

# The River News

The Official Newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association

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July - August 2024

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## AOTY Standings Flip Flop With Results From Two Summer Tournaments

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Between the opening tournament and the halfway mark of the season, the 2024 Angler of the Year standings have experienced quite a shake-up. Several tough fishing days – the June Bass Tournament and the July Catfish Tournament – have knocked the previous leaders back and stretched out the standings and point totals more than usual.

As of the July Catfish Tournament, there are only two anglers with legal fish weighed in all five tournaments. Another two anglers have weighed legal fish in four of the five tournaments. Six additional anglers have weighed in legal fish in three of the five tournaments.

The new top dog on the leaderboard, former AOTY Scott McDonough, is no stranger to the that role but how he got there with fourth-, seventh-, and tenth-place finishes stands in sharp contrast to his previous AOTY success. Rick Mawson is a distant second with 463 points. Complete standings are available on page 5 of this newsletter.

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### Attention: Important Notes And Updates

Here are several notes to keep in mind relative to previously raised DRFA announcements. *(Remember, any volunteer activities at Silver Lake Nature Center (SLNC) count toward our service hours needed to defray the cost of our meeting space.)*

#### **SLNC Day-Camp Fishing Activities.**

Youth fishing activities are tentatively scheduled for SLNC day-camp attendees on Thursdays in August. Morning and afternoon sessions are available. If you can help out guiding these young anglers, contact Holly at SLNC – (215) 785-1177 – a day or two ahead of time to confirm the date and timing.

**SLNC Special Project.** Rick Mawson is looking for volunteers to help with a post repair and replacement project on the SLNC grounds. This project can be conducted on our own schedule. Contact Rick – (215) 809-4098 – for more information.

#### **SLNC First-Saturday Work Sessions.**

These sessions are scheduled for the first Saturday of every month. The SLNC asks that you contact them in advance, if possible, to help them coordinate work plans.

You can [register online](#) or contact the volunteer coordinator

at [v-rabarry@buckscounty.org](mailto:v-rabarry@buckscounty.org) or (267) 880-5020.

#### **September Catfish Tournament**

**Location.** Earlier versions of the DRFA newsletter mistakenly listed an incorrect location for the September 7 Catfish Tournament as Neshaminy Marina. Please note that this event will take place at the Byram, NJ ramp at 6 am.

**Annual Raft Trip.** This year, instead of hoping weather and water conditions will match our pre-selected trip date, Pete Antoniewicz is going to monitor forecasts and contact interested participants when river conditions are optimal. If you are interested in joining, or have questions about the trip, text or call Pete Antoniewicz at (609) 751-7545.

### Important Dates

**Wednesday, July 31, 7 pm.** Monthly meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center.

**Sunday, August 18, 6 am to 12 pm.** Bass Tournament at Gloucester City, NJ ramp.

**Wednesday, August 28, 7 pm.** Monthly meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center.

**Saturday, September 7, 6 am to 12 pm.** Catfish Tournament at **Byram, NJ** ramp.

## Minutes Of The May Meeting

Club Secretary Pete Antoniewicz called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm. The minutes of the April meeting were read and approved.

**Treasury Report:** The Treasurer's report showed a balance of \$8,447.76 as of May 29. By comparison, last year's end-of-May balance was \$8,527.72 – a difference of only \$79.96 less this year.

**Membership Report:** Rick Mawson reported that we had 61 members as of the May meeting.

**Tournament Report:** Tournament Director Scott McDonough reviewed the results of the May Catfish Tournament. Weighmasters for the upcoming June Bass tournament are Rick Gasper and Harry Wirebach. Weighmasters for the July Catfish Tournament are John Pedrick and Pete Marcolina.

**Youth Activities:** The DRFA Youth Fishing Derby is scheduled for July 14. Members and guests were reminded that any DRFA member (*individual or family member*) is allowed to host youth anglers at that event. Any youth fishing from the Pennsylvania Yacht Club docks will be required to wear an appropriate PFD during the event. Application forms are due by the June monthly meeting, June 26.

The Silver Lake Nature Center will also request DRFA members for help with the youth fishing activities during their summer camp sessions. Dates and times are still to be determined.

**Old Business:** Rick Mawson announced that we have the opportunity to fulfill a block of our service hours with Silver Lake Nature Center to offset the cost of our meeting space. This

will be a standalone DRFA project that we can manage on our own schedule. It involves replacing some posts around the property. Look for an upcoming email or visit the DRFA website for dates and times of those workdays. We may still also need to have volunteers work on the first Saturday of any month and at the October Family Fishing Day to help meet our total service-hour commitment.

