

JCAA NEWSPAPER MARCH 2009

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on February 18th, 2009)

Remember New Monthly Meeting Room

"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, February 24th, 2009

Starting at 7:30 PM

At The JCAA OFFICE

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 12th, 2009

Starting at 7:30 PM at JCAA Office

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.

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JCAA Newspaper Publisher Tom Fote

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 732-929-2591 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
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Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page

IMPORTANT DATES

February 24th JCAA General Mtg.

March 5th NJMFC Meeting

March 5th-8th Suffern Show

March 12th JCAA Board Meeting

March 20th-22nd Somerset Saltwater Expo

March 31st JCAA General Meeting

JCAA HIGH ROLLER RAFFLE

It is now time for the JCAA High Rollers 2009 Raffle. We have put together a terrific selection of rods and reels and other prizes for a raffle that will be drawn on April 28, 2009. This is a major fundraiser for the JCAA. The 8 prizes are listed below with a value of almost \$3,500. Tickets will be two dollars each and Club Representatives can get books of tickets to sell by attending a JCAA meeting. JCAA will have a booth and will sell tickets at the Saltwater Fishing Expo at the Garden State Exhibit Center, Somerset, March 20-22. Stop by and say hello. If you would like to buy raffle tickets call the JCAA office. When your club representative brings them to your club, please help with your purchase. Without your continued support we cannot function as an organization in protecting the marine resource and angler's rights. Shimano provided reels at a special price to JCAA.

1. Shimano Tiagra TI-30WLRSA reel with a Shimano TLC X58MHRSA rod Value \$688
2. Minn Kota Riptide Trolling Motor model RT 55/SE/L&D Value \$550
Donated by Johnson Outdoors Inc
3. Fisherman's Headquarters, Ship Bottom, NJ donates a \$500.00 Shopping Spree Value \$500
4. Shimano Calcutta 700BSV reel w/a Rogue SSW extra heavy 765C rod Value \$480
Donated by JCAA and Rogue
5. Shimano Calcutta 400BSV reel w/a G Loomis Pro Blue PBR844C rod Value \$465
Donated by JCAA and G Loomis
6. Shimano Calcutta 400BSV reel w/a H&H LSW845722 rod Donated by JCAA and H&H Value \$440

7. Shimano Stradic - ST-5000FI Reel with
Shimano Terramar TMS-70MH Rod Value \$380
Donated by Shimano
8. Tsunami TSSD 3000L reel and TSTBC-661H rod
Value \$150
Donated by Bimini Bay Outfitters
- Total Value \$3,653.00**

President's Report

By Mark Taylor

I am honored that you elected me to be your President for 2009. I take this position very seriously. I am looking forward to making this Association even stronger. There are going to be some major topics on everybody's mind this coming year. We all are going to have to digest the information that is available to us and come up with a JCAA position on each issue. We have our work cut out for us. To get the latest information first-hand the club representatives should come to the general meeting and bring the information back to their individual clubs for discussion. I will be trying to make our individual committees more effective in this coming year. If you are interested in serving on them contact me.

I would like to take the time to thank past President John Toth for all the hard work and dedication during his second tenure as President of JCAA. I am looking forward for him to keep his dedication for years to come. We have many dedicated individuals that keep things going but we are always looking for more. Contact the JCAA office if you are interested.

I am looking forward to working with our new Operations Manager, Sharon McKenna. This is going to be a new experience for me this time around as President which I did not have the first time.

I would like to congratulate Tom Fote as the Governor's Appointee to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

This is the time of the year for our High Roller Raffle. This is one of the fundraisers that helps offset the expenses to run your Association. So help out by getting some raffle books. The drawing will be April 28, 2009 in Brick.

The Atlantic City International Power Boat Show has just passed. Our presence there was felt by the recreational fishermen that were in attendance by

answering questions that they had. I would like to thank everyone that stepped up to volunteer at the JCAA booth. We have another show that we need volunteers for. It is the Saltwater Fishing Expo at the Garden State Exhibit Center in Somerset. The dates are Friday, March 20th to Sunday, March 22nd. I would like to have some new people to volunteer instead of the same people. This is your Association that needs to have its presence at the show. Contact me at 732-929-2591 or email mtsport64@aol.com if you wish to volunteer. Believe it or not, there are some people that do not know about our Association.

The National Saltwater Angler Registry is on everybody's mind. We all need to do our homework and get all the information that is available. I am in the process of putting a Saltwater Registry Committee together so we can go through the details of the program. I will give a progress report at the next general meeting.

Operations Manager Report

By Sharon McKenna

Hello all, and thank you for your rousing welcome for me as new Operations Manager. I want to thank the JCAA Executive Committee for their confidence in me and to give a special thank you to my new home club, the Village Harbour Fishing Club, for their encouragement in becoming part of the JCAA family.

It's been an interesting month here in the office. I am learning about the computer system, about how to deal with a new email server, the newspaper printer, all the office basics plus the biggest of all tasks - working on the Fluke Tournament for a go-date on Saturday, June 13th. Mark it on your calendars - it is going to be a great time!

