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# Virginia Charter Boat Workshop Summary March 2012

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**Virginia Charter Boat Workshop Summary**  
March 2012



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## **2012 Virginia Charter Boat Workshop Summary**

### *Recreational Fisheries Enhancement of Outreach to the Virginia Charter Boat Fisheries*

For hire (charter boat and party boats) represent an important sector of the fishing industry by providing access to the marine environment and inshore, offshore and migratory fisheries. As the national and state economy has declined the charter boat industry in Virginia has also witnessed a decline in business and has been faced with new challenges. Charter boat captains have been looking for new ways to improve their businesses and in an effort to address this interest, a needs assessment was conducted via survey in November 2011 by the Recreational Fisheries Program of the Marine Advisory Program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

The survey was distributed to the Virginia Charter Boat Association (VCBA) membership and other charter boat captains in the state. The survey results showed a definite need for a workshop and were invaluable in focusing educational elements for the program. Weighted means analysis of educational priorities from the survey showed strong interest in the following ten topics: Legal Issues, Federal & State New Regulations, Permits, etc., What it Takes to run a Charter Business, Latest Coast Guard Regulations, Financial Management, Alternative Activities for Business Development (sightseeing, etc.), First Aid & CPR recertification, Boat and Personal Insurance, Marketing and Catch and Release.

The First Aid and CPR recertification courses were offered in March 2012 in cooperation with the Safety Officer, Paul Nichols, at VIMS. Two training sessions were offered at the VIMS Campus in Gloucester Point and all 11 participants responded positively to the training opportunity.

A workshop agenda was developed with the guidance of the Virginia Charter Boat Association leadership and other charter captains to meet the other needs identified in the survey results. March was selected as the best time of year for the workshop because it is usually the slowest month of the year for fishing in the charter industry in Virginia. Three major sessions were selected including Legal Issues & Insurance, Fisheries Update and What it Takes to Run a Charter Business. Subject experts were invited as speakers with two round-table discussion opportunities during the day.

The workshop was held in Watermen's Hall at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, Virginia on Saturday, March 10, 2012, with support from Virginia Sea Grant. There were 45 participants in the workshop; the majority of them were active captains in the charter boat industry. Approximately 35% of participants were members of the Virginia Charter Boat Association and 50% of evaluation participants heard about the workshop from the VCBA. The two most valuable presentations (each chosen by 36.4% of respondents) were given by Captain Greg Ignash-"The Pitfalls of Charter Boat Management" and Mr. Stephen White-"Understanding Legal Issues and Liability for Your Boat Business." The other most popular responses were "all/overall" presentations and the Captains Roundtable discussion.

Most participants attended the workshop to increase their knowledge of the charter industry and improve their businesses. The majority (66.7%) of respondents found VIMS to be a suitable location for a future workshop, with the remaining respondents suggesting other locations including Virginia Beach, Hampton and the Eastern Shore. Survey participants selected Legal Issues as the most desired topic for a future workshop, followed by Off Season Strategies and Accounting Management and Guide license regulations. There were few participants who suggested changes to the program, but those that did suggested a special session on Coast Guard regulations and licensing. There were a few questions raised during the Captains' Round Table Discussion regarding Coast Guard regulations; these questions were answered after the workshop by a Coast Guard representative. If a future workshop is offered, the agenda will definitely include a Coast Guard official to provide direct feedback the day of the workshop. Survey responses showed that 62.1% would like the workshop offered on an annual basis with 24.1% preferring a biennial workshop.

This workshop provided well-timed educational information to charter boat operators and also provided a venue for direct feedback to state, federal and regional fishery managers. **Overall feedback from the participants was very positive: evaluations showed that 100% of participants felt that the workshop met or exceeded their expectations and all but one respondent (96.4%) would attend another workshop in the future** (note: the one "nay" was not a charter captain and was only interested in ecotourism offerings). This workshop also strengthened the long-term partnership between the Marine Advisory Program at VIMS and the charter boat industry. The workshop evaluation and subsequent communications have confirmed the benefit of workshop to charter boat operators. The program provided an opportunity to improve business management while also improving overall industry communications in Virginia. Support and funding from Virginia Sea Grant and the Marine Advisory Program at VIMS should be assessed to offer a similar opportunity to Virginia's charter industry in the future.

## 2012 Virginia Charter Boat Workshop Pre-Survey RESULTS

PLEASE SELECT THE TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN A FUTURE PROGRAM. THE FOLLOWING ARE IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF PRIORITY.

Please rank the importance of learning more about these topics for your business by inserting a check mark where appropriate.

