



CHESAPEAKE TIDE

Breaking News

Volume 10, Number 4

Late Season Quantity & Quality Striped Bass

By Capt. Tom Hughes

It was 5:30 AM on a dry, crisp morning in mid-November as we waited outside Stingrays Restaurant on Rt. 13 just south of Capt Charles, Virginia. We were discussing yesterday's successful striped bass fishing trip at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) and going over strategies for today's trip. By the time the doors opened we didn't need any coffee to get our adrenaline flowing. Anticipating the many battles with quality striped bass facing us during today's trip was excitement in itself.



Many large stripers like this one caught on Tom's boat last November by angler Jerry Sauter inhabit the waters adjacent to the CBBT.

The CBBT spans 17.6 miles across the foot waters of the Chesapeake Bay, just north of the Atlantic Ocean. 365 days a year this structure is a fish magnet. Striped bass, red and black drum, seatrout, flounder, croakers, and bluefish are a few of the species that visit this stretch of the Bay one time or another during the year.

From mid-November through January the waters around the CBBT hold countless numbers of "big shoulder", "head shaking", and "drag zinging" striped bass. They can be caught on fly or light tackle fishing equipment in all water columns. Last year in 42 degree water we caught quality striped bass on top water flies and poppers. Now that's exciting!

There are a variety of structures that can be productive during the right time of the day. To locate striped bass swift current is the key. The current during both the incoming and outgoing tides is considerably swift as it moves around the 1,589 pilings that support the trestles. Be safe and drift away from the pilings with nothing behind your boat as you

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Persistence and Patience Pays Off for Menhaden

By Dick Brame, Atlantic States Fisheries Director

August 17, 2005, Alexandria, VA- After rejecting Omega Protein's last minute proposed compromise of a voluntary cap of 131,000 metric tons of menhaden harvest from Bay waters, the Menhaden Management Board approved Addendum II with the options recommended by Menhaden Matter, a cooperative effort between your CCA, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the National Coalition for Marine Conservation, and Environmental Defense.

The motion that passed was put forward by Howard King, DNR's Fisheries Service Director and a Maryland Commissioner to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Maryland's delegation was very effective in persuading the Board to reject Omega Protein's proposal in favor of a responsible cap.

Beginning in 2006, Virginia will be required to impose a cap of 105,800 metric tons for menhaden harvest in the Bay or face having the ASMFC declare them out of compliance, which could result in the Secretary of Commerce closing the fishery. The cap represents the reduction industry's average for the last 5 years and will remain in effect for 5 years.

CCA has been the driving force for change in menhaden management since the inception of its CCA-Atlantic States Committee in 1999. The committee's first goal was to change the ASMFC's Menhaden Management Board, at the time the only Board with industry sitting both on the Board as well as the Technical Committee. The industry comprised half of both the Management Board and the Technical Committee – truly a case of the fox guarding the hen house.

Once the Management Board issue was resolved in 2001, we asked for better management, especially after seeing declines in adult menhaden abundance. We partnered with other groups and formed Menhaden Matter. The group's first action was to call for a workshop on the ecological role of menhaden that took place in the fall of 2004.

The workshop exposed that while the menhaden stock on a coastwide basis was judged to be healthy by

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CCA Founder Named “Legend of Fishing”

In the May 2005 issue of *Field & Stream*, writer John Merwin selects 50 legends of fishing, choosing among writers, showmen, teachers, conservationists, innovators, and tycoons. Under the section dedicated to The Conservationists, CCA National Chairman Walter Fondren heads the list for his part in the creation of the Gulf Coast Conservation Association in 1976 and in guiding its evolution into the national Coastal Conservation Association.

Merwin explains that to become a legend, you must have had an impact on the sport

“I am proud to be included with such a prestigious group of anglers, but even more than that, I am glad that the creativity, commitment and perseverance of the tens of thousands of CCA members and volunteers have been recognized,” Fondren said. “You don’t accomplish what CCA has been able to achieve over the past 30 years by working alone. It has been my privilege to work with some of the most dedicated and hard-working people you will ever meet. This kind of recognition validates the work they have done, and will continue to do.”

