

Crossroads Anglers

FLYFISHING CLUB SINCE 1994

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 • 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

From the President



Well, as I am writing this month's letter, once again I am buried in snow. I had the same experience last month as I was writing February's letter. As we all know, the snow will melt and we will be out fishing soon.

Last month was a great meeting.

Larry Grant is an excellent tyer and one hell of a fishing historian. Everyone who was there was telling me how well the meeting went. Anyone who was not there was missed.

I want to congratulate Chip Metzger who won a trip with Dave Porreca.

The March meeting should be a great one. Gary Nelson from the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries will speak on the state of the stripe bass and river herring. This should be very interesting!

Don't forget we are having another raffle with Cory this year for a guided trip in saltwater. Capt. Cory is a great guide and will be speaking to the Club in April.

In May, we are having our annual cook out, so plan to attend and make sure you bring a rod! We would like to have everyone fishing on the pond — stocked by the state with trout.

Invite a friend to come to the meeting we always are looking for new members.

Unpack you rods and reels. We WILL be fishing soon!

—Joel

March 2013 Speaker: Dr. Gary Nelson

The Status of Striped Bass and River Herring on the Atlantic Coast



Dr. Gary Nelson

Please come hear Gary speak at the March meeting! It promises to be very interesting and informative.

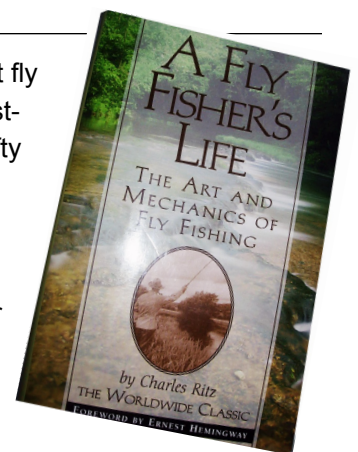
Gary has worked for the Division of Marine Fisheries since 2001 and currently heads the fish biology program. His main duties include stock assessment, analysis and statistical modeling of striped bass and river herring. He's also the Massachusetts representative on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries

Commission striped bass technical, stock assessment and tagging subcommittees, and the river herring stock assessment subcommittee. He is currently the chair of the striped bass stock assessment subcommittee.

In the early days of learning about fly casting I watched the great fly casters including Charles Ritz and Lefty Kreh.

A neat book is *A Fly Fisher's Life* by Charles Ritz – be sure to get the third edition. He has a chapter in the latest edition on health. (You can get this book on Alibris.com or Abe Books cheap). This

chapter is written for people getting on in age that still want to fish. Check it out, good stuff. —Armand



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Decline Blamed On Weather No Catch Restrictions Planned

By Timothy B. Wheeler, The Baltimore Sun

October 16, 2012

The number of young striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay fell to a record low this year, a drastic decline from a near-record high the year before, state officials reported Tuesday.

State biologists checking Maryland's part of the bay found the fewest newly spawned striped bass that they've tallied in any year since annual surveys for the fish began 59 years ago, the Department of Natural Resources reported.

Maryland's state fish, also known as rockfish, is closely monitored because it supports a multimillion-dollar recreational and commercial fishing industry that employs thousands. The species is widely regarded as one of the bright spots in the 30-year effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay; its population rebounded from near-collapse in the 1980s after a five-year fishing moratorium.

Though state officials said the decline probably was the result of unfavorable weather during spawning season, some recreational fishing advocates urged vigilance.

"We expected the numbers to be low, but by no means did we expect them to be this low," said Tony Friedrich, executive director of the Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland. "It does concern us."

The upper bay is the spawning ground and nursery for three-fourths of the striped bass that migrate along the East Coast.

In the Maryland survey, the number of little striped bass counted in each haul during a three-month sampling of traditional spawning areas was more than 90 percent below the long-term average.

Virginia scientists reported similarly poor reproduction in their survey of the southern portion of the bay.

DNR officials said there appeared to be plenty of adult striped bass returning to the bay's rivers to spawn this year, but that unusually warm, dry weather last winter and spring spelled doom for their offspring.

Eric Durell, leader of the department's striped bass survey, said newly hatched larvae are particularly sensitive to envi-

ronmental conditions such as the flow, clarity and temperature of the water. In past years when ample rain fell around spawning season, the number of juvenile fish found was higher, he noted, but this year saw near-record low flows in bay tributaries.

