

# SALTY BYTES

*Newsletter of the Saltwater Fly Anglers of Delaware*



## July to September, 2024 Newsletter

### **Writer/Editor:**

**Roy Miller**

On the internet at [www.sfaod.com](http://www.sfaod.com), our club message board is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sfaod/> For club-related questions, inquiries and suggestions, here is the **Board of Directors** contact information:

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### **A Note from the Editor:**

As always, contributions of articles, comments, or pictures that I can include in subsequent newsletters are welcome. You can reach me at the above at [sfaod@outlook.com](mailto:sfaod@outlook.com)



number or send them via email to Bill O'Connor

## SFAOD Meeting July 10, 2024

**Attendance:** 17, plus the following Board of Directors: Ron Smith, Bill O'Connor, Roy Miller, Hans Feindt, Ed Hill, Walt Clark. Loretta Smith was absent.

Our speaker was Mike Sleplesky and the title of his talk was "Tight Lining Maryland." Mike is a high school social studies teacher and a fly fishing guide on the Gunpowder River and other streams in Western MD and PA. He specializes in Euro nymphing. He stated that the first six times he fished the Gunpowder he caught nothing so he changed his tactics to embrace Euro nymphing which became popular in competitive fly fishing. He stated that trout do 90-98% of their feeding underwater. On the Gunpowder he says that the biggest fish are in the top section of the catch and release water nearest the dam. Otherwise, the average trout is a 9 inch. To catch the bigger fish he recommends using streamers, fishing structure, and fishing early or late in the day.

Euro nymphing is Czech or Polish nymphing, which is different from Spanish or French nymphing which uses more delicate tackle and reels. He started with an 11 ft. rod in a weight 3, and recommends 3-4 wt. rods for Euro nymphing. These rods have a down-locking reel seat. A good reel for Euro nymphing has a large arbor, is light, and has a full frame cage. It counterweights the rod to make it easier on your shoulder.

For leaders, "go thin to win" for nymph fishing. If the fish are feeding on top, he puts a dry fly on a 5 inch dropper and uses a thicker leader. He uses a 12-15 ft. leader for nymphing and tries to stick the landing of the fly so it will duck down and drop quickly. He uses a 2 ft. sighter of colored mono to detect strikes. Most of his strikes come in the first third of the drift. Most of the nymphs he uses are sizes 14-16, but he will use a range of size 8-20. Some patterns he likes are Frenchie/pheasant tail, Walt's worm, blow torch, jig streamers and buggers, and a CDC France fly. He prefers tungsten beads because they are 45% heavier than lead. The clearer the conditions, the brighter the bead on his flies.

Lance Egan and Devin Olsen have a great video to download. If anyone wants to hire Mike for a day, he charges \$250-\$325 for a day of fishing on foot. The membership seemed very engaged in the program, and we all thanked Mike for his thoroughness.

He released a blog-cast on YouTube entitled: "Tight Lining Maryland."

There was no business meeting that night due to the length of the program. Roy Miller won the 50/50 raffle and donated half of his winnings back to the Club. The last announcement was that Anne, the wife of our Club founder Don Avondolio, had passed away recently and a viewing and service is scheduled for July 16 at 11:00 AM.



Croaker were abundant on the Flats in July and August.



Bill Douwes fishing on the Flats on July 24. Roy Miller photo.

### **SFAOD Meeting August 14, 2024**

The August meeting consisted of outdoor casting practice, followed by consumption of burgers and dogs grilled by Ron Smith. There was no business meeting conducted.

### **SFAOD Meeting 9-11-2024**

**Attendance:** Board of Directors included Roy Miller, Bill O'Connor, Hans Feindt, Ed Hill, Ron Smith, Walt Clark and Loretta Smith. President Loretta Smith convened the meeting at the Rolling Meadows Club House at 7:15 PM.

**Walt Clark** gave the Treasurer's report. Our Club balance as of 1/1/2024 was \$5,595.58. Our income this year so far is \$9,446.40, expenses \$4,413.4, thus leaving a balance of \$5,033.26.

**Loretta Smith** announced that the One Fly Contest for this year will be held on Sept. 21. Be at the Club House at 0730 to turn in your two flies and select one in a blind drawing for the contest. Report back to the Club House at 1:30 for a cooked lunch of barbeque pork and slaw.

