

At The American Legion Hall, Post # 170, 33 West Passaic Street, Rochelle Park, N. J.

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Members enjoying the fine food at our Holiday Meeting.

We had a good turn out with lots of great conversations and followship.



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Good fishing, good friends.

That's what SWABC is all about

The Best Fishing Club in NJ

The regular meetings will be held every third Tuesday of the month, (except March) at **7:30 PM** at the Legion Hall. A \$5 fee is required, for non-members. This entitles you to refreshments, snacks, and some new tricks about fishing plus participation if you choose in our dark horse drawings. Welcome all; we hope you enjoy the evening.

Happy New Year! President's Corner

We had a very enjoyable Christmas/Hanukkah party and I think everybody had a good time! There was a huge assortment of food and nobody left the meeting hungry! Trays were available for members to take food home that was left over. Our members brought so much food and it is difficult to list who brought what, but I know that these members brought food to it: Lou Castellano, Rick Reitano, Mark Capalbo, Nick, Casamassimo, Ralph DeJulia, Tom Tyls, Tony Carbone, Art Vrola, Dave Nicholson, Ken Lesenko, Salvatore Crachiola, John Fatuzzo, Fred Villanova, Dominic Ciazza, Don Burns, Jim Piobino and myself. Other members brought food items that I am not aware of, but we even ended up with a huge dessert table that could rival some restaurants! Our club also purchased **7 trays of food** for the party for about \$700 that included: Chicken Parm, Penne Vodka, Sausage & Peppers, Meatballs, Chicken Franchise and the caterer (Brothers Pizza from Saddle Brook) did a really good job in preparing food for our meeting. **Ralph DeJulia** set up the food arrangements with this new caterer **and Thanks Ralph!** Jim Galanaugh played **Santa Claus** in handing out gifts to our members. Setting up the tables with red tablecloths and cutlery and making the hall festive were Mark Capalbo, his lovely wife Michelle, Gary Gusterson, John Fatuzzo, Bill Goodsir and myself. Steve Totten also prepared the boards for our turkey and ham raffles and Salvatore Crachiola handled the money for this raffle. Chuck Santoro bought the turkeys and hams and Lou Castellano gave out the turkeys and hams to the lucky winners. Mark Capalbo, Don Lohse and Ralph DeJulia helped to set up the food trays and clean up. Gary Gusterson sold our 50/50 tickets and **Ron Stewart** was happy to win a very nice **50/50** prize money!

Because of all of the efforts of our members, and I may have missed some, this party was very enjoyable with about 60 members in attendance, including some wives, and we all had a very nice evening together and sharing the holiday spirit with each other!

At this party, I briefly mentioned the threat to the NJ Fish & Game Council by animal right activists who want more representation on it. If successful, fishing and hunting would have a slow death in this state. This issue is further explained in another section of this newsletter.

Fishy Quotes:

"Fish and visitors smell after three days" – Benjamin Franklin

"Fishing consists of a series of misadventures interspersed by occasional moments of glory" – Howard Marshall

"We are haunted day and night by the knowledge that the amount of time we spend fishing is inconsequential in comparison with the amount of time we spend doing things we do not love" – Howell Raines\

January 20, 2026 –

First Club Meeting of the Year – John Fatuzzo

Over 23 million years ago, a monstrous shark existed that was about 60 feet long and terrorized other sea animals. This huge creature was called Megalodon. John Fatuzzo, a member of our club, is fascinated by this shark and he has volunteered to give us a power point presentation about Megalodon and how it roamed the seas many years ago. The size of its teeth was about 7 inches. Megalodon is probably the biggest creature that ever existed on our planet.

February 17th Meeting –

Oyster Rehabilitation Program

Oysters consumed by diners in restaurants were regularly thrown in trash bins. An ambitious program developed by our state DEP along with a commercial seafood company not only saves discarded oysters, but uses them to seed new oysters in our local waters. This is not only a big win for our environment, but also a win for a new food source. A representative from our state DEP will be at this meeting to give us a presentation of this cooperative program with our state and a commercial fishing company to promote our oyster industry.

March 24th Meeting – is the Past President's Dinner at the Mountainside Inn. Tickets will be on sale at the January meeting.

