
Fishing & Hunting

Journal



FREE

- 10 THINGS WELL LEARNED!
- OFFSHORE TIPS FOR THE LITTLE GUY
- A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUNFISH
- MIDDLE RIVER BASS
- MD DNR DISMISSES TOP LEADERS
- 13 foot 7 inch Crocodile

Maryland is a favorite hunting and fishing location

Landing that prize rockfish or tagging a world-class deer in Maryland may be more enjoyable than the same victory somewhere else, according to a recent survey that reveals most out-of-state anglers and hunters rank their experience in Maryland superior to that of their home state.

“These findings underscore what residents already know — that Maryland’s exciting array of top-notch recreational opportunities just can’t be beat,” said Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Mark Belton. “Not only do we reap the benefits of having great hunting and fishing in our backyards, the visitor revenue provides more jobs, supports local economies and helps fund public resources.”

The consumer research was conducted last year among sportsmen and

women in Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia to gauge their impressions of hunting and fishing in Maryland. Among those polled, 53 percent of hunters and 45 percent of anglers preferred Maryland. Those same non-residents indicated a 97 percent and 84 percent satisfaction rate with the state’s hunting and fishing.

Non-residents gave the highest rating to the Maryland’s hunting opportunities, but sought more reason to spend the entire weekend here, spend more money and pursue more deer. Hunters rated access and season length as a primary motivator to extend or increase their visits. Adding quality public hunting areas and Sunday opportunities would allow visiting hunters a full weekend of participation.

Hunting and fishing in Maryland generates nearly \$800 million annually for state and local economies, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

“The Department of Natural Resources employs countless hunting and fishing programs that support recreation in our state, and works closely with the tourism industry to market the services of travel-dependent local businesses,” added Belton. “To see these commitments validated is very encouraging for all of us.”

Responsive Management — an internationally recognized attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues — conducted the survey in August and September 2014. The research, part of a larger initiative to promote Maryland as a premier hunting and fishing destination, was designed to guide marketing decisions and investments to capture a greater share of the \$90 billion Americans spend annually on these activities nationwide. Click here to view the report and presentation.

From the first-timer to seasoned pro, hunters and anglers can participate in a variety of DNR-hosted programs including Junior Hunter Field Days,

Mentored Youth Hunts, National Hunting and Fishing Day, Hunting 101, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Youth Fishing Rodeos, Free Fishing Days, the Maryland Fishing Challenge, the Trout Stocking Program and more! Stay up to date with upcoming events and activities at facebook.com/AccessDNR.



Curt Soukup with his partner Billy Davis Jr. and their 2015 spring Eastern Shore gobblers.

Check out our video on line!



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Delaware new Striper regulations in effect

Effective May 11, 2015, Striped Bass regulations for 2015: 2 fish per day. Length: 28” to 37” or more than 44”.

The summer regulation for the Bay estuary is now 20”-25”

The short version is that there is a NO TAKE slot from 38” to 43”.

Any striped Bass caught in that size cannot be kept.

This is a maximum of 2 fish per day, not 2 fish per size range.

Notice - Tautog season closes May 11 and will remain closed through July 16.

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By Lenny Rudow

Many of us love fishing for big game species out of Ocean City, Indian River, or Wachapreague, but we have boats that are sized more for the Chesapeake. Safety-wise, as long as you wisely pick your weather, your boat is reliable, it's well-built, and is properly-equipped, this isn't necessarily foolhardy. Especially these days, when there might be 100 boats trolling across the tip of the canyon on an average summer weekend day; the ocean isn't nearly as isolated as it once was. There's just one thing: in our outboard-powered center consoles and walkarounds, we may feel like we're at a major disadvantage when compared to the guys in those big sportfishing machines. Well, I have news for you: we are at a disadvantage.



Bracketed by a pair of Hondas, a day on the Thrill Seeker proves you don't need a pair of big inboards to raise a big white.

"Hooked on Fishing"

Offshore Tips for the Little Guy

Inboard diesels swinging big propellers will attract more fish into the spread as they troll. Period. It's not just an old wife's tale, it's a fact. We proved it some years ago, while doing field research for a magazine I was writing for at the time. First we used a hydrophone to record the underwater sounds made by several different types of boats at trolling speeds. Then we took the recordings to a sound studio and had them broken down and graphed. Finally, we had a marine biologist who specialized in offshore pelagic fish listen to and look at the sounds, and match them up with the types of vibrations and sounds that were known to peak the curiosity of the fish, and which traveled best through the water. The bottom line? We confirmed what offshore anglers had suspected for years: large diesel inboards do attract more fish than small outboard boats, mostly because of the size and shape of their propellers and the deep resonating harmonics they produce.

They question you and I need to answer is, how do we make up for this intrinsic disadvantage? Let me count the ways...

1. Pull at least one large dredge. No, these don't draw in fish like a thrumming propeller, but they do add a vast visual display to your spread which can help pull in fish from afar. Many small boat anglers don't bother with dredges, because they're large, bulky, tough to stow, tough to deploy, and tough to get out of the water when a hot fish is on the line. But if you don't use one, you should change your ways—it's the single biggest fish-attracting device you can add to your boat, today. Added note: a lot of purists frown on StripTease-style dredges, but I've found them best for small-boat anglers. They're easier to stow, produce a massive visual display, and are quite effective. But don't take my word for it. Pull one for a while, then see how many pin-holes you can



Brian Lowery and Brad Clark show off a pair of chunky yellowfin - two of six they caught one June morning at Baltimore Canyon - on an outboard boat.

count in the plastic, from where fish tried to eat the mylar. (Hint: there will be too many to count).

2. Pull at least one deep line. This can be a planer line, which is my personal choice since you can quickly and easily change the offering you pull from it, a downrigger, or a diving plug. In any case, get a bait or two 20' to 30' beneath the surface. Yes, this can be a real pain in the butt and no, this usually isn't the biggest fish-catching line of the day (though there are exceptions). But catching fish on this line is only half the idea. Like the dredge, the idea is to attract attention. This lure or bait will be visible from different angles and depths than the rest of your spread, and even if fish don't strike it, they'll often move in to investigate. Then they'll be close enough to see a ballyhoo swimming at the surface, or the disturbance of your spreader bar.

