

# **JCAA NEWSPAPER MAY 2008**

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on April 21st, 2008)

Remember New Monthly Meeting Room

**"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"**

## **JCAA REGULAR MEETING:**

**Tuesday, April 29th, 2008**

**Starting at 7:30 PM**

**Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd**

**NEXT JCAA EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**Thursday, May 8th, 2008**

**Starting at 7:30 PM at JCAA Office**

## **OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.**

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**JCAA Newspaper Editor Paul Turi**

This publication is printed and mailed one week prior to each regular monthly meeting of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. One of the prime goals of JCAA is to get accurate information into public hands as soon as possible.

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**JCAA General Membership Meetings are for club representatives and invited guests only. These meetings are not open to the general public. If you would like to attend as a guest, call the President at 732-446-6298 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
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**Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page**

## **Subject: Letter from the Board of Directors of JCAA to The Fisherman Magazine**

JCAA Board of Directors was very disappointed with the attack on JCAA in the Executive Editor's Log by Jim Hutchinson in the April 3, 2008 New Jersey Fisherman Magazine.

At the November 2007 New Jersey Outdoor Writers Meeting, Jim Hutchinson and Tom Fote had a discussion about the strained relationship between JCAA and The Fisherman Magazine for the past few years. We agreed that JCAA and The Fisherman should set up a meeting to discuss the issues. Most of us assumed that this meeting would be a response to the discussion with The Fisherman Magazine and that the agenda would be to resolve some of our disagreements. At our joint meeting The Fisherman only wanted to discuss the JCAA membership in the Marine Fish Conservation Network. At the conclusion of this meeting we were surprised to be given a prewritten letter from The Fisherman demanding JCAA Board withdrawal from the Marine Fish Conservation Network or The Fisherman would no longer financially support JCAA through its sponsorship and with articles. JCAA has never caved into financial threats. There are a number of items the representatives of The Fisherman fail to understand. First, The Fisherman has never been a member of JCAA. JCAA is an association of fishing clubs and other organizations concerned with the marine resource. Second, the assumption that the JCAA Board makes policy decisions for JCAA is false. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Board only handles the business operations of JCAA. At the general meetings, the representatives of the member clubs and organizations make policy and vote on actions that JCAA should take. The Board simply

implements policies determined by the majority of our membership. Since our membership in the Marine Fish Conservation Network is determined by the member clubs, the JCAA Board was never in a position to give in to the demand by The Fisherman Magazine that we withdraw from the Marine Fish Conservation Network. Given the controversy that has surrounded our continued participation with the Network during the summer flounder debate, these issues were discussed at JCAA General Membership Meetings many times prior to the meeting with The Fisherman. Our member clubs have been steadfast in their recognition that our membership in the Network allows us to continue to be part of the debate with other members of the Marine Fish Conservation Network. You need only read the article called "JCAA'S Participation in the Marine Fish Conservation Network" appearing in the 2008 January and February issues of the JCAA Newspaper to get a fuller understanding of our participation in the Network. This article can be found on our web site at <http://www.jcaa.org>.

We believe that members of the press should be reporting on varied points of view so their readers can make informed decisions. The Fisherman Magazine has every right to take an editorial position on any subject. But to malign those who disagree with them and express their opinions using information they know to be incorrect is misleading journalism. American Sportfishing Association (The trade association of the tackle manufacturers) asked JCAA to replace them on the Advisory Board of the MFCN. JCAA accepted the challenge. At the 2008 Saltwater Expo in March the President of ASA told The Fisherman staff and the members of SSFFF that he "was responsible for encouraging JCAA to join the Advisory Board of MFCN." The President of ASA was clear that our responsibility was to provide a strong recreational fishing voice in the Network and keep the Network out of the Marine Protected Area debate. As long as JCAA or ASA have participated on the MFCN Advisory Boards, the MFCN have taken no position on MPAs. The Fisherman Magazine article claims the MFCN has been promoting MPAs and that is just blatantly not true.

When we met with The Fisherman representatives in January, we explained that JCAA never joined Conserve Our Ocean Legacy and have repeatedly asked for our name to be removed from any of their publications and web page. Over 18

months ago RFA brought the COOL webpage to our attention and we immediately contacted them to insist on our withdrawal. It was not clear from the way they listed Jersey Coast Anglers if they were even referring to JCAA but we demanded the name removal anyway. That has taken place. To claim that COOL speaks for JCAA is just not true and The Fisherman was made aware of that in January but did not mention that in their editorial article.