"We think that this year we just did not have the flow necessary for larval survival," Durell said.

Similar fish such as white perch, river herring and yellow perch also had poor reproduction this year, bolstering scientists' belief that weather was to blame for the striped bass decline. Like striped bass, those species return to spawn in rivers after spending much of their lives in the Atlantic Ocean.

State officials said reproduction varies from year to year, so even this extremely poor showing was no cause to clamp down on fishing.

"One year of reproductive failure isn't itself a disaster for a species like this," said Durell. "We're not overfished; we're not overfishing."

He said that the number and age range of adult fish remains good but noted

that scientists are in the midst of taking a new look at the health of the striped bass population, which should be finished next year.

Last year's survey found the fourth-highest number of juvenile striped bass ever, easing anxiety about the species' sustainability. Spawning survival had been sub-par in four of the previous five years, and many adult fish in the bay have been suffering from mycobacteriosis, a disease that some have linked to a shortage of food for striped bass, particularly menhaden.

Until the 2011 uptick, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates fishing in coastal waters, was considering a proposal to reduce the striped bass harvest by 40 percent.

Lynn Fegley, assistant state fisheries director, said the commission's striped bass management plan does not require harvest reductions unless there are three years of poor reproduction in a row.

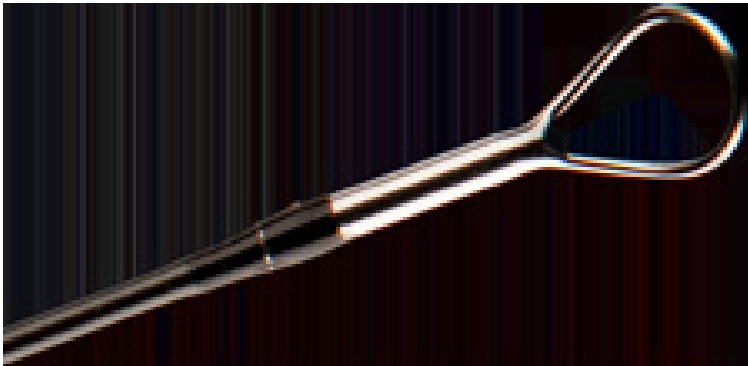
Commission members have talked about increasing conservation efforts for striped bass, Fegley acknowledged, but she said the current plan has been successful at sustaining the fish population despite reproduction ups and downs.

William Goldsborough, senior fisheries scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a member of the Atlantic States commission, said the drop is "certainly something to keep an eye on ... but I'm not terribly concerned."

Independent fisheries experts said the poor reproduction this year was not cause for panic, because striped bass can spawn repeatedly over their lifespan and good years can balance out the bad.

"This is a fish that has many times at bat," said David Secor, a fisheries ecologist with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences. "It can wait out a year or two or three, maybe more."

But "if we have more of these years," Secor added, "it means we could have diminished fisheries." ■



How Rod Design and Manufacturing Influences Performance

The sensitivity of a fly rod can easily be influenced by the first three inches of a fly rod. When crafting a premium fly rod, most builders begin by determining guide placement beginning from the tip of the rod. Guide spacing is more precise when done from the tip, in theory and practice, the weaker more fragile part of the rod, hence a quality tip top guide is critical to how the rod will perform.

The least amount of weight placed at the tip will enhance how sensitive the rod will feel in your hand. As a result, many

rod and component manufactures look for ways to reduce the tip weight during rod design. There are several factors that can influence tip weight, the material used to manufacture the tip top guide, the length and weight of the tube that joins the tip top guide to the blank, as well as the amount of epoxy that is protecting the wrap at the top of the rod.

When you purchase your next fly rod, pay attention to the materials and construction of the tip top guide. It could very well be the reason you like or dislike the rod you're casting.

"Three-fourths of the Earth's surface is water, and one-fourth is land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn." — Chuck Clark



Why the Fishing is Down On Outer Cape Cod

by Doug Fraser
dfraser@capecodonline.com
December 17, 2012

PROVINCETOWN — Rich Wood knows the names and faces of the people from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut who used to come here in the fall to surfcast for giant striped bass with the magnificent white dunes as a backdrop and a wild frothy ocean before them.

They don't come anymore to the beaches along the back side of the Outer Cape, Wood said, because it's too hard to catch anything with the number of seals feeding there.

"Business has changed dramatically," said Wood, who recently had to close one of his two tackle shops. "You can't beat July and August but traditionally mid-September to mid-October would be big, my #2 season. But people stopped coming.