Pete Antoniewicz reached out to Chris Smith, a NJ fisheries biologist responsible for invasive species, to confirm his interest in speaking at an upcoming meeting but did not yet get a response.

Members were reminded that anyone can contribute news or web links for the website, Facebook page, and newsletter. You don't have to wait for a meeting.

Members were also reminded that we still need one person to serve as a central point of contact for club business. That can be achieved either by filling the vacant president's position or by filling the role of an existing Club officer to free that person up to take the president's role.

**New Business:** Pete Antoniewicz raised a question about how we handle flathead and blue catfish at DRFA club tournaments. After a discussion, it was determined that we would not change rules in the middle of the season, but those species can be entered in tournaments this year under the existing rules. Further discussion will be held in September and October regarding any rule changes for 2025.

Rick Mawson announced that the website hosting fees for DRFA website are scheduled to go up to \$375.84 from the former cost of \$160.92 starting on November 6.

Pete Antoniewicz volunteered to handle the credit card charge for the website.

**Environmental Report:** There were no environmental reports.

**Fishing Reports:** There were no fishing reports.

After the business meeting, a presentation on bass fishing was given by Lake Nockamixon fishing guide, Anthony Awgul.

The 50/50 drawing for \$35.00 was won by Ron Soto. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

## Minutes Of The June Meeting

Club Secretary Pete Antoniewicz called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm with 14 members in attendance. The minutes from the May meeting were read and approved.

**Treasury Report:** In the absence of Treasurer Eileen Kicinski, Pete Antoniewicz read the financial report, which showed a balance of \$8,292.76 as of June 25. By comparison, the end-of-June balance in 2023 was \$8,483.08 – leaving this year's balance just \$190.32 short of the balance at the same time last year.

**Tournament Report:** With no tournaments since the last meeting, Vice President and Tournament Coordinator Scott McDonough reminded members of the date and time of the upcoming Bass Tournament and called for weighmasters for the final four tournaments of the season. Volunteers were as follows:

**August 18 Bass Tournament at Gloucester City** – Gregg Southery and Chick Bay.

**September 7 Catfish Tournament at Byram, NJ** –

George Hoffman and Rich Hoffman.

**September 28 Bass Tournament at Byram NJ** – Scott McDonough and Casey McDonough.

**October 26 Bass Tournament at Bulls Island NJ** – Frank Beck and Bryan Malkiewicz.

Scott also announced that the 2024 SJBCA Bass Bowl would be held on October 13 at Anchor Marina on the Northeast River in Maryland. The top point earners in DRFA bass tournaments between the last SJBCA Bass Bowl and this year’s Bass Bowl qualify to compete in the event.

**Youth Activities:** As of the June meeting, eight young anglers were registered for this year’s Youth Fishing Derby to be held at Pennsylvania Yacht Club. Chick Bay will arrange for shirts, relabeled existing trophies, and snacks for the participating anglers.

Also, Club members were reminded that they can help earn service hours with the Silver Lake Nature Center by guiding young day campers during their fishing events. Contact SLNC for dates and times.

**Old Business:** Pete Antoniewicz reported that although NJ Fisheries Biologist Chris Smith had not yet settled on a specific date to address the Club, he did provide information on invasive species, which Pete read to Club members. He noted that both blue catfish and flathead catfish were listed as Potentially Dangerous Species in the NJ 2024 Freshwater Fishing Digest. The regulation on them states that the possession or release of live, potentially dangerous species is prohibited and that any fish purposely killed must be removed from the water from which they

were taken and either used or disposed of properly.

It was suggested that while we await scheduling for Chris Smith’s presentation, we should check on the availability of a fisheries biologist from Pennsylvania to weigh in on the same topic from their perspective.

As discussed at previous meetings, members were reminded to pass along any interesting fishing-related topics to Rick Mawson and Pete Antoniewicz for inclusion on our website and in our newsletter. Members were also reminded of the need for a person to fill the role of president as a central contact for club business topics.

**New Business:** Pete Antoniewicz led a discussion on potential efforts to make better use of our Facebook page for attracting new

members next year. More thought needs to be given on how we can make it work to greater advantage.