<b>I. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS</b>				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Federal & State New Regulations, Permits etc.	13	5	1	
Catch & Release	8	8	3	
Latest Coast Guard Regulations	14	6	1	1
What it Takes to run a Charter business	10	7		
First Aid Recertification/CPR Class	10	7	2	1
Clean Boating Act (best management practices)	2	14	3	
Other (specify):	Catch limits			

<b>II. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT &amp; YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS</b>				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Financial Management	11	5	2	
Legal Issues	14	6		
Boat and Personal Insurance	9	6	2	1
Basic Internet Skills (getting online, email, etc.)	4	6	5	2
Everyday Marketing of your Business (e.g. web sites, pamphlets)	9	5	4	
Alternative Marketing Development (e.g. hotel packages, etc.)	8	7	2	2
Alternative Activities for Business Development (e.g. sightseeing, etc.)	9	7	2	
Technology (new equipment)	6	8	5	
Other (specify):	taxes			

<b>III. WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE and TIMING</b>			
<i>Workshop attendance</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Reason/Alternative timing</b>
Would you be interested in attending a potential VA Charter Boat Workshop in March 2012 in Gloucester Point, VA (VIMS)?	17	3	

Would a one-day workshop from 9 a.m.-4 p.m be a convenient format? If not, please give an alternate timing that would be acceptable for you.	18		*please hold workshop on a Sunday (1 vote)
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<b>IV. WORKSHOP COMMUNICATION</b>			
<i>Please let us know...</i>	<b>Website/Email</b>	<b>Mail</b>	<b>Other</b>
How are you most likely to register?	16		
How would you like to receive workshop information?	17	1	

<b>V. WORKSHOP FEES</b>		
<i>Cost</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Would you be willing to pay a registration fee which covered the <b>actual cost</b> to provide lunch and break refreshments?	16	
Would you be willing to pay a fee (~\$12) which covered the <b>actual cost</b> of course materials for an optional First Aid/CPR course?	15	1

Please include your preferred contact address information (email, fax, mailing address):

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# **2012 VIRGINIA CHARTER BOAT WORKSHOP**

## **Watermen's Hall**

*Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Virginia*

**Saturday, March 10, 2012 8:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**8:00 – 8:30 am Registration**

**8:30 – 8:45 am Welcome/Introductions**

*Tom Murray, Associate Director for Advisory Services and Susanna Musick, Marine Recreation Specialist*

## **LEGAL ISSUES & INSURANCE**

**8:45 am Understanding Legal Issues & Liability for Your Boat Business**

*Stephen White - Attorney At Law. Wright, Constable & Skeen. Baltimore, Maryland*

**10:00 am – 10:30 am BREAK**

## **FISHERIES UPDATE & PANEL DISCUSSION**

**10:30 am Regional Fisheries Regulation Update**

*Toni Kerns, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator*

**11:00–12:00 pm Fisheries Panel Question and Answer Session**

*Toni Kerns, ASMFC, Rick Robins, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), and Joe Grist, Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)*

**12:00–1:00 pm LUNCH**

## **WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN A CHARTER BUSINESS**

**1:00 pm The Pitfalls of Charter Boat Management**

*Capt. Greg Ignash, MBA, Business Consultant. Ocean City, Maryland*

**2:00 pm Case Studies: Full-time and Part-time Captains**

**Introduction:** *VCBA President, Capt. Robert Hewlett*

**Speakers:** *Capt. Alan Alexander, Capt. Bill Mershon*

**2:30 pm – 3 pm BREAK**

**3:00 pm Captains' Round Table Discussion**

**Moderator:** *Capt. Mike Handforth, President, Chincoteague Island Charter Association*

**Speakers:** *Capt. Alexander, Capt. Mershon, Capt. Hewlett, Capt. Ignash, Capt. Handforth*

**3:45 pm Closing Comments**



## **VIRGINIA CHARTER BOAT WORKSHOP**

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

March 10, 2012

Panel Members: Joe Grist, Toni Kerns and Rick Robins.

### **Fisheries Panel Discussion Sample QUESTIONS:**

With the disparity between the flounder sizes caught in the upper and lower Bay why aren't there two different sizes for recreational fishermen?

I would like to know if the ASMFC thinks that the monies being spent to enforce the three mile EEZ are worth it?

I'd like a response from the ASMFC regarding the percentage of fish taken from the Bay that are not Bay fish, meaning the females that are taken by both commercial and recreational anglers. My concern is that a large portion of the Bay quota being taken are not Bay fish and this is leading to an increasingly large number of fish remaining in the Bay, eating themselves out of house and home and leading to an increase in illness. I think that the quota of smaller fish needs to be increased for the welfare of the fish.

On the flounder issues it was noted that every state was under quota in 2011, but 2012's TAL (total allowable landings) was less than 2011's, why?

The commercial size limit for flounder is 14" why isn't this the same for the recreational limit?

What are the biggest gaps in confidence in fisheries management at the federal level?

What is the council (MAFMC) doing to bridge the gap between fishermen and fisheries scientists?

## **VIRGINIA CHARTER BOAT WORKSHOP**

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

March 10, 2012

Round Table Members/Captains: Alan Alexander, Mike Handforth, Bob Hewlett, Bill Mershon

### **Captains' Round Table Discussion Summary**

#### **How do you handle customers with regard to rough water?**

Best to leave in the hand of the customer. If you know customer doesn't handle rough water well, call in advance; otherwise, let the customer make the decision.

#### **What if you catch no fish?**

Be certain to make every attempt to catch fish by moving, trying different species, etc. Remain positive and entertaining.

