



The River Keeper: September 2012



Chapter fishing trips are a great way to meet anglers who share your passion for fishing and your conservation ethic. Join us this fall for striped bass (above), atlantic salmon (right) and much more.



Chapter Fishing Trips Slated for the Fall Beginner or Experienced Angler, Join us on the Water

Join your friends and fellow members at the Mianus Chapter's great line-up of fall fishing trips.

Starting with a Sept. 22 outing to catch the beginning of the fall striped bass migration where the Housatonic River rushes into Long Island Sound, these trips are a great way for you to learn new places to fish, meet anglers who share your passion and build your local fishing skills.

A full schedule of fall fishing trips, as well as other chapter events can be found on Pages 4 & 5 and is always updated online at

www.mianustu.org.

Chapter fishing outings are a great way for beginner anglers - and those whose skills have gotten a little rusty - to spend time on the water with more experienced folks who are eager to share their skills and knowledge.

Spend a day with the Mianus Chapter members and your fishing skills are sure to improve. You'll also have a great time sharing the water with like-minded anglers who know that stewardship of our rivers is what provides us these great opportunities.

IN THIS ISSUE

You & Mianus TU	Page 2
Crab Invasion	Page 3
Chapter Calendar	Pages 4 - 6
Fixing The River	Page 7
Restoration Heroes	Page 8

A RIVER RANGER



Anglers: The first line of defense

As anglers, we spend more time outside and on the water than most Fairfield County residents and it is up to us to raise the alarm when we see activities that threaten the health of our rivers and streams.

Whether reporting a poacher, notifying officials of a wetlands violation or turning in a company illegally dumping grass clippings into a nearby stream, it may not be pleasant to get involved, but if we don't, who will?

The scene above, stumbled across by a Mianus Chapter member on the Norwalk River this spring was too egregious to ignore.

A few photographs, a short email to the DEEP, and the violator now has to fix the damage they caused, improve the river with bank stabilization and plantings and build new in-stream habitat to benefit trout and other aquatic life.

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ABOUT US

The Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited conserves, protects and restores the coldwater rivers and streams in lower Fairfield County. With more than 500 members living in Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, Norwalk, New Canaan, Ridgefield and Wilton, the Mianus Chapter leads restoration projects and cleanup events on local rivers, promotes educational programs in the schools, hosts fishing outings for members and collaborates with local governments, state agencies and other nonprofit groups to plan and implement conservation programs across the region.

Learn more at: www.mianustu.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

You & Mianus TU: Be A Part of It All



From river cleanups (above) and restoration projects to the fly fishing clinic, Special Olympics Derby and chapter fishing trips, there are so many ways you can participate.

The strength of the Mianus Chapter has - and always will be - the dedicated members and volunteers who make the organization tick.

With over 500 members, we are one of the largest, most active chapters in the country and this core of support from you provides us with the energy, the enthusiasm and the resources to accomplish all that we do.

We have restored thousands of feet of streambank on the Norwalk River, improved trout habitat and angler access on the Mianus River, introduced hundreds of new anglers to fishing and brought environmental education into schools in every town in our chapter.

But we can do so much more. And with your help and support, the Mianus Chapter is ready to kick things up a gear.

This year, we have begun planning a large-scale, multi-year restoration project that will further protect and support wild trout spawning on the Norwalk River. Talks have started with the state to consider special catch-and-release regulations in the fall to protect the adult fish on their spawning redds.

And plans are in place and the engineering is being conducted to remove

the last two dams on the river still blocking sea-run and anadromous fish passage into 13 miles of river.

On the Mianus River, we will literally be re-building the river within the Mianus River Park. Thanks to partnerships with the city of Stamford, the Mianus River Watershed Council and Friends of Mianus River Park, we have made great headway on this endeavor already. (See page 7)

A soon-to-be released master plan for the park's river corridor - commissioned by the chapter and city - will lay out the next decade-worth of work to bring the Mianus River back.

