

MSSA FREDERICK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Working to Provide a Unified Voice to Preserve and Protect the
Rights, Tradition and the Future of Recreational Fishing!
No Unity, No Voice, No Fish



The Official MSSA Frederick Chapter VHF Channel is 71

President's Message

Finally, some sunshine, man, 14 days of clouds sure can be depressing. It's unfortunate that our first two tournaments were deluged with way too much rain. Looks like chapter is 4 for 4 with rain for our last four events. It started with a downpour at the crab feast, a hurricane at the King Mack tournament and the last two this year were almost washed out. However, being the die hard fisherman that we are, our club really made the best of things anyway. Not being a part of some of our events after doing it for so many years, makes one reflect on how much fun our chapter really is and makes one understand the all the effort that goes into making all our events first class. Having said that, huge thanks to those of you who really step up to help make the chapter a success.

We will be kicking off our offshore season this meeting with Captain Ken Lehr from ReelDraggin Tackle speaking about some offshore Tuna and other species of fishing. He will also have all the tackle you will need to complete your arsenal to target these offshore fish. Ken has been a huge supporter of The Frederick Chapter over the years and please make sure that you become one of his supporters. Next month (July), we will have a light tackle demonstration and vendor. August, we will do a nice outdoor presentation of crabbing with Bay Country Crabbing supplies.

This year our crab feast will be a paid event. Our apologies to those who attended that sold raffle tickets. Tickets will be available this meeting for \$35 per person and the menu, prizes and crabs will be just as good if not better than in the past. See Bob Pellicot to purchase your tickets. The board has decided if we do not have at least 50 people attending the event it will be canceled. Tickets will be sold until August 31st and there will be NO sales afterwards. Hope everyone can attend.

Fish Hard! Ed

Next Meeting

Date: June 8, 2016

Food Service begins at 6:15 PM
Meeting at 7:00 PM

Speaker: Ken Lahr from Reel Draggin Tackle

Vendor: [Reel Draggin Tackle](#)

Dinner Menu:

Hot Roast Beef
Mashed Potatoes
Gravy
Cole Slaw
Green Beans
Corn
Dessert

Attendance at May Meeting: 82

Raffle Winners:

Steve Oneil- Rod and Reel Combo
Tom Fouche- Pliers and Gloves
Porter King- 14.5" Hook Remover
Stephanie Shaller- Gulp 4" Mullet 8 oz
Garrick Valdes- 3" Pearl White Shrimp
John Dibble- Fluke Rigs
Kevin Swartzbaugh- Eagle Claw hooks/
Rigs
John Travers- Cutting Board and Knife

50/50 Raffle: Bobby Hurt- \$108

Directions To Meeting at the Frederick

Moose Lodge: - [Map](#)
From Frederick, take **I-70** east
to **exit 56** (Rt. 144W). Turn slight right
onto MD-144. Go 0.8 miles to 828 E.
Patrick St. on the left

Cobia Tournament Update

The VMRC voted to change the Cobia regulations, allowing the season to stay open until August 30. There are a few new regulations though. The boat limit is now 2 fish. The minimum length is now 40", and only 1 fish is allowed to be over 50". Also, there is NO GAFFING allowed. These regulations allow our Cobia tournament to be held as planned. The June 8th tournament will be the last chance to register.

******Due to the regulations being announced so late, the board has agreed to waive the late registration fee for this tournament only******

Fishing Reports

Ocean City Action

Oyster Bay Tackle

Bluefish up to 36 inches are being caught by anglers tossing Gotcha plugs, speck rigs and spoons from the North jetty, the Route 50 bridge and from boats drifting the inlet. Colby and Ashley from Pa. fished the Route 50 bridge and caught a 31 inch chopper bluefish along with smaller blues and short strippers.

Maryland DNR Fishing Report

Maryland Weekly Fishing Report Overview | June 01, 2016

Memorial Day Weekend is come and gone and we are now entering the month of June. This is great news for anyone fishing for striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay and the tidal rivers since now all waters are open to the standard striped bass regulations we are all familiar with (Bag limit is 2 fish, minimum size is 20 inches,

only one of which can be equal to or greater than 28 inches). Out of a three day weekend we at least had two good days of weather and what better way to celebrate than to take a veteran fishing. In this case Travis Long took his dad (Ed Long, a Vietnam Vet) and family for a fun day of jigging striped bass on the Chesapeake together.

