

JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION PO Box 1191, Wall Branch Post Office, Wall, NJ 07719 Phone 732-506-6565 Fax 732-506-6975 Website: https://www.JCAA.org

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DATED MATERIAL

JCAA Hi-Roller Raffle

July 10th

JCAA Annual Sportsperson-of-the-Year Dinner

Saturday, November 8th



Jersey Coast Shark Anglers 2025 Tournament Schedule

Spring Striper Fever: May 10-17 Fluke Fever: July 19 Arrowhead Inn Fluke Tournament: Aug. 23 Fall Striper Fever: Nov. 1-8 Bluefin Fever: TBD

For information go to www.jcsa.org

Forked River Tuna Club 2025 Tournament Schedule

War at the Shore Meeting - TBD Ladies Catch of the Day - July 12 Bi-Club Fluke Tournament - TDB Tuna Tournament - TBD Tournament Rain Date - TBD

Mark Your Calendar

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Chuck Santoro Fisherman Headquarters Fish Hawks Forked River Tuna Club Greater Point Pleasant Charter Boat Association Hi-Mar Striper Club Janice and Joe Blaze Jersey Coast Shark Anglers

\$100+ JCAA SPONSORS

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A Saltwater Anglers Club

New Members Welcome

www.FISHHAWKSNJ.com

Meetings are at 7:30 PM on the first Thursday of the month at the Lacey Elks, Forked River, NJ

\$250+ JCAA SPONSORS

Half Business Card AD

Beach Haven Charter Fishing Association Bi-State Shad Fishing Contest, eric@shadfishingcontest.com, (610) 762-0440 New Jersey Beach Buggy Association Raritan Bay Anglers Club Paul Shafer, Bethel, CT

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Asbury Park Fishing Club, Asbury Park, NJ 732-988-0121 Association of Surf Angling Clubs, www.asaconline.org Barnegat Fishin' Hole, www.BarnegatFishinHole.com Howard Beeferman, Monroe, NJ Belmar Fishing Club, P.O. Box 38, Belmar 07719 Michael Blonske, Morrisville, PA Bradley Beach Surf Casters, Neptune, NJ Vito F. Cardinale, Red Bank, NJ Michael Colucci, Brick, NJ Jim Davis, Port Monmouth, NJ Daniel DeChurch, Moorestown, NJ David Dowd, Orange, NJ William M. Feinberg, Ocean City, NJ Exton Window Cleaning & Exton Building Maintenance, Exton, PA Fortescue Captains & Boat Owners Assn, NJ F.U.B Divers, Neptune, NJ Dr. Joel Gelbman The Geld Family, Elkins Park, PA Jean A. Hasslinger, In Memory of Ed Anderson Lagoon View Yacht Club, Waretown, NJ, lagoonviewyachtclub.org Bob Lick, Cheyenne, WY In Memory of Joe Kunz, Donated by David Strom & Laura Greenwald Bruce Halstater, Norwood, NJ Michele A. Kohler James Krauss, Atlantic Highlands Richard Lippo, Mount Laurel, NJ Wilson L. Mathis, Barrington, NJ Randy Minix, Gibbstown, NJ Picatinny Saltwater Sportsman Club Point Pleasant Fishing Club, rmazz1428@gmail.com Newark Bait & Flycasting Club New Jersey Beach Buggy Association Round Valley Trout Association, Lebanon, NJ Saltwater Anglers of Bergen County Louis Schott, Galloway Twp Schuyler Tuna Fishing Club Seaside Heights Fishing Club Richard Secare, West New York, NJ Shore Aquatic Club, Sea Girt, NJ Silverton Fishing Club, Toms River, NJ David Strom, Jr., West Orange, NJ South Jersey Saltwater Anglers Surf Kings Fishing Club Douglas Vitale In Memory of Bruce Vitale Women's Surf Fishing Club of NJ, www.wsfcnj.org



New Jersey Beach Buggy Association PO Box 511, Seaside Park, NJ 08752 Buggy Membership Info: Ken Hollins 732-814-7021 www.NJBBA.org Fighting for Beach Access & Conservation Since 1954



Manasquan Fishing Club PO Box 513, Manasquan, NJ 08736

Meetings held first Friday of the month at 7:30pm Manasquan Woman's Club, 62 Main Street www.manasquanfishingclub.com

JCAA NEWSPAPER JULY 2025

Official Newspaper of the JERSEY COAST ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION

(Published on June 23rd, 2025)

"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING

June 24th, 2025, 7:30pm

Jersey Coast Shark Anglers Building 385 Herbertsville Rd, Brick, NJ 08724 or via Zoom, for link contact:

tothjohn@verizon.net or mtsport64@aol.com

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING Thursday, July 10th

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC. PO Box 1191, Wall Branch Post Office Wall, NJ 07719 Phone 732-506-6565 Fax 732-506-6975 Publisher Tom Fote, Editor Paul Turi

This publication is printed and mailed one week prior to each regular monthly meeting of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. One of the prime goals of JCAA is to get accurate information into public hands as soon as possible.

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JCAA General Membership Meetings are for club representatives and invited guests only. These meetings are not open to the general public. If you would like to attend as a guest, call the President at (732) 245-9445 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.

2024 OFFICERS

President	Mark Taylor	732-245-9445
1 st V.P.	Stephen Machalaba	908-588-1426
2 nd V.P.	Don Marantz	908-347-1434
Treasurer	Doug Tegeder	732-575-2661
Rec. Sec.	Karen Noe	732-245-2751
Cors. Sec.		
Mem. Sec.	John Toth	732-656-0139

Committee and Chairpersons listed on last page

IMPORTANT DATES

June 24th JCAA General Meeting July 10th JCAA Board Meeting July 10th Hi-Roller Raffle Drawing August 7th JCAA Board Meeting

No General Meetings in July & August

August 23rd 9th Annual Play Hook-e (*see flyer*) September 11th JCAA Board Metting September 30th JCAA General Meeting November 8th JCAA Sportsperson Dinner

JCAA Sportsperson of the Year Dinner

By John Toth

Save the date! Our Sportsperson of the Year Dinner is going to be held on Saturday evening on November 8th. Once again, the dinner will be held at the Captain's Inn located at 304 E Lacey Rd., Forked River, NJ. This is a dinner you don't want to miss, just ask anyone who attended the last three years what they thought of it. It's going to be a great event again this year. This sit-down dinner starts at 5 PM with cocktail hour. Appetizers will include bacon wrapped scallops, mini crab cakes, calamari and pigs in the blanket. A cheese and cracker platter along with bruschetta and toast will also be placed at each table. That will be followed by a dinner beginning with a house salad and stuffed shells with vodka sauce. Then you will have your choice of 4 entrees, prime rib, a broiled seafood combo, chicken marsala and pecan salmon. All entrees will come with potatoes and vegetables. Finally, dessert will consist of Tartufo & mini pastries. Coffee, tea and soda are also included. There will be a cash bar.

