

Annual MVSA Summer Picnic

The Annual MVSA Summer Picnic will be held Saturday July 8 at Bend in the Road Beach in Edgartown. The event begins at 5:00PM. The rain date is Sunday July 9. Once again Phil & Lauren Horton have graciously volunteered to organize the event which features Phil's "world class" ribs. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. The MVSA will provide the food, soft drinks, condiments and snacks but salads and dessert donations will be gratefully accepted. The event will feature an "accuracy casting" contest and the popular 50/50 cookie jar raffle. New MVSA T-Shirts will also be on sale. Volunteers willing to help with set up & grill duties can contact Phil at 508-693-6979 or phorton@lucent.com

MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament

Off the south shore recently a group out striper fishing caught a huge Mako shark. The sharks are already here and hungry. Are you ready to go back to East Beach for the excitement of the Fourth Annual MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament?? Once again the event will be of two week duration beginning on July 22 at 6:00PM and ending on August 6 at 8:00AM. The cookout and awards ceremony will be held at 4:00PM on Sunday at a site TBA. Last year's winner Joe Gubitose from Fiskdale, MA will be on hand to defend his title. By virtue of catching and landing the only shark during last year's two week event, Joe has established himself as the man to beat.

The Striper Cup

For almost thirty years, from 1947 to the late 70's, the F. M. Schaefer Brewing Company staged a competition that pitted fishing clubs and thousands of anglers along the entire striper coast against one another in a contest that recognized the top anglers and clubs. The winning club was awarded the Striper Cup for the year to be shared with members and then passed along to the winning club the following year. Top anglers were also recognized with beautifully detailed trophies and awards which included pins for entering the 30, 40, 50, and 60lb. club.

Throughout the 70's the Martha's Vineyard Fishing club walked away with top honors in both the striper and bluefish surf divisions and won the last event ever held. The trophy resides at the MV Historical Society in Edgartown. Other trophies and awards are currently on display at Larry's Tackle Shop.

On the Water magazine has revived the contest with a modern day version that includes boat and shore divisions as well as club competition. To date more than 1,500 anglers and 27 clubs have registered as competitors. Anglers are allowed to weigh in one fish per week that must be at least 34" long and are awarded one point per pound of fish. At the end of the event the angler with the most accumulated points will be awarded the Angler of the Year award. The club that weighs in the ten heaviest fish will be awarded the coveted Striper Cup for the year. The top club in each state will also receive a permanent trophy and in the club competition there is no distinction between boat & shore caught fish. Like the Schaefer contest, handsome pins are awarded to anglers joining the 30, 40, 50, & 60 lb clubs. Weekly and monthly awards are also awarded and registered anglers are eligible to win a boat and truck.

The MVSA has registered as a club and as of June 26 was leading the club division by a mere 4lbs over RISSA from Rhode Island. In addition, members Pat Toomey and Phil Horton are currently in contention for the shore angler of the year award. Pat leads the surf division by 30 points and currently leads in the monthly contest for June. Between them, Pat & Phil have also entered seven of the MVSA's top ten fish. Other members contributing are Janet Messineo, Jim Cornwell, Phil Cronin, Bob Jacobs, and Ron Domurat.

It is not too late to enter the contest and compete for the Striper Cup continuing the tradition of excellence among Vineyard anglers. The entry fee for club members is \$25 and all entrants receive a handsome pin and T-shirt. Entries may be made on line at www.onthewater.com or at Larry's or Dick's Tackle shops. Be sure to register as an MVSA member to receive the discounted entry fee. The event runs through September 13.

Beach Report

Trustees Superintendent Dave Belcher reports the following:

As of 6/26/06, there are currently a dozen active Piping Plover nests spread along Norton Point Beach, East Beach and Cape Poge. About ½ of NPB is open from the left fork east toward Chappy. OSV traffic to Chappy is not available and will most likely remain that way at least thru July. There is also an active tern colony on NPB as well as several Oyster Catcher nests and chicks.

On East Beach only about 200 yards of beach is open from out front of the beach entrance south, but that may soon close to protect an active plover nest that resides behind the dune near the front entrance. That closure is also expected to last thru the end of July. There are a total of seven active nests on or behind East Beach. Four on the beachfront and three behind the dune.

There is an active plover nest at the Poge elbow near the crossover to the back trail to the Gut. When the nest was found recently it already had four eggs in it that are expected to hatch soon, forcing closures in that area. But David Belcher said chicks hatched in that area generally do not survive to fledge.

Belcher also reports that the management takeover at Norton Point is proceeding nicely with few problems and understanding people. The guard shack is in place and the Trustees provide 18-hour patrols beginning at 9:00AM every day. To date more than 500 OSV permits have been sold, just 100 short of all last year.

