

Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association

August 2005 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another busy summer on the Vineyard is behind us. After the coldest May in one hundred years, we endured a hot and humid summer with virtually no rain. It was definitely a summer to have air conditioning which I do not. I don't like to complain about the heat but there were quite a few nights when it was tough to sleep.

It was another busy summer for the Surfcasters as well. As always, the summer picnic was great and Phil Horton did another outstanding job in organizing it. The food gets better every year. The *Skipper* trips for the Boy's and Girl's Club was a success once again and we had plenty of members willing to help this year which was terrific! We also had a record number of anglers join the Chappy Shark tournament this summer. The fishing wasn't that great since we only had one qualify, but we had ball fishing for them. I'm already looking forward to next years contest.

We had some great bass fishing in June and some of our members had personal bests like Gary Mirando's 42 inch bass on fly. I bumped into to quite a few familiar faces during the early morning hours between Dogfish and Lobsterville during the month. It's tough to stay home when the fishing is so good! It was certainly a great start to the season.

Now, we are on the cusp of another Derby. It's time to sharpen your hooks, get new line on your reels and tell your employer you'll be late on a lot of mornings. For many of us Derby time is our favorite time of the year. We wait all season for it. It's more than just fishing though. It's about spending time with friends. Like I've said before, the camaraderie we share is all part of the Derby experience.

I'd like to wish all of you plenty of luck during the 60th Derby and hope to see a member or two on the Atlantic Connection stage on Oct. 16.

Tight Lines,
Jeff Sayre

The Surfcaster

"In addition to being the least comfortable of any fishing form, surfcasting is also one of the least productive. Restricted to the arc of his casts, the beach fisherman has a most limited range. To be caught, the fish must first swim within the small quadrant the caster can cover, then it must decide whether to strike the lure. The combined variables generally guarantee the surfcaster a relatively small catch. One or two striped bass for a nights fishing would be considered a good take by most casters. So many days and nights are spent fishing with no reward that many experienced surfcasters learn to expect nothing when they embark on their expeditions.

Hostile environments and small catches, however, have not been enough to dissuade millions of surfcasters who populate the fishery. Casters need nothing but rod, reel, line, and lure--plus waders if they want to stay reasonably dry. They can fish from any beach they can reach; they are not at the mercy of rough seas like their boating counterparts; and they are, at all times, in position at the lip of the seas, that place of eternal romance.

“The shared mystery of dark nights in that place, the mutual hardships and discomforts of dawns and dusks on the beach, together with the recognized sportsmanship of their particular kind of fishing has united surfcasters as few other recreational groups are united. Their fraternities abound. And although individual fisherman say the size of their catch is not personally significant, the primary thrust of every surfcasting club and organization has been toward improving the surfcasters chances of bringing home more and larger fish.”

John N. Cole-Striper, A Story of Fish and Man

Derby Predictions

Chip Bergeron-With the warm water this year, I expect that we will see a strong showing throughout the Derby from both Bonito and False Albacore. I think that the blues will make a stronger showing from shore than in the past few years, but look for the shore bass to be harder to come by. Now one good hurricane coming our way will change all that. Also, the fish may think differently than I do!!

Ron Domurat-Bonito will be around in greater numbers this year. More shore bonito will be weighed in than the 16 or 17 the last couple of years. The great false albacore fishing that we had last year will not repeat and shore based anglers will once again be hard pressed to find legal length fish of 25". The Lobsterville/Menemsha area will have the better false albacore fishing this year. Striped bass sizes will be larger than the last few years and the shore division leaders will be in the mid forty pound range. Up Island and North Shore anglers will have the best striper fishing. Bluefish will continue their sporadic ways and will average in the mid seven pound range with the winner around 15 lbs. The winning bluefish will be caught on Chappaquiddick.

Short Casts

Boys & Girls Club Skipper Trips

Thanks to Janet Messineo, Dave Nash, Bob Lane, Bill Cline, Bob Jacobs Russ Lawrence and Neil Patt for their help with Boys & Girls Club campers on board the Skipper party fishing boat. The MVSA donated \$1500 to sponsor the trips and more than 90 campers and counselors participated.

Annual Picnic

Thanks also to Phil & Lauren Horton for organizing our annual summer picnic. After a postponement from the day before, more than seventy member and guests enjoyed a beautiful Sunday summer afternoon at Bend in the Road Beach. Once again members were treated to the special Horton family ribs and this year Russ Lawrence served up venison & peppers and Tom

Kowalski provided clams casino for all. Al Premo Jr. & Rob DiGiantomasso ably manned the grill!