Our Trout in the Classroom program continues to grow, and new opportunities are emerging with teen fishing groups - including a 75-member student club in Wilton.

Yes, there is much going on these days, and so many ways for you, as a member, to make a difference.

If you've been wanting to attend a river cleanup, but haven't. If you've considered joining us on a fishing trip, but can't seem to find the time. Or if you've thought of countless other ways you can bring your skills to the chapter - now is the time to step forward.

The “Mitten Crab” Invasion: A Threat to Our Rivers



An alien invasion has been identified in the Mianus River and the help of anglers like you is needed.

In late June, a Chinese Mitten Crab - named for the fuzzy-looking growths on its two front claws - was found in the Mianus River fishway. It is unknown if this juvenile crab is a sole invader or a harbinger of the horde of crabs to come.

Why We Are Concerned

Native to eastern Asia and a relatively new inhabitant of the Atlantic coast - they were first identified around the Chesapeake Bay in 2005 - Chinese Mitten Crabs are the only crab that makes its home in fresh water.

On our local rivers, the two main threats these crabs can pose is in out-competing native species for food and habitat and accelerating erosion due to their habit of digging burrows into streambanks.

What To Look For

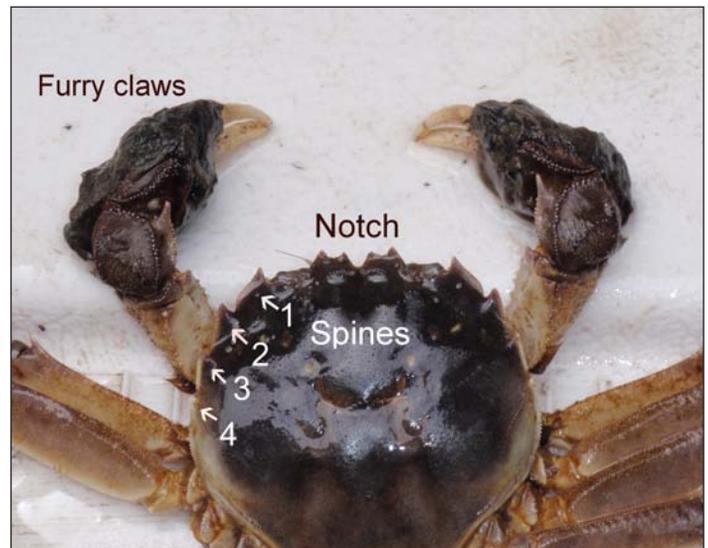
First and foremost, if you are fishing the Mianus or other local river and spot any crab in freshwater, it's a clear sign this is not a native species.

The most noticeable feature of these crabs are their two front claws, which have white pinchers surrounded by what looks like a furry, lumpy mitten.

These crabs will live the first 1 to 4 years of their life in freshwater - growing up to 12 inches including legs, then migrate to the saltwater as adults to spawn.

What to Do if You Spot One

The state is asking all residents - particularly anglers



The invasive and highly destructive Chinese Mitten Crab (named for the dark, fuzzy-looking growth on the two front claws) has been found in the Mianus River. Living most of their lives in freshwater - the only crab in the Atlantic to do so - mitten crabs can cause significant bank erosion due to the burrows they dig into the sides of streams.

Photo credit - Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

who are out on our rivers more frequently than others, to help stop the invasion in its tracks by identifying crab incursions and preventing them from spreading further.

If you spot a crab in the river, please do the following:

- 1) Capture the crab
- 2) Note the exact location it was found
- 3) Freeze it or keep it on ice
- 4) Contact the DEEP at (860) 434-6043

Mianus Chapter coming events - September to January

Fishing on Long Island - First Chapter Meeting is Tuesday, September 11

Long Island is more than concrete and highways.

With access to Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, several rivers holding native brook trout and sea-run trout, and dotted with lakes and ponds full of lively bass, there are plenty of fishing opportunities to be found.

On Tuesday, September 11, Paul McCain, a member of the Long Island Fly Rodders, will share his secrets of where to go, what to use and the surprising fishing you'll find on Long Island.

