

Recipe Corner

Weakfish on the Grill

Courtesy Frank Carnese

Ingredients

4 weakfish fillets (leave skin on)
Old Bay seasoning
juice of half lemon
1 small onion
two cloves garlic (finely minced)
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 tsp thyme
4 tsp butter

Wash fish fillets and sprinkle with lemon juice, salt and pepper, and Old Bay seasoning. Mince the herbs and seasoning and place over each fillet. Top each fillet with a teaspoon butter. Wrap each fillet in heavy duty foil, then place on the grill for approximately 10-15 minutes. You should be able to use a fork to flake the fish when it is done. *Do not over cook.* Serve with grilled vegetables.

Serving size: 4

Tide Runner is published by New York Sea Grant in collaboration with LKGS, Inc., as a community outreach service for the Annual Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament. Please contact New York Sea Grant's fisheries outreach specialist with questions or comments.

Antoinette Clemetson
Fisheries Specialist
New York Sea Grant Extension
3059 Sound Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901
631.727.3910
www.nyseagrant.org

Weakfish Facts & Figures cont'd

There was a precipitous decline (61%) in recreational weakfish landings in 2002 when compared to the previous year. A similar drop was also observed in 1998 and continued into 1999. Since the database is limited in its usage, we can speculate that the reduction was possibly a result of changes in fishing regulation e.g., introduction of a new fishing regulation, or perhaps less fish were available to catch.

So, the next time you are intercepted by one of the NMFS data collection agents with the Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey, remember that giving accurate information helps us to build a better understand the important contributions that our anglers are making in New York and along the mid-Atlantic coast.

Weakfish Trivia

Did you know that New York holds the IGFA Record for weakfish? **Dennis Rooney** caught a 19 pounds 2 ounces weakfish in Seaford on 10/11/84, which was later tied by **William E. Thomas** who caught his weakfish in Delaware Bay in 1989.



Tide Runner



Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament Official Newsletter

Weakfish Tournament 2002

It's time again for the Annual Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament. This year marks the fourth anniversary since **Surfside 3 Marina** first hosted the tournament, which is one of the first events in the angling season. Last year's contestants endured some very rough weather for on the first day, although the conditions were much more favorable on the last day. Most participants were pleased with last year's tournament, and we thank **Frank Carnese** for persevering the elements to land the winning fish, weighing in at 10.12 lbs. Frank and his crew took home the coveted 15 feet Boston Whaler Sport with 75 hp MerCruiser, which was donated by **Surfside 3 Marina**.

Charles Rex placed second with his 10.08 pounds entry. Third and fourth places were won by **James Dion**

and **James Uzenski**, respectively. They took home prizes cash prizes totaling \$1,500 – not bad for two days fishing.

Approximately 400 anglers and 150 boats turned out for the tournament. Contestants made charitable donations to New York Sea Grant to assist with the outreach and angler education programs that are being offered in Great South Bay.

© 2002 Barbara Branca, NYSG



A hopeful contestant in 2002 Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament. Nice catch!



© 2002 Christopher Graziose, LKGS Inc.

Congratulations to the Labelle Lorette Captain Frank Carnese and crew, winners of 2002 Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament.

We asked Frank about his experience during the last tournament. Frank recalls the challenging weather conditions which forced the crew to head back to shore. *"The sea conditions were unfavorable, so everyone on the boat decided it was better to return to base to wait for the storm to pass"*. Their good judgement and patience was worthwhile, because the weather made a complete turn around, and the crew had a spectacular second day. *"Things really picked up and we started to catch several eight-pound fish, but as soon as we hooked the last fish, everyone knew this was a potential winner"*.

Frank used light tackle [8 lbs test], and was delighted because this was his biggest weakfish landed since he first started angling. Frank has been fishing since high school, and started clamming in the 1960s, but now that he's retired, he fishes as many as 2-3 days each week. When

Cont'd Page 2

Weakfish Tournament 2002 cont'd



© 2002 Christopher Graziose, LKGS Inc.

LaBelle Lorette Captain Frank Carnese and Crew, grand prize winners for Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament 2002.

asked to comment on weakfish fishing in Great South Bay, his prompt reply was “catching weakfish is very challenging; you need to know Great South Bay, and how the tide runs, but it is a very productive fishing ground”.

