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Outdoors Notebook: Virginia's artificial reefs getting a few upgrades

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By [Lee Tolliver](#)
The Virginian-Pilot
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The first took place Thursday at the new Poquoson Reef, where 210 concrete reef balls were added to a barge and pipes that were placed late last year as the structure's foundation.

Next in line are the Blackfish Bank off Chincoteague, Parramore off Wachapreague and the Tower Reefs surrounding the Chesapeake Light Tower.

Those three deeper-water reefs each will be getting topped off with 84 old New York subway cars in June or July.

"We've got a contract with the New York Transit Authority to get those cars sent to us," said Mike Meier, artificial reef program coordinator for the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. "New York also is starting a reef program, and that would affect how many we get in the future. But we already have a contract for these."

Several dozen subway cars already have been placed at the Tower Reef site.

"We're getting very good reports from some local divers about fish activity on those," Meier said. "The way the silt that settles stays on top of the cars, big flounder love to lay on top of them."

"So our reefs are doing what they are supposed to."

Virginia has 22 artificial reefs - 17 inshore and five offshore. Most are marked with yellow VMRC buoys.

GPS coordinates for them can be found at www.mrc.virginia.gov

Good harvests

State game officials have compiled preliminary harvest reports for bear, deer and turkey for the 2007 fall season.

Hunters set a record with 240,423 deer killed. Additionally, the doe harvest topped the buck take for the first time since the state check-in system was initiated in 1947.

The black bear harvest of 1,517 was the second best on record.

And the fall turkey harvest of 4,759 was better than the year before, giving biologists hope that turkey reproduction finally is on the rise.

Record fish

The 66-pound snowy grouper caught in December by Chris Boyce of Hampton has been certified as an International Game Fish Association all-tackle world record.

The 49-1/2-inch long fish had a girth of 37-1/2 inches. It was caught in nearly 600 feet of water at the Norfolk Canyon. Boyce was fishing with Capt. Ken Neill.

The fish topped the previous mark of 65-8 caught several months earlier by Bob Manus of Ark.

Fred Cousins of Richmond has a pending IGFA line-class world record for the 64-pound blue catfish he caught Jan. 15 on 4-pound test line. The existing mark is 47-9.

National honor

The Virginia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation has received the organization's L.A. Dixon Memorial Chapter Award for being the best chapter in the 5,000- to 9,999-member category.

New regulations

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Virginia has new regulations for several species of fish that migrate into Virginia through North Carolina drainages.

The new rules are for the North Landing, Northwest, Nottoway, Blackwater, Meherrin and Back rivers.

Anglers can keep two striped bass that each measure 18 or more inches long on these rivers.

Anglers can keep 10 fish in aggregate of either American or Hickory shad of any size.

Anglers no longer can keep any alewife or blueback herring on any of these waters.

Good finish

Doug Larson of Suffolk was second among co-anglers in the FLW Bass Fishing League's recent event on Kerr Lake.

Larson landed three bass that weighed a combined 9-12 and won \$1,107.

Upcoming

- The Virginia Hunting Deer Alliance will meet at 2 p.m. today at 2920 Lake Drummond Causeway, Chesapeake. There will be a presentation on possible legislative changes that could affect the use of dogs to hunt. For more information, call John Morse at (757) 421-0822.

- The Norfolk Anglers Club will meet at 7 p.m. Monday at Martin's Family Restaurant, 331 E. Bayview Blvd., Norfolk. Capt. Herb Gordon will talk about offshore fishing. For more information, go to www.norfolkanglersclub.com.

- The Angling Exploration Group will present its third annual Fly Fishing Film Tour at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Nauticus Living Sea Theater in Norfolk. This year's tour highlights work from eight independent filmmakers and features some of the world's best fly fishermen and women. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors 55 and older, \$10 for children 12 and younger.

- The Mid-Atlantic Kayak Fishing Symposium will be held at 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the Great Neck Recreation Center, 2521 Shorehaven Drive, Virginia Beach. The \$20 admission free includes seminars and in-water demonstrations. A dinner for an additional fee will feature speaker and Pro Football Hall of Famer Jackie Smith, an avid kayak fisherman. For more information, call (757) 431-8566.

- The Virginia Beach Anglers Club will hold its annual awards banquet at 6:30 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$5 for members and \$15 for non-members. For tickets and location information, call Sue Smith at 340-8022.

- The Tidewater Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will hold its annual fundraising banquet at 5:30 p.m. March 28 at the Chesapeake Convention Center. No tickets will be sold at the door, and ticket sales end March 14. For prices and information, call Dave Ditman at (757) 405-1762.

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