JCAA has always sought to form partnerships with the goal of dealing with major issues and accomplishing positive results. Currently, JCAA is a member of the Partnership for Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Science Inc. (PFMAFS). Garden State Seafood Association (GSSA), RFA, United Boatmen of NY and NJ and SSFFF are all members of this partnership that has the goal of arriving at better science to accurately assess fish stocks for management purposes. JCAA has frequent disagreements with Garden State Seafood Association. For example, we are currently working on legislation to ban all pots from the artificial reefs and GSSA strongly opposes this. We also strongly disagree with attempts by Garden State Seafood to open NJ waters for commercial harvest of striped bass. We fought with them about the removal of the Menhaden reduction boats. However, we have also worked together on ocean dumping, stopping the proposal to build Liquid Natural Gas distribution centers in the ocean off NJ and getting better science on summer flounder. JCAA and the Garden State Seafood both contributed \$15,000 to get better science for summer flounder. Would The Fisherman Magazine like JCAA to ignore the possibility of working together on important issues? Early in JCAA's history, Capt Len Belcaro (Big Game Fishing Journal) put together a diverse coalition to stop the dumping of chemicals, sewage sludge, wood burning and close down the chemical dumps in the ocean. Len realized we could not do this alone and extended our partnerships beyond New Jersey and to any organization that recognized the importance of these issues. This partnership included recreational, commercial and other environmental groups. It was called Cease Ocean Dumping (COD). Because of those early partnerships with groups that we sometimes had disagreements with, we no longer have this type of dumping in the ocean. Consequently, we were able to achieve a great victory for the environment and our fishing community.

Perhaps a little history will help people understand perhaps why The Fisherman wrote the editorial article in question. There has been a strained relationship between JCAA and The Fisherman since 2002 when the publishers and editors of The Fisherman demanded that they be given the exclusive media sponsorship for the JCAA annual Fluke Tournament. Since we had one other long-term media sponsor at that time, we did not feel it was appropriate to drop them. We explained that while we gave exclusivity to various types of product sponsors, we had always treated media differently. All the media is essential to not only promote the fluke tournament but share information from state and national meetings about issues of importance to all anglers. Despite two years of discussion about this issue, in 2004 The Fisherman issued an ultimatum. Their proposal was to create an opportunity for magazines to bid for exclusive media rights to the JCAA Fluke Tournament. After careful consideration and discussion with our membership, the JCAA offered both magazines an opportunity to bid for exclusivity with the understanding that the financial incentive would be large enough to cover JCAA's additional advertising costs in other publications. Neither magazine wanted to pursue exclusivity given the high cost. In truth, JCAA was grateful that we would not lose the relationship with either publication. However, The Fisherman withdrew sponsorship for the JCAA Fluke Tournament giving the other magazine temporary exclusivity. When we later added another publication as a sponsor, we offered The Fisherman an opportunity to reinstate their support. Neither of the other two publications, New Jersey Angler and Nor'east Saltwater, had any problem sharing the spotlight. The Fisherman declined the offer. The Fisherman did continue their \$500 JCAA sponsorship until they withdrew it after the January 2008 meeting. After The Fisherman withdrew their sponsorship of the JCAA Fluke Tournament, JCAA paid for an advertisement for the Fluke Tournament for the next year in The Fisherman. We declined to continue that practice when The Fisherman refused to list all of the Fluke Tournament sponsors. We have never had that problem with any other publication.

In the past 27 years, JCAA has maintained a close relationship with all of the previous editors of The Fisherman Magazine. They understood we were protecting their jobs, the recreational fishing industry

as well are the rights of recreational anglers. And those relationships remain positive to this day. Historically, we disagreed about striped bass gamefish and we never criticized The Fisherman Magazine for not actively supporting the NJ legislation in the early 90s that JCAA was instrumental in passing. We had the same lack of support by The Fisherman Magazine for striped bass as a game fish in New York when we tried to get a bill passed in the early 90s. Again, the JCAA never openly criticized The Fisherman for their position since such negative press serves to divide the recreational fishing community when we all need to stick together given the obstacles we face from those groups who want to shut down our fishery.

The most blatant falsehood included in The Fisherman article is that they are only being critical of the JCAA Board but not the clubs, organizations and fishermen who are members of JCAA. The JCAA Board only runs the business of JCAA. Our membership, through their representatives, makes the policy. An attack on JCAA is an attack on every member club and every member of every member club since this is their organization for 27 years and they vote on all its policies.

## JCAA HIGH ROLLER RAFFLE

The JCAA High Rollers 2008 Raffle will be drawn on April 29, 2008.. Tickets are two dollars.

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Shimano Tiagra TI-30WLRSA reel with a Shimano LCX8MHRSA rod                 | Value \$805    |
| 2. Minn Kota Riptide Trolling Motor model RT 55/SE/L&D                         | Value \$550    |
| <i>Donated by Johnson Outdoors Inc</i>   |                |
| 3. Fisherman's Headquarters, Ship Bottom, NJ donates a \$500.00 Shopping Spree | Value \$500    |
| 4. U S REEL 240 SX reel with Lamiglas EXS 722 rod                              | Value \$450    |
| <i>Donated by Lamiglas and US REELS</i>  |                |
| 5. Shimano TLD 30 reel with Profile GL5630 stand up rod                        | Value \$430    |
| <i>Donated by Profile Rods</i>   |                |
| 6. Penn 850SSm Spinfisher reel with a Offshore Angler OMCP11SS rod             | Value \$300    |
| <i>Donated by Bass Pro Shops</i>   |                |
| 7. Shimano Stradic - ST-5000FI Reel with Shimano Terramar TMS-70MH Rod         | Value \$280    |
| <i>Donated by Shimano</i>  |                |
| 8. Tsunami TSSD 3000 reel and TFSBC-601MH rod                                  | Value \$150    |
| <i>Donated by Bimini Bay Outfitters</i>  |                |
| <b>Total Value</b>   | <b>\$3,465</b> |