Some of you reading this newspaper may be unfamiliar with me, so I would like to introduce myself. I have been involved in shaping fisheries policy since 1991, when I started working for Congressman Jim Saxton in Washington, DC. It was then that I realized that fisheries policy can be divisive, and that even within the recreational community, there are fractures that can hurt us overall. Since then, I have worked in various capacities in DC and New Jersey on fisheries issues, most recently at the Institute of Marine and Coastal

Sciences at Rutgers University as administrator of its Striped Bass-Bluefish Research Program. Fish has been the focal point of my career and the politics surrounding it has continued to make it interesting.

I have several goals I hope we can achieve together over the coming year. Some are smaller but extremely important. Some examples of smaller goals are: consistent dissemination to marinas and tackle shops of the monthly newspaper throughout New Jersey by member clubs; full coverage of the upcoming fluke tournament throughout the state, including dispersal of fluke tournament posters which advertise the when and where of this vital fundraiser for our operations; and to mount an effort to increase member club participation in the general meetings. I know people are busy, but staying in touch with us and sharing your club's view is an essential tool to representing your club properly during legislative hearings and with state and federal government staff during meetings and workshops.

On a larger scale, I think it is important to develop a registry throughout New Jersey of all the fishing clubs that exist. Those who have not connected with JCAA can only do so if there is outreach explaining what we do and how we can help them to continue enjoying our sport. So, when you are on that party boat, ask the angler next to you if he or she is a member of a fishing club, then let us know if the name of the club seems unfamiliar to you. Some clubs meet but once a year, but daily decisions in fisheries policies in the state and nationally will affect each and every member of that club. Why not be involved in JCAA and have a strong and credible voice about the policies that will affect YOU?

Expect to hear from me with volunteer opportunities, new events and workshops over the coming months. Thank you all for your strong welcome and I look forward to a productive time in 2009!

**SUPPORT THE
ARTIFICIAL REEF
PROGRAM
&
Take a Kid Fishing**

**Fisheries Management &
Legislative Report**

By Thomas Fote

ASMFC WINTER MEETING

The complete meeting summary is on the JCAA webpage.

Summer Flounder

The states did as well as they could with the summer flounder recreational tables. Because we haven't fixed the stock assessment for summer flounder, the quota is still ridiculously low. The peer review stock assessment states that the amount of spawning stock biomass does not appear to correlate to recruitment. When we had a spawning stock biomass less than 1/4 of what we have now, with females no larger than 18 inches, we were getting higher recruitment than we are now. We now have a spawning stock biomass that is almost 5 times what it was in '94. The majority of the females are much larger (over 27 inches), yet we are producing less recruitment. If spawning stock biomass has nothing to do with recruitment and other factors are causing the stagnation in stock growth, we may have reached the carrying capacity of the bays and estuaries for summer flounder. When that is true for other species, we are allowed to fish at a higher mortality rate. I hope this issue is discussed at the next stock assessment. We are needlessly destroying the commercial and recreational summer flounder fishery and the industries that depend on that species. There is no stimulus package for recreational and commercial fishermen.

Winter Flounder

The winter flounder situation has not gotten any better coastwide. There was an effort to put in place an emergency action that would have closed the fishery down for 2009. I made a strong argument that this should go through the proper addendum process. Truthfully, many states could not have implemented this measure before the season was over. There will be an addendum available for public hearing in April. This will call for either a moratorium or great reductions in the winter flounder inshore fishery for next year. ASMFC only controls the inshore fishery and a majority of the

catch is offshore. I am waiting to see what happens with New England's ground fish plan. Since most of the recreational catch is made in state waters, and we are only a small percentage of the total catch, we will feel the brunt of the regulations even though we don't cause the problem.

Striped Bass

As usual, the Striped Bass meeting was interesting. There was a lengthy discussion on the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service counting of recreational anglers. These two branches of the federal government have different numbers for the anglers from each state. Since those numbers are used to extrapolate the number of fish landed and stock assessment, the recreational participation is either over or under estimated and, therefore, the numbers result in unreliable data. This discrepancy contributes to the problems we experience in developing appropriate recreational targets. Hopefully, part of this will be resolved when the saltwater registry is in effect.

JCAA, Stripers Forever and many other recreational groups have always known that there are illegal commercial striped bass entering the market. The article below deals with the Virginia and Maryland illegal catch. It confirms our worst fears and we know Virginia and Maryland are not alone. All you have to do is watch what goes on in Staten Island and Brooklyn and listen to the stories from Massachusetts and Rhode Island. As a further indication that some states are in total denial of this issue, after a lengthy discussion two proxies for commissioners with strong commercial ties actually recommended increasing the commercial coastal quota. Luckily, there was a tie vote and the measure was not passed. I am always surprised when Washington, DC, which has striped bass as a gamefish, votes with the commercial interests.

Motions

Move to initiate an addendum including options to increase the coastal commercial quotas by 10, 15, 20 and 25% and adopt a 50% underage rollover.

Motion made by Mr. Johnson, second by Mr. Calomo. Motion fails by roll call vote (In favor: MA, NY, DE, DC, PRFC, VA, and NC; Opposed: ME, NH, RI, CT, NJ, PA, and MD; Abstention: NMFS; absent: USFWS).

JCAA Web Page

