

## Three-Pounder With Attitude

*A bumper crop of bluefish of all sizes*

By Russell Drumm | June 20, 2012 - 9:36am

They say mako sharks come and go according to the number of bluefish, their favorite dish, in the area. On Friday, the first day of the Star Island Yacht Club's two-day shark tournament, 25 makos were caught.

True to form there seems to be a bumper crop of bluefish of all sizes, always a plus for vacationing neophyte anglers. Last weekend, a visitor from Queens booked a room at Lenhart's Cottages in Montauk. Lenhart's on Old Montauk Highway is a stone's throw from the Atlantic Ocean.

"Both Saturday and Sunday mornings were productive, with some feisty

bluefish and a baby striper," he wrote in an e-mail to Harvey Bennett of the Tackle Shop in Amagansett. Bennett had given him a few tips when he stopped at the shop on his way to Montauk.



The crew of the P Pod posed with the 237-pound blue shark that took first place in the blue shark division of the Star Island Yacht Club's shark tournament over the weekend.

*Star Island Yacht Club*

“Sunday was a little rough, with strong current but the bluefish were larger, two to three-pounders. And, the two-ounce Hopkins worked like a charm on the second cast, scoring a three-pounder with a bad attitude. I’m a bit of a newbie on the surf but had a great time in Montauk.” He caught a few bluefish in the surf and was over the moon.

Meanwhile, across the Montauk peninsula at the Star Island Yacht Club, experienced fishermen with big expensive toys were using blocks and tackle to lift sharks — in one case a 422-pound thresher — from the decks of their sportfishing boats. Except for the prize money they were no more ecstatic than the visitor from Queens with his bluefish with a bad attitude.

About 1,000 anglers fishing from 156 boats got tossed around by strong east winds and a strong groundswell during the tourney, but the sharks were in good supply. The heaviest, the 422-pound thresher, was caught by Tom Ripoli III fishing from Mike Marro’s Bluefin, a Connecticut boat not to be confused with Montauk’s Bluefin IV.

The biggest mako was a hefty 344-pounder wrestled in by Mike Ragano on Capt. Pat McFarland’s Little Mac. The second and third-place makos both weighed over 300 pounds. Mike Vultek, fishing aboard Ed Pollner’s P Pod, caught the biggest blue shark, a 237-pounder.

The tournament collected 750 pounds of shark meat that was donated to the Long Island Council of Churches.

Speaking of sharks (and this might seem to be one of the more oblique segues, but this is the “On the Water” column after all), Pat Mundus, daughter of Frank Mundus, Montauk’s late Monster Man, lives in Greenport these days, but is offering a movable feast of sorts.

Mundus is retired from a career in the Merchant Marine, and more recently served as president of the Shelter Island Historical Society. She is an experienced sailor and has just launched a sailing charter Web site, [eastendcharters.com](http://eastendcharters.com), that puts boatless sailors together with sailboats for parties, destination trips, photo shoots, sailing lessons, et cetera.

Back to fish. The 33 surfcasters vying for the one and only prize in the Montauk SurfMasters Spring Fling have been struggling, to say the least. The tourney, which targets striped bass, started on May 1. As of Monday no fish had been weighed in, not because bass had not been caught, but because competitors judged them to be too small to bother with.

However, with fewer than 10 days left before the June 30 10 a.m. finale, and with over \$1,000 in prize money on the line, macho casters, with notches on their rods representing 30, 40, and 50-pound fish, are swallowing their pride and sneaking to the scales with runts.

On Monday, John Ward did just that, weighing in a striped bass that strained the scales at 71/4 pounds, and measured 28 1/4 inches long. The minimum legal size for bass is 28 inches. “We measured it four times. It was 28 1/4 inches, the skinniest bass I’ve ever seen,” Ward sheepishly confessed to Fred Kalkstein, a tournament organizer and fellow competitor. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The identity of last week's mystery fish was correctly revealed as a black crappie (pronounced cropy) by Arden Gardell and by Jim Brzezinski. Both called within minutes of each other. Virginia Gerardi guessed white crappie. Both are freshwater fish. The one in the photo was found on the banks of Fort Pond in Montauk.

***About the Author***

---

***Russell Drumm***

*Senior Writer*