



The 2011 Bunny Clark Guestletter

Tim Tower's annual primer on the 2010 Bunny Clark fishing season

February 5, 2010

Dear Guests:



The 2010 season will be remembered as the best weather season that we have ever experienced. With very few exceptions, the ocean was calm or nearly so from April 1 until September 1, the least amount of wind we have had for these first five months since the **Bunny Clark** was first launched in the spring of 1983. If we ever had five months as good in the years pre-**Bunny Clark**, I don't remember them. The calm weather led into a summer that was consistently the warmest I can remember - ever. Along with light wind and warm temperatures, we had very little rain during the day, almost none. When it did rain, the event took place in the evening leaving the daylight hours warm, dry and sunny. One thing is for sure; there will never be a five month period with the weather as nice.

[The image on the left is a shot of **Dave Bingell** (CT) holding the **Bunny Clark's** largest cod of the 2010 fishing season. This fish, weighing 62 pounds and caught on the May 14, 2010 marathon trip, was landed during an offshore trip where most cod caught were under 10 pounds. In fact, **Frank Mauro's** (CT) 18.75 pound cod was the heaviest cod by over 4 pounds when **Dave's** fish was boated. Even when the day was complete, **Frank's** cod was still the second biggest cod of the day. Devine intervention or luck? Whatever it was, we were glad for it.]

From September until the end of the season in November,

weather conditions were normal. This is a windier time of year and a rainier one as well. And there were no exceptions last fall. It did, however, make me appreciate the spring/summer weather even more.

For fishing, the 2010 season will be remembered as having fantastic haddock landings much earlier than expected, our earliest and longest run of pollock and an exceptional number of white hake, mostly small ones, available almost everywhere on the open bottom during the summer and fall. The Federal government imposed a shorter cod possession season last year, our most diminished season yet. Thus, it was illegal to keep cod until April 16, 2010, an extra two weeks more as compared to the two seasons previously. This didn't seem to matter as the haddock fishing was so good it was almost a joy not to have to deal with the cod as well. When we were able to keep cod, we also saw an increase in pollock and a continued frequency of haddock giving the angler a choice we are unaccustomed to until June. And, as I mentioned, hake were added to the mix later in the year.

The warmer calmer summer didn't diminish the availability of fish. However, it did affect the catch rate during the months of July and August. Landings were down slightly from the previous season even though it was obvious that there were plenty enough fish available. Slower catch rates in the summer are directly related to calmer weather. The longer the good weather the smaller the landings. As proof, last summer the fishing would escalate dramatically on those rare days when we had cloud cover and a bit more wind. Still, the harder fishing mostly bothered our less seasoned and newer anglers. Our better anglers seemed to find a way to catch fish regardless of the conditions or fishing.

We incorporated no new innovative ideas for improving the angler's ability to catch fish. So, I can't report on how they turned out. However, I have to say that **Captain Ian Keniston** and his brother, **Jared Keniston**, have taken winter rod and reel repairs to a higher level. We experienced less reel failures than any previous year last season. With many spare reels to choose from, when we did have a problem, we just changed the reel out.

For new rods we still use **Saco Bay Tackle Company** in Saco, Maine and work with **Kay** at **Surfland Bait & Tackle Company** in Plum Island (Newbury), Massachusetts. They make the best jigs sticks available, all to my specifications.

We did make one improvement during the season last year. I installed a new state of the art GPS/track plotter with bathymetric chart software. This opened up new areas for fishing and gave us ideas on other ways to search for fish. Without it I don't believe we would have landed the largest wolffish of the year or our largest monkfish of the year.

Improvements for the 2011 season will mostly be in areas concerning the **Bunny Clark's** upkeep and maintenance. We are removing the oak combings in the cockpit area and replacing them with a rot resistant species of mahogany, a knot free hard wood that holds paint much better than oak but still gives one that wooden boat feel. We are revamping our hydraulic system on the boat, this mostly due to age. The engine will have a new paint job, new/rebuilt alternators, rebuilt starter, new raw water pump, all new injectors, etc. & etc. for the new season. We are replacing our old aluminum hand rails with a new 316 stainless steel welded rail around the cockpit area. Our bunk cushions have been replaced new or overhauled and repaired. And there is the normal seventy item maintenance/cosmetic list that we work from to bring the **Bunny Clark** up to a level that makes the boat look new and clean when she is launched in March.

I am looking into adding a sea anchor to our arsenal as another technique to use while fishing. I have used sea anchors, drogues and kelleets in the past but gave them up after gill nets were removed from the Western Gulf of Maine closed area. Kelleets specifically were a means of getting our jigs back directly when gill netters set ahead of us while the boat was in a drift. Kelleets are not an option anymore as they disrupt the habitat. However, sea anchors have improved dramatically over the last few years and are employed very successfully by my contemporaries in the business with boats of similar size. I found that sea anchors helped

best when dogfish came on too strong while anchoring but the drift was too fast to maintain the bottom. This is just another approach in an attempt to make us more efficient on the fishing grounds.

[The shot on the lower right shows seventeen-year-old **Halley Tower** (ME), my daughter, holding a 13.5 pound pollock she caught while fishing on the bow of the **Bunny Clark**, the August 3, 2010 full day trip.]

Our website at <http://www.bunnyclark.com> continues to be the location where you can get information about the **Bunny Clark** operation on a daily basis during the season and off-season. We have a schedule and rates section, a photo section, a world records section and more. Our fishing update section provides anglers with up to date information on the daily catch, fish sizes, daily weather, angler deeds and fishery management information. This **Guestletter** resides on our web site along with some of my previous **Guestletters**. Although I can't personally answer all the e-mail that comes in associated with the site, our staff does a great job with this while also answering reservation questions and scheduling fishing dates. We are still not planning to use the e-mail as a direct source of making reservations as the phone serves as a better means to take care of anyone on an equal basis.

My tagging program was just this side of dead in 2010. We tagged only six legal cod. Out of the six, though, two were significant releases. Both fish were tagged by **Jon Griffin** (MA) in the spring and both were Maine state trophies for size. One weighed 35 pounds and the other weighed 36 pounds, tagged within two days of each other, the two largest cod released during the 2010 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. There were rumors of two of my tagged fish caught in the Whaleback area off the Isles of Shoals later in the season. This I could not substantiate. I'm hoping that this year will be a more productive tagging year.



