

The River News

The Official Newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association

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September - October 2026

IMPORTANT: September Meeting To Focus On Nominations, Rule Changes, And More

The two most important reasons to attend the DRFA September monthly meeting are to establish the foundations for our upcoming 2027 season – electing Club officers and the submission of potential changes to Tournament Rules.

On that first topic, there are currently two vacancies in our Club Officer roles (*President and Membership Secretary*). Although final elections are held at the October meeting, it will be important to address these two vacancies so we can hit the ground running without a hitch in the new year.

On the second topic, the September meeting is the last chance to submit any proposed rule changes for the 2027 tournament season. If you have a proposed rule change to submit, you must do it **in writing**. You can do so at the September meeting or, if you are not able to attend, reach out to Tournament Coordinator Scott McDonough before the meeting using his contact info on the last page of this newsletter. Even though the final vote will not take place until

October's meeting, it is important to start discussions and refine the wording of proposed changes so everyone will have a good understanding before voting in October.

Other important topics to be discussed at that meeting also include plans on outdoor-show attendance over the winter months, a Holiday Party, and a potential fundraising raffle of a striper fishing trip. We will also need several members to step forward to coordinate the details of these two important activities.

Volunteers Needed To Assist At SLNC Family Fishing Event

The DRFA has agreed to provide helpers to support the Silver Lake Nature Center's Family Fishing event on Saturday, October 10. Volunteers are scheduled to meet at the Bath Road Parking Lot for main lake access at 8:30 am – one-and-a-half hours before the 10 am to 1 pm event – to help prepare the SLNC fishing rods to be used during the event.

Members will then man the stations to help the young anglers practice their casting and to assist with shoreline baiting of hooks and unhooking fish. This event is an important aspect of providing service hours to pay for the cost of our monthly meeting space.

Minutes Of The July Meeting

Secretary Pete Antoniewicz opened the meeting at 7:01 pm with 11 members in attendance. Minutes of the June meeting were read and approved.

Important Dates

Wednesday, September 30, 7 pm. Monthly meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center. Officer nominations and planning for winter shows and raffle.

Saturday, October 3, 7 am to 1 pm. Bass Tournament at Byram Ramp. (*See page 3.*)

Saturday, October 10, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. DRFA volunteers to assist at SLNC Family Fishing Day. (*See separate article on page 1.*)

Sunday, October 11, 7 am to 3 pm. SJBCA Bass Bowl. Gloucester City Marina.

Saturday, October 24, 7 am to 1 pm. Bass Tournament at Bulls Island Ramp. (*See page 3.*)

Wednesday, October. 28, 7 pm. Monthly meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center. Final nominations and elections.

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Treasurer's Report: John Pedrick reported a balance of \$9,810.69 in the treasury as of the July meeting date.

Membership: Rick Mawson reported a total of 52 members as of the meeting date, including 10 supporting business members.

Tournaments: Scott McDonough recapped the results from the July catfish tournament and the Angler of the Year standings as of that tournament. He called for weighmasters for the remainder of the season. We still needed two people for the September catfish tournament and for the early October bass tournament, as well as one more for the late-October bass tournament.

We will need a new DRFA representative to attend the South Jersey Bass Clubs Association meetings if we want to continue being eligible for the SJBCA Bass Bowl. Rick Mawson said that he had provided a Club roster to Bob Jack for this year's event.

Youth Activities: The Silver Lake Nature Center has asked for the DRFA's help during their Family Fishing Day on Saturday, October 10. As usual, members will meet about 90 minutes before the 10 am start to ensure that the poles from the summer camp are in good operating condition.

A club member also asked about DRFA help for a friend's youth fishing event. Rick Mawson told him to have that individual get in touch with a DRFA Club Officer for potential help.

Old Business: Bob Slobodian gave members information about his group fluke fishing trip on the Mi-Jo out of Atlantic Highlands on August 21 if anyone was interested in using it as a social event for DRFA members.

Members were reminded that August 1 was the next day for DRFA members to donate volunteer hours at the SLNC monthly workday.

It is suggested that volunteers sign up at silverlakenaturcenter.org so the Center can schedule tasks according to the number of volunteers available.

New Business: Members were reminded that nominations for Club officers would be open at the September meeting, with elections at the October meeting. Members were also reminded that any proposed tournament rule changes need to be submitted in writing by the September meeting so that they could be discussed before the October meeting.

Environmental: 'Weeds' was the key word regarding river environmental conditions. Tim Lang reported them in the Titusville area, Rick Mawson in the Lambertville area, and Frank Beck in the area above the Tohickon Creek when launching out of the Byram ramp.