Short Casts

In Memoriam- On Wednesday evening May 17, 2006 MVSA member Fred Stula from Wethersfield CT lost a long battle with prostate cancer. Fred had only visited the Island for the last few years but enjoyed spring and fall fishing trips with his brother Charlie and friends Pete & Glenn Connly, Joe Gubitose, and Walter Lison. He particularly enjoyed his membership in the MVSA and the wonderful friends he had made. A big guy with an even bigger heart, he will be missed by his fishing friends. Our deepest sympathies go out to the entire Stula family.

New T-shirts- New short sleeve T-shirts are available to members at a nominal fee of \$10. The shirts are ash gray and feature an enhanced three-color version of the MVSA logo. Shirts will be available at the summer picnic or by calling Jeff Sayre 508-693-4841 jeff@flyfishingthevineyard.com

MVSA Members Score in Tournament- Congratulations to members Janet Messineo and Chuck Hodgkinson for finishing in the top three of Dick's Bait & Tackle 14th Annual Memorial Day fishing Tournament. Janet won the shore striped bass division with a 24.9lb fish and Chuck placed second in the shore bluefish division with a 6.8lb fish.

"The Great Stakeout"-On the morning of April 13, MVSA members beat a rainstorm and joined TTOR employees and other volunteers to help clean up and restore Norton Point Beach to a more natural setting. An estimated 400 rusted and deteriorating fence posts were removed as well as miles of polypropylene rope, enough to fill the beds of five pick-up trucks and two ATV trailers. The result is a strikingly more beautiful trail through the dunes, which is instantly apparent upon entering the trail past the new guard shack. Volunteers included, Tom Smith, Phil Upham, Dave Brennan, Al Angelone, Dave Nash, Walter Lison, Ron Domurat, Jim Henderson, Phil Horton, George Moran, Russ Lawrence, and Jim Hendrickson.

Safe Haven- Once again MVSA members provided tackle and assistance to off-island campers from the Safe Haven Program. As usual, the fishing was bad for the ten campers who braved cold and windy conditions. Intrepid MVSA volunteers who provided "one on one" guidance were Walter Lison, Cooper Gilkes, Russ Lawrence, Dave Nash, Bob Lane, Phil Cronin, Paula Sullivan, Dave Brennan, and Tom Kowalski.

Beach Clean-Up-MVSA members braved a raging Nor'easter to pick trash along South Beach and Norton Point during the annual beach clean up. Thank you to volunteers; Chuck Hodgkinson, Bob Clay, Jim Cornwell, Paul Schultz, Ron Domurat, Joe Dart, Will & Sue Geresy, Ken Beebe & Jeff Sayre.

A Fish Called Martha-The MVSA has donated \$300 and adopted a "Fish Called Martha" to help scientists determine seasonal striper movements in the Plum Island Sound area. The sixteen-inch fish along with 45 other stripers was caught on 4/16/06 and fitted with an acoustical tag that will be monitored by nineteen strategically placed listening posts throughout Plum Island Sound. The study hopes to determine the every day movements and feeding habits. The data collected will be presented to fishery managers for help in future decision-making. Martha's travels can be tracked at the "Adopt a Bass" web site blog @ <http://360.yahoo.com/plumislandstripers> We hope to have the graduate student in charge of the program attend one of our winter meetings to discuss her research.

Conservation and Environment Updates

By Dave Nash

Public Access at the SSA Oak Bluffs Pier

Last month Walter Lison, Ron Domurat and Dave Nash met with Wayne Lamson, Steamship Authority General Manager, and Marc Hanover, SSA Board Vineyard Representative to discuss public access options for the Oak Bluffs pier.

Public access has not been entirely abandoned according to Mr. Lamson and Mr. Hanover. Mr. Lamson committed to having their engineering firm look at a simplified design for an attached catwalk with an expanded end section or floating dock for fishing/public access. Unfortunately, they responded that no design other than one originally proposed would meet their structural standards. That design involves separate pilings and a pier essentially separate from the modified pier that has been proposed. An approach that uses separate pilings represents the most costly option so funding that option then becomes the biggest problem. So far, everyone has been talking about a catwalk or walkway that would extend along the north side of the ferry pier.

Meanwhile, we have approached Kerry Scott who is on the Board of Selectman in Oak Bluffs. Ms. Scott is very much supportive of public access options for the pier since, for many visitors who arrive by SSA ferry, this is their first view of Oak Bluffs. She also feels the design of the pier should reflect more of the character of Oak Bluffs rather than simply being just a functioning ferry pier. Ms. Scott will assist us in a further discussion of this option at an upcoming Selectman's meeting where we can possibly talk about design and funding alternatives.