Just a short car or ferry ride away, the waters of Long Island offer close, convenient fishing for anglers searching out some new scenery.

Mianus Chapter monthly meetings are free and open to members and non-members alike. Coffee, soft drinks and snacks are served.

Doors open at 7 p.m. The program begins at 7:30.



Join us Tuesday, Sept. 11 for a great talk on the wide range of fishing opportunities offered on nearby Long Island.

Striped Bass Fishing Trip - Join us on Short Beach Saturday, September 22



Located where the Housatonic River flows into Long Island Sound, short beach offers great fall striper action.

Fish with fellow chapter members, bring your friends and new anglers and join the Mianus Chapter as we anticipate the fall migration of striped bass streaming into Long Island Sound and up the Housatonic River on this great fall fishing trip.

No guides, no set schedule or shore lunch, just an opportunity for Mianus Chapter members to get together as friends and fish some of the best waters our region has to offer. These informal chapter trips are a great way to meet likeminded anglers and future fishing buddies, improve your fishing skills, try a new area and learn where to go and how to fish these great spots.

Chapter outings are free and are open to members and the public. Email thill@mianustu.org to register.

Connetquot River Fishing Trip - Spend a Day on the Water Tuesday, October 2

Our annual fall outing to the Connetquot River in Long Island is always an anticipated event. While the number and size of trout have declined in recent years, the Connetquot offers easy wading, a beautiful setting and access to a river with a storied past.

Anglers must have a New York Fishing License and are limited to hip waders with rubber soles only.

Cost: \$60 per person.

Send reservations and checks to:

Dick O'Neill

90 Branchville Road

Ridgefield, CT 06877

Questions, email doneill@mianustu.org.



The Connetquot River in Long Island is a scenic destination to escape for a day of fishing.

Full details and updates online at www.mianustu.org

Special Olympics Fishing Derby - A Heartwarming Event - Saturday, October 6

The annual Special Olympics Fishing Derby is one of the Mianus Chapter's most popular events for members and volunteers. For nearly a decade the annual derby at the pond at Merwin Meadows Park in Wilton has helped athletes from Connecticut Special Olympics learn how to fish and also win \$1,000 prizes to help fund their team's training and expenses.

It doesn't take much to volunteer and the rewards are beyond description. To see an athlete reel in what may be the first fish of their life and then beam with joy, pride and a sense of accomplishment is beyond compare.

This year's derby takes place on Saturday, October 6, 2012, with preparation and setup starting at 10 a.m., the derby running from around noon to 1 p.m. and a complimentary lunch for athletes and volunteers following.

Email jyates@mianustu.org to sign-up and for details and directions.



Share your love of fishing with some special friends who will have you grinning from ear-to-ear with their excitement.

'Living Streamers' for Big Trout - Chapter meeting on Tuesday, October 9



Mark Sedotti knows how to tie, cast and fish big streamers and catch brutes like this. Learn his secrets on October 9

Well known for his casting skills and prowess fishing large flies for big fish, Mark Sedotti will bring a new level of understanding to anglers of all skill levels on the ability to catch big trout on large streamers.

He will join the Mianus Chapter on Tuesday, October 9 to share his fishing secrets.

Mark will present on tying, casting and fishing 'living streamers' to trigger aggressive strikes from big fish - whether they are actively feeding or not.

Mianus Chapter monthly meetings are free and open to members and non-members alike. Coffee, soft drinks and snacks are served.

Doors open at 7 p.m. The program begins at 7:30.

Farmington River Trip - Enjoy fall colors and fiesty trout Saturday, October 20

Spend a great day enjoying the scenery of northwestern Connecticut's spectacular fall colors, enjoy great fishing with fellow Mianus Chapter members, and maybe hook a fish of a lifetime as big brown trout aggressively feed to fatten up for the coming winter.

Join us for a free, informal fishing trip to the Farmington River on Saturday, October 20.

Bring your friends and new anglers, meet new like-minded fishing buddies and spend an afternoon on one of our region's great trout rivers.