In crafting the list, Merwin explains that to become a legend, you must have had an impact on the sport. The list spans centuries and includes luminaries such as Izaak Walton, Mary Orvis Marbury, Zane Grey, Ernest Hemingway, Lefty Kreh and John Morris. People on the list “didn’t necessarily catch the most fish or the largest fish, but their contributions changed fishing forever,” Merwin writes.

With Fondren as national chairman CCA has been involved in many impressive conservation victories, including the banning of gill nets in several states, establishing game fish status for species in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, implementing bycatch-reduction guidelines for the shrimp industry, and passing a 1994 constitutional amendment in Florida banning the use of any type of entangling net in state waters.

With more than 90,000 members in more than 180 local chapters in 15 states spanning the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic seaboard, the impact of CCA’s grassroots machine is unparalleled. Determined to “change fishing forever,” CCA has focused on restoring coastal marine resources and bringing them back to healthy levels.

“It is gratifying to see a respected publication like *Field and Stream* recognize Walter Fondren. He was the right man at the right time,” said Alex Jernigan, CCA vice chairman. “Many recreational anglers all over the country knew there were problems that had to be addressed. He was not only able to identify the problem; he had the ability to create the solution. CCA has been the solution for marine resources.”



CCA founder Walter Fondren with a nice striped, err, snook.

ChesapeakeTide/Breaking News is published 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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Fisheries Management: Past, Present, Future and You

Part Three

By Sherman Baynard, Chairman of Fisheries Committee

The first two parts of this series (see Volume X Issues 2 and 3 on our website, www.ccamd.org) discussed the need for a different management strategy by DNR for recreational fisheries, the difficulty managers have in dealing with allocation of the resources, and fee based (fishing licenses) funding for fishery management.

Recreational anglers are strong supporters of marine fisheries conservation. We demonstrate that fact with our willingness to adopt conservation actions for the good of the resource even when they negatively impact our own fishing activity. We also provide the majority of Maryland's Fisheries Service funding, while working for good fishery management. In addition, our pursuit of saltwater fish provides a huge economic benefit to the state as demonstrated in the comparison of commercial and recreational annual economic impact for recreationally important saltwater species (see chart).

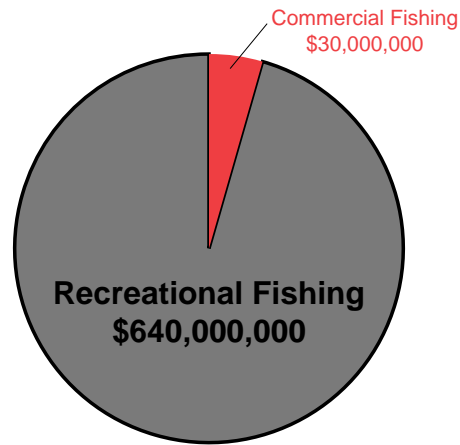
It is difficult to understand why general funds that support fishery management continue to be reduced, but we have to face the facts that other budget items, such as education, health, and public safety, are given a higher priority. If we accept the premise that Maryland fishery management is moving toward fee based funding, then what can we expect in the future?

The commercial fishing industry has repeatedly stated that they cannot and will not pay higher fees for the privilege to exploit our state's marine resources. Recreational anglers then become the major remaining source for additional funding for fishery management. Are Maryland's recreational anglers willing to again step up and support fishery management through higher license fees and if so what should we require in return?

CCA MD believes recreational saltwater anglers are willing to accept reasonable license fee increases for the privilege to fish, but we will require a change in management philosophy that recognizes the future of sustainable fishery management lies with the recreational angler and their support. To that end, recreational anglers cannot assume DNR will change their management philosophy simply to get a fee increase. In fact once they have the money they may not change anything. Anglers will have to see a real time commitment, with major change, prior to providing access to increased funding.

Recreational fishers require a reasonable expectation of angling success by having a sufficient abundance of

Annual Economic Impact in Maryland of Recreationally Important Saltwater Finfish



fish in the water with a broad age structure. Because this management goal is not compatible with managing commercial fin-fisheries a conundrum exists for DNR. They are going to be placed in the uncomfortable position of having to make a choice, but this will only happen if recreational anglers make it happen.

