

The Saltwater Fishing Show: rods, jerky and white camo pants

by TODD CORAYER

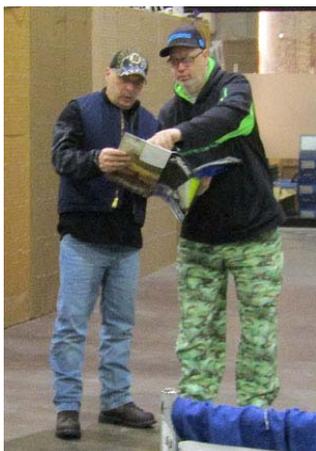


The **R.I. Saltwater Anglers Association** hosted their most successful Saltwater Fishing Show ever. They broke attendance records all three days. There were fishermen and women queued up an hour before doors opened. They hosted dozens of speakers, seminars and television stars. They made sure Narragansett Brewing Company handed out free samples to keep the masses calm.

President Steve Medeiros and his all star team of volunteers are the best oiled machine this side of a Dave Morton refurbished reel. Basically, they nailed it.

Walking the show to peruse the latest and greatest gear is sheer joy for fisher folks of all ages. Then, there's the fashion. It's hard to overlook clothing options on display and not wonder how some piece came to be worn with another.

Full disclaimer: no judging here. These are merely observations of a guy working a busy booth who was occasionally drawn away to make notes on a few people's decisions about what to wear. In public.



Lookin' good on a Saturday morning

Only one "Eat Fish" hat was seen. There was a stark decline in red "Make Fishing Great Again" hats. Perhaps a current decline in popularity was behind that or maybe fishing as a way to get away from politics itself has rebounded.



Camouflage is always big at the show. Even the self-appointed iconic restaurant turned clothing pimp. The Black Dog has camo shirts now.

Last year a toddler was seen wobbling down the aisles in head to little toes camo while his parents strutted their

own green on green patterns. This year no stalking babies were observed, but dozens of young kids were there in camo hats, jackets, belts and even a few pairs of sneakers. They must be for sneaking up on deer.

Some adults struggled to match their patterns. It seems like if you're going to make a statement by wearing **Realtree** designs on your everything, shouldn't you at least match?

One older man, who may have started his day by leaning on the good **Narragansett Beer** folks for an hour or three, wore khaki shorts with well-earned tatters on the ends and a heavy fleece camo jacket. Which season he was prepared for remains a mystery.



Another older man whose midsection came around the corner a long second before the rest of him did, passed us by wearing brushed fleece camo pajama bottoms, distributing a scent likely earned by some extended sampling at The Jerky Hut. That's an image you need to roll around for a moment. Those pants seemed unfit for tree stands, but so then did the rest of him.

Hikers love the expression, "not all who wander are lost." That cat was both.

Cowboy hats seemed to have gained some traction this year. Sharp and rarely donned ones, floppy, dirty, dusty ones, and ones that may have been driven over by a semi a few times capped several heads. Maybe they highlight how wide a draw the show has.

T-shirts are always a big deal. People seem to relish the opportunity to strut their message in front of a large, shuffling audience.

"Fishaholic" was popular, as was "Captunamerica."

"Cod give me strength" announced another.

One gent wore a shirt airbrushed with a picture of a fly fisherman casting into a perfect stream, apologizing for a missed call because his, "arm was stuck in a cast." Some clever.

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