

President  
Jeff Sayre

Vice Presidents  
Walter Lison  
Paul Schultz

Volume XIII Issue 4

# The Fishin' Times

*All the news that's fish...we'll print*

The Newsletter Of The Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association

Treasurer  
Ron Domurat

Secretary  
Bob Lane  
Paula Sullivan

July, 2004

"...to encourage the sport of surfcasting; to gather for entertainment and good fellowship; to promote and uphold sound conservation practices and laws, and to see that these laws are properly carried out by members; to further good sportsmanship; and to seek and protect public access to fishing areas on Martha's Vineyard." A. Spofford, 1989

## President's Message

Happy Summer Everyone!! I hope you all have been able to partake in some of the outstanding fishing we've had this spring and early summer for striped bass and bluefish. Whether you throw plugs, cast flies or use bait, it's been a terrific start to our 2004 season. I just hope the fall is this good!

We've got a few events planned for the summer that I hope all our members can enjoy. First, we have our Annual Picnic on July 10th complete with great food, camaraderie and, of course, the casting contest. Next, the revitalized Chappy Shark Tournament will start on July 31st and run for a whole week. We wanted to make sure everyone that joined had a chance to fish, and hopefully this year we'll actually land a few!

In keeping with our conservation measures, a new line box has been installed by the jetty at Eastville Beach. It is a busy time on our beaches and not everyone takes care of them as well as we do. Hopefully all of our line boxes will be used appropriately for spent fishing line and trash will be discarded in its proper place. If you see someone using our lines boxes for bottles and other trash...please say something to them.

Have a safe and joyous summer season!

Tight Lines, Jeff Sayre

## Chappy Beach Report

by: Bob & Fran Clay

### Chappy Community

So far this year things are reasonably quiet on the Chappy community front. Most of the community criticism in the past has stemmed from too much vehicular traffic going to the Trustee property. There are no firm comparative numbers out yet, but the feeling is that both

sticker sales and vehicle visits are no greater than last year. Records for last year and the previous year show a marked drop-off in visitation. Walk-on traffic is definitely down, so far this year. If traffic is down, the Trustees can better defend their mission to invite visitors. The real test of the community attitude will be given at the annual Chappaquiddick Island Assoc. meeting scheduled for July 10th. If things turn nasty, we'll let you know.

### Plover Nesting

The Trustees do a nice job of keeping as many trails as possible open during nesting season. As soon as a nest is identified, they build a wire enclosure and direct traffic around the nest. It takes about 5 weeks for Plovers to fledge once the eggs are hatched. By law, the beach needs to be closed where ever the chicks range until they fledge. That's why sometimes there are important parts of the beach closed.

We aren't as lucky on the county beach which runs from Katama to Chappy. Dukes County doesn't allocate enough money to staff the beach with bird monitors. The county therefore doesn't know exactly when eggs are laid and therefore can't accurately estimate when the eggs will hatch. The state regulators get upset with the county if the county keeps the road open, but doesn't know when the plovers will hatch. I understand that the state pressured the county to close the county beach road on June 27th. Because no one knows when the eggs will hatch, we can't estimate how long the beach will be closed. But, if the chicks survive predators, it could be closed for over 5 weeks.

As of June 28th, there was a nest on East beach near Wasque. The beach is closed at the crossover near Tom Kieras' and Dan Geary's bluefish hole. Access is denied from there to Leland Point.

There is another nest near the windmill house. If those eggs hatch and the chicks wander from one side of that beach to the other, we could have that portion of the beach closed to the gut. Dave Belcher estimates that the eggs will hatch around July 4th or 5th.

### Beach closure hot lines

Trustees property (will also give you any information they have about county beach)-\_508-696-0731.

County beach- 508-696-3810

## Around the Island

**Squibnocket!** This issue's spot features one of the Islands best chances to catch a trophy bass. Not only is it a big fish place it's also one of the most consistent places to catch stripers on Martha's Vineyard. But be forewarned, there are more than three miles of beach studded with alternate stretches of boulders, sandy beaches, points and bowls, and sometimes much of it must be worked before fish are found. A wading staff, corkers, an inflatable preserver and a good fishing companion are prerequisites. While some of the area is easily accessed and fished, much of the area is private property and features tough terrain. It is not for the faint of heart or anyone over the age of 35 and out of shape.

