles, colors, sizes and manufacturers, how do you keep them organized so you can quickly select the right lure for the conditions you are fishing? Here is a tip to organize your lures.

Arrange your lures by action, one box for top water, a second box for suspending twitch and another for sub walker. This will let you quickly narrow your search for that prize lure.



When purchasing a lure keep the package that it came in and put it at the bottom of the box in the slot for the lure as seen in the picture above. That will help you refer to the model number, color, size, and action of the lure when you need to replace a lost lure.

Now if you don't have a package to refer to, how can you look at one of these lures and quickly tell if it is a top water, slow sinking, or sub walker?



Generally speaking, it's all in the location of the line connector ring on the lure. If the ring is on the top of the head of the lure, it is a sub walker. When the ring is on the lip of the lure it is a slow suspending twitch and if the connector ring is on the chin of the lure, it is a top water. As seen in the photo, the top lure is a top water, the middle is a suspending twitch and the bottom is a sub walker.

When targeting trout or puppy drum it is a good idea to take 3 rods each

rigged with 1 of these 3 styles.

As mentioned above, these lures are not cheap. A good way to protect your investment is to use a lure cover. Not only does it protect your lure, but it also keeps the hooks out of your fingers and hands during travel. Clear ones are the best choice since you can easily see the lure you want to use.



The more time your lure is in the water, the higher the chance you have of hooking that gator trout or line ripping puppy drum. If you don't have the luxury of taking multiple rods rigged with different

lures and you find yourself always tying on lure after lure trying to figure out what the fish are feeding on. Instead, use a split snap connector. This allows quick switching between lures without having to tie on lure after lure. Just snap off the lure and snap on a new one. They are very lite weight and do not impact the action of the lure. Thus, it provides you more time in the water.

Hope some of these tips help you catch that monster trout or puppy drum.



## Bay News

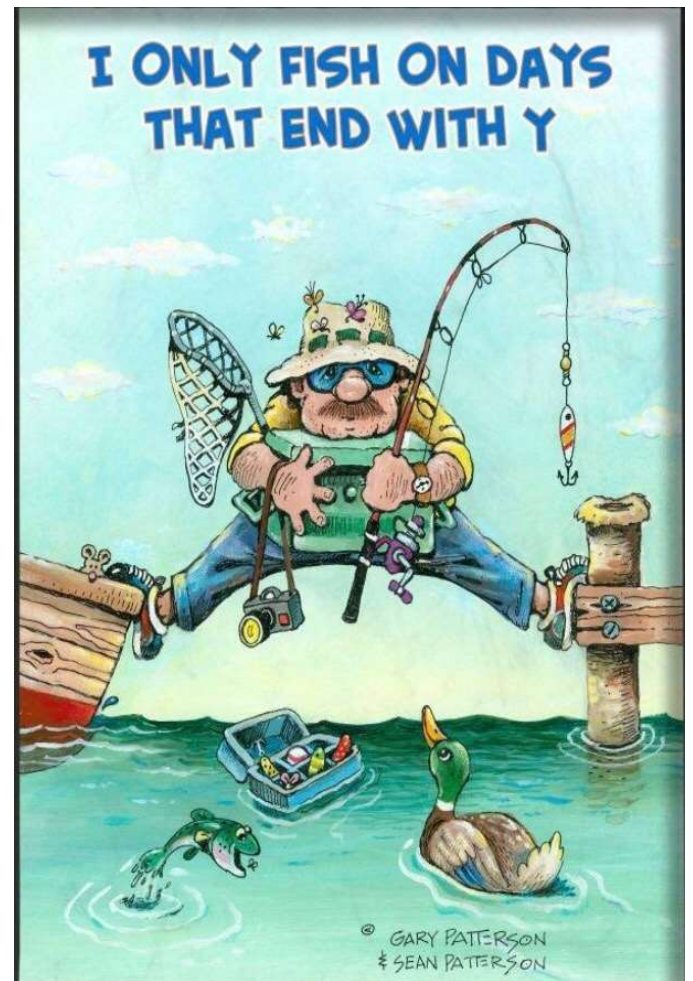
If you were down here in your Rivah Home or thereabouts a week ago, you no doubt witnessed a phenomenon which scientist believe will become more common place. It affected the Northern Neck but it was even worse in certain places such as Annapolis.



Many boats were set adrift and much localized flooding occurred:

<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/more-than-a-dozen-boats-adrift-or-damaged-during-flood-event/>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/maryland/articles/2021-10-29/mid-atlantic-braces-for-tidal-flooding-strong-winds>



So that's it for our late fall report at this time. Everyone have a great Thanksgiving and keep fishing! We love to see your fishing photos and if you send them to us, we will make sure they are on Facebook and also our website for others to see. For those of you already scheduled to join us on November 16 and December 1 for the next two charters, we will see you on those dates. You know who you are and will be receiving more updates as we get closer to the departure times. And don't forget to let us know if you want to go on our open December 15 charter. The first seven people who text me their desire to go are in!

Fish on!!

Ben Ames  
President  
NNAC



**Captain Ben Ames, Jr.**  
**The Ames Marine Group**  
**428 Sutton Ave**  
**Reedville, VA 22539**  
**[316-304-1475](tel:316-304-1475) C**

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](mailto:fishNNAC@gmail.com) and we would be more than happy to publish it.

**Sponsors:**

R. W.'s Sports Shop  
Tackle Shop at J & W Seafood  
Butlers Bait and Tackle

**Partners:**

BoatUS  
Smith Point Sea Rescue  
VSSA  
Killer Bee Baits

**Weigh Stations:**

Smith Point Marina  
Buzzards Point Marina  
Chesapeake Boat Basin  
Lewisetta Marina  
Boatyard @ Christ Church  
Morningstar Marina  
Norview Marina  
Ingram Bay Marina  
R. W.'s Sports Shop  
Tackle Shop at J & W Seafood