As always, we will have gifts and silent auctions along with a 50/50. We will have a lot of really nice prizes including some for the ladies. We are requesting that our member clubs and individuals donate something for our raffle and/or our silent auction, or perhaps a bottle for our basket of cheer or even tackle that you have not used but is still in great shape. To make a donation, please contact **Don Marantz** at (908) 347-1434. Tickets are \$100 per person. **John Toth** will be handling the ticket sales as well as the seating arrangements this year. John can be reached at <u>tothjohn@verizon.net</u> or at (732) 656-0139.

Also, there are 4 entrees to choose from and please ask your members which of these entrees they want to have as their dinner selection. Please provide me with this information so that I can pass it on to the Captain's Inn so that they can know how much food to prepare for each entrée.

Nominations for the Sportsperson of the Year will be made at the JCAA's General Membership Meeting on September 30th. Start NOW to think of who from your club should be nominated to receive this prestigious award!

When writing up your nomination, please do not write several pages for it. Present your nomination in just a few paragraphs and focus on the major points why your club member should receive the award. When we meet in September to hear your nomination, the reading of a few paragraphs will make your nomination easier to comprehend to our membership than reading several pages of it.

JCAA Hi-Roller Raffle

By Mark Taylor

Once again, this year we will be having our Hi-Roller Raffle and as you can see there are some really nice prizes. This is one of our major fundraisers so please buy some tickets. If you buy tickets, I absolutely guarantee you will have a chance to win. If you want tickets call the office at (732) 506-6565 or email jcaa@jcaa.org. The prizes listed below have a *total value of \$3,040*.

The drawing will be held on **July 10, 2025**, during the July JCAA board meeting at the Toms River Knights of Columbus Building, 113 Tennyson Ave. Toms River, NJ 08753.

New Jersey Amin. Code § 13:47-8.7

Location: Toms River Knights of Columbus Building 113 Tennyson Ave, Toms River, NJ 08753

Drawing Date: July 10, 2025, at 7:30 pm NJLGCCCC Identification: #475-4-32152 Municipal Raffle License: **#9951** Beneficiary: Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Price of Ticket: \$2 each, 3 for \$5, or a book of 7 for \$10

List of Prizes & Retail Values

- 1. Jersey Nutz Six Man Charter (6-hour, 6-man inshore weekday charter) – **\$1200**, Donated by Captains Robert and Cody Melton
- 7'4" Shimano Curado Rod/Shimano TPXD Reel Combo – \$660, Donated by JCAA
- 3. \$500 Gift Certificate from Fisherman's Headquarters – **\$500**, *Donated by Fisherman's Headquarters*
- 4. 7' Penn Battle III LE / Penn Spinfisher VI 2500 Reel Combo – \$235, Donated by Atlantic Bait & Tackle
- 5. 7' Shimano Rod / Montauk Cerebus CER210 Reel Combo – **\$230**, *Donated by JCAA*
- 6. 7' Penn Spinfisher Rod / Penn 6500LL Reel Combo – **\$215**, *Donated by Penn Fishing*

Note: No substitution of the offered prize may be made and no cash will be given in lieu of the prize.

President's Report

By Mark Taylor

As we reach mid-2025 and enjoy summer, I hope you are making the most of it with your loved ones. Consider discussing the importance of protecting our future now. Everyone can contribute by joining clubs or organizations aligning with their passion. Do not wait to get involved.

The 2025 JCAA High Roller Raffle will be drawn on **July 10th** at the Toms River Knights of Columbus Council #4969 Facility, 113 Tennyson Ave, Toms River, NJ 08753. The winner will be notified after the drawing. Following this, the monthly JCAA Board Meeting will take place. Good luck to all participants and thank you for supporting JCAA.

As mentioned in the last newsletter and at the recent general membership meeting, clubs are encouraged to consider their nominees for the 2025 JCAA Sportsperson of the Year and the 2025 Youth

Education Award. Please provide an electronic summary of five hundred words detailing why your nominee deserves selection. Submissions made by the newsletter's due date will be available for review. Late submissions should be promptly sent to Tom Fote at tfote@jcaa.org for the Sportsperson of the Year and to Greg Kucharewski at gkucharews@aol.com for the Youth Education Award. The summaries will be distributed to all club representatives for review, and a vote will take place at the General Membership Meeting on September 30th. The chosen nominees will be honored at the 2025 Sportsperson of the Year Dinner on November 8th. Clubs are encouraged to promote participation and reserve a table for this distinguished event. Further details can be found in Chairperson John Toth's articles.

Politics can be controversial, but it affects our fisheries. Regardless of affiliation, we must focus on environmental actions like resource protection, regulatory changes, or funding cuts. The recreational community should address issues, not parties, to be effective. An additional way to get information about the upcoming meetings is by press release that you need to sign up for. Here are two from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's 2025 Summer Meeting will be August 5 – 7, 2025

This will be a hybrid meeting (both in-person and remote) to allow for participation by Commissioners and interested stakeholders; the details of which will be provided two weeks prior to the meeting. A brief, preliminary agenda and public comment guidelines are included in the attached. Materials will be available July 23 on the Commission website at <u>this link</u>.