3. Get away from the pack. Not only did the scientist (Daniel Bagur, author of Where the Fish Are) validate the attractive vibrations of large diesel outboards, he thought the high-pitched whine of an outboard may actually perturb the fish. And as we all know, a bite can shut down fast when the fleet

descends on a particular spot. Since we're already working with a handicap, don't make it even worse by playing follow-the-leader and fishing alongside all the other outboard boats.

4. Switch to chunking. Yeah, yeah, I know, chunking is going to "the dark side" and all that. Whatever. If I go offshore I want to catch fish, and if it'll help me catch more of them, hacking butterfish is just fine by me. (Full disclosure: I actually enjoy wiggling my hand into a bucket of fresh-cut butters.) When you're chunking the props aren't spinning, and other than a lack of elbow-room, you're on a more or less even playing-field with the big boys.

5. Switch to jigging. This can be a bit tougher, since you really need to locate a school of fish before you can effectively apply the tactic. But when the meter is lit up and you get a bite, some fast thinking and a jigging rod or two can quickly develop into a multiple hook-up. On top of that, if you're targeting bluefin on the inshore lumps it's often possible to spot small pods of fish sitting at 100' or more on the meter, stop the boat, and jig on them vertically.

If you apply all of these tactics, will you catch as many fish as the big boys? Probably not. Many of the big boats are charters, they have more experience, they share information with each other in a closed loop, and those guys simply get out a heck of a lot more than you or I do. But there will be days when you end up leading the fleet. And at any rate, at least they'll help you shed that inherent disadvantage—and catch more fish than you did before.



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Front Cover-

Thomas Point Light - Whether it's a sunrise over the marsh or a waterman hand tonging for oysters, the passion of his craft is obvious in every photograph. Jay's talent is undeniable. His photography is not only beautiful but purposeful. Jay is available for commercial, editorial, wedding and portrait photography. 410-279-8730 - jaypfleming@gmail.com

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FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

It was with gratitude that prompted an old man to walk on an old broken pier on the eastern seacoast of Florida. Every Friday night, until his death in 1973 he would return, walking slowly, slightly stooped with a large bucket of shrimp. The seagulls would flock to this man.

Many years before in October, 1942 Captain Eddie Rickenbacker was on a mission in a B-17 to deliver an important message to General Douglas McArthur in New Guinea. An unexpected detour would place him into the most harrowing adventures of his life. Somewhere over the South Pacific the Flying Fortress was lost and ultimately ditched into the ocean. For nearly a month Captain Eddie and his crew fought the weather, sharks, and other dangers. The worst enemy was starvation. One afternoon all were asleep when something landed on Rickenbacker's head. He reached up and grabbed the seagull. He and his crew ate its flesh and fished with its intestines. That one bird had saved their lives. Their hopes were renewed, and they ultimately made it to safety.

It was something Captain Rickenbacker never forgot. Because every Friday evening, about sunset, on a lonely stretch of highway in Florida's eastern coast you could see an old man walking. His bucket filled with shrimp to feed the gulls and to remember that one which, on a day long past gave itself as sacrifice.

My mother used to say at times "Oh how quickly we forget", and it's so very true. The parents, coaches, relatives, pastors, and friends who were there for us when we were in need are so quickly forgotten. Jesus said that one of the signs of the end of the age is that the love of many would run cold. All of us can look back at those who sacrificed for us and are forgotten. Today some of us need to go to the sea and feed the gulls and thank that 'one' for their sacrifice.

— MEL BRINDLEY
Pastor

Chestertown (Md.) Baptist Church

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Chris Clauser of Schuyler Haven Pa. at Indian River Inlet with a bucktail brought in a 33 inch, 14 lb bluefish.



Longtime PA. Fish and Game commissioner John Plowman with his final bird of his MD limit, a thick bearded 26 lb. Tom taken with Barneck Outfitters guide Chris Sherman out of Tilghman Island MD.



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Snakehead fish are getting huge these were caught in King George County, VA. in a creek off the Potomac by Shane Buzby.

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“Tackle Box Tim”

Middle River Bass

Boat docks, grass beds, rock piles, rip rap, bulkheads, and fallen wood along the shoreline: All of this sounds like many largemouth bass fisheries

throughout the country, not to mention the upper Chesapeake. Overshadowed by other rivers and tributaries in the upper bay is Middle River. Here in the lower reaches of the upper bay’s largemouth bass region, you’ll find grass beds and more boat docks than you can fish in a month. You don’t have to look hard to find bulkheads, though you will have to search a bit for some rip rap and sunken deadfalls.

Last year I heard that bass fishing in the river was on the upturn after several years of poor fishing. It seems that restocking efforts have taken hold and bass fishing is worthwhile again. In 2014 I made myself fish docks and piers with both finesse and power tactics. Most of the bass I caught were on wacky rigged stick worms. I credit the river and its bass for giving me confidence with the technique.

So what can you expect if you head to Middle River in pursuit of bass? To start and end the day, the launch facility at Wilson Point Park is more than adequate with about 60 spaces. It is situated at the back of Dark Head Creek. The only drawback is that it does lye over a mile into a weekend/holiday 6 mile-per-hour zone. On a weekday foray, you can work the entire river. Be advised, though, that the maximum speed in the river is 35 mph.

From what I have seen so far this year, grass beds are far more abundant and further along in growth than they were at this time last year. Every creek I’ve fished had lush beds. Norman, Stansbury, Hog Pen, and Frog Mortar Creeks are looking very good. Many of the piers I fished last year have milfoil growing around them. That gives bass double the cover.

The abundance of shoreline homes can be a blessing and a curse. Sure there are plenty of piers to target, but which ones are going to hold bass consistently? Many home owners will protect their property from erosion with rip rap or bulkheads made of wood, metal, or industrial grade plastic. Because there are so many homes on the river banks, it’s truly hard to have much in the way of sunken wood. Middle River does not have the drainage of say the Susquehanna or even the Gunpowder. Unlike these two river to the north,

there’s not much of a chance of wood floating into the river after small storms. If you do find a wooded shoreline, that is your best bet to find bass near sunken wood. Look in the backs of coves in Norman, Hog Pen, and Sue Creeks to find tree-lined banks.