Recreational anglers need to join together in a coordinated effort to educate the public, the DNR, the legislature, and the administration that a meaningful change in the way DNR manages our fisheries is not only appropriate but also necessary. We will have to show it is in the best interest of the state economically and socially to support this change. Anglers will have to mount this initiative and expend our own monies and time to modify the present management philosophy to accomplish the changes we require.

CCA MD has accepted this challenge as a long-term goal for our organization. Other organizations have expressed interest in the concept. We plan to work with all interested stakeholders to move this issue to completion. It will take a long-term commitment, and most of all it will take you, the grass-roots member, to make this happen. If you remain on the dock complaining and don't meet the challenge with action, it will mean fewer people will have to work harder for change. You will need to act, not alone, but as part of a well-organized effort to elevate recreational angling to the importance it deserves and requires. 🐟

Are Maryland's recreational anglers willing to again step up and support fishery management through higher license fees and if so what should we require in return?

ANGLERS & OYSTERS

By Robert Glenn, Executive Director

With all the attention CCA MD has given oyster management recently, some have asked why? We don't fish for oysters. The truth is that CCA MD has been trying to shine a light on the State's failed management of our oyster resource for several years. What's the State's plan for oyster restoration? The answer to this question should make you angry, as a recreational angler and as a taxpayer.

Here's the plan. It begins by dredging fossil oyster shell onto barges in the upper Bay, often in prime fishing habitat. This dredging has occurred for more than 40 years without there ever having been a peer reviewed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) demonstrating that it is not harming bay bottom and important fish habitat. After transporting the shell south to more favorable waters, it's dumped overboard on 3 types of sites; repletion, restoration, and reserves.

The repletion program began in 1960 in response to declining harvests. Let's call it what it is, a classic put-and-take fishery. The State puts and the commercial oyster industry takes.

The further south the shell is dumped on these repletion sites, the better potential for natural spat set. So down south, all the industry needs is for us to pay to tear up fish habitat for their fossil shell. They'll do the rest when they exploit our generosity during oyster season. To add insult to injury, we're then told we have no right to have a say in the management of "their oysters". Thank you, now get lost.

But what about areas where natural spat set isn't as high? The State transports "oyster seed", juvenile oysters, from down south, to repletion sites further north. Why? The DNR says these oysters will die from disease if they're not harvested in the south. So they move them north where they have a better chance to survive disease. Then they allow them to be harvested. Confusing, isn't it? DNR estimates that 80% of the industry's harvest comes from their handiwork, so it's working well for the industry if not for the oyster.

So about 15 years ago, it was decided that sanctuaries, areas off limits to harvest, would be established. This would signal that the State was serious about oyster restoration and not beholden to the industry, which of course opposed these sanctuaries. Sanctuaries get a token amount of shell but a lot of attention. It's good PR. These areas are typically seeded with larvae from hatcheries.

Then there are the reserves. These are sanctuaries. Well, sort of. They're sanctuaries until the industry really needs those oysters. Then they're opened for a "managed harvest", and since the State has managed oysters so well, this must be good. Good for the industry if not the oyster.

As a recreational angler, are you angry yet? Tearing up prime fish habitat for a program that doesn't work. Allowing the harvest of the most ecologically important


species in the Bay when it's at 1% of its historical abundance. If this doesn't trip your trigger, maybe this will.

DNR spends \$3 million a year on oysters. That's 20% of the Fisheries Service budget. Where does the Fisheries Service get its money? Taxpayers and fishing license holders. The DNR is wasting your money on a program that has failed to restore oysters for 40 years in order to benefit a handful of commercial oyster harvesters. Your money that could be spent on programs that benefit you and the rest of the public. The cynic in me thinks this program is more about propping up an economically extinct industry than restoring oysters.

In 2002, CCA MD stepped forward and challenged shell dredging due to concerns about dredging Man O'War Shoal, a highly productive fishing area at the mouth of the Patapsco River. CCA MD generated enough public opposition that DNR withdrew their dredge permit application to the Department of the Environment.