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**April 29<sup>th</sup>** JCAA General Mtg & Raffle Drawing

**May 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>** ASMFC Meeting Week

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** JCAA Board Meeting

**May 27<sup>th</sup>** JCAA General Meeting

**June 12<sup>th</sup>** JCAA Board Meeting

**June 14<sup>th</sup>** JCAA Fluke Tournament

**June 20<sup>th</sup>** JCAA Fluke Tournament Award

Ceremony

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*By John Toth*

**Outdoors Writers Workshop** - Tom Fote and I attended an Outdoors Writers Workshop sponsored by the JCAA and the NJ Federation of Sportsman's Clubs on April 1, 2008 at the Assunpink Central Region Office. The purpose of this meeting was to have the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife give a presentation to sportswriters on the latest projects the Division is working on so what they report is timely and accurate. While we heard about a variety of issues, Director Chanda reported that his Division is undergoing a hiring freeze and they cannot hire needed employees to fill a number of vacant positions that is very negative impact on what the Division can accomplish. He reported that the Division presently has 169 employees and approximately 40 of them can retire if the state offers an early retirement incentive program. The Division is certainly being impacted by NJ's budget problems, but we (anglers and hunters) will suffer if the Division loses an inordinate amount of staff over this budgetary issue. We will keep you informed over the latest developments on how the budgetary issues are affecting the Division.

**New Jersey Outdoor Alliance** – This coalition of anglers and hunters was instrumental in defeating Senator Karcher and Assemblyman Panter whose agenda was to stack the NJ Marine Fish Council with animal right activists. This organization is not a one-issue organization and it is dedicated to protecting the angling and hunting rights of all who hunt and fish in NJ. I attended the NJ Outdoor Alliance meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup>, and the NJOA has decided to retain a lobbyist who will represent anglers and hunters on a full time basis in Trenton. The lobbyist is Mr. Bill Pascrell from Princeton Public Affairs Group. He will promote all of our interests with the

legislators in Trenton and also advise us on the best course of action on pending legislation concerning fishing and hunting issues. If New Jersey's anglers and hunters were united in one voice, we could control this state! More on this topic to follow!

**Response by the Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) to the Executive Editor's Log in Edition # 14, April 3, 2008 of the Fisherman's Magazine.**

A more detailed response to this editorial is in this newsletter, but I have offered a much shorter version that shows the pros and cons of this issue. We will discuss this abbreviated response and the JCAA's association with the Marine Fish Conservation at our General Meeting scheduled for Tuesday April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Most, if not all anglers, are environmentalists at heart. We know that if we defile our oceans, the fish will be gone. With this perspective in mind, the JCAA, along with other fishing organizations, joined the Marine Fisheries Conservation Network (Network) when it was first formed in 1994. In 2001, the American Sportsman Association (ASA) asked the JCAA to serve on the Network's Board of Directors to represent all of our recreational interests. The pros and cons of our membership in the Network follow:

### **PROS:**

- The JCAA steers the Network away from Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) and other harmful issues to the recreational community. Just very recently there has been a renewed call for more MPA's by environmentalists.
- At the JCAA's urging, The Network is pushing for funding in the Federal budget to pay for the best possible science that we all know we desperately need to argue against severe reductions in fluke quotas and other species.
- The JCAA influenced the Network in not asking for a lower summer quota (11.7) pounds for the 2008 season.
- With input from the JCAA, the Network is trying to protect important forage fish such as menhaden.
- The Network shares all of our commitment for clean water and is a good ally with the recreational community in fighting for it.

- The JCAA's membership in the Network at least ensures that the recreational point of view is heard in the environmental community. Without it there would be no counter arguments to those extreme environmentalists who want to take the Network and other environmental groups to follow their anti-recreational agenda.

**CONS:**

- The JCAA's affiliation with the Network gives the recreational community the impression that the JCAA supports and endorses all of the Network's positions that are hostile to recreational interests. This is definitely not true!
- The JCAA has received very negative press (such as the editorial in question) over its affiliation with the Network while trying to protect anglers from extreme environmental groups.

All of these points were shared with the Fisherman staff at our January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting and that the JCAA member clubs, not its Board members, make policy in regard to all JCAA issues including which organizations the JCAA join. JCAA membership in the Network has been approved by its member clubs and this membership can be terminated anytime if the member clubs decide to do so. We, like the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and the American Sportsman Association (ASA) and other Network members, have had and still have issues with the Network in regard some of their positions, especially as it relates to summer flounder. There also may come a time when the JCAA removes its membership from the Network because of these types of issues. However, at this time the JCAA feels that its membership in the Network can better serve the best interests of the recreational angling community. **The real issue here is that all recreational groups need to stick together to have a united front against all of those interest groups who want to end fishing as we know it.** As Benjamin Franklin said over 200 years ago, "we all need to stick together or surely we all hang separately one by one."