Ecological Reference Points Benchmark Assessment Peer Review Scheduled for August 12-15, 2025

The press release can also be found <u>here</u>. Individuals interested in horseshoe crabs and wishing to participate in the process are reminded that the deadline for submitting nominations by non-traditional stakeholders to join the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel is approaching June 27th. Interested stakeholders can fill-in and submit a <u>nomination form</u> by 11:59 PM on June 27, 2025 to <u>info@asmfc.org</u> (subject line: HSC AP nomination). Nominations submitted will be reviewed by a subgroup of the Board, which is also tasked with reviewing the AP's composition and membership and providing recommendations to the Board for consideration.

Recreational clubs or individuals interested in saltwater fishing can contact JCAA Membership Secretary John Toth at (732) 656-0138 or tothjohn@verizon.net for information. Member clubs that have not submitted current details and dues should also reach out. Updated information is vital for meeting notifications and fishery alerts.

For those passionate about supporting their local fishing community, the importance of staying informed and engaged cannot be overstated. Whether through attending meetings, volunteering at events, or discussing pressing issues with peers, every effort contributes to preserving the vibrancy of the recreational fishing scene. Organizations such as JCAA play a pivotal role in advocating for regulatory measures and resource management that directly affect the angling experience. By fostering community unity and participation, anglers can collectively address challenges and ensure the future of this cherished activity. Contact me at (732) 245-9445 or via email at <u>mtsport64@aol.com</u>.

Join the Community, Share Your Concerns, and Protect Recreational Fishing's Future

Important Info: Reminder there are No General Membership Meetings in July and August. The next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for **September 30th** at 7:30pm, held in person at 385 Herbertsville Rd., Brick, NJ 08724 with a zoom meeting invite (Hybrid Meeting).

JCAA Letter to U.S. Coast Guard RE: Proposed Buoy Discontinuation By Mark Taylor

My name is Mark A. Taylor, the current President of Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA), which is an organization representing Saltwater Fishing Clubs, Diving Clubs, and Coastal Conservation Groups throughout New Jersey. Our association comprises several hundred members.

The JCAA is submitting <u>this letter</u> to formally oppose the US Coast Guard's proposed Buoy Discontinuation Project. The safety of those who use the water is a critical concern. We urge you to consider this matter with utmost seriousness before approving the project. For any questions or concerns regarding our membership concerns, please feel free to contact either myself or Vice President Steve Machalaba.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.



U.S. Coast Guard First District Commander

Email: DO1-SMB-DPWPublicComments@uscg.mil

Reference: Proposed US Coast Guard Buoy Discontinuation, Project No. 01-25-015

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) is an association that represents Saltwater Fishing Clubs, Diving Clubs and Coastal Conservation Groups throughout the State of New Jersey, equating to several hundred people. The JCAA is opposed to the US Coast Guard's proposed Buoy Discontinuation Project. Many of the people we represent own boats and depend upon US Coast Guard Buoys for navigation. Not all of these boats have GPS, or Radar and very few are AIS equipped; It is not a requirement. Even with GPS, boaters depend upon US Coast Guard Buoys for visual reference, as do commercial vessels of all sizes. GPS, Radar and AIS signals are not flawless and can be affected by weather and atmospheric conditions.

Boaters in New Jersey depend upon US Coast Guard Buoys navigating Sandy Hook/Raritan Bay with its many diverging and converging channels. Sandy Hook/ Raritan Bay is the entrance to the New York Harbor, one of the busiest ports in the country. It includes the Port of New York, Port Newark, Port Elizabeth, and Port of Bayonne. Recreational boaters share Ambrose Channel, Sandy Hook Channel and Chapel Hill Channel with commercial marine traffic, including large ocean-going ships.

The safety of those using our coastal waters should be the number one priority. Discontinuing US Coast Guard Buoys, according to this proposal will negatively impact marine navigation, resulting in increased possibilities for vessel collisions, and groundings causing dangerous and life-threatening situations. To propose to remove lighted navigational buoys along Ambrose Channel, Sandy Hook Channel, Chapel Hill Channel along with other buoys such as the buoys at the entrance to Ambrose Channel, Scotland Light at the entrance to Sandy Hook Channel, the buoy at Shrewsbury Rocks and other buoys, or convert them to AIS only, is counterproductive to maritime safety and is adamantly opposed by the JCAA. Instead of seeking to discontinue these lighted buoys and navigational aids the US Coast Guard should continue maintaining and upgrading these devices for the greater public good and safety of the maritime public, even if this requires seeking increased funding from Congress.

Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Mark A. Taylor, President (<u>mtsport64@aol.com</u>) Stephen M. Machalaba, Vice President (<u>smachalaba@aol.com</u>)

Cc:

Honorable Secretary Kristi Noem, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, NJ 4th District

U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone, NJ 6th District

U.S. Senator Andy Kim

U.S. Senator Cory Booker

Forked River Tuna Club Scholarships 2025

By Paul Lenzo

This year our club presented four scholarships to students from the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science. MATES, is part of the Ocean County Vocational School District. Any student from an Ocean County High School is eligible to attend MATES and apply for our scholarship.

Congratulations to the following students who will be majoring in Marine Biology, Environmental Science, or completed a research project which will benefit our environment as well as mankind. Each student will be receiving a \$2,000.00 scholarship.

- Lillian Cole, Monmouth University
- Maggie A. Kelleher, University of Maryland
- Cleatus Oakes, California Institute of Technology
- Amalie Werner, North Carolina State University

The students, families, and staff at MATES are grateful for the awards from the FRTC. We are thankful for all the people who helped and attended various club activities or donated to support the scholarships!

Sincerely, Joyce and Paul Lenzo



Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

Summer has arrived with a bang. We are already talking about a heat wave of over 90 degrees starting June 21st. this was an interesting Spring with a lot of rain, storms and crazy weather conditions throughout the country. Yet we still have some climate change deniers. It will be interesting to see what happened with the young of the year in Chesapeake Bay with the cold winter and spring. We had colder temperatures this winter than in many years with ice on the rivers and lagoons. We should see a lot of sand eels. We don't take into consideration the fluctuation in water temperatures when we talk fisheries about management. Management can only address the catch figures and doesn't take climate change into consideration. But the recreational and commercial anglers suffer the consequences.