Today Susquehanna River and adjoining area fishermen are rejoicing that the catch and release restrictions are now lifted and striped bass regulations follow the basic size and creel limits for the rest of the bay. Fortunately the striped bass are sticking around in the edges near the flats and in the lower Susquehanna so fishing has been very good. Casting topwater lures in the early morning and evening hours along grass edges and shoreline structure offers a lot of fun and excitement. Jigging along channel edges or near the Conowingo Dam pool or channel edges in the river is also a productive way to catch striped bass. There are also a lot of white perch in the area providing plenty of fishing fun along with flathead and channel catfish.

Any casual boater on the upper bay could not help but notice a fleet of boats anchored up at Love Point and also over at Swan Point this past weekend. Chumming for striped bass has started in earnest and success has been pretty good on the ebb tide. Reports reveal a high percentage of sub-legal fish which is normal for the upper bay fishery but the 2011 year class is coming on strong and most are catching their two fish limit in short order. Some prefer to troll for their striped bass and trolling a mixed spread of umbrella rigs, tandem rigs behind planers or inline weights will get lures down to where the fish are holding along channel edges. Medium sized bucktails, Storm swim shad type plastic baits and spoons are good choices for trolling. Jigging is very productive when concentrations of fish can be found suspended near structure. Live lining eels is also another good way to catch striped bass near structure such as bridge piers and submerged rocks and channel edges.

There are plenty of white perch to be caught in the upper bay region this week and most of the tidal rivers have excellent populations. This is a wonderful opportunity to take kids or older folk for a leisure day of bottom fishing with small jigs or bottom rigs tipped with pieces of bloodworm. Channel catfish and striped bass can also be part of the mix.

The middle bay region offers a lot of great fishing opportunities this week as water temperature finally pass the 70° mark for the first time this year. Striped bass are very active in a wide variety of habitats and locations so there is something for

everyone. All of the tidal rivers are now open to striped bass fishing. Eastern Bay and the middle regions of tidal rivers such as the Choptank are offering striped bass fishing for those fishing shoreline structure or steep channel edges. Nora Long is all smiles with this beautiful striped bass she caught while fishing with her family.

Shallow water fishing for striped bass is a light tackle dream when it comes to fishing topwater lures on spinning tackle or skipping bugs, streamers and Clousers on a fly rod. Shoreline structure such as old rip rap, prominent points and old piers are great places to target in the early morning or evening hours. The cow-nosed rays are here in force and are stirring up the shallow waters and often pushing striped bass to new areas.

Out in the main part of the bay chumming at the Bay Bridge, Hacketts, Gum Thickets, the Hill, Thomas Point and the Clay Banks is becoming popular. Catches have been good especially on an ebbing tide. Trolling along channel edges has also been popular and success has been very good. Inline weights and planers will get umbrella rigs and tandem rigged bucktails and Storm type swim baits down to the fish. The channel edges outside the chumming fleet locations and the western edge of the shipping channel have been good places to troll. Ballast stone piles are also a very good place to troll by if you can find them. Jigging with soft plastics along channel edges where fish can be found suspended is a fun way to catch some nice striped bass.

White perch fishing has is very good this week in the tidal rivers of the middle bay region and offer a lot of fun fishing opportunities. Fishing off of docks and piers with lures or simple bottom rigs baited with grass shrimp, bloodworms, peeler crab or small minnows is the ticket to this fun show. Now that the perch are moving into their summer haunts and can be caught along shoreline structure in the mornings and evenings on light tackle with small beetle spin lures, spinners or jigs.

There has been some black drum action on the Sharps Island and James Island Flatsthis week. This is a very specialized fishery but rewarding if you want to slug it out with one of the largest fish to be caught anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay. It takes a good depth finder and a watchful eye to locate the drum and one has to be quick with a simple bottom rig with a soft crab bait tied onto a big hook with rubber bands and a fair sized sinker. Dropping a soft crab bait to the bottom of the Chesapeake is like sliding a chocolate cake out in front of a bunch of hungry teenagers so it can't be left down there for long. Everything from toadfish to cow-nosed rays will make short order of such a delectable offering.