Scott McDonough reported on dredging in the area of Biles Creek above Bordentown. He also discussed reports of the Army Corp of Engineers potentially using the Biles Island lake as a deposit site for dredge spoils, even though it is a key spawning ground for largemouth bass.

Fishing Report: Tim Lang reported his son catching nine smallies, a channel cat and a blue cat in Titusville a few days before the meeting.

Frank Beck and Joe Newton caught 55 smallies on a guided trip with Tim Keebler north of Reigelsville, NJ.

Pete Antoniewicz reported on a smallmouth fishing trip in late July around the Dingman's Ferry ramp. Five kayakers reported catches that were a 'little off' from normal results up there, with average catch rates in the mid-teens vs. the twenties and smaller than normal average-size fish compared to previous years, even though the largest fish caught was a 17" smallmouth.

Scott McDonough reported slow fishing with his son Casey and with Joe Scanapieco Jr. on a trip south of the Neshaminy Marina ramp, with only two bass being caught. He also related how ABA Bass Tournaments on the Delaware River had produced only one 5-fish bag limit as of July.

The winner of \$25 in the 50/50 drawing was Dave Roberts. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Minutes Of The August Meeting

Secretary Pete Antoniewicz called the June meeting to order at 7:05 pm with 13 members in attendance. The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved.

Treasury Report: Treasurer John Pedrick reported a balance of \$9,746.11 as of the August meeting date.

Membership: Membership Secretary Rick Mawson reported a total of 52 members – including 10 supporting business memberships.

Tournaments: Pete Antoniewicz reported on the results of the August Bass Tournament, where



only two anglers weighed in legal fish.

Pete also called for weighmasters for the September Catfish Tournament and the early October Bass Tournament. David Stokes and Mike Weiszer volunteered to be the weighmasters for the September Catfish Tournament.

Youth Activities. Saturday October 10 is the date for the Silver Lake Nature Center Family Fishing Day. We will need at least 6 to 8 people to come ahead of time to help prepare the SLNC fishing rods and help participants with casting and releasing caught fish.

Members were reminded about the next tournament – a September 12 Catfish Tournament at Neshaminy Marina.

Old Business: Frank Beck spoke with Tim Keebler about participating in a raffle for a guided trip with him as our fundraiser for 2027. Frank Beck says Tim suggested an early-season striper trip. If that is going to be the case, Pete Antoniewicz suggested that we let Tim be the guest speaker on striper fishing for the March meeting at which the raffle drawing would be held, to draw some extra interest and hopefully some added ticket sales. If Tim is also attending the Kingwood Outdoor show in March, we could also gain some attention for his March presentation and raffle at that show, just before the drawing. We could then move up a shad talk to the February meeting.

Pete Antoniewicz did not know whether there were plans for a Silver Lake Nature Center workday on the first Saturday of September due to the Labor Day weekend. Members can always

access [the SLNC website](#) to sign up for their monthly first-Saturday work days. Don't forget to register as a DRFA member so that we get credit toward our meeting space rental.

New Business: The question was raised as to whether we would be doing outdoor shows in conjunction with a guided-trip raffle-ticket drawing. No decisions were made and no volunteers stepped forward to serve as coordinators for either the outdoor shows or a guided-trip raffle drawing.

Members were reminded that noninations for Club officers and trustees will open at the September meeting, with subsequent nominations and voting at the October meeting. We currently have two vacancies that need to be filled – President and Membership Secretary.

Environmental Reports: There were no environmental reports."

Fishing Report: Frank Beck reported catching the pool-winning (18.25") fluke on a party boat trip the Friday before the meeting. The trip was scheduled to head out to the Shrewsbury Rocks, but due to extremely strong nowrhwest winds was limited to the Sandy Hook area of Raritan Bay and the mouth of the Hudson River.

Dave repoprted fishing the area of the Little Egg Harbor Inlet on the Sunday before the meeting with one keeper fluke, a dozen shorts, and lots of sea bass.

Frank Beck and Joe Newton had an extremely short trip on Falls Township Lake with little success before the wind and rain blew them off the water.

Dave Wermuth reported tough trout fishing on the West Branch of the Delaware River near Deposit, NY while on an outing with 21 other participants. Only two trout were caught over a long

2026 Tournament Schedule

All DRFA Club tournaments are free and open to dues-paying DRFA members, with Club-funded payouts of \$50, \$30, and \$20 awarded to the top three places. Participants also accrue points toward the Angler of the Year competition based on their top six finishes among the nine regular Club events. (There are no tournament entry fees, however, launch ramp and/or parking fees may apply.)