One of the accessible spots is directly in front of and a couple of hundred yards to the west, or right of the parking lot. It is also an easy place to land a fish but can sometimes be frequented by a running surf of a couple of feet or more particularly in the spring and early summer after a couple of days of southerly winds. In the late evening or predawn hours this area is frequented by baitfish including sand eels, silversides and herring that appear to sag into the bowl around the mussel bed and sandbar at the western end. Many times stripers will herd the bait toward the bar that forms a natural trap and can provide some outstanding fishing. Surprisingly, most anglers will walk right by this spot in favor of fishing the mussel bed or points further west.

In front of and to the left of the parking area are two other spots that can also be big fish places and are easily accessible. They are also often ignored. The area directly in front of the lot produces consistently in the fall for bait dunkers using fresh or frozen squid, while the rocky structure to the left which is the start of Stonewall Beach, is a good place to fish slowly retrieved swimmers or needlefish. This beach should be explored and worked until fish are found.

To the right of the bowl mentioned earlier is the mussel bed or at least what is left of it as migrating sand has turned it into a large sand bar. This bar is still a productive spot to fish and major

blitzes have occurred here as the bar forms the western end of the "fish trap" created by the bowl to the left. This bar is best fished on an incoming tide, retreating until the tide and the surf force you off completely. Wear your inflatable here and work the front and both sides with big swimmers and needlefish. It's also a great spot to cast a live eel.

To the right of the mussel bed is still another bowl that should also be given a look before even considering the long hike to the Point and beyond. While not as deep or as wide as the first bowl, this area and the rocky shoreline to the Point is loaded with structure and produces consistently for anglers that take the time to fish here. It's a good place to swim an eel or work a soft plastic bait like a large Sluggo.

The farthest most visible point from the parking lot is Squibnocket Point and the former site of the infamous Squibnocket Bass and Surf Club. While the club has long since disappeared, remnants of the pipe supporting the former bass stand are still visible at low tide. This point and the area for two miles to the west can all produce consistent action but features some tough terrain including rocky points, ankle twisting boulders and slippery rocks. It should not be attempted in the dark the first-time as its a long walk to safety should an accident occur.

With regard tides, most guys like to fish the rising tide particularly the last two hours. The first hour of the drop can also be good. Anglers wishing to fish the mussel bar should get out there at the first hour or so of the flood and fish until the tide pushes you off. Dusk and predawn hours are usually the best time to fish as the first hint of daylight usually will send the fish scurrying to deeper waters but like everything in our sport there are exceptions to that rule particularly during a strong southeasterly storm when the bait gets herded into the bowls.

As far as lures are concerned, matching the "hatch" with regard to bait will pay off here like anywhere else. Needlefish, big swimmers and darters are consistent producers on larger fish but smaller Yo-Zuri type plastic lures as well as 5" & 7" Sluggo soft plastics will also reap rewards. In addition, cast & retrieved live eels took some monster fish this spring and freshly caught squid fished at night is always a good bet.

## More Trouble for Bunker

Our beloved stripers favorite food is in more trouble as Omega Protein one of the worlds largest producers of Omega-3 fats recently announced plans to complete a 100 metric ton per/day fish oil refinery on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay. Omega began on the refinery over a year ago after netting a contract with a Texas food processor that is adding fish oil to the breakfast burritos and tamales it produces for a 300,000-student school district in Texas. In the past Omega has focused on using bunker oil for fishmeal and crude fish oil. The meal is used in animal feeds but the oil can be sold for a variety of other industrial uses. The contract is a big prize for Omega which hopes to capitalize on the health benefits provided by the Omega-3 fatty acids found in menhaden. Omega also operates three menhaden processing plants in Mississippi and Louisiana.

While the company states it's demand for menhaden will remain about the same despite the new refinery, they go on to say that "it is obvious to us the Omega-3 story is something about to happen. It is only going to grow from here."

Omega officials believe the growing interest in a healthy diet will give Omega a likely product in refined menhaden oil. The American Heart Association began recommending two years ago that Americans include Omega-3 fats in their diets through supplements or foods such as salmon or other cold-water fish.

Omega harvests menhaden in bays along the Atlantic coast with the help of spotter aircraft who direct the company's ocean going ships to large schools. The ships then dispatch smaller vessels that encircle the schools with large seine nets. The nets are drawn tight around the school and retrieved by the factory ships where the product is vacuumed aboard. By-catch includes any game fish that happen to be foraging on the bunker at the time. The company operates ten ocean going factory vessels.

