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September 2022

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# UPPER BAY Boating MAGAZINE

Summer 2022

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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- 5 Marinating with Jim High
- 6 Not Letting The Fun End *By Wendy Gilbert / Contributing Editor*
- 8 Putting your "spidey senses" to work on the water
- 10 On My First Fishing Trip
- 12 Chesapeake Bay Blue Cats
- 14 Pirates of Madame Machete
- 16 Cooking tips for your Boat, Brats & Burgers
- 22 Pardon Me... I've Got Gas
- 23 Upper Chesapeake Bay
- 25 Conservation Jobs Corps Graduates Class of 2022
- 26 Boat Dogs
- 27 Grants Gateway Open for Resilience  
and Restoration Funds
- 33 WHITE MARLIN OPEN winner
- 34 Stocking the Future

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Me & the Mrs., Boating  
around Manhattan. Thank  
you, Freedom Boat Club



## WHAT THE NON-BOATING HUMANS DID?

### Picking on GIZMO!

Those Damn NBHs are at it again. If they would just buy that boat, many problems could be solved! For instance, the non-boating humans were the culprits behind GIZMO! You remember little Gizmo from the 1984 movie Gremlins! The NBHs devised a way to create monsters out of a cute adorable little snuggly creature ... whenever you add a little water, well... all hell breaks loose! Take a look:

### Gizmo wanting to go boating!

After adding water and cursed by Non-Boating Humans! The NBHs actually cursed Gizmo with three things that would prevent Gizmo from going boating. This couldn't be a coincidence. Rule number one: No Sunlight (tough for people like us) Rule number 2. No Water (really tough for boating Humans) and Rule number 3. No PARTYING after midnight (actually they said no food, but we know what they meant)



## A FEW WORDS ON THE DUEL WITH THE FUEL!

In the words of Riverside Marines Jason Baumgartner this summer was a "smiles per gallon!" not miles per gallon season! So, since June at least the price per gallon has come down a bit. But I have to ask --is the fuel tank half empty?

When you look down at the gauge or for some, gauges, are they half full or are they half empty? How are you going to spend that fuel? Are you going to mosey over to a raft-up or be one of those full send guys or gals and go throttles down to the next fuel pump or better yet... a six MPH wake zone?

Even sail boats burn a bit of fuel every now and then. I guess our sailing friends will be running all the sails a little more often this summer and pass the Go-Fast boat moseying. Ha ha!!! That is kinda funny when

you think about it!

So, the tank is what we make of it and what we can afford, but regardless of the speed or the endeavor, the beauty will always be there. And when that beauty turns windy and dark skies appear, you still have a half tank of gas to get back to the shore safely.

## BLUE SKIES/ HIGH TIDES

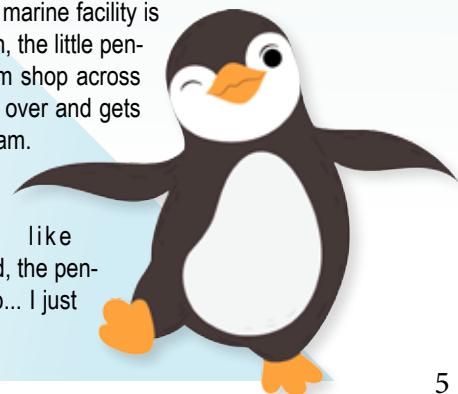
It ain't over Folks! It ain't over till the slightly large, wing-helmeted, incredibly loud, operatic star belts out her last song! That's right... There is that much summer left! Blue Skies / High Tides! Over the years I have been watching the fabulous photography of David Sites. He really has caught some amazing images. Remember -- boating when its 40 degrees out this fall is still better than the opera! Long live the Summer of 2022.

## BACK TO THE SHORES OF THE UPPER CHESAPEAKE BAY

We have the Eastern Shore which we all know. We have the Western Shore which we all know. Is there also an Upper Shore? I know the Western Shore ends at the Susquehanna between Havre De Grace and Perryville. I know the southern Eastern Shore begins or ends at The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. I'm just not sure where the end of the Northern Eastern Shore is. I've posed the question before but I am going to continue to ponder the question. Can I get a few thoughts on the matter?

## BLEW A SEAL!

(This one could get me in trouble) So... A penguin notices a little gear lube behind his boat in the water. Being prudent he asks his local marine repair shop to take a good look at it and make a suggestion on having it fixed. While the marine facility is diagnosing what going on, the little penguin notices an ice cream shop across the way. So, he waddles over and gets himself some ice cream. When he waddles back to the mechanic, the mechanic says, "It looks like you blew a seal." Insulted, the penguin explains "No, no, no... I just had a vanilla Ice cream!"







By Wendy Gilbert / *Contributing Editor*

# NOT LETTING THE FUN END

I often get to this point in the season and feel a bit off kilter.

On one hand, I rejoice in the reduced boat traffic. There's little to no waiting at the dock, fewer showboating speedboats buzzing around and the long-awaited drop in gas prices finally happened. I also feel a sense of peace that only comes in September. It is truly one of my favorite months of the year.

On the other hand, there's that nagging sense that like all good things, summer is coming to an end. The days are shorter, the nights are a bit cooler and the events calendar starts to thin.

Although for the first time in 2 years, there were lots of events! We had the best time.

Or should I say times. We enjoyed First Fridays, summer music, a little theatre and a few memorable cruises. There were parties, cook-outs, picnics, festivals and fairs. You get the picture and I'm hopeful you had a great summer as well.

Instead of bemoaning the swift passage of the season, like the pessimist I have never claimed to be, I embrace the coming weeks and relish each day that comes our way.

My daughter put in a huge garden this year. While my gardening is limited by not only space, but ravenous and persistent wildlife, I caught a bit of her fervor and decided to try a little container gardening myself. It worked! I have been

harvesting cherry tomatoes for weeks now. I can hear the snickering now, but I'm happy. The deer cropped at them viciously until I dug them up and put them in pots on deck. The deer wait until flowers appear before munching them down. That's how they roll.

First Fridays in Havre de Grace are so much fun! Live music, great seafood and something for everyone in the family. My neighbor gathers her sailing friends after a day of racing to relax and recreate. It's a lively and fun treat to attend these types of festivals.

My brother was up for a very brief visit for the first time in over three years last week. We can pack a lot of fun into a short

visit. There were restaurants, breweries, wineries -- new and old favorites to visit. Last night we enjoyed a great dinner at my town's crown jewel "Woody's". Somehow going there never really gets old. You can count on running into a friend or two and a neighbor almost always.

He'll be back in a couple of weeks for an equally short visit. I can't wait to take him to the 5<sup>th</sup> Company Brewery in Perryville. We used to live there as young adults and are excited to visit. I sampled their brews at the Sip 'N Stroll event in Chesapeake City last February, so I know we are in for a treat.

Summer may be ending folks, but the fun never really ends unless you let it.

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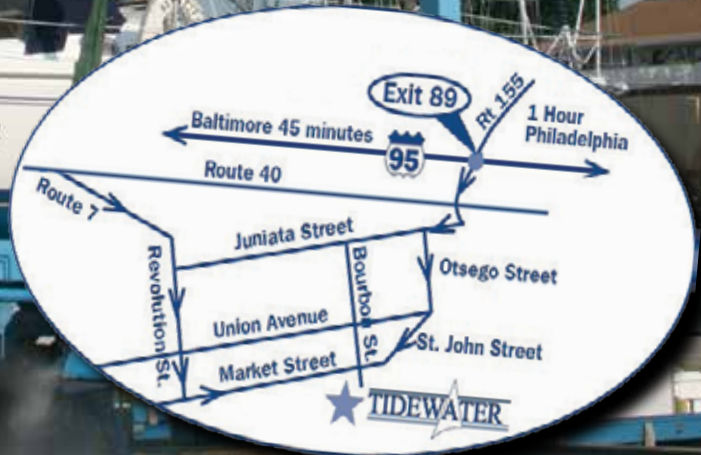
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# Putting your “spidey senses” to work on the water

By Wendy Gilbert



**1. INEXPERIENCE 2. INATTENTION 3. EXCESSIVE SPEED 4. DRINKING 5. NOT WEARING A PFD**

*The above are the primary causes for most boating accidents. And we've had too many of those already this season. Some of them deadly.*

Our attention can be easily drawn to the few accidents that are caused by other, sadly more interesting things, but most of them come down to these five. All of which are under your control as a captain and/or crew of any boat at any time.

## **1. INEXPERIENCE**

If you are new to the boating game, boat with an experienced friend as often as you can. Even after you've passed your classes and feel like you're good to go. Passengers are never really just passengers on a boat. You're crew. Even if you don't do much more than pass out bottles (of water), you can keep your eye out for trouble. Debris can be deceptively dangerous. If you see something, say something.

## **2. INATTENTION**

Put the darned cell phone down keep your eyes laser-focused on what you're doing, where you're going and how you're getting there Wake Up! Be alert. Watch your fellow boaters, the water, the sky – all of it. All the time. Your scope is large and you are in charge. Activate your Spiderman, Superman, Wonder Woman or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle super powers. Draw on your instinct, your sixth sense, common sense or gut –whatever it takes. Remember those karate classes back in the day? Your sensei would want you to put your cell phone down too.

## **3. EXCESSIVE SPEED**

There's no denying how much fun it is to whip across the Upper Bay. Engines humming, full speed ahead. But only as conditions allow. The Bay is not the autobahn. I've actually been on Germany's autobahn a few times. What makes that system work is that everyone works together. If a faster car is coming up from behind you, you move over, let it past and then if conditions allow, get back in the fast lane.

That is not the way in the U.S.A. It's a me first world here. And trust me folks, there's no changing that.

## **4. DRINKING**

There's a reason drinking is more fun on the water. The motion messes with your inner ear balance and you feel tipsier easier and faster. Not a bad thing in the right measure and at the right time. But ... ah come on, you know the drill. Stay sober, designate a driver.

## **5. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES**

There was a day when those things were darned ugly, bulky and signaled little more to the world than the fact that you probably couldn't swim. Nowadays, PFDs are the new deck shoes. Show off your style, my friends!

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# On My First Fishing Trip

Although I've always enjoyed being on the water, I'd never previously been fishing. That all changed on June 10 with a birthday gift from my cousin—a charter trip on the Susquehanna with Bayraiders Outfitters LLC. Led by Captain Joe Chamberlain, we departed in the 8 a.m. hour from historic Havre De Grace en route to some fresh local rockfish.

Once we settled on the Susquehanna, the action started early and often. Within a few minutes, I had an opportunity to catch my first fish. Eagerly, the captain called my name, set the rod and began his instructions. Slowly but steadily, using every ounce of strength within me, I reeled up my first catch—a 24-inch rockfish. It was truly a once in a lifetime thrill! Within the first hour, our party caught 8 rockfish—the legal limit. With that, Joe brought us closer to the shore in search of predatory catfish. Set just over the Cecil County line, we

blared more classic rock, cracked some beers and reeled up a few big fat blue cat while we were at it. I was told that most first fishing trips aren't nearly this bountiful. Some may call it "Beginner's Luck" but I think our success was a direct result of our captain knowing these waters and his vessel so well.

Through this trip, I was able to join the storied human history of fishing and make my grandfather—photographer Thomas C. Scilipoti, very proud. With the price of everything going up, this was a priceless experience, led by a reel pro, at a bargain price. In summation, my first fishing trip will surely not be my last.

*By Thomas A Scilipoti*

"truly a once in a lifetime thrill!"


...we blared more classic rock, cracked some beers and reeled up a few big fat blue cat..."

Left to Right: Thomas A Scilipoti, PJ Komenda Jr, Dylan, Matt Wiherle






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# Chesapeake Bay Blue Cats



*By Captain Mark Galasso*

Most invasive species in the Chesapeake Bay were introduced quite by accident. As more and more people started living, working and recreating in the Chesapeake watershed the introduction of nonnative species becomes inevitable. A few become beneficial to the native species but most become competitors or even worse predators on the native species. In a few rare examples species were deliberately introduced for one reason or another. Two glaring examples of introduced species are the Mute Swans and the Blue Catfish.

Blue Catfish were introduced into a number of Virginia Western Shore Rivers around fifty years ago. Blue Catfish have also been introduced to river systems in at least 20 other states. It was thought they would create recreation opportunities for the fisherman that fished those waters. It was also thought at the time that this species was a perfect addition to the area. They grow big, they put up a great fight on rod and reel and they were quite tasty table fare. These facts all proved to be true. Blue Cats already provided a robust recreational and commercial fishery for a number of Southern States with access to the mighty Mississippi River. One fact that wasn't borne out was the Blue Cats tolerance to brackish water. When the fisheries people in Virginia introduced the fish into their rivers it was thought that the fish would stay there since they were not tolerant of



*Photo courtesy of  
chesapeakebay.net*

salt water and wouldn't venture out into the saltier waters of the main Bay. They were wrong.

Currently Blue Cats can be found in almost every major river in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In some, like the Potomac, they grow to immense sizes and pictures of fifty pounders are not uncommon. In fact so far the Maryland State record is 84 pounds, but fish in the Mississippi have reached close to 100 pounds. Another fact that escaped the people that introduced Blue Cats into the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem is that for a fish to reach 100 pounds they must eat a lot. This has been a serious problem in the Chesapeake. Stomach contents studies revealed that Blue cats will eat almost anything. One major study in Virginia revealed that up to 10 percent of Blue Cat forage was small fish like Herring, Shad and Eels. Guess what? Maryland now has a moratorium on Herring and Shad. In those lower Bay Virginia Rivers it was also found that up to 25 percent of the fishes diet was Blue Crabs, Maryland's most valuable commercial fishery. A Salisbury State University study even found a Wood Duck in the stomach of a large Blue Cat!

Now for the easy part. If you know where to fish Blue Cats are easy to catch. Cut fish, chicken livers, peeler crabs all make great baits. Many of the same thoughts and techniques that go into chumming for Rockfish work well for Blue Cats. Just remember to use circle hooks when fishing like this. Blue Catfish like structure and can be found around oyster piles, channel edges and bends or even outside on the edges of grass beds. Fishfinder rigs with large hooks are best with plenty of weight to hold near the bottom in current. Anchoring is usually best especially if you get some chum going.

Blue Cats are excellent eating but it is recommended that fish up to 30 inches are the best due to the fact that larger fish are older and may contain increased toxin levels. This can be said for almost all fish however.

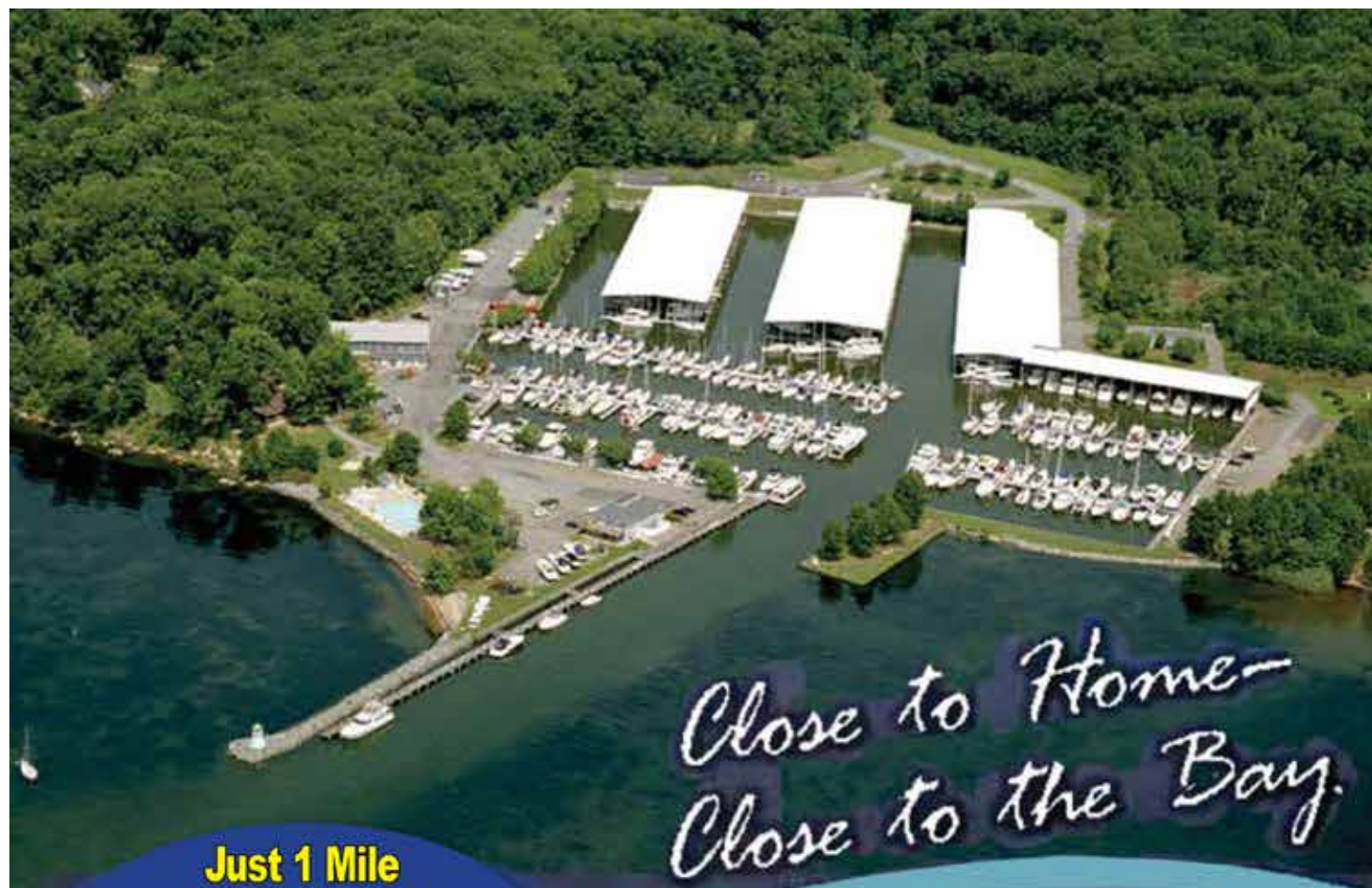
Now for the hard part. Maryland has a number of fisheries that need help. Fisheries managers always target commercial and recreational fisherman to control harvest of these fisheries. Rockfish (Striped Bass) are in decline and the whole east coast is looking for ways to decrease harvest numbers. The

fact is that as Chesapeake Bay stocks go the whole east coast goes. Blue Crabs are also in decline and regulations for crabbers are already being implemented. Herring and Shad are under a moratorium and have been for years. The Chesapeake Bay is a fragile food web. As more and more top end predators are introduced into the web it changes to come into balance. The introduction of Blue Catfish and Snakeheads is a major concern. Both species are top end predators. It is estimated that Blue Cats eat between 5 and 10 percent of their body weight a day. In 2017 Commercial Waterman in Virginia harvested 5 million pounds of them. Do the math.

Now for the REALLY Hard and frustrating part. Remember those southern states that have commercial fisheries for Blue Catfish? Their legislators in DC set up roadblocks to any new commercial fisheries in other states concerning Blue Catfish, clever foresight on their part. This was done back in 2017 and was done by manipulating the inspection process that all commercial fisheries must go through. Just to put things

**See BLUE CATS page 37**





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Aurgh thar,  
Tis me an me mateys marauding on the bay! 'Twas  
a meeting of the members of the Pirate Counsel &  
Body of Water Chapter on the High Treasonous Seas  
which was hosted at Madame Machetes Emporium  
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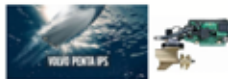
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# Cooking tips for your **BOAT, BRATS & BURGERS**

By Montana Grant

**Food tastes better outdoors, and from a grill.** It's even better when grilled on a boat. It is not against the law to grill while afloat. Be aware that some marinas and waters may have certain regulations related to maritime grilling.

**Boat grilling is best when kept simple.** This is not when you smoke brisket and create Food Channel cuisine. Brats and burgers will do just fine. Everyone has a better appetite when afloat. Plan plenty and enjoy.

**When selecting a boat grill consider propane or electric.** Charcoal can be a pain in the ash on windy days. Size matters when grilling on a boat. Round grills heat more evenly but rectangular grills have hot and warm zones. Also be aware of safety when using propane. This gas flows downward and gathers in low spaces. A spark can set it off. Electric grills may require a generator. For the nature nuts, consider a solar oven.

**Mount the grill on a rod mount or over the rail bracket.** Both are available at marine stores. In this way, you can relocate the grill as needed and be cooking safely over the water. Don't grill when water skiing or at full throttle. Your Fast Food can become lost. A stable mount also needs to be adjustable. Keep the vents perpendicular or away from the wind.

**Grill tools need to be marine grade stainless steel.** A storage case will keep you organized and clean. Store grill food in a separate cooler. Don't use the fish storage, beer locker, uncleaned ice chest to store food. If your boat has a galley, it can be used for heating sides like beans, sloppy joes, or mac 'n cheese.

**Plan and organize ahead of time.** Place meat in zip bags. A marinade can also be in the bags. Think about timing and start cooking first what takes longest. Plan a condiment bar with squeeze containers. This limits plasticware. If you are using paper plates, place them in wicker plate holders to add stability. Have salads and other perishables in plastic containers, with secure lids to keep away flies and bugs.

**Presentation is key.** Pay attention to little things like a quick toasting of the buns. Paper towels may be more practical than napkins. An out of the wind buffet is fun. Fresh produce is always a big hit. Farm fresh tomatoes, sweet onions, garden lettuce, and 'lopes and watermelon make an easy dessert.

**Clean up is important.** No dumping trash overboard. Have a trash box or bag on hand. You also need to cool the grill down before storing it. Have a dedicated box to organize your boating grill and tools.

So, now that you are grill ready, lets grill!

Here is a great Brat and Burger recipe to enjoy.

## **BEER BRAT BATH**

This idea allows the cook to prepare the brats and serve them in a baking dish or bath. I use an old chicken baking pan that has a lid. The old dark blue enamel with white spots one. It is bullet proof, and small enough, to fit on a small boat side grill. Foil pans will also work. Slow cook the brats on the grill until they get grill marks. Now place them into the bath with sliced sweet onions, peppers, and sauerkraut. Oh, and a beer or two. I also add some Old Bay spice and brown sugar, just because. Leave the bath on the grill to simmer while the crew is swimming. Serving simply needs some tongs and a bun. You can also prepare some with mustard, or whatever, if needed.

## **BOAT BURGERS!**

**Everyone one likes burgers.** You will want to make the burgers up ahead of time. Try using ground chuck for the meat. Don't settle for frozen premade pressed patties. They shrink and end up half the size of the bun. Stuff the burgers with pimento cheese, Blue Cheese, or your favorite add ins. Sprinkle some Worcestershire sauce to the meat blend and your favorite burger spices. Old Bay makes a great all purpose nautical spice. Precook your bacon for a tasty topping. Toasted buns make a sturdier and tastier burger holder. Again, fresh produce is a must. A slower cook is best. If you want to add smoke to your grill, take a small can, like a tuna fish can, and add some wood chips or flavored pellets. I soak the wood chips in water first. Pellets fall apart when soaked so maybe just a spritz of water will do. Allow the wood to smoke the meat on low heat. Then finish the burgers on a higher heat. Don't smash and futz with your burger. Let them cook on their own.

Be creative and have fun with your marine menus. You will become Captain of the Galley!







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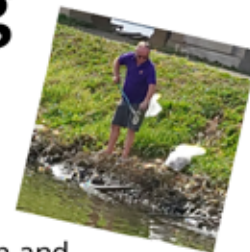
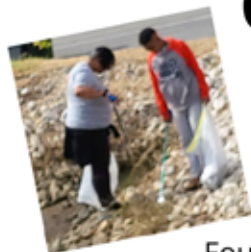
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This Conservation tournament focuses on bringing businesses and anglers together. Fishing, education, habitat and a shoreline cleanup are all a part of the take from the event. Raising awareness and an understanding of what's happening in our Chesapeake Bay and connecting with our local waterways is another. It is important to understand that these resources belong to all and we must educate the proper way to use and maintain them through responsible angling, boating and stewardship.



-The Chesapeake Fishing Open kicks off on September 30th with a Captain's meeting from 5 - 7 pm at Nick's Fish House.

-Angler's may have their lines in the water at 7 am on October 1 and out by 3 pm.

- Categories for Rockfish (Catch & Release), Catfish, Northern Snakehead and White Perch.

-Awards Ceremony at 5 pm to include live music, raffles, auctions and seafood buffet.

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-Shoreline Cleanup at and around Nick's Fish House in Port Covington

-Fishing lessons and rods for kid's

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-Connect with our Waterways and work toward improving water quality



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# Pardon Me... I've Got Gas

By L. Alan Keene

I don't feel very good today. I felt just fine this morning when I got up, but ever since that mid-morning trip to the Exxon station to fill up our SUV, I've felt a little sick to my stomach. It's no wonder, I guess. It cost me over \$75.00!

As I stood there watching those electronic numbers fly by and the total zoom past \$50, I couldn't help but think back to 1962 when it would cost me less than \$4 to fill up that old '50 Ford of mine (not that a 17-year-old ever fills a car up). The price for a gallon of gas back then was just 27 cents. The price this morning....\$4.53.

As I twisted on the filler cap and headed for the driver's seat, I started thinking about the remainder of the boating season and the powerboater with the 120-gallon tank. With marina gas prices averaging 10 percent or more higher than their land-based cousins, that 120-gallon tank could easily cost that boater over \$600 to fill. SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS!!! Enough money to feed his family of four for two weeks. Enough to pay for 20 rounds of golf on a public course. Enough money to make a substantial down payment on that Caribbean vacation he's been promising the missus.

As I pulled out onto the highway, my first thought was "thank God I'm a sailor!" But, for some reason, that didn't seem to ease the nausea. As a sailor, I know that these mind-boggling gas prices will have little or no effect on my enjoyment of the

Bay this season. As a sailor, I know that that powerboater's 120 gallons of gas could easily last me three boating seasons, whereas he could empty that tank in a long weekend. As a sailor, I know that these gas prices will probably result in more room out on the Bay for those of us who choose the wind as our engine. But, for some reason, I still felt sick.

If I were a powerboater, I wondered as I headed home, what would I do. What COULD I do? First, I'd make sure that my boat was operating as efficiently as possible. I'd make sure the engine or engines were well tuned and the hull was clean. I'd try to keep the boat as light as possible, offloading everything that wasn't essential, and I'd try, first and foremost, to find the most fuel-efficient speed range for my boat, to keep from wasting that liquid gold.

And, I thought, I'd probably have to invite several other powerboating couples to join us for those summer Saturdays and Sundays, allowing the expenses to be spread among us. That adjustment would be a last resort for Peg and me, I thought, since the solitude of boating has always been one of its major appeals.

But, given all of these adjustments, the simple reality would be that we'd have to give up some of our boating hours. We'd have to spend more time in the marina or at anchor and less time up on plane, skimming

across the waters of the Chesapeake. Our boat would have to become our mobile "summer cottage", where fewer hours were spent at the wheel and more hours sitting, enjoying the afternoon sun. We, like most powerboaters, would have no choice. We couldn't allow the outrageous price of gasoline to bankrupt us.

As I rounded the corner leading into our development, one last option begged for attention. If I were a powerboater, I wondered, would I consider selling my powerboat and buying a sailboat? Would I consider giving up the thrill and excitement of speed for the joy and satisfaction that comes with harnessing the wind? My answer surprised me. If I were a powerboater, I decided, I would rather enjoy a lesser amount of what I loved about the water than an abundant amount of what I didn't. Powerboating and sailing are two totally different pursuits, I concluded, and their appeals have little in common, other than our beautiful upper Bay.

As I turned into our driveway, I suddenly felt some relief. These outrageous prices can't continue forever, I thought. While it's certain we'll never see 27 cents a gallon again, \$2.27 might not be out of the picture. If so, we sail boaters look forward to sharing the open water with our fellow boaters again, like we have for over a hundred years!



# UPPER CHESAPEAKE BAY

Now that striped bass season is open again, anglers have been casting topwater lures in the Conowingo Dam pool in the early morning hours. The reports from the pool and the Susquehanna Flats reveal a few striped bass are being caught with a fair percentage measuring shy of the 19-inch minimum.

Many anglers in the lower Susquehanna River are sticking to fishing for a mix of flathead, blue, and channel catfish from the dam pool and beyond the mouth of the river. The catfish are providing plenty of exciting fishing action and good eating.

The fishing fleet showed up August 1 at the lumps and shoals between Pooles Island and Rock Hall to resume live-lining spot. The striped bass were still holding there, and fishing picked up where it left off before the late July closure. What also resumed is the warm water conditions that create stress on striped bass that are returned to the water. Visit the DNR website for responsible catch-and-release procedures and for tips on using circle hooks



There are good reports from the Love Point rocks, where anglers are having good luck with live-lining spot and jigging with soft plastics. The bridge piers at the Key Bridge at the mouth of the Patapsco River is another location where anglers are succeeding with live-lining spot or eels, or working soft plastic jigs close to the pier bases.

Anglers are finding white perch on the 7-foot and 9-foot knolls and the Snake Reef by using bottom rigs baited with pieces of bloodworm. White perch are also being found in the lower Patapsco River near old pilings, and the Key Bridge piers in about 15 feet of water. All the region's tidal rivers and creeks have populations of white perch that provide summer fun by fishing from docks or by casting small lures during the morning and evening hours along shoreline structure.

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### *Maryland Teens Complete Outdoor Jobs Skills Program*

More than three dozen young Marylanders celebrated their graduation from the Conservation Jobs Corps August 2 after five weeks of job training, conservation education, hard work, and fun.

The ceremony was held at Sandy Point State Park in Anne Arundel County with former Veterans Conservation Corps crew leader Calvin Ogburn as the keynote speaker.

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps is a summer program that provides opportunities for students ages 14-17 to complete hands-on projects throughout Maryland's State Parks. They engage in tasks that benefit communities and public lands while learning about public service and stewardship. They also participate in exciting outdoor activities, including camping and wildlife



*Photo by Luke Terrell, Maryland Department of Natural Resources*

observation.

Under the leadership of Maryland Park Service staff, crews throughout Maryland

worked on a variety of projects, including storm and trash cleanup, trail work, native tree and pollinator garden planting,

invasive plant removal, and trail-related construction and maintenance projects.

## Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC)

Upon the 75th Anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources expanded the Maryland Conservation Corps (MCC) to include a new initiative called the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC). The CJC works in partnership with community youth organizations to provide conservation service opportunities for youth in Maryland State Parks.

The CJC is a unique summer program where you'll be part of a team working to conserve and restore Maryland State Parks. Discover Maryland's natural resources and gain the skills to protect them. Learn how to build bridges and trails, and how to make a rain barrel!

You will gain skills that will prepare you for many career opportunities and a lifetime of healthy outdoor recreation and interaction with nature.



Don't worry, it's not all work, there's plenty of time for fun outdoors! Have you ever wanted to walk on a tight rope, or scale a climbing wall?

How about hold a Great Horned Owl or a Corn Snake? Do it all this summer with the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps!





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# GRANTS GATEWAY OPEN FOR RESILIENCE AND RESTORATION FUNDS

## DNR Accepting Grant Applications for Fiscal Year 2024



*Photo by Stephen Badger, Maryland Department of Natural Resources*

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources announced the Grants Gateway application is open for local governments and organizations for Fiscal Year 2024, which begins July 1, 2023. Through this process, funding is available for projects that restore local waterways, increase communities' resilience to climate change and storm impacts, strengthen local economies, develop the next generation of environmental stewards, and foster sustainable development and

use of Maryland waterways with projects that benefit the general boating public. The department's Grants Gateway provides a streamlined, single point of entry to several state and federal programs, maximizing the resources available to restore the Chesapeake Bay and help coastal communities. The system, now in its fourth year, enables communities better access to financial resources and a more intuitive reporting and management process.

Last year, Maryland helped co-

ordinate more than \$35 million in state and federal support for hundreds of projects and initiatives that are protecting and enhancing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Grants are made possible with funding through the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, the Waterway Improvement Fund, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All applications must be submitted through CCS's Grants Gateway: [https://webportalapp.com/sp/grants\\_gateway](https://webportalapp.com/sp/grants_gateway). Applications CANNOT be mailed, faxed or submitted in person. If this is your first time submitting a proposal, you will first need to visit the website and sign up by clicking on "Sign Up." Please store your username and password in a secure location for later reference. Your username and password will be used to submit online reports if your project is selected and to submit future proposals.

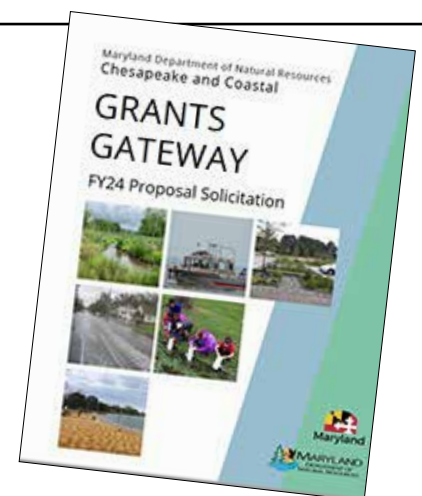
#### Deadline

All proposals must be submitted through the CCS web-based grants management portal at: [https://webportalapp.com/sp/grants\\_gateway](https://webportalapp.com/sp/grants_gateway).

Outcome 5 proposals will be due by 11:59 p.m. on September 16, 2022

All other outcome proposals will be due by 11:59 p.m. on December 15, 2022.

Visit for more information: [dnr.maryland.gov](https://dnr.maryland.gov)





# The Tree Lady Knows Her Sycamores

By Anne Sandbek

“What’s that white tree?” My bestie asks as we float down Deer Creek sipping on some lemonade. Sometimes I’m a bit bitter that I have become the “Tree Lady.” Mostly because my tree identification skills are only so-so. Thankfully, I know this one without a doubt! (whew) “It’s a Sycamore!” I respond.

If you’ve ever wondered what those looming white trunks along a stream bank are. If you didn’t know, now you know. There’s quite a large stand of them just below the Conowingo Dam on the Cecil County side. These fast growing, water loving trees commonly host America’s favorite raptor. In the winter while driving over the dam, I’ve counted a dozen without trying. It’s not surprising that this stand of trees is a

popular spot for Bald Eagles to hang out. The stand is a perfect fishing perch, made even better because you can’t get your boat there!

The sneaky Bald Eagles’ white heads even blend into the space between branches, matching the trunks of sycamores. To be honest I don’t know why the trunks of sycamores are white. They start off an odd brownish-gray color when young and keep that coloring in the bottom few feet throughout their lives. Which is probably why my friend had never noticed the tree. If you’re hiking in the woods, you’ll just see another brownish trunk, unless you look UP!

The Sycamore is one of the largest deciduous trees in the Eastern United States. While not a super fast-growing tree, it

will easily outpace an oak tree in the early decades of its life, especially near water. The average lifespan is about 200 years, but there have been many individuals dated to over 600 years old. The largest sycamore tree in Maryland is over 27 feet in circumference, you would need five adults to hug it. Also, it’s 145 feet tall, the height of almost five average sailing masts. Although not common it’s not unheard of to use Sycamore for boat building.

So, this Fall keep your eye on the banks for large white trunks with bright orange-yellow leaves. Beware though if you know the answer to “what’s that white tree?” you too many become your fam’s “Tree Lady” whether you actually know your tree ID or not!







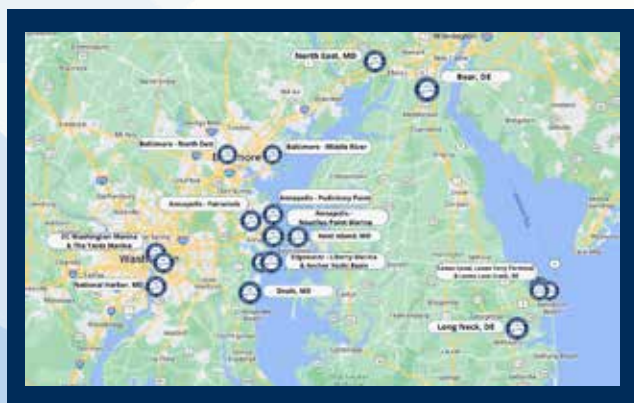
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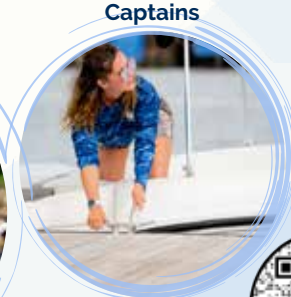
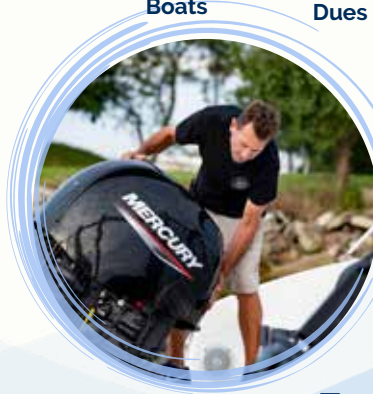
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# Lions, Tigers and Dolphins? Oh my!

By Kimberly Merriken

As a kid I was obsessed with dolphins. They were just mystical to me. They were smart and cute and everything a little girl from the city could romanticize about. Some years back, I was in Ocean City on one of the boat tours and saw a pod of dolphins. I was transported back in time and sat there in awe of their gracefulness and playfulness.

Fast forward a few more years and I actually got to swim with a dolphin and kiss it. AMAZING! But expensive. I don't know if you have ever done a Disney cruise, but living out my childhood dream cost a small fortune.

Now, as luck would have it, according to Chesapeake Dolphin Watch, I can paddle my little kayak to many parts of the upper bay and the chances of a dolphin sighting are quite high.

There is a group of researchers led by Dr. Helen Bailey that are working to understand the distribution and movements of the bottlenose dolphins in the

Chesapeake Bay. I reached out to Jamie Testa, Project Coordinator of Chesapeake Dolphin Watch, recently regarding these sightings and the conversation we had was no less than phenomenal. Jamie has been with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science since 2017 and it turns out Jamie loves dolphins -- maybe even a little more than I do.

Jamie's group relies on public sightings and the use of acoustic devices to track and validate where dolphins have been seen. You can log sightings using the app or you can go onto their website at [umces.edu/dolphinwatch](http://umces.edu/dolphinwatch). Just remember that it is using your location when you log the sighting so if you wait until you get home to log in the sighting could be logged as your house. LOL! As you can imagine there is a lot of data, but the researchers do comb through all of it to confirm the sightings.

Jamie explained that dolphins are sighted in the low-



er bay all year, but during the spring, the dolphins begin to push upward. It has not been determined if they are following food or searching for food, but sightings continue to move north. July is by far the busiest month for sightings north of the bridge. In the past, the northern-most sightings were around Tolchester but now there have been confirmed sightings just south of Poole's Island and up in the C&D Canal.

Jamie cautions everyone to not approach the dolphins. Do not feed or attempt to feed them. It is harmful and illegal. Do not swim with, ride, pet, touch, or attempt to interact with dolphins in the wild. They

are inquisitive enough that if you are still with no motor running, they will probably approach you or at least give you a good show. A great website for guidelines on mammal watching is through NOAA. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/marine-life-viewing-guidelines/guidelines-&-distances>

Please follow the guidelines and help to keep our bottlenosed friends safe while we share space in our beautiful upper bay with them and don't forget to track your sightings so we can help the researches learn more about their movements and why they continue to push northward.

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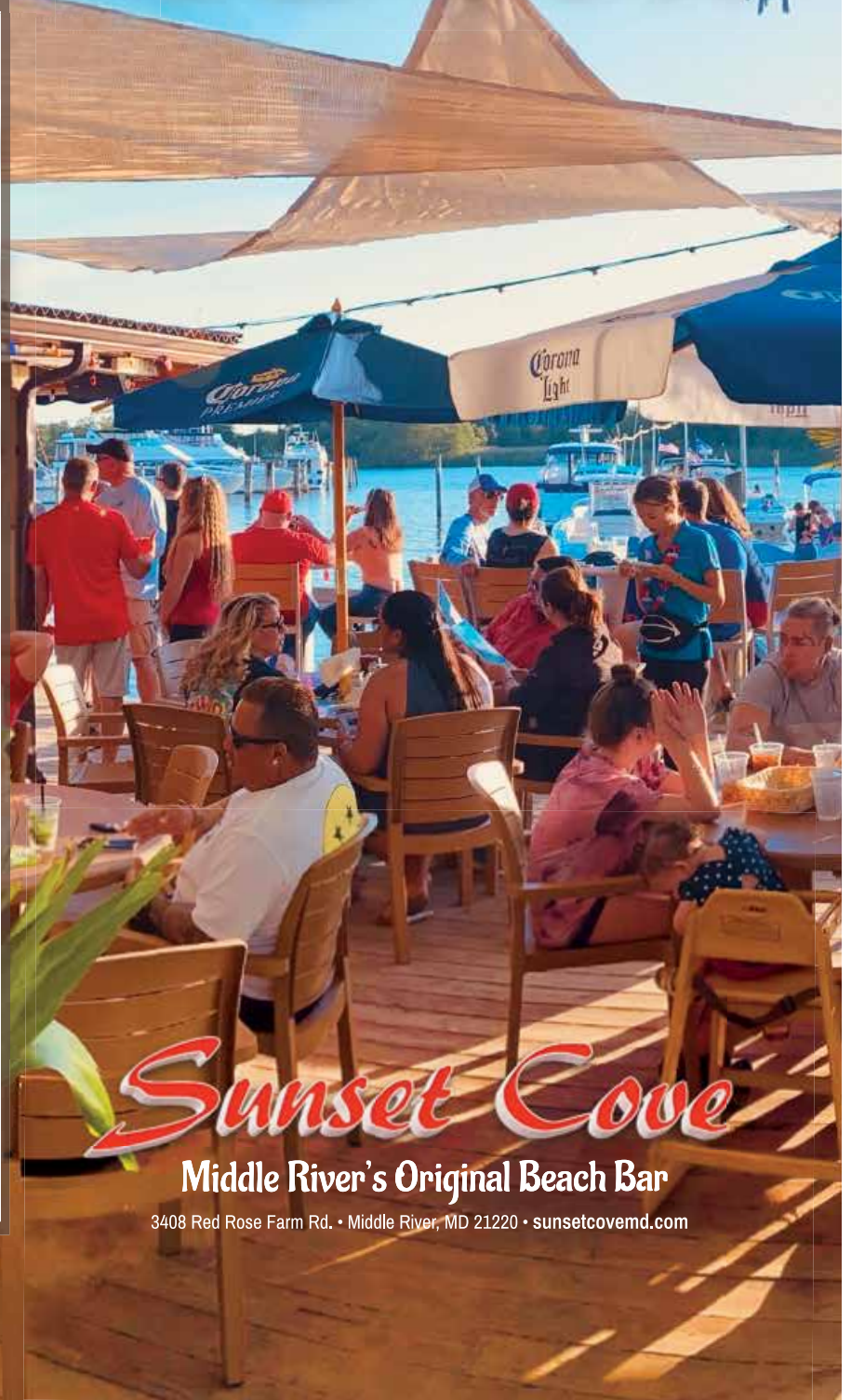