Line Recycling Boxes

Over the winter, Tom Kowalski constructed seven new line re-cycling boxes. Thanks to Tom's efforts, boxes are now in place at the Eastville Jetty as well as several popular fishing spots on Chappaquiddick and Norton Point. *Thanks Tom!!*

Worth Noting

Karen Kukolich-19.97 Pacific Jack Crevalle, Costa Rica. A new world record on 16lb tippet. Karen's sixth world record.

Jeff, Dawn & Jack Sayre-21 ½", 7lb. 14oz. baby girl (Julia)

Jim Cornwell-11.40lb fluke. Member of winning team, American Legion Fluke Derby

Gary Mirando-42 ½" flyrod striped bass. 90 lb yellowfin tuna, Guadalupe Islands, CA

Tom Kieras-300lb nurse shark, Fernandia Beach Fl.

Joe Gubitose-69" Brown Shark-Winner of MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament

In House Derby Standings

Very few entries have been turned in to date and most categories are still wide open. With the Derby upon us, it's easy to send a copy of your weigh slip to Paul Schultz. And just a reminder that we've added boat & shore Grand Slam categories this year so start adding to your species and weight counts.

All Tackle

Shore Striped Bass-Janet Messineo-23.9lbs.

Shore Striped Bass Released-Ron Domurat 44 ½"

Shore Bluefish-Ron Domurat-8.05lbs.

Boat Bonito-Ed Lepore-7.5lbs.

Senior Boat Bonito-Walter Lison-6.0lbs.

Junior Boat Bonito

1. Jake Gubitose-6.0lbs.
2. Adam Cron-5.8lbs

Junior Shore Bluefish

1. Jake Gubitose 6.1lbs

Junior Shore Bluefish Release

1. Olivia Connly 25”

Flyrod

Boat Striped Bass Release-Jeff Sayre-38”

Shore Striped Bass Release-Gary Mirando-42 ½”

Janet Messineo Inducted into Derby Hall of Fame

Former MVSA president and charter member Janet Messineo was recently inducted into the Martha’s Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby Hall of Fame. Recognized for her Derby accomplishments both on and off the water, Janet was inducted in a ceremony held at the Harbor View Hotel on Wed. August 10. Also inducted was Penn Tackle rep and long time Derby supporter Dan Shea.

Janet was praised for her work on the Derby Committee and her devotion to charitable programs. During her tenure as President of the MVSA Janet was responsible for the clubs involvement with the Boys & Girls Club as well as the Safe Haven Program and the Red Stocking Fund.

Janet says, “My main goal was to beat the guys and catch the biggest bass, but whatever I accomplish in the Derby it won’t compare to the enrichment it has brought to my life”. She joins fellow club members Don Mohr, Cooper Gilkes and MVSA co-founder Arnold Spofford (deceased) in the Derby Hall of Fame.

Joe Gubitose Wins MVSA Shark Tourney

By virtue of catching the only brown shark, during the two-week event, member Joe Gubitose from Fiskdale MA won the Third Annual MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament. Joe’s fish measured 69” and weighed approximately 90 lbs and came on the twelfth day of the fourteen-day event. He was fishing with his eleven-year old son Jake and fellow member Pete Connly and his daughter Olivia.

A record twenty-six members participated in the event and although only one shark was caught, anticipation was high as dogfish and bluefish provided plenty of excitement and bent rods as entrants anxiously hoped for that “one big fish”. Ed Willoughby also found himself flat on his back with a dazed expression on his face and his favorite rod broken in four places after trying to muscle a very large skate onto the beach after a forty-five minute battle.

The event provides a nice diversion from the striper hunt and summer doldrums and is looked forward to by members who wait on the beach while regaling each other with stories of fish battles won and lost. This year entrants were also treated to spectacular sunsets and moonrises as well as other celestial displays including the Perseid Meteor Shower.

A Shark Tale

by Joe Gubitose

Having the good fortune to be vacationing on Chappy the same two weeks of the Shark Tournament, we were able to fish for shark often. I say we, because my son Jake, brother-in-law Jamie Campbell, Pete Connly and myself, were all entered in the tournament. Jake and I were able to fish both weeks while Jamie and Pete only fished one week each. We fished hard for shark, only catching dogfish. When we got the call from my father-in-law, Walter Lison, telling us that a film crew from On The Water would be filming Wednesday night (8-3-05) on East Beach, we decided to stick to our original plan and take our wives out to dinner instead of fishing that night. As it turns out, that was the best choice as our wives were happy. We had a great meal and now we could fish the remaining two night of our vacation.