**Ron Smith** has microfiber shirts for sale. He also has left-over t-shirts on sale for \$10 in various colors and sizes.

**Ed Hill** discussed programs for the rest of the year. Next month (Oct.) Jim DiDonato will talk about a fishing trip to Harman's Cabins in WV that four Club members made back in June. There was a recent article in Fly Fishing Magazine about the Project Healing Waters group staying and fishing at the same location on the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River.

In November, Dr. Noah Bressman of Salisbury State University will be our speaker. He will talk about invasive species (snakeheads and blue catfish) in the Chesapeake area.

In December, Roy Miller will summarize recent developments and regulations from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Roy also will give a slide talk on fishing trips he made in 2024.

On January 3 at our annual holiday banquet, story teller Jim Duffy will be our speaker.

**Program:** Loretta introduced Morgan Krell, our speaker for the evening. Morgan is a biologist who works for the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays and is a long-time fly fisherman. The title of the first part of his talk was "Fly Fishing for Muskies." Over the years he has caught over 40 muskies on flies. It is a real passion of his. He suggests using a 10 or 11 wt. rod for muskies, although you can get by with using a 9 wt. if you choose smaller musky flies. He likes an extension butt long enough to accommodate his hand at the end of the handle. Since muskies don't make long runs, you can get by with a smaller reel because you don't need hundreds of yards of backing. He carries 3 types of line, but he prefers a sinking line for all but poppers and other surface flies. Leaders are nothing fancy, just 2-3 ft. of 40 lb test and 1 ft. of 7 strand wire at the tip. He does not use wire clips because they can fail. Muskies apparently are not leader shy.

In terms of fly selection, you are not matching the hatch with muskies and instead want to use flies that will get their attention with movement and flash. He uses Game Changers, but other flies of hair, synthetics and feathers like Beaufort Specials and T-Bones will work as well in his view. He will employ weedless flies in the summer in weedy areas. Once you retrieve the fly to the boat, always do some figure eights starting with an L turn. The rod tip should be 2-3 feet into the water for these figure 8s. Sometimes a musky will follow the fly to the boat and won't strike unless induced by the figure 8s.

In terms of their habits and habitat, it varies with the major moon phases, time of day, and time of year. In the fall and winter in rivers, look for them in deeper water downstream. They spawn in the spring. As much as 20% of a lake's musky population will go over a dam if they can. He recommends bigger flies in the fall and smaller ones in spring. For fly colors his favorites are white, black, and chartreuse and keys on water color as his guide. He likes dark colors for dark days and light colors for light days. For hooks he prefers 3/0 and larger in quality hooks like Gamakatsu, but not the heavy stainless steel varieties.

He fishes in Canada (northwest Ontario) and N. Wisconsin and Minnesota. Closer to home he said muskies, referring mostly to tiger muskies which are a hybrid of northern pike and muskellunge, swim downstream from PA into the Brandywine and Christina Rivers. They also are found in the Potomac, Susquehanna, and James Rivers. Morgan says perseverance is the key. The old adage about muskies being the fish of 10,000 casts has some validity. You must maintain a positive attitude when pursuing muskies as they sometimes will hit when you least expect it.

Morgan finished his talk with a presentation of how to do research for your fishing trip like you were a fishery biologist. Start with a goal for your fishing trip. Consider how and when your target spawns, and where. What temperatures do they need? What are their major food sources and how do they feed? Then do a Google search for local information, local fishing reports, and government reports. Use State mapping tools and click on the class

of streams and public access. Try the electronic program Fish Brain, or talk to a regional biologist. Try peer-reviewed literature like Google Scholar and once you find something promising, read the abstract to see if you would benefit from reading the whole report, especially the discussion section at the end of the published paper. Everyone thanked Morgan for his excellent talk.

Following the program we held the **Annual Raffle**. The prize winners were as follows:

1. Orvis Recon 8 wt. rod, Hydros reel, line and backing. – Bob Kutay
2. TFO Signature 3 rod, 9 ft. 8 wt. – Denise Hansen
3. Orvis Hydros reel for 5-7 wt. (donated by Ron Smith) – Donald Lushis
4. Norvise fly tying vise – Joe Helby. Joe said he will donate it to Project Healing Waters
5. Snakehead fishing trip donated by Ted Morlock – Hans Feindt
6. Fishing for stripers under the lights with Shawn Rakes – Walt Clark passed and Bill Sperduto won it on the second draw.
7. ½ day of fishing with Capt. Chuck Cook – Eric Danmeyer
8. Orvis stripping basket – Walt Clark
9. R.W. Wheatley fly box donated by Loretta Smith – Harry Glacker
10. \$100 Orvis gift certificate – Ron Smith passed and Mike Rieker won it on the second draw.

