



# CHESAPEAKE TIDE



Breaking News

SPRING 2003

## CCA Catch-of-the-Day CHOPTANK FLATTIES

by Gordon Ries

One of the great privileges we have as Delmarva fishermen is the ability to fish the fertile waters of the Choptank River. This river, only minutes away for most of us, provides a marvelous opportunity to target a variety of fish and enjoy some of the best fishing on the East Coast. While I fish almost every day from spring to December, and I enjoy all types of fishing, my one true love is fishing for flatties. I began my flounder fishing under the tutelage of Keith Walters and Jim Walker, two neighborhood geezers who truly taught me most of what I use today. Loaded up with homemade spinner rigs painted with Jim's "John Deere" yellow paint, a sixteen foot aluminum boat, and lots of minnows, we'd travel to Folly's Creek on cold spring mornings to attack the unsuspecting flounder making their spring run into Virginia waters. The trips were great fun, and we caught fish, but the long drive got old in a hurry. As spring turned to summer and I continued fishing under these two icons, I discovered the Choptank flounder. Same fish, close to home, what a deal. The past five or six years I've been working hard at perfecting all aspects of my flounder fishing, hoping one day to move into the "geezers class." My success over the past several years, and the fast approaching 64<sup>th</sup> birthday, are indicators that I'm almost there.



Flounders, while not as plentiful as some of the other species in the river, can be found on almost any good edge at the 15 - 40 foot depth level. There are many such edges from the mouth of the river to the Route 50 bridge in Cambridge, and all will produce fish at some time during the summer. Flounder are very aggressive feeders and like other fish, station themselves on an edge or hump and wait for the tide/current to bring food to them. Unlike other fish, they settle in the mud and launch their surprise attack from

## CCA JOINS SALTWATER COMMUNITY TO TACKLE TOUGH ISSUES

Eighty representatives of the saltwater fishing and boating community, including CCA representatives from three states, including Maryland, met with leaders from the National Marine Fisheries Service for an expansive dialogue on marine conservation and recreation issues in St. Pete Beach, Florida, February 24-25, 2003. The gathering, spearheaded by the American Sportfishing Association and its president, Mike Nussman, a CCA Maryland member, laid the groundwork for collaboration on federal policy-making that will better represent fishing and boating constituencies.

The Sportfishing Leadership Conference was co-sponsored by BoatUS, the Billfish Foundation, International Game Fish Association, National Marine Manufacturers Association, and Recreational Fishing Alliance in addition to CCA. Boy Hayes, CCA general counsel and a CCA Maryland member served as conference moderator.

Federal participants included Dr. Bill Hogarth, assistant administrator for Fisheries, Jack Dunnigan, director of Sustainable Fisheries for the NMFS and Rollie Schmitt, NMFS director of Habitat Conservation as well as Dr. Ron Baird, director of the National Sea Grant College Program and Margot Jackson, NMFS senior policy advisor.

"We had a lot of ground to cover on several longstanding issues, yet everyone came ready to share their perspectives, expertise, and experiences with the common goal to come away with a better understanding of what we need to accomplish together in the future," Nussman reported following the meeting. "Saltwater anglers and boaters were well represented by this group, and we appreciated the goodwill and investment of time from Bill Hogarth and other agency leaders. Everyone demonstrated a strong commitment to work together to keep our ocean fish healthy and protect the fishing and boating experience."

A series of panel presentations prefaced teamwork to come up with resolutions for current obstacles to progress. Presenters covered topics such as catch allocations for commercial and recreational fishing,

**"Everyone demonstrated a strong commitment to work together".**

## THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

by Karen Ripple



**Nationally,  
our right to  
fish has  
come under  
attack.**

**S**hadbush is blooming. Anglers once connected the appearance of the curly white blossoms of this small woodland tree with the shad run and the delicacy of shad roe. The yellow perch spawning run is past, and the striped bass and white perch runs are on—fishing season is now officially OPEN! It was a long winter and one of the hardest we've seen in many years, but we made it through and our reward will be a great fishing season. I'm always an optimist, but maybe more so this year after a winter that's refused to let go.

We've also weathered a difficult legislative session under a new governor. Some of our goals were achieved and some came close. Personnel changes at DNR have thrown some wild cards into the mix of politics and science that will take time to figure out.