As a whole, last year, we had very few cod released during that period in the season where we could keep cod. The most notable release occurred in late June when **Tim Williams** (CT) returned the third largest released cod of the season. This fish weighed 31 pounds. During the no cod possession period, thirteen cod from 20.5 to 33 pounds were released back to the ocean alive.

We caught no Maine state or world record fish last year. We came closest with the 47.75 pound Maine state trophy white hake that **Ray Westermann** (MA) caught during the ultra marathon last year. The existing **IGFA (International Game Fish Association)** all tackle world record for the white hake at this time is 46 pounds registered on shore weight and caught initially as a 51 pounder by **John Audet** (ME) on the **Bunny Clark** in the fall of 1986. We felt that we needed a slightly larger fish in order to break or tie the world record. Hake lose more than a pound even in a short period of time to consider getting the fish to a registered scale on land before it lost even more. As we use an exceptionally accurate scale, it can be said that initially **Ray** had a world record hake. **Ray's** hake is the largest of its species we have seen on the **Bunny Clark** since **Jim Mailea** caught his 49 pounder during the 2003 season. The largest one we have ever seen was a 63 pounder caught by **Robert Jorgensen** (ME) in 1983.

[**Dick Lyle** (PA), left, holding his 44.5

David MacDonald (MA) holding his 40.5 pound Maine state trophy white hake with the Ultra Marathon of July 20, 2010.]

You can check out all of our current and past world and state records by accessing the records link at <http://www.bunnyclark.com> or by going directly to <http://www.bunnyclark.com/records.htm>.

At the time of this writing, the new recreational fishing regulations for the 2011 fishing season (the fiscal calendar year starts May 1st) are very similar to last season's. We don't expect any new changes for the upcoming season. As the rules exist, we have a 24 inch minimum length limit on cod, a 12 inch minimum size on winter (blackback) flounder, a 19 inch limit on pollock, an 18 inch limit on haddock, a 9 inch limit on redfish and a 41 inch limit on halibut. Halibut landings are limited to one halibut per vessel per day federally, state wise we are limited to five halibut per calendar year (Maine only). There is no limit on hake and cusk. There is also a ten fish bag limit on cod and a seasonal closure for cod possession from November 1st until April 16, 2011. Regulated fish can be filleted at sea and skinned as long as you leave at least "2 square inches of contiguous skin that allows for identification of fish species". Non-regulated species like hake, cusk and ocean pout can be filleted and skinned completely - at least this was the intent of the **New England Fishery Management Council's** ruling. There is a prohibition on the possession of wolffish (We release them back to the ocean alive).

As I feel that the greatest achievement in angling is the ability of a person to hook and land a trophy fish on their own, I have listed the guests who caught the five to nine largest of each significant species during the 2010 fishing season. Keep in mind that all the represented weights of these fish were taken aboard the **Bunny Clark** using a registered scale shortly after capture (the same way it has been done since our first fishing trip on the **Bunny Clark** in May 1983). I feel that this is the fairest comparison between the angler's fish since weight loss is proportional to the amount of time the fish is out of water.

NAME (STATE)	FISH/WEIGHT - in pounds	LENGTH X GIRTH - in inches	DATE CAUGHT
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Jim Phelon (NH)	Bluefin Tuna 176.5	67 X ?	6-8-10
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[The picture on the right shows **Ron Roy** (NH) holding his 14.75 pound Maine state trophy cusk.]

Lenny Sikora (PA)	Redfish 3	17 X 14	6-5-10
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Steve Selmer (NH)	Redfish 3	16.5 X 13	8-1-10
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Andy Chornobil (NY)	Redfish 2.75	17.5 X 14	8-1-10
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Dan Kelley (ME)	Redfish 2.5	16.25 X 12.5	8-31-10
Steve LaPlante (CT)	Redfish 2.5	16.25 X 12.5	10-28-09
Dan Kelley (ME)	Redfish 2.5	16.25 X 11.5	6-29-10

Bob Williams (NY)	Monkfish 27	37 (length)	9-26-10
Fred Fredberger (CT)	Monkfish 22.5	38.5 X 26	8-11-10
Steve LaPlante (CT)	Monkfish 15		10-14-10

John Gardner (NY)	Wolffish 28.5	released	9-26-10
Alex Dobois (VT)	Wolffish 17	released	8-14-10
Steve Levine (ME)	Wolffish 16.5	released	6-20-10
Tim Tardiff (VT)	Wolffish 16.5	released	7-5-10
Mike Mazzarella (MA)	Wolffish 16.5	released	8-7-10

[**Trevor Cutter (NH)** can be seen, right, holding his 16.25 pound wolffish. This fish would have been a Maine state trophy had it been caught in 2009. The wolffish attained threatened federal status in 2010 and weren't allowed to be kept. This forced the state's hand to deny applications for wolffish trophies or else go against the federal mandate. In accord, we took a quick picture of each significant wolffish and released it without taking the length and girth. Of the sixty-five (total) wolffish that were brought to gaff on the **Bunny Clark** in 2010, all were released alive, most in the water at the surface.]



George Roberts (NY)	Pollock 27	43 X 23	8-5-10
Mike Neveu (MA)	Pollock 24.5	45.5 (length)	6-8-10
Steve Kaczala (NJ)	Pollock 24.5		9-5-10
Steve Morenski (NJ)	Pollock 24		5-5-10
Doug Lipinski (CT)	Pollock 24		5-12-10
Marc Pagnozzi (CT)	Pollock 24		5-18-10

Ralph Small (NY)	Pollock 24	7-12-10
Rand Richards (ME)	Pollock 24	9-24-10
Dan Kelley (ME)	Pollock 24	10-20-10

Ray Westermann (MA)	White Hake 47.75	48 X 34	7-20-10
David Gray (VT)	White Hake 46.5	48 X 32	6-10-10
Tim Williams (CT)	White Hake 46.5	46 X 34	6-29-10
Bob Smith (NJ)	White Hake 46	48 X 31	6-24-10
Chris Kruger (MA)	White Hake 45	47 X 32	10-13-10



[Gloria Gennari (MA), right, our female angler of the year, holding holding her 2.25 pound Maine state trophy redfish.]