The lower bay region offers a wide variety of fishing opportunities this week as warming water temperatures encourage some of our summer migrants to move into the region. Croakers are at the top of the list and they are being caught this week in a variety of locations. The lower Patuxent River and Cedar Point area has been good; the Wicomico River, Cobb Island and over on the eastern side of the bay croakers are being caught in Tangier Sound. White perch can also be counted on to be part of the catch in many of these locations. A few bluefish have been caught in the region recently and speckled trout are becoming more common on the eastern marsh shoreline areas. Large red drum will soon be caught and released near the Target Ship and spot are due to show up in the region's tidal rivers.

Striped bass are being caught along shoreline structure near prominent points and creek and river channel edges on topwater lures in the early morning or evening hours as well as suspended jerkbaits and soft plastic jigs. Trolling has been popular along channel edges in the lower Potomac River and near Cove Point, Point Lookout and Hooper's Island. A mix of umbrella rigs, spoons, bucktails and Storm type swim shads have been popular behind inline weights and planers.

Recreational crabbing has been good in many of the middle and lower bay tidal rivers and continues this week. In some areas, female and small crabs tend to be chewing up baits and now cow-nosed rays are joining the buffet as uninvited guests. This can really be a pain when using razor clams in bait bags on a trot line; they tend to crunch them up and destroy the plastic bait bags. Despite the locust trees being a little behind on blooming; crabs are starting to shed in the lower bay area and there are plenty of peelers available for bait this week. Blue crabs often don't make it through their third winter of hibernation, especially if we have a really cold winter. But when they do they can develop into real whoppers! Angelina Watts got to go out trot lining with her dad for some Memorial Day crabs on a middle bay region tidal river and holds up two whoppers they caught.

The upper Potomac River is still running high and anyone thinking about fishing on the river should use caution. Water temperatures are around 66° and waters are stained. Tubes and craws worked along current edges and breaks are a good tactic. There are other waters in the state that are less shall we say "adventurous" than the upper Potomac in spring time. Liberty and Prettyboy Reservoirs hold some excellent smallmouth bass fishing as does the lower Susquehanna River. Dave Zeigler holds up a beautiful trophy smallmouth bass he caught in Prettyboy Reservoir recently.

Many have heard by now through press releases and social media about our new state record northern snakehead that was hauled in by a bow fisherman in the tidal Potomac River. Dutch, as he likes to be called, is an ardent night time bow fisherman who loves to hunt northern snakeheads and blue catfish and he is very good at it. Dutch Emory was out bow fishing with his longtime buddy Franklin Shotwell (appropriate name for an archer) when he spotted a big snakehead in the lights. Dutch's aim was true and after a fairly intense struggle the fish was boated and they had their prize. A preliminary weight told them they really had something and therefore demanded a certified weight. The certified weight was 18.42 lbs and upon inspection by a fisheries biologist the new state record was declared. Maryland groups bow fishing and hook and line methods of capture together for invasive species state records for northern snakeheads, blue catfish and flathead catfish. As a side note if Dutch or someone else had caught this snakehead by hook and line, it very well could have been declared a new world record. Northern snakeheads are growing to huge sizes as evidenced by Dutch's fish and they are spreading rapidly throughout the Chesapeake Bay river systems so there are or will be shortly even larger snakeheads out there for some future angler to possible break the current world record northern snakehead record of 17 lbs, 12 oz caught in May of 2014 in a Virginia tributary to the Potomac River.

Water temperatures in the Ocean City area will most likely reach the 70° mark this coming weekend and those warmer water temperatures are bringing in more varieties of fish. In the surf large striped bass are still being caught along with bluefish of various sizes, black drum and kingfish. Fresh menhaden or sand flea baits have been working well for the striped bass and black drum, finger mullet tends to be the better bait for bluefish. Bloodworms tend to be the preferred bait for the kingfish.

In and around the inlet tautog are being caught near the South Jetty and bulkheads or bridge piers inside the inlet on sand fleas and pieces of crab. Bluefish are moving through the inlet; spec rigs and Got-Cha plugs have been the best way to catch them. Striped bass are also in and around the inlet; they are being caught on swim shads, bucktails and live eels.

Flounder fishing is improving as more of them move through the inlet and into the back bays. Water clarity has been fairly good and warmer water temperatures on a falling tide help fishing success.

Virginia Beach Action

Weekly Sportfishing Rundown
03 June 2016

The summer fishing season continues to pick up momentum. With good weather, warmer days, and cooperative fish, this trend should continue.

Cobia is still the big news, and with good reason. Cobia hunters are happy that the season has been extended (in a sense), which is better than nothing. Although Federal waters will close to cobia on June 20th, inshore anglers can keep one fish per angler at 40-inches or longer, up to two fish per boat through August 30th. Only one of the two fish boat limit can stretch to longer than 50-inches, and cobia can no longer be gaffed. Since the cobia arrived early this year, folks have wasted no time searching for their share. Sight casters are having the best success while cruising the lower Bay and CBBT areas. Boats using the chumming technique are also having good results from the Buckroe area off Hampton, to the Inner Middle Grounds and the Nine-foot Shoals closer to the mouth of the Bay. Some larger fish are making an appearance this week, while most fish are still ranging around 20 to 30-pounds. Local pier anglers are also landing a few small cobia lately.

Red drum are still providing plenty of action right now. Depending on the conditions, boats are releasing bulls from the seaside of Fisherman's Island and the Nautilus Shoal areas measuring up to over 50-inches while bottom fishing or while casting to roaming schools of big fish. Black drum are still taking clam offerings mostly near buoys 13 and 16 off the Eastern Shore, with most blacks still averaging under 30-pounds. These fish will begin moving to the islands of the Bay Bridge-Tunnel soon.

The flounder bite is still improving, with more anglers reporting limits of bigger fish. Some flatfish pushing close to 7-pounds are taking drifted minnows and cut bait near the islands of the CBBT. Anglers jigging and working live bait along the pilings and over the tubes of the Bridge Tunnel are also scoring with fish, with the 1st and 2nd islands most productive lately. Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets are still giving up above average numbers of keepers, with many flatties averaging to around 20-inches this past week. Both the Bayside and seaside areas of Oyster, the Cell, and the buoy 36 area are producing better flounder numbers for drifters recently, with a few doormats also in the mix.

The first catches of the season's Spanish mackerel happened this week off the Virginia Beach oceanfront this past week. Reports of some speckled trout and puppy drum continue to come from mostly within Lynnhaven Inlet and Mobjack Bay. Nice bluefish and medium-sized croaker are available all over the lower Bay. Bigger snapper-sized bluefish ranging to about 6-pounds are still lurking inside Rudee Inlet recently. The HRBT, Hampton Bar, the Monitor-Merrimac, the James River Bridge, Little Creek, and the southern small boat channel at the CBBT are providing decent action on a range of sizes of hardheads. Sea mullet are also hitting along the oceanfront, where pier anglers had a good run of small to medium-sized fish this week. Respectable spot are also hitting within lower Bay inlets.

Spadefish are appearing on the Chesapeake Light Tower and inshore wrecks, with a few fish already boated. Most fish are ranging around 3 to 5-pounds. Sheepshead action is also heating up, with a few nice catches reported so far from the CBBT area. Although interest is waning with so many other species becoming available, striped bass are still biting, with good reports coming from the islands of the CBBT, the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel, the James River Bridge, and the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel lately. Many of these rockfish are ranging to around 32-inches.

The open seabass season is drawing some boats to deeper water off the coast, where folks are finding good catches of big fish when they can get out. Deep droppers are also hauling in big seabass along with a good variety of blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, some big grouper and blackbellied rosefish.

Offshore, warm water is now within reach from Virginia, where excellent catches of nice yellowfin tuna, scattered big eye tuna, and larger mahi, and mako sharks are rewarding boats making the run. Most of the yellowfin tuna are in the 40-pound range, with a few tuna pushing to over 60-pounds also around.

<http://www.drjball.com>

Delaware Fishing Report

By Eric Burnley Sr.*

Updated: June 2, 2016

DELAWARE BAY The weather is warm, but it is also wet and the rain canceled many trips on Sunday and Monday. The

early part of the holiday weekend was fair and good numbers of fish were caught.

Keeper rockfish are still in the Upper Bay and are still taking cut, fresh bunker and bloodworms. The usual locations such as the Yellow Can, the Bull Pen, 4L and 6L buoys are holding up well for boaters who chum with fresh bunker. Shore fishermen are finding keepers on bunker and bloodworms at Augustine Beach and Governor Bacon.

The white perch and catfish action has been good along the banks of the Upper Bay and in the tidal creeks and rivers. The perch like bloodworms and the cats will take just about anything from bunker and bloodworms to chicken livers and homemade stink baits.

The black drum bite has been steady at the Coral Beds. Right now most of the fish caught weigh 15 to 25 pounds, with a few much larger to over 70 pounds. We should see more big fish over the next week or so. Fresh clams are the most popular bait, but if you can find live blue claw crabs give them a try. The drum will gobble the crabs up while sharks, rays and skates don't seem to find them as attractive as clams.

I wish I had better news on the flounder, but they don't seem to be here in any large numbers. The Lewes and Rehoboth Canal has been dirty and choked with weeds since the heavy rain on Sunday. The Lower Bay around the Ferry Wall is not much better. This is not to say no flounder have been caught, just they are a rare commodity.

A few keeper flounder have been caught from the fishing pier at Cape Henlopen State Park. It's no bonanza, but seems to be getting better each day with larger flatfish coming over the rail. Big bluefish come around now and then to add a bit of excitement. Blues have also been caught from shore between the pier and Cape Henlopen on cut bunker.

INSHORE OCEAN As predicted, the best of the sea bass action has moved beyond the 20-Fathom Line where there remain a decent number of keepers. Those who box a limit don't stay in the same place for long. The largest sea bass bite first and once you begin to catch small fish it's time to move. Clams, squid and Gulp! will all work on the sea bass.

There are a few flounder coming in from the Old Grounds and this will only improve. The last two years saw excellent flounder fishing in the ocean and there is

no reason to believe this year will be different.

INDIAN RIVER INLET Keeper rockfish have been caught after dark on swim shads and white bucktails with a white worm. The southside of the inlet seems to hold more rock that anywhere else.

Blues from small to large pass through the inlet on incoming current. If you are there at the right time you can catch them on metal or bucktails.

Massey's Ditch has given up a few flounder on live minnows, but the rest of the back bays remain pretty barren. All the rain we had over the weekend didn't do anything to clean up or warm up the water.

SURF FISHING We continue to get reports from the beach of big rockfish and blues on fresh bunker chunks. Herring Point, the Old Coast Guard Station, Conquest and Three Rs Road have all seen some action. As is always the case, being there when the fish arrive is the secret to success.

BE CAREFUL OUT THERE Indian River Inlet is one of the most dangerous inlets on the east coast. The only ones I know of that are more dangerous are Oregon and Hatteras inlets. If I had to navigate either of those to go fishing, I would take up golf.

With the drop off of fishing inside the Inland Bays, more folks will want to fish the ocean, and that means more boats going and coming through Indian River Inlet. Some will get through on dumb luck and a few will end up losing their boats if not their lives.

The most dangerous time to run the inlet is on outgoing current. Add in an east wind and you have some pretty gnarly conditions.

Back in the 1970s and 80s I would go through the inlet in my 14-foot tin boat. My passage would be timed to coincide with the incoming current. I would try to run out at slack low water and be back in before the current changed to outgoing. I would not go at all if the wind was out of the east or was above five to ten knots in any direction.

The current will change direction approximately one-and-a-half to two hours after the change of tide. If your tide chart says low tide will occur at noon, expect the current to change around 1:30 to 2 p.m.

There are at least two types of boats that should never try to navigate Indian River

Inlet; Jon boats and pontoons. I have seen a few Jon boats upside down because they are not able to take on a big head sea. Pontoons simply are not designed for big seas and while they may not flip like a Jon boat they will take water over the deck and this is somewhat disturbing for the captain and passengers.

If you must come and go when the outgoing current puts up big standing waves, proceed with caution. Do not hit those waves at full speed thinking your super-fast boat will just jump right over the waves. While it may, chances are it will jump the first wave then land bow first into the second. At this point the boat will come to a very sudden stop that could damage the hull and injure the folks onboard.

Enter the wave at a reasonable speed using enough power to get through and be prepared for the next wave. Too little power will cause the boat to turn side to the next wave and that is seldom a good thing.

Coming back in is a similar operation. Allow the wave to break under the boat as it surfs in. Adjust the power so the following sea does not come in over the transom. Continue this procedure until you have cleared the standing waves.

By the way, please have everyone on the boat wear their PFDs.

DNR in the News

Natural Resources Police Urges Safety This Boating Season

May 24, 2016

With Memorial Day weekend and the start of summer right around the corner, the Maryland Natural Resources Police reminds swimmers, boaters and anglers to be water wise.

Last year was Maryland's deadliest boating season in two decades, with 21 fatalities. Eighteen of the victims were not wearing life jackets. Late May begins the annual boating boom and the four-month stretch in which the majority of boating accidents occur.

This year, officers will be out in force, targeting unsafe and negligent boaters and those whose judgment is impaired by alcohol or drugs. Extra patrols will be conducting safety checks, and boaters who lack sufficient or have inadequate life jackets will be issued a ticket and returned to the launch ramp.

"You are your own best lifeguard," Natural Resources Police Superintendent Col. Robert K. Ziegler Jr. said. "Once a boat strikes something in the water or capsizes, it's too late to reach for a life jacket or to be scrambling to find a way to call for help."

For many people, the Memorial Day weekend marks the first time they'll be on the water since fall. Ziegler said it is important to review procedures, do a bow-to-stern inspection, and make sure all required safety gear is on board and in good working order.

Here are five things you should know before you go:

- **Make sure everyone on board has a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.** Children under the age of 13 are required to wear a life jacket aboard a boat less than 21 feet long.
- **Never boat while impaired.** The sun, wind and water can take their toll on boaters. Alcohol and drug use magnifies fatigue and impairs judgment.
- **Check weather and tides before heading out.** Storms come up suddenly. Don't think you can outrun a fast-moving squall. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder or flash of lightning before resuming activities.
- **Supervise small children** and other individuals who cannot swim.
- **Carry a cell phone** in a waterproof pouch or have a marine radio and monitor VHF Channel 16. Let someone on land know where you are going and when you expect to return.

Tips and Tricks

Boat Sounder Tips

This was posted on Stripersonline Forum by Wayne Tj

Active sonar produces two pieces of information:

- 1) the amount of time it takes for a sound to bounce off an object
 - 2) the strength of the echo
- The echo that came back first is at the top of the screen, while the longest is at the bottom. The strength of the echo is usually displayed in colors or gray scale, with darker being stronger.
- Sounder Controls:

1) Picture Advance Speed

Typical choices are 2-1, 1-1, 1-2, and 1-4. With a setting of 2-1, the screen will move over 2 vertical lines for every pulse it transmits (drawing each one twice), while at 1-4 it will only move one line for every four pulses.

Tip: As a general rule, leave the unit set on 1-1 for normal running and trolling. If you are at anchor or drifting, sometimes 2-1 is a good bet because it spreads the same information out over a wider area. When running over an area at higher speeds, use 1-2 or 1-4 to slow down the picture so you have enough time to examine it before it moves off the screen.

Tip: Learn to use the horizontal scale. It is usually calibrated in seconds and allows you to determine how far back something is that you saw on the screen.

2) Frequency Control (200 kHz or 50 kHz)

The 200 kHz frequency will provide more information about the items it bounces off than the 50 kHz frequency because it has a shorter wavelength and thus bounces off a section of the target. Also, 200 kHz sound waves cannot travel through the water as far as a 50 kHz sound without getting so faint that the sounder cannot "hear" the sound reflected back to it.

Tip: To get the best information on your sounder screen, use the 200 kHz setting in shallower water and switch to 50 kHz in deep water.

Almost all units will work at 200 kHz down to about 100-150 feet. Some expensive sounders with high performance transducers will work down to 300 feet or more at 200 kHz.

3) Range & Shift Control

Tip: Set it so that the lower end of the range is just deeper than the approximate depth of the water you wish to read.