Nationally, our right to fish has come under attack. First, recreational anglers in California faced prohibitions on fishing in the Channel Islands—not because of any scientific information that this would help the fishery, but based on theory and rhetoric that is frighteningly like that used by the anti-hunting movement. It's difficult to understand how anglers (and hunters) who have such a long history of conservation can be vilified as enemies of the resources we've sought so long to protect. Now other jurisdictions besides California are coming under siege—are we next? For more information on the Freedom to Fish Act visit [www.FreedomToFish.org](http://www.FreedomToFish.org).

During the next few months, CCA MD will host a national CCA meeting, our new website will go online, and plans will be developed for a workshop to chart the future of CCA MD. Your officers will be attending meetings to help formulate plans for better management of our fisheries resources as well as attending to routine duties. A lot of hard work goes into our successes at every level.

But CCA MD is more than meetings, banquets, and membership events. CCA MD is a group of concerned anglers sharing information, learning how to make a

difference, and then setting out to do just that. We CAN make a difference. Working together we ARE making a difference here in Maryland. We have a "seat at the table" on most fisheries committees. Our new DNR secretary, Ron Franks, is a CCA MD member. And with our legislative email program, local legislators know where we stand on matters affecting our fisheries resources.

Some CCA MD members deserve special thanks for their vision of what we can accomplish and their long days of service towards those goals. Brian O'Hare,

*continued on page 6*



A CCA Maryland license plate will be available shortly displaying our red unifish logo. We will be eligible to order these new plates when we receive 25 commitments. We're almost there, so it shouldn't be hard to reach the minimum. If you're interested, send a check in the amount of \$25, payable to MVA, to CCA MD, 101 Ridgely Ave, Suite 12-A, Annapolis, MD 21401. This is a one time fee of \$25, future registrations won't cost you anymore than a standard registration renewal. Please include your current license number for the plate you'll be replacing. Your new plate will be sent directly to you.

**ChesapeakeTide/Breaking News** is published four times a year by the Coastal Conservation Association Maryland, a non-profit organization of recreational anglers dedicated to marine resource conservation and science-based fisheries management.

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## CCA MD 2003 Legislative Wrap-Up

Brian O'Hare, Chairman, Government Affairs Committee



The 2003 General Assembly session ended on April 7 after a turbulent 90 days. On balance, CCA MD did very well this session. We defeated 2 bad bills. We took action that resulted in the proposed crab regulations being modified so that they conformed to Maryland's commitment to reduce projected harvest by 15% (*see article on page 5*). We failed, however, to get our legislation to peer review fishery management plans (FMPs) passed. We held our first legislative reception and gained some new advocates on the House Environmental Matters Committee (ENV). We launched a program to have Legislative District Coordinators (LDCs) in a number of districts establish a relationship with their legislators and we significantly expanded our Government Affairs Committee.

Here is what happened on the legislation we lobbied:

### **SB 474 - Secretary of Natural Resources - Consideration of Information and Economic Impact (Sens. Colburn and Stoltzfus) –**

This was the most disturbing legislation we have seen yet. It proposed to revise the mission of the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) so that the Secretary would have 2 responsibilities, protect the state's natural resources, and in doing so, consider the best economic and social information and the economic impact on the state. Since there will always be an economic case for taking scarce or endangered natural resources, we saw this bill as presenting the Secretary with an impossible conflict. The Secretary's position exists to protect the state's natural resources from those who would endanger them for economic gain, so we viewed this as a very bad bill.

We were the only conservation group opposed to this bill. The DNR, astonishingly, supported the bill. We were successful in narrowly defeating the bill in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

(EHE) Committee with the help of Sens. Pinsky (Dist. 22), Grosfeld (Dist. 18), Schrader (Dist. 13), Britt (Dist. 47), Conway (Dist. 43) and Chairman Hollinger (Dist. 11).

### **HB 65 - Fishery Management Plans - Goals, Elements, and Scientific Peer Review (Del. Schisler)**

This bill, which Del. Schisler introduced at our request, modernized the process by which the DNR develops Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). It expanded the allowable objectives of FMPs, introduced adaptive management to the process and required the independent peer review of FMPs by outside scientific experts.

The bill was introduced early in the session and was unopposed. The DNR, however, introduced a substantial number of amendments at the ENV Committee hearing. With the assistance of Del. Schisler, we were able to incorporate the appropriate amendments and reject others that dealt with the allocation process, which we had crafted the bill to avoid. The bill received a favorable Committee report, with the able assistance of Dels. Owings (Dist. 27B) and Sossi (Dist. 36), and subsequently passed the House by a vote of (139 – 1).

