



# Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association

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8461C Fort Smallwood Road • Pasadena, MD 21122  
Phone: 410-255-5535 • Fax: 410-255-1552  
Email: fishmssa@aol.com • Website: www.mssa.net

Press Release - April 4, 2008

## Net Results - Illegal Fishing

Candus Thompson, *The Baltimore Sun*

I know where I'll be May 13: hanging out in the Kent County District courtroom of Judge Floyd Parks to listen to Samuel Joiner explain how he managed to scoop up 680 pounds of yellow perch - some of them oversized - before the season opened.

According to a Natural Resources Police report, it was dark and the running lights on his boat weren't on when he was stopped in the hours before the start of the season March 15.

I'm sure the Chestertown waterman (innocent until proven guilty, natch) has an explanation, and I can't wait to report it. For his sake, let's hope it's better than: "Your honor, it's hard to see those fish, let alone the calendar, in the dark."

Joiner, 29, was charged just 10 days after the end of his one-month probation for failing to mark his gill nets in February. The fisherman was also fined \$200 for setting unattended gill nets.

But Joiner's day in court is just the warm-up act for what follows May 15 in Talbot County District Court.

I can't wait to hear Joseph Bruce Janda Jr. explain to Judge William Adkins III why he came into the dock at Wittman Landing at 5:10 a.m. on March 9 with no lights on his boat. Or explain how those 12 1/2 bushels of oysters - many of them undersized - sneaked into the cabin.

When NRP officers asked to look below deck, Janda apparently refused to unlock a forward compartment. When officers got a warrant and went below, they reported finding that "11 of those bushels contained anywhere between 10 to 30 percent undersized oysters."

Janda (innocent until ... ) was charged with 11 counts of illegally possessing oysters and for having undersized oysters.

A sense of entitlement to Maryland's natural resources seems to run in Janda's blood. In the past six years, according to court records, this serial poacher has racked up almost 20 convictions, some multiple convictions: oystering with a revoked license, failing to mark his fishing gear, dredging in a restricted area, setting an unattended gill net, failing to cull oysters, possessing undersized hard crabs and operating a dredge in a hand tong area.

Top fine: \$500.

And he's only 22! Imagine how good he'll be at 40.

Now, I know most of you can't cut out of work to spend a day at the courthouse. So here's what you can do: give the prosecutor some ammunition.

In Talbot County, that would be State's Attorney Scott Patterson. His e-mail is: scottp@talbgov.org. His phone number is 410-770-8060. In Kent County, it's State's Attorney Robert Strong Jr. His e-mail is: rhstrong@kentgov.org His phone number is 410-778-7450.