Striped Bass

I have included an article that Marty Gary posted on his Facebook page. I am happy someone sent it to me as I am not on Facebook. I have known Marty for more than 30 years and respect his work. He doesn't get stuck in the groove of some directors and always looks at all the science. We worked together at ASMFC. I am happy to see he is now the Director for New York Marine Resources. He covers many points that I have been talking about for many years. A report like this always makes me think of Bob Pond (Atom Lures) coming to the Berkeley Striped Club and talking about similar issues in the mid 70's.

Dredge Materials

I put in a public notice from EPA looking at dredge spoil material and what to do with it. If you are concerned, you should get involved. We don't have enough people in JCAA to cover all these topics, so I am asking you to consider doing this research. Let me know if you are willing.

Lobsters and Clams

Frank Macalik has volunteered to become Chairman of the JCAA Lobster and Clams Committee. Frank is a diver and represents the Dive Association. If you have a species you are interested in, let us know whether you can chair a committee or become a member of this or any of our committees.

Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council

There is a notice in this newspaper about the President's executive order relaxing regulations or restrictions for commercial fishermen. This did not include any help for the recreational sector. Over the years, we have seen the impact on party and charter boats, tackle stores and tackle manufacturers with many of them going out of business. But because we are not considered part of trade and commerce under the Department of Commerce, we are frequently overlooked and ignored. The MidAtlantic Council really needs to take into account the impact of climate change before relaxing the regulations for the commercial sector and if they do the need to do this for the recreational sector.

In closing, in August ASMFC will meet and we will then have a better idea what they are proposing for 2026. If you are not signed up at ASMFC to get their releases, you should definitely do so. Then you will get information about meetings and other information. If you are concerned and you want to get reliable information, look at the ASMFC reports. These reports are based on the best science we have at this time even though we need much more science about climate change impacts.

Bluefish

Below are two articles from the archives from 1997 and 1998 that restate the point that bluefish depend on the forage species. That is what makes bluefish stocks rise or fall, not restrictive fisheries management.

Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote (Reprinted from April 1997)

Bluefish

At the Mid-Atlantic Council meeting in February, the Council approved draft Amendment 1 to the Bluefish FMP. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be voting on Amendment 1 on March 19th. There are questions that have not been answered in the Bluefish Fisheries Management Plan that must be considered before this plan can be approved. First, what are the normal stock levels? Second, how much spawning stock biomass needs protection so that if conditions are right the population will increase? And third, what is the spawning stock biomass below which we would severely inhibit reproductive potential and a stock recovery?

In order to answer any of these questions we must think about what has happened. The number of bluefish available in the 70's and 80's were the highest that anyone ever remembers. Their range expanded dramatically further to both the north and south.

Unfortunately, the stock information being provided to the Council and Commission for review purposes only goes back to 1981, a time when the stock levels were at their highest. Consequently, the stock assessment today appears drastically low, by comparison.

The available stocks of bluefish decreased in the late 80's. This downward trend has continued into the 90's. Unlike other species, there was no dramatic increase in either the commercial or recreational fisheries. Actually, there were no bag limits in the 70's or 80's, as bag limits were first imposed in 1990 with no effect on slowing the stock decrease. Bluefish is not a species that takes a long time to become sexually mature. Not one scientist can point with any certainty to the reason why the stocks have decreased. When you look at the charts and at the fifty-year average, the 1990 catches are still above the fifty-year average. Before we implement the draconian measures that have been proposed for 1998, we must answer these questions. It is not fair to the recreational community and the industry to impose measures that will have a drastic effect on the industry without actually meeting its goals of conserving the stocks. The question I continually ask is, if we stopped all bluefishing tomorrow for three years, could you tell me if that would have a significant impact in increasing bluefish stocks to the historic high levels of the 80s. Not one scientist has been willing to answer that question on the record. Most of us started our saltwater fishing on snappers.

One of the management tools that is likely to be implemented is a 12-inch size limit for both recreational and commercial fishermen. This could be a big mistake economically for the future of recreational fishing and the industry. My father first introduced me to fishing by taking me down to Sheepshead Bay to fish for snapper blues. We never wasted any, bringing every fish we caught and kept was brought home to eat. That is how I have introduced my nieces and nephews to saltwater fishing, taking them down to a dock on Barnegat Bay to fish for snappers. If I must stop teaching children to fish on snappers, at least guarantee me that the sacrifice will have a truly beneficial impact on overall stocks. Unfortunately, as it appears right now, it looks more like a 12-inch size limit is going to be imposed just so managers can look like they are doing something, not because it is the correct scientifically determined thing to do. Right now, the fisheries management community is unable to provide any encouragement that a size limit is the answer. In fact, they are still struggling with the simple question, why are bluefish stocks declining in our waters. I have a sneaky suspicion that the main reason bluefish stocks are down in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern states is due to the overharvest of critical forage species like menhaden, herring, mackerel, squid and other species. To correct that problem would require some serious fisheries management and NMFS, the Council and Commission are very hesitant to open that can of worms.

Bluefish Update: Bag Limits to Remain at 10 Fish for 1998

By Gary Caputi (*Reprinted from September 1997*)

The combined Bluefish Board of the ASMFC and Coastal Migratory Committee from the Mid-Atlantic Council gathered in Philadelphia last week to determine the annual specifications for bluefish commercial quotas and recreational bag limits for 1998 and to further discuss Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Management Plan.

The 1998 specifications were determined under the original plan and had nothing to do with what was being considered for the upcoming plan amendment. I attended the Monitoring Committee meeting, which was held on Monday, August 11 and was pleased to see the committee and audience members seriously questioning the stock assessment results. While the assessment would lead one to believe bluefish were in a seriously depleted state and in need of major fishing mortality reductions, the vast amount of anecdotal data presented indicating the opposite was taken very seriously. The Monitoring Committee came to the conclusion that absent of any new management tools, they would fly in the face of the scientific data and recommend bag limits and commercial quotas stay status quo in 1998.

