

Angling Around New York's Marine District

Throughout the summer and early fall, the angling community is busy organizing activities to lure New Yorkers to the shorelines. What better way for kids to enjoy fine weather than to spend a day fishing from one of the many access points along the shoreline? Whether your preference is salt- or freshwater, there are many services being offered to residents and visitors to the state.



Children at a springtime fishing clinic learn about Long Island's most popular sport fish from Antoinette Clemetson's colorful display. Photo courtesy of Antoinette Clemetson

Teach-A-Kid-To-Fish is a workshop that is organized by local angling clubs and associations, to teach basic fishing skills to our youths. Kids learn knot tying, fish identification, casting techniques, catch-and-release, and boat safety. Each session includes poster presentations and short lectures coupled with hands-on sessions, including a wet display of locally caught fish. Kids enjoy touching specimens and getting their hands dirty. Workshops are held near the water to allow time to practice what they've learned. Several anglers have attested to the satisfaction of seeing a child catch his or her first fish.

The newly constructed Sportfishing Education Center and Aquaculture Facility located at Cedar Beach Marina in the Town of Babylon is another way youths can participate in marine education. The Center is a pivotal point in promoting saltwater fishing and angling ethics, including catch-and-release fishing. It will soon support the wider angling community by offering adult education programs. Plans include a fishing museum displaying fishing tackle over the years. *Casting for Recovery*, a program that focuses on women breast cancer survivors, has already hosted a weekend retreat in collaboration with the Center.

The Center was made possible with funds secured by Assemblyman Robert Sweeney. The planned programs are collaborative efforts among many groups including New York Sportfishing Federation, Long Island Beach Buggy Association, *The Fisherman*,



Young and young-at-heart practice technique along the Nissequogue River. Photo courtesy of Antoinette Clemetson

New York Sea Grant, NYS DEC, and Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program.

Parents can also use the *Fishing Tackle Loaner* program, a national initiative conducted from participating libraries, where patrons with a library card may check out a saltwater fishing rod and reel and tackle boxes on loan. Bayshore and Patchogue-Medford public libraries run the program from summer to early fall. Librarian Paul Haywood gives the program high marks. This program would not be possible without support from the angling community that donated fishing equipment.

Fishing in New York City

Fishing-sponsored events are not confined to the suburbs. Several groups and agencies offer fishing clinics in the bustling metropolis of New York City. Staff at *Battery Park City Parks Conservancy* organizes fishing festivals and marine education programs in lower Manhattan, and offers a six-week master angler training course. Master anglers are the foundation for outreach to youths and other focus groups. These volunteers continue to promote the sport of fishing in their own communities.

Take-a-Kid-Fishing offers environmental educational and angling programs to youths. The staff works with teachers to arrange classroom projects and lectures that culminate in a field trip. The program is a partnership with associations and agencies including schools, state agencies, youth support groups, and charterboat operators.

The new *I Fish New York* program being coordinated by NYSDEC will also focus on outreach in the city and on Long Island. Although it is in the development stage, it is envisioned this program will enhance fishing opportunities in urban communities.

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Reeling in Weakfish for Sea Grant

Anglers not only raised fish out of the water during May's Third Annual Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament, but a portion of the proceeds from the two-day event will be put to good use in furthering NYSG's activities in coastal outreach, education and research. More than 400 anglers and 120 boats turned out for the tournament, hosted by Surfside 3 Marina.

"Our presence at this year's tournament helped get the word out about the many research and education projects we sponsor," says **Cornelia Schlenk**, NYSG's Assistant Director. "All of us at Sea Grant are appreciative of the fundraising efforts made possible by Surfside 3 Marina and the generosity and interest of so many of the captains and their fishing teams."

So why was Sea Grant targeted to benefit from the tournament? On Long Island, Sea Grant has also been instrumental in sponsoring catch-and-release programs, by-catch workshops, and has worked with the angling community to plan the new Sportfishing Education Center in Babylon. "We're not involved in making policy or regulations," says **Antoinette Clemetson**, NYSG's fisheries specialist. "Our job is to help empower people by educating them about our natural resources that they use both for business and pleasure." These include understanding hard clam population factors, learning what triggers the blooms of brown-tide algae in our bays, and understanding the impacts of breaches.

Adds Schlenk, "In working closely with everyone from anglers to charter operators, business associations to bait suppliers, our aim is to give

Photo by Barbara Branca



Cornelia Schlenk, NYSG Assistant Director gets the word out about Sea Grant's mission as she congratulates the winners of the Third Annual Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament.



Frank Carnese, captain of the *Labelle Lorette*, holds the 10.12 pound weakfish that won the tournament.

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everyone concerned the information they need to make sound, fact-based decisions. NYSG's goal is to provide information based on solid scientific research so that good management decisions can be made for our environment and economy."

Anglers at the event were vying for a new 17-foot Boston Whaler Montauk, which was awarded to the captain of the *Labelle Lorette*, **Frank Carnese** who brought home the prize winning 10.12-pound weakfish. Second place was held down by another 10 pounder - Charles Rex's 10.08 was good for \$1,500. A trio of 9.7-pound weakfish followed, all weighed in and registered according to time, with the earlier time receiving the higher prize. The first 9.7, caught by James Dion, was worth \$1,000, while the second, caught by James Uzenski, took \$500. All of top 10 fish caught were over the 9-pound mark.



Frank Carnese, far right, took home the largest, but the whole crew was pretty happy at weigh-in.

Photo courtesy of Greg Giarrantano of Burnett's Bait and Tackle

Sea Grant representatives provided tournament participants with fact sheets as well as an opportunity to discuss the program's successes, both present and over the past three decades. "We considered this tournament an excellent opportunity to showcase the important work done by New York Sea Grant," says **Paul Barbara**, co-owner of Surfside 3 Marina. "Everyone who enjoys the water, or makes a living from it, benefits from the information they help provide, not just on Long Island, but on a national scale."

— **Paul C. Focazio**

Additional information provided by LKGS, Inc. and The Fisherman