Large schools of adult bunker up to a foot long used to be a common sight in Vineyard waters and were the target of stripers in the famous "Columbus Day Striper Blitz" of 1981. Now however, an adult bunker is a rare sight locally as commercial ventures such as Omega's have significantly reduced the size and range of the species. In recent years schools of adult fish have been replaced by smaller schools of one or two year old fish called "peanut bunker" that occasionally migrate into our waters providing good forage for stripers, false albacore and other

game-fish. Even they may now be in jeopardy if Omega continues to expand its operations. Only Connecticut has an outright ban on the commercial take of menhaden in its waters.

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## MVSA Web Site Survey Results

**6/7 Question-Would you be in favor of a "slot limit" for striped bass?**  
(22 responses) 55% yes, 45% no.

**5/14/04 Question-The MV Derby has changed the grand prize structure, i.e. boat goes to shore angler, truck goes to boat angler. Are you in favor of this setup?**  
(55 responses)-67% yes, 31%no, 2% don't care.

**4/26/04 Question-When will the first Vineyard shore bluefish be caught? (22 responses).**  
May 3-4, 5%, May 5-6, 32%, May 7-8, 27%, May 9-10, 18%, May 11-12, 9%, May 13-14, 16%, May 17-18, 0%, Later than May 18, 9%. (First bluefish actually caught May 12)

**4/11/04 Question-When will the first 2004 migrating schoolie be caught from Vineyard shores? (29 responses).** April 15-16, 7%, April 17-18, 7%, April 19-20, 17%, April 21-23, 14%, April 25-26, 14%, April 27-28, 3%, April 29-30, 0% May 1-2, 7%. (first schoolie actually caught on April 18)

**4/5/04-What did you catch your largest Vineyard shore striper on? (18 responses)**  
Swimming plug 22%, Live eel, 17%, Live bait, 17%, Chunk bait, 11%, Spoon 6%, Fly 28%.

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## Events and Meetings

**MVSA Annual Chappy Shark Tournament-**  
6:00PM 7/31/04-6:00AM 8/8/04.

Russ Lawrence-508-627-9670, [HYPERLINK](mailto:captainruss@marthasvineyardfishing.com)  
"mailto:captainruss@marthasvineyardfishing.com"  
[captainruss@marthasvineyardfishing.com](mailto:captainruss@marthasvineyardfishing.com)

**Martha's Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby-**  
Sunday Sept 12, 12:01AM-Saturday October 16, 10:00PM.

## Short Casts

**New Members.** A warm welcome to our newest members Jim & Betty Lou Cordon of Wilson CT and Dan William's of Slatington PA. (Note: We currently have 125 paid members that include 36 off Island memberships.)

**Awesome Raffle Chairman.** Our request for a volunteer has so far gone unanswered, as no one has stepped forward to assume the position of Awesome Raffle Chairman for our annual banquet and fundraiser. Without a chairperson to organize our prize collection efforts we may be forced to seriously scale back this event that provides us with the funds to sponsor the Boys & Girls Club fishing trips and summer camper-ships as well as our annual donation to the Red Stocking Fund.

The person that takes on this important role will not be going it alone. A list of donors is in place and others are willing to help solicit merchandise. If you would like to chair our most important event of the year and give back to the club and the community, please contact President Jeff Sayre at 508-693-4841 or [Jeff@flyfishingthevineyard.com](mailto:Jeff@flyfishingthevineyard.com)

**Joe Kreskey.** We are saddened to learn of the recent passing of MVSA member Joe Kreskey of Edgartown & Watchung, NJ after a short illness. Joe and his wife Ursula could often be spotted on East Beach or at the Chappy harbor fishing for bluefish and false albacore. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Ursula and the entire Kreskey family.

**Abe William's Memorial Bench.** With funds provided by memorial donations to the MVSA a bench in memory of deceased member Abe William's has been placed at the former site of the Cape Poge Lighthouse overlooking the rocky bar down below which was one of Abe's favorite places to fish. The memorial plaque reads, "Donated by the Martha's Vineyard Surfcaster's Association, In Memory of Abe Williams, Always Watching the Water." In her thank you note to the MVSA, Abe's friend and partner Maryann Henniger writes, "It was one of Abe's most frequented stops. He will be watching the water and watching out for all of you."

