

*From the Baltimore Sun*

## **3 watermen fined for illegal fishing**

### **Men's nets held more than 22,000 pounds of yellow perch, a protected species in Md.**

By Candus Thomson  
Sun reporter

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The current and former presidents of the Baltimore County Watermen's Association and a third commercial fisherman have pleaded guilty in federal court to charges of poaching off Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Charles "Sonny" Norris, Daniel F. Beck and Harry Foote III were arrested March 1, 2005, by officers of the Army installation's Marine, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement Division, who pulled up about 85 nets filled with more than 22,000 pounds of yellow perch, a fish protected under Maryland law.

State law prohibits commercial yellow perch fishing in February, the fish's spawning month.

Federal officers said that after warning the men for several years, they watched them set their nets in early February.

When the men boarded the boat March 1, the officers confiscated 2,500 pounds of fish and released 20,000 pounds, a catch valued at \$39,000.

The three watermen - who work out of Middle River - each pleaded guilty Monday in U.S. District Court in Baltimore to a single misdemeanor, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Beck, 57, who led the Baltimore County Watermen's Association for 20 years, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Marvin J. Garbis to a year of probation, was fined \$5,000 and was ordered to forfeit three nets.

Norris, 40, the current president, received a year of probation, was fined \$1,500 and forfeited one net.

Foote, 47, received one year's probation, was fined \$1,500 and forfeited three nets.

In 2000, Beck pleaded guilty to federal charges of catching as much as \$70,000 worth of striped bass off of APG using state fishing licenses issued to his wife and daughter, then falsifying his catch information at his state-licensed check station.

Garbis sentenced him then to one year and one day in federal prison, fined him \$5,000 and ordered the forfeiture of his fishing license, boat and nets.