Except for the Shad Tournament, there is also a voluntary \$10.00 luner pool with a 100% payout to pool participants at tournament's end for the three heaviest pool fish – 60%, 30%, and 10%.

Except for the Shad Tournament, new members may register on the morning of an event before check-in time. All participants should check in at least 10 minutes before scheduled starting time. Weigh-in is at the time specified. Late entries will not count.

Always check the DRFA website or the Tournament Hotline (267-934-2148) the night before the event to learn about potential rescheduling or relocation due to weather or water conditions.

Day	Date	Event	Time	Location
Sat.	10/3	Bass	7 am - 1 pm	Byram Ramp
Sat.	10/24	Bass	7 am - 1 pm	Bulls Island Ramp

weekend from Thursday to Sunday.

Bryan Malkiewicz recounted a successful smallmouth trip to the North Branch of the Susquehanna River with Jim Pocetti and Pete Antoniewicz. They averaged a little better than 10 fish per hour over the course of three days, with most fish coming on Ned Rigs and swimbaits, but some also taken on topwaters and crankbaits. Most fish were taken along gentle shoreline currents, mid-river current breaks, around submerged mid-river rocks, and in the pushwater above whitewater rapids

The winner of \$18 in the 50/50 drawing was John Pedrick. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.

From A to Z:

Are We At A Crossroad As A Fishing Club, Yet?

What makes a good fishing club?

Is it an exclusive membership roster with a long waiting list? Is it a large membership (*even if only a handful of members participate*)? Is it large tournaments with big cash prizes? Is it mandatory participation in fund-raising, monthly meetings, and scheduled Club tournaments?

Or is it just a bunch of guys who like to have fun fishing together recreationally and in friendly tournaments, not cut-throat competition?

When I first joined the DRFA nearly 30 years ago, we had more than 200 members, of which 25 or more (15-20%) typically attended meetings and participated in tournaments, and our budget reserves amounted to about \$20 per member. By the turn of the century, that membership grew over 300

members and saw tournament participation stay proportionately the same (15-20%) – although it did add nearly a dozen children/grandchildren of members participating in tournaments on a regular basis.

Club officials would marvel that 80% of members were supporting the tournament prizes and casual Holiday party for the active 20%. The common refrain was that the monthly 8-page newsletter was the reason for the loyalty, perhaps because it featured fishing reports from a half-dozen or so bait-and-tackle shops before online fishing reports and other Internet search opportunities had become an everyday resource. The printing of the newsletter was handled for free by one of the Club members with a printing shop, and postage was a fraction of what it is today.

Between low overhead, the sheer volume of members, and annual fundraising ‘open’ tournaments for bass and/or catfish, our bank account stayed stable from year to year. Yes, we would lose a certain percentage of members from year to year but typically made up for that with new members registered at outdoor shows or by word of mouth.

But after peaking at nearly 400 members in the early 2000’s, membership levels started to recede slowly year by year for any number of reasons: Older members died off; people could get fishing reports online; the 2008 financial crisis put a squeeze on recreational spending; membership dues rose as postage costs went up and we were forced to start paying for newsletter printing when we lost our ‘free’ printing source; and new costs for web page hosting and Club liability insurance were added over the years

Still, we managed to maintain annual membership levels between 100 and 200 until the COVID years. In the past five years, however, membership has dropped below 100 and has settled to between 50 and 60 over the past two years.

Ironically, in that same time, meeting participation has risen to around 20-25% of dues-paying members and tournament participation has actually risen to over 50% or 60% of members. As of the August 2026 meeting, our treasury balance is up around \$185 per member.

Unfortunately, our recruitment efforts at outdoor shows, through the Facebook page and the YouTube Channel, and via word of mouth don’t seem to be moving the needle all that much. Is it a lack of interest in the overall population? Is it that most people who do want to join a fishing club are interested in bass fishing exclusively? Or is it that we just haven’t hit on the right channels of communication or appeals for today’s digital environment?

How low can our membership drop before we cease to be functional? How low are we willing to let our monthly bank balance decline before we want to raise dues (*knowing that raising dues might impact both new memberships and renewals*)? How much longer can we function if current leadership gets tired without new people stepping up to handle key responsibilities like fundraising, Membership Secretary, guest-speaker coordination, newsletters, etc.?

My goal as a Club officer, newsletter editor, webmaster, etc. has always been to maintain the low-pressure, low-cost approach of the Club I originally joined, but to improve the trend of

members sharing fishing experiences/success more than we typically did in the old days. And while my fishing insights have benefitted tremendously as a by-product of gathering information for the newsletter, I can empathize with Rick Mawson's desire to move on from some Club responsibilities he has handled year in and year out.