**Earth Day Beach Clean-up.** On a beautiful early spring day a record number of MVSA members turned out to cleanup Norton Point Beach from the left fork at Katama to Chappaquiddick. As in the past, our members had the dubious distinction of collecting more trash than any other group participating in the event. Our thanks to: Bob, Jenna, Matt and Teresa Digiantommaso, Walter Lison, Wally White, Cliff Snyder, Neil Patt, Russ Lawrence, Ron Domurat, Dave Nash, Paula Sullivan, Paul Schultz, Bob & Fran Clay, Bob Ozyck, Ron Rizun, Janet Messineo, Chris Israel, Phil Horton and Phil & Shirley Craig.

**Safe Haven Trout Fishing Day.** Thanks also to MVSA members that volunteered to work with AID affected children from all over the country during their annual visit to Martha's Vineyard. While few trout were caught, all participants and volunteers left with a good feeling. Volunteers included, Jeff Sayre, Russ Lawrence, Walter Lison, Phil Upham and Ron Domurat.

**In House Derby Boundaries.** At a recent meeting MVSA members voted to accept the boundaries of the Martha's Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby as the official boundary of the MVSA In House Derby. Fish caught outside of waters

surrounding Martha's Vineyard will not be eligible for annual awards. Boundary limits can be found in copies of the MVSB& BF Derby programs.

**Litter.** Some of you may have noticed a significant increase in the amount of litter at some of your favorite fishing locations. While much of the debris washes ashore from far off places or is discarded by beachgoers or partiers, much is left behind by thoughtless slobbers among members of the fishing community who think nothing about discarding an empty beverage can or squid box on one of our Island beaches or jetties. It is highly unlikely that these slobbers will ever understand the ramifications of their actions but it is clear they have little regard for our environment or appreciate the natural beauty of what we have here. They give all of us a bad name. We can help educate these people if we catch them in the act but most likely it is in our best interest to pick up after these children and carry out even a small portion of what they leave behind.

**Reading the Water.** The wonderful and informative book by the late Robert Post who described himself as a "fisherman trapped in the body of a dentist", which profiles colorful members of the Vineyard surfcastering community including MVSA members Cooper Gilkes, Janet Messineo, Paul Schultz and the late Arnold Spofford has recently been reprinted by Globe Pequot Press. Originally printed in 1988 the book has been out of print for a number of years and original copies have been selling for as high as \$500 on the Internet. In the reprinted edition, Pia Post wife of the late author writes beautifully in the dedication, "The gift of shore fishing for Bob was much like the spaces between words in a sentence. The quiet times between casting and the excitement of bringing in a fish were deeper times of shared experiences in the beauty of nature, the deepening of experience. These were reasons to wander the shore and share and commune with fellow anglers."

Reading the Water is available at Island tackle shops and books stores and is must reading particularly for newcomers to our sport and anyone that fishes the Martha's Vineyard surf.

Bob Post was a charter member and founding father of the MVSA.

**Recreational Fishing Alliance-(RFA).** The MVSA has voted to join an ever-growing alliance with the RFA. The RFA is national nonprofit advocacy group of more than 75,000 recreational anglers dedicated to preserving marine fisheries. As a condition of our alliance the MVSA will receive periodic updates and action alerts regarding problems relating to marine fisheries. Also as a condition of our alliance we have been asked to share our membership list so the RFA can solicit individual memberships. Our list will not be sold or shared with other organizations or companies. If you would like your name removed from the list we send to the RFA, please contact membership chairman Ron Domurat at 508-627-4956, [rd\\_bjr@msn.com](mailto:rd_bjr@msn.com) no later than 8/1/04.

**MVSB & BF Derby Prize Structure Change.** We have reliable information that the Grand Prize structure for the annual fall classic will change significantly. Effective this year, shore division anglers will compete for a chance to win the Grand Prize Boston Whaler and boat anglers will compete to win the Grand Prize Chevy truck donated by the Clay Family dealerships. This is a flip-flop from recent years and the decision was made after complaints from anglers who said they would rather compete for something they didn't already own. In a recent MVSA web-site poll, anglers overwhelmingly agreed with the decision with 67% in favor as opposed to 31% against and 2% saying they didn't care.

# Surf Safety Tips

A few issues back veteran member Chip Bergeron wrote a scary piece about getting knocked down suddenly in the surf on two separate occasions. We thought it might be a good idea to review a few surf safety tips.

**Wading belt**-Wear one! Most experienced surf rats cinch a belt around their waist. Should a dunking occur, the belt prevents water from filling up your waders and hauling you under.