As we move further into summer, docks, grass, and any sunken wood you can find will be your best bet. If you can combine any two of these types of cover, you can increase your odds that a bass will be near. A fallen tree that reaches out into milfoil is ideal; as is grass going in close proximity to piers. Much of the rip rap in the river is fairly shallow. You may find bass feeding from time to time on a summer morning’s high tide, but I wouldn’t spend but a few casts around the rocks.

Now since we’ve laid out the cover, let’s discuss what to use around it. I really became attached to fishing piers over the last few years. Worms have been my go-to baits. I prefer to skip wacky rigged stick worms under the piers. It was my best tactic last year. Even more importantly, most of my bites came on light colored baits. After having fished the Zoom Speed Worm on the North East River last year with Captain Brian Immekus, I’ve added that lure in to my Middle River rotation as well. Often times I can work the Speed Worm better than the wacky worm if there is grass around or under the pier.

Often times, plastic worms get you numbers of bites but not quality bites. That’s when you will want to fish a jig or plastic crawfish lure. I like these lures in green pumpkin with blue flake for Middle River as this color combination is as close to resembling a crab as you can get. Dipping the claws of your crawfish bait or your jig’s chunk trailer in blue Spike It dye will get you even closer to a crab imitator. When I see recreational crabbers running trot lines in the river, that’s when I’ll start pitching the jig or craw more frequently.

If you are successful working grass beds in other rivers on the upper Chesapeake, the ones in Middle River should be no problem. On flooding tides you can work over the grass. A wake bait-style crankbait that tracks just below or bulges the surface is a good choice. So, too, is a buzzbait. Slender body paddle tail swimbaits will also work well over the top of green stuff.

As the tide falls, you’ll need to use baits that do not foul on the tops of the grass. A floating frog is the best option for topwater baits. A large stick worm can be dragged along to matted greens and pitched into holes. Rig them on a wide gap hook that has a spike or corkscrew style keeper. This will insure that the head of the stick worm does not wad up on the hook. The jig and craw baits will also produce

bass when the lures are punched through the vegetation or pitched into holes and pockets.

When you find the wooded banks and deadfalls, square bill crankbaits are a good choice, make sure you crash it into the limbs. On windy days, make a few casts with a spinnerbait. For slower presentations try stick worms, shaky head worms, and the Speed worm.

I am not ready to proclaim that Middle River is back to being the a hot bed of bass fishing that it was late last decade. I can, however, assure you that “promising” is a great adjective to use currently. Bass anglers with better skills and more time than I can spend should have a much better experience than I’ve had ... and I have done fairly well.



“Tackle Box” Tim shows a 6-pound bruiser largemouth bass caught in Middle River last summer.



After high winds blow, check shorelines at dead low tide to see what you have been missing.

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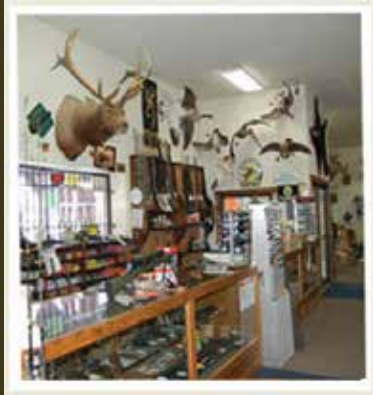




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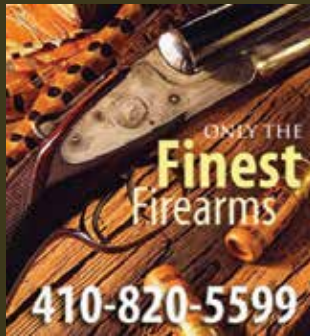


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Lindsey Dodd with her 1st turkey taken in QA county.

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CONOWINGO RESERVOIR SURVEY

at Conowingo Reservoir. Fish were sampled at 10 stations in the Maryland portion of the reservoir. Conowingo Reservoir supports a diverse sportfish community that includes largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, green sunfish, rock bass, yellow perch, channel catfish, and flathead catfish. Smallmouth bass were abundant, and although many of the fish were yearlings (3-7 inches), a good number of adult fish up to 20 inches were encountered. Abundance of largemouth bass adults was low, but many of this year's young-of-year were collected. Based on the large number of young smallmouth bass and largemouth bass observed during this survey, anglers should have tremendous bass fishing opportunities

MD DNR Eastern Region Inland Fisheries staff recently conducted the annual summer electro-fishing survey

for years to come.



Pictured are Technician David Fletcher (left) and Fisheries Biologist Mike Porta (right) with a pair of beautiful smallmouth bass collected during the Conowingo Reservoir survey.



Captain Drew Cooper aboard the Ahi with a nice mako caught by Keith from Frederick Md. Check out the teeth.

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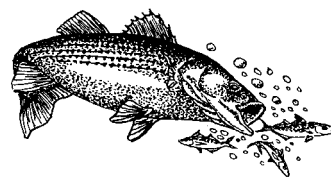
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Don Travis (left) and Eric Sutton had their hands full with this 13 foot 7 in Crocodile.

Photo's courtesy of Travis Taxidermy

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Captain Lenny Fletcher overall winner of 2015 20th Annual Maryland Watermen's Association Rock Hall Fishing Tournament. This is not a winning fish ... but Captain Lenny weighed in a total of 61.1 lbs. - Overall below.....

Friday June 12

Lenny Fletcher— 19.5lbs Kevin Miller— 18.4 lbs

Chuckie Clark 18.2 lbs

Saturday June 13

Bill Lloyd—20.9lbs Tracy Brilz—18.2lbs

Chucky Woodfield—18.1lbs

Sunday June 14

Lenny Fletcher—23.6lbs

JB Walls— 18.8lbs

Tracy Brilz—16.9lbs

Congratulations to all the winners!



Kate Beauchamp with a 22.8 lb. Tom - 10 1/2" beard. Photo Courtesy of Wink's Sporting Goods.