### **One Fly Contest, September 21 –**

The Club's annual One Fly Contest was held Saturday morning September 21. Participants in this contest must contribute two of the same saltwater flies to be placed in a common pool. Participants then draw one fly each blindly and are then obligated to fish with that fly for purposes of the contest. If you lose the fly, you are finished with the contest for the day. Prizes were awarded for largest fish and the most fish. Morgan Krell took first prize for the largest fish caught, a 26-inch bluefish from Indian River Inlet. Roy Miller caught the most fish (3) including a 16.5" striped bass and two small black sea bass. Roy caught his striper in Fresh Pond and his two sea bass from "the Pipes" separating Rehoboth Bay from North Shore Marina on Indian River. Hans Feindt took honorable mention with a 14 inch summer flounder from the beach near the Cape Henlopen Pier. Morgan Krell got to keep the extra flies entered by the 16 or so contestants.

Following presentation of the prizes, everyone partook of pork barbeque sandwiches and fried chicken, slaw and potato salad provided by Ron Smith who served as contest director. We all owe Ron a debt of gratitude for the gracious donation of his time, cooking talents, and for obtaining the gift certificate prizes.





Morgan's 26 inch bluefish.



Roy with his striper.



Han's flounder



That's Morgan in the center, Roy on the left, and Hans right.

Roy and Hans are holding the flies they fished with.



Jim DiDonato contributed this picture of a European equivalent of our yellow perch which he caught on a fly in Germany on a military trip this month.

#### **Schedule:**

**Oct. 6** – Coast Day, Lewes campus of U of D

**Oct. 9** – Regular meeting Rolling Meadows Clubhouse

**Oct. 26** – Club Pickerel Fly Fishing Tournament

**Nov. 13** – Regular meeting Rolling Meadows Clubhouse

**Dec. 11** – Regular meeting Rolling Meadows Clubhouse, Roy Miller speaker

**Jan. 3, 2025** – Annual holiday banquet

#### **Biologist Corner:**

##### **Fisheries Management Bodies**

If you have been somewhat confused about which agencies are managing our fisheries and which agencies have jurisdiction over setting and enforcing fishing regulations, you are not alone. Part of the confusion is because two different agencies, neither one of them exactly government agencies, manage fisheries in internal tidal waters out as far as the 200 mile limit off our coast. The agency that is responsible for fishery management plans in internal waters extending offshore to the 3-mile state limits is the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission or ASMFC.

The agency that manages fisheries from the 3-mile limit to the 200 mile limit are the regional fishery management councils. More specifically from NY waters south to North Carolina waters it is the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. For waters north and south of there you have the New England Fishery Management Council and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

None of the aforementioned agencies have enforcement officers. Enforcement of the fishery regulatory measures adopted by ASMFC falls within the purview of the state agencies that make up the ASMFC, with the exception of federal waters offshore of the 3-mile limit. In federal waters the National Marine Fisheries Service or NMFS for short which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, also called NOAA Fisheries under the Department of Commerce, adopts and enforces fishery management measures in federal waters outside of the 3-mile limit. When ASMFC adopts a fishery management plan, it is up to the states to enforce the regulations needed to comply with the fishery management plan. In federal waters these same measures can be enforced by federal agents (typically the Coast Guard) or by state enforcement officers that have a joint enforcement agreement with the feds.

The ASMFC and the regional fishery management councils all have at least one state fisheries administrator from each state to represent the fishery management agency of that state. Other Commission members include a legislator from each state or their designated appointee, as well as a Governor's Appointee from each state. I serve as the Delaware Governor's Appointee to ASMFC. Thus there are 3 members on the Commission from each state, and each state gets one vote on management measures. On the regional councils there are one or two fishery management employees from each state as well as representatives of the sport fishing and commercial fishing industry or environmental interests. Of these, seven obligatory seats are state-specific and must be filled by one individual from each of the Council's constituent states, and six at-large seats may be filled by individuals from any constituent state.