Following fishing, we will head to a local restaurant to share a meal (at your cost) and tell lies about our trout!

Email jyates@mianustu.org to register.



Spend the day fishing the Farmington River on Saturday, October 20. Bring your friends, or make new ones on the river.

...and the fall and winter events don't stop there. Join us!

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, September 11

Meeting: Fishing on Long Island

Saturday, September 22

Trip: Striped Bass at Short Beach

Tuesday, October 2

Trip: Connetquot River, LI

Saturday, October 6

Special Olympics Fishing Derby

Tuesday, October 9

Meeting: Living Streamers

Saturday, October 20

Trip: Farmington River

Saturday, November 10

Trip: Naugatuck Atlantic Salmon

Tuesday, November 13

Meeting: Fishing Western Mass.

Tuesday, December 11

Annual Holiday Party

Tuesday, January 1

Trip: New Year's Day Fishing

Tuesday, January 8

Meeting: Fly Tying Clinic

DIRECTIONS

The Mianus Chapter's monthly meetings take place the second Tuesday of September-April at Waveny Mansion in New Canaan.

- Take Merritt Parkway to Exit 37 for Route 124 in New Canaan
- Head north on Route 124
- Take first left into Waveny Park
- Mansion is at top of the hill

Atlantic Salmon Fishing Trip - Saturday, November 10

Hook into a bright silver bullet, or a deep orange and brown hook-jawed Atlantic Salmon, experience the aerial display of leaps and fast runs and spend a day on the water with friends from the Mianus Chapter.

Best of all, you only have to travel about 1 hour from home to do it.

Each fall, the state stocks large broodstock atlantic salmon into the Naugatuck River. These fish - weighing anywhere from 2 to 20 pounds, offer a challenge to anglers and - if successful - a great fight.

Enjoy the last days of fall on a scenic river with fellow anglers who share your passion for fishing and your conservation ethic.

Email Tony Hill at thill@mianustu.org to register and for details.



Fishing Western Mass. - Chapter meeting November 13

For anglers looking for more great fishing opportunities within a few hours drive, the rivers of Western Massachusetts provide an easy trek and some incredible trout fishing.

On Tuesday, November 13, area guide and long-time supporter of the chapter Jack Smola will present on the fishing opportunities on the Deerfield, Westfield and Housatonic Rivers in Massachusetts.

Join Jack on a tour of these three great rivers as he covers where to go, when to go, what flies and gear you'll need and more.

Mianus Chapter monthly meetings are free and open to members and non-members alike. Coffee, soft drinks and snacks are served.

Doors open at 7 p.m. The program begins at 7:30.



Annual Holiday Party - Celebrate with us on December 11

Celebrate the holidays and usher out 2012 with the Mianus Chapter at our annual holiday party. Always a festive affair, members and guests alike are welcome to this free event. Catch up with old friends, meet new anglers who share your passion for fishing and conservation and spend an evening enjoying great food and company.

The chapter board provides a buffet-style array of shrimp and filet, smoked salmon and sausages, chips, dips, desserts and more. Our holiday raffle will feature a rod, great fishing tackle and related prizes as well as a wide selection of other items.

Doors open at 6 p.m. The presentation starts at 7:30.

New Year's Day Fishing Trip - Tuesday, January 1

Start the year off right - with a rod in hand and in the company of fellow anglers. Whether you've partied hardy, or tucked yourself in early on New Year's Eve, nothing beats a day of fishing to celebrate the start of 2013.

Email jjates@mianustu.org to register and for details.

Fixing the River: A plan to restore Mianus River Park

People are loving the Mianus River to death.

It's quite plain to see when you enter the Mianus River Park that the sheer volume of park visitors - from hikers to mountain biker and anglers to dog walkers - far exceeds what the park can handle.

Bootleg trails crisscross between the main road and the river, stream banks are completely denuded of vegetation and erosion is rampant - particularly where people, and dogs, frequently go in and out of the water.