Separately, MVSA has filed formal comments on the public record for the permit application filed by the SSA with the State DEP. This application by SSA is necessary due to some of the dredging required by the reconstruction project. Our comments reflect the desire that some form of public access be included in this project separate from the day-to-day use of the pier. State authorities will need to decide if the SSA is obligated to provide public access or simply needs to explain their position in more detail or is not required to provide access. This response will be in the form of a proposed decision, which we can appeal if we feel there is anything to gain by that process. The state's coastal management guidelines would seem to favor a decision that no public access for this project is required since it is only a modification of a project previously approved and, more importantly, it is what is referred to as a "water dependant" use. The ferry is obviously water-dependant so the pier to access the boat is covered under that definition. If, for example, the SSA were constructing additional parking areas over the coastal zone and taking more of the shoreline for its' own use (as was part of an original plan), that parking would not be considered a water-dependant use and public access offsets would need to be provided. The law is not rigidly defined in these matters so there may be some flexibility—but not likely. Due to the interest expressed by MVSA membership, we will continue to follow this project. A recent survey of MVSA members revealed overwhelming support for

public access. You can all help by keeping up the level of interest, talking to your friends, neighbors and elected officials as well as Steamship Authority representatives you may know.

Herring Creek Restoration project

The Herring Creek restoration project is part of a larger more comprehensive assessment of the area from Katama (Mattakeset) Bay to Edgartown Great Pond. Currently underway are a number of separate assessments and studies involving several boards and commissions and the progress has been slow. MVSA is tracking this project with the anticipation that we will become more involved as a stakeholder which would give us the opportunity to have direct involvement on the development of various management plans covering future uses of these areas. As previously reported, there will also be volunteer opportunities for our members to participate in studies, restoration work and even to have a voice in how the various management opportunities will complement each other.

Many different interests and concerns are involved in this larger study. In addition to the Herring Creek Run restoration effort, dredging in Mattakeset and Katama Bays, and construction of sluiceways for Crackatuxet and Edgartown Great Ponds, the project is looking further into how the various initiatives will impact each other. Since many of these initiatives will be supported by federal funding and grants, the application process requires that all these relationships be clearly identified in the form of a comprehensive management plan. The various management studies are slowly coming together and when they do, MVSA will hopefully be more directly involved and be able to contribute recommendations to the plan. Herring, shellfish and blue shell crabs will all be assessed by this review process to assure that their respective habitats are managed at optimum levels. Salinity management, the impacts of dredging and the recurring siltation in Mattakeset Bay are examples of the issues under review.

Volunteer opportunities may be coming

Volunteering is not new to Martha's Vineyard or the Surfcasters. We have participated in the annual Earth Day Beach clean-up sponsored by the Vineyard Conservation Society for many years and can probably be considered among the most dedicated supporters of that event. Another great example is the Norton Point Beach effort undertaken when TTOR took over management of this beach. For that project, Surfcasters pitched in and helped transform Norton Point Beach into the nearly pristine barrier beach it is today. Can everyone remember what it looked like before we helped remove 400 metal stakes and 2 miles of nylon rope?

Other opportunities may be coming for us. As part of our support for various initiatives underway around the island, such as public access for the SSA pier, we might be attending some public meetings as a further display of our support. We will likely have opportunities associated with the Herring Creek restoration project to contribute our ideas and our opinions on issues that will impact us and we will be able to donate our time to various projects like assisting in fish counts. There may also be unique educational opportunities for not only the adults but for kids as well.

There is another project under development by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institutes' Sea Grant group who will be studying erosion along the South Beach barrier beach. Please watch for announcements of these and other volunteer opportunities in this newsletter or on the MVSA website.

MVSA “Braggin” Board

Island's 1st migrating striper-Russ Lawrence-4/11/06

Island's first keeper striper-Ken Beebe-29 ½”, 5/6/06

Island's first bluefish-Ron Domurat-5/7/06

38lb striper (and four other 30lb fish)-Pat Toomey

32lb striper-Phil Horton

Current In House Derby Standings (as of 6/26/06)

Senior Division

Shore Striped Bass-Will Point, 22.7lbs

Shore Bluefish, Vince Frye 6.1lbs.

Open Division

Shore Striped Bass-Pat Toomey-38.2 lbs

Shore Striped Bass Release-Pat Toomey-43"

Shore Bluefish-Dave Balon, 10.68lbs

Calendar

July 8, 2006, Summer Picnic

5:00PM, Bend in the Road Beach, Edgartown

Phil Horton, 508-693-6979, phorton@lucent.com

August 6, 2006, MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament

Russ Lawrence, 508-627-9670, captain.russ@marthasvineyardfishing.com, Phil Cronin, 508-693-8861, captain.phil@capewock.com

September 10, 2006-October 14, 2006-61st Annual Martha's Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby