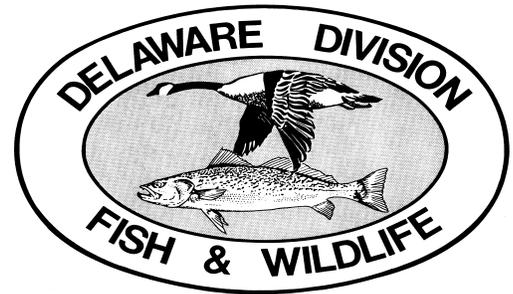


Tournament News



Fisheries Updates - Cathy Martin

Another year for tournament reporting... applications and report forms are available online. I plan to print out hard copies of the newsletter and report forms for those of you who use mail-in reports. If you use electronic submissions, I will send out a notice when the latest issue of Tournament News is posted. If you prefer paper copies of the newsletter, applications for permits, or report forms, please give me a call and I will mail out a supply.

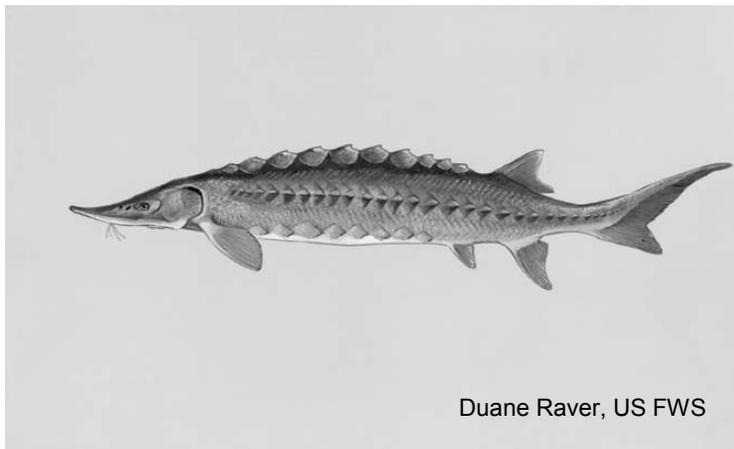
Since more and more information from this Division is coming via email, please make sure that we have your current address. Any changes, give me a call or send an email.

Work began on the Cedar Creek boat access/ramp renovation in late November. It is progressing well due to the mild winter weather. Check the Division's website for the latest information on the status of this project. A walkway is also being constructed between the north and south parking lots at Garrisons Lake. This should make traveling from one side of the pond to the other much safer.

I have been notified by the Enforcement Office that they will be sending out tournament permits for both pond and tidal river events. Please send all applications to Carol Gondeck in that office. Electronic applications are automatically sent to her. If you have any questions about permits or the event schedule, contact Carol. If you need assistance with report forms after an event, contact me or Jared Jacobini (numbers on right).

As you may have noticed, recent issues of the Delaware Fishing Guide have had contact information for reports about sturgeon carcasses. This has resulted in numerous reports that have yielded much useful information on Atlantic sturgeon. One fish was reported at the Seaford boat ramp on the Nanticoke—a first in recent memory. We also got a call from a bass angler who reported seeing

two swimming in the clear water of Deep Creek. This type of information is very useful to Matt Fisher, our Atlantic sturgeon biologist. If you see any dead sturgeon in Delaware waters, please contact Matt as soon as possible (302-735-8663 office or 535-5382 cell).



Duane Raver, US FWS

Spring 2012

Telephone numbers of Interest

For tournament reports:

- Cathy Martin, 302-735-8658 ; catherine.martin@state.de.us
- Jared Jacobini, 302-735-8661 ; jared.jacobini@state.de.us
- For tournament permits: Carol Gondeck, 302-739-9913
- **Fish Tag Hotline:** 302-653-2887, leave name & phone no.

Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Agents:

New Castle & Kent Counties:

302-739-6139

Sussex County: 302-855-1901

Report Violations: 302-739-4580

Or 1-800-523-3336

24-hour Enforcement Number
for Environmental Complaints

1-800-662-8802

Operation Game Theft :

1-800-292-3030

Permit applications:

