



# HARDLINES

Northern Neck Anglers Club Monthly Newsletter

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



**COVER STORY:**  
**Custom NNAC MirrOlures**  
**Spring Edition 2022**



## Greetings NNAC Members,

Sounds like fishing season outside to me! Gale force winds and about seven straight days of small craft advisories. It reminds me of one of our tournament months!

No, let's be positive now. The calendar doesn't quite say spring yet, but I see bait moving in my creek, cormorants chasing fish, and it won't be long before I see predator fish moving underneath the bait. Crab fishermen/watermen are setting pots. Water temperature is warming up, outside temperature has been great for a few days in a row, things are headed in the right direction.

## Club News

Congrats to the new NNAC Board Members:

Congratulations to new board members Jimmy Morgan, Robin Cunningham (new Secretary) and Earl Pierotti. And congratulations to returning board members Stuart McKenzie, Ivor Van Heerden, Mark Roy, our illustrious vice president Tom Hedgpeth and yours truly Ben Ames. You know it's a weak slate when Tom and I keep getting re-elected!

Seriously, we will be leaning heavily on the board this year as we have more and more things planned and frankly, we need help with all of the events. So, get to know the new board members as they are the lifeblood of our club!

It is time to get those membership renewal applications in for the 2022 season. The \$30 fee remains the same. You can find the membership/liability statement on the web site under **Membership**. Complete the application and mail it along with the membership dues to the NNAC address listed on the membership form.

NNAC club sponsored charter calendar announced:

We have charted a sponsorship agreement with Ryan Rogers, Doug Gray, and Zane Oliver of Midnight Sun Charters for 2022. While there are several excellent charter services on the Northern Neck, these gentlemen of the Midnight Sun have supported our club for years and have gone the extra mile to make sure that our trips in the past and

## Cover Story

### CUSTOM NNAC MIRROLURES

We have not been idle over the winter. Topping, VA trout specialist Thomas Licht and I designed four new custom MirrOlures which are proprietary to the Northern Neck Anglers Club. Then we had MirrOlure build them for us.

We thought long and hard about different trout and redfish designs which would cover spring, summer, and fall light tackle fishing for those two wonderful Chesapeake and tidal river species. Two designs are built for bright days, some are designed for low light. You will not see these anywhere other than at one of our events. The best news is they will be available for sale at our seminar on April 23. Here are three of the completed custom Mirrolures with one more on the way.



Thomas will be speaking at our seminar and will discuss these baits, tactics, tackle, and more. Here's a photo of Thomas with one of our designs:



scheduled for the future will be superb experiences. We have strategically designed the schedule so that new fishing species will arrive and be available on each new charter.

We will be opening reservations for these trips soon, as there will be official signup sheets available at our April 23rd grandiose fishing seminar extravaganza in Kilmarnock.

We are tweaking the reservations process this year to refine a small issue we experienced last year of late club member cancellations, leaving my wallet standing alone to make good on our guarantees with the captains of the particular charter. I don't want to go through that again, so we are requiring a deposit this year when you make your reservation. Further, when you make a reservation and we confirm your place, and you make a deposit, you are still required to pay for the trip if we cannot fill your spot. And we may ask your assistance in helping to fill your spot. That usually doesn't happen but at last minute sometimes we don't have a lot of options. Although some other clubs do it this way, I didn't want to enact this new twist, but again, history has shown us that it's necessary. On the positive side, I am usually able to find a replacement as long as I have a week or so notice. But that's not guaranteed. Of course, at any time weather may cancel the trip at the discretion of the captain, and if you can't make an alternate date, you will receive a refund.

#### 2022 Midnight Sun Charter Schedule:

May 3, May 16  
July 5  
August 15  
September 12 (Virginia Beach Offshore)  
November 30  
December 20

#### April 23 Fishing Extravaganza Cometh!

We have a full slate of seven tremendous and varied speakers, a great location, some interesting displays to look at, coffee and donuts for the early arrivals, and lots of raffle items, giveaways, and sponsorships thanks to our 2022 NNAC Sponsors: Liz Moore Realty in Kilmarnock, Midnight Sun Charters, R W's Sport Shop, Horn's Northern Neck Ace Hardware in Kilmarnock, Butler's Bait and Tackle in Reedville,

Yeti Coolers, Blue Coolers, MirrOlure, KWigglers Baits, The Reedville Fishermen's Museum, Cygnet's Restaurant in Lottsburg, Jett's Marine in Reedville, J.W. Seafood in Deltaville, and a few more as of yet unannounced.