**Environmental Report:** There were no environmental reports.

**Fishing Reports:** Frank Beck and Joe Newton scored 45 smallmouth bass up to 17” during a guided trip out of the Apple Tree ramp on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River in early June on poppers, jigs, and small spinnerbaits.

Tom Ferrante reported catching 130 smallies up to 18” on a trip to the North Branch, where he used Junebug Ned Rigs and 3.5” swimbaits.

Tim Lang reported catching bass and stripers on a mid-June fishing trip around Titusville.

### Remaining 2024 Tournament Schedule

*All DRFA Club tournaments are free and open to dues-paying DRFA members, with club-funded payouts of \$50, \$30, and \$20 awarded to the top three places. Participants also accrue points for the Angler of the Year competition based on their top six finishes among the nine regular Club events. (There are no tournament entry fees, however, ramp, launch, and/or parking fees may apply.)*

*Except for the Shad Tournament, there is also a voluntary \$10.00 lunger pool with a 100% payout to pool participants for the three heaviest pool fish – 60%, 30%, and 10% – at tournament’s end.*

*New members may register on the morning of an event before check-in time. All participants should check in at least 10 minutes before scheduled starting time. Weigh-in is at the time specified. Late entries will not count.*

*Always check the DRFA website or the Tournament Hotline (267-934-2148) the night before the event to learn about potential rescheduling or relocation due to weather or water conditions.*

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sun. ....	8/18.....	Bass .....	6 am - 12 pm .....	Gloucester City Ramp
Sat. ....	9/7 .....	Catfish ....	6 am - 12 pm .....	Byram, NJ Ramp
Sat. ....	9/28.....	Bass .....	7 am - 1 pm .....	Byram, NJ Ramp
Sat. ....	10/26....	Bass .....	7 am - 1 pm .....	Bulls Island, NJ Ramp

Scott McDonough reported just a few bass the weekend before the meeting, despite hitting six or seven spots while fishing out of the Neshaminy Marina.

Scott also reported a couple of 5-lb. smallmouth caught on a fishing trip to the St. Lawrence River with Anthony Seliga, Chick Bay and Gregg Southrey

Dan and Dave Wermuth reported catching small walleyes, an 18” striper, and a 28” catfish from the river in the area of Tullytown Cove.

Bryan Malkiewicz reported good fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass while fishing Lake Ontario and the Oswego River during the second week of June.

The winner of \$33 in the 50/50 drawing was Tim Lang. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

## May Guest Speaker Provides Insights On Largemouth Fishing

The guest speaker at the May DRFA meeting, [Anthony Awgul](#), shared principles and approaches he uses to improve his success rate and the size of bass that he catches. As a guide on Lake Nockamixon, he has learned how to target more and bigger bass on that notoriously hard-to-fish lake.

His presentation started with what he described as his “process” for bass fishing. That includes researching the water he is going to fish and preparing for the environment and circumstances it presents. On the water, he tries to start fast and cover as much water as possible to gather clues as to how the fish are acting that day. As patterns start to emerge, he tries to repeat the successful efforts and minimize those that are not as productive. And once a

trip is done, he reflects on and records his experiences.

One point that Anthony emphasized is that big bass behave differently. He described bass approaching 4.5 to 5 lbs. as ambushers who like to conserve energy by moving less and eating bigger, easier to catch meals. So, while a goal of catching more bass might entail smaller baits and targeting more locations for moving fish, when focusing on big bass consider using larger baits in areas with structures that compress the feeding zone into a smaller space – such as shallower water with heavy cover.

Characteristics that can create a compressed feeding zone include current (*natural flow in a river or wind-induced current in a lake*), and high-percentage current-breaking features, as well as fluctuating water levels or tides.

Where possible, he will look for areas with a variety of structure nearby and find the zones that are most productive. He also takes into consideration environmental conditions such as cloud cover, wind, turbidity, and temperature along with currents and water levels. For example, greater light penetration will often drive bass deeper into cover. Likewise, dropping water temperatures will slow a fish’s metabolism while murky conditions will make fish more dependent on their lateral line to detect vibrations than on their sense of sight to see their prey. That is the time to switch to noisier baits fished slower and tighter to structure or cover.

## Youth Derby Fishing Report

Chick Bay reported on a successful Youth Fishing Derby held July 14 at the Pennsylvania Yacht Club. There were nine youth participants and a number

of club members to help with the fishing, weighing, and cooking of hamburgers and hot dogs. Fishing from the docks was tough with no catfish caught there, only white perch among the five pier anglers. Four young boat anglers managed to do a bit better with catfish from 3.19 to 5.73 lbs. All youth participants will receive T-shirts to mark the occasion.