In the Senate, we testified before the EHE Committee and learned that the Committee had not reported any bill containing a fiscal note. HB 65 had a fiscal note that estimated it would take 2 full time planners to oversee the peer reviews. While this was clearly far in excess of the effort that would be required, we were unable to resolve the fiscal note issue in time to get the bill favorably reported by the EHE Committee. The bill died in Committee and we learned some tough lessons.

### **SB 698 (Sen. Stoltzfus) and HB 1159 (Del. Elmore et al)- Natural Resources - Oysters - Power Dredging**

See "CCA Defends Oysters from Power Dredging" on page 6.

### **SB 248 & HB 344 - Potomac River Fisheries Commission - Dredging of Oysters and Oyster Repletion Fees**

See "CCA Defends Oysters from Power Dredging" on page 6.

### **SB 475 (Sen. Colburn) and HB 820 (Del. Schisler) - Study of the Suminoe Oyster - Findings of the National Academy of Sciences**

We supported both bills with amendments to improve the biosecurity of any tests. HB 820 passed the House, but both died in the Senate EHE Committee.

**We  
defeated  
2 bad bills.**


## Angler Alert: Fishing Line Can Kill

*A message from the  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

**T**he Chesapeake Bay has some of the finest fishing on the East Coast. In Maryland and Virginia, more than 414,000 anglers fish the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries from late March through November. The Chesapeake Bay supports one of the largest nesting populations of osprey, with approximately 3,600 breeding pairs within the Bay. While anglers are fishing the Bay, these magnificent birds fly, build nests and raise their young.

Ospreys are very tolerant of humans and will fish and nest close to populated communities. They line their nests with a variety of natural and manmade materials. Ospreys pick up manmade materials such as paper, plastic rope and fishing line. Some of these prove to be deadly.

Osprey young have been found in their nests entangled in fishing line or impaled with fishing hooks. Adults can also become entangled in fishing line. Legs, wings and beaks can become so tangled that the bird will not be able to stand, fly, or eat. Conservative estimates indicate that 5-10 percent of nests have fishing line in them.

You can help. Anglers can reduce the injuries or deaths to ospreys and other wildlife simply by properly discarding fishing line and hooks. Retrieve broken lines, lures and hooks and deposit them in trash containers or take them with you. Help protect Chesapeake Bay wildlife. 

**Osprey  
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*Legislative Wrap-up continued from page 3*


**SB 535 (Sen. Dyson) - Natural Resources - Fishery Management Plans - Sport Fishing and HB 1160 (Del. Redmer et al) - Maryland Freedom to Fish Act**

Both bills were introduced on behalf of the Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association (MSSA). Due to differences in the text of the bills, they were not cross-filed bills. CCA MD testified favorable with amendments on the Senate bill for technical reasons (we saw the language as overly broad, a flaw corrected in the House bill). The DNR also sought to amend the bill, and at the Chair's suggestion, the parties met at the DNR and hammered out mutually acceptable language. Subsequent to this meeting, "the fourth floor" at the DNR rewrote the bill in a move that was high-handed to say the least. We made one last attempt to correct the language, but MSSA opted to have the bill referred to summer study.

The House version met a similar fate after hearings in which a number of groups testified in opposition to the concept of "freedom to fish". The genie is now out of the bottle and we can expect to see pressure, in the not too distant future, to create more "no fishing zones" where ALL fishing is prohibited.

Even a cursory review of the paragraphs above should be convincing evidence that the fisheries of Maryland are in peril of legitimized overexploitation via legislation and regulation. In addition, there are groups that believe that you should not have the right to fish, even in cases where your fishing does not threaten the fish you seek. They espouse an "ecosystem view" that says that any taking of a single species upsets the ecology and should be stopped.


You joined CCA MD because you care about Maryland's fisheries, you want to see them restored to health and made sustainable for future generations. Belonging to CCA MD, however, isn't enough. You need to participate in the political process and let your legislators know that you want them to support sustainable fisheries in Maryland.

If your legislator is one of the highlighted individuals who supported us, please call or write and let them know that you appreciate their support. If you don't see your legislator's name, or your legislator opposed CCA, call or write to let them know you're disappointed. Make it a point, between now and next January, to meet with your legislators and ask them to support CCA MD's goals. Your legislators will be pleased to know that you are interested and in many cases will comply with your wishes, but only if you ask. It makes a difference! You can make a difference! 

*Saltwater Community continued from page 3*

representation on the eight regional fisheries management councils with responsibility for ocean fisheries and those that migrate inland, and the role of marine protected areas in marine management.

