

The River News

The Official Newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association

Vol. 34, No. 2

March – April 2022

Hoffman Takes Early Lead In AOTY Race As Tournament Season Kicks Off

With his first-place finish in the initial DRFA Bass Tournament of the season, George Hoffman signaled his intent to defend his 2021 Angler of the Year title. Not only did he capture the top position, he did it with an impressive largemouth bass. (*See tournament coverage article.*)

But members who did not weigh in a legal fish in the March tournament still have plenty of time to score points and catch up in the 2022 AOTY standings. Because only an angler's top six scores (*out of nine tournaments*) are counted toward the final tally, missing just one weigh-in is not an insurmountable obstacle. That being said, weighing in a legal fish in every event creates the greatest opportunity to elevate your point total for the season.

Use the listing on page 3 to mark your calendar for the remaining chances to achieve fame and fortune in the annual AOTY competition. Even if you don't take the grand prize, you can still earn your share of Club-funded tournament prize money.

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President's Message

Spring is in the air, the birds are singing, the flowers are blooming, and the trees are budding. More important, the shad are starting to run and the stripers are coming up the river. That all being said, it's time to ready our boats for the new season.

Let's make sure all our equipment is in good and safe fishing condition. Make sure that we have enough life jackets and that they are serviceable. Let's be as safe as we can and enjoy it. To one and all, I wish a safe and prosperous season with lots of fish and memories.

Bob Jack

Special Notes For Tournament Anglers

Here are several notes for DRFA Tournament anglers to be aware of during this year's upcomming tournaments:

The first note is relevant to our DRFA tournaments being run out of the Neshaminy Marina later in the year. Club tournament participants are not allowed to fish within the marina during the hours of any DRFA tournament that is based at that location.

Next, club members are reminded that there is no culling of dead fish from livewells during a

tournament. Once a fish in your livewell dies, it must be presented as your official entry. It will be weighed in, but assessed with an 8-ounce penalty.

The recently approved rule reads as follows: "*Once a fish is placed in a livewell and dies, there is no*

Important Dates

Wednesday, March 30, 7 pm
Monthly Meeting: Silver Lake Nature Center. Gain insight on shad fishing from our guest speaker – fishing guide Rusty Held. (*Bucks County COVID rules require all in the building to wear properly fitting masks.*)

Saturday, April 23, 2 pm
Shad Tournament weigh-in will take place at the Yardley Park and Ride Lot. (*See tourney details on page 3.*)

Wednesday, April 27, 7 pm
Monthly Meeting: Silver Lake Nature Center. Our guest speakers from Muskies, Inc. will share their experiences in catching the largest freshwater gamefish in NJ and Eastern PA.

Saturday, May 14 Catfish Tournament at Gloucester City Ramp starts at 6 am, with weigh-in at 12 pm.

culling of a dead fish. Any fish brought to the scale dead will not be disqualified, but will receive an 8-ounce penalty at the weigh-in. This rule applies to all Bass and Catfish Tournaments, but not the Shad Tournament."

Also, relevant to our Club catfish tournaments, all anglers using live or cut bait for fishing the tidal river should use in-line circle hooks. According to the Pennsylvania Summary Book of 2022 Pennsylvania Fishing Laws and Regulations: "*Non-offset (in-line) circle hooks are required when fishing with bait for ANY species of fish in the tidal Delaware Estuary, including tributaries from the mouths of the tributaries upstream to the limit of tidal influence.*"

More information is available at <https://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/Fishing/Pages/CircleHooksTidalDelaware.aspx> or <https://pfbc.pa.gov/fishpub/summary/delaware.html>

Minutes Of The January Meeting

President Bob Jack opened the meeting at 7:08 PM with 9 members in attendance.

Bob introduced guest speaker WCO Mike Blair to members. Mike introduced new WCO Peter Labosh and stated that 5 districts in the southeast region are without officers but that they should be filled when the current class graduates, but he did not say when that will be.

He also stated that there are changing regulations for trout season and that now there is only one opening day statewide, which is April 2. He said that there will be no trout stocked in the Neshaminy Creek due to the pollution problems there. The trout scheduled for Neshaminy

will be distributed among other Bucks County locations.

Striper regulations have not changed, but when fishing with bait for any species of fish in the Tidal Delaware Estuary the use of non-offset (inline) circle hooks is required. This also applies to tributaries up to their upper tidal limit. He said if you have any question to check the Fishing Regulations Summary book. When asked if he had any books, he said that he did not. He did carry the books at one time but always ended up with most of them so now he does not carry them. They are available online.

