

Chesapeake Bay Buyboat Association 15th Reunion Cruise

The Chesapeake Bay Buyboat Association announces its plans for its 2018 Reunion Cruise. Beginning on the weekend of August 3-5 in Urbanna, Virginia, approximately 10 to 15 of the large traditional freight and seafood industry vessels will travel the southern Chesapeake Bay, also visiting Deltaville on August 6-7, Hampton on August 8-9, and ending their tour at Whitehouse Cove Marina in Poquoson the weekend of August 10-12.

They will be open to the public in Urbanna, Hampton, and Poquoson.

From the early 1900s through the 1980s, buyboats traveled the length and breadth of the Chesapeake Bay. At one time numbering several thousand vessels, there are now about thirty still alive in the bay area. Their tasks included the buying, transport, and selling of oysters from tonger to shucking house (hence the name "buyboat"). The large decked boats with a large boom for lifting cargo also carried lumber from sawmills, tomatoes to packing plants, pigs to Smithfield, and watermelons from as far as Elizabeth City, where the sweetest varieties were grown, to Baltimore for shipment further north. Soft crabs were shipped quickly from southern ports. As highways, trucks, and fast engines took away their freighting duties, the boats became active as crab and oyster dredgers, and a number of the vessels were active into the 1990s. The **Delvin K.** of Tangier and the **Poppa Francis** of Piney Point, MD have been continuously worked to the present.

The mission of the Chesapeake Bay Buyboat Association is to bring an understanding of these historic vessels to ports where they were once numerous but often now forgotten. The wooden workboats, which average 60 feet in length, are still voyaging to the far reaches of the bay as privately-owned vessels and museum educational boats. Visiting the communities where generations of watermen once plied the tributaries of the Chesapeake, the owners, at their own expense, open the boats to visitors so that future generations can celebrate their long heritage and continued existence. The boats often welcome watermen who once greeted the dawn of a cold day on a Chesapeake workboat, heading out to shovel oysters or dredge crabs. Nowadays, while the work aboard a Chesapeake Bay buyboat is far less demanding of her crew, their upkeep is no less onerous. During the 15th Chesapeake Bay Buyboat Reunion cruise, you are invited to step aboard and visit the past.

Buyboats signed up to attend the Urbanna "Homecoming" include: **F.D. Crockett**, Deltaville Maritime Museum; **Peggy**, Mathews Maritime Foundation;

Elva C., Reedville Fisherman's Museum; **Muriel Eileen**, Georgetown, MD; **Nellie Crockett**, Georgetown, MD; **P.E.Pruitt**, Rock Hall, MD, **East Hampton**, Chester River, MD; **Thomas J.**, Rowles Wharf, MD; **Samuel Bailey**, Bushwood, MD; **Propwash**, Dumfries, VA, **Linda Carol**, Bavon, VA, **Veteran**, Urbanna, VA, **55th Virginia**, Urbanna, and **Joy**, Wanchese, NC. More information at <http://www.oysterbuyboats.com>.