**SHARE YOUR FUN  
TEACH & TAKE  
SOMEONE FISHING**

## **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT & LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

*By Thomas Fote*

### IN MEMORY OF RALPH KNISELL AND PHIL KOZAK

#### Ralph Knisell

Ralph Knisell was 83 and lived in Wenonah, N.J. He died Friday, April 11, 2008. I knew Ralph as an outdoor writer, radio personality, rod builder and reel repairman. Ralph would call me at least twice a month and we talked about fisheries issues. I would do a lot of listening and learning since he fished an area unfamiliar to me and had more years of experience than I did. He was a friend of JCAA and always supported our efforts. I would meet him and his wife Rachel at the outdoor writer's workshop and we would always talk about the current issues. I am sorry I never did accept one of his invitations to come fish with him in Delaware Bay. He will be sorely missed by the anglers who enjoyed his radio show, read his columns and his many articles but most of all he will be missed as a husband, father and grandfather.

He is survived by his wife Rachel (nee Burke), son Richard L. Knisell and his wife Patty of Garnet Valley, Pa., and their daughters Kelsey and Luran, and son Harry W. Knisell and his wife Deborah of Flovilla, Ga., and their daughters Brandy and Sheena and Ralph's four great-grandchildren.

#### Phil Kozak

I met Phil at a tuna meeting. He had started the National Fishing Association to work on fisheries issues. I welcomed him aboard the frustrating thing called fisheries management and especially tuna management. Phil would host meetings and tried to get collations formed to work together on complicated fisheries issues and to build consensus. He was a fighter and would never give up. He would send me emails with a new idea and we would discuss it. I remember last year coming back from a striper trip in Keyport. I was standing by my car when Phil pulled in. Of course, the next hour was spent talking about fisheries management and fishing and an invitation to fish with him. I am sorry I did not take him up on the trip since it now will never happen.

Phil Kozak leaves his wife of 47 years, Patricia, son Phil Jr. and daughter Donna Monarque. His family requested that in lieu of flowers donations are requested for the NFA/Phil Kozak Memorial Children's Fishing Derby, P.O. Box 50, Pompton Lakes, N.J., 07442-0050.

### **NJEF Conference 4/5/08**

The NJ Environmental Conference was a great success. It brings together advocates, scientists, students and politicians from around New Jersey. I moderated a panel discussion titled "Drugs Down the Drain." I was unsure how much attention this topic would draw but it was standing room only. The panelists were Dr. Anne McElroy, Stony Brook University, and Barker Hamill, Assistant Director Water Supply Operations for NJ DEP. They each brought their unique perspective and experience, water quality from Mr. Hamill and research science on the effects of endocrine disruptors on fish from Dr. McElroy. They both proved to be fabulous resources for those of us who want to become knowledgeable about these topics. Though this topic is near and dear to my heart, I learned a great deal from both of them. JCAA will be posting more information on our website including Dr. McElroy's research. Scientists are meeting in small groups and conferences around the country but we need to bring everyone together, including the public, to initiate a shared dialogue around this topic. JCAA will be looking at making that happen. I will disseminate more information about the NJEF Conference when the report comes out.

Senator Frank Lautenberg had a hearing on water quality issues about drugs in drinking water. See the newspaper article included in this newspaper. The US Congress is planning a hearing soon on the effects of endocrine disruptors on fish. We will share the information as it becomes available.

The April JCAA Newspaper included much information about this topic. Although I was questioned about the amount of information included relative to articles about fishing, recent conversations with anglers I meet at various functions have confirmed for me that we are all interested in this important environmental issue. It is clear that New Jersey's anglers can understand the long-term impact of environmental issues on fisheries and their own quality of life.

**GET THE POTS OFF REEFS**

### **Monmouth University Ecosystem Conference**

I also had the privilege of serving on a panel on ecosystem-based management at a conference at Monmouth University . This conference was sponsored by the Urban Coastal Institute (UCI ), ([http://www.monmouth.edu/urban\\_coast\\_institute/default.asp](http://www.monmouth.edu/urban_coast_institute/default.asp)). Tony MacDonald is currently the director of the Urban Coast Institute, John Tiedemann Assistant Director of UCI and Jennifer DiLorenzo Sustainable Coastal Communities Liaison coordinated this conference. The purpose of the conference was to identify opportunities and challenges to ecosystem-based management (EBM) in the NY/NJ region. Topics included indicators and criteria for successful EBM; How EBM can enhance current management regimes; Marine spatial planning; Data collection and information sharing; and integrated regional ocean governance to address critical ocean and coastal issues.

It was interesting to attend this discussion with New Jersey scientists, DEP officials, university professors, and environmental activists, many of which I have worked on projects with for over the last 20 years. There was also representation from New York State Government. Ecosystem management is expensive. Much of the data we need is not readily available or easily synthesized. When I look at the money being spent outside of New Jersey, I am concerned about our lack of funding. New York has appropriated 12 million dollars and Massachusetts is doing a 12 million dollar study. We can't fund the Bureau of Marine Fisheries sufficiently to gather the necessary data for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Management Plans. The entire DEP budget for the marine resource is 3.1 million dollars. Until there is an economic commitment to this issue coastwide, we will not have the information necessary for the long-term ecosystem management. In a perfect world, we could look at the management of summer flounder and discover the impacts of global warming, loss of habitat, prey/predator relationship, endocrine disruptors, water quality and quantity in nursery areas, bycatch, and other issues. All we deal with now is the actual harvest and we have no actual idea about natural mortality. If the natural mortality is higher, then the quotas could be higher. But the fishing public is being penalized by the lack of research.