Boating safety courses will be available free of charge at D & S Marina on March 19 and April 30 from 9am - 5:30pm, however preregistration is required. Contact Melissa Carson at 215-949-2100 to register. A charge of \$12.00 is needed to cover the cost of obtaining a PFBC Safety card. This is an option of your choosing.

After Mike Blair ended his presentation, President Bob Jack read the minutes from the December meeting in the absence of Club Secretary Pete Antoniewicz.

Treasurer's Report: Eileen Kicinski stated that our deposits were \$100, and expenses were \$0. The January balance was \$8,790.51. The December balance was \$8,690.51.

Tournament Director Report: Scott stated that all permits were filed with the state and were signed by Mike Blair on Dec 30 and sent in. Scott has not received them back yet. Scott mentioned that next month he will start asking for volunteers for weigh-ins at tournaments.

Youth Director Report. No report.

Fishing Reports: Scott said he launched out of Bordentown and fished the lake area across from the Trenton ramp catching about 25 bass, water temp was in the high 30's with a very high tide. When he got back to the ramp the whole parking lot was flooded and they had a hard time retrieving the boat.

Membership Secretary Report: 15 members signed up so far. A few new applications turned in at meeting. Rick will do a hard copy mailing to members that did not join yet.

New Business: Bob pointed out the upcoming speakers and that we have Anna Robuck for the February meeting, Rusty Held for the March meeting, and Chris Gorsuch for the May meeting. There is still no confirmation from Muskies, Inc. for the speakers for April. Dave Wermuth said he contacted them but has not heard back yet.

The Oaks Show is from February 18 – 20, but we will not have a booth at the show.

John Pedrick mentioned that the gates at Neshaminy may not be open for the March bass tournament and that we would need to enter through the other gate and drive around to park in the lot. Scott will check with Neshaminy Marina to find out if the gates will be open for the March 26 bass tournament.

The 50/50 was won by President Bob Jack for \$23.00. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Minutes Of The February Meeting

The February 23 meeting was called to order by President Bob Jack at 7:10 pm with 18 members in attendance.

Before beginning the business meeting, Bob turned the floor over to Dr. Anna Robuck for a presentation on her work evaluating the accumulation of PFAS chemicals in samples of Delaware River fish – many of which were provided by DRFA members for the study. (*See a recap on her presentation in a separate article.*)

After the presentation, the minutes from the January meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: Eileen Kicinski reported a balance of \$9,368.20. By comparison, the end-of-February balance for 2021 was \$9,246.47.

Membership Report:

Membership Secretary Rick Mawson reported 35 paid members as of the February meeting date

Youth Fishing Activities: Chick Bay reported that the scheduled date for this year's Youth Fishing Derby is July 9. The event, scheduled to be held at the Pennsylvania Yacht Club in Bensalem, is open to all DRFA members who want to bring an under-16 relative or friend to fish the river from the dock or from a boat on that day.

Tournament Schedule: Scott reported that he had received the tournament permits back from the State of Pennsylvania and was in the process of delivering them to the Neshaminy State Park office for use of the marina there.

Scott asked for weighmasters for the early season tournaments, and got the following volunteers:

- **March 26 Bass Tournament:** Scott and Casey McDonough.
- **April 24 Shad Tournament:** Pete Antoniewicz and Bryan Malkiewicz.

- **May 14 Catfish Tournament:** Gregg Southrey

- **June 25 Bass Tournament:** Gregg Southrey

Scott will ask for weighmasters for the remaining tournaments later in the year, as we get closer to those events. Chick Bay suggested that the sign-in list for each tournament should also include the name(s) of the weighmaster(s) for the next event so that the appropriate individuals can take the scale and ruler at the end of that day's weigh-in.

Members are reminded that in addition to the Club-paid prizes of \$50 for first place, \$30 for second place, and \$20 for third

place, the voluntary \$10 lunker pool will still be available.

Scott noted that per the language of the contract with the Neshaminy State Park Marina, fishing is off limits to the Club's tournament anglers on the days that our sign-in and weigh-in events are held there. Any club angler fishing there will be disqualified from the tournament.

Old Business: Frank Beck and Ron Soto spoke with members of Muskies, Inc. who would be willing to give a talk on muskie fishing at a future club meeting. Rick Mawson will try to confirm them for our April 30 meeting. Rick Mawson also discussed the possibility of a speaker from

2022 Tournament Schedule

All DRFA Club tournaments are free and open to dues-paying DRFA members, with club-funded payouts of \$50, \$30, and \$20 to the top three places. (There are no entry fees, however, ramp, launch, and/or parking fees may apply.) There will also be a voluntary \$10.00 lunker pool with a 100% payout to pool participants for the three heaviest pool fish – 60%, 30%, and 10% – at tournament's end.)