Curt Fish (ME)	Haddock 13	30.5 X 19	4-14-10
William Lozada (NY)	Haddock 11.1	29 X 18	4-12-10
William Lozada (NY)	Haddock 10.5	28.5 X 18	4-12-10
Nick Ignazio (NY)	Haddock 10.5	31 X 18	4-21-10
Justin Smith (NJ)	Haddock 10.5	30 X 17.5	6-22-10
Dan Potyrala (MA)	Haddock 10	29.5 X 17.5	4-8-10
Jon Griffin (MA)	Haddock 10	27.75 X 18	4-23-10
Catlin Fox (MA)	Haddock 10	30 X 18	5-13-10

Jon Griffin (MA)	Cusk 28	39.25 X 24	7-20-10
Tim Williams (CT)	Cusk 22.5	40 X 21	6-15-10
Katie Lynch (ME)	Cusk 22	39 X 22	7-28-10
Bob Piotrowski (NH)	Cusk 20.5	37 X 23	7-31-10
Andy Rice (VT)	Cusk 18	35.5 X 19	10-26-10



[**Mike White** (CT), right, can be seen holding his 9.5 pound Maine state trophy haddock with the sexiest eyes I have ever seen. This fish was caught in late April on a Marathon trip, the **Bunny Clark's** tenth largest haddock of the 2010 fishing season.]

Dave Bingell (CT)	Cod 62	54 X 33	5-14-10
Ty Kashmiry (ME)	Cod 52	52 X 31	4-21-10
Michael Prestipino (NY)	Cod 50.5	50 X 31	9-13-10
Don Prior (MA)	Cod 49	47.5 X 30	6-8-10
Steve LaPlante (CT)	Cod 40.5	44 X 29	5-12-10

Rob Wojciak (CT)	Lobster 7.5	released alive	5-10-10
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Dan Kelley (ME)	Halibut 3		
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- **Dan Kelley** appeared the most in the top five season trophy list with four fish. **Steve LaPlante** was second with three. For the number of trips taken, **Steve LaPlante** caught more significant fish than any other angler in 2010. His count totaled nineteen trophy fish in eight trips.
- **Dave Bingell's** cod is the largest cod that has been landed on the **Bunny Clark** in two seasons. Interestingly, part of the fish's weight was a 2.1 pound Maine state trophy redfish that **Ian Keniston** found deep in the cod's mouth just before filleting it!
- **Curt Fish's** 13 pound haddock is the largest haddock that has been caught on the **Bunny Clark** in six seasons. It is the fourth largest haddock ever caught on the **Bunny Clark**. **Moe Momaney** (VT) has our third largest haddock with a 14 pounder caught in 1983, **Jim Mailea** (MA) has our second largest haddock with a 14.5 pounder caught in 1991 and **Jared Keniston** has our largest haddock, a 17 pounder that was caught in May 2004 and, later, became the Maine state record haddock. Incidentally, **Jared** caught twenty-eight haddock on a trip last early spring, a **Bunny Clark** record for the most legal haddock caught on a single jig (with no fly or spare hook above the jig). Also, our best double keeper haddock catch of the year was landed by **Jeff Frisby** (NY) when he landed a 7.5 pound Maine state trophy haddock and another haddock of 4.5 pounds, both fish on the same line at the same time, on a trip in late April.
- This is also the first time that we have ever seen more than five haddock 10 pounds or more caught on the **Bunny Clark** in a single season. Before last season the most haddock landed 10 pounds or more occurred during the 1991 season when five were caught. In third place are the seasons of 1984, 1998 and 2000 when three haddock of 10 pounds or greater were landed. On one trip last season we had three full fish totes of haddock that ranged from 6 pounds to 13 pounds including eleven total trophies (7 pounds or greater), the largest number of big haddock I have ever seen caught at one time on a boat using rod & reel only. These fish totes represented only half of the total pounds of legal haddock caught that day.
- **Ray Westermann, Tim Williams, Dave Gray** and **Bob Smith** all beat or tied the existing white hake world record at the time of boating their respective fish. The existing world record for the white hake (as mentioned previously) is 46 pounds weighed on a registered scale ashore.

- **Bob Williams'** monkfish is the largest of that species caught on the **Bunny Clark** in two seasons.
- **John Gardner's** wolffish is the largest wolffish that has been caught on the **Bunny Clark** since **Tom Hadley** (NH) caught his 31 pounder in 2003.
- **Jim Phelon's** 176.5 pound bluefin tuna is the third largest of its species that has ever been caught on the **Bunny Clark** with a "cod rod". **Paul McCullough's** 365 pound tuna in 2009 is the largest bluefin that has ever been caught by conventional groundfish tackle on the **Bunny Clark**. The second largest bluefin caught via "cod rod" on the **Bunny Clark** was one of 208 pounds landed by **Emile Gallant** (ME) in 2001 during an afternoon half day trip. There have been a total of eighteen bluefins caught with conventional groundfish tackle since **Floyd Raymond** (NH) caught our first one (an 89 pounder) in 1994.
- I don't know if there has ever been a lobster caught with rod & reel on the **Bunny Clark** as large as the one that **Rob Wojciak** caught last spring. We caught a bigger lobster (10 pounds plus) one time south of the **Portland Lightship** but we plucked it out of a ghost gill net after hooking the net while fishing.
- We only caught one halibut this year with **Dan Kelley's** fish. I left it out in the **Guestletter** that was hard copied since I had forgotten about it. The fish was too small to legally keep so I didn't write it down. When things don't get written down, they don't get transferred to the data sheet. **Dan** reminded me of his catch after this Internet version came out.

Before I end this **Guestletter**, I want to cite those anglers and experiences of note that deserve an honorable mention for their uniqueness and/or fishing prowess during the 2010 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. I realize that this is a value judgment on my part but I believe that my conclusions are recognized as a popular opinion and/or statistical fact among my crew and fishing guests and are based on many fishing trips. These special anglers and incidents are as follows:

Fisherman of the Year (FY-'10): Tim Williams takes our most prestigious title for the second year in a row. And, actually, there was no one even close; relinquishing the need to add comparative value points (**CVPs**) in order to come to a salient decision. (**CVPs** - points added or subtracted between two anglers who end the year at the top end with 30 points or less separating them. Points are only adjusted on those days where both were fishing together.) This is the sixth time that **Tim** has prevailed in this category, a tie with **Fred Kunz** (NH) for the most **FY** awards in the history of **Bunny Clark Deep Sea Fishing!**

