

# Spring Fling in the Chesapeake.

## Rockfish, Flounder, & Trout.

by  
Jim Baugh  
Reporting from the Flybridge

Jim Baugh on left, captain Jay Kavenaugh on right.  
Stripers caught in the Chesapeake Bay near Hampton Virginia.



It is 5 p.m. with a lovely south west wind blowing around 5 knots. The cool spring breeze fills the flybridge of our 36 foot Trojan as I have fired up the lap top and try to recount this weeks fishing efforts. Perched on the Flybridge docked at Sunset Marina in downtown Hampton Virginia, I can clearly see the best fish cleaning station in the Chesapeake, so I get a good glimpse of how everyone else is doing by the size of the fish bags and the sharpness of their filet knives. So far, it looks like the spring fishing has been pretty darn good around here!

Along with the cool spring breeze, also comes the faint itch of pollen, and what ever else falls from the trees. This is a good thing, because it signifies the massive spring run of some of the countries most sought after fish, Rockfish, Flounder, and Trout. The migratory patters of these and other species make the lower Chesapeake the number on place to be for spring time fishing.

First off, why is my laptop, camera boat, fishing boat, wife, kids, fishing buddies, and dogs, sitting in Hampton Virginia? Simple, I believe that the Mid- Atlantic region of the USA is the Best and most under rated fishing area in the entire world. Hampton just happens to be the best location in the Mid Atlantic region. All one has to do is look at a map, yes that is, that wonderful city just before you cross the Hampton Tunnel heading east towards Norfolk and Virginia Beach. You know the town, the one with the beautiful waterfront, marina's, the Radisson Hotel with it's awesome seafood restaurant, waterside grill with bands playing on the weekends, Langley Airforce base, the Air and Space Center, Sunset Marina, etc. etc. etc. All this plus the fact that by boat in, an hour or so, I can be fishing offshore for Dolphin, or I can head West and be catching 55 pound Blue Catfish in the James River. So whether I want to fish for Crappie, or Yellow fin Tuna, I can do it all as long as I have my boats in Hampton, Virginia.

Now you know the reason for my location, lets get on with the Spring Fling in the Chesapeake.

Probably one of the most popular species to fish for in the Chesapeake and it's tributaries is the Rockfish, also known as the Striped Bass. There is a spring season for both Maryland and Virginia, however, they change a lot year to year. Before heading out for the big trip, check with your local game authorities to see what the rules and regulations are. Now spring Rockfishing techniques differ a bit from what most anglers do during the fall season. In the upper Bay, chumming is a great way to round up the Rockfish. These Rocks are swimming up

the tributaries for the big spawn run, and they are very hungry. Chumming off Windmill point up to the Middle Grounds are some great areas to start a chum slick. You will need some fresh bait to chum. My advice is to contact the local tourism offices in the area to find out what bait shops are in the area. That will be your best source of information to get local fresh bunkers. Fresh, not frozen bait is always the best to chum with. Get yourself a manual grinder mounted on a board, a sharp knife, and a hose to wash your boat down with when you are through. Chumming is not complicated, but you do need to know a few basic principles. First, start your chum slick at the beginning of a tide change. Chumming at slack tide does nothing but feed the seagulls. Second, NEVER, NEVER, fish with someone else's chum slick without their permission. You will be sorry if you do otherwise. Third, take plenty of bait, and use fresh not frozen Bunkers. I know all you folks are thinking, "I will just use the frozen bag, I can buy it anywhere, it is simple, and not a lot of mess". I hear this all the time, and I think it is great a lot of anglers cop out on the frozen bag trick. It just leaves more hook ups for us with bigger fish. Chum On!!

If Chumming is not your bag, pardon the pun, then Spring Flounder fishing is a good choice for the family. Flounder fishing is easy, and very fun. A good location for Flounder is the Hampton Bar. This is a huge shallow bar that spreads across the entrance to Hampton Harbor and is easily found on a chart. This bar shallows up to around four feet, and drops off to some 50 plus feet on the channel side of the James River. Fishing this ledge is a great place to locate Flounder. Drifting is a must, leave the anchor stowed. Fluke rigs work well with a minnow and squid trailer. This is also known as the "Eastern Shore Sandwich". Drifting is only one way to catch Flounder, during the spring, Flounder can also be caught on casting gigs with about a 1\2 to 1 ounce jig head. Berkley power grubs work well trimmed out with some fresh cracked Chesapeake Blue Crab attached to the hook. Cast around pilings and the underwater tunnel at the beginning of a tide change.

Bait is easy to get, just motor in to Hampton Harbor, take a left at the first little channel, once in the Harbor. About 300 yards down you will

see Sunset Marina on our right. There is a great tackle store right there that has all the fresh Minnows and tackle you will need for Flounder fishing. After you have had your fill of drifting for Flounder, you can pull into the Radisson for a delicious lunch or dinner. That is what I call a day of fishing.

If you like to cast, then Grey Trout fishing in the Chesapeake is the species to fish for. One of the best locations for catching these delicious critters is right in front of the Chamberlin Hotel in Hampton, Virginia. Big Trout love to school up in front of the Hotel and seem to move and feed just over the Hampton Tunnel. Slack tide is a good time to start casting. Use your favorite casting jig, trimmed out with some fresh cracked Crab. Also always have a couple of double bottom dropper rigs on the bottom for those bottom feeding Trout. Covering the water column is always a good idea when fishing for Trout.

Well, there are a lot more wonderful species swimming their way up the Chesapeake, I have only touched on three that I love to fish for. There are tons more great locations and techniques for catching these fish. I have only covered the basics.

My Lap Top battery is giving me the warning signs, the breeze is getting cooler, and the clam chowder is beginning to overheat in the Galley. So for now, that is it for me on the Flybridge. The Canvas is zipped and I am going down below.

I leave you with these immortal words of wisdom from the old timers of the Chesapeake: When the wind is from the East, the fishing is the least.

When the wind is from the West, fishing is the best!

Wishing you all, light West Winds,  
Jim Baugh  
Jim Baugh Outdoors Television Show.

Jim Baugh Outdoors is Sponsored by: Kenner Boats, Suzuki Outboards, Boaters World, Colonial Outdoors, Berkley Trilene, Fenwick Rods, Abu Garcia, Power Bait, Hampton Conventions and Tourism, Virginia Tourism, and by Gulf Athletics.