"My business is really down," he said.

Fishermen and business owners blame the resurgence of the gray seal population on the Cape and Islands over the past decade — 5,611 in 1999 compared with an estimated 15,756 in 2011 — for killing off a traditional fall fishery that brought in money in the off-season and helped the Cape gain a measure of fame in the recreational fishing world for catching big bass.

"I have heard the same things," said Owen Nichols, director of marine fisheries research at the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies.

Nichols is researching the interaction among seals, fishermen and their prey. He is also a member of the newly formed Northwest Atlantic Seal Research Consortium, based at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, which brings scientists, fishery managers and fishermen together to tackle some of these problems.

"It's very difficult to quantify without direct observation of how

much seals are capturing or the more complicated issue of them driving fish offshore," Nichols said. "Fishermen at this point are the best source of the information we do have; however, we need more quantitative evidence."

Nichols said a public forum on seals is in the works for March.

Before he bought Nelson's Bait & Tackle in Provincetown eight years ago, Wood was one of those fall fishermen. He traveled from Connecticut and stayed for two weeks at the end of September into the beginning of October, at the iconic Days' Cottages along Route 6A in North Truro. Now, when he drives by, he can't help but take a wistful glance at the cottages.

"I look over at those little Monopoly cottages and see the cars and see if they have any rod racks on them," Wood recalled. "Normally, there'd be one in front of every little cottage. Now? Nothing."

"I never thought I'd see the day," said Tony Stetzko of Orleans, who once held the International Game Fish Association all-tackle world record with a 73-pound striper caught on Nauset Beach in Orleans in 1981. He used to go by boat to relatively isolated beaches on Monomoy Island off Chatham to get away from the fall crowds. This fall, he said he pretty much had Nauset Beach to himself.

"It's all done. Everybody knows it now," said Stetzko, who said his fishing guide business has suffered from the decline.

"The Outer Beach doesn't do it anymore in the fall," said Lee Boisvert, owner of Riverview Bait and Tackle in South Yarmouth. Boisvert said his beach surfcasting business is way down with most people opting to go on boats or fish the Cape Cod Canal where the seals haven't yet had a big impact.

"I've pretty much stopped fishing the back shore due to the presence of seals," said longtime fisherman Lou MacKeil, vice president in charge of environmental affairs for the Cape Cod Salties sportfishing club. "Trying to get a striped bass in among those seals is impossible. That's why no one is fishing out there in the fall."

The abundance of seals is just one of many possible reasons given for a 74 percent drop in the recreational landing of striped bass between 2006 and 2011. In recent years, bad weather and environmental conditions have led to poor survival rates for larval and juvenile bass in the Chesapeake Bay, where many of our fish originate. Mycobacteriosis, an opportunistic, widespread and potentially fatal bacterial disease, may also be affecting Chesapeake populations.

Still, scientists and fishery managers say the striped bass population is robust, with the females 148 percent over what is considered a healthy threshold. On Cape, some wonder if warming inshore water temperatures may be too high for bass. There are also fewer small fish inshore, possibly driving the bass offshore beyond the reach of a rod cast from the beach.

"We've had tons of sand eels, but not close to shore," Wood

said. The 100 or so vessels visible off beaches in the summer commercial season are catching bass that no longer come inshore, Stetzko said, because seals have eaten the smaller fish.

Stetzko made a clapping sound over the phone, mimicking the sound of small flounder known as sand dabs that would wash ashore at night.

"They'd be everywhere, and you'd hear them flapping at your feet," he said. He thinks the seals have gobbled them up.

"As soon as dusk came, you could go hole to hole until you found the bait fish and if you knew what you were doing you'd find (bass)," Stetzko said. "Those are the bass that used to come onto the shore at night, but the fish know if they come in, they will be harassed by those seals — and those were big fish."

MacKeil and Boisvert said the seals are spreading into Nantucket Sound and are now a relatively common sight at many of the Cape's rivers.

"Every day, every month, every year, there are more and more," Stetzko said. "It's just devastating what has happened to surf fishermen along Cape Cod."

David Collyer's Grey Nymph Utilizing Grey Heron herl

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) is not a common fly tying material in the UK these days explains Paul Davis, mainly thanks to it being a protected species and therefore not commercially available. But many old patterns prescribe its use and a dead bird can provide useful salvage material!