#### Fishing Reports

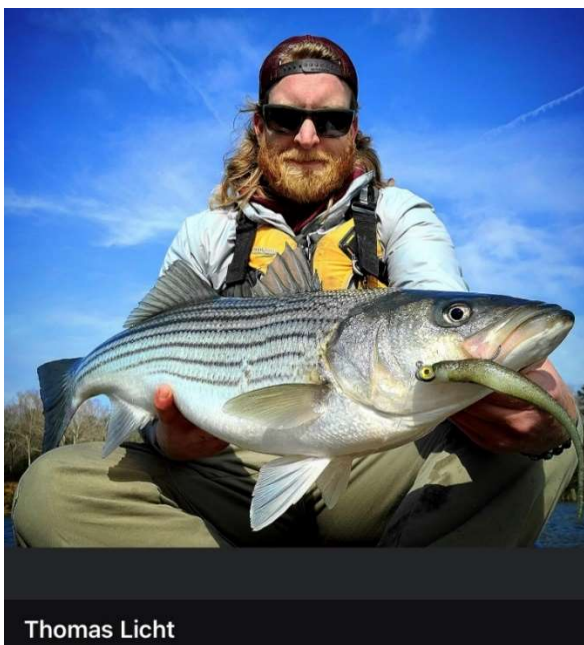
I know it's still March and we are only about a week out of a pretty good snowstorm. But it's warming up fast, trees and flowers are in full bloom on the Northern Neck, so we are making progress.

Even though Virginia does not have a trophy rockfish season. The Potomac River and Maryland waters don't open until May 1, but the rockfish don't know they're not supposed to be here yet. And they are in Virginia waters in good numbers. The Rappahannock and tributaries have a ton of fish in them. Friends of mine who fish out of kayaks are getting some great fish. And if you like catch and release like I do, it's a playground right now! Look for them in cuts of 15 to 20 feet of water minimum, make sure you got some tidal action either coming in or out, stay away from a full moon and you ought to be able to catch some on soft baits. And a 10-inch soft bait is not too big. Zman make some great ones called the Heroz series. I highly suggest you try a few of those with a 4/0 hook and a three-quarter ounce jig head.

Go catch a 40 inch plus rockfish because they are out there waiting to be caught:







Thomas Licht

Noticed the Zman HeroZ bait Thomas is using in the bottom photo. Both fish were taken while fishing out of a kayak in the past week. I know where they were taken but these two guys promised to poison my well if I mention locations!!!! J/K



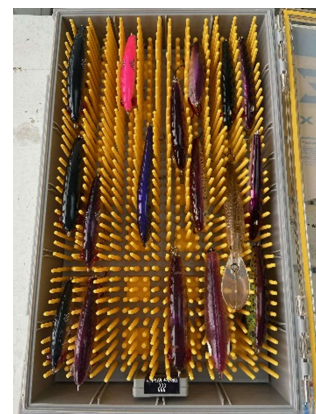
Also, there are lots of perch to be caught, both yellow and white. In tributaries off the upper Rapp and in freshwater lakes, crappies are hot. Huge blue catfish in the Potomac River are there for the taking. Also, Earl and Robin have been doing some great work on panfish while waiting for saltwater bites to get serious!

Here's the latest Rudow lower Bay fishing report. Notice his emphasis on catfish and perch:

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

## Fishing Tips and Techniques

Another of our speakers will be William Clarke who has been in the fishing tackle industry for several years. Among other things, he is the tackle expert at horns Ace Hardware in Kilmarnock. He is on the cutting edge of new tackle designs and availability. He recently showed me a really cool, trick tackle box



for Mirrolure and stick type baits such as Rapala, Yo-Zuri, etc. He'll have one for you to look at our seminar plus other interesting and new tackle offerings.