The group made recommendations to NMFS and its parent agency, the U.S. Department of Commerce, that focused on better representation for sport anglers, a stronger role for recreational fishing in management decisions and a common sense approach on Marine Protected Areas.

"From Alaska to Florida, the saltwater community was united on the common issues that need addressing," said Nussman. "The challenge is there's still a lot of work to be done on our end, too. We are committed to providing the leadership to keep the dialogue and progress going strong for saltwater fisheries." 

## CCA Successfully Opposes Crab Grab


CCA MD successfully defended an effort to break Maryland's commitment to reduce crab harvest by 15% over 3 years. Maryland, Virginia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission entered into the agreement in 2000 through the Chesapeake Bay Program's Bi-State Blue Crab Advisory Commission (BBCAC). The goal of the reductions, recommended by 25 top scientists in the field, was to increase the spawning stock biomass to improve recruitment of juvenile crabs.

The effort to rollback recently imposed crabbing regulations designed to comply with Maryland's commitment began when DNR estimated that if we fished under last year's regulations in 2003, which happens to be year 3 of the plan, Maryland would achieve a 17.7% decrease in harvest. Erring on the side of conservation isn't in the commercial crabbers' playbook, so they decided to take their case to the new leadership at DNR with the help of the Eastern Shore Delegation to get their 2.7% back.

But when the Eastern Shore Delegation met with DNR officials with their wish list, DNR discovered that their wish list sought much more than 2.7%. DNR estimated that if they granted these wishes, a reduction of less than 7%, less than half the agreed upon 15%, would have been achieved. DNR persuaded members of the delegation such a proposal wouldn't have a chance of being implemented.

That's how DNR's proposed emergency regulations that caused such controversy were born. They proposed regulations that would, according to their own calculations, result in a 14.6% reduction. Emergency regulations such as these can be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) if 1 member requests a hearing. CCA told DNR that their proposal would have to add up to the 15% reduction or we would ask an ally on the committee to request a hearing. At the last minute, an agreement with DNR was reached and we had our request for a hearing withdrawn, but several members of the AELR committee were committed to holding the hearing. At the hearing, Del. Wood, who happens to co-chair the AELR committee and who also is the Maryland representative to the Bi-State Blue Crab Advisory Commission (BBCAC), set the tone early. As the "ambassador" from Maryland to BBCAC, he made it clear we were going to live up to the agreement of a 15% reduction, and anything less would be rejected. The crabbers and their representatives quickly realized he was serious and everyone fell in line with the amended proposal CCA and DNR had negotiated. In fact,

during the hearing, this proposal was amended again to provide a small cushion. The final proposed regulations will achieve an estimated 15.2% reduction.

This achievement isn't going to "save" the blue crab, but it was encouraging to see the legislators hold their ground in a hearing room packed with commercial crabbers. Every time an issue such as this arises, it presents us an opportunity to lobby legislators and remind them the resource belongs to all of us and management decisions shouldn't be based on short term economic factors. Call it a tiny step in the right direction, and it wouldn't have happened without CCA. 


## Angler Participation Sought for Data on Striped Bass, Flounder and Shad

**B**ecause of the monitoring of sales of commercially caught species, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has fairly reliable length distribution and catch per unit effort (CPUE) data from the commercial fishing industry. Adequate data on recreationally caught species is more difficult to obtain and is best acquired from angler surveys. Recreational anglers can make a valuable contribution to the management of our fisheries with the investment of a small amount of time by participating in these surveys.

Results of a fishing trip for striped bass or flounder can be reported on the internet at [www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries), then by clicking on the link for Recreational. You'll see the links for the surveys. You can also participate by mail using forms and postage paid envelopes.

It is important to measure and record all fish caught and not just the ones kept so that length frequency data can be derived. The length of time fished is also important so that CPUE can be calculated. Although an angler may be reluctant to report an unsuccessful trip during which no fish were caught, the time spent fishing even without results is important.

Shad fishermen can participate by keeping a log and returning it at the end of the season.

Please consider participating in these surveys and thereby contributing to the optimal management of our fisheries. 

**The final proposed regulations will achieve an estimated 15.2% reduction.**

## CCA Defends Oysters from Power Dredging

Apparently the oyster exploitationists aren't satisfied that our native oyster is decimated. Incredibly, instead of proposing measures to restore the oyster population that they depend on, not to mention that the Bay's water quality depends on, the watermen sought to bring back power dredging from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Back when oysters were plentiful, Maryland officials had the wisdom to outlaw power dredging as a method that was too efficient. At a time when oysters are at historic lows, Maryland officials sought to bring back this destructive fishing method.