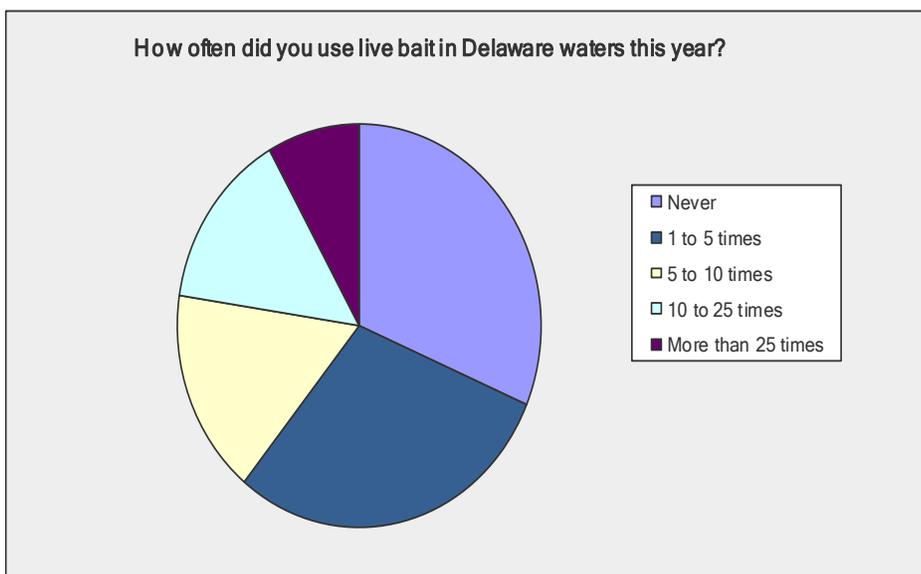
www.fw.delaware.gov/

Click on Fisheries, Go to Recreational Fishing, at top of page—*App. for fishing events*; under bass, see *Tournament report form* or *tag return forms*.

Live Bait Survey Results

An online survey about the use of bait was conducted in the past few months. Participants (8000) were selected from the FIN (Fisherman Information Network) and sent an email with a link to the 12-question survey. Naturally we didn't know what type of anglers (fresh, salt, both) we were sending emails to until the responses came in. The survey itself worked out very well with 36 percent (almost 4 out of 10) anglers responding. What did we learn?

1. See chart below for depiction of bait use by responding anglers (2950).
2. Just over one-third of the bait anglers used live bait while fishing in a freshwater pond. The most common baits there were: nightcrawlers and minnows/shiners.
3. Freshwater creek bait anglers used live bait about one-fourth of the time with nightcrawlers and minnows/shiners also most common. However, grubs/mealworms/waxworms were also often used.
4. In freshwater tidal rivers, just under one-third of bait anglers used bait with minnows/shiners edging out nightcrawlers as the bait of choice. However nightcrawlers were also very popular.
5. Trout anglers who used bait preferred nightcrawlers followed closely by grubs/mealworms/waxworms although minnows/shiners were also commonly used.
6. As might be expected, saltwater anglers used bait much more often than freshwater anglers. In the Delaware Bay and River, the most commonly used bait was bloodworms, but mummichog/bull minnows, bunker, and spot were also popular. Green crabs/shore crabs were also used to a lesser extent. The use of some of these groups may be slightly biased as only information on live bait was requested while some species such as bunker are more commonly used as cut bait. Bait use by Inland Bay anglers was very similar to Del River and Bay anglers except that bloodworms and mummichog/bull minnows were used equally.
7. Ocean bait anglers use was almost equally split between bloodworms, spot, mummichog/bull minnows, and bunker/menhaden. This group also reported the highest use of bait—nearly half of all anglers who used bait.
8. Most bait users keep their bait in water although cold packs and in packing material were also common. Most save unused bait for a future trip, release it into the water or give to someone else to use. Almost 9 in 10 bait anglers purchased bait from a sporting goods store but sometimes (39%) caught their own.
9. The focus of this survey was to determine what bait species are in use and what the risk is of non-native bait species being released into our waters. Almost 60% of respondents know that some live bait species can be considered invasive. This is great news—we just have to educate the other 40%. Meanwhile, if you purchase bait, do not release it alive (or the packing material) into our waters. Better safe than sorry. Green crabs are found here but are not native so should not be released alive either even if collected here.



Invasive Species: Crested Floating Heart

Already 2012 has had a new invasive species report. An established nutria population was found in the vicinity of Mud Mill Pond on the DE/MD border near Marydel. Steve Kendrot with the USDA will be working with Division wildlife biologists to control this outbreak.

It is very likely that more snakeheads will be seen this year as water temperatures warm. If you catch one, please kill it and hold for our examination. Keep it on ice or put in the freezer and we will retrieve it from you.

There is another invasive plant species within a 10-hour boat ride of Delaware. This is crested floating heart, *Nymphoides cristata*, an ornamental species brought in as a water garden plant.