Thanks to Scott McDonough, Casey McDonough, Gregg Southrey, Frank Beck, and Dave and Dan Wermuth for their participation.

### From A to Z:

## Don’t Become A Statistic

The Delaware River has claimed the lives of three Eastern PA residents this month, according to the [Doylestown local edition](#) of Patch. Two of the incidents involved recreational float tubes and one involved a person swimming from a raft. In all three cases, the victims were not wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs).

Even if you are not swimming or slipping off of a float tube, this advice from the US Department of Agriculture Forestry Service is still appropriate for anglers who fall into moving current with or without a PFD...

*“If you fall into fast-moving water, do not try to stand up. The force of the water will push you over and hold you under. Most drownings result from getting a leg or ankle caught in an underwater rock ledge, between boulders, or snagged in tree limbs or other debris. Lay on your back with your feet pointing downstream and toes pointing up toward the surface. Always look downstream and be prepared to fend off rocks with your feet.”*

### Scott McDonough Vaults Into AOTY Lead With Two Strong Tournament Finishes

Thanks to his first place finish in the June Bass Tournament and a second-place finish in the July Catfish Tournament, former DRFA Angler of the Year Scott McDonough has made his way to the top of this year's standings.

But despite his current lead, Scott's victory is anything but secure. Several anglers are still well within striking distance if they can manage to have three strong finishes in the remaining four tournaments. With only six tournament finishes counting toward the end-of-year standings, Casey McDonough at 383 points, Gregg Southrey at 296 points, Pete Antoniewicz at 291 points and George Hoffman at 283 points could all overtake Scott's point total if he does not improve on one or more of his lower finishes in earlier tournaments.

In fact, after the first half of the tournament schedule, 34 anglers (*more than half our membership*) have participated in the AOTY competition and all 34 still have a mathematical change of finishing in the top three money-winning spots for the annual competition if the anglers ahead of them falter.

So, keep participating and keep contending to make the finish to this year's contest as exciting and competitive as possible, right up to the final event of the year.

#	NAME	WEIGHT	LENGTH	POINTS
1	Scott McDonough	22.18	104.75	481
2	Rick Mawson	16.05	88.50	453
3	Casey McDonough	10.40	74.00	383
4	Dan Wermuth	10.94	73.50	360
5	Gregg Southrey	17.32	68.50	296
6	Pete Antoniewicz	16.19	64.25	291
7	George Hoffman	15.17	62.25	283
8	Bryan Malkiewicz	12.38	60.75	281
9	Dave Wermuth	13.61	63.75	279
10	Joe Newton	10.14	55.75	272
11	Rich Hoffman	10.63	56.75	195
12	Hazel Scholl	12.98	47.25	188
13	Devan Seliga	3.09	12.00	181
14	Anthony Scholl, Sr.	7.22	40.98	177
15	Joe Tropea	13.21	29.75	100
16	Alex Scholl	4.29	21.00	100
17	Jase Tropea	10.61	28.25	99
18	Anthony Seliga	4.06	20.75	99
19	Pete Marcolina	4.70	22.00	98
20	Nicholas Knechel	2.42	16.50	98
21	Anthony Scholl Jr	3.70	20.50	97
22	Chick Bay	10.10	27.00	96
23	John Pedrick	3.30	21.00	96
24	Adam Schneck	1.43	14.75	95
25	Shane Seliga	1.24	12.75	93
26	Travis Wilhelm	1.14	13.50	93
27	Frank Beck	1.10	17.75	92
28	Patrick Baranowski	3.05	19.75	88
29	Xahnder Villanueva	5.21	23.50	87
30	Gerry Rigney	4.96	22.50	85
31	Matthew Weinhardt	0.97	14.00	85
32	Ryan Villanueva	3.92	22.00	83
33	Nohre Villanueva	3.20	19.75	82
34	Seijhie Villanueva	3.04	20.00	81

*Check the DRFA website  
or Tournament Hotline  
267-934-2148 for potential  
changes the day before  
each DRFA Tournament.*

### June Bass Tournament

The June Bass Tournament saw great participation but only modest results, as just nine of 31 anglers successfully brought a fish to the scales. Top finisher Scott McDonough's 3.00-lb. smallmouth bass was the only fish larger than two pounds. The remaining fish averaged about 1.5 lbs., although second, third, and fourth places were each separated by just 0.01-lb.