The ASMFC Bluefish Board and the Council met in joint session the next day and over a two-hour period, going back and forth with the Regional Administrator, approved the Monitoring Committee's recommendations. The status quo vote was overwhelming, but not unanimous. The manner in which the final proposal was worded prevents NMFS and the RA from denying the proposal, so the bag limit remains at 10 fish for another year.

Next came continuing discussions on Amendment 1 to the plan. The problem with this amendment is not so much expanding the management options to include possible seasonal closures and size limits, as it is the manner in which the stock is being assessed and what it could drive the management process to do in future years. The stock assessments are horribly inaccurate. Stock assessment scientists readily agree that they do not properly assess the stock's health when the fish are ranging further offshore, as has been common in recent years. The scientists conceded that the MRFSS survey, which gauges recreational landings and harvest, is dominated by recreational trips that take place inside three miles of shore, while bluefish can range to over 100 miles offshore. Once bluefish move beyond 10 miles out, recreational trips targeting them plummet. They also recognize that recreational effort associated with bluefish has dropped dramatically in recent years, indicating a further "decline" in supposed bluefish stock size. The bottom trawl survey conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center is a poor way to judge stock size for bluefish, and this is also

conceded to. But the bottom line is these stock assessment tools are being used to drive the management system and until the science is corrected to adequately gauge bluefish stock size, it could force the system to take draconian measures to improve a stock that very well might not need any help, while hurting the recreational and commercial users who depend upon it.

Now, add to all this, the base years being used to establish stock size includes the early and mid-1980s, when bluefish stocks were at all-time historic size. We recognize that stocks have declined from those years, but with such a short time frame being used for comparison purposes in the plan, 1979 through the present, the decline seems far greater than it probably is when compared to historic stock sizes over the past 50 or 100 years. Which brings us to the question of just how large a stock are we aiming for in the plan? What constitutes a healthy bluefish biomass? These questions have not been answered, so we are left to wander around in the darkness of indecision and the current amendment provides very few answers in its present form. The future of the bluefish amendment is still at question and the variables driving management, especially the stock assessment component, is very much a Catch 22 scenario. We'll keep you posted on developments.

Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass Article - 2025 *By Marty Gary*

The following is a post made by Marty Gary, the current New York Marine Resources Director. This post is from Marty's personal Facebook page and is not related to New York DEC. Over the years, Marty has posted his personal observations when he worked at Maryland DNR and PRFC. He shared his observations because fishermen would approach him and ask him his thoughts. Marty started his career at the onset of the Striped Bass moratorium in the mid-1980s as a Striped Bass Project biologist for Maryland DNR, where he participated in the various surveys that inform the stock assessment process. Marty has shared these observations for the same reason many of us post about Striped Bass, because we all care deeply about this resource.

Chesapeake Striped Bass Spawning Prognosis Final Update #4 and a Dive into Zooplankton

Today is the final day protective measures are in place on upper Chesapeake Bay spawning areas, rivers and reaches for Striped Bass. These areas are the primary spawning grounds for Striped Bass on the Atlantic Coast, and the greatest contributor to the Atlantic coast stock. Each year, starting on March 1st and running through May 31st, all defined spawning rivers, areas and reaches (reaches are discreet areas within spawning rivers where actual spawning occurs) are closed to targeted fishing for Striped Bass. You cannot even attempt to catch a Striped Bass in those areas. Those regulations were promulgated in 1982, as the stock was collapsing and one mediocre year class remained in the age structure. It wasn't lost on anyone back then or even now just how important those spawning habitats are, producing $\sim 80\%$ of the coastal population. And as spawning success goes in these areas as captured by the Maryland Juvenile Abundance Index (JAI or Young of Year), so goes the year classes as they mature and join the coastal migrant population. And most everyone knows that the past six consecutive years JAI values have been poor.

The geometric mean of the past six years is very similar to 1983-1988 (the weakest six consecutive years in the 67-year history of the survey), and the arithmetic mean is lower than those years in the 80s. We also know from past history that a couple of strong to dominant year classes can turn things around. That's what happened in 1989, bolstered a few years later in 1993 leading to the stock being declared recovered in 1995. I had a front row seat for this as a biologist for Maryland DNR in the mid-80s to the late 90s. Many of my work colleagues and mentors from that time are either retired or passed away. But there are several that are still around and know both the science and the on the water experience of that time. And fortunately, there are a few that are still at the Striped Bass Board at ASMFC. The coastal states have been constraining harvest now for the past decade, while still trying to afford access to the fishery, which is critically important, as angler advocacy for conservation can be disrupted and even lost when access is lost. I saw this firsthand when the biggest no targeting closure ever occurred from 1985-1990 in Maryland.

When I talk to fishing groups, one of the questions I am guaranteed to be asked is... "What is

causing the poor reproduction?" The truthful answer is we don't exactly know. But we do know it is environmentally driven. Likely by a synergy of factors I lay out below. And we do know it is not being caused by a lack of menhaden or predation by seals, dolphins, or cormorants. Spawning wrapped up weeks ago, and in a little over a month from now, the first round of the MD JAI survey will begin. When I was a biologist on the Striped Bass Stock Assessment Program, every year just before the JAI/YOY began, the biologists on the project would hedge their bets (a gentlemen's bet) to predict what the JAI would be based upon the conditions on the spawning grounds in the spring.

NO ONE ever hit on the nose, and hardly anyone ever really got close. The closest we came were in the years when we had very cool springs with sustained high flows in the tributaries. 1993, 1996, 2001 etc. we knew we had a better chance at a big year class, but even then, we wound up underestimating the JAI for those three years which produced dominant year classes that carried the fishery for years up and down the coast. Last year, I had held out hope that even though the prime temperature window was early, we still had slightly above average river discharges, and several weeks of steadily rising temperatures, and I hoped we could get to double digits. 2024 turned out to be a bust, and the sixth consecutive year of poor reproduction. So, what do I even know? But here we go again anyway.