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Beth Collins fighting a big Striper aboard the 'Sea Dux' with Captain Brian Councill at the helm.



Todd Warner with his first turkey opening day gobbler with a 6 inch beard taken in Wicomico county, MD.



Antonio Broadnax with 2 Crappie measuring 15" and 14 1/2" respectively caught in Anne Arundel County, Md. Photo courtesy of Clyde's Sport Shop.

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By Jim Gronaw

It goes by a different name. Some call it a shellcracker, others call it a red-ear. Still other anglers from the south call it a 'chink', just a nick-name from the deep south regions where this big sunfish lives. But wherever it lives, it is a favorite among panfisherman for the flavor, size and fight that this critter has. It is the red-eared sunfish, the largest of our many panfish species.

My first experience with red ears, or shellcrackers, came back in the early 1980's when a good friend of mine invited me for a weekend of fishing in Amelia County, Virginia. On this hunting property were a half dozen ponds from one to five acres and they were loaded with bass, bluegills and redears. It was mid June, hot, and we found these fish in a spawn to post-spawn phase and willing to take tiny jigs tipped with worms. We caught those bass and bluegills, but the catch of the day were those powerhouse red ears that averaged 11 to 12 1/2 inches... big sunfish by any measure. Back then, I fell in love with, and developed, a whole new respect for this great panfish.

"Fishin' Back East"

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUNFISH

By appearance, red ears look a bit like pumpkinseed sunfish, only not as colorful. They tend to be slightly more elongated in body shape than bluegills, but trophy class fish in the 3 to 4 pound range are far more common than other sunfish species, with a current world record of 5 pounds 13 ounces from Lake Havasu, Arizona. Red ears have a red or orange crescent on their gill flap, with nest guarding males flaring their red gills at other intruders during bedding times. When bedding, they just pick up and remove objects from their bedding sites, quickly expelling the lure or bait almost as fast as they pick it up. Many waters in the south and Virginia/North Carolina routinely produce 2 to 3 pound fish. The Savannah River currently boasts a shot at producing giants that exceed four pounds.

From a sporting standpoint, I have found that red ears fight harder and more enduring than bluegills or other sunfish of comparable size. They are more skittish on the spawning beds and are choosy in what they will strike. Good shellcracker waters tend to be dark, tannic stained systems or backwater sloughs that are hard to get to. But they make out just fine in deeper, clearer waters such as those in southern California, where they have been introduced and grow huge.

They do well with farm pond owners, as they do not tend to over run a



Red ear sunfish, or 'shell-crackers' readily take small jigs tipped with bait.

pond with high numbers of stunted off spring, as may occur with bluegills or other sunfish species. They like to dine on snails and small crustaceans, hence the name 'shellcracker', using their pharyngeal teeth in their throat to crush these morsels. On the table, they are delicious, and a favorite in the south as a main course for many fish fries.

But the coolest thing I like about 'crackers is their size...they just run bigger than gills and that's good enough for me! In the Mid-Atlantic region, there are some outstanding 'cracker water in the lakes of Tidewater Virginia around Suffolk, Cahoon, Burnt Mills, Western Branch and Lake Prince produce hundreds of citation-sized 'crackers per year in excess of 11 inches with some fish in excess of 2 1/2 pounds.

Close to home, Maryland has fishable populations of red ears in Cunningham Falls Lake, Rocky Gap State Park, Wheatly Lake, Lake Hashawha and a remnant population of bigger fish in Piney Run. Over in Delaware, 'crackers can be found in many of the public ponds and lakes in Sussex County as Delaware DCNR efforts have numbers of good fish in Trap Pond, Records Pond, and Waggonons Pond. The current Delaware record stands at 3 pounds 1 ounce. One heck of a sunfish!

Scattered populations of these fish also are in and around the region and some decent fish could show up just about anywhere in small public or private water. I have heard reports of these fish showing up in a number of small, public lakes in southern Maryland. My most recent encounter with red ears was just a few weeks ago as good friend Loren Lustig invited me to fish a small pond just above the Mason Dixon Line in Adams County, Pennsylvania. Using pole-n-line and ultralight spinning gear, we caught a mix of bluegills and red ears and kept a few from this harvest venue to bolster up a fish fry. The red ears ran 10 to 11 inches long and were in full spawning mode, taking bait-tipped jigs and putting deep bends in our rods. Yeeesssss!

As spring progresses into early summer, these big sunfish tend to remain on the spawning beds longer than bluegills or other species of the clan. Skittish, they tend to aggressively guard the beds as big, dark males will flare their gill flaps and show the 'red ear' tab whenever another fish of equal or lesser size closes in on a bedding site.

I have watched them spawn in shallow, clear water and it is amazing as to how protective and aggressive these guardian males can be. Small pieces of worms or nightcrawlers can usually coax strikes from these fish, and, when hooked, they whistle off on a drag-peeling run as strong as any panfish out there. On 2-pound test mono and tiny ultra light gear, they are an absolute blast!

One of my favorite tactics for redears is to drag tiny hair jigs, tipped with a piece of worm, slowly across the bottom in and around prospective bedding sites. The strike may be light and delicate, or it can be a sledgehammer smash! In southern waters, most anglers use live worms or crickets on thin wire Aberdeen style hooks at size 6 or 8. Some use floats or corks to suspend the bait just off the bottom and others prefer to tight-line the baits right on the bottom. Shellcrackers also tend to go for a fly rod approach and will take sinking flies like wooly buggers and small crayfish imitations.

What ever you catch them on, they are worthy game and delicious on the table. If you ever get the chance to fish for them where they are abundant, give these methods a try and maybe you'll catch the biggest sunfish of your life!



Loren Lustig shows off a dandy shellcracker from our recent outing.



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Ken Cunningham caught his first ever snakehead. It was 24 inches long and put up a great fight on a floating top water lure. It was caught on June 9, 2015 off of Highway 335 in Dorchester County.



Captain Curtis P. Johns of the Karen Ray II of Crisfield with a baby loggerhead released unharmed while fishing.



17 yr old Angelina Watts is a fishing machine - here she poses with Large Mouth Bass.

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Bob Tjaden with his first 50" Rockfish caught aboard the 'Kingfish II' out of Deale, MD.