Hamza with a couple of nice Blackfish



**Message from our Membership Chairman –
Art Vrola**

On behalf of our Board members, I want to **Thank** all of you members who have already paid their 2026 dues. Please keep in mind, the club depends heavily on the timely payment of dues to fund our programs throughout the year. As stated in our club's by-laws, to be an active club member our dues are due no later than February 2026.

If dues are not received by the end of February, delinquent members will be removed from our membership roster and will not receive our club's monthly newsletter or be eligible to participate in the club's activities. Checks for dues payment should be made out to **SWABC**. If you cannot attend a meeting - mail your check to the **American Legion Post # 170 c/o SWABC, 33 West Passaic Street, Rochelle Park, NJ 07662**.

Our club membership dues are **\$55 for an individual and \$60 for family membership**. Included in the dues are **two club raffle books** with a value of **\$20**. (Each book has ten tickets in it at a cost of \$1 for each ticket). Members can buy these raffle tickets for their own use to possibly win our raffle prizes, or sell the tickets and keep the \$20 from selling their two raffle books.

The new raffle tickets are in the process of being printed and will be distributed at our January meeting. This membership policy was adopted by the club's Board to have an ongoing revenue stream to cover the club's expenses relating to insurance fees, hall rentals speaker fees, refreshments for our meetings and other expenses.

Winter Trade Shows

The first one up is the Boat show in February (12 - 15) and followed by the Salt Water Expo in March (13- 15) Our club has a booth at both of these shows and we need volunteers to staff them to sell raffle tickets and to talk to visitors to see if they would be interested in joining our club. We want to have at least 2 members for each shift for bathroom breaks and have the opportunity to see the shows. Members working at these shows **do not pay an entrance fee**. Please see John Toth at our January 20th meeting to sign up for these shows. John can also be reached at (732) 656-0139 or at tothjohn@verizon.net. Both of these shows will be held at the NJ Convention Center at 97, Sunfield Ave., Edison, NJ

**NJ Boat Show Sale & Expo – February 13th – 16th –
NJ Convention Center, Raritan NJ**

Thursday, February 12th

11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.–John Toth, Fred Villanova (set up)
3 to 7:00 p.m.–Tom Bornemann– **one volunteer needed**

**February 1st – Club Flea Market at the
Hilton, Hasbrouck Heights**

Our club is having its Flea Market at the Hilton Hasbrouck Heights on February 1st and Andrew Basso is our Chairman. Andrew will need volunteers to take entry fees at the door, selling Dark Horse tickets, 50/50 tickets, security, and selling our club's raffle tickets. Volunteers are needed to be outside the building to assist vendors with help in bringing in their tackle and to respond to any issue that may also develop in the Hilton hotel.

At our December meeting, Don Lohse asked members to bring unwanted fishing tackle to our **January's 20th meeting**. We will sell this donated equipment at the Flea Market; the funds raised will be for our club. We will also need volunteers to sell this donated tackle.

We also need club members to promote our flea market by telling Andrew of vendors you know that they would be interested in being a vendor at our February 1st Flea Market. The cost is **\$40 for the first table and \$30 for each additional one**. The entry fee is **\$5 for adults and kids under 10 years free**. The flea market will start at **8:30 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m.**

If you know of vendors that would be interested in our flea market, direct them to Andrew Basso at (973) 600-0376 or at ajbasso1@gmail.com

Most flea markets have seminar to provide attendees with a speaker to give them an interesting presentation on a fishing topic. We will have Pedro Ildefonso to give his best techniques on how to catch blackfish and Dave Lilly to do a presentation on catching fluke.

Andrew would much appreciate any help that you can provide to him and ultimately make our flea market a fun and successful event!

Friday, February 13th

11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.–John Toth, **one volunteer needed**
3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – **2 volunteers needed**

Saturday, February 14th

10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. – **2 volunteers needed**
2:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – **2 volunteers needed**

Sunday, February 15th

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.–John Toth, **One volunteer needed**
1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – John Toth, **one volunteer needed to close up**

Salt Water Expo – March 13th – March 15th

Friday, March 13th

Noon – 4:00 p.m. – John Toth, Fred Villanova (set up)
4 to 8:00 p.m. Tom Bornemann, **one volunteer needed**

Saturday, March 14th

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Bob Goldstein, John Farrell, Ralph DeJulia

2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – **2 volunteers needed**

Sunday, March 15th

10:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. – **2 volunteers needed**
1:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – John Toth, **one volunteer needed to close up**

Megalodon tooth found on Florida beach

A woman discovered a rare shark tooth in Florida, offering a glimpse into prehistoric times.