The five variables that could impact Striped Bass reproduction:

- 1. Flow rates of key tributaries
- 2. Water temperature profile with a focus on the 12-16 \mbox{C}° window
- 3. Timing of the spawn based on temperature
- 4. Zooplankton hatch/timing
- 5. Blue Catfish predation impacts

1: Flow Rates Score = 3 out of 10

If you're going to hang your hat on any one of these metrics, it has to be this one. If you look at the chart of the Potomac (2nd most valuable spawning area on the Atlantic Coast), flows from late March through April were below the long-term median values, and lower than last year which produced a poor year class. The entire suite of upper Chesapeake spawning rivers was in moderate to severe drought conditions and that included the Susquehanna Valley in Pennsylvania. Discharge volume/Flow rates are an extremely important variable. This is because the eggs of Striped Bass are slightly negatively buoyant, and the fish intuitively seek a place in the rivers where there is zero salinity, coupled with just the right flow rates to keep their eggs aloft in the current until they hatch out. More flow into the Chesapeake's tidal tributaries increases the available surface area for the fish to spawn. So, in a high flow spring, the fish have a larger area, more area of river length to spawn in. Conversely, in low flow years, the salinity wedge pushes further up the rivers and constricts the available spawning areas for the fish. This is one reason why I am personally skeptical of folks that tell me the fish are shifting north and utilizing more northern rivers and streams along the coast. Even if this is true to some extent (no evidence of this), smaller northern rivers are not going to be able to match up with the surface area of the upper Chesapeake's spawning areas, rivers and reaches.

2: Temperature Score = X (Unknown)

I've struggled with this metric, as we had a spike in atmospheric temperatures starting around St. Patrick's Day that saw us rocket through the 12-16° C window where the vast majority of spawning typically occurs, and before MD DNR even started their spawning survey on April 2nd, but it lasted about 10 days and we returned to more normal temperature pattern. We then warmed up again the last couple of weeks of April. On May 3rd, the water temperature hit a scorching 78°F at Little Falls. The reproductive strategy for this animal is for multiple cohorts to spawn over a broad span of time, though clearly temperature elicits spawning pulses. So this will be interesting to see how it might play out, but I honestly don't know how to assess it for this year.

3: Timing of the Spawn Score = 4

Looking at the first graph of Potomac water temperatures from 1920-2022, you can see April, temperature averages have increased 10°F over the last century. The spawn is definitely starting earlier, and early relative to Joe Boone's (Joe standardized the MD JAI in 1962) accounts from the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The shift to earlier onset of spawning has led to the next variable, which is......

4: Striped Bass and Zooplankton Hatch Match/Mismatch Score = X (Unknown)

The potential for a mismatch between first-feeding striped bass larvae and their zooplankton prey in the Chesapeake Bay is a significant concern, particularly due to the effects of climate change on the timing of the spawn. This mismatch, often referred to in fisheries science circles (or at least Striped Bass science circles) as the "hatch match-mismatch" hypothesis, suggests that the survival of larval fish is critically dependent on the timing of their first feeding, which needs to coincide with the peak availability of their primary food source, zooplankton. Temperature changes, influenced by climate variability, can significantly alter the timing of larval striped bass emergence relative to the peak abundance of zooplankton. Cold and wet winters have been associated with large year-classes of striped bass, as these conditions tend to favor the synchronization of larval fish and zooplankton availability. Conversely, warmer and drier conditions can lead to a temporal (timing) mismatch, where larval striped bass may hatch at times when zooplankton are less abundant, potentially leading to higher mortality rates due to starvation or suboptimal growth. This issue is compounded by the broader impacts of climate change, including increased temperature and altered precipitation patterns, which can further disrupt the phenology (study of cyclical and natural phenomena) of both striped bass spawning and zooplankton availability. In my discussions with Claire Buchanan, scientist emeritus at the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin - ICPRB, she referenced the research done by D. Heimbuch and others describing a larval striped bass model - it relates larval survival (as measured by the JAI) to spring habitat and food. Some of the key parameters were temperature, flow, Secchi transparency, salinity, and zooplankton abundance. The model was very successful in the Potomac and Patuxent but not for the Choptank for various reasons. It would be great to see the model verified/improved with additional data. Those first few weeks after Striped Bass hatch are so critical for the larvae. In the model described by the Heimbuch et al study, zooplankton availability plays a crucial role in larval striped bass growth by serving as the primary food source during the larval stage. The zooplankton (food) availability sub-index specifically assesses the amount of available zooplankton biomass relative to the larvae's metabolic and energetic needs.

The process involves several steps:

- The biomass of zooplankton (mg/l) is estimated based on monitoring data.
- The volume of water swept by a larva's search during feeding is calculated, considering environmental conditions such as water clarity and prey size.
- The available food (mg/d) is then derived as a function of zooplankton biomass and the larva's feeding volume.

This available food directly influences larval growth because it determines whether larvae can meet their maximum consumption potential or face food limitations.

When zooplankton availability is high, larvae can consume enough to support optimal growth, leading to higher survival rates. Conversely, low zooplankton concentrations may result in insufficient feeding, slower growth, and increased mortality risk.

The sub-index compares zooplankton biomass and predator searching ability to the larvae's minimum food requirements and maximum consumption capacity, thus quantifying how well food availability supports larval growth and survival. Therefore, higher zooplankton availability positively influences larval growth rates within the model, aligning with the biological expectation that more available prey enhances growth potential.

The taxa of zooplankton mentioned in the study include:

- Cladocerans, typified by Bosmina
- Copepods, typified by species such as Eurytemora affinis and Acartia tonsa

These taxa are mentioned because they constitute the primary microzooplankton prey available to striped bass larvae during early development. Their mention is crucial because:

Larval striped bass (Morone saxatilis) survival during their first-feeding period in spring is closely tied to the abundance and availability of key zooplankton prey, primarily cladocerans (typified by Bosmina longirostris) and copepods (notably Eurytemora affinis and, to a lesser extent, Acartia tonsa), during April and May in estuarine systems such as Chesapeake Bay.

More on Striped Bass Larval Diet Composition and Prey Preference...

According to available literature, larval striped bass feed almost exclusively on the cladoceran Bosmina longirostris and the calanoid copepod Eurytemora affinis during their early life stages in the upper Chesapeake Bay.