#	NAME	WEIGHT	LENGTH	POINTS
1	Scott McDonough	3.00	18.50	100
2	Casey McDonough	1.79	14.75	99
3	Gregg Southrey	1.78	15.00	98
4	Dave Wermuth	1.77	15.00	97
5	Joe Newton	1.56	14.75	96
6	Adam Schneck	1.43	14.75	95
7	Rick Mawson	1.29	13.50	94
8	Shane Seliga	1.24	12.75	93
9	Devan Seliga	1.05	12.75	92



Scott McDonough, 1<sup>st</sup> Place



Dave Wermuth, 4<sup>th</sup> Place



Rick Mawson, 7<sup>th</sup> Place



Casey McDonough, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



Joe Newton, 5<sup>th</sup> Place



Shane Seliga, 8<sup>th</sup> Place



Gregg Southrey, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place



Adam Schneck, 6<sup>th</sup> Place



Devan Seliga, 9<sup>th</sup> Place

### July Catfish Tournament

The July Catfish Tournament was a lot tougher than normal, with only nine of 19 anglers bringing fish to the scales. The size of fish was also in stark contrast to the results of the May Catfish Tournament, with only Gregg Southrey's winning entry topping the 5-lb. mark. The average size for the entire tournament was 3.27- lbs. – barely half the weight of the May tournament average.

#	NAME	WEIGHT	LENGTH	POINTS
1	Gregg Southrey	5.13	24.75	100
2	Scott McDonough	4.80	23.25	99
3	Pete Marcolina	4.70	22.00	98
4	Anthony Scholl Jr	3.70	20.50	97
5	John Pedrick	3.30	21.00	96
6	Dan Wermuth	2.40	18.75	95
7	Rick Mawson	2.20	18.50	94
8	Casey McDonough	2.10	19.25	93
9	Frank Beck	1.10	17.75	92



Gregg Southrey, 1<sup>st</sup> Place



Anthony Scholl, Jr., 4<sup>th</sup> Place



Rick Mawson, 7<sup>th</sup> Place



Scott McDonough, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



John Pedrick, 5<sup>th</sup> Place



Casey McDonough, 8<sup>th</sup> Place



Pete Marcolina, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place



Dan Wermuth, 6<sup>th</sup> Place



Frank Beck, 9<sup>th</sup> Place



**The Delaware River Fishermen's Association**  
**PO Box 21145, Philadelphia, PA 19154**

**THE RIVER NEWS** is the bimonthly newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association. The DRFA typically meets the last Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Silver Lake Nature Center, 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA. All interested sportsmen and women are invited to attend our meetings and join the organization.

### **Don't Forget These Supporting Members Who Help To Keep Our Club Afloat**

Remember our supporting business members who provide added financial support, share their fishing knowledge with our Club members, or support our Club and youth fishing efforts with their facilities or products. When we return that financial support by patronizing their businesses, be sure to make specific mention of our appreciation for them helping to fund our guest speakers and our tournament cash prizes. Without their support we would not be able to provide the same opportunities to our current members or to attract potential new members.

**The Fegley Law Firm** • 301 Oxford Valley Rd, Suite 402A, Yardley, PA • Business, Employment & Personal Injury Law • 215-493-8287

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**Silver Lake Nature Center** • 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA • 235 acres of woods, lakes, marshes & meadows, 4.5 miles of trails

We also recognize our Associate members – the [South Jersey Bass Club Association](#) and [Delaware Riverkeeper Network](#) – who both provide relevant information and additional fishing experiences for DRFA members.

**KEY CONTACTS:** *Tournament Hotline:* 215-809-4098 • *Email Address:* [DRFA\\_TheRiverNews@hotmail.com](mailto:DRFA_TheRiverNews@hotmail.com)  
• *President:* (vacant) • *Vice President/Tournament Director:* Scott McDonough, 215-989-0153 • *Treasurer:* Eileen Kicinski, 215-713-4951 • *Recording Secretary/Newsletter Editor:* Pete Antoniewicz, 609-751-7545 • *Membership Secretary/Webmaster:* Rick Mawson, 215-809-4098 • *Youth Activities Director:* Charles Bay, 609-744-8260 • *Tackle Bag Coordinator:* Pete Marcolina, 215-637-4555 • *Trustees:* Frank Beck, Harry Wirebach, John Pedrick, Gregg Southrey