COWNOSE RAY FACTS

The cownose ray is 11 to 18 inches in width at birth. A mature specimen can grow to 45 inches in width, and weigh 50 pounds or more. There is some controversy over the size that a mature cownose ray can reach. A ray reaching a span of 84 inches has been recorded. - Mating takes place in late summer before the rays leave the Bay for the winter. Females give birth to a single live young, called a pup, in mid-June the following summer. At birth, pups are about 11 to 18 inches long. Potentially dangerous because it has a poisonous spine at the base of its tail

Captain John Smith learned about the cownose ray's spine the hard way. During his 1608 voyage he was stung so severely that his crew thought he was going to die. The site on the Rappahannock River where he was stung is still known today as "Stingray Point."

Although cownose rays are sometimes referred to as skates or stingrays, they are technically neither. Cownose rays belong to their own family of rays.

Cobia, bull sharks and sandbar sharks are known predators of cownose rays.



Bunky Arauanis with nice Gobbler taken in April.

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How Much Venison Do Hunters Harvest?

DALLAS - A study launching in 2015 will measure the actual amounts of venison and other wild protein harvested annually in North America. Researchers will assess the nutritional, cultural and economic values of this harvest, as well as the ecological costs of replacing this food through standard agriculture and domestic livestock production.

DSC is the founding sponsor of the project, pledging \$200,000 over the next two years. DSC officials hope other sponsors will come aboard to help advance the study.

"This research isn't just fascinating. It's critical to help modern society understand the full scale of hunting on this continent, and of the natural, organic, sustainable food that today's hunters provide for their families," said Ben Carter, DSC executive director. "Additionally, this research will help all of us understand the hidden costs when hunting traditions are eroded - or attacked."

Every year, some 40 million citizens in the U.S. and Canada harvest protein sustainably from forests and fields, streams and lakes. The study will show just how much wild protein the two nations provide annually, and its real value to our society.

The study, named "Wild Harvest

Initiative," will be conducted under the direction of research biologist Shane Mahoney, founder and CEO of Conservation Visions, Inc.

Mahoney said, "The harvest and consumption of wildlife has been an integral part of the human story throughout the entirety of our existence. Agricultural and technological progress have certainly altered our direct dependence and engagement in this process, but in many regions of the world, including the U.S. and Canada, human populations continue



to rely on wild harvest for a significant part of their diet."

Harvest research will enable better understanding of the economic effects of resource management approaches, validate policy and governance structures, and empower best practices for providing sustainable use of wild protein to as many people as possible.

The five-year initiative is scheduled to begin later this year. To assist or learn more, visit www.conservationvisions.com.



Coby "The Spear" Wilson and his crew out of Tilghman have had a pretty good spring on the Cownose Rays.

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SPANNING THE GLOBE....

Potential World Record Black Grouper Caught in Florida

What started off as an uneventful fishing trip for one Bonita Springs man ended in the harvest of a potential world record fish. According to the News-Press, Alex Newman and his crew were participating in the 3rd Annual Offshore Rodeo Fishing Tournament, a charity event in the Gulf, when they hooked an absolutely massive black grouper on Saturday.



“When we were lifting it up we couldn’t lift it,” Newman said with a laugh. “I fish the Gulf a lot. This is the biggest fish I’ve caught. When that thing popped up it was like a dinosaur.”

Black groupers are notoriously fierce fighters but it was just what Newman and his team were waiting for. They had been fishing for almost three hours in the tournament with little success, but their luck turned around thanks to the large grouper. The anglers initially estimated the fish at 90 pounds, which would give them a big advantage in the tournament’s grouper category.

“We went crazy! We instantly gaffed that fish, got him in the boat, and you can’t describe the feeling. It was awesome,” Newman told NBC 2.

Yet the grouper was even larger than he expected. On a scale it weighed 124.18 pounds and measured 57 inches long and 48 inches in girth. At that weight, Newman found himself in a predicament that every angler dreads.

The grouper he had just caught was larger than the current world record, but just only. The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) recognizes a 124-pound grouper caught by Tim Oestreich III off Texas in 2003 as the world’s largest. Still, a difference of three ounces is more than enough to give Newman the new record if IGFA confirms his catch. The angler says that he will be submitting an application to IGFA for review and is currently waiting for Florida officials to confirm the fish as a state record as well.

Missouri man with his new state record Striper



TANEY COUNTY, MO (KTVI) – A Rockaway Beach man set a new state record after hauling in a massive striped bass at Bulls Shoals Lake last month.

Lawrence Dillman said he fought for over 45 minutes reeling the large fish into shallow water. Dillman wrapped his arms around the fish and pulled it onto the bank.

The striped bass was weighed at a certified scale at the Missouri Department of Conservation scale at the Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery in Taney County. The fish weighed in at 65 pounds, 2 ounces, with a length of 49-and three-quarter inches and a girth of 36 inches.

The previous state record fish—60 pounds, 9 ounces—was also caught at Bull Shoals Lake, in 2011.

Dillman said he’s having the fish mounted at the Bass Pro Shop in Springfield.

Fish caught in Missouri are measured and weighed in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Such methods include, but are not limited to: archery, bank lines, grabbing, jug lines, snaring, spearfishing, and throwlines.

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SINKER SELECTION

Not all sinkers are made equal. Certain sizes and shapes are best used in the situations for which they were designed.

The most popular model is the bank sinker. This tear-shaped sinker is great for drifting or where you want the rig to move in the current. They come in all sizes and I keep a ready supply of one- to eight-ounce weights available in my boat and in the bag I carry when fishing from a head boat. Actually, the weights in my head boat bag range from four to eight ounces. I also have one or two 10-ounce sinkers in the bag, but as a general rule, if 10 ounces won't hold bottom it is time to go in the cabin.

Bank sinkers are not much good from the surf unless you want the rig to move around in the current. I have found the tongue sinker holds bottom better than any other model and believe me I have tried them all from the pyramid to the Hatteras to the ones with the wires sticking out. The tongue holds bottom and has as little resistance as possible when casting.