Members also accrue points for the Angler of the Year competition based on their top six finishes among the nine regular Club events. Except for the Shad Tournament, new members may register on the morning of an event before check-in 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 water or weather conditions.

Date	Event	Time	Location
Sat. 4/23	Shad	2 pm weigh-in	Yardley Park & Ride Lot
Sat. 5/14	Catfish	.6 am–12 pm	Gloucester City Marina, NJ
Sat. 6/25	Bass	.6 am–12 pm	Gloucester City Marina, NJ
Sat. 7/9	Youth Derby	8 am—2 pm	Pennsylvania Yacht Club
Sat. 7/16	Catfish	.6 am–12 pm	Neshaminy Marina, PA
Sun. 8/7	Bass	.6 am–12 pm	Neshaminy Marina, PA
Sat. 8/20	Catfish	.6 am–12 pm	Neshaminy Marina, PA
Sun. 9/18	Bass	7 am–1 pm	Byram Ramp, NJ
Sun. 10/9	Bass	7:30am–1:30pm	Bulls Island Ramp, NJ

Viking Eyewear to speak about points to consider when choosing eyewear for fishing.

New Business: Bob Jack announced that the SJBCA Bass Bowl will be held on the Delaware River on October 16, out of Gloucester City. DRFA anglers who accumulate the most points from our Club Bass Tournaments from the last event in October 2021 through the September 2022 Bass Tournament will qualify to represent the DRFA at the SJBCA event.

Fishing Reports: Rick Mawson reported a tough day of fishing with Joe Newton at Lake Luxembourg on the day of the meeting, with only one carp caught on a Ned Rig. Pete Antoniewicz also reported a skunking while fishing Salem Harbor on the day of the meeting.

Dave Wermuth also reported tough fishing through the ice when he accompanied Frank Beck to Lake Luxembourg several weeks before the meeting. Frank revisited the same spot two days later with Ed Robinson and did much better at catching sunfish, crappie, and one trout.

Scott reported several smallmouth caught by a friend in the Washington's Crossing area on the day of the meeting. He also reported on some successful walleye fishing with swimbaits from the shoreline at Fireman's Eddy.

The 50/50 was won by Scott McDonough for \$45.00. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

DRFA Members Help Scientist Pinpoint A New Chemical Contaminant In Delaware River Fish

We have been hearing about pollutants in the Delaware River for so many years that we tend to take them for granted. But the guest speaker from our February DRFA meeting, Dr. Anna Robuck, specializes in detecting the biological impacts of manmade chemicals on wildlife. And with the help of fish contributed for her research by DRFA members she has documented both the presence and source of some unique chemical contaminants in the Delaware River. Her presentation to the Club at the February meeting, and the Q & A session that followed, were educational in terms of new pollutants discovered, identifying their source(s), and impacts on fish consumption.

As an integral part of her research, Dr. Robuck studied fish caught between Bristol, PA and the Delaware Memorial Bridge, looking for a range of pollutants known as polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). There are more than 9,000 types of PFAS – often called ‘forever’ chemicals because they never break down in the environment. These chemicals have been used across a wide variety of consumer products, industrial processes, and firefighting foams.

Dr. Robuck looked at year-round resident fish populations as opposed to seasonal populations such as stripers or shad. Accumulated pollutant levels varied by fish species. Catfish did not have as high levels as white perch, yellow perch, or bluegills.

While researching the presence of known PFAS substances in aquatic species, Dr. Robuck also documented high concentrations of several dozen novel PFAS compounds characterized as unique ‘cousins’ to the more

widely recognized and studied compounds like PFOS and PFNA. These new chemicals are chemically known as polyfluoroether carboxylic acids. The highest concentrations came from fish collected in the area of West Deptford NJ. Fish samples collected farther upstream had lower concentrations than those collected around West Deptford. Several otters in the same West Deptford area also tested high for concentrations of the novel compounds.

While New Jersey defines ‘safe’ levels for polyfluoroether carboxylic acids as two parts per trillion (ppt) in groundwater, the Delaware River water in the West Deptford, NJ area tested as high as an estimated 400 ppt. By way of comparison, 1 ppt is the equivalent of one second in nearly 32,000 years!

