**MVSA May 2014 Newsletter**

 **The Season has Finally Begun**

After what seemed an eternity, the 2014 fishing season has finally begun and by the time you receive this should be in full swing. On May 5th, Janet Messineo caught one of the season’s first migrating stripers. Ron Domurat caught the first bluefish of the season on May 15th and the next day Jim Mullen caught a 30” striper, the first keeper reported this year.

 **Beach Report**

With the exception of the Gut most of the beaches are open to ORV travel but that is not likely to remain the case for much longer. The Norton Point tern colony is back and occupies the last mile or two of the beach. There are also nesting Oyster Catchers as well as Northern Skimmers.

East Beach is open from in front of Dike Bridge to Lelands Beach but is very narrow until you reach the area of the Wasque crossover where it widens. Please be careful passing oncoming vehicles and do yourself and everyone else a favor by dropping your tire pressure to 15 PSI. Also, please respect the ‘no dog’ rule. There are signs everywhere.

Past the crossover to Wasque but just south of that point are two piping plover exclosures so access to Lelands will likely be closed soon. The back trail to Wasque remains open to a small parking area about ¼ mile from the Rip.

The bathing beach trail that was opened last fall has been closed to accommodate pedestrian beach goers but the back trail remains open. The front beach can be accessed at a point east of the Cedars and ORV’s can currently travel the front beach to the Cape Poge lighthouse and beyond. However, there is a plover exclosure just south of the access point so it is likely the entire beach front trail will be closed soon.

Access to the Gut has already been closed as there are two plover exclosures on the beach there.

 **May Meeting**

President Scarpone stated that the club is in good shape financially and ready to move forward with a donation of $1000 to the MVRHS Scholarship Fund.

**Annual Picnic**-A date of June 14, 2014 has been set for the Annual MVSA Picnic. The rain date is June 15. This year the event will be held on East Beach and food will be served beginning at 5:00 PM. In addition to the usual hot dogs and hamburgers the event will feature a fish fry (if we can catch enough striped bass to feed the multitudes). We will need at least eight stripers (legal size of course) to feed the multitudes so get fishing! The club will provide soft drinks and snacks but members are requested to bring a salad or dessert.

Also in keeping with President Scarpone’s goal of putting ‘fish’ back into the fishing club, a bluefish contest will be held beginning at 2:00 PM and prizes will be awarded for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd largest bluefish caught from the surf.

**In House Derby-**President Scarpone announcedthat the MVSA Board of Directors agreed to award plaques to the division winners of last years (***2013)*** In House Derby.

Also after much discussion, a motion by Bob Jacobs was made and seconded to add a raffle which will be held at the annual MVSA Awards Ceremony in January. The monthly 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners for each species and will be eligible to win a new fishing reel. Shore and boat combined.

**Mystery Prize-** Each month any member who enters a fish in the In House Derby will be eligible to win a beautiful Striper Maniac lure manufactured by Wharf Rat Ron McKee.

**T-Shirts-** The new club T-Shirts have arrived and will be available at all of our club events. In addition the shirt supplier donated a few hooded sweat shirts that will be raffled off at a future event. Anyone who purchases a T-Shirt will get a chance to win one of the sweatshirts.

**SADCT-**Vice President Ralph Peckham made a short presentation about the MA DMF Sportfish Angler Data Collection Team (SADCT) and the members present voted to participate in the program which includes the recording of catch & release information as well as the measurement data and the collection of fish scales. The program provides a means for interested anglers to help study the marine species they enjoy. All participating anglers will receive a hat, an annual study report and individualized summary on the fish they sampled. It is not limited to striped bass.

Members should contact Jennifer Stritzel Thomson @ 978-282-0308, Jennifer.s.thomson@state.ma.us to sign-up or obtain additional information.

**Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier-**Dave Nash reported that the ribbon cutting for the new pier will be held on June 29th-time to be announced.

**Summer Meetings-**Breaking with past tradition the MVSA will continue to meet throughout the summer this year. The July meeting will be held on July 12th at a site to be determined by where the fish are biting. Don Scarpone will cook up some hot dogs and the club will provide snacks and soft drinks. A striped bass fishing contest will be held with prizes awarded for the first, second and third largest fish caught. Fish may be kept or released but if released measurements and photos must be taken.

The next meeting will be held on August 16th and have the same format. The site is yet to be determined.