Nicole Mercuri, 26, was walking on a west Florida beach when she spotted the tooth and pulled it out of the sand.

The tooth was 3 inches wide and 5 inches long.

The oldest Megalodon fossils date to 23 million years ago, according to the Florida Museum of Natural History. This extinct predator could have been 50-60 feet long, and its teeth, which resembled serrated knives like triangles, can be up to 7 inches long.

Good News about the Endangered North Atlantic Right Whale

Most of the time we hear bad news about the population of North Atlantic Right Whales declining, but this time there is good news about them. The whale population increased from 376 to 384 according to the North Atlantic Right Whale Commission. While not out of the woods yet, this is encouraging news to hear that the population of Right Whales is slightly on the increase. An increasing concern is that Right Whale is on the verge of extinction and this news is very welcome to hear.

(Asbury Park Press, October 25th)

Great White Shark Facts

- How many are there? - this is unknown, but NOAA estimates that there are about 3,000 to 10,000 of them
- Weight –up to 4,500 lbs.
- Lifespan – 70 years or more
- Threats – unintentional capture, habitat impacts.

Mark Capalbo with his 9 lb. blackfish



Big Fish Derby

Our **January 20th meeting is the last date** that affidavits can be received to enter the Big Fish Derby. Please bring your affidavits to this meeting or send them to John Toth at tothjohn@verizon.net.

Prizes for the winners of our Big Fish Derby will be given out at our **Past President's Dinner** that is scheduled for **March 24, 2026** at the **Mountainside Inn in Clifton, NJ**. This is our club meeting during March and it will **not** be held at our regular meeting place at the American legion Post in Rochelle Park.

Club Raffle Prizes

The drawing of raffle tickets will be held on **April 21st** at our regularly scheduled club meeting at the American Legion Post # 170. Our club has some very nice prizes to offer and they are:

1. **Charter Fishing Trip on the Fins on Feathers Charters - \$800 value**
Captain Frank Tenore - 125 Concord Ave., Leonardo, NJ. (Gratuity not included).
2. **JW Rod JW-X 761 C-H with Seagate 20 H – \$290 value**
3. **JW Onyx S 701 H Rod, Shield 600 Reel – \$230 Value**
4. **2 Tickets for the Party Boat “Fisherman”- \$200 value**
5. **Gift Certificate – Jigging World, 175 Rt.17, Rochelle Park, NJ 07667 - \$100 value**












Lou's Big Ling



2025 BIG FISH OF THE YEAR DERBY.

Rules

1. Fish have to be in season to be entered.
2. The fish can be caught anywhere, not in just New Jersey's waters.
3. The fish entered has to be verified by the boat captain or another club member or at an official weigh station. A picture of the fish is a much-preferred way to verify an entry into the Big Fish contest done by a cell phone or a regular camera. A club member can win more than one Big Fish contest prize.
4. Affidavits must be received within 30 days after the fish is caught. Entries for fish caught after 12/15 of a given year must be received by January 15th of the following year.

FISH	SPECIES	MIN. WEIGHT	ENTRY WEIGHT	ANGLER
	BLACKFISH	4	9 lbs. 8 oz.	Bob Goldstein
	BLUEFISH	12		
	COD FISH	10		
	FLOUNDER	1.5 lbs.	2.62 lbs.	Chuck Santoro & Don Lohse
	FLUKE	4	10 lbs.	Carmen Bufardeci
	LING	2	2 lbs. 4 oz.	Lou Castellano
	POLLOCK	10	12 lbs. 1 oz.	Jon Campbell
	PORGY	1.5 lbs.		
	SEA BASS	2	4 lbs.	Carmen Bufardeci
	STRIPED BASS	12	30	Nick Casamassimo
	WEAKFISH	2		

Any member submitting a false affidavit will be disqualified from entering the contest during the year. If disqualified twice, the member will be expelled from the club.



SALT WATER ANGLERS OF BERGEN COUNTY FISHING CONTEST AFFIDAVIT



ANGLERS NAME: _____

Date submitted with picture: _____

I certify that the following statements are true and that all contest rules were complied with and the witness actually witnessed the weighing and the measuring of the fish.