Based on the unique compounds discovered, Dr. Robuck and her collaborators were able to identify a local source for three of the new polyfluoroether-carboxylic-acid pollutants by comparing them to patent literature describing their unique compositions. The State of New Jersey is working to understand this new family of compounds and prevent further emissions.

There are no fish or surface water regulations or safety standards for the new compounds. But as a point of comparison, the concentrations of the newly pinpointed polyfluoroether-carboxylic-acid compounds in fish around the West Deptford area were high enough that they would trigger fish consumption advisories if they were one of their more highly regulated PFAS cousins like PFOS or PFNA.

As for impacts on drinking water in the region, concentrations detected in river water in the area

of the New Jersey-American Water Company intake and Philadelphia Water Company's Baxter Water Treatment Plant intake – both near the Linden Avenue boat ramp – were much lower than those found in the West Deptford area of the river.

With respect to fish consumption from the West Deptford section of the lower river, Dr. Robuck recommended that people of child-bearing age avoid regular fish consumption for now until we better understand this new group of PFAS. For others, she recommended trending away from year-round resident fish in favor of migratory fish such as stripers that do not spend the majority of their time in the river.

Become A Better Fisherman ... Learn More About Catching Multiple Species At Our Monthly Meetings

Try not to miss the next few monthly meetings, which will provide a variety of opportunities to learn from expert anglers about improving your abilities to catch shad, muskies, and smallmouth bass.

Our special guest speaker for the **March meeting** will be Rusty Held – a shad-fishing guide from the Easton area – who will provide insights on shad fishing. Learn about locations, tackle, and tactics that can be used anywhere along the Delaware River to capitalize on this upcoming Spring fishery. Rusty will also have selected tackle for sale to help you turn his tips into fish in the boat. This is a great opportunity for members who intend to fish in the Club's April 23 Shad Tournament or for beginners who just want to

increase their odds for recreational angling success.

Multiple DRFA members have reported catching muskies as a byproduct of bass fishing. Here's your chance to improve the odds of catching one on purpose! Our **April meeting** speakers from Muskies, Inc. – the world's largest fishing and conservation organization dedicated to the conservation of muskellunge – will explain various approaches to muskie fishing in Pennsylvania and New Jersey rivers and lakes.

Our **May meeting** will see the return of widely known and respected fishing guide Chris Gorsuch who has guided several DRFA members for smallmouth bass fishing on the Susquehanna, the Susqy's North Branch, and the Delaware Rivers. Chris will be accompanied by Mike Kiermaier, a Delaware River guide from Bronzeback Outfitters. They will speak on smallmouth fishing topics relative to the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers.

Use the "Member Forum" Link <<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/dfishermen/>> on the Member Services page of the DRFA website to access a Poll Question under the "General Discussion" category to help Chris and Mike tailor their presentation to the interests of our members.
(*Contact Rick Mawson at DRFA_TheRiverNews@hotmail.com if you have trouble accessing the Forum pages.*)

Also, at the meeting, feel free to ask a specific question that can help you do a better job in our late-season bass tournaments on the non-tidal Delaware River or simply get more enjoyment out of your Summer and Fall angling.

From A to Z

Is It Time To Break Out Of The Same-Old, Same-Old Rut?

It's easy for anglers to become creatures of habit, fishing the same old spots based on past success – maybe even after they stop paying off. I fell into that trap myself when my fishing time dwindled due to work and family demands. What precious few fishing days were available were almost exclusively spent chasing river smallies on the Big D or Susqy rivers, unlike earlier years when I would practice fish in the specific area of an upcoming tournament at least once or twice in the weeks leading up to the tournament.

Since my recent retirement, I've resolved to get back to my old tournament pre-fishing habits. But I'm also determined to widen the scope of my angling pursuits to include lake and stream fishing, especially for times when the river is dangerously high or excessively muddy from upstate rainstorms. So, keep your eye on our Club's website forum for a ride-along posting when I'm looking for a partner to share an empty seat or to join me at a local lake. And if the situation is right, you can even borrow my extra kayak for an upper Delaware float trip or outing at a cartop-launch-only lake.

As an extension of that, I also want to become more consistent at posting reports of my fishing experiences – good and bad – on the Club forum. I used to be much better about sharing such reports in past years when I had more time. That is something all of us could consider adding to the benefits of DRFA membership. You don't have to provide photos with recognizable landmarks or cite specific GPS coordinates

(send those directly to my cell phone) for fear of disclosing your honey hole. But it is possible to share information of value without giving away the store. Consider sharing some insights that you would have appreciated having before you made your trip – water levels/flow rates, clarity, temperature; lure selection (*as generic as jigged soft plastics vs. hard-bodied baits*); tide phase; ramp access problems, etc.