While it may be OK to use a bank sinker in the surf, it is seldom if ever OK to use a surf sinker when trying to drift fish. I have seen people on head boats using a pyramid sinker wondering why they are always hung up. Those sinkers are made to dig into the bottom and they will readily attach themselves to any structure they can find.

Trolling sinkers are long and thin and tapered from front to back. When used for trolling the longer the leader from the sinker to the lure the better. I use at least 30-feet of leader when trolling spoons.

These same trolling sinkers may be used when casting lures at Indian River Inlet. Back in the day the hot setup for bluefish was a Tony 141 spoon behind a two- or three-ounce trolling sinker. A 12-inch leader had to be used as anything longer made casting difficult.

There are other types of sinkers used in special circumstances, but for almost anything you are going to do in Delaware, these three will fill the bill.

**Eric Burnley Sr. is a native Delawarean who has fished the waters of his home state for more than 60 years. He has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978, with articles appearing in most national magazines as well as many regional publications. He has authored two books, Surf Fishing The Atlantic Coast and The Ultimate Guide To Catching Striped Bass. - courtesy of <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/fisheries/pages/fishingreport.aspx>*



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By Grant Soukup

10 Things Well Learned!

Taking risks and trying new things is how we learn. We should never get our limit of knowledge in our lifetime. The best lessons are learned through trial and error. Big mistakes mean big opportunities to grow.

Here are 10 things that I have learned that have helped me become a better outdoorsman and person:

#1. Attitude is important!

Hunt, fish, and live your life with a positive attitude. Every cast is an opportunity for a bite, every hunt could lead to a big buck, and life is supposed to fun. I expect a bite on every cast. If you don't, what's the point? If you think the fish won't bite or the deer won't move, and that life is miserable, you will always be right and unhappy. Lighten up and enjoy what life throws at you.

#2. Be a Student of the Sport!

Old dogs can always learn new tricks. If someone else is catching more fish than me, I want to be shown what I am not doing right. Make new friends and take every opportunity to learn. Today's shows, seminars, readings, and clubs are great ways to network and keep up with the best new tips and gear. The most important things that we learn in life are the things we learn after we already know everything!

#3. Be Comfortable!

If you only trek outdoors on the "nice days", you will miss out on most of the best hunting and fishing. Today's quality fabrics and clothing offer incredible comfort and function. You don't have to wear the same boots from 30 years ago. Treat yourself to some new gear! If you are cold, hungry, hot, or just uncomfortable, you will not be attentive to your hunt or cast. Hand and toe warmers are a godsend. Under Armour-type constrictive garments wick away moisture, support your joints, and improve circulation. Lightweight tree stands have swivel seats and shooting rails! New boats are equipped with all sorts of comfort features that are worth the investment. If you are not comfortable, you will not be motivated.

#4. Move more and Eat less!

Staying in shape becomes tougher with age. It is easy to find excuses to stay home. All of us fight the battle of weight and staying in

"Montana Grant"



shape. Fitness memberships help, but hunting and fishing can be a workout too. It is important to move and exercise when hunting and fishing to promote flexibility and muscle strength. A trout stream or mountain ridge is a lot more exciting and beautiful than a gym. Attack your sport within your limits and enjoy. I also have the chance to bring home a meal and a story or two. Lazy Boy chairs are for lazy boys and not sportsmen!

#5. Stay True to the Limits and Rules!

Anyone can be a cheater, poacher, or thief. They are lazy, greedy, and brainless. Sportsmen follow the rules and take pride in what they accomplish. Telling truthful stories about great hunting and fishing trips are part of the celebration. It is always easier to remember the truth. These exciting and honest moments change a person in so many ways. I always preach that kids who get into trouble need to learn how to hunt and fish. The rules, limits, guidelines, and laws define right and wrong. Out of control kids don't know what limits and rules are.

Sports are a great way to teach them. Poachers know the rules but choose to ignore them.

#6. Safety First!

Always anticipate what may go wrong. Be prepared for the worst case scenarios and you will stay safer. Outdoor sports happen in dangerous environs. Storms, bears, snakes, bees, insects, cuts, bruises, and breaks can happen in a second. We don't need to fear them, we just need to be aware and prepared for them. An updated and modern first aid kit is a must. Life vests and modern gear and weapons offer better safety features. CPR and First Aid classes are important.

#7. Teach Others the Sport!

The greatest outdoorsmen show others the way. Being a Pathfinder is more important than ever. Men are an important part of our children's lives. Many single-parent "Soccer Moms" were never taught the hunting and fishing heritage. They want their kids to be active and involve them in what they know. Teaching others how to enjoy the outdoors is the best assessment of the kind of sportsman you are. Nature, fishing rods, and hunting are great daycare alternatives. They teach patience, respect, and are great fun.

#8. Change it up!

Do the opposite of what is expected, to reap huge results. Use a big fly during a midge hatch, fish



Tim Reynolds always brags about how he gets skunked when fishing. This picture is proof that even a blind squirrel can find an acorn once in awhile! This was Tim's first legal flounder caught last weekend at Chincoteague.

downstream instead of up, try a new spot, be creative and unique! I once used a giant Joe's Hopper while fly fishing Henry's Fork in Idaho. This technical river required skill, fine tippets, and perfect presentation. Everyone was fishing with tiny dry flies so I went BIG! I was catching so many huge trout that a fisherman called the game warden on me! They thought the "kid" was using bait. If you do what everyone else is doing, you can expect the same results.

#9. Fish and hunt for fun!

Don't measure the success of the trip on the filled limits or tags. The true bounty is with the adventure and experience. Plan to have a great day no matter what happens. You will discover that you are more anxious and excited about every aspect of the day. The rest will take care of itself. Most of us have never caught enough fish or adventured outdoors enough.

I once called in 5 bugling bull elk for a client in a single morning. Every bull was huge and offered a bow shot within 20 yards. He missed every shot because he was so excited. This experienced worldwide hunter had the best hunt of his life and his tip proved it.

#10. Celebrate the Sport!