There are a variety of manufacturers that offer bait dye for enhancing or changing the color of your baits. The dye comes in a variety of colors and yes you can get scented dye such as shrimp, garlic, etc. Generally, it does not adhere to scented plastic baits. You can also change those hard baits with a dye pen or aerosol spray can.

Next time you are fishing, and things just don't seem to be working, try jazzing up your bait with a different color tail using dyes.

## Fuel Price Woes

Kayaks anyone? Paddle boards? Wading? A lawn chair on a dock, cane pole and a cooler full of worms? It's getting freaky out there thinking about what no ethanol marina fuel is going to cost. I hate to

think about it but it's life in 2022 for us for now. But all is not lost, here's what Boat US says about the subject.



SPRINGFIELD, Va., March 17, 2022 – Gas prices are up. What can boaters do to prepare for a summer of boating? The 800,000-plus member Boat Owners Association of The United States ([BoatUS](#)) has 21 fuel-saving tips boaters can do to help save on fuel and still enjoy a fulfilling season on the water. While some of these techniques may sound obvious, there may be some you never considered.

#### Before Heading Out:

1. **Tune your engine now.** A once a year for a tune-up and service will help it run more efficiently.
2. **[Match the boat's prop to the boat and activity.](#)** Propellers are most efficient when they're matched to the kind of boat you have and what you use it for (e.g., towing water skiers, fishing). Ask the pros at a propeller shop for recommendations and experiment with different models. The right prop can potentially increase fuel efficiency by as much as 10%.
3. **Check your WOT.** Take your boat out on a calm day and run wide-open throttle (WOT). The WOT rating is the RPM range the motor should achieve when running at wide open throttle. If it's not able to reach WOT — or overruns it — you've got the wrong prop and you're not getting the most bang for your fuel buck.
4. **Check for propeller damage throughout the season.** A dinged or broken propeller will hurt your fuel economy, so regularly inspect yours and replace it if it's damaged.
5. **Keep the prop clean.** Barnacles and other growth can attach to the propeller, which will slow it down and impact fuel economy.
6. **Keep a slick hull.** For boats that spend a lot of time in the water, barnacles or stuck-on grass can create drag on the hull and make the engine work harder. Boats in warm places will probably need to be cleaned weekly, while those in colder waters may be able to go a month or two.
7. **Measure your fuel flow.** Install a fuel-flow meter, which can show you in real time how many gallons per hour your engine is burning, and allow you to dial in the most efficient speed for your boat.
8. **Upgrade your motor — if you can.** With the pandemic, engines have been hard to come by, but newer engines tend to be significantly more efficient than older models. The fuel savings alone might not be enough to justify an upgrade, but you're likely also benefitting the environment. If your vessel is suitable, there are [more options for electric and hybrid propulsion than ever before.](#)
9. **[Join BoatUS.](#)** Yes, this is a pitch, but it will save you gas money. Members receive exclusive marina fuel discounts at nearly 400 [BoatUS Partner Network marinas across the United States that offer BoatUS members up to 10 cents off per gallon of fuel.](#)
10. **Refuel smartly ashore.** Most recreational boats in the U.S. are refueled at roadside gas stations, mini-marts and other retailers. It may be wise to enroll in the retailer's customer loyalty or "cash back" program. Just read the fine print on how your discount is delivered. Your credit

card company or grocery store may also offer percentage-based “cash back” program on fuel.

## At The Dock

1. **Ditch extra stuff.** Take stock of what’s onboard; additional weight means more drag. Clean out anything you won’t need, from extra anchors to old, unused lines and tools. Of course this does not include safety gear or necessary ground tackle.
2. **Lighten your tanks.** Don’t run with a full freshwater or fuel tank unless you absolutely need it. Water weighs 8 pounds per gallon, and some boats have freshwater tanks that can hold 100 gallons, so emptying half can add up quickly. Gasoline weighs 6 pounds per gallon, so if you don’t need a full tank to safely return (you obviously don’t want to worry about getting stranded), lighten your load and bring less. A rule of thumb when planning for fuel use on any outing is you need to have one-third of your fuel to your destination, one-third back home, and one-third in reserve.
3. **Avoid excess idling.** It’s a common misconception that engines need time to warm up. Modern engines are fuel injected, so when you start them, they’re ready to go in a minute or two.
4. **A note on safety:** Self-refueling your boat while it’s in the slip at a marina with portable containers may be prohibited due to fire hazard or potential for a spill, and depending on the volume of fuel needed for a fill-up may be impractical. It’s also problematic as the risk of fire and explosion goes up when gas is transported in your vehicle. This type of refueling is better suited to small vessels with portable tanks that can be removed, filled at a gas station and returned to the

boat. Regardless of how you refuel, [follow all safety guidelines](#).