#### **How do you handle a cruise?**

Know the history of the water that you are cruising. Learn as much as you can to entertain.

#### **Should I incorporate or become an LLC?**

One panel member thinks you should incorporate. Another captain thinks you can start as an LLC for you have the flexibility to incorporate later, if need be.

#### **What is a TWIC card and is it necessary?**

The TWIC card is no longer necessary. Card is needed only for high security areas.

#### **Is it necessary to be part of a consortium?**

No, but you must have a plan to be drug tested. It's easier to be a member of a drug consortium.

#### **What is required for an itinerary?**

Must leave passenger count, time of departure and anticipated time of return. One captain says names need to be on boat according to U.S. Coast Guard Eastern Shore. Others think not. Answer to question unclear.

**Does a child need a life jacket on a charter boat?** No.

**Is a charter boat a recreational license?** Yes.

#### **Is there a definitive source/site for charter boat regulation?**

Call local USCG office. Coast Guard auxiliary will provide a free six-pack inspection.

#### **Part-time mates: am I setting myself up for liability?**

He is a seaman.

#### **I am close to running out on my USCG license.**

Do not let it lapse. You cannot run charters after the expiration date.

# 2012 Virginia Charter Boat Workshop Evaluation Form

*Thank you for participating in this new program. As a part of the educational process, we would like to collect feedback from you that will help us develop charter boat programming in the future.*

We value and need your input, so please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire.

1. Overall, did the conference meet your expectations? Please circle one.
  - a. Fell far short
  - b. Fell somewhat short
  - c. Met my expectations
  - d. Somewhat exceeded my expectations
  - e. Greatly exceeded my expectations

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please circle the topics you would like to see at future meetings.
  - a. Accounting management for your charter business
  - b. Guide licensing and regulations
  - c. Fishing tournament ethics
  - d. Fish quality and safety
  - e. Legal business issues
  - f. State fishing regulations
  - g. Federal fishing regulations
  - h. Web page design
  - i. Ecotours/sightseeing
  - j. Off-season charter business strategies
  - k. More charter captains presenting information
  - l. More resource related issues
  - m. More safety related topics/demonstrations

3. If not listed in question 2 above, what subjects would you like to see in future programs?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Where did you hear about the charter boat workshop?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What was the most valuable presentation for your business?

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6. Why did you attend this workshop?

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7. Would you like to see the program in another location? If so, where?

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8. What program changes would you recommend?

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9. How often do you think this workshop should be offered?

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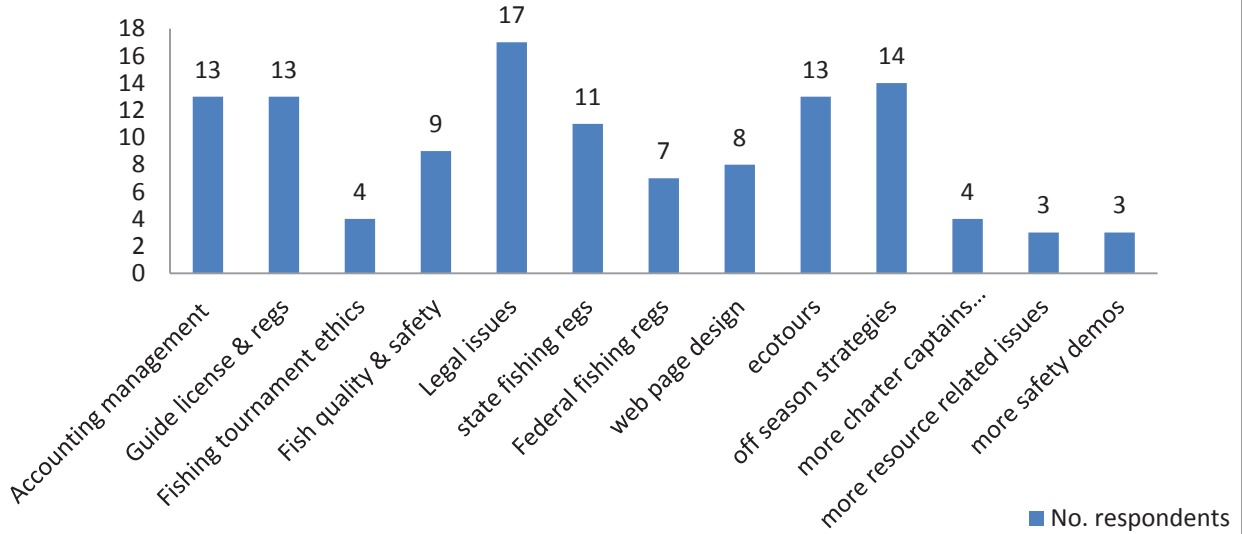
10. Would you attend this workshop again in the future?

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11. Other comments or feedback: \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2012 VA Charter Boat Workshop Evaluation Results: Desired Topics for Future Workshops



### 2012 VA Charter Boat Workshop Evaluation Results: Desired Topics for Future Workshops