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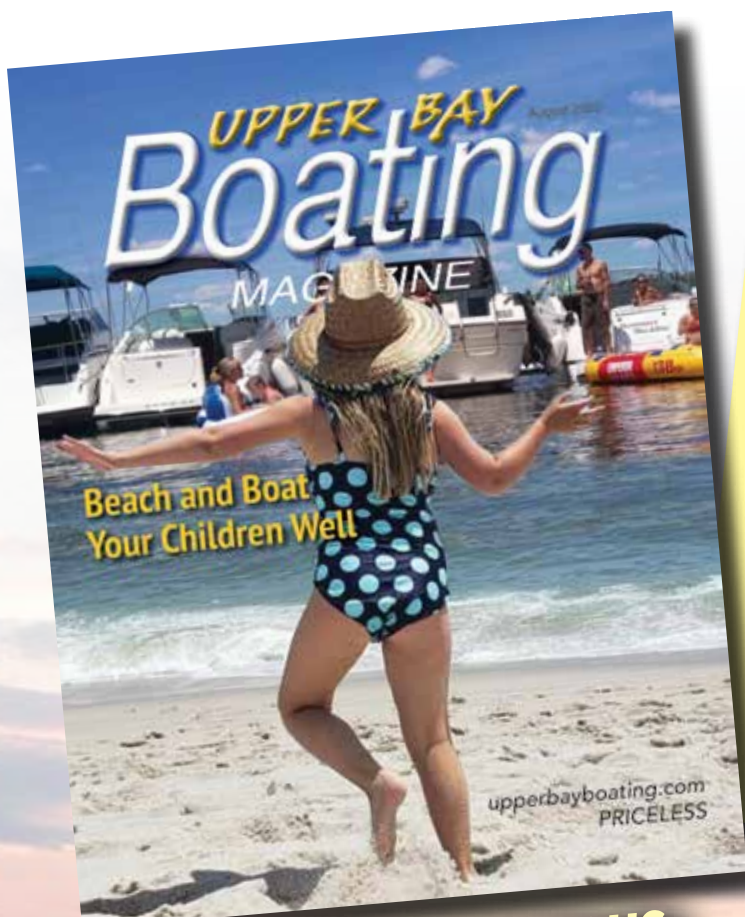


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# STOCKING THE FUTURE

By Tim Sherman

In the early and middle part of the last decade, I found a niche for catching bass in Middle River. In years prior to that, I'd found patterns for catching bass in the Gunpowder River complex. For years, these areas have been less revered than the highly touted areas at the head of the bay. Bass related more to grass in the Gunpowder River, Dundee and Saltpeter Creeks. My mantra for Middle River was, "If you're not fishing docks, you are not catching bass." I'd taken knowledge gained by fishing with bass pros and local anglers and formulated plans to do well.

Now remember back to the summer of 2015. It's a very important time for bass fishing on the upper Chesapeake. The B.A.S.S. Elite Series made a stop on our waters, which showcased to the world the great largemouth bass fishery we have. The 100 pro anglers fished in waters from the North East River south to Middle River. The late, great Aaron Martens was the tournament champion with a 4-day winning weight of 70 pounds, 2 ounces. He was one of the few who made the long run from the launch at the head of the North East River to Middle River.

Many in the local bass fishing world were surprised that the tournament was won in Middle River. I knew the river held some quality bass, yet Martens proved its true potential. The head of the bay was more coveted for large bass than the lower reaches of the tournament boundaries. Martens found a special pattern in Bowleys Marina. His win brought immediate providence to the river.

Fast forward to December 2015 and Middle River was in the headlines again. This time it was bad news. An algae bloom set off a fish kill that devastated



Scott Sewell,  
MD BASS Nation  
Conservation  
Director

multiple species in the fishery, including largemouth bass. The highest of highs related to bass fishing on the river was quickly deflated in a matter of months. The next winter, and to a larger extent, another mysterious algae bloom overwhelmed the Gunpowder River.

Natural repopulation for many of these species is catching up in both rivers. Yet, one organization and its conservation leader have since stepped up to replenish and grow the population of largemouth bass in these two rivers. Scott Sewell, MD BASS Nation Conservation Director put in a restocking program that is still in motion today.

Sewell says that the stocking program has long been in place. He'd been restocking Middle River at some levels since a similar fish kill in 2000. The most recent events lead him to a more aggressive project. He has got assistance from the Maryland Department

of Natural Resources (DNR), in conjunction with him soliciting funds from members of MD Bass Nation, the business community, and the public. The funding allows him to purchase bass from certified fish farms to help repopulate the area.

For the Gunpowder River, volunteers from local BASS Nation clubs meet at the Mainer Point Park ramp. Sewell acquires permits from the DNR so that these volunteers can transport up to 20 bass in their live wells for distribution throughout the river and its creeks and coves. Without the permits, the volunteers would legally only be allowed to transport 5 bass each. Scott advised them to release the bass where there is plenty of cover so the bass would not be subject to predation from birds of prey and larger gamefish. The same process has been repeated for Middle River where the volunteers gathered at the Wilson Point Park launch.

Most recently, Scott has modified his restocking program. Since 2019 he has been buying a larger class of bass. Costing up to \$22 per fish, 12-inch bass have a greater chance of surviving predation. They will naturally repopulate the fishery sooner than the smaller class. In Middle River, he now has the tanker truck meet him at various marinas for direct stocking on the main river and creeks. He still uses the volunteers to stock the Gunpowder River with the larger brood.

An additional complication to the fish kills is the ever-growing population of invasive snakeheads. What once was an issue limited to the Potomac River and lower eastern shore tributaries has morphed into a bay-wide concern. Snakeheads are in direct competition with bass for food and territory. Sewell believes that, while the snakehead population is growing, bass recruitment is stagnant or lacking. This is why this stocking program and the larger class of bass is so important.