Originally found in the late 1990s in southeast Florida, it has spread throughout the state and into South Carolina. It first appeared in Lake Marion, SC in 2006, but by 2010 covered over 2,000 acres.

Herbicides normally used to control floating aquatic plants have had little effect on this species. Therefore, preventative measures taken by boaters and anglers are critical. Just one plant brought back on a boat trailer or in a livewell could be the start of an invasion.

The plant can be identified by heart-shaped leaves, a 5-petaled small (1/2 inch) white flower, and banana-like roots that dangle below the leaves.

One important note in Delaware, two rare native floating hearts are very similar. If you see a plant resembling this, please contact the Division immediately via telephone (735-8650) or email Cathy Martin or Jared Jacobini. Crested floating heart grows in ditches, canals, and ponds while the native species are found in millponds and isolated wetlands.



U.S. Geological Survey
Photo by C. Jacono
Nymphoides cristata
Crested floating heart



Crested floating heart
Nymphoides cristata
Photo by C. Jacono
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Crested floating heart, photos: USGS C Jacono.



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On the Web

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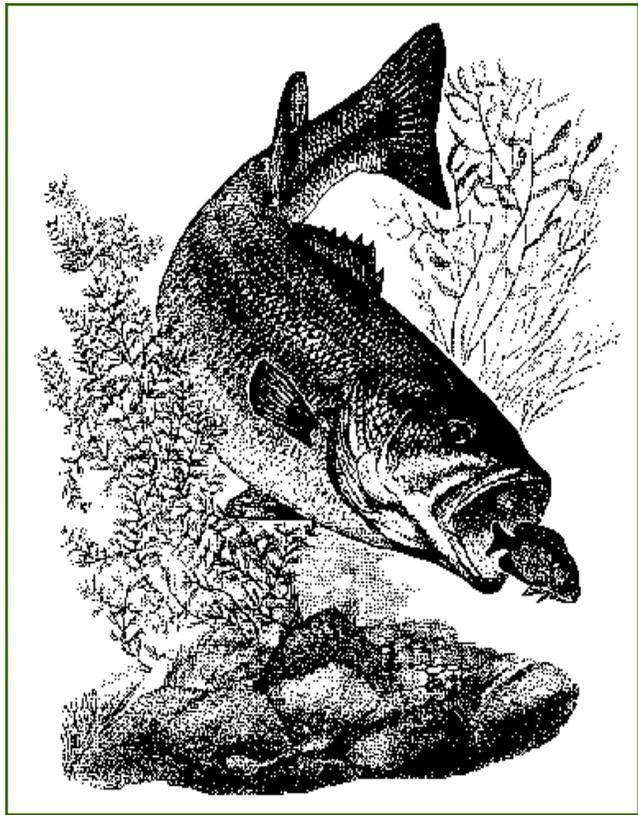
Tournament Results

Thank you, thank you. The tournament reporting this year was much improved. I had 89 tournaments listed and got 84 reports in. That gives us a much better picture of what is going on tournament wise.

This improvement resulted in a reported 10,189 angler hours for 2011 compared to 7,428 in 2010—a 37% increase.

The biggest surprise was the drop in the number of tournaments and tournament fishing hours in the Nanticoke. I have only 16 events reported there during 2011 compared to 20 the previous year. However bass catch per hour increased from 0.25 fish (0.37 lbs) in 2010 to 0.29 fish (0.46 lbs) in 2011.

The popular ponds as far as number of events and anglers were Trap, Records, and Millsboro. Lums Pond had the biggest (weight-wise) bass on average but few fish were reported there. However, Millsboro and Trap Ponds also had high average weight fish with many bass represented (191 in Millsboro and 371 from Trap). The average weight of bass reported from the Nanticoke is generally not as heavy as the ponds—as I have mentioned before. They just don't live as long in that challenging habitat. However, the 2010 mean weight reported



was 1.45 lbs (1200 bass) but jumped to 1.57 lbs (906 bass) during the 2011 Nanticoke tournaments.

One question on the bass report forms asks how many fish over 5 lbs were weighed in during a tournament. This is a fairly recent addition to the report form so we don't have a long history of data. However, there were 11 such fish reported in 2010 and 10 in 2011. Generally these fish are reported from pond contests, but one of the 5+ pounders in 2010 did come from the Nanticoke.

Hard or electronic copies of the full tournament report are available. If you would like a copy, just call or email me and let me know what format you prefer. Cathy