Every year we get one less hunting and fishing opening day. We never thought about that when we are younger but...embrace every opportunity and friend as you share the outdoors. Great hunting and fishing buddies are harder to find than a good wife, husband, or partner. En-

joying nature is better with a buddy. It is also safer. As our population grows, more impact will continue on our natural resources. The more folks that celebrate and love nature will help to protect and conserve it. Celebrate, share, and teach others to appreciate and enjoy our outdoor legacy.

The best outdoorsmen are the ones that can excite and teach others how to be their best. That is what the Outdoor legacy and heritage is really about!

*Hunt and fish with pride!
Montana Grant*



Captain Lowers with Whitney Reynolds are showing off Ava Lowers first Chincoteague flounder! The doormat bit a Barbie rod! The 23 incher gave Ava quite a battle and was finally netted after a 3 stooges like adventure!

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Coastal Report

By Capt. Mark Sampson

Last month I heard someone on the marine radio calling out to a sailboat that was passing by and requesting that they change course and give them some room because they were hooked up to a big shark that was "strung out" far from the boat. Understandably the fishermen didn't want the sailboat to run over his line and make him lose his fish.

Listening to the call I couldn't help but wonder why the fisherman didn't just maneuver his boat so that the sailboat wouldn't pass between him and the fish? It was quite calm that day and hard to imagine that any sailboat could possibly be moving so fast that it could have been a credible threat to someone's line unless their engine wouldn't start or their anchor was stuck in the bottom, and considering how visible sailboats are on the horizon, I doubt this one snuck up on the lucky fishermen.

But I'm guessing that the fellow on the radio just didn't think it through enough to realize that if your fishing line is on a collision course with an object it's pretty easy to prevent the collision if you just get your boat moving and rotate the line out of harms way. In fact, the incident is a good example why anglers who hook up to fish capable of taking more than just a little line off their reels will usually fair best if they do whatever they must to shorten the distance between man and beast, because whether it's another boat, a sea turtle, a bunch of floating debris, or even another fish, anything

in the water can snag and part a line, and the more line that's off the reel and in the water, the more chance for the heart-break of a lost fish. So it would seem obvious that the closer a fisherman can stay to their hooked fish the better chance they have of not getting cut-off by someone or something in the water.

Staying close to a fish is certainly easier from some boats than others. Those fishing from center console boats have it best as they can put the angler up in the bow and just point the boat where they wish to go and then use as much speed as necessary to get there. Cabin boats often limit the angler to fishing from the stern and are much more problematic because in order to run up on a fish the skipper will have to decide if it's best to back-down on it or keep the angler the fish on one side of the cockpit and move the boat forward.

Backing-down might be the only option if the angler is limited to working from a fighting chair in the middle of the cockpit, and it can be the most difficult way to get up on a fish, particularly if the boat has a single engine which will limit maneuverability. Under choppy sea conditions backing-down can also lead to a very wet battle for everyone aboard.

Whether they're going forward or backwards, anglers trying to shorten the distance between them and the fish can either move the boat directly at the fish or run a more parallel track to the direction it's traveling and then gradually close the gap between boat and fish.

Running a straight track to the fish can be the best approach when the fish is showing signs of being tired and anglers think that they can get in quickly, get a shot at grabbing the leader and bring the fight to an end. The critical part of the tactic, however, is that the fish be at or near the surface. But dogging close to a fish on the line will tend to drive it deep rather than enticing it up where anglers want it to be. To counter this anglers can use the tactic of stopping the boat and letting the fish run off line which will often prompt it to rise to the surface as it goes away. By watching the angle of the line it

should become apparent when the fish is working its way to the surface and once the fish is up the boat can be moved quickly towards it. But it's important that the boat not be moved any faster than the angler can crank so that the fish isn't given any slack and the boat doesn't run over the line.

This method sometimes has the fish to the boat a lot quicker than the crew expects so everyone aboard

needs to be very prepared with gloves, tags, nets, gaffs and any other necessary tools at the ready because things can happen fast! If the fish sounds when the boat gets close the engine can be put back into neutral and fish allowed to run again until it gets back on the surface and the process is repeated until the leader can finally be grabbed.

Instead of moving the boat directly at the fish it's often better to parallel the fish and gradually close the gap by moving closer at a very gentle angle. In the process a belly in the line will usually be created which will assist to keep pressure on the fish without overworking the angler. This often proves to be the best way to stay close to a fish during most of a fight, but it does require that the captain pay close attention to the direction the fish is traveling so that he can turn away should the fish try to cut under the boat or turn towards it if the fish starts to veer off. Paralleling can work well right up to the end stages of the fight but anglers must be careful because a fish that is very close can quickly dodge under a boat that's moving ahead and pull the line into a turning prop.

Hearing the guy calling the sailboat had me remembering how, when tarpon fishing down south in the winter, every time we're hooked up to a big fish on light line we're constantly maneuvering our boats around stone crab traps, bridge pilings, and mangrove roots to avoid being cut-off. We don't moan and complain about someone building a bridge in the middle of our fishing hole, we just fire up the engine, get after the fish, and do whatever we have to do to keep our line from contacting the structure. But it doesn't matter if someone is chasing tarpon in the Florida Keys, blue marlin in the Washington Canyon, or sharks in the Fingers - every angler should be prepared to maneuver their boat and keep the distance between them and their quarry to a minimum thereby keeping maximum pressure on the fish, minimizing the chances of a broken line and providing a greater chance of success at the end of a long fight.

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“The Last Word”

Maryland Division of Fisheries Director Let Go

By Steve Huettner

While attending a fundraiser for the Maryland Hunting Coalition a few weeks ago, the talk among many of those in attendance was the dismissal of four senior level staff at Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources by Department of Natural Resources Secretary Mark Belton.

Let go by the new secretary were Deputy Secretary Frank Dawson, Assistant Secretary Kristin Saunders, Fisheries Director Tom O’Connell, and Communications Director Darlene Pisani, a group that had close to a century of experience managing Maryland’s wild places and wildlife.

While it is not uncommon for new leadership to remove senior level management and replace with people of their own, the removal of Fisheries Director Tom O’Connell has many in the fishing and conservation community concerned. O’Connell’s removal comes after the transfer of Mike Naylor from the Oyster Program. Naylor had overseen the Oyster Program that saw an increase in oysters placed back into the bay and the addition of more oyster sanctuaries.