We were told that the new owner of the 15 ft. Boston Whaler grand prize who lives in Islip Town has already made many memorable fishing trips to Great South Bay. When asked if he has any plan to top last year’s winning fish, Frank said, “that’s a tremendous challenge, but who know if there isn’t another magnificent fish waiting out there for me?”

Frank wishes to thank Surfside 3 Mariner, Tom Melton, *The Fisherman*, and New York Sea Grant for doing a wonderful job organizing the tournament. “I want to wish the contestants in 2003 Great South Bay Weakfish Tournament a safe tournament and good luck!”.

Please visit the official tournament website at <http://www.weakfishtournament.com> for details.

Weakfish Sounds

Experienced anglers are familiar with the distinct sounds that weakfish make underwater. Scientists study a wide array of subjects, and it is not surprising to know that several researchers have documented the types of sounds, and conditions that affect weakfish calls. Researchers use sensitive acoustic equipment to record and decipher sounds made by various animals in the wild. Weakfish make two distinct types of sounds, one is referred to as purring, and the other sound is called school sound. *Purring sound* is made by drumming of muscles adjacent to the swim bladders in the males (these special sonic muscles are absent in female weakfish). *School sound*, is very similar to static, but it is made by an aggregation of spawning weakfish. Weakfish also make another sound called *chattering*, but recent evidence suggests that this sound is not ubiquitous to weakfish, and it is also produced by the striped cusk eel. You can visit the website <http://personal.ecu.edu/spraguem/fish/cynreg.html> to listen to these sounds.

Although some fish can produce sounds for a relatively long duration, most fish sounds are of short duration and pulse-like in character. Weakfish (and other members in the family), produces sound mainly during the spawning season. Seasonal sound production has been shown to play a role in courtship behavior. These special mating calls are used routinely to monitor spawning populations in the field.

Weakfish also make a *disturbance call*, which is described as a voluntary call uttered by the fish when it is handled out of water. These disturbance calls are the same as the sounds made during courtship, however, the latter would not usually be made outside of the spawning season, and weakfish don’t make these sounds when startled in captivity (e.g., if chased with a net). These disturbance calls vary with the size of weakfish, with larger fish having a different sound frequency than small fish. Since weakfish spawn at night in low visibility, researchers believe the variations in acoustics for the drumming sounds are a cue for female attraction and mate choice. It is possible the females can use these differences to identify the biggest (and therefore strongest) males in the spawning school.

Connaughton, M.A., M.H. Taylor, and M.L. Fine. 2000. Effects of fish size and temperature on weakfish disturbance calls: implications for the mechanism of sound generation. *J. Exp. Bio.* 203. 1503-1512.

Weakfish Facts & Figures – New York Marine District

In case you were wondering how fisheries regulations come about, you should know that the state and federal agencies dedicate staff to collect and maintain statistical databases for many of the fish that are caught by anglers. The **NOAA Marine Fisheries Service** conducts its Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MFRSS) each year, where field use telephone surveys and measures fish caught by anglers. This helps fisheries managers to determine fishing pressures being exerted on the populations, and they can evaluate the effects of fisheries regulations. This data collection program is being conducted in the coastal states throughout the entire country. Please access to the databases at <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/index.html>.

We can use these data to better understand how weakfish is being caught by the angling communities that frequent New York’s marine district. Data collected on weakfish over the past six years indicate that the majority of these landings are comprised of fish between 16-20 inches. Readers should note that state imposed minimum size limits often bias length distribution frequencies, and these measurements often reflect the prevailing fisheries management regulation.

Have you ever wondered where do people come from to fish our local waters? The success of New York’s angling season is heavily dependent on its residents living in the coastal communities. Coastal areas include anglers from counties within 25-50 miles of the predefined coastal area. This number is believed to be well over 400,000 anglers in 2002, and it comprised more than 90 percent of the marine angling community, including anglers on headboats, six packs, and private boats. Anglers also come from non-coastal communities and from out of the state to fish, but they are much fewer in number.

Marine fishing is an important pastime in the northeast, and it is estimated that just about ten million fishing trips are conducted in this region each year. This represents a downward trend which was experienced for most of the 1990s. Marine saltwater fishing has since seen an upward turn in its patronage, with the help of various outreach programs to attract more anglers. New York accounts for about two million saltwater fishing trips each year on average (2,190,054 trips), with New Jersey anglers making the majority of saltwater trips.



© 2002 Christopher Graziose, LKGS Inc.