The question is whether we can find a new equilibrium before our current officers suffer from burnout. And will the general membership grow tired of the status quo if we cannot find some new blood to boost our efforts and improve the payback of Club membership in terms of fun, growth of fishing knowledge, or financial reward from tournament pools and prizes?

The good news is that we do have a good base of knowledgeable anglers who share information, we do still have fun joking around at meetings and tournaments, and we do have a bit of financial resilience thanks to our current monthly balance per member is about 10 times the face value of what it was 30 years ago (*and still 5 times the value adjusted for inflation*).

The question remains: How long can we maintain the status quo? At what point will we fall below the critical mass needed to sustain the Club even if meeting and tournament participation remains at the current percentage of membership? And what can we do to expand our appeal to attract new members and new energy to maintain our momentum as a Club even as Father Time whittles away at our roster?

The answers – for better or worse – will be revealed over the next two, four, or six years. But even if it is winding down, it has been a good run, with many new

friendships, many new fishing experiences, many and many memories that we made a difference in the health of our river and our community.

August Bass Tourney Presents A Big Challenge To Most Participating Anglers

The August Bass Tournament out of the Gloucester City Ramp was not very kind to most of its participants but did reward the only two successful anglers by pushing them to the top of the Angler of the Year standings after six tournaments.

George Hoffman took the top prize with his 2.46-lb. largemouth bass caught in the main river, while Rick Mawson captured second with a 1.78-lb. smallmouth bass taken from Big Timber Creek.



1st Place, George Hoffman



2nd Place, Rick Mawson

Pos	Name	Weight	Length	Points
1	George Hoffman	2.46	16.00	100
2	Rick Mawson	1.78	15.75	99
3	Pete Antoniewicz	0.00	0.00	50
4	Frank Beck	0.00	0.00	50
5	Rich Hoffman	0.00	0.00	50
6	Jason Johnson	0.00	0.00	50
7	Bryan Malkiewicz	0.00	0.00	50
8	Casey McDonough	0.00	0.00	50
9	Scott McDonough	0.00	0.00	50
10	Gregg Southrey	0.00	0.00	50

Check the DRFA Website or the Tourney Hotline 267-934-2148 for potential changes the day before each DRFA Tournament.

September Catfish Tournament Provides Good Catch Rate And Good Mix of Sizes

Fifteen of the 16 anglers registered for the September Catfish Tournament brought a fish to the scale. But George Hoffman's 27.14-lb. flathead catfish outpaced the field by a wide margin, weighing almost as much as the next two impressive entries – Bryan Malkiewicz's 16.54 channel cat and Gregg Southrey's 11.47-lb. channel cat.

(* photos not available)

Pos.	Name	Weight	Length	Points
1	George Hoffman	27.14	37.00	100
2	Bryan Malkiewicz	16.54	33.00	99
3	Gregg Southrey	11.47	28.75	98
4	Dave Stokes	10.10	29.75	97
5	Rich Hoffman	6.87	29.25	96
6	Michael Weiszer	6.63	25.00	95
7	Jason Johnson	6.33	23.50	94
8	Casey McDonough *	5.67	23.00	93
9	Dan Wermuth	5.59	23.75	92
10	Luca Marisco	4.83	22.75	91
11	Amber Wermuth	3.97	21.25	90
12	Scott McDonough. *	3.94	22.25	89
13	Pete Antoniewicz	3.71	21.00	88
14	Dave Wermuth. *	3.64	22.00	87
15	Rick Mawson. *	3.62	20.50	86
16	Anthony Marisco	0.00	0.00	50



1st Place, George Hoffman



4th Place, Dave Stokes



7th Place, Jason Johnson



2nd Place, Bryan Malkiewicz



5th Place, Rich Hoffman



9th Place, Dan Wermuth



3rd Place, Gregg Southrey



6th Place, Mike Weiszer



10th Place, Luca Marisco

Tough Tournaments And Participation Points Set Up AOTY Standings For A Furious Finish With Only Two Events Left

With only two tournaments to go, eleven anglers still have a mathematical chance at the top three spots in the 2026 AOTY race.

George Hoffman, Bryan Malkiewicz, Scott McDonough, and Rick Mawson are the only four anglers with five fish weighed to date and have a chance to drop a 50-point participation score plus one other low score if they enter fish in the next two tournaments. But Casey McDonough, Gregg Southrey, Rich Hoffman, and Dave Stokes still have a puncher's chance at reaching the top spot – with Pete Antoniewicz, Dan Wermuth, and Anthony Seliga also having a shot at a top three finish – if the leaders falter.