Hopefully, as more people post and more people benefit, those benefactors will in turn start sharing their own insights as well. That will enhance the real value of being a DRFA member for all involved. (*And, in turn, help some of us break out of our ‘same-old, same-old’ ruts.*)

A classic example of how this sharing can work are the annual early Spring contributions from long-time DRFA member Bob Kuntz. Sharing his shad-fishing success today doesn’t take away from his success tomorrow, but it can be helpful to another member who fishes farther upstream in the following days. Not only do they know when a pack of fish are moving upstream, they also have a handle on what color of shad spoons or darts worked the day(s) before.

Striper fishing is another area where sharing info can be likely to help someone else without compromising your own fishing success or impacting your tournament results – whether you choose to share a general location or pattern to your report or not.

We become better fishermen when we try new things, many of which can be learned from others more easily than we can learn them through trial-and-error ourselves.

I thank everyone who has

contributed in one way or another over my past 24 years in the Club. And I stand ready to ‘pay it forward’ in terms of answering questions or sharing my experiences through our River Fishing Reports forum – even if it is occasionally done somewhat cryptically. Now all you have to do is to learn how to ‘read between the lines’.

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Club Address Update

Please note that the correct zip code for our recently updated PO Box address is:

**PO Box 21145
Philadelphia, PA 19154**

and not 19114 like previously indicated. Sorry for any confusion that oversight might have caused.

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Save The Date: Help Needed For Family Fishing Day

The Silver Lake Nature Center is planning to run their Family Fishing Day again this year with the help of DRFA anglers. The proposed dates for the event are Sunday, April 24 or Sunday, May 2. That date should be finalized by our March meeting.

The hours spent interacting with young anglers there – teaching rigging and casting, or helping to bait lines and unhook fish – will go a long way toward accumulating the service hours needed to defray the cost of using the Nature Center building for our monthly meetings.

Wanted – For Sale – Free: Get Boat Or Fishing Gear You Want, Or Get Rid Of What You No Longer Need

Have boat or fishing gear to sell? Looking to supplement your existing gear? Looking for a hard-to-find item? Have something to give away? Be sure to check out the DRFA [Items For Sale](#) selection on our DRFA website forum.

As of the date of newsletter publication, there were several free boating items for a club member who can use them and a ‘trolling motor wanted’ request.

Support (And Encourage) Our Supporting Business Members

An important source of funding for our Club tournament payouts is the financial backing provided by our supporting business members. Be sure to make mention of your DRFA membership and your appreciation when patronizing any of the businesses or organizations listed on our ‘Sponsors’ webpage or on the back of each newsletter.

And if they have not yet renewed their membership for 2022, let them know that their past participation has been appreciated and that we will start featuring writeups of our supporting business members in upcoming newsletters and on our website.

Finally, remind them that their membership qualifies them to participate in our Club tournament events at no extra charge.

March Bass Tournament Results

Hopefully, the first tournament of the 2022 is not a harbinger of things to come, as Mother Nature greeted the participating anglers

with everything from sun and gentle breezes to heavy wind, rain, and sleet and limited interest from the bass being targeted. Of the 19 competitors who registered for the late-March event, only 8 were able to bring a legal fish to the scales, although half of them did exceed the 2-lb. mark. Water temperatures were in the upper 40s to lower 50s depending on fishing location – a slight dip from earlier in the week – with good clarity.

The order of finish and points earned in this tournament also represent the current Angler of the Year standings.

George Hoffman
 Scott McDonough
 Casey McDonough
 Rick Gasper
 Brian Malkiewicz
 Mike Nucero
 Pete Antoniewicz
 Rich Hoffman

#	Name	Weight	Length	Points
1	George Hoffman	4.40	20.00	100
2	Scott McDonough	3.62	19.25	99
3	Casey McDonough	3.08	18.75	98
4	Rick Gasper	2.18	15.25	97
5	Bryan Malkiewicz	1.95	15.00	96
6	Mike Nucero	1.38	13.75	95
7	Pete Antoniewicz	1.27	13.50	94
8	Rich Hoffman	0.96	12.00	93



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



MARCH – APRIL 2022 ISSUE

- NEW 2022 CLUB BENEFITS
- MEETING SPEAKER NOTES
- MEETING MINUTES
- TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

Also visit our website

www.drfishermen.com

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.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SUPPORTING BUSINESS 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

Associate Members:

South Jersey Bass Club Association

Delaware Riverkeeper Network