As most of you know by now, the **FY** award is based on a point system that relates to specific achievements during a trip and during the year. Each achievement is worth a set of points. The individual with the most points at the end of the season wins. In order to compete in this category, you have to have paid for and completed at least 10 different trips on the **Bunny Clark**. I have had many excellent anglers who fish with us on a regular basis every season, any one of whom has the potential to become the **Fisherman of the Year**. **Tim** was consistently the best or one of the best anglers last



season. His strengths in this category included the most trophy fish of the season, his penchant for being high hook on almost every trip he attended, his fisherman of the day abilities (catching the largest fish of the trip on the same trip that he was high hook), his competitive spirit, his belief in himself and his consistency. By definition he becomes the best angler (with **Fred Kunz**) who has ever fished on the **Bunny Clark**. I can say quite honestly that it has been a supreme pleasure to have served **Tim** over the years. I have taken it as a great honor that **Tim** has chosen to fish the **Bunny Clark** on so many occasions. So, to me, it is a wonderful thing just to be able to say; "Hey, **Tim**, you are the best" - and mean it! Congratulations, **Tim**!

[The digital image, right, shows **Tim Williams** holding his 22.5 pound cusk caught on the June 15, 2010 marathon trip. **Tim** has caught three cusk over 30 pounds on the **Bunny Clark** and has caught many over 20 pounds, more than any angler I have ever met.]



[The picture, left, is one showing **Tim** holding his first trophy cod of the 2010 season. This one weighed 27.5 pounds and was caught late in April on a marathon trip.]

Tim's total point count was 257 (24 more points than last year with fewer trips overall). **Dan Kelley** took second place with a point total of 165. Eighteen year old **Bryan Lewer** (FL) was third with 149 points. **Steve LaPlante** came in fourth with 102 points. **Jon Griffin** was fifth with 97 points. I am reminded that all five anglers fish with jigs and jig sticks. However, **Tim** rarely fishes with a fly over his jig. **Dan** never fishes with a fly. **Bryan, Steve** and **Jon** rarely use a fly. These accomplishments become even more meaningful when you consider that those who fish without that extra hook are limited to only one fish a drop (with rare exceptions). It certainly makes it that much harder then to reach high hook status on a given day and almost eliminates you from the points that could be gathered by landing one of the top five double keeper catches of the season.

Female Angler of the Year: Gloria Gennari (MA) wins this award for the fifth season in a row. There wasn't a woman even close - again last year. Her consistency, her nine trophy fish and her drive put her well above any other female angler who was aboard the **Bunny Clark** last year. **Gloria**, you make it easy for me to fill this category. Thanks and congratulations! You rock!

Best Bait Fisherman: Shameless Ray "The Pole Tossing Master Baiter" Westermann (MA), just gets better every year. He took bait fishing to yet a higher level than he did when winning the same award last year

and the year before! For three consecutive years he has caught the biggest hake of his life. In 2009, he did it five times! Last year he did it twice, the first time with a 42 pounder and the second time with a 47.75 pound hake that could have tied the **IGFA** all tackle world record! Not only that, he did very well on the haddock in numbers and size, including three Maine state trophies, the most trophy haddock for any (except for **Jeff Frisby** who also boated three) angler on the **Bunny Clark** last season. You know when a fisherman is good when other anglers on the boat are constantly asking; "How's **Ray** doing?" Congrats, **Ray** - again!

Most Aces: For those who don't know, an angler scores an ace when he or she lands the three (or more) largest fish during a single trip. There can be no ties in fish size with other anglers in order to achieve true "ace" status. There were only two anglers who qualified for an ace last season. **Jared Keniston** was the first. On July 1, 2010, **Jared** was acting as an overseer for **Alec Levine** (ME) on **Alec's** first trip (a 4PM-8PM half day trip). **Alec** was working the deck as a mate without **Jared's** help. **Jared** was there to correct anything that might go terribly wrong. As it turned out, nothing did so **Jared** fished all evening and caught the three largest fish. A total of twenty legal fish were caught that night for the twenty-five anglers aboard. **Jared** caught twelve legal cod and may have caught one or two legal "others". And I believe he was the only one who knew how to use a jig. His three largest fish included an 11.5 pound cod, a 10.5 pound cod and a 9.5 pound cod. There was a tie for fourth place. Both **Ron Poremba** (MA) and **Phil Springer** (NY) caught an 8 pound cod each. **Ron's** was a cusk. **Phil's** was a cod.

The first and only ace caught by a customer came on August 11, 2010. **Fred Fredberger** (CT) was the fisherman of the day on that trip. His three largest fish included a 22.5 pound monkfish, a 17.5 pound pollock and a 13 pound pollock. There were twenty-two anglers aboard that day with a total count of seventy-seven legal fish landed of which **Fred** had a count of twelve and was high hook.

Incidentally, **Mark Whitney** (ME) was the only angler to catch a legal fish on the August 20, 2010 afternoon half day trip. He caught three. They included a 7 pound cod, a 6 pound cod and a one pound redfish. Had he caught a legal cod for his third fish he would have had the ace. There were, however, at least three anglers who had sub-legal cod larger than his redfish. There was also another trip where **Bryan Lewer** caught the three largest fish on an evening trip August 4, 2010. His three fish included a 7.5 pound cusk, a 7.25 pound cusk and a 6 pound cod. However, **Tim Golden** (NY) spoiled his ace by duplicating his third largest fish with a 6 pound cod himself.

[**Bob Williams** (NY), right, holding his 27 pound Maine state trophy monkfish. This picture was taken by **Captain Ian Keniston**.]

Most Trophy Fish (including hake over 15 pounds, cod & pollock over 20 pounds, monkfish over 15 pounds and any halibut) of the Season: **Tim Williams** caught the most with a count of forty. **Dan Kelley** was second with a count of twenty-nine. **Bryan Lewer** was third with twenty-six counters.

Most Trophy Fish during a Trip: **Tim Williams**, **Dan Kelley** and **Chris Porter** tied for the most with six trophy fish each. For second place, **Tim Williams**, **Gloria Gennari**, **Jon Griffin** and **David MacDonald** (MA) shared with five trophy fish each. For third and fourth place, **Tim Williams** fished two more trips where he landed five trophy fish on each trip. There were also several anglers who deserve an honorable mention for landing four trophy fish on a single trip, some more than once. These anglers include: **Dan Kelley**, **Jay Tenney** (MA), **Steve Selmer** (NH), **Marian "Merv" Murphy** (NH), **Ray Westermann** (on two separate trips), **Ron Roy** (NH), **Bryan Lewer** (two trips), **Steve LaPlante** (three trips), **Steve Shugars** (ME) and **Jim Watson** (NY).

