

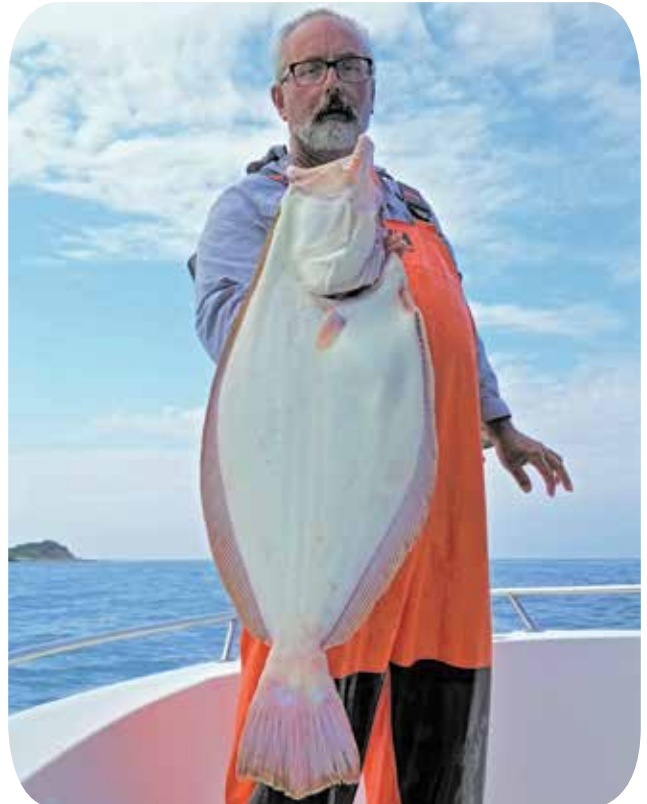
ARTIST AND ANGLER

SAVIO MIZZI

BY FRED GOLOFARO

Capt. Savio Mizzi who serves as The Fisherman's staff artist has been practicing art since his days as a youth on the island of Gozo in Malta. There he also developed a love for fishing, though in that part of the world, most of his fishing was done with handlines. In 1974 at age 18, he and his family came to the United States and settled in Queens. He went to school for advertising design and also studied art in Europe. His work was featured in shows throughout Europe and the United States and in addition to his art sales, he did a lot of freelance work for newspapers, national magazines, the fashion industry, book publishers and advertising agencies. His work was regularly featured in Newsday's magazine section once he settled on Long Island. Known in the art world as "The Renaissance Man" for his mixed media approach and diverse painting style, his work ranged from surrealism to realistic water colors with a unique style all his own. When he wasn't working on his paintings, he was designing and building furniture, as well as several homes. He continues to do commission work, much of it featuring gamefish, including striped bass, bluefish, fluke, tuna, sharks, tarpon, bonefish, redfish, snook and permit. His artwork has also been the featured prize at several prestigious fishing tournaments in the Northeast and Florida.

He attributes his diversity to "getting bored" and always looking for a new challenge, although when it comes to fishing he never gets bored. In fact, there are times when fishing takes precedence over everything else, including work. He moved out to East Hampton in 1989 and fishing soon became a priority. It wasn't until later in the 1990s that he found his way out to the Montauk surf after being tipped off by a neighbor. In the pre-dawn hours, every cast produced a big bluefish. The striped bass fishery was entering the height of its historic recovery at the time and as dawn broke on Jones Reef, Savio found himself face to face with waves full of stripers. During a break in the torrid action, he phoned his wife from the lighthouse parking



Capt. Savio with one of eight fluke he caught over 10 pounds last season. Photo by James Levison.

lot and told her "I just died and ended up in heaven – don't know when I'll be home." He became fanatical in his pursuit of striped bass, ignoring work and leaving \$10,000 worth of book cover art for a major book publisher unfinished. He fished every day – all day that fall and several falls after, costing him tens of thousands of dollars in lost work, but as he said, "It was worth every one of those dollars."

We all know what has happened to the striped bass fishery since those golden years. Beaches once crowded with casters from all over the Northeast are often void of anglers during what used to be the height of the fall run, but Savio remains fanatical about his fishing. While he still loves to pursue striped bass, he now runs a guide service (fishhooker.com) specializing in light tackle fishing for not only bass, but also blues, albies, sea bass and fluke. Last season he personally decked eight fluke over 10 pounds on bucktails and light tackle. When he isn't fishing, he keeps busy doing artwork commissioned by other anglers with a penchant for art. He can be reached at saviofishhooker@gmail.com. 🐟