



The Virginia Saltwater Review

Plans and Statistics Department
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
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<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

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By

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW



The cobia bite has begun! While there are scattered reports around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, folks at the Buckroe Pier, in Hampton, hooked several this week. Of course, this means cobia anglers are gearing up for the upcoming tournament season, with one of the biggest events planned for Saturday, June 26th at

Wallace's Bait and Tackle in Hampton (Captain's meeting Friday, June 25th). Once again, the Marine Sportfish Collection Project team will be on hand to collect valuable biological information from each cobia weighed in at the tournament. Each angler who provides a fresh whole cobia for biological sampling will receive one of the project reward shirts in return (and after a few minutes wait, their cobia will be returned to them less a pair of otoliths for ageing).

Everyone seems to be asking about croaker. While a few locations report that croaker are just beginning to show up, the folks in the York River report that they have officially arrived. Plentiful croaker are available from the river and the Gloucester Point Pier. Offshore, everyone is excited about the first bluefin tuna reports and is expecting the tuna bite to turn on very soon. Flounder are still biting, especially around Chincoteague and Wachapreague.

And a final reminder to all striped bass anglers. **Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported.** You can report online through the Virginia Saltwater Journal (www.vasaltwaterjournal.com) or filling out and mailing in a form (included on pages 7 and 8).



Have a great week fishing!

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna, at Captain Bob's reports that Queen's Sound continues to be reliable for flounder. The throwback ratio is 15 throwbacks to 1, but the keepers have been large (25 to 24 inches). Staff at Captain Bob's suggests for anglers to follow the birds for huge snapper bluefish (averaging 24 to 26 inches) at Markers 17, 19, and 20 or in front of Curtis Merrit Harbor. Numerous undersized black sea bass and whopping skates and rays (40 to 45 pounds) are also in the area. The Four Mouths are has been producing as well (despite a lot of grass), and in the surf, 12- to 14-inch kingfish have been biting along with a few striped bass. Offshore, anglers are catching their limits of black sea bass at Black Fish Banks, and a few flounder have come in from the wreck in that area as well. At the Lumpy Bottom, mako sharks have been caught with regularity. A bluefin tuna was also spotted there this week, along with piles chopper blues. Donna notes that a big bluefin tuna bite usually arrives just behind the arrival of the chopper bluefish!

Wachapreague

Flounder fishing has been great near captain Zed's. According to staff, everyone is catching fish and coming back with a few keepers. Keeper ratio is 1 in 10. Green and Drawing Channel, and near the old Coast Guard Station. The first bluefin tuna of the year was brought in over the weekend.

Cape Charles

Slow fishing was reported this weekend from Chris' Bait and Tackle. A few flounder catches were reported from Oyster and around northern Cape Charles. Cobia have been caught by anglers site-casting around Latimer Shoals

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone reported catches of croaker, kingfish, and grey trout (the largest was 14 inches). He also reported flounder near Plantation Light. Not many boats. Anglers on his vessel have seen a few cobia swimming around as well.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

At Cobb's Marina, several citations were reporting including a 7-pound, 11-ounce, 26-inch flounder caught at the highrise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and a 51-inch cobia hooked near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel as well.

Large flounder (22 to 24 inches) were reported from Sunset Boating Center. Most of those flounder were caught at the Hampton Bar last week.

At Wallace's Bait and Tackle, staff has seen a good number of cobia being brought in, with several citations recorded this weekend (60 to 70 pounds). The cobia have been biting near the rock piles in the

Grand View area. Staff is still hearing reports of red drum in the area, as well as a few flounder.

