



HARDLINES

Northern Neck Anglers Club Monthly Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION

What's inside this Issue:

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

Grab Bag Tournament



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Greetings NNAC Members,

Finally, it's fall! Yes, I know winter is on the way, but let's talk about September, October and the first part of November first! For many fish species in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, this time period means the hottest action of the year.

Cooler weather often equates to hotter fishing! Just ask a speckled trout, a puppy drum, a big red drum, a flounder, an under 30" rockfish, some lingering cobia, black drum, spot, some croakers, etc. I'm not sure about fall being better for snakeheads and catfish, but they are certainly here as well.

Most of these fish are preparing for winter and most of them have a tremendous internal calendar. They know what's coming and they want to be ready. They either hang out in the bay or they head south later this fall. Some species do both.

The water temperature is slowly cooling, and it will get better. If you're not sure that it's a good time to be fishing for all species, just look at what some of our members caught recently. All these fish were taken in the middle to lower bay or tributary rivers.



Great Wicomico
Soft plastic on a Jig



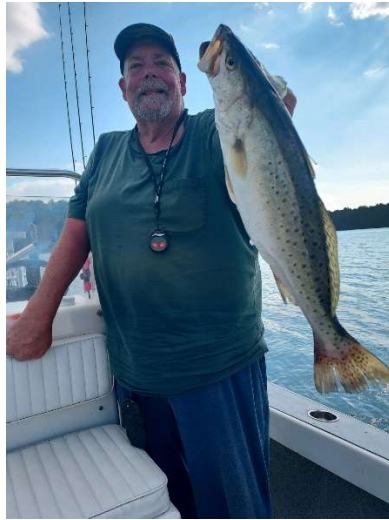
Piankatank River
Topwater Plug



Little Wicomico Jetty
Live minnow



Tangier Bay
Live Spot



Piankatank River
MirrOlure



Piankatank River
MirrOlure



Little Wicomico Jetty
Live Minnow



Little Wicomico Jetty
Live Minnow



Great Wicomico
Soft Plastics/Live Shrimp



Bay



Great Wicomico
MirrOlures



Bay



Club News

Our club sponsored fishing charters have again been a great success this year. We had one last week, and some of our newest members took part as well as some old hands. We got a number of species as a big bluefish. Here's a portfolio of pictures taken on a really fun on 9/12/23:



Due to adverse weather conditions, our club meeting scheduled for Saturday, 9/23/23 at the Wicomico Parish Church in Wicomico Church had to be postponed. As soon as a new date is determined, we will send out an email and post it on our website and Facebook page.

We had a great pair of DNR and VMRC enforcement officers scheduled to give us a really interesting boater safety discussion. And you will certainly want to hear what they are seeing in the bay as to fish species trends for the coming years. Both officers support our club and are certainly no one to be afraid of. They are both excellent fishermen in their own right and love being on the water as much as with their families, just like we do. We plan to get them back for our new meeting date.

Also, we planned a presentation on alternate ways to catch trout that you may not have experienced before. That includes fishing with live shrimp, minnows, and popping corks. We'll also give you a brush up on baits that really work well in the fall for all light tackle species we generally see in the next two months. This will also be included in the new meeting date.

If you have placed in a tournament and have not received your award at this point, don't worry.

We will be presenting all remaining fishing tournament awards up to this point during our next meeting. Please show up at the meeting and you will receive yours. We do have more tournaments in the next couple of months, and there will be an angler of the year crowned in December. Obviously, if you cannot make the meeting, your award will be mailed to you.

There were no entries reported for the September Grab Bag Tournament. The Tournament was hampered by Small Craft Advisories. Thanks to all our tournament sponsors and weigh stations for their continued support for the club and its members. Next

month is the club's Octoberfest tournament. Targeted species are Speckled Trout, Rockfish, and Puppy Drum.

Fishing Reports

Spanish Mackerel / Bluefish – The spanish mackerel bite has dropped off somewhat however, the bluefish bite is still on fire and the fish are a bit larger than earlier in the season. Troll Clarkspoons, Drone spoons and surgical tubes for the best result. Tangier area and the NNK Reef are current hotspots. Also, reds, bluefish and trout are taking live spot in these areas and around the local wrecks.