## On The Water

1. **Rearrange your passengers.** Evenly distributing the load aboard your boat is the simplest way to help you boat run most efficiently when the boat’s trimmed, which is roughly parallel to its at-rest waterline and not leaning too far to one side or the other.
2. **Get on plane.** Most recreational boats run most efficiently when they’re on plane, so once you’re out of the no-wake zone, [safely get on plane](#) as soon as you can. If your boat has trim tabs, experiment with the up/down switch to find the sweet spot where your boat moves most efficiently and achieves the best trim.
3. **Watch your wake.** One sign you’re blowing gas is the size of your wake. While sometimes you have no option, slowing down to no-wake speed saves fuel. It’s a matter of plowing a wall of water rather than efficiently slipping over or through it. Of course, wakesurfers will take umbrage to this tip. We get it.
4. **Try slowing down.** Yeah, that’s a hard one for a lot of us, but in addition to stretching a tank of gas, it’s safer. You’ll see more things and have more time to react in the water, such as other boats or approaching traffic.
5. **Reduce wind drag.** A canvas or bimini top is great for protection from the sun, but you can improve fuel efficiency while underway by taking it down if you can. Just be sure to bring — and apply — sunblock.

6. **Navigate smartly.** The ultimate trick to saving fuel, of course, is running your engine less. Travel to closer destinations or drop anchor somewhere nearer to home to enjoy your fun afternoon on the water. If possible, take the shorter route and route trips in synch with current and tide, and try to avoid a lot of banging into head seas.
7. **Share your angling outings by “buddy boating.”** Head out this weekend by inviting the guy in the slip next to you, and then rotate on the next weekend’s angling outing. This fuel-saving technique is especially popular with anglers who fish canyons far offshore. Of course, this also improves your social aspects of fishing life as well.

## Bay News

A cargo ship called the Ever Forward has been stuck in the mud of the Chesapeake Bay for nine days and counting, and crews continue what could be weeks of work to dig it out.



The huge, 1,085-foot ship was heading from Baltimore to Norfolk on March 13<sup>th</sup> and missed a turn in the shipping channel when it ran aground north of the Bay Bridge. However, the ship is not blocking the shipping channel lanes. The bad news, though, is this ship is in much deeper mud. The plan now is to dig the ship out, but that’s a slow and dangerous

process. Mud will be moved to Poplar Island, a wildlife refuge in the bay that is maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.





That's it for now, don't forget our big seminar day on Saturday, April 23 at the public library in Kilmarnock. It starts at 9 AM and will finish up sometime around 4 PM. We will have seven speakers, lots of extra cool things to see, lots of giveaways, a quick break for lunch, some coffee and donuts, and a great time! The event is free for members, but we will accept a donation to help defray the cost. You are welcome to bring guests. There will be more info on that event as we get closer. Watch our Facebook page as well and also our website.  
Fish on!!



Ben Ames  
President  
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Tom Hedgpeth  
Vice President  
NNAC

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	Partners	Weigh Stations
R. W.'s Sports Shop	VSSA	Smith Point Marina
Tackle Shop at J & W Seafood	BoatUS	Buzzards Point Marina
Butlers Bait and Tackle	Smith Point Sea Rescue	Chesapeake Boat Basin
Liz Moore & Associates Real Estate		Lewisetta Marina
Horn's Northern Neck Ace Hardware		Morningstar Marina
Yeti		Boatyard @ Christ Church
Blue Coolers		Norview Marina
Cygnet's Restaurant		Tackle Shop at J & W Seafood
Reedville Fisherman's Museum		Ingram Bay Marina
		R. W. Sport Shop