Caught from: ___Boat ___Surf - Date: _____

Name of Boat: _____

Port: _____

Where caught: _____

Signature of Angler _____

SPECIES

LBS.

OZS

Witnessed by: _____

1. _____

Address: _____

2. _____

Phone No. _____

3. _____

New Jersey Fish & Game Council under Attack Again by Animal Right Activists

By John Toth

Here we go again with animal right activists who want to change how we fish and hunt in New Jersey. However, before I go further with this column, a brief explanation of the NJ Fish & Game Council is needed to better understand its important role in managing fresh water fishing and hunting in our state.

The Fish & Game Council has 11 members appointed by our Governor and with the consent of Senate members. The composition of this council includes three farmers, six sportsmen, a member of the Endangered and Non-Game Species and one Public Member. These members are chosen to be on this council because of their extensive background and knowledge of fishing, hunting and land use and soil conservation. They are selected from different regions of our state to ensure broad representation. In regard to fishing and hunting, they establish regulations that govern these sports that include but are not limited to permits, seasons, bag limits, and the number of wildlife that can be harvested. In short, the NJ Fish & Game Council manages all fresh water fishing and hunting that occur in our state. Any changes to the composition of this council can and most likely will have a direct impact on the management of fishing and hunting in New Jersey.

During 2007, Assemblyman Panter and Senator Karcher introduced bills to reduce the number of council members from 11 to 7 and include representation from animal rights activists. Alarmed that fishing and hunting opportunities would be curtailed, anglers and hunters joined forces throughout the state to defeat these bills. Rallies were held throughout the state to oppose these bills and I remember attending one at the Clarksburg Inn in Millstone Township on October 28th that drew 800 men and women. I and others spoke at this rally to oppose changing the Fish & Game Council and it was so exciting to see anglers and hunters join together to stop threats that would ultimately destroy their fishing and hunting opportunities. These bills were defeated and even the politicians who pandered to the animal right activists over us anglers and hunters in our state were ultimately voted out of office!

Fast forward to 2025, just when you thought that this threat to the Fish & Game Council would not happen again, bills A 6055 and S 4893 are moving through our legislature and pushed primarily by former Senator Raymond Lesniak who has championed having animal right activists on the Fish & Game Council for many years. Under this bill, three sportsmen from the Fish & Game Council would be replaced by animal welfare advocates. Council members who have considerable

knowledge of conserving wildlife for conservation would be replaced by members who would advocate animal welfare over wildlife management.

For example, seasons for hunting deer could be curtailed or fishing seasons reduced under this new type of management. Seasons for bear hunting would also be curtailed or stopped outright even though the population of bears has exploded in certain sections of our state causing crop damage and posing threats to humans. During 2007 we had some time to organize opposition to the Panter/Karcher threat. session, bills can be approved by Unanimous Consent when speakers of both the Assembly and Senate along with the Governor agree to pass a bill. The Lane Duck session ends on January 15, 2026. As I write this column, there has been a groundswell of opposition to these bills by anglers and hunters, but I do not know yet if these bills have been defeated or passed.

I do want to share an experience that I had with an animal right activist when I testified in Trenton to the Senate Environmental Committee to pass the Hooked-on Fishing not on Drugs bill. The purpose of this bill is to take youths from inner cities on fishing trips and away from the drug scene. I told the committee that my fishing club (Salt Water Anglers of Bergen County) sponsors youths on an annual fishing trip and these youths enjoy fishing so much. I related how a 14-year-old girl told me that she could not fish and, with a little encouragement from me, she was catching fish and was so excited about it. She told me at the end of the trip that "this day is not going to end, is it?" The committee approved the Hooked-on Fishing not on Drugs bill and disregarded the testimony of the animal right activist opposing it. When I was about to leave the animal right activist came up to my face and angrily accused me of teaching kids how to kill fish and I should be ashamed of taking kids on a day of fishing.

Imagine if these type of people gained control of the Fish & Game Council. Fishing and hunting in our state would certainly die a slow death under their control.

Legislators to contact to oppose

A 6055 and S 4893:

Senator Nicholas P. Scutari, Senate President (LD22) (732) 827-7480

Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin, Assembly Speaker (LD19) (732) 855-7441

Senator Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez, Economic Growth Chair (LD5) (856) 541-1251

Assemblyman William W. Spearman, Commerce Economic Development and Agricultural Committee Chair (LD5) (856) 853-2960