Other prey, including Acartia tonsa and Daphnia spp., are much less common in larval diets, occurring in less than 5% of examined guts.

Survival and Recruitment Linked to Prey Abundance, Strong year classes of striped bass are associated with years when there is a close spatial and temporal match between larval fish and high concentrations of zooplankton prey, especially Bosmina longirostris and Eurytemora affinis.

Years with high freshwater flow in spring (March–April) produce higher abundances of these zooplankton, particularly in the estuarine turbidity maximum (ETM), enhancing larval feeding success and survival. The ETM acts as a retention zone for both larvae and their prey, increasing the likelihood of successful feeding and survival.

Enhanced feeding success and growth rates are observed in years with higher prey abundance, with feeding-stage larvae consuming significantly more cladocerans in high-flow years (e.g., 50% of gut contents in 2003 vs. <22% in 2001).

Mismatch Hypothesis

The "mismatch hypothesis" posits that larval survival is poor when the timing of zooplankton blooms does not align with the first-feeding period of striped bass larvae, often due to changes in winter/spring temperature and river flow.

This mismatch results in insufficient prey during the critical early feeding window, leading to high mortality.

Environmental Controls

Freshwater flow and temperature are primary drivers of zooplankton abundance and distribution, influencing the overlap with striped bass larvae.

In summary, the scientific literature consistently demonstrates that the survival of larval striped bass in April and May is highly dependent on the abundance of cladocerans (Bosmina longirostris) and copepods (Eurytemora affinis, with Acartia tonsa being less significant). Successful recruitment is most likely when there is a strong spatio-temporal overlap between larvae and these zooplankton prey, which is driven by environmental factors such as freshwater flow and temperature. Years with high prey abundance, especially in the ETM, result in higher larval feeding success, growth, and ultimately, survival.

And all this being said, there is at least one more factor to consider that Hildebrand & Schroeder did not encounter......

5: Blue Catfish Predation Score = X (unknown)

The highest densities of invasive Blue Catfish overlap with every Striped Bass spawning reach in the Chesapeake Bay (Within the spawning rivers and areas listed in this regulation, sections of these rivers and areas are established for special conservation actions and are known as striped bass spawning reaches - Md. Code Regs. 08.02.15.03 - Spawning Rivers, Areas, and Reaches). If you are not familiar with the level of biomass of *Ictalurus furcatus* in the tributaries of the Chesapeake you really need to see it firsthand to actually understand it. I do not pretend to know what the possible impact could be, but I believe it is not zero.

I will post one final update in three weeks, but we are already through the looking glass on the broadest range of spawning temperatures in the literature (52-70°F), as temperatures in nearly every major spawning river in the Chesapeake have exceeded 70°. Rain is forecast over this weekend, which will bring flows up and temps down a bit. Perhaps that will help the last spawning cohorts, but for all intents and purposes, the spawn is wrapped up. I promised an update on zooplankton with some information from ICPRB scientist Emeritus Claire Buchanan. I hope to have lunch with her this week after ASMFC wraps up. 2025 JAI Prediction: None of the variables I see, most importantly discharge volumes and temperature lead me to believe we'll have a dominant year class. Couple that with a level of abundance of catfish that even a robust commercial fishery and growing charter boat exploitation can't seem to put a dent in, but who knows? This year's JAI could be a 20 or could be another bust. The metrics lean toward another bust, but all things considered, my prediction for this year's JAI is 4.8.

No delusional optimism from me on this.

Mid-Atlantic Council Invites Public Input in Response to Executive Order 14276, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness"

MAFMC News, June 17, 2025

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) invites fishermen, processors, scientists, seafood businesses, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties to provide input on ways to reduce regulatory burdens and increase production in domestic fisheries. Submitted comments will inform the Council's response to Executive Order (EO) 14276, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness."

Background

Signed on April 17, 2025, EO 14276 directs federal agencies to "promote the productive harvest of our seafood resources; unburden our commercial fishermen from costly and inefficient regulation; combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and protect our seafood markets from unfair trade practices of foreign nations."

Section 4 of the order instructs the Secretary of Commerce to ask each Regional Fishery Management Council to provide updated recommendations that reduce burdens on domestic fisheries and increase production, building on lists first developed in 2020 under EO 13921 (see the Mid-Atlantic Council's previous recommendations here). Recommended actions should stabilize markets, improve access, enhance economic profitability, and prevent closures. NOAA's Office of Sustainable Fisheries has requested that Councils submit their updated recommendations by September 30, 2025.

How to Submit Comments

- Online: Use the Council's <u>Executive Order 14276</u> <u>Comment Form</u>
- Email: Send comments to <u>msabo@mafmc.org</u> with the subject line "Executive Order Comment"

All comments must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, July 18, 2025. Submitted materials will be posted publicly on the Council's website.

Next Steps

The Council will review all submissions at its August 2025 <u>meeting</u> and develop a prioritized list of recommendations for submission to NOAA Fisheries.

Questions? Contact Mary Sabo at <u>msabo@mafmc.org</u> or (302) 526-5261.

Input Wanted: NJDEP & NJMFC Survey on Summer Flounder & Black Seabass

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife has partnered with the NJ Marine Fisheries Council to explore potential future summer flounder and black sea bass measures in depth. For years, the public has expressed interest in regionspecific or sector-specific measures, and we are collectively building the tools and expanding data collection to make those explorations a reality.

With the opening of summer flounder season on May 4, and the opening of the black sea bass season on May 17, we wanted to reintroduce this concept, and ask for your help. A form was developed specifically for rapid entry of your catch and release information for these two important species. The form is available here along with a <u>FAQ</u> list to help with common questions.

While this effort is focused on summer flounder and black sea bass, please don't forget how important it is to report catches for all species. There are a variety of forms to help you record those data (<u>paper form</u>, <u>electronic form optimized for computers</u>, and <u>optimized for mobile devices</u>).

JCAA Membership Report By John Toth

The following is a list of clubs that have paid their dues and sponsorships for 2025. Please check to see if my information is correct and let me know if I am in error with it. I can be contacted at (732) 656-0139 or at tothjohn@verizon.net.