Most Pools (largest fish of the trip): **Tim Williams** and **Bryan Lewer** tied for first place by catching the largest fish of the trip on four different occasions. **John Russell** (ME) landed the second most pools with a count of three. **Brian Murphy** (NH), **Brian Walsh** (NJ), **Fred Fredberger** (CT), **John Griffin**, **Paul Dykeman** (ME), **Ralph Small** (NY), **Ray Westermann**, **Scott Anzalone** (NJ), **Shane Anderson** (MA), **Steve Kenney** (ME), **Steve LaPlante**, **Steve Levine** & **Walter Morenski** (NJ) landed the largest fish of the trip two times last season.

High Hook: **Tim Williams** was high hook (the most legal fish on a trip) at least fourteen times that we know of. **Bryan Lewer** was second in this category with nine counts that we know of. **Dan Kelley** was third at eight counts. You should know that **Dan Kelley** never uses a fly, the implication of which is not lost on me when considering this category. **Dan** can catch fish, a lot more of them if catching the most fish was his

goal. I appreciate **Dan's** method very much indeed.



[The digital image, left, was taken on June 8, 2010 marathon trip. This shot was taken of **Jim Phelon's** 176.5 pound bluefin tuna, the only bluefin we landed last season. The photo participants from left to right include **Jim Phelon, Bryan Lewer, Don Prior and Mike Neveu (MA).**]

Hardest Luck: **Rod Wood (PA)** had the hardest luck this season. On April 23, 2010, Rod threw his (our) jig stick, rod, reel, jig and five hundred yards of **Spectra** line overboard in one errant cast, never to be seen again. I thought he was going to cry. I almost cried with him (That would have been a picture for the Internet.). Later that day he lost two more jigs. After that he almost launched himself overboard when he slipped while making a cast. It was only by the grace of God that he stayed aboard. There was a part of me that wondered if we would ever see **Rod** on the **Bunny Clark** again. I'm happy to say that he returned with much better luck a couple more times later in the season!

Second place in this category has to go to **Bill Hazlett (MA)** who waited until September 1st to go out fishing on the **Bunny Clark** for the first time last year. On that day he was high hook, which was good, caught the second largest fish,

which was good. That's where it ended. He was tangled all day long which is remarkable considering he had a legal fish on his line most of the times that he was. He got sun screen in his eyes so badly that **Ian's** first impression was that **Bill** badly missed not having his wife aboard (obviously balling about his loss). He lost a great fish, lost a favorite jig and lost his expensive sun glasses overboard, never to be seen again. You can certainly tell when an angler should have been fishing more often.

Third place has to go to **Mark LaRocca (NY)** who lost, arguably, the largest cod of the fishing season. We lost a big cod in the fall last season as well. But **Mark** lost his cod during prime spawn on June 24th on a spot I only use twice a year where we always (up to this point, of course) hook into a big cod (and have caught several whale cod over the years). **Tim Williams** was the only other angler to hook up with a steaker there that day, a 31 pound cod which he subsequently released back to the ocean alive. The signature of **Mark's** fish on the sounding machine was just phenomenal. When I saw the fish on the machine leaving the bottom, going back to bottom, leaving the bottom and then getting high enough off the bottom where I could get a good look, I had to cross my fingers and hope that I could at least see this fish on the surface. It was not to be. A third of the way off the bottom the fish held depth for too long. I looked from the machine to **Mark** and a perfectly straight rod. My heart sank. Well if ever **Mark LaRocca** is on the boat the same time **Mark Francis (PA)** is aboard, they can hold hands on the way out and try to figure out what went wrong.

Most Improved Angler: Fred Fredberger (CT) pulled in a hell of a season with just a handful of trips last year. He started on an afternoon trip where he was high hook, won the boat pool and was a fish away from getting the "ace". The very next trip, a full day trip, he took home all the marbles. Not only was he high hook and the pool winner again, this time he captured the "ace" that was denied him the trip before and his largest fish became the **Bunny Clark's** second largest monkfish of the season. And he was successful during his later trips. **Fred** wasn't nearly as successful any other year previously. Whatever it was that happened, I want to see more of it this year! Nice work, **Fred**!

Honorable mention has to go to **George Smart** (NY). On a marathon trip in 2009, **George** endured a serious tongue lashing by yours truly (including that phrase "Shut the *%#@ up", the recitation of which by **Jared Keniston**, has never allowed me to live it down.). There were tangles galore that day. This year, **George** came up to me before the trip to "apologize" for something he thought he did wrong when it was actually me who did the wrong thing! Well **George** was the much improved angler on last year's trip. He was also quite a bit quieter. I would call it more respectful. Thank you, **George**. Let me be the one to apologize to you! Incidentally **Barry Juhasz** or **Rick Gurney** (both from the **Lighthouse Fishing Club** - MA) might ask; if the word "forgiveness" weren't in the dictionary, would **Tim** still retain any repeat business?

Best Team: Tom Ward (CT) and **Jim Sanford** (NY) have fished with me for years but have never received the recognition they deserve. So I thought that this year I would reserve this category for them. The criteria for a good team has always been a function of angling success based on a deep knowledge of their equipment, with a strong sense of the harmony, fun and companionship that is so much a part of fishing. These two epitomize what a good team should be. And their success ratio is high enough to always give me something great to write about on the Internet. And I appreciate that! Thanks, guys. You're the best!

Jackass Award: This award is for the one person who most stands out on a charter who doesn't enter in the boat pool. This does not apply to religious groups or to persons who can't afford to get in the boat pool for other reasons. **John Kelley** (MA) wins this award hands down. He stands out not only because he had a fish large enough to win the boat pool for the second largest fish of the trip but also because the fish was so large, a 35 pound Maine state trophy white hake! I took this award out of the **Guestletter** a few years ago in the flavor of political correctness that was sweeping the land. **John's** utter disregard for his fellow anglers made me decide to put it back in. Nice going, **John**!



[**Kelly Strob** (MA), seen right, holds her 7.5 pound Maine state trophy haddock that she caught on the **Bunny Clark** in July 2010.]