**SUPPORT THE ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM**

## Summer Flounder

Bruce Freeman attended a pre-stock assessment meeting in Woods Hole. He will brief the general membership at our meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Bruce has serious concerns about how this will be resolved. We are lucky this year that our coalitions have been able to send scientists to these meetings and gather the most current information. It is important the scientists are able to be part of the discussion and express their concerns from a scientific point of view. The long-term consequences of the poorly conceived and implemented management plans will be felt by the recreations community for years to come. Add these tough regulations to the gas prices and faltering economy and this is not going to be a good economic summer for the recreational fishing industry. Businesses will fail and lives will be changed needlessly.

## **TOURNAMENT BEST INDICATOR OF FLUKE FISHERY**

**By John Geiser  
March 27, 2008**

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association will hold its 14th annual fluke tournament June 14, and anglers are hoping it will not be the last.

The JCAA event, with its statewide format and one-day results, provides probably the best information on fluke that scientists or non-scientists can gather in June. Despite this significant contribution to science, the tournament depends on the recreational fishery. Some of the fluke fishing options offered the recreational community this year and last year would have cut out the June event, if adopted.

The JCAA could have opted for a later date, if that had happened, but the valuable data pattern would have been upset. It would be similar to the National Marine Fisheries Service trawl survey being held on different dates or new stations. The real blow, of course, might come next year, if NMFS decides to close the fluke fishery or pushes the minimum size so high that Fortescue and back bay anglers are shut out of the tournament.

It will be tough even so for those anglers this year with an 18-inch minimum size. Some Barnegat and Great Bay anglers said that even last year they were hard pressed to land a keeper. In any case, the tournament is on for this year, and JCAA president John Toth promises it will be an exciting event.

"There are loads of prizes to be won from 12 different ports, and our many tournament sponsors will provide numerous door prizes at the Trump Casino," he said. "Last year, approximately 1,500 anglers and their friends showed up at the awards ceremony in the ballroom of the Trump Marina Hotel Casino," he added.

Competition this year will get under way at dawn and weigh-ins will be accepted at the 12 stations from noon until 5 p.m. Anglers must designate their station in advance. There are two ways to win in this tournament: by weighing a prize-winning fish at one of the 12 ports June 14, and by being selected by lot for a boat, motor and trailer at a drawing in Atlantic City June 20.

The heaviest fluke caught and weighed in by a tournament angler June 14 earns the fortunate individual the \$1,200 first prize in only the port competition for which he or she is registered. That fish has no bearing on any of the other port results or the drawing at the awards ceremony.

The heaviest fluke weighed in each of the port weigh stations brings the angler a \$1,200 prize donated by the Trump Marina Hotel Casino. There will be nine additional prizes for the heaviest fish at each port.

The prizes this year will be: 2- Raymarine DS600X color digital fish finder; 3- \$750 Boater's World gift certificate; 4- Profish tackle package; 5- MinnKota \$400 gift certificate; 6- Shimano rod and reel; 7- Hi-Seas tackle bag; 8- New Jersey Angler Magazine custom rod; 9- Nor'East Magazine rod and reel; 10- Canyon Gear Outfitters gift set.

The grand prize will be an 1801 CC Century boat with a four-stroke Yamaha engine and Loadrite trailer. The package is valued at \$30,000. Anglers are reminded that to be eligible for the grand prize they must have their entry affidavit, register prior to the ceremony, and a member of the crew with a ticket must be present at the drawing.

Anglers who are considering entering the tournament either individually or as a team of up to six anglers per boat can take advantage of the \$120 early entry fee, which is offered before June 7. After that date, the fee jumps to \$150 per boat.

The 12 ports and weigh stations this year will be: Jersey City (Lightship Dock/Liberty Landing); Sandy Hook (Julian's Bait and Tackle, Atlantic Highlands); Shark River (Fisherman's Den, Belmar); Manasquan River (Clark's Landing Marina, Point Pleasant); Barnegat Bay (Southwinds Marina, Forked River); Long Beach Island (Fisherman's Headquarters, Ship Bottom); Great Bay (Great Bay Marina, Little Egg); Atlantic City (Farley State Marina); Ocean City (Fin-Atics); Townsend Inlet (Avalon Point Marina); Cape May (Jim's Bait and Tackle, Cape May); and Fortescue (Higbee's Marina). The tournament will be held rain or shine. Further information can be obtained at the JCAA Web site: <http://www.JCAA.org>.

The fluke tournament is an important fund raiser for the JCAA. The other source of revenue for the organization is the JCAA High Roller Raffle, which will be held April 29. The eight prizes being offered run from an \$805 Shimano TI-30WLRSA reel-Shimano LCX8MHRSA rod combination to a \$150 Tsunami TSSD 3000 reel and TFSBC-601 MH rod.

Tickets are \$2 and can be purchased from a club representative or call or write the JCAA office. Many fluke anglers are not only concerned about what lies ahead in 2009 and 2010, but are still unhappy with the rules for this season.