Trout and Puppy Drum – Trout and puppy drum are beginning to catch fire. Members have reported a several trout in the 16" – 24" range are being caught in the early morning and evening. Mirrolures and soft plastics were the preferred baits fished around Submerged Aquatic Grasses (SAV) in up to 5' of water. Same with puppy drum. Great Wicomico, Indian River, Dividing Creek and the Piakatank River are current trout and puppy drum hotspots. For trout, take along some live shrimp and fish them under a popping for some explosive action.

Flounder - The flounder bite has also picked up over the last couple weeks. Reports of keeper size flounder have been caught in the Little Wicomico jetty. Live minnows and small spot bounced along the bottom seem to be their preferred appetite. Some reds have also been caught using small plastics.

If you have a cast net and like to fish with live bait, all the waters around the Bay are full of bait huge balls. And I mean full!

Fishtalk Magazine - Here's a great report for our area, which should be considered a must read. Lenny Rudow does a really good job with these reports.

[Lower Chesapeake Bay Fishing Report, September 2023 Fishtalk Magazine](#)

Regulation Updates

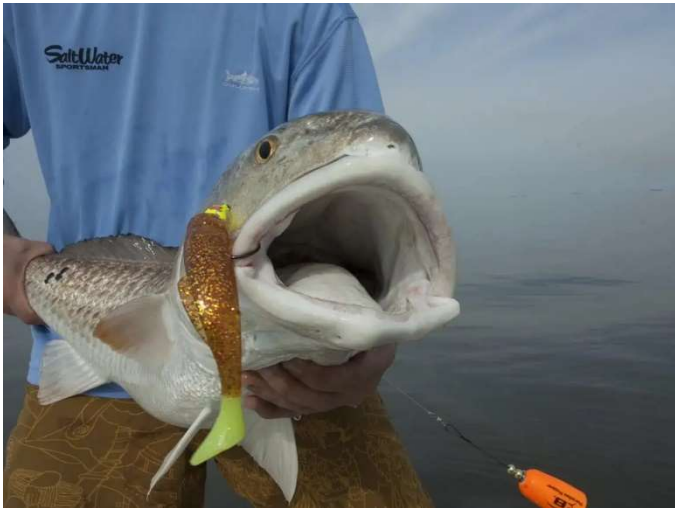
Virginia Striper Season opens October 4 – December 31, 2023.

Reel Limit 1 per angler.
Size Limit 20" – 31".

Size limits are in total length; fish must be measured from the most forward projection of the snout, with the mouth closed, to the tip of the longer lobe of the tail fin, with the tail compressed along the midline, using a straight-line measure, not over the curve of the body.

Virginia Cobia season is closed as of September 16.

Tackle Box



One technique that is not frequently used in this area but is often used frequently in the Gulf States and the Carolinas for catching trout and reds is the use of popping corks.

A popping cork rig is a 2" to 6" float made of cork, Styrofoam or hard plastic and often weighted at the bottom for easier casting and to keep the bait below the surface. Under the cork is a 3'-4' leader material and your bait of choice.

The bait used under a cork can be a jig with a soft plastic bait or even better is a live shrimp.

The idea behind this technique is that fish are attracted to surface commotion because it mimics surface feeding or baits fleeing from predators.

The angler casts the popping cork to a spot where fish might likely be, then he twitches hard on the rod a time or two to make the cork pop loudly and splash on top of the water, while the bait or lure dangles below.

After the initial pop, it's best to pause the retrieve, much like when working a topwater chugger. Then pop the cork once or twice a few seconds later, and again pause for a moment before repeating the procedure as you slowly reel in the rig.

There are many styles of corks found with these rigs including, oval, cigar, tapered and with or without weights. The best kind are the ones that make the most noise or a loud clicking sound.



This type of technique may make all the difference in the world when the bite is slow. It can provide some excellent results. Try it. You might surprise yourself.

Bay News



Manatee rescued from a pound net. Good article about this in the Chesapeake Bay Magazine.

<https://www.chesapeakebaymagazine.com/video-manatee-rescued-from-pound-net-amid-multiple-sightings-in-bay/>

What's Next for the Chesapeake Bay?

Bay Program ponders options as a changing world, new science challenge old assumptions.

https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/what-s-next-for-the-chesapeake-bay/article_cf39e97a-476f-11ee-83bd-ef3bb77071f2.html

Don't forget, send us some pictures of your fishing successes or anything you see in the media that you think we should share with the general membership. We love seeing your photos!

Fish on!!
Ben Ames
President, NNAC



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If you would like to contribute content, photos or suggestions 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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