Croaker fishing in the York River has been phenomenal; anglers are catching mixed sizes throughout the area, according to the York River Fishing Center. Several speckled trout citations were reported including a 5-pound, 6-ounce fish caught in the Ware River on June 7 and a 5-pound, 4-ounce fish from the North River on June 9. The speckled trout bite in the Mobjack area has really picked up as well.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

The flounder bite is finally showing some life. This will continue to heat up over the next several weeks, which is perfect timing for the Flounder Bowl on June 26. Some impressive catches have been made by wire-liners in the deeper areas along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Keeper flounder are being caught around Back River Reef, the Hump, Buoy 36 A, and around the Cell. Cobia are the hot fish right now. It has been a tremendous early season bite. Fish are being caught on the western side of the Bay by the chumming fleets from Buckroe to York Spit. Sight fishing has been very productive near the mouth of the bay. Wes Blow's largest cobia from last year, 105.5 pounds has been studied and found to be 12 years old. That is a short time for a fish to reach that size. Maybe, someone will catch a 13-year-old fish this week. Red drum are a good bet near Fisherman's Island and on the shoals at the mouth of the bay. They are also being caught by cobia anglers near York Spit. Black drum have been found schooling near the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Live-baiters are picking up some nice striped bass over the tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. That season closes after June 15. Spadefish catches have been made, but so far, the bite has been less than stellar. This should be the week that the bite picks up. Some sheepshead have also been caught, but again, it is not a hot bite yet. Spanish mackerel have joined the list of fish to catch in the lower Bay and along the ocean front. Virginia's offshore action has been anemic. Some bottom fish are being caught, and there have been some bluefin tuna caught out of Wachapreague.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

With most all of the summer species now in place, anglers are still turning most efforts towards the abundant cobia, which are now available all over the lower Bay. Cobia are making their presence known as they take chummer's offerings, and cruise along the surface. Boats using the chumming technique are having good results from the Buckroe area off Hampton, to the Inner Middle Grounds, and the Nine-foot Shoals closer to the mouth of the Bay. Sight casters are having the best success, with many boats scoring with double-digit hook-ups while cruising the lower Bay and Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel areas. Anglers fishing on the Ocean View Fishing Pier are also landing a few small cobia lately.

The red drum bite is still very good, as big reds continue to hit along the surf and at Buoy 10 near Fisherman's Island, and the Nine-foot Shoals area. Many anglers are finding top water action as schools of red drum continue to cruise near the 3rd and 4th islands off the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

The black drum have shifted to the islands of the Bridge Tunnel, where various lures can prove effective. Be sure to take the time to revive these fish when releasing them, as they tend to tire,

leaving them unable to recover without assistance. Pier anglers are also getting in on some of the black drum action. Two black drum (the largest was 52 inches) were released from the Seagull Fishing Pier at the first island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Spadefish are showing up on lower Bay structures, inshore wrecks, and the Chesapeake Light Tower. Anglers have hooked a few fish, with most fish weighing around 6 pounds. The larger spades will come from the inner Bay hot spots soon, such as the Cell and Wolf Trap Light. Sheepshead action is not much yet, but a few fish are cooperating along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, with one fish pushing to over 13 pounds boated last week.

There is finally good news on the flounder front. The bite is still improving, with more anglers reporting limits of nice fish. The folks at Ocean's East 2 report that flatfish weighing up to 9 pounds are taking drifted minnows and cut bait near the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Anglers jigging and working live bait along the pilings and over the tubes of the Bridge Tunnel are also scoring with nice fish, with the 1st and 2nd islands most productive lately. Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets are still giving up above average numbers of keepers. Chris' Bait and Tackle reports that the seaside area of Oyster, the Cell, and the Buoy 36 area are producing big flounder for drifters, with a few doormats in the mix.

Many anglers are excited about the recent arrival the Spanish mackerel into local waters. These fish provide quick action, and are easy to catch. Boats are encountering good numbers of Spanish mackerel while trolling off Cape Henry and along the Virginia Beach Ocean front. Taylor bluefish are also in these same vicinities.

Reports of speckled trout and a few puppy drum are still coming from within Rudee Inlet, Lynnhaven Inlet, and Mobjack Bay.

Small bluefish and croaker are available all over the lower Bay. The Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, the Hampton Bar, the Monitor-Merrimac, the James River Bridge, Little Creek, and the southern small boat channel at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are providing the best action on a range of sizes of hardheads. Sea mullet are also biting along the oceanfront, where pier anglers had a good run of small to medium sized fish this week. Small spot are also hitting within lower Bay inlets.