Exceptional Good Luck: I have a plaque in my workroom that you will see as soon as you walk through the door. It hangs on the wall between two shelves. It is an honorary membership in the **104th Fighter Wing** out of Westfield, Massachusetts. That plaque comes close to my heart. **Jim Nodwell** (MA) and his crew presented it to me years ago after my small bit of support in their military involvement during the Iraq War. **Jim** and his crew had fished with me before they went overseas and have fished with me a few times since.

In mid June last season they were sixteen of the nineteen anglers aboard during a marathon trip. And what a trip it was. As soon as we got to our first fishing spot, one of their crew, **Don Prior** (MA), hooked into a bluefin tuna. He fought it for five minutes only to have it break off - no fault of his own (That afternoon, **Don** landed the largest cod of his life, a 49 pounder!). Later, one of their father and son teams (**Theo & Tad Russell** - MA) hooked into a bluefin tuna of about 400 pounds or less and fought it for two hours at least. For two more hours others on the boat took part including **Tim Belisle** (MA), **Captain Ian, Rowland Mortensen** (NJ) and me. We got the fish close enough to gaff later in the fight but the fish was too green and the gaff pulled out. The long and the short: we lost the fish due to a severely chaffed leader right next to the boat. I was surprised the fight lasted as long as it did. The ordeal took us three miles from the original spot.

Licking our wounds, tails between our legs we limped back to the original spot where we had started and went back to cod fishing. We weren't there for five minutes when **Jim Phelon** (MA - with **Nodwell's** crew) hooked into another bluefin tuna! That was the last straw. I announced that I was not going to chase another tuna. **Jim** was welcome to fight the tuna as long as he wanted and I would help him land it. But I was not going to move the boat - again. Nor was I going to make anyone reel up who was engaged in the act of cod fishing - again. Well, as luck would have it, **Jim's** bluefin stayed on the surface the whole time and made screaming runs directly aft and then right back to the boat. **Jim** was fighting the fish from the stern. He was able to stay tangle free away from everyone. Watching him on one of the fish's runs from the boat, I noticed the line chattering and realized he had the fish tail wrapped! Encouraging **Jim** to "reel", he got the fish right back to the boat where **Bryan Lewer** (FL) and **Ian** were waiting for the fish with two gaffs. They sunk the gaffs in the tail, got the tail out of the water and the three of us hauled the fish over the side, kicking and thrashing, into the boat! It happened so quickly that no one on the bow even realized a tuna was on the on line, never mind on the deck! The fish weighed 176.5 pounds, 67 inches long. A week later that fish would have been an illegal length to keep! And the **104th** enjoyed another conquest.



Most Unusual Catch & Quote of the Year: During a marathon trip June 1st with fifteen minutes left to go before heading home on one of **Dave Miller's** famous charters, **Dennis Pietro** (MA) hooks into something near the bottom that starts stripping line off his reel. Unable to gain line, I had everyone else reel up so I could chase after it and **Dennis** could gain some line back. I couldn't imagine what it was that early in the year but I knew I wanted to at least see it. The fight was on.

We moved **Dennis** into the bow pulpit so he could get some rail support in three hundred degrees of a circle. Plus, I could see what was going on more easily while at the helm. **Dennis** fought this fish like a champ (pumping and reeling). Try as he might, after half an hour we still hadn't brought the fish above the 40 fathom (240 feet) mark. It seemed to want to stay right there. On the sounding machine it appeared as a big red blob. I couldn't imagine what it was. A tuna? At the end of that first half hour **Dennis** started to work his rod, forcing the fish into 20 fathoms. For another hour it hung at that depth. The fish's progress led us southeast. Coming up on

two hours we were already three miles from where it was hooked. And **Dennis** wasn't doing well. He had already hurled a couple of times with the enormous amount of energy he was expending. **Dennis** does not get sea sick.

Just before the two hour mark, I pulled **Dennis** off the rod and put **Shane Anderson** (MA) on it. **Dennis**, in the meantime, had crashed on the deck, on his back, spread eagle and appeared dead to the world. **Shane** put renewed vigor into the fight, just what we needed. In about a half an hour, the fish started coming out of 20 fathoms and right to 10. It hung there for a bit and then headed up. I left the helm to run up to the bow just in time to see this big brown shape coming from the bottom. "It's a halibut", I said. "We'll never get it in the boat", **Ian** cried. But, in fact, it was a basking shark about twenty-six feet long, one of the biggest ones I have ever seen. **Dennis'** jig was lodged in the corner of the jaw like it was smoking a lead cigar! The fish had come up head first. With the big wide pectoral fins just behind the head, it looked like a huge halibut initially. This is the strangest catch I have ever witnessed and the first time I have ever heard of a huge basking shark being brought to gaff with a cod rod! We promptly snapped the line at the jig and watched the big fish lumber off into the depths as if nothing had ever happened.

[**Dave Gray** (VT), seen left, is my most regular of regular anglers. In this picture he is holding his 46.5 pound Maine state trophy white hake. I believe this is his biggest hake. And for the years and his many fishing trips, that's saying something!]

Most Unusual Hook-Up: Two weeks after the basking shark incident I was hosting a marathon trip when **Brian Stevens** (VT) hooked into something unusual. His jig was part way to bottom when his line started to angle outboard. Something he hooked while dropping his line to bottom was on the way to the surface - fast. I thought it must be a tuna. I urged **Brian** to reel quickly to take up the slack. This he did. At a distance a few boat lengths away a silver and dark fish appeared just under the surface with **Brian's** jig swimming rapidly from left to right. All of a sudden this fish leapt a few feet out of the water, throwing the jig out of its mouth and landing flat on its side. It was a sunfish (*Mola mola*, spp.)! Once it hit the surface, *sans* jig, it resumed normal sunfish behavior and remained on the surface paddling slowly away - dipping its dorsal in and out of the water's surface. Never have I seen a sunfish get hooked in the mouth before. Was this a chance thing, luck of the draw or did it intentionally go after the jig? Also, I have seen sunfish jump before but I never realized that they could swim so fast. I guess they would have to have this kind of mobility if they were going to get enough speed to get out of the water. Very strange indeed!