Over the past five years, the Mianus Chapter, in partnership with the city of Stamford, Friends of Mianus River Park and other groups, have been quietly working to fix the worst of the problem areas in the park.

We have fenced off the most sensitive areas to give nature a chance to rest and recover.

We have replanted native vegetation like willows and witch hazel to provide some root structure to hold soil in place and shade to keep the river cool and protect trout from predators.

Two years ago, we installed the first of a series of planned hardened access paths down to the river, providing park users access to the water on a large stone path that prevents future erosion.



The popular "Boulder Pool" on the Mianus River is one of the stretches of river most significantly damaged by erosion from over use. This summer, the Mianus Chapter re-built the river bank and created a hard stone access path to limit future erosion.

These efforts have made a difference, but the severity of the situation warrants a more focused and aggressive approach.

Recently, the chapter and city combined resources and hired Bryan Quinn of One Nature: Ecological Services + Design to help us create a master plan for restoring the entire river corridor within Mianus River Park.

The draft of that plan is almost complete and lays out an ambitious strategy and timeline for re-configuring the trail system, repairing the eroded sections of bank and conducting significant in-stream restoration work.

By placing stone structures, log jams, woody debris and other engineered structures into the stream channel we will, over time, create a river which has the ability to heal itself.

The changes won't happen overnight - we will be proposing hundreds of thousands of dollars of restoration work phased over many years - but the momentum to fix the Mianus River is growing among city officials, park users, neighbors and other stakeholders.

With their help, and with yours, we will rebuild the river, repair the park and enhance the outdoor experience for all who flock to this 200-acre gem in the heart of Stamford and Greenwich.

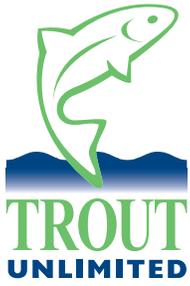
A Summer to Remember: Dispatches from fishing locations across the country

This summer, one of the Mianus Chapter's newest members - 15-year-old Patrick Friend of Darien - has been providing frequent, excited email updates from across the country as he experiences a wide-range of angling opportunities. From Florida to Maine and off the coast of Rhode Island, he has battled sailfish, false albacore, grouper, permit, redfish, barracuda, striped bass, landlocked salmon and brook trout with rod and reel.

His interest and enthusiasm are hard to mask: *"Not five minutes later in true cinematic fashion a sailfish exploded into the air. "KITE! STARBOARD LONG!" Jesus handing me the rod Frank firing up the engines and screaming at Jesus to get me a belt. I have never witnessed something as majestic as a sailfish constantly leaping completely out of the water."*



Patrick Friend with a 32.5 pound permit - a fish that earned him the top spot in the Angler's Club record books down in Key Largo. He topped this off with an 80-pound sailfish.



Mianus Chapter
Trout Unlimited
PO Box 475
Wilton, CT 06897

Thank you for your help as we work to restore our local rivers

This summer, more than 30 Mianus Chapter members pitched in to help on restoration projects along the banks of the Norwalk River.

We cleared invasive vines, planted native willows, sycamores and other shrubs and trees and installed a conifer revetment to stabilize an eroding streambank.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for these important - and fun - projects to improve our rivers and protect our trout.

Over the past 15 years, Mianus Chapter volunteers have contributed thousands of hours restoring and repairing our local streams. And we are getting results.

In one location where we completed work, state electroshocking surveys have shown the population of juvenile, wild trout spawned in the river increased more than 300%.

These stream restoration projects are a great way for you, your friends and your family to get involved in the Mianus Chapter - there are tasks for everyone, no matter your age, strength or experience.

What's more, by helping build the habitat that will protect the trout in the river, you will learn a great deal about the river ecosystem and how it functions - priceless knowledge for when you are out later in the season stalking those same trout with rod and fly.



Mianus Chapter members Johnnie Jackson and Tommy Cody drive anchors into the river bed to secure a conifer revetment.

Remember: If you take care of the fish, the fishing will take care of itself..