The state Marine Fisheries Council decided on the eight-fish limit, 18-inch minimum and season running from May 24 through Sept. 7. Toth admitted that the JCAA membership was almost equally divided between the option chosen and a season running from May 17 through Oct. 6 with an eight-fish limit and an 18 1/2-inch minimum size. "None of the options we had to vote on were good," Toth pointed out. "At the marine fisheries council meeting, the overwhelming opinion on this divisive issue was that, if we chose the longer season, we would start the 2009 season with an 18 1/2-inch minimum size.

"Therefore, since we never seem to go down with our minimum size, 2009 would most likely start with a 19-inch or more minimum size, if we went with this option making it all the more difficult to catch legal fish," he continued. "This sentiment was not only expressed by myself, but many, if not most of the party/charter boat captains who have the most to lose with a shorter season," he added.

Toth said that he was approached by one of the council members after the meeting who told him that, even if they had chosen the longer season, the fishery might have been closed anyway, if it was determined the fluke quota would be exceeded before Oct. 6. "Therefore, we would not have a longer season, and also we would start the 2009 fluke season with an 18 3/4-inch minimum size," he said.

## **Mercury in Fish Caught by New Jersey's Coastal Anglers**

*By Joanna Burger and Michael Gochfeld*

For years we have been conscious of our diet, selecting fish for the many healthful nutritional benefits, even before the specific details of omega-3 fatty acids were common knowledge. Yet fish, particularly those species high on the food chain, accumulate contaminants which can jeopardize health. What to do? How to choose? We have spent

the last twenty-five years studying mercury, lead and cadmium in fish, often near heavily contaminated sites, like Superfund dumps, Department of Energy nuclear weapons sites, and contaminated harbors and bays. For the last three years, however, we have been working with the Jersey Coast Anglers Association to examine levels of mercury in fish caught by recreational fishermen along the Jersey shore. It is an exciting project because recreational fishing is an important cultural and economic part of New Jersey. Fish, however, are the only major source of methylmercury exposure for the general public.

### **Fishing is Important for New Jersey Residents**

Fishing is important to New Jersey, both as a commercial and recreational enterprise worth about \$2 billion annually, as well as contributing to the \$16 billion dollar coastal tourism income. Fish are an important source of protein, and fishing is a popular pastime all over the World, including our urban areas, such as the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area.

Over the years our studies, often involving interviews with anglers fishing along the Jersey shore and in the NY-NJ harbor, have shown that:

1) People fishing along our coasts eat most of the fish they catch, and they eat more fish than EPA or FDA recognize as "typical" for Americans.

2) There are ethnic and cultural differences in the information base and compliance with fish consumption advisories issued by the state (mainly for freshwater fish).

3) People generally believe that fish are safe to eat, but have little information about mercury in the specific fish they eat.

4) Many people would eat more fish if they only knew which ones were safe to eat.

### **Benefits and Costs of Eating Fish**

There are nutritional benefits to eating fish, particularly as an alternative to red meat. Fish offer high quality protein, low in cholesterol, and have omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) which promote cardiac health and baby development. Over the past 15 years, people have responded to the health benefit messages by eating more fish. Adults who eat fish frequently (once a week or more) generally have lower cholesterol and a reduced risk of heart disease compared to those eating fish less than once a month. Likewise, pregnant women who



eat fish are less likely to have low birth weight babies than are those who don't eat fish.

However, contaminants in fish, such as mercury and PCBs, can cause health problems, especially in unborn babies and children. And the mercury in fish counteracts some of the benefits of the PUFAs. Despite the interest in self-caught fish freshwater fish, little attention has been directed at salt water fish or at the fish that are commercially available in supermarkets and fish stores, the source of fish for most New Jersey residents. In some cases, important recreational fish, like Bluefish, are also available in New Jersey fish markets and supermarkets.

### **Government Agencies and Fish Consumption Advisories**

Different state and federal agencies issue fish advisories telling people what fish to avoid because of high contaminant levels. The Food and Drug Administration issued advisories based on methylmercury that suggested that pregnant women and women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should avoid eating four types of marine fish (shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, and Tilefish), and should limit their consumption of all other fish to just 12 ounces per week (see FDA.gov website). While this is helpful, it does not tell people what fish they can eat safely. The FDA has set an Action Level of 1 ppm of methylmercury. Fish that exceed this level could be seized in interstate commerce, although since FDA does not routinely test fish, no seizures are occurring, even though we have found exceedances in some fish samples.

People who fish or like to eat fish are interested in what fish are low in mercury – which is a different question from the government's advice on which fish are high in mercury. It is easy to guess which fish are at the top of the food chain and will be high in mercury (shark, swordfish), but not whether medium-sized predatory fish (Bluefish) or bottom dwellers (flounders) have dangerous levels of mercury. Also, age and size are important because older fish have longer to accumulate mercury than do younger fish. Some very large fish (like a 100 pound Halibut) are younger than some smaller fish (such as Rock Fish, which are only a foot long). Guessing isn't good enough!