The *range control* actually does more than it appears to do because most sounders are programmed to operate differently within certain blocks of depth linked to the range scale. Since the sound pulse takes longer to bounce off the bottom in deeper water, as the range scale goes up, the rate at which the sounder sends out its "pings" goes down.

Tip: To get the most information on your screen, it is important to be operating with the lowest range scale that still puts the bottom (or desired depth) on your screen.

The *shift control* changes the depth at which the display starts so instead of the top representing zero depth, it can be set to a greater depth, leaving off the specified number of feet from the top and adding them to the bottom range.

Tip: If you are in 32 feet of water, and your choice of ranges are 30 and 60, you will get a much better result if you use the shift feature to adjust the starting point down five feet. You can then create your own range of 5 to 35 feet and keep the sounder sending out more pulses as it is programmed to do.

The split screen "bottom zoom" feature on most machines is the built-in way of doing the same thing, except that it is programmed to show you a slice from the bottom up 10 or so feet.

Tip: When fishing in relatively deep water for fish that are likely to be well above the bottom, it is often helpful to just display a "slice" of the water to get more detail.

Here's an example of how that might work: assume the bottom is 600 feet but the bait or schools of gamefish you are trying to spot are likely to be in depths from 50 to 200 feet. Instead of setting the range all the way down to 600 feet, set it at 200 and shift it down 20 feet. Now your screen will be showing just what the sounder is reading from 20 feet down to 220 feet. You will see smaller targets and get a much better picture of the relative size of the targets using this range scale than if you just automatically go for the bottom.

4) Gain

Contrary to what many people think, the gain control does not increase the power output of the sounder. It works on the other end of the process by controlling the amount of amplification applied to the return echoes.

Tip: If there is too much gain, all signals will be shown as relatively strong and the amount of detail visible on the screen will be greatly reduced. If the gain is too low, the sounder will go "deaf" and not hear many echoes, thus also losing detail.

Tip: Use the bottom as a reference point in setting the gain. Start from a low setting and increase the gain until the bottom shows as a solid line of the strongest signal return color (dark red).

5) Clutter Filter

The purpose of this control is to give you a

way of dealing with the fact that there are many things in the water that might send return echoes that you can ignore (i.e. air bubbles, sand/sediment).

Tip: Adjust the clutter setting to the absolute minimum that gets rid of most of the "snow", but does not get rid of all of it because you run the risk of filtering out useful information from small targets such as baitfish.

6) Signal Level Filter

Used to set a threshold echo strength and have everything weaker than this level will vanish completely from the display.

Tip: This is a control to be used very sparingly in the event that the Clutter Filter leaves too much low-level noise on the screen from weeds in the water or some other target of no interest to you.

7) Interference Rejection Filter

This control eliminates unwanted stray electronic signals from being displayed.

Tip: If you are seeing noise that has regular patterns such as vertical lines, try using this filter to see what you lose from the display.

Putting it all together - what am I seeing?

Reduced to the basics, using a sounder for fishing consists of identifying three things under the boat: bottom structure that might be good habitat; schools of bait that attract the game fish, and, of course, the actual fish we are trying to catch.

Reading the bottom....

Reading the bottom is probably the most important skill for inshore fishing. Perhaps the best way to learn to read the display is to look at the difference between a sandy and rocky bottom, using a chart to put you in the proper areas. To do so, stop over a sandy area and turn down the gain until the sounder just starts to lose any echo from the bottom (depth reading will flash or go blank). Then gradually increase the gain until you start to see a line at the bottom. Because you are over sand or mud and not rock, this line should be one or two steps weaker than the strongest color.

Now head for the nearby rocky area. If the gain has been set correctly, you will begin to see areas of deep red when you get over the rocks, which reflect sound much better than a sandy bottom and thus show up as a stronger bottom. By noting the shifts in bottom color intensity, you can easily find the boundary of fish holding areas.

Finding the baitfish....

Looking for baitfish is pretty straight forward. All the fish we normally encounter (except tuna and their cousins) have air bladders that they use to maintain neutral buoyancy. Air bladders reflect sound quite well and thus make a good target for the sounder. Tuna also show up well because of their large, densely muscled bodies. But since baitfish are small they will show up as low intensity colors unless they are tightly packed, in which case the densest portion of

the school may show red. The usual giveaway is a greenish or yellow mass with a small amount of red in the central portion, which can either be spread out or stacked up vertically.