The final two tournaments can really mix up the final standings depending on how many anglers choose to participate and who weighs in fish. Remember, it is not only the leaders who determine the final standings – every angler who weighs in a fish has the potential to affect the final standings.

To date, 31 of our members (60%) have participated in at least one tournament this season with all but five of those catching at least one fish. Individual tournament results have varied widely – with nearly all participants catching a fish in some of them, and only a small fraction of entrants weighing a fish in several others. Some of the most impressive results have come in the catfish tournaments

Pos.	Name	Points	Weight	Length
1	George Hoffman (*50)	541	57.75	128.25
2	Bryan Malkiewicz (*50)	520	28.31	110.00
3	Scott McDonough (*50)	520	15.37	94.75
4	Rick Mawson (*50)	516	18.26	101.00
5	Gregg Southrey (*100)	481	23.68	91.00
6	Rich Hoffman (*100)	481	21.80	93.50
7	Pete Antoniewicz (*100)	476	12.41	77.25
8	Casey McDonough (*50)	434	17.97	84.50
9	Dan Wermuth (*100)	389	30.20	76.00
10	Dave Stokes (* 50)	342	55.22	90.25
11	Frank Beck (*100)	341	7.05	41.75
12	Anthony Seliga (*50)	327	6.36	50.50
13	Mike Weiszer	292	20.54	55.00
14	Joe Newton	285	5.24	37.75
15	Joe Scannapieco Jr	246	1.85	17.50
16	Jason Johnson	194	6.33	23.50
17	John Pedrick	193	4.52	23.25
18	Chris Hoffman	192	4.23	31.00
19	Amber Wermuth	188	15.15	30.00
20	Peter Marcolina	149	5.32	23.25
21	Jimmy Mawson	141	4.24	22.25
22	Patrick Baranowski	138	2.35	17.00
23	Dave Wermuth	137	3.64	22.00
24	Joe Scannapieco Sr	100	0.00	0.00
25	Devon Seliga	100	0.00	0.00
26	Charles Bay	100	0.00	0.00
27	Shane Seliga	96	2.14	16.50
28	Chris Stokes	95	8.99	27.00
29	Luca Marsico	91	4.83	22.75
30	Matt Weinhardt	50	0.00	0.00
31	Anthony Marsico	50	0.00	0.00

where flathead and blue catfish have given the channel cats a run for their money as anglers have topped the 15-lb. mark on five occasions.

(* Participation points available to be dropped in favor of new entries)

Catfish Photos (cont'd from pg. 6)



11th Place, Amber Wermuth



13th Place, Pete Antoniewicz



The Delaware River Fishermen's Association
PO Box 21145, Philadelphia, PA 19154

THE RIVER NEWS is the bimonthly newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association. The DRFA typically meets the last Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Silver Lake Nature Center, 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA. All interested sportsmen and women are invited to attend our meetings and join the organization.

Don't Forget These Supporting Members Who Help To Keep Our Club Afloat

Remember our supporting business members who provide added financial support, share their fishing knowledge with our Club members, or support our Club and youth fishing efforts with their facilities or products. When you return that financial support by patronizing their businesses, be sure to make specific mention of our appreciation for them helping to fund our guest speakers and our tournament cash prizes. Without their support we would not be able to provide the same opportunities to our current members or to attract potential new members.

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Pennsylvania Yacht Club • 2189 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020, 215-245-9883

Silver Lake Nature Center • 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA • 235 acres of woods, lakes, marshes & meadows, 4.5 miles of trails

We also recognize our Associate members – the [South Jersey Bass Club Association](http://SouthJerseyBassClubAssociation.com) and [Delaware Riverkeeper Network](http://DelawareRiverkeeperNetwork.com) – who both provide relevant information and additional fishing experiences for DRFA members.

KEY CONTACTS: *Tournament Hotline:* 215-809-4098 • *Email Address:* DRFA_TheRiverNews@hotmail.com
 • *President:* (vacant) • *Vice President/Tournament Director:* Scott McDonough, 215-989-0153 • *Treasurer:* John Pedrick, 215-817-3929 • *Recording Secretary/Newsletter Editor:* Pete Antoniewicz, 609-751-7545 • *Membership Secretary/Webmaster:* Rick Mawson, 215-809-4098 • *Youth Activities Director:* Charles Bay, 609-744-8260 •
Trustees: Dave Wermuth, Harry Wirebach, Frank Beck, Gregg Southrey