Our research with mercury levels in fish purchased in supermarkets indicated that the levels in some fish are sufficiently low as to provide no risk no matter how much is eaten, while this is not the

case for other species. Fresh tuna steaks had the highest levels, and were in the range that could potentially provide health problems for unborn babies (see JCAA article on Toxins in Fish, January 2005). People who want to eat fish more often need to know the relative levels of mercury in fish so that they can make their own decisions. Our study is aimed at providing this information.

The FDA publishes information on the mercury content of a variety of fish. See <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~frf/sea-mehg.html>.

### **Our study of "Mercury in New Jersey Coastal Fish"**

Our objective was to determine mercury levels in fish commonly caught by recreational anglers in New Jersey's bays, estuaries and the ocean. We enlisted both individual anglers and clubs from the Jersey Coast Angler's Association to help us collect a range of different species of fish, with a range of sizes of each type of fish. In many cases, we went to fishing tournaments, and took a small sample (about the size of our thumb) from each fish at the time of weigh-in, and we also went out with DEP sampling boats to obtain some smaller fish for comparison with those that fit the legal size limits. This study was unique because it involved collaboration between anglers and scientists, between fishing clubs (JCAA) and scientists, and it involved fish that people are actually catching and eating (rather than those caught by electroshocking, seines, or other trap methods).

Mercury was then analyzed in our laboratory at Rutgers University and the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute.

### **Findings to Date on Mercury Levels in New Jersey's Coastal Fish**

Our two primary interests are determining 1) the levels of mercury in different species of coastal and estuarine fish, and 2) whether mercury levels increase with the size of the fish. Armed with this type of information, people can select what species of fish to eat. There are, of course, subtleties, such as how much variation in levels of mercury is there within each species, and do the mercury levels vary by season.

Overall, mercury levels vary by fish species, with some being higher than others. Mako Shark had the highest levels, followed by Striped Bass, Bluefish and Bluefin Tuna. The lowest levels were in Bonito, Dolphin, Weakfish and Porgy.

FISH	MERCURY LEVELS	PERCENT OF FISH ABOVE 0.3 ppm	PERCENT OF FISH ABOVE 1.0 pp,
Mako Shark	2.09	96	88
Striped Bass	0.47	77	5
Bluefish	0.46	75	9
Bluefin Tuna	0.43	75	0
Tautog	0.18	12	0
Black Sea Bass	0.17	0	0
Yellowfin Tuna	0.13	3	0
Croaker	0.13	0	0
Fluke	0.13	5	0
Weakfish	0.08	5	0
Porgy	0.08	0	0
Dolphin	0.07	0	0
Bonito	0.05	0	0
Bunker	0.01	0	0

In general, mercury levels increased with the length (and weight) of the fish for Bluefish, Mako Shark, Striped Bass and tuna. That is, larger fish had higher mercury levels than smaller fish, suggesting that given a choice, it is better to eat the smaller fish. The figure below shows the increase in mercury with size for Bluefish and Striped Bass. The numbers under the Bluefish line indicate the approximate age of the fish in years.

### Omega-3

We don't measure omega-3 PUFAs in our laboratory, but values have been published for a number of species. In general the ideal situation would be to eat fish that are high in PUFA but low in mercury, for example, Salmon.

### Next Steps

We are continuing to analyze fish, concentrating on figuring out whether mercury levels vary by season or by location along the coast. Both aspects require increasing our sample sizes to be able to distinguish differences. We want to know whether levels are higher in the spring or fall for Bluefish, for example. We are also examining the relationship between mercury levels and selenium

because there is some indication that selenium is protective against the effects of mercury in people and other organisms that eat the fish. So far the data indicate that selenium levels are relatively constant in New Jersey coastal fish, which might suggest another reason to eat smaller fish.

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

*By John Koegler*

### Bluefin Tuna

NMFS has reduced US anglers permitted daily bluefin tuna catch to one school and one large school/small Medium per trip.

The European Union has demanded that their member states immediately end their overfishing of bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Coast. Will they actually force their fishermen to end their overfishing of bluefin tuna? These countries have avoided their commitment to ICCAT for over 32 years. Any observance of the ICCAT European quota should be considered in the miracle category.

### Atlantic Coast Gulfstream event

There is a huge Gulfstream finger moving up the Atlantic coast's 100 fathom line from Cape Hatteras all the way to the Hudson Canyon. Such a major finger of hot tropical water will affect spring weather. Such warm water provides a temperature break of over 30 degrees. Huge temperature breaks always provides good tuna fishing.

The first calm day was April 10 and several boats from NJ, MD and NY took a look. They all caught one bluefin tuna. A Beach Haven boat weighed in a 76.5 bluefin. This is the earliest anyone can remember a bluefin tuna being landed in NJ.

Normally eddies from the Gulfstream are modest in size from 5 to 50 miles in diameter. They always form offshore of Nantucket and move down the 100 fathom edge to Cape Hatteras where they are reabsorbed into the main stem of the gulfstream. But this gulfstream finger is something totally new. Will it stay around? It will surely change the migration of HMS fish species if it stays.

### Bay Fishing

The local bays have experienced a major warmup. Reported temperatures between 55 and 60 degrees are normal. These are record warm numbers for our bays at this time of year. Most shore boatyards are not yet busy.