Biggest Double: **Rob Foster** (ME) caught the largest double keeper catch of the season on the second trip of the season! His catch included a 23 pound pollock and 20.5 pound pollock, both fish caught on the same line at the same time. **Jon Griffin** (MA) caught the second largest double. His catch included a 24 pound white hake and an 18 pound white hake. **Chris Porter** (MA) took third with a 24.5 pound white hake and a 14 pound white hake. **Jim Shepard** (MA) was fourth with a 21.5 pound pollock and a 16 pound pollock. **Bill Dewsbury** (NY) took fifth with a 26 pound Maine state trophy white hake and an 11 pound pollock. To my knowledge all the doubles were caught while using a jig and cod fly combination, one fish caught on the jig and the other on the fly.

Unexplained Phenomena: My daughter and a couple of her girl friends go to a Japanese restaurant where you sit down at a table while the chef prepares your meal right in front of you. She is shown to a table already partially occupied by a family. After a couple minutes the gentleman at that table leans over and tells **Halley** that he saw the name "**Tower**" on her softball jacket; "You wouldn't be related to **Tim Tower**, would you?" It was **Captain Phil Eastman** from the biggest party boat fishing fleet in New England, his family's business, and a good friend of mine. Not only does he surprise **Halley**



initially, he secretly paid for their meals before the girls got the bill! I wrote about this event in my daily web page blog mentioning **Phil's** kindness and commenting that I now owe him one but "What do you get the man who has everything?" Someone got wind of the event and my comment and started a thread on a popular fishing chat page. The thread characterized **Phil** as the man with everything and the gifts that should be forthcoming. You can imagine where it went from there. It was one of the funniest things I read all summer! Obviously there are a lot of **Phil Eastman** admirers!

- Every year someone shines in the angling department. There were a few last season but **Steve LaPlante** could have been the **FY'10** had he fished with us more often. What people don't know is that his fishing prowess also extended to dogfish where, on August 16th, he developed a method, *avec* glow tube, that allowed him to catch a dog a cast. Nice work, **Steve**!
- **Dana Labbe** (ME) brought a trophy cusk to the surface of enormous size, certainly large enough to be in the top five **Bunny Clark** cusk of the year. However, this one got off the hook. And even though it was "poke blown" swam right to bottom as if it were a mackerel! Normally, they can't make it to bottom.
- We have conservationists who fish with us from time to time. **Jim Gilliam** (PA) is one. He prefers to leave the hook protectors on his jig so he doesn't kill too many fish!

[The picture on the right was taken during a marathon trip in late April. The pollock were already in full force, which is unusual; normally they appear later in the year. **Dana Decormier** (NH) was one of the early lucky recipients. He is shown right holding his 18 pound 40 inch pollock while posing in the bow pulpit on a choppy day. Had this fish been filled out with spawn later in the year it could have easily weighed 30 pounds! If so it would have been our biggest of the year. Timing is everything!]

- Seven tuna hook-ups in an hour on one of my best cod fishing spots including a double angler hook-up. One would ask if we were fishing for them. You can ask. We weren't! This is a boat record for tuna strikes while jigging for cod.
- How strange is this: **Arnie Buza** (NJ), a wonderful individual and excellent fisherman, boats only two legal fish on a day where the boat total with eighteen anglers is 246 legal! Ouch; it's all I have to say.
- **John Provoncha** (VT) gets sea sick on a marathon trip? This is the first time in the thirty years he has been sailing with me - unless he did a good job of hiding it all these years!
- I believe that **Shawn Rosenberger's** first sea sick experience was more related to the fishing than the motion of the ocean!
- It wasn't strange that **Mel Dupke** (CT) got sea sick on that marathon trip in the fall. The strange part was that she was again part of the same annual trip where she earns the hard luck award t-shirt specifically for *mal de mer*!
- And if I was **Joe Smegalsky** (NY) and I got sea sick after sitting on the boat at the dock for five minutes, I would walk off too!
- What would you think if a sixteen foot great white shark came up beside the boat, available for all to see, and then just disappeared? That was the same day we lost a jig to the great white and lost twenty-nine others to blue sharks, a record for last year!
- **Mark Hesselink** (NJ). Was that rod just too wimpy for the fish or did you have your drag too tight?
- It's amazing how a good sized rock will make you think you have a huge fish on the line. Isn't that so, **Dave Larson** (NH)?
- It's easy to be a bow god when you use one of our best fisherman's terminal gear, isn't it **Todd Mancivalano**?
- No cod on a marathon trip for **Louis Bellaud** (NH)? Now that's a first. I don't know if this beats **Bob Mochnacz** (NJ) who went on a trip and didn't catch a single keeper, also a first!
- And how about **Chuck Mannings** who looked over at his wife, **Donna's**, line screaming out of her reel (she had hooked a small tuna) and thought the reel was in free spool. So he helped her out by pulling the eccentric lever and giving her a backlash that could have allowed a bigger fish to yank her right overboard had her line been stronger. Instead, she lost a fish she could have landed - and it was her birthday! But, to make it more interesting still, while **Chuck** was lifting a haddock out of the water (he was fishing on the bow), he lost his balance and fell backwards, landing on the deck. His jig and haddock, meanwhile, went

flying in a big arc over everyone's head and landed neatly in the fish box where it would have ended up anyway. Everyone has their methods and there is certainly more than one way to skin a haddock!



The two people who are the basis for a very successful **Bunny Clark** fishing season are **Captain Ian Keniston** and **Jared Keniston**, brothers in the strongest sense of the word. They operate my boat and business as well or better than if I did it all myself. As I have become more involved in my family's restaurant business, **Barnacle Billy's, Inc.**, I do not take as many trips as I used to. Not being on the boat as much also affords me more time with my children who are fast approaching the time of their college days. Ian and Jared have allowed me to continue with my many jobs unfettered and worry free. As true professionals, they have handled any and all problems on the **Bunny Clark** with common sense and positive outcomes. You can't know how much I appreciate their time with **Bunny Clark Deep Sea Fishing**. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, **Ian and Jared**.

Captain Tom Corbett (NH) was not able to work for us last season. With cut-backs at work, he couldn't take the days required to work for me on a part time basis. Instead, I had **Tom Parker** (ME) who took his place. **Tom** was one of the [Ugly Anne's](#) (another deep sea fishing vessel that sails out of Perkins Cove, Ogunquit) best captains of yesteryear and a person I have respected as one of the best for as many years. I was truly fortunate to have him aboard to take my "other" **Tom's** place. And it didn't take **Tom** very long to come up to **Bunny Clark** speed. Thanks so much, **Tom**. I so appreciate your tenure with us.

[Left; a digital image of **Rob Wojciak** holding his 7.5 pound Maine lobster.]