In 2003, DNR followed this defeat by applying for a dredge permit off of Worton and Plum Points. CCA MD issued an Info Alert and then an Action Alert to its members. Their correspondence and CCA's presence at the public hearing cast a lot of doubt about the wisdom of dredging fossil oyster shell in prime striped bass spawning ground. Earlier this year, DNR withdrew its permit application for Worton and Plum Points in the face of having it denied.

Desperate for fossil shell, DNR sought to extend a permit originally granted in 1999 scheduled to expire on June 1. CCA MD learned with two days notice that the matter had become a special agenda item for the Board of Public Works (BPW) meeting. CCA MD representatives testified against the extension. An extension through September 14 of this year was granted but DNR was instructed to develop a new comprehensive oyster management plan with the input of CCA MD and all interested stakeholders. The directive could have been interpreted as "don't show up before this Board again without a defensible plan".

Since then, a new Oyster Steering Committee (OSC) has been convened by Assistant Secretary Mike Slattery and it has now met four times. CCA is hopeful that the Committee will address all areas of oyster management including the oyster repletion program, development of oyster sanctuaries, the advisability of and criteria for power dredging (see page 5, *Maryland Withdraws Proposal to Expand Power Dredging*), and the use of alternative cultch materials for restoration projects. 



The cynic in me thinks this program is more about propping up an economically extinct industry than restoring oysters



THE OYSTER ROAD

by Sherman Baynard

The Chesapeake Bay has an historic road that runs through its very heart and sole. This road is paved with oysters, and like its real life counterparts, is fragile and poorly constructed with little thought to the future.


Our collective choices for the direction of this road are littered with tragic errors and miscalculations. We have a long history of our mistakes in choosing its path exemplified by over-harvest, destructive gear, waste of fresh and fossil shell, introduction of disease through alien oysters, movement of disease by seeding programs, destruction of essential fish habitat, and the list goes on.

From its earliest beginnings this road has two common ingredients that form its foundation, politics and economic value. We lacked the knowledge and the vision to choose any other mix for the foundation for our oyster road. In fact we didn't even know there were other options. Only recently have we experimented with adding a new foundation material known as ecological value.

The deteriorated condition of our oyster road can no longer be denied, as it has become an obvious danger to all that travel on it. We now find ourselves at a crossroad of decisions for the road's future. These decisions will be no easier to make than those of the past. We can only hope that we are wiser and understand that the past mistakes cannot be repeated, for if they are any new road will surely fail just as the old.

While at this crossroads of decision we must start any new oyster road with a firm foundation, constructed of ecological value. It is understood that politics will always be part of the foundation mix, but it must be measured so as not to weaken the foundation. We can also build the road strong enough to accommodate a lane for economic value when the foundation has cured enough to carry its weight, but we must be cautious not to travel the economic lane too early or too heavily.

This literary road is real and the time is now, 2005. A time for decision on oysters is fast approaching and the citizens have turned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to help guide us. Maryland's Governor, Robert Ehrlich, Jr., has brought his wisdom to the issue by stating "Science will dictate the ultimate decision; it will not be politics or politicians." While he was referring to the introduction of the Asian oyster, let us hope that his commitment to science based decisions is transferred to all current and future oyster management.

CCA MD is actively participating in this process because our members, as conservationist and recreational anglers, have a huge stake in its eventual outcome. We want the benefits that a healthy Bay can provide, both in improved water quality and more diverse fish habitat. Restoring oysters may be a partial solution and CCA MD will be there to help guard against repeating our past mistakes. 

Maryland Withdraws Proposal to Expand Power Dredging




At a time when the Chesapeake Bay's oyster population is at 1% of its historical abundance, the state of Maryland seems determined to grant a handful of oyster harvesters the means to catch the last one. Banned in the 1800s because it was deemed too efficient and destructive to oyster bars, the oyster industry says power dredging is the only way the depressed stocks of oysters can economically be harvested anymore.