There have been good reports of stripers in the surf a few weeks back, but recent storms seem to have moved them. Other fishing seems to be yet to develop, but such warmth will cause fish species to show up earlier than normal.

### **TWIC and Charterboat Captains**

The USCG announced that all captains and hazardous material truck drivers plus those working in US ports are required to obtain the new Transportation Worker Identification Certificate. Captains must obtain this new card by September 25, 2008. The USCG has stated that if you do not have this card by September 25 your license will be invalid until you obtain this card. Over 60 percent of those expected to apply have yet to do so. There is a good TWIC website. It clearly explains what is required.

## **Jersey Coast Anglers Association Youth Education Report By Greg Kucharewski**

### **LETTER REQUEST**

On April 1, 2008 I attended the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club Annual Dinner Awards event. The guest speaker was Craig Lemon, Superintendent Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery, and he delivered an impressive slide presentation about the good work that is done at the State Hatchery. But, due to funding issues this year, the derby season that generally takes place during the months of May through September will be suspended due to the lack of staffing. This is a great disappointment to the many fishing clubs and organizations that depend on the support of the Division of Fish and Wildlife to assist with providing derbies and educational programs to New Jersey families. We request letters be written to bring the Derby program back and give young anglers and their families the opportunity to experience the fun of participating in a fishing derby. Please address your letters to the JCAA, Youth Education Committee, 1201 Highway 37 East, Toms River, NJ 08753. The letters will be forward to the State Office of Information and Education.

### **RBFF NEWS-STEPHANIE HUSSEY**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA** – Frank Peterson, president and CEO of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) is pleased to announce today that Stephanie Hussey has been named RBFF's Director of State Initiatives. Hussey will be responsible for implementing the organization's State Direct Mail Marketing Program and continuing to build relationships with state fish and

wildlife agencies and their partners. "Stephanie has been committed to promoting boating and fishing participation at the grassroots level and developed close relationships with our state partners across the country," said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. "She has worked diligently to implement our State Direct Mail Marketing Program and her commitment to the project has earned her a well-deserved promotion." Hussey has 14 years experience working with state fish and wildlife agencies and as one of RBFF's veteran staff members, she has led the charge on many key products and programs, helping kick off the first National Fishing and Boating Week and leading the development of the Take Me Fishing Event Planning Kit and Passport to Fishing and Boating Program. She also sits on the Association for Conservation Information's board of directors. "I am honored to be directing RBFF's state initiatives, which support the state fish and wildlife agencies' efforts to sell fishing licenses and, ultimately, increase funds for critical conservation projects," said Hussey. "I truly enjoy working with our state partners and look forward to developing new relationships as we expand our State Direct Mail Marketing Program and launch a boating registration pilot program with Oregon in the year ahead." Hussey received a bachelor's degree in biology from Michigan State University and was awarded a Berryman Fellowship to pursue graduate studies in fisheries and wildlife at Utah State University. RBFF is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase participation in recreational angling and boating. RBFF helps people discover, share and protect the legacy of boating and fishing through national outreach programs including the Take Me Fishing campaign and Anglers' Legacy.

### **KIDS FISHING DERBY**

The Newark Bait and Flycasting Club held their twenty-eighth Annual Kids Fishing Derby at Echo Lake Park, Mountainside, NJ. As usual it's always a great success because the membership of the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club membership donates time, plenty of prizes, and trout for the youngsters to catch.

**"TAKE THE PLEDGE" AND RECEIVE A COUPON**  
The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation announced a new partnership with Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. to recruit new anglers across the country and promote the Anglers' Legacy, a program that encourages avid anglers to share their love of boating and fishing, and introduce a newcomer to the sport. In a campaign that kicked off in April 2008 and runs through the end of July, Dick's will include in-store displays that encourage customers to visit AnglersLegacy.org and "Take the Pledge" to receive \$10 off their next purchase of \$50 or more. With a goal of at least 5,000 new Pledges, the promotion will run in approximately 360 stores in 36 states nationwide.

## We need the support of your club and its members

Your club should be a member of JCAA and make a difference for only \$50 a year. Your club will have a voice in all JCAA positions that affect your fishing future. Your club will receive up-to-date info on vital issues each month.

**Club Membership Application**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

President's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pres. Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_

Fax # \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check \$50 payable to JCAA

## JCAA SPONSORSHIP

The JCAA has four levels of sponsorship, \$50, \$100, \$250 & \$500.

Sponsors are recognized in our newspaper. For more information call JCAA at 732-506-6565. Become a JCAA sponsor and help our cause. As you can see by our newspaper many our member clubs are also JCAA sponsors, if your club is not contact us today to become one. With all the new battles we are engaged in we need to raise more funds in order to be effective. Become a sponsor now and help us to continue the fight.

## Join JCAA as an Associate Member

Only \$25 per year! Support the Goals of JCAA and receive a subscription to JCAA NEWS that gives you the Most Up-To-Date News about Fisheries Management and Environmental Issues

**JERSEY COAST ANGLERS**  
**ASSOCIATE MEMBER APPLICATION**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check if you would rather receive newspaper by email instead of by regular mail. Yes \_\_\_

Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_

Fax # \_\_\_\_\_

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