Commission members receive no compensation from the Commission for attending Commission meetings, except for normal travel expenses and room and board expenses. Council members are different in that non-government members are compensated at typical federal rates in preparing for and attending Council meetings. State and federal employees receive their normal salaries for attending Commission and Council meetings. Some Commissioners and Council members are paid to attend their respective meetings by private organizations with a strong interest in fishery management.

So let's illustrate with a few familiar examples. When the Commission adopted the 28-31 inch slot limit for striped bass this year, each state had to pass internal regulations that met the intent of the Commission plan. Not only that, but each state has to enforce these measures. For species that occur more often in federal waters, the Council makes the decisions in conjunction with NMFS, and then again it is up to the states to enforce the measures in state waters. In federal waters both NMFS and the states provide the enforcement. Examples would include regulations on summer flounder, scup, black sea bass and bluefish. Since all of four species occur both inshore and offshore, the Councils and the Commission have the joint responsibility of managing these four species. There are other species like Atlantic mackerel that seldom enter state waters so the Councils are responsible for managing Atlantic mackerel.

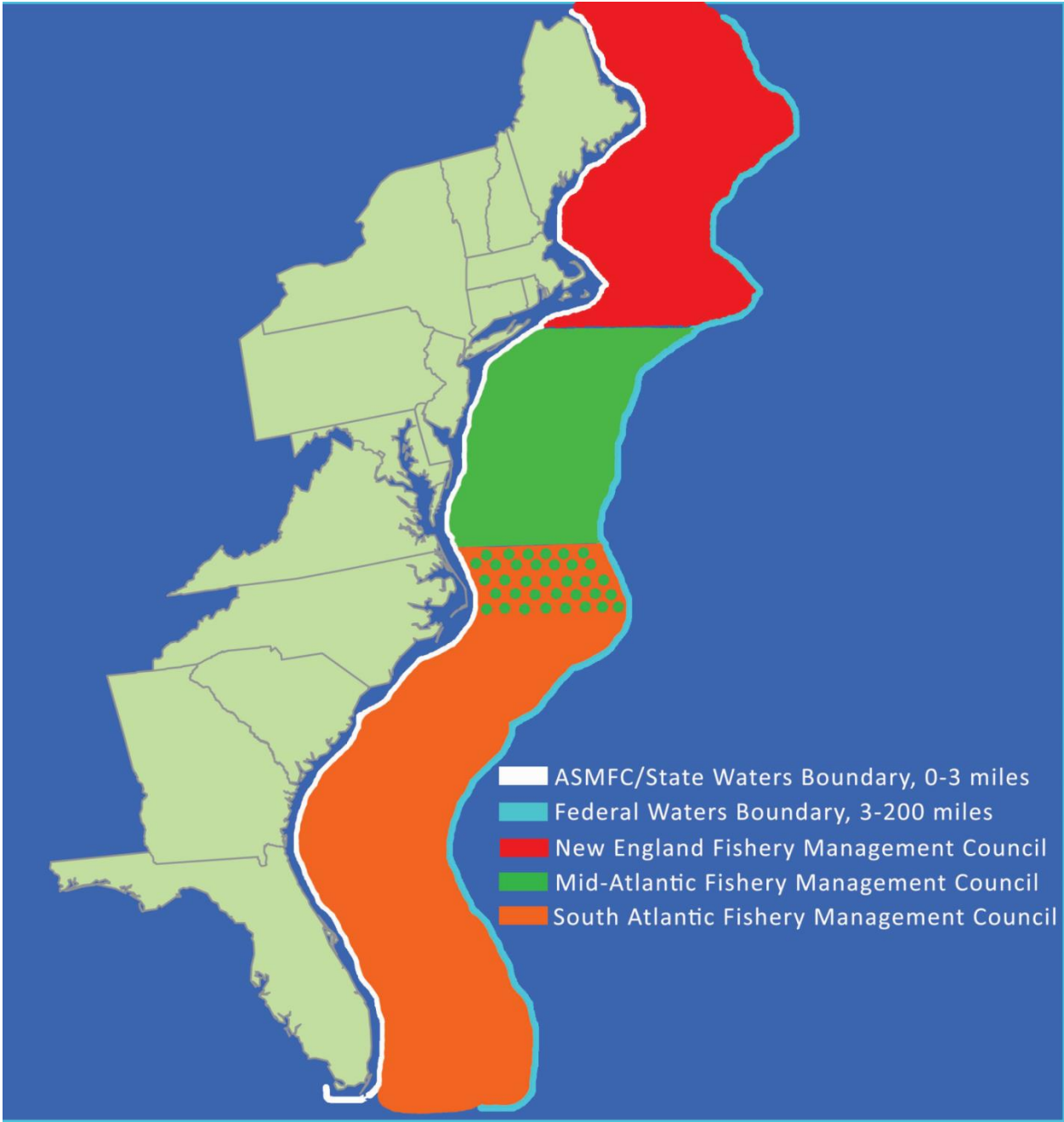
Finally there are offshore species like mako sharks that are managed by federal regulations which the states must be in compliance with to avoid conflicting regulations.