The next afternoon, Pete, our kids and I were beaching out by the Jetties fishing for bait, when Ron Domurat drove up and told us about Wednesday night's events. He told us about the film crew and how nothing but dogfish had been caught. Like so many others fishing East Beach, our heaviest catch to date had been seaweed and a few dogfish. When Ron suggested we try fishing that night by the Jetties, we were game and ready to try something new (as it turns out this was a great suggestion). We headed back to our house to get ready for a night of fishing.

By 6:00 pm we're back out on the beach between the Jetties and Cape Poge getting the barbeque ready to cook dinner for ourselves, as our wives were off island visiting friends on Nantucket (doesn't get much better than that). We had our lines in the water but really didn't get serious until around 9:00 pm. Pete got the first hit around 10:30 pm but broke off quickly (most likely it was a bigger shark than mine, his drag was set too tight). Between 10:45 and 11:00 my reel started singing and when I went to set the hook the shark started its first run setting the hook itself. I was putting pressure on the spool hard enough to burn my thumb. That first run went for 80 to 100 yards and then I started gaining it back. At one point the shark actually charged the beach and I thought for a moment I'd lost it. After about 15 to 20 minutes of hard fighting, I was pretty sure it was only 50 to 75 ft off shore. It was fighting side to side and not really taking out a lot of line. Another 10 to 15 minutes and I couldn't move it anymore. We turned on our lights and saw it in the wash. I waited for a good wave and it was on the beach. I handed Jake my rod, Pete grabbed the leader, I grabbed the tail and we dragged it up the beach. As we looked at the shark we were all amazed at what I had done. Me most of all, as the shark had made all the mistakes that night, while I had done everything right. Lots of excitement, measuring, pictures, trying to stay away from all those teeth, and finally Pete and I released it. As the water splashed over it's head, we could tell it was ready to be let go, it slapped me in the leg with its tail and swam back into the deep.

This catch qualifies as one of my most exciting fishing moments. The anticipation of catching a shark (my first from the beach) at night, not knowing if it was a shark or maybe a big bass, was great. Truthfully it didn't give me the fight I thought a shark would. I was expecting much more head movement and a much longer fight. I'm already looking forward to doing battle with another one of these amazing creatures, so plan on me competing again next year.

For the record, I was using a conventional reel (Ambassadeur 7000) with 25lb test line (Sufix Tritanium Plus) a custom-made 9 ft rod (I made the rod myself) 2 ft of 80lb wire leader and about 4 ft of 60lb mono leader with a fish finder and 6 ounce weight.

Braided Line

By Will Geresy

New users of braided line often experience enough problems that they abandon braided lines after the first outing. The learning curve for braid can be steep but once you know a few tricks you can really maximize the advantages of using braid. I'll tell you about some of my experiences and conclusions.

Choice – use one of the round styles of braid. The bulk of my experience is with Power-Pro® but there are others around. I primarily use both 30 # and 50 # class lines. 30 # class on my 9 ½ foot all around rod and 50 # class on my 12 ½ foot “Wasque Bazooka”. Any lighter and you will get wind knots and heavier will negate the casting distance advantages of braid.

Reels – here is where I'll cause some controversy. Some reel spools and braid are incompatible no matter what you try. I personally will not use braid on any of my old Penn® SS reels. Too many wind knots. My Shimano® and Van Staal® reels thrive on braid.

Make sure your drag is clean and smooth. The cushion of stretch with mono is gone with braid. You'll find out the hard way on a big fish if you have a sticky drag.

Rods – use a good rod with a ceramic tiptop and you'll be fine. Abrasion isn't an issue. Don't overload your rod by cranking down the drag too tight on heavy class braid.

Spooling up – Braid will slip on your reel arbor. Cover the arbor of your spool by winding on 10 or 20 yards of 20-30 # mono. Spool the braid over this “friction” layer. You do not have to splice the two together. Just tie on the braid with your favorite arbor knot. Does not use tape as the friction layer; it will cause a mess eventually. DO NOT overfill your spool. However, as braid breaks in it will lay tighter on the spool and look like you under filled. If that bothers you, unspool the braid and add some more mono as fill underneath.

Knots – learn how to tie a Palomar knot. It is a strong and simple knot with both braid and mono but not fluorocarbon. Never use a clinch knot on braid. It WILL slip out.

Leaders – use a fluorocarbon leader at the end of your braid. You can splice in directly but it's simpler to use a swivel to attach the braid and leader. Make sure you use good quality ball bearing swivel. You will put tremendous strain on the swivel once you start casting without fear of snapping your line as you begin to realize the full advantages of braid. You also don't want to twist up braid, same as mono.