Despite claims by advocates of power dredging, available scientific evidence shows that there is no improvement in spat set as a result of "cleaning" shell during oyster season. In order to improve spat set, the cleaning would have to take place in the weeks before spawning, most years in June. What we do know is that power dredging activity destroys oyster bar fish habitat. In CCA's opinion, this bill had 1 goal, to increase oyster harvest to save a dying industry.

CCA's campaign against power dredging extended to 4 bills and culminated with SB 698, introduced by Sen. Stoltzfus. The bill proposed to expand power dredging, potentially to the entire Bay. The bill lifted many of the restrictions contained in Sen. Stoltzfus' 2000 bill that allowed power dredging in 4 counties. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) had worked with Sen. Stoltzfus and testified favorable with amendment. Sherm Baynard, on behalf of CCA, had sat in on the meetings with the Senator and CBF, but concluded that the bill could not be amended to make it acceptable. CCA's concerns centered on the spread of power dredging and the relaxation of the restrictions.

SB 698 passed the Senate's Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee (EHE) after it was amended to include some, but not all of the CBF amendments. It went to the Senate floor on crossover day and at our request, Sen. Brian Frosh (Dist. 16) requested that the bill be laid over. Ordinarily, this action would have caused the bill to miss the crossover and require that it go before the House Rules Committee, but the maneuver did not work. The bill passed the Senate (37-10) on the next day which was the same "legislative day", crossover day, and was referred to the House's Environmental Matters Committee (ENV).

ENV had been through 2 bills dealing with power dredging, HB344, authorization for the Potomac

River Fisheries Commission to allow it, and HB 1159, the companion to SB 698, which was being held by the Chair, Del. McIntosh. Previously, Dels. Liz Bobo (Dist. 12B), Karen Montgomery (Dist. 14), and Virginia Claggett (Dist. 30) had fought tenaciously to stop power dredging. CCA provided them with additional detailed information. We also enlisted the help of Del. Marvin Holmes (Dist. 23B). CBF finally joined us in opposing the bill after the sponsor rejected some of their amendments. The happy result was that the Committee reported both HB 1159 and SB 698 unfavorable and they died on April 4.

CCA MD sincerely appreciates the effort and energy that Dels. Bobo, Montgomery and Claggett expended on our behalf. They were outnumbered and were put under a lot of pressure, but prevailed in the end. Thanks. 

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*Chairman's Message continued from page 3*


Chairman of the Legislative Affairs Committee; Sherman Baynard, Chairman of the Fisheries Committee; Ken Lewis, Past Chairman of CCA MD; John Roen, Past President of CCA MD; and Jim Flannery, Past Vice Chairman of CCA MD—thank you for your unflagging efforts during the legislative session and for everything else you do when the legislature is not in town.

Thanks to each chapter president and their dedicated volunteers for planning and executing successful banquets, super seminars, and other events that keep us funded and continually push our membership numbers upwards. The louder our voice, the easier it will be to gain the attention needed to effectively advocate for our fisheries resources.

And to all the unsung heroes within each chapter, the ones who send emails to their legislators, coach kids on fishing, survey yellow perch egg masses, serve on committees, raise yellow perch for release, hang posters, or share fishing tips and hot spots with CCA friends—thank you. You are the backbone of CCA MD; you are the ones who make CCA MD such a great organization. I'm proud not only to be a member of CCA MD, but also to have been chosen to lead the organization. My predecessors have set some very high standards. Thank you for your confidence in me.

*Karen L. Ripple, Chairman*

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Karen has spent many years doing fisheries research with the University of Maryland and Rutgers University, taught high school sciences, and then designed and taught courses for teachers on wetlands construction/restoration which resulted in publication of a curriculum guidebook for educators. She is also an avid angler. 

**This bill had 1 goal, to increase oyster harvest to save a dying industry.**

## CCA Opposes Increase in Commercial Striped Bass Quota

Washington, DC - At a recent meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the Striped Bass Management Board not only voted to increase the coastal commercial quota on striped bass by an astounding 950,000 pounds, it also requested the Secretary of Commerce to allow fishing in the federal waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In response to this move, the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) has reiterated its firm opposition to any increase in the coastal striped bass quota and to opening the EEZ.


"This increase is simply a slap in the face of recreational fisherman," said Richen Brame, CCA's Atlantic States Fisheries Director. "The striped bass population should be managed for what it is - the most valuable marine recreational fisheries in the country. The ASMFC's decision to increase coastal commercial harvest and open the waters of the EEZ greatly diminishes any chance for the age structure of striped bass to expand."