Scott Sewell's dear fishing friend, the late Bill Sanders, was passionate about the restocking program. For years, Bill was the Tournament Director for the rival FLW Maryland Bass Federation. He believed that to grow the sport of bass fishing for future generations, there needs to be bass for them to catch. Few words have resonated so true. Over the last six years, hundreds of bass have been introduced to the Gunpowder and Middle Rivers by MD BASS Nation at the direction of Scott Sewell. These additional bass can only add to the natural recruitment of the species in the southern reaches of the upper bay bass waters.



# Light Advice for Boating in the Dark

By TowBoatU.S. Captain Dale Plummer

Last night at 2am, I was out trying to find a boater who was broken down and only had a vague idea where he was. I started thinking about how hazardous night boating is if you aren't experienced and don't have the right electronics. Over the years, we have responded to more than our share of night related boating accidents and break-downs. There are a couple of simple rules that might keep you out of trouble.

Always reduce your speed at night and keep a sharp lookout for lights of other boats, unlit markers, and debris. If you are not familiar with the area, chose to stay put for the night.

Always check your lights before leaving the dock. Keep spare bulbs on board for your nav lights as well as a spare flashlight. If your boat is dead in the water because of an electrical issue or dead battery, a flashlight or even a cell phone can be used to wave off an approaching power boat or help a tow boat locate you.

If using autopilot don't set your course directly to a marker. You are setting your course for a head-on collision if you don't spot the marker in time.

Turn off vanity lighting and only use your spotlight when necessary. Artificial sources of light reduce your natural night vision.

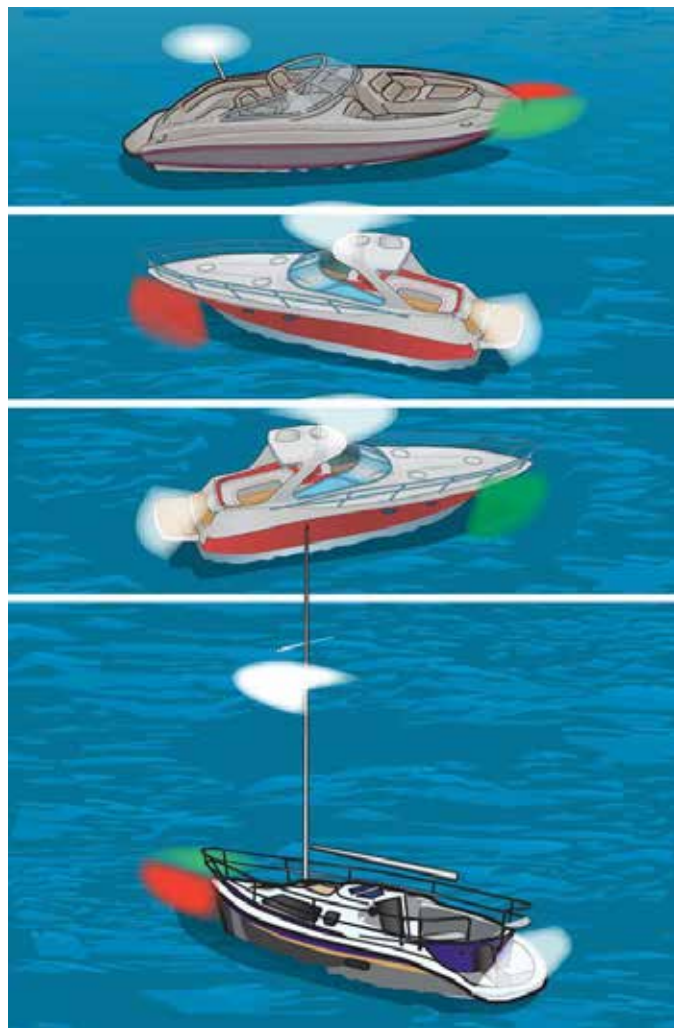
Learn how to dim your electronics monitor. I responded to a recent accident where the boat owner had covered his radar screen with a towel because it was too bright. Had he just known how to dim the screen, his radar could have helped him to avoid the collision.

Learn how to use your electronics, in advance, to help navigate. Even an accurate compass heading while it's still light can help you maintain a steady course or reverse course for the trip home.

Learn how to spot the light patterns of oncoming and retreating vessels as well as vessels that are crossing your path. A very simple rule to remember is that when you see red, stop. The other boater has the right of way. Remember the more lights that are present on a boat, the larger the boat is so its best to just steer clear.

If navigating across the Bay and you must cross the shipping channel, monitor channel 13 for ship traffic or visit [marinetraffic.com](http://marinetraffic.com) for live AIS monitoring.

If you are looking for more in-depth material, [boatus.org](http://boatus.org) is a great resource. BoatUS Foundation also is offering hands-on boating courses for novice boaters. Give them a call at 800-245-2628. And, give us a call when you need a helping hand - day or night - out on the water. Happy to Help!



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# Blue Cats



Photo courtesy of  
chesapeakebay.net

in perspective in 2014 Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama farm raised almost 300 million dollars' worth of catfish for the commercial market. That doesn't even account for the wild commercial catch of Catfish. As I understand it fish and shellfish that are transported interstate must be FDA inspected. Except Blue Catfish! Since they can be farm raised they must now be inspected by the USDA like chickens and beef, a much more intense set of expensive regulations and inspections. Processors and dealers under USDA guidelines must have inspectors on site while processing product, at the processors expense. Also while processing one species all others must be removed. This is fine in a chicken plant that only processes chickens but most seafood processors are processing numerous products. Blue Catfish can now be seen on many Virginia and Maryland restaurant menus (with rave reviews) but they can't easily be shipped out of state. So the commercial market is very slim to Maryland and Virginia Waterman.

However! There is light at the end of the tunnel. Legislation has been introduced by Congressman Andy Harris to take the USDA out of the equation and keep with the FDA inspections like all fisheries. This would make every state that has invasive species play by the

same rules as those states that have the species native to their waters when trying to create commercial fisheries. And we all know that the best way to control an invasive species is to create commercial demand. The Maryland General Assembly also introduced Joint Resolution 4 (Senators Guzzone and Stein). It also removes USDA and its cumbersome inspection rules on Blue Catfish returning this oversight to the FDA as in the past. Support within Maryland for these measures is almost unanimous and these measures are supported by groups like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Waterman's Association, CCA and DNR. It's rare to see such unanimous support by these diverse stakeholders.

If you really think about the issue in simple terms it makes sense. We are at the top of the food web. Most of the species we rely on for food and recreation are on the next level down. And they, like us rely on all the levels below them. The carrying capacity of the Chesapeake is limited at all levels and right now the food web is extremely top heavy, too many predators and not enough prey. Something has to give. In fisheries we talk about how many pounds of a species we can harvest and still leave enough to maintain the Species, sustainability. But how do we arrive at that number with increased numbers of predators like Bottle Nosed Dolphins, Snakeheads and Blue Catfish? Hopefully we can do something to bring things back in balance. Creating a robust commercial fishery for Blue Catfish is a big step in the right direction.

Editor's Note: The captain operates Tuna the Tide Charter Service in Grasonville. This article first appeared in "Maryland Hunting and Fishing Journal".

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