Casting – new braid and wind knots are a tag team to be avoided. Always break-in braid with some easy casts whether it is new or old. Get it broken in and wet before you start casting for Portugal. Never ever, allow braid to get loose on your spool. A tight lay is imperative. To help accomplish this, always stop line from leaving the spool as soon as your plug or bait hits the water. If you don't, a wind knot is inevitable.

Wind knots – eventually you'll get one. Stay cool and just pick away at it. I find that I can usually get one out by just picking away randomly at the knot without even looking at it and trying to figure it out. It's really not a knot but a series of loops of line. If it doesn't come out after a few minutes and you're down to the last few loops, a good tug on either side of the knot may free it. If that doesn't work it's time for the rope wrench (knife).

Applications – braid is fantastic for situations requiring sensitivity. Springtime bottom dragging with slimes or metal will result in a fantastic increase of hookups due to the unbelievable

sensitivity on a light strike. However, on the other side, the first time with a live eel will drive you to twitching as if you are having a fit. You might want to stay with mono for Albies. The amount of shaking transmitted to your rod and elbow by an Albie is nothing less than punishing on braid.

Casting distance is exceptional with braid. The diameter/strength ratio is a very big advantage.

Cost to spool with braid is high but if you're willing to take a risk with a very big fish turn the braid around on your spool when it starts to look frayed. It still has lots of strength left and your drag will handle it if you kept it in good shape. I get a good hard season of fishing from a braid filling.

You'll be able to spot the dedicated braid users from a distance. We're the guys with the tape on our casting index finger. Once you experience the advantages of braid, you too will be taping up for the big game. (Waterproof 1-inch wide cloth adhesive bandage tape works best)

Fisheries

On August 18, 2005, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) voted to enact a five-year cap on the commercial harvest of menhaden, better known to most of us as bunker.

The cap, which will take effect next year, limits the commercial fleet owned by Virginia based Omega Protein to harvest 105,800 metric tons of menhaden, the average catch the last five years. Last year, the Omega trawler fleet netted 184,000 metric tons. The fish are ground up for use as animal feed and the oil extracted is used in heart healthy Omega 3 capsules and cosmetic oil. Menhaden are also the favorite food of most of our local sport fish as well as many other marine animals. In addition, menhaden serves as an important filter feeding that contributes significantly to the removal of harmful marine plankton. Many states have banned trawling for bunker and most bunker fishing occurs in the Chesapeake Bay where trawling is still permitted.

Although the coastal population of bunker is considered healthy, the number of fish along its range from Virginia to Maine has shown a marked decline. Schools of foot long adult bunker used to roam Vineyard shores on a regular basis and were the target of the stripers in the famous Columbus Day blitz, however it's been many years since adult bunker were seen along our shores.

The issue generated more public comment than any other in the history of the ASMFC which received more than 20,000 e-mails, 5000 form letters and post cards and 200 individual letters. Public hearings also generated more than 900 pages of public testimony.

Omega said it would challenge the decision in court,

Calendar

60th Annual Martha's Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby-12:01AM Sept 11,2005-10:00PM October 15, 2005.

MVSA Meeting-7:00PM November 16, 2005 American Legion Hall, Vineyard Haven.

Jeff Sayre-508-693-4841

MVSA Meeting-7:00PM December 14, 2005, American Legion Hall, Vineyard Haven.
Jeff Sayre-508-693-4841

Annual Awards Ceremony and Banquet-January 28, 2006, Old Whaling Church, Edgartown.
Ron Domurat-508-627-4956, Jeff Sayre-508-693-4841, Chuck Hodgkinson (Prizes)-508-693-9372

Don Mohr's Smoked Fish Recipe

Filet, skin, rinse and dry.

Mix 1 part kosher salt and 3 parts granulated sugar.

Use shallow glass dish (8x12), cover bottom very lightly with mixture from above.

Place fillets in dish and cover with remaining mixture. (ok to make two layers)

Cover and refrigerate over night.

Next day, prepare smoker.

Soak (2 pieces) of hickory for one hour.

Light charcoal and place in bottom pan.

Put hickory on charcoal.

Fill top pan ½ full of water.

Spray Pam over grill and place in smoker.

Rinse fish and dry.

Lay filets in dish and sprinkle with lemon juice.

Sprinkle liberally with brown sugar.

Arrange on the smoker grill.

Smoke for about one hour (varies according to thickness of filets)

Remove from grill and cool.

Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate or freeze.

Don's Smoked Bluefish Pate

8 oz. Whipped cream cheese

½ tsp prepared horseradish

1 small finely diced red onion
6-7 oz shredded smoked bluefish
dash Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp lemon juice

Optional

A pinch of cayenne pepper
Salt to taste
A little Grey Poupon

Mix ingredients and serve with crackers