All things are political, and our natural resources and their management are not immune. For several weeks there had been a concerted lobbying effort by fisherman and conservationists on behalf of the Fisheries Director to keep him in his job. After the election of Governor Hogan, a campaign by a member of the House of Delegates and certain commercial interests was instituted to have O’Connell removed from his job.

By all accounts O’Connell had served the state well and performed his job admirably. He was concerned about protecting and enhancing all things that live in Maryland’s waterways. He oversaw an oyster program that increased in size and success,

(to the extent that Maryland exported oysters last year), addressed a declining crab population, and steered Maryland through a contentious regulatory process regarding Striped Bass. He was passionate about his job, committed, and inspired his staff, all characteristics one would look for in leadership.

Those that had dealings with him said he was fair, impartial, and in the end let the science speak in deciding what was best for Maryland’s aquatic critters. Doing the right thing for fish and game often infuriates those that don’t agree with science when it doesn’t suit their interest. That’s the unfortunate aspect of trying to manage fur, fish, and game. When people have a personal interest, (whether recreational or commercial) in wild things, science and what’s best for the resource often suffers.


It was no secret that commercial interests were not happy about the addition of oyster sanctuaries under O’Connell, and by extension Naylor. The addition several years ago of fines and suspensions for repeat poachers who steal natural resources from the public and law-abiding waterman did not sit well with some. I’m also sure the crab regulations that have been implemented over the last two years were not popular among some. The sad thing is that the regulations that have been enacted have worked. They protected the resources and allowed it to grow, which by my definition is a success.

One has to wonder if a small minority interest will be dictating fisheries management moving forward and what how Maryland’s fisheries will fare. Will fisheries move away from science based management and tilt toward commercial interests? Will repeat poachers get a slap on the wrist and be allowed to continue to pillage natural resources? Will sanctuaries no longer be sanctuaries and become fair game for harvesting? Let’s hope that whoever is appointed does what’s right for the resource. Anything less will be short changing future generations.



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YIELD: 4 Servings
PREP: 15 mins
COOK: 20 mins
READY IN: 35 mins

This Broiled Striped Bass recipe is so good you will think you are at a high end seafood restaurant.

Ingredients

- 1 fillet striped bass
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 1 small zucchini
- 1 small green pepper
- 1 small onion
- 1/4 cup Dixie Garlic and Herb Marinade Sportsman's Table Item # CY4090
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 T. butter
- 2 T. panko bread crumbs
- 1 T. Red Dog Rub Sportsmans table Item # MG101
- 1 T. Awesome Antler Rub Sportsman's Table Item #MG104
- 2 chopped tomatoes
- 1 chopped banana peppers

Instructions

Mix Dixie Garlic and Herb with water and marinate fish for 2-3 hours. Pull fish and dredge in bread crumbs and place in an oven safe dish. Place two pads of butter on top evenly spaced across fillet. Set aside. Mix olive oil with awesome antler rub. Slice sweet potatoes in 1/4 inch discs. Add seasoned olive oil and mix well. Place potatoes on a broiling pan. Bake at 400 for 20 min.



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Book of the Month

KAYAK FISHING MADE EASY: A PRACTICAL SEA ANGLER'S GUIDE FOR CATCHING YOUR FAVORITE BIG FISH FROM A KAYAK

Kayaking gives great pleasure for all those who head out onto the water to become a master of the waves. If you are a fan of this fantastic and exhilarating sport you may want to take your hobby one step further and learn how to catch fish from your Kayak. If so this is the book for you.



"Kayak Fishing Made Easy: Sea Angler's Guide for Catching Your Favorite Big Fish from a Kayak" will teach you everything you need to know about getting started and turning a hobby into a sporting lifestyle. With the expert advice you will learn not only about the equipment you need but also the techniques and tricks that will help you to have a successful kayaking fishing trip each time you head out on the water.

This book will give you a valuable insight into what to do and what not to do when fishing in a kayak. Without the right knowledge it is possible you will find yourself quickly out of your depth. Before you head out take time to read through this exciting and richly detailed book full of all the information you need to get it right and avoid costly mistakes.

The topics that are covered in this easy to read book include:

- What kayak should you use for fishing?
- How to pick the best kayak?
- What equipment will you need?
- How much money will a good fishing kayak cost?
- What paddles/oars should you use?
- The kayak fishing check list
- Fish fighting techniques and tricks of the trade
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FB15-042

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June 19, 2015



Commercial Harvest of Atlantic Dolphin Will Close on June 24, 2015

The commercial harvest of Atlantic dolphin from Maine through the east coast of Florida will be closed, effective **12:01 a.m.** (local time), **June 24, 2015**. Commercial harvest will reopen **at 12:01 a.m.** (local time) **on January 1, 2016**. Reports indicate that landings are approaching the 2015 catch limit for the commercial sector.

The operator of a vessel with a federal commercial permit for dolphin-wahoo that is landing dolphin for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such dolphin prior to **12:01 a.m.** (local time), **June 24, 2015**. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of dolphin that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to **12:01 a.m.** (local time), **June 24, 2015**, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. During the closure:

- Harvest or possession of dolphin is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits.
- Sale and purchase of dolphin is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters.

This closure is necessary to protect the dolphin-wahoo fishery.



Carly with her Catfish from the Choptank River. Photo courtesy of Clyde's Sport Shop.

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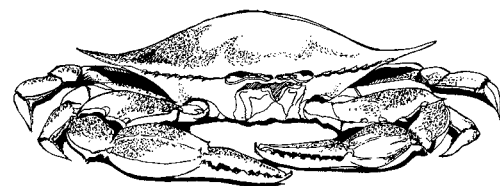
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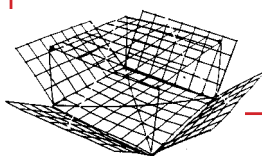
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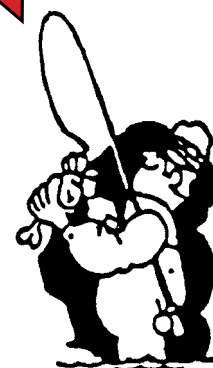
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