Striped bass, the most popular marine recreational species in the U.S., can live more than 30 years and attain weights in excess of 70 pounds. Past management measures have provided high population levels of smaller bass, but have failed to provide proper conservation for larger, more mature fish. The current vote of the ASMFC accommodates the commercial industry while achieving no additional conservation of the resource, according to CCA.

"The ASMFC has chosen, through the adoption of Amendment 6, to increase harvest by the commercial industry by almost a million pounds," said Pat Keliher, Executive Director for CCA's Greater New England Chapters. "The real benefit of this fishery is keeping it a recreational fishery - not increasing the commercial take. It is insulting that the Board not only chose to increase the harvest, thereby potentially harming the age structure of the stock, but continued its penchant for supporting growth of the coastal commercial catch of striped bass".

Rather than pursue methods of conservation to alleviate the commercial sector's wasteful bycatch, the ASMFC's decision to open the EEZ simply postpones the need to implement a more permanent solution for these destructive fishing practices. CCA maintains that the Board's actions will do nothing to ensure a restoration of the true historic age and size distribution for this vitally important fishery. In voting to essentially reverse a conservative management plan for this valuable public resource, the Board chose to negate years of sacrifice by all participants in this fishery and allow a very narrow sector of commercial interests to reap the benefits.

"CCA's position on Amendment 6 was for an overall reduction in mortality to increase the age structure and for status quo on the commercial /recreational allocation," said Charlie Witek, Vice Chairman of CCA's

National Government Relations Committee. "Now we find they want to keep the recreational and Chesapeake Bay commercial harvest the same, increase the coastal commercial harvest, and open the EEZ to accommodate commercial concerns. CCA members are alarmed that the Commission does not seem to care about the concerns of the largest user - the people who fish for personal use - and instead favors the commercial industry." 

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*Choptank Flatties continued from page 1*

down on the deck. This is primarily a drift fishery so tide, wind, and current can affect where you fish, how you fish, and how successful you're going to be. Our most successful days always occur when wind and tide work in tandem and push the boat at a pretty good clip. You will not out drift these fish if they want what you're offering, and faster drifts on most occasions have produced better (larger)fish.

The tackle most serious flounder fishermen use are seven foot graphite medium to medium-heavy rods with levelwind reels spooled with Fireline or some other sensitive line. The Fireline is attached to a 3 foot length of 30lb leader material with an Albright knot or terminal tackle of the fisherman's choice. At the end of my leader you'll find two chartreuse Colorado blades separated by a series of yellow or pearl # 6 beads and a 2/0 Kayle stainless steel hook. Weighted down with three to four ounces of lead, this rig has historically out fished hair, plastic, and everything else I've tried for five years.

Live bait has produced more fish and better fish than artificials, and the rule is "the bigger the bait, the bigger the fish." We begin the season about mid-May with large bull minnows and switch to cut-bait when the Norfolk Spot arrive. A 4" to 5" long strip of spot is a meal hard to resist for a big flounder, trout, blue fish, and the occasional rockfish. Flounder belly is also a superb bait but the belly has to be taken from a "legal fish" and you must retain the carcass to satisfy DNR if you're stopped.

Many fishermen complain about the move to a 17" size limit, but we've noticed little impact at the end of a day of fishing. Over the past three years (and last year was sub-par), 40% of the fish we've caught have been over 17 inches with a fair percentage over 19 inches. Not only are these beautiful fish, but they yield almost their entire body weight into some of the best eating fillets Delmarva has to offer. So what are you waiting for? Set your minnow trap, grab your gear, and join me for some great flounder fishing.

You can find me and my partner look-a-like, Dick Zeches at the mouth of the Choptank River on most days in the "Lady Di," my 23' Hydra-Sport Center Console, and I'll be doing what I like to do best, catching flatties. For flounder tips contact me @ GRIES@DMV.com 

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**"This increase is simply a slap in the face of recreational fisherman"**



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- \$200 Sponsor- Bronze Lapel pin, CCA print, and member gifts
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- \$1000 Life Membership- Gold Lapel pin, CCA print, and member gifts; payable in \$250 installments
- \$15 Associate Membership- for each additional family member; all member privileges except extra copies of *Tide*
- \$10 New Tide Membership- all individuals 17 and under receive member benefits and *Rising Tide* magazine
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to make an additional donation in the amount indicated to CCA's Maryland Chapter

How did you hear about CCA? \_\_\_\_\_