- Barrington Rod & Gun Club \$150
- NJ Beach Buggy Association (NJBBA) \$300
- Surf Kings \$50
- Hi-Mar Striper Club \$500
- Belmar Fishing Club \$50

- Seaside Heights Fishing Club \$100
- Bradley Beach Surf Casters \$150
- Manasquan Fishing Club \$300
- Delaware River Shad Fishermen's Association \$100
- Salt Water Anglers of Bergen County \$100
- Bay Head Shores Fishing Club \$50
- Hudson River Fishermen's Association \$100
- Village Harbor Fishing Club \$50
- Sandy Hook Bay Anglers \$250
- Spring Lake Live Liners \$100

Sponsorships have been received from:

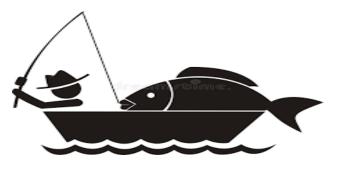
- Paul Shafer \$200
- Barnegat Animal Clinic \$70
- Jon Brunetti \$100
- Linda & Chris Jewel \$210
- Adam Piasecki \$70
- Joseph Palumbo \$500
- Greg Jewell \$45
- Raymond Humphreys \$100
- Fisherman's Headquarters \$100
- Louis Schott \$100

We are already approaching the middle of this year, and a number of clubs have still not paid their dues. Please send in your club dues to:

Jersey Coast Anglers Association P.O. Box 1191 West Branch Post Office Wall, NJ 07719

Our next JCAA General Membership meeting be on **June 24th**, **2025**, and it will be held as an in-person meeting at the Shark Anglers Building in Herbertsville and by ZOOM starting at 7:30 p.m. We will NOT have JCAA General Membership meetings during July and August because we are supposed to be fishing!

Have a good summer and catch some big fish!



Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

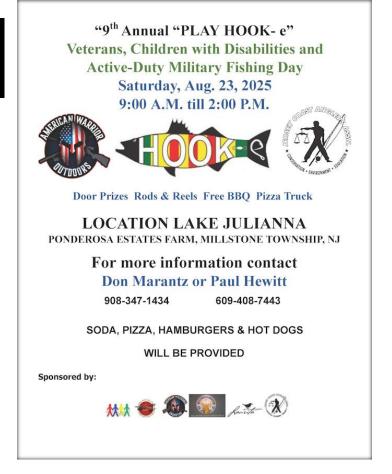
9th ANNUAL VETERANS, DISABLED CHILDREN & ACTIVE-DUTY FISHING DAY

Save the date for the Play HOOK-e 9th Annual Veterans, Disabled Children and Active-Duty Military Fishing Day. This year, Paul Hewitt and Rob Felicito from American Warrior Outdoors are joining us to assist Don Marantz to make the event improved. The goal of the veteran, active-duty military, and disabled children fishing day is to encourage attendees to feel the health benefits of getting in touch with nature while making good memories with friends and family while fishing.



Veterans and families that have disabled children and other special needs are welcome to register for the 9th annual event. Attendees and their guests are invited to fish at Lake Julianna to catch and release big fish and then join Mr. Vito Cardinale and his staff of volunteers for a free BBQ that will provide soft drinks, pizza, hamburgers & hot dogs, and other goodies. Admission is free but registration is mandatory through Eventbrite. Come join us at Ponderosa Estates Farm, Millstone Don Marantz, Event Chairman, Vito Township. Cardinale, Cardinale Enterprises, and Randy Johnson, Laurita Winery always make this a fun event for children with disabilities and other special needs. The event includes a fishing fun day for children and honoring disabled veterans, along with active-duty military from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, on Saturday, August 23, 2025, 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Disabled Veterans and children with mobility challenges will have use of 4x4 transportation around the lake, along with fishing assistance if needed. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Jersey Shore Chapter will assist with fly fishing instruction. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife will bring their mobile education trailer and HOFNOD loaner rods and reels.



Don Marantz, Event Chairperson stated: "We have plenty of door prizes, terminal tackle, bait, and other fishing equipment available to ensure that participants have an enjoyable time at Lake Julianna. "Come out and catch a smile."

BEGINNER SURF FISHING CLINIC



George Brown and his crew of expert angler volunteers are gearing up to teach beginner surf fishing clinics at Island Beach State Park. Register and learn from some of the best fishing experts along the Jersey Shore. Learn how to tie knots, how to read the beach, what species to catch and how you can improve your skills! Every Friday morning starting July 11th, till August 30th. Cost is \$10 and you can <u>register here</u>.

28th ANNUAL FISHING TOURNAMENT AND FAMILY FUN DAY

Join the fishing families that will attend the awards ceremony at the American Legion #493 in Little Egg Harbor Twp. Boaters will fish for fluke or bluefish in the morning, then join families for BBQ, music, and fun at the American Legion.



ANNUAL VETERAN FISHING TRIP



Rich MacDonald and his volunteers always do an excellent job of organizing the annual Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club veteran fishing trip.

JERSEY COAST SHARK ANGLERS ANNUAL VETERAN FISHING CHARTER



The Jersey Coast Shark Anglers will co-sponsor a fishing trip for veteran men and women with Play HOOK-e from PTSD, Vietnam Veterans of America, Shore Area Chapter 12. Michele Kohler is working on a August date with JCSA board members. We thank the membership of JCSA for making this an annual event.

2025 JCAA YOUTH EDUCATION AWARD

We received our first nomination from the Hi-Mar Striper Club. The JCAA Youth Education Committee is accepting nominations for the 2025 Youth Education Award. Youth Education Award Criteria: Promoting "Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs (HOFNOD)," Certified HOFNOD instructors, number of fishing or aquatic education events, JCAA lending library usage, and creativity for promoting youth events. Submit your nominations in writing and email to <u>gkucharews@jcaa.org</u>.



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ISHING TACKLE 43rd Annual 2-Day **Fluke Tournament** July 12 & 13 2025 sandyhookbayanglers.org P.O. Box 513 Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716 Monthly Meetings: 2nd Friday of the month at the senior building in Atlantic Highlands Compliments of Janice & Joe Blaze Brielle, NJ

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