Deep dropping boats are finding decent catches lately. The head boats out of The Virginia Beach Fishing Center are finding good numbers of blackbellied rosefish and some nice blueline tilefish. On a recent trip, one lucky angler boated the new state leader for the year, weighing in at 19 pounds, 5 ounces. Scattered golden tilefish, grouper, and wreckfish are also in these same areas. Boats targeting black sea bass are finding some nice fish on a few offshore wrecks and as a bycatch while deep dropping.

Virginia Middle Bay

Heidi, with Jett's hardware, reports that there hasn't been much change in the fishing report, compared to last week. Croaker and spot are being caught by the bottom fishermen, and stripers were hooked by those chumming. There is a lack of reports coming from the anglers who do not want to give away

their secret fishing holes due to the upcoming 27th Annual Reedville Fishing Derby being held this weekend. There are \$25,000 in prizes for categories of bluefish, croaker and striped bass.

Dan, with Smith's Point Marina, reports that the fishing has been good over the past week. The croaker are getting larger; however, fishing in the early morning and late afternoon produces the best action. Keeper stripers are still available for those people willing to chum. Nice-sized flounder are being landed, and a few spot are starting to show up for dock fishermen.

Butch, with Garrett's Marina, reports that the croaker fishing is still going strong, and there are a few reports of flounder around the Whitestone Bridge.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, contributed the following:

Flounder fishing continues to improve. Although there were no citations registered this week, those fishing caught fair numbers of fish and had a keeper ratio of about one in three. The big question is "Where are the spadefish?" Some have been sighted around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, but none have been seen in the middle Bay yet. Lets hope they come in droves in the next week or so. The croaker bite in the Rappahannock is shifting downstream towards the Bay, and spot are being caught in the Piankatank as well as the Rappahannock River. Striped bass are available by chumming around the structures, and bluefish are mixed in. Cobia have shown up in the lower Bay and may be available around New Point Light if waters continue to warm.

Virginia Beach

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, deep-droppers continue to do well offshore. Two bluefin tuna (1 was a release citation) were also reported last week. Inshore, bluefish, red and black drum, and Spanish mackerel were caught, and there were reports of spadefish and cobia as well. In the Inlet, anglers found numerous flounder, a few bluefish, and speckled trout.

Virginia Piers

Croaker, spot, and a few flounder (including keepers) were reported from the Ocean View Pier this week. Rays and bluefish were also reported.

At the Virginia Beach Pier, catches this week consisted mostly of sea mullet with small spot mixed in. On June 9, a citation-sized Spanish mackerel was caught (26 inches), along with a few bluefish.

Sea mullet, triggerfish, and spadefish were reported from the Little Island Fishing Pier this week.

Cobia have been biting at the Buckroe Fishing Pier. Several have been reported weighing around 17 pounds. The largest has been a 47-pound, 52-inch cobia caught last week. Other catches included striped bass, Spanish mackerel, croaker, spot, sea mullet, and undersized flounder.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet has been very good for people looking for yellowfin tuna and dolphin. Bluefin tuna catches have ended, but king mackerel, wahoo, blackfin tuna, and bigeye tuna

have helped to make up for that. Billfish catches have been improving but are still slow with the blue marlin making the biggest improvement. Bottom fishing included tilefish, black sea bass, triggerfish, vermilion snapper, and snowy grouper. The artificial reefs have seen moderate catches of sheepshead, triggerfish, and tautog. Nearshore and pier fishing produced excellent bluefish runs with some Spanish mackerel mixed in. The cobia bite is slowing down some. Inside the sounds and inlet, the fishing has improved greatly. Flounder and speckled trout continued to be the most targeted fish. The trout were concentrated in Roanoke Sound, and the flounder were in the shallows of Oregon Inlet. Large croaker were also in Roanoke Sound.

Surf fishing south of Oregon Inlet has been going strong as pompano are biting very well with two hotspots around Ramp 43 and Ramp 49. Sea mullet were also caught around Ramp 43 and in Avon. Spanish mackerel were reported around Ramp 49. The cobia and red drum bites have been dropping off lately.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet has seen a good run of yellowfin tuna and dolphin over the last week. Billfishing has been slow with only a few blue and white marlin being released. Inshore, the bluefish and Spanish mackerel have been the headliners with a couple of cobia and red drum in the mix.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

2010 STRIPED BASS RECREATIONAL TROPHY REPORT **FORM**

**THIS REPORT MUST BE FILLED OUT AND MAILED OR HAND
DELIVERED TO VMRC NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2010.**

Each fisherman, captain, or boat operator is responsible for complying with all restrictions and requirements contained in regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported.