When looking for schools of bait in deeper waters offshore near temperature breaks or structure, you will have the best results by sticking to 200 kHz and using a lower range setting than the actual bottom so that you expand your view of the top 50 or 100 feet of water.

Locating the quarry....

The bigger bladders of gamefish mean that they will usually show as a red horizontal spot. The shape is not critical since the fish might be moving laterally or horizontally in the water column.

One of the big reasons to use manual controls instead of the auto settings is to be able to spot the fish in areas with rocky bottoms. If the gain is set too high, the strong echo from the bottom will "drown out" the return from the fish near the bottom. On the other hand, if the gain is too low, only the bottom will show up because the sounder's "hearing aid" will be turned down too low to pick up the fish echoes.

Tip: When a strong red bottom shows, try gradually lowering the gain. Often as you do this, some weaker targets will start to appear in and among the red or just above it " those are most likely fish.

Schools of large fish are pretty easy to spot if your sounder gain and range are set properly, especially if they are off the bottom. They will usually appear as a group of very close together red marks. If they are very close and at some distance from the transducer, they may even appear as a single large mass.

When your boat is stationary (at anchor, for example), remember that if the school stays within the transducer's beam angle, the red mark will eventually look more like a wide band stretching across the screen. It didn't get bigger of course, that's just the sounder's way of telling you it has been seeing the same echo for a longer time.

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FREDERICK MSSA CHAPTER – 2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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JANUARY	13	- Frederick Meeting
	16	- Frederick Chapter Fishing Expo – Frederick Fair Grounds
	20	- Frederick Board Meeting
	23	- Tri State Marine Flea Market – Deale MD
	28-31	- Baltimore Boat Show – Baltimore Convention Center
FEBRUARY	10	- Frederick Meeting
	13-14	- Pasadena Flea Market – Earleigh Heights Fire Co, Pasadena, MD
	17	- Frederick Board Meeting
	27	- Saltwater Fishing Expo Annapolis Elks #622 – Edgewater MD
	27	- Dorchester County Flea Market – American Legion Cambridge, MD
27	- Dinner Dance - Frederick Moose Club	
MARCH	9	- Frederick Meeting
	16	- Frederick Board Meeting
	19-20	- Essex/Middle River Flea Market
	26-27	- Southern MD Fishing Fair – Solomons Fire Hall
APRIL	2-3	- Southern MD Fishing Fair – Solomons Fire Hall
	13	- Frederick Meeting
	16	- Opening Day - Striped Bass Season
	20	- Frederick Board Meeting
	29-1	- Frederick Chapter Spring Rockfish Tournament- Solomons
	29-1	- 33rd Annual MSSA Spring Tournament
MAY	11	- Frederick Meeting
	18	- Frederick Board Meeting
	20-22	- Frederick Chapter Flounder Tournament – Chincoteague
JUNE	8	- Frederick Meeting
	15	- Frederick Board Meeting
	17-19	- 27th Annual MSSA Tunament – Ocean City, Chincoteague, Wachapreague, and Indian River Inlet
JULY	8-10	- Frederick Chapter Cobia Tournament in Kiptopeke, VA
	13	- Frederick Meeting
	20	- Frederick Board Meeting
AUGUST	10	- Frederick Meeting
	17	- Frederick Board Meeting
SEPTEMBER	10	- Frederick Chapter Crab Feast
	14	- Frederick Meeting
	17-18	- 6 th Annual Mid Atlantic Flounder Tournament – OC, Chincoteague, DE
	21	- Frederick Board Meeting
OCTOBER	1-8	- Frederick Chapter North Carolina King Mackerel Tournament
	12	- Frederick Meeting
	19	- Frederick Board Meeting
NOVEMBER	9	- Frederick Meeting
	16	- Frederick Board Meeting
	18-20	- 24 th Annual MSSA Fall Tournament - Fish 2 of 3
DECEMBER	14	- Frederick Meeting
	21	- Frederick Board Meeting

FREDERICK MSSA CHAPTER – 2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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