I'm not too surprised when someone shoves a brown envelope into my hands with furtive glances. Well unless it contains a large amount of used twenties and a whispered warning to make yourself scarce before Mr Big catches up with you. Therefore when, at a Sussex Fly Dressers Guild Thursday tying evening at Patcham, the chairman of the main guild at that time, Alan Middleton, thrust a brown envelope into my paws I thought it might be a pay off from the main guild to stop writing these articles! However looking at the scrawl on the front - *Ardea cinerea* - it was clear that a few Grey Heron feathers wouldn't buy many personal desert islands.

Alan indicated I should cast these treasurers widely so I passed them on to whoever fancied them as I didn't need any for myself as I still largely had most of a complete set of wings from a dead Heron I found whilst out walking last March.

It occurred to me that only a few people decided to have some – and I wondered whether this was down to the fact that heron, specifically herl from the primary and secondary feathers (the main flight feathers of the wing) is hardly used in trout flies these days. Now this is obviously linked to supply and demand – with Heron being a protected species the material doesn't appear in catalogues for sale and it is only those available to those who make use of any dead bird or discarded feather found on their countryside outings. It set me thinking that maybe it might be worth tying up a few of these old patterns.



(and as I surprisingly discovered some quite new patterns).

I dusted off my memory banks, had a rifle through my fly boxes and came up with the following pattern. Before falling into the detail of the pattern I should mention that any of the long wing feathers or even the tail feathers from a heron yield very usable herl and it should be cut off and used very much like pheasant tail fibres. However heron herl is more fragile than pheasant and I apply the following tactic when making a herl body as it makes it slightly easier to tie and also more resistant to fish teeth and gives a nicer segmented abdomen effect than herl alone: When laying down the underbody of thread do not clip off the waste thread but keep it attached. Then when the heron herl is tied in take this trailing piece of thread and wrap it around the herl. Grasping both the herl and the thread wrap the body as normal and then tie both the herl and thread at the thorax point.

Grey Nymph

One of the David Collyer trio of nymphs for the reservoirs – probably the most famous of the three as this fly was used

to catch the fly-caught record rainbow trout back in the early 1970's. In my tying I have substituted the very precise description of 'grey with white tips ostrich herl' for just plain white ostrich herl. I also prefer slightly longer tails than some may tie or consider in proportion but I think this gives the fly slightly more 'wiggle factor'. With either of these modifications the fish don't seem to care!

Hook: Size 10 Heavy Wet Hook (e.g. Kamasan B175).

Thread: Black.

Tail: Tips of four or five strands of heron herl. These are the tips of the herl that are tied in to form the body.

Body: Four or five strands of heron herl.

Rib: Silver oval tinsel.

Thorax: Grey with white tips ostrich Herl. The waste ends of the heron herl are tied over the back to create wing cases.

N.B. Dr Paul Davis, to give him his full title, is the current Vice Chairman of the Fly Dressers Guild. When he is not fly fishing or fly tying he sometimes turns up for work as Registrar at the Natural History Museum.

FUN IN FEBRUARY!



Special *Savings* for Crossroads Members

Discounts will be offered to members of the Crossroads Anglers who show their Club membership card to the following businesses when they reserve their date out on the water:

Captain David Porecca, River & Riptide Anglers
 Fly & Light Tackle Charter and Guide Service
10 percent discount for Crossroads Anglers Members
 401-392-1919, www.riverandriptide.com

Captain Gary Swanson, Striper-Charters
 13 Harbour Hill Run, South Yarmouth, MA 02664
 508-353-4009, CaptSwanson@Striper-Charters.com

Captain Vern (Rob) Robinson & Son, Rock N Reel 24
 85 Seymour Street, Berkley, MA 02779, 508-822-6756

Capt. Tom W.
 Private Charters for both Fresh & Saltwater Guide Service
 Conventional & Fly-fishing
15 percent discount for Crossroads Anglers Members
 781-408-1215



Yeah, right!

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~ March 2013 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 Board Meeting 6:30pm	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 St Patty's Day	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Regular Meeting at Foxboro Community Center 6:30-9pm With Dr. Gary Nelson	27 	28	29 Good Friday	30
31 Easter	Notes:					

~ April 2013 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Board Meeting 6:30pm	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Pay Your Taxes Or Go to Jail Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Earth Day	23 Regular Meeting at Foxboro Community Center 6:30-9pm	24	25 	26 Arbor Day	27
28	29	30	Notes:			