**** This page is for summary purposes only ****

FISHING SEASONS: Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries--May 1 (12:01 AM) - June 15 (11:59 PM), 2010
Coastal Virginia waters--May 1 (12:01 AM) - May 15 (11:59 PM), 2010

TROPHY POSSESSION SIZE: 32-inch minimum; except for Potomac River Tributaries, where there is a 28 minimum.
POSSESSION LIMIT: 1 trophy-size fish per person. When fishing from a boat or vessel, where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board, legally eligible to fish, multiplied by the applicable personal possession limit. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit.

GEAR: Hook and Line fishing only

NO SALE OF HOOK & LINE CAUGHT STRIPED BASS

NO POSSESSION of Trophy striped bass in the spawning reaches (defined below) May 1 through June 15.

- James River - from a line connecting Dancing Point and New Sunken Meadow Creek upstream to a line connecting City Point and Packs Point.
- Pamunkey River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to a line connecting Liberty Hall and the opposite shore.
- Mattaponi River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to the Route 360 Bridge at Aylett.
- Rappahannock River - from the Route 360 Bridge at Tappahannock upstream to the Route 1 Bridge at Falmouth.
- Alteration of striped bass while aboard any boat or vessel or while fishing from shore or pier so that total length cannot be determined is prohibited.
- Spearing or gaffing or attempting to spear or gaff striped bass is prohibited.
- Transfer of any striped bass to another person while on the water or while fishing from a pier or shore is prohibited.
- Striped bass fishing is prohibited in Federal waters (beyond the Virginia three-mile limit line).

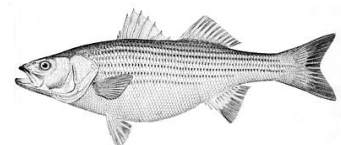
REPORT FORM HELPFUL HINTS:

- You must include length information on each trophy size striped bass that is kept.
- VMRC would appreciate any length information on striped bass that are released, please see the other side of this form.
- Lengths are total lengths in inches (to nearest 1/4 inch). Total length is measured in a straight line from tip of nose to tip of tail.
- Weights (in pounds) are optional
- TO REPORT REGULATION VIOLATIONS: 1-800-541-4646
- TROPHY REPORTING QUESTIONS: 1-800-937-9247

RETURN FORM TO:

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
ATTENTION: JUSTINE WOODWARD
PLANS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT
2600 WASHINGTON AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS VA 23607-0756

On-line reporting is available:













www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPEL, WARSAW GROUPEL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT, HAT, BOAT WHISTLE OR MEASURING TAPE FOR EACH PARTICIPANT, PER MONTH of the DONATION.

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

- Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
- Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
- Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
- Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)
- Virginia Beach Fishing Center (Virginia Beach)



VIRGINIA SALTWATER Fisherman's Journal



Get Hooked!

Report at

www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.

The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing

experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Individual measurement of caught, and released, on the most highly prized fish, such as red drum, striped bass, and summer flounder, provides a greater benefit to everyone. This past year, data from volunteer angler surveys were an important component in the calculation to reduce size limits for summer flounder in Virginia. However, Virginia data from Virginia anglers have not yet reached the level needed to stand alone. If the ability to reduce the size limit occurs in the future, the catch-and-release information on undersized summer flounder would be of great benefit.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions, and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal" and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

◆ Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:

- Fish
- Birds
- Marine Mammals
- Boaters and swimmers

◆ Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

◆ Contact the VMRC to sponsor additional bins your area



VMRC Managed Locations*

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague
Lancaster County (multiple locations)
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Newport News (multiple locations)
Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton

*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

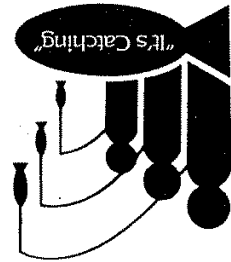
The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation and the Virginia Aquarium.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water