The Commission and the Council have reached agreement on which species will be regulated by which management body. Some examples of Commission managed species include striped bass, American shad, river



herring, Atlantic lobster, horseshoe crabs, Atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish, spotted sea trout, cobia, redfish, and other primarily inshore species. Council managed species include Atlantic mackerel, monkfish, tile fish, squid, butterfish, and other primarily offshore species of fish and harvested shellfish. Jointly managed fish include the aforementioned summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, and spiny dogfish. Offshore species like the large pelagic sharks are federally managed. NMFS also gets one vote on every inshore species managed by the Commission, as does the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Does that help clarify who manages what? The illustration below helps show in general where the Commission and Council's jurisdictions lie. What isn't illustrated is that the ASMFC's jurisdiction for migratory species like striped bass and American shad extends inland as far as these species range in their native spawning rivers. Locally that means that American shad are covered by the Shad and River Herring Management Plan from the mouth of Delaware Bay and nearshore ocean waters up to the extent of their spawning run into the upper East Branch of the Delaware River in New York State.



Both the Commission and the Council generally meet quarterly in separate meetings, unless discussing jointly managed species, in which case both bodies meet at the same location.

rwm

**The following message is from Club member Jim DiDonato:**

**PHWFF:** Fellow SFAOD members, this message is to provide you with a very brief summary of what's been happening with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) in Delaware, and to solicit in-kind donations to support our mission.

Hopefully, you're already aware that PHWFF exists to support the emotional and physical healing of our nation's disabled military veterans, and it uses fly fishing to do that. Almost three years ago when I assumed leadership of the Dover Program – the only PHWFF presence in Delaware – there were only four active veteran participants. Today there are 14, and I believe that number will continue to grow during 2024.

We meet twice monthly in the Dover area, and sometimes we do additional special activities. Some of our "special" activities would be very familiar to SFAOD members. Those include fishing local ponds, helping DNREC stock trout at White Clay Creek, and taking a daytrip to Cape May to fish the shoreline there. Good things are happening, and I sense that the lives of our disabled veterans are better for their participation in the program.

Where the Dover Program was once sponsored by SFAOD, there hasn't been a formal relationship for several years. Several members of SFAOD have volunteered – and continue to do so – over the years to make the program a success. The one major thread that bonds our groups is our love of fly fishing. Because our budget is small, in-kind donations (donations of items rather than money) are very helpful. I've only been a fly fisherman for about six years, but my experience has been that there is a special community among fly anglers, and they truly enjoy helping each other.

So, my purpose with this message is to raise awareness among SFAOD members of our existence and mission, and to put PHWFF on your "radar" for possible in-kind donations. While all items are appreciated, those related to fly tying – hooks, beads, marabou, etc. – would be useful, and tying vices (with metal bases) would be of particular value. For what it's worth, PHWFF is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization. That means that money and in-kind donations are all tax deductible, and PHWFF headquarters will provide you with a helpful tax form.

Given the chance, I'll repeat most of this during our next SFAOD meeting. But, with this message I'm hoping to reach the entire membership, including those who might not be there on meeting nights. Whether F2F or via email, I'll gladly answer questions you might have about any facet of our program. Thanks. Jim

James DiDonato

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PROJECT HEALING WATERS FLY FISHING ♦ DOVER PROGRAM  
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[Please Stay Safe](#)



That's Roy Miller with a weakfish taken on the Henlopen Flats on July 21.  
The lead picture was taken on the Flats that same night by Roy Miller