**Neoprene waders**-While hot as blazes in warmer weather, neoprene has a higher degree of floatation and may provide a bit more protection against hypothermia should you go in the drink.

**Inflatable life preserver**- If you spend a lot of time at the water's edge and don't own an inflatable vest, buy one before you spend another dollar on any kind of fishing equipment-and get in the habit of using it. While some may consider this item an expensive and unnecessary piece of equipment, it may save your life someday.

**Wading staff**-An often overlooked piece of safety equipment it's a must item for anglers fishing alone or at night, particularly in slimy or boulder filled areas. You'd be surprised how much it aids your balance when walking. Most hard-core surf anglers won't venture out with out one. Drilling a hole through any old broom handle and running a four or five foot piece of rope through it can make a simple wading staff. Tie a loop around the opposite end and run your wading belt through it. The staff will float out of your way when wading.

**Corkers**-Corkers are sandals with spikes on the bottom and straps that can be worn over the top of wader shoes. Corkers provide a great deal of added traction in slimy boulder filled waters. Considered a little heavy by some they are an invaluable piece of footgear if you spend any amount of time in that kind of environment. The spikes are replaceable. Some anglers will even drive small round-headed screws into the bottom of their waders to provide a similar effect.

**Short boots**-You might consider dispensing of waders altogether when jetty fishing. Instead try wearing short boots with rain pants over them. Should you should go in the drink, the boots, even if filled with water will not weigh you down and are easy to kick off.

**Flashlight**-It goes without saying that you are going to carry a flashlight when fishing at night. But most veterans carry an extra flashlight or at the very least an extra set of batteries and a spare bulb.

**Compass**-Buy and carry a small compass and know how to use it. It may get you safely off a bar if a fog rolls in unexpectedly.

**First aid kit**-Carry a small first aid kit that contains some anti bacterial ointment.

**Cell phone**-Carry it if you own one.

**Plan**-Finally, without divulging any secrets, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.

# Safety Hazards While Fishing - My Story

By: Phil Cronin

Each year we hear from someone who found themselves in a dangerous situation while fishing the shores of the Island. Over the last several years we have even seen tragedy occur when experienced surf fishermen have been swept away by what appeared to be safe wading waters. The heart wrenching reaction to a life lost pursuing this mutual passion should bring us to the realization that safety should never be taken for granted. On a recent visit to Tashmoo, I found myself in one of those totally unexpected situations which need to be shared with all.

While fishing the annual spring cinder worm spawn I was wading an area deep in mud. Swirling bass got my adrenaline pumping and I hastily moved toward the feeding frenzy not paying much attention to the bottom, which was getting deeper in both water and mud. I suddenly stepped into a hole which sucked me down into at least four feet of silt and mud. Suddenly and without warning I was chest deep with water pouring into my waders and stripping basket and absolutely nowhere to regain my footing. I tumbled face first into the water and tried in vain to get enough footing to stand upright. I fell again and again with more and more water filling my waders. It finally dawned on me that the only way to get out of this sticky situation was to maintain a cool head and fall flat and allow whatever buoyancy was left in my water filled waders to pull my legs upward and give me enough forward momentum to "breast stroke" to the shore and firmer footing. On my third attempt to escape this muddy and potentially dangerous situation one of my fishing buddies noticed that something was wrong and began running over to my location. Luck would have it that I reached the shore before he had to jump in and get me but I was thankful that he was ready, willing and able to come to my aide.

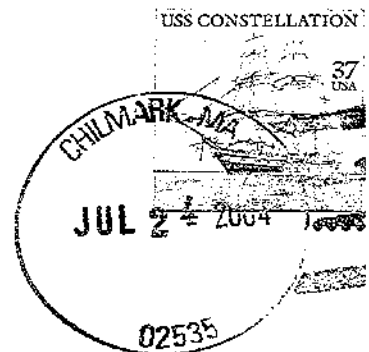
The lesson I learned was that fishing any shoreline can be potentially dangerous. My haste to get into swirling fish caused me to ignore caution and put me in a serious safety hazard. Fortunately, the only thing that resulted was a wet, cold, smelly fisherman who did not catch any fish. After a quick trip home to shower, change and switch my waders, I was back to the beach with one extra piece of equipment-a tightly cinched wading belt.

**Don't forget to fish safely during these upcoming competitions for all anglers!**

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**Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association**  
**PO Box 3053, Edgartown, MA, 02539**



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