When the State proposed an expansion of power dredging this summer, CCA MD was surprised that anyone noticed. The Department of Natural Resources did as they usually do with oysters, selling the plan as a way to help the industry and the oyster. According to oystermen, harvesting by power dredging "cleans" the bars and brings the oysters back.

What surprised CCA was the media and much of the conservation community's reaction to the proposal. Upon hearing of DNR's plans, CCA MD reached out to the press to offer its reasons for opposing the proposal.

To DNR's dismay, news coverage included not only their talking points but skepticism of the plan. The result was a groundswell of opposition.

Meanwhile, CCA MD activated its Action Alert system. Our members reacted by providing written comments and attending three public hearings. The Government Relations Committee arranged for a hearing before the General Assembly's AELR Committee that has oversight over executive branch regulations should a member of the legislature request one. In the face of having to defend their proposal before the legislature with overwhelming public opposition, DNR withdrew its proposal.

Since then, it has become clear that the DNR is under immense political pressure and is far from giving up on its attempt to expand power dredging. Rest assured that CCA MD will oppose power dredging into new areas without clearly defined science based criteria. 

the Chesapeake Bay's oyster population is at 1% of its historical abundance

NOAA Version of Magnuson-Stevens Legislation Seen as Good Starting Point for Future Discussion

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released their version of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in September, which includes provisions supported by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership's (TRCP) Marine Conservation Working Group (MCWG). The MCWG expressed particular support for the bill's provision to implement a saltwater fishing license.

The TRCP's MCWG is made up of the American Sportfishing Association, the Coastal Conservation Association, Environmental Defense and the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. The working group was formed this year to designate, and promote consensus marine conservation priorities. These organizations believe that the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act provides opportunities to strengthen the Act to improve the current management processes, collect new data to fully document the importance of healthy fisheries to all user groups, allocate fishery resources efficiently and fairly, and improve the overall management of our coastal and ocean resources for all Americans.


Specifically this coalition is focused on the following consensus priorities:

- 1) implementing a state license system for salt water recreational fishing;
- 2) establishing appropriate marine protected areas (MPA) guidelines;
- 3) reducing the use of destructive fishing gear; and
- 4) improving allocation of the marine fishery resource.

The TRCP MCWG was particularly pleased to see NOAA's attention to licensing or "registry" of salt water recreational anglers. Sportsmen have long played a critical role in both funding the conservation and management of fish and wildlife and in providing critical data regarding the health of these valuable natural resources. One of the primary mechanisms for accomplishing these goals is through hunting and fishing licenses that sportsmen have purchased and supported for generations. Currently, several coastal states do not have saltwater fishing licenses. As a result, data collection and funding for recreational fishing and marine conservation do not meet current management needs. The Administration's bill begins to address this shortfall by establishing a national saltwater angler registry to ensure that recreational catches are accurately counted for scientific assessments and management allocations.

While a national recreational angler registry will fill some of the gaps in data collection, the opportunity to also improve funding for marine fisheries is lost. As a result, the TRCP MCWG is supporting the creation of state-based saltwater fishing licenses in states that do not currently have them in place. State licenses will ensure that the conservation dollars anglers spend for their licenses stay in the state and will also allow the state to capture larger shares of federal matching funds for fisheries conservation. State fish and wildlife agencies also have the infrastructure already in place to implement the licensing. The end result of a state saltwater fishing license will be improved data on the recreational harvest, increased funding for conservation, and perhaps most importantly improved recognition of the critical role that recreational fishermen play in marine fisheries and the economic benefits that they generate.

Although the Administration's bill does include the national angler registry, the TRCP MCWG's other three priorities are not directly addressed by the Administration's draft bill. The Working Group looks forward to engaging with NOAA officials and other key policy-makers to discuss incorporating those important provisions into the final reauthorization of Magnuson-Stevens.

Earlier this year, at the request of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, the Working Group submitted comments on its draft Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization bill. The comments advocated the inclusion of the group's four key priorities in the legislation the committee is expected to introduce. The coalition will continue to work together to promote recreational angler interests as Congress and the Administration work together to craft the next generation of marine fisheries conservation legislation. 