**Kiramati-Christmas Island-**Peter Sliwkowski awed those present at the May meeting with a terrific power point presentation about his January fishing trip to Kiramati Island which sits 1300 miles south of Honolulu. Peter described fishing for bonefish on the flats and casting to Giant Trevally, Yellowfin Tuna, and Doarado in 1000 feet of water right from the beach. Peter said it was beautiful place and an awesome experience. It’s also described it as reasonably inexpensive and intends to return again next winter. For additional information about a trip to Christmas Island, contact Peter at psliwkowski@gmail.com

**Striped Bass**-The non-profit advocacy group Stripers Forever recently sent out the following release which should be of concern to all of us.

*At the annual meeting of the ASMFC last fall MA State Director Paul Diodati told his fellow commissioners that one didn't need to be a fishery scientist to see what has happened to striped bass. They simply weren't there in the numbers that they had been, and that when he looked at the current data, it was apparent to him that action should have been taken to reduce harvest years ago.  In fairness to the managers, the data keeps changing and the statistics didn't look as bad years ago as they really were.  Under the new "models" that are supposed to more accurately estimate the population, the true condition of the fishery is now thought to be more accurately reflected, and it is not a pretty picture.  Fishermen's reports, which are referred to as  "anecdotal data", have displayed warning signs for the last 7 or 8 seasons, so it turns out that they were more accurate than the scientific data.  Diodati suggested an immediate 40% cut across the board for the 2014 season - just the kind of sensible thing that our members would agree should have been done, but his recommendation failed.*

*There was substantial pushback to Diodati's proposal, mostly from commercial fishing states, but even from some recreational commissioners, who in our view hold the outdated view that people value harvest more than conservation. They wanted to go more slowly and look at the matter again in subsequent meetings.  That is the scenario that has played itself out in the last two meetings.  The ASMFC Management Board gave the can a gentle kick down the road by asking the scientists to come up with some options to reduce harvest by about 31% beginning in 2015 - a calculation designed to keep the spawning stock biomass from slipping into the overfished category.  This ignored the scientists having told them that a 31% cut would not be enough.*

*Since the Winter meeting resistance stiffened behind party lines with Chesapeake Bay commercial fishermen insisting that they caught the smaller, non-migratory Bay fish and not the increasingly scarce coastal cows, and of course they played the old commercial sympathy card, complaining about how much they needed these fish to pay their bills, and how a 31% cutback would ruin them.  A story in a Maryland newspaper that recently aired this viewpoint showed a gillnet full of stripers on a commercial boat; every one of them that could be clearly seen was a large female full of eggs.  Also not mentioned was that the Chesapeake Bay area Young of the Year index over the last few seasons is a shadow of those in the 1990s and early 2000s which produced today's larger fish.*

*So that is how the battle is shaping up.  Recreational fishing and environmental groups are calling for stronger conservation measures - SF went on record as asking for a 50% cutback - and commercial fishing groups along with a few old-school members of the recreational community want a go-slow approach, with the 31% cut to be phased in over three seasons and not to take effect until 2015.  This delaying tactic is designed to give them time to claim that no cutbacks at all are necessary.  If it all sounds a bit confusing, it should, because there is very little direction to the plan at all.  Here is the* [*ASMFC press release*](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=8EjBI&m=3Xu57HqRyWoV6WG&b=vyLwxHgBw_9CW1nsZx5Ywg) *on the meeting.  Stripers Forever will be making comments to the ASMFC commissioners prior to the August summer meeting, and doubtless we will advocate then for complete catch reductions to begin with the 2015 season.*

  **2014** **Calendar**

**MV Rod & Gun Club Catch & Release Tournament-** May 31-June 1. Cooper Gilkes 508-627-3909 or Nelson Sigelman nelson@mvtimes.com

**MVSA Annual Picnic & Fish Fry**-June 14-East B each, Chappaquiddick. Fishing contest begins at 2:00 PM, Dinner at 5:00PM. Don Scarpone, 508-627-1269

**MVSA vs Nantucket, Island Cup Challenge,** Friday June 20, 5:00PM-Sunday June 22, noon.

Victor Colantonio-617-413-6140, victorcolantonio@rocketmail.com

**Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier Ribbon Cutting**, June 29, time TBA.

**MVSA Cookout and Fishing Contest**-July 12, site and time TBA. Don Scarpone, 508-627-1269

**MVSA Cookout and Fishing Contest-Aug 16**. Site and Time TBA. Don Scarpone 508-627-1269.

**69th Annual Martha’s Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby,** 12:01AM Sunday September 14, thru Saturday October 18, 10:00PM.