We also added an extra deck hand to the mix. This was meant to give **Captain Ian** and **Jared** more time off. His name is **Alec Levine** and he did a masterful job. It took such a short time for **Alec** to get up to speed that I became immediately comfortable being with him alone on a trip. Thank you, **Alec**. I was delighted to have you working with us last season.

I also want to thank those who keep us all going. Of most importance is my wife, **Debbie**. She did all the bookwork, computer stuff and controlled the reservations side of the business. Last year we didn't have the added help of **Renée Stevens**, our best at the computer and desk over the years. And I did miss her and thought it might be too much of a burden on **Deb** along with her role as the head of our family. I am very pleased with the outcome. **Jane Staples** became our number two. She took on more responsibility with a smile and a professional attitude that I have come to like and respect. I'm glad to say that **Jane** has been with us for a number of years now - and just gets better. Thank you, my wonderful wife and **Jane** for allowing us to keep the **Bunny Clark** going. I couldn't do it without you.

We had four reservationists who work solely to help perspective anglers book positions on the various fishing trips. Reservationists need to know how the trips work, what people want, how to provide it and to be able to communicate well and in a pleasant manner. We had some excellent people this year, three who have been with us before and one bright new girl. That such nice employees come back is certainly a benefit and a blessing to us. Highest on my list, of course, is my daughter, **Halley**. **Halley** completed her fifth year last

season. **Halley, Deb** and I communicate very well together. But it helps that **Halley** knows the business well enough that she can make some very pertinent decisions on her own. This establishes her as our best asset and I can truly say I love her for who she is. **Halley** is the best and I am not biased in the least. I am really happy to say that **Katie Graichen** completed her fourth season with us last year. She is just about perfect, certainly everything I would want in a person dealing with the public, particularly where it concerns my fishing business. I was very happy to have **Eliza Jacobs** back again last season. This was her third season. **Eliza** is very upbeat and outgoing in the best way. We also had a new recruit, **Lathrop Kelly**, who struck me as being mature beyond her age. She is a school mate of **Halley's** and the daughter of one of **Halley's** best teachers. **Lathrop** was excellent. I want to thank you all for being wonderful representatives of **Bunny Clark** and doing a great job besides. I very much appreciate it!

We had three reservationists who work solely with the people booking positions on the various fishing trips. Reservationists need to know how the trips work, what people want, how to provide it and to be able to communicate well and in a pleasant manner. We had some excellent people this year, made better by the fact that all have been with us before! That such nice people come back is certainly a benefit to us and the public they serve. Highest on my list, of course, is my daughter, **Halley**. **Halley** completed her fourth year last season. **Halley** and I communicate



very well together as she seems to do with everyone. I may be a little biased but I think she's the best. Also, it helps that she knows **Deb & Tim** better than anyone! **Katie Graichen** completed her third season with us last year. She is just about perfect, certainly everything I would want in a person dealing with the public, particularly where it concerns my fishing business. I was very happy to have **Eliza Jacobs** back again last season. This was her second season. Another great season with **Eliza**! I want to thank you, all three of you, for being who you are and for doing such a wonderful job. Don't change a thing!

[Ah, the trickery that's so a part of the **Bunny Clark** experience. The note is on the back of one **Glenn Stadnick** (CT). The picture was taken in May 2010. **Glenn** lost a cod bigger than **Dave Bingell's**, in 2009. And this one we could see on the surface, a gut wrenching loss! And what a way to lose it! Oh, by the way, **Peter Victoria** (CT) placed the note on **Glenn's** back in the dark before we left the dock. **Glenn** wore the note all day long without anyone telling him.]

This was my fourth season riding in the **Pan-Massachusetts Challenge (PMC)**, an 192 mile two day cycling event in August to raise money for cancer research and care at the **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI)**, Boston, Massachusetts. Last year I passed a total of \$96,279.25 to the **Jimmy Fund**, the fund raising arm of the **DFCI**, the end of a four year effort that included the support of more than a thousand donors. For this support from all of you, I feel deeply grateful. I have already renewed my application for the 2011 **PMC** and have thus far raised \$3,400.00. This means I have received and passed on a total of

\$99,679.25 or \$320.75 shy of the \$100,000.00 mark as of this writing. This is truly great and it helps to maintain the most wonderful cancer facility in the country right in our own back yard. The research that comes out of that place, the friends of mine it has cured, the kids that emerge cancer free and go on to a better life, the fact that 100 percent of your donation goes right to the cause with no fees taken out and the fact that this money pays for the best researchers in the world makes the **DFCI** number one to deserve the donations I try to bring to it through you. This is truly a way to make this planet a better world. And cancer curing needs the money. Thanks for your help.

As I end this **Guestletter**, I want to make you aware that I have never meant this missive to be just a newsletter. It is a primer or outline of the top events of the previous **Bunny Clark** fishing season. But, more than that, it's about the people, anglers and individuals who have made the past year something I enjoy writing about. My goal, when writing, has always been to include as many individuals as I can. I started my first newsletter with "Dear Guests" in 1984. It grew over the years into something that involved a commercial printing service. I named it the "**Guestletter**" in 1993. It has remained so ever since. And the reasons are obvious. So when you read this treatise again, pat yourself on the back. I couldn't write it or maintain this wonderful business without you. From the bottom of my heart; thank you, all, for another wonderful season. I am very much looking forward to seeing you again come April!


Best Fishes,
Tim Tower

My Favorite Angler



This is a shot taken of sixteen year old **Micah Tower** on the **Petrel**, our lobster boat, thirty miles offshore. We have spent many winter trips on this boat with many anglers from the **Bunny Clark** who have been gracious enough to say "yes" to an invitation to go on a spartan fishing trip with me. In this picture, **Micah** is reeling in a pollock while also assuming the **Petrel** fishing position, the most comfortable position for reeling a fish up. This was the first trip of the 2011 season, New Year's Day, a very successful one. We hope this trips success bleeds into the 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season!

If you want to send me e-mail, the current address is ttower@bunnyclark.com. The general email address is info@bunnyclark.com. My personal email address is sowhake@gmail.com.

With this web site in general, I hope to keep you current on all of the fishing particulars on the **Bunny Clark** and include updated information on fishery management decisions that could potentially affect us. For a current report go to the [Fishing Update](#) section from the link located on the index page of this web site. Thanks!

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