The coalition will continue to work together to promote recreational angler interests



Remembering Bob Ganz

If you ever fished under the bridge at “The Narrows”, you probably knew Bob Ganz. If you ever attended a CCA MD meeting of the Kent Narrows Chapter at Fisherman’s Inn, you probably knew Bob Ganz. But even if you didn’t have the pleasure, if you like to fish, you probably know someone like Bob.

Bob was the “old timer” everyone who visits a particular fishing spot or tackle shop has run into. Someone with a signature that makes you say, “Oh yea, I’ve met him.”

Bob’s signature was his snowflake fly, and he loved giving out his snowflake flies to strangers he met. If you’re wondering what the pattern for Bob’s snowflake fly was, it didn’t exist. You see, each snowflake fly was unique. Just like snowflakes, no two snowflake flies were alike. And while all of us have probably known a Bob Ganz, just like his snowflake flies, Bob was one of a kind.

Tragically, while fishing under the bridge Bob knew so well on October 13, he apparently slipped into The Narrows. His body was recovered the following day. Bob’s family requested that memorial contributions be made to the Kent Narrows Chapter of CCA Maryland or the Kent Island Fire Department.

Rest in peace Bob, and to everyone else, be careful out there.



Robert W. Ganz, Sr.
February 5, 1920–
October 14, 2005

Late Season Quantity & Quality Striped Bass
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place your casts on the power side of a selected piling.

Four manmade islands are also part of the CBBT. The first and second islands are on each side of the western shipping channel, and the third and fourth islands are on either side of the main shipping channel entering the Chesapeake Bay on the east side. Large boulders running into the water around these islands hold many striped bass, and if it becomes windy, are excellent locations to fly fish. It’s not necessary to take your boat close to the boulders that run from the island tips out toward the channel. There are some rogue boulders that can be dangerous.

I recommend either a 9 or 10 weight fly rod with a large arbor reel, spooled with sinking line ranging from 325 to 450 grain. Attach a four foot 20# fluorocarbon tippet with a long deceiver, or half & half fly, and you’re all set for a day of catching. Flies with silver bodies, white and chartreuse feathers or bucktail with a red head can be very productive.

When it comes to light spinning tackle, a 6’ graphite, medium-heavy action rod rated for 1/4 to 1 ounce lure with a fast or extra fast tip works just fine. Team the rod with a 2500 series spinning reel, 14# test Berkley FireLine with a 6’ fluorocarbon leader attached to a Hopkins Shorty spoon and hang on (see picture for proof).

Article by Capt. Tom Hughes, Full Time Fly & Light Tackle Guide www.capttomhughes.com

Note: Capt. Tom Hughes will be giving a 2 part lecture on striped bass fishing at Baltimore County Community College in Hunt Valley, MD, on Feb 4th and 11th, 2006. Contact Jim Fitch, 410-918-4237, for details. 


Persistence and Patience Pays Off for Menhaden
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the stock assessment, there was little direct information on the status of Chesapeake Bay menhaden. What did exist was a compelling case based on anecdotal evidence that too many menhaden were being removed from the Bay. Over 65% of the annual coastwide harvest occurs in the Virginia half of the Bay, yet those landings are used to judge the health of the entire stock. This information formed the basis for the Menhaden Management Board’s approval of a precautionary cap in August.

Why Not a Moratorium?

The data needed to determine if the landings in the Chesapeake Bay are a problem are not available at present. We have asked for and supported a research program to get the necessary data – basically how many menhaden are in the Bay at any given time and what their movements are in and out of the Bay. When that data is available the ASMFC can determine if the concentrated removals from the Bay are a problem.

Until then, the ASMFC is not going to put a moratorium on the harvest of menhaden in the Bay. To do so would both be bad management and the basis for a lawsuit the ASMFC would almost certainly lose. We chose to support a cap since a moratorium was not even an option under consideration. We would rather spend our time and efforts supporting something that will move the process along and collect the needed information rather than waste our time supporting an option not being considered by the ASMFC.

CCA supports good fishery management based on science. Once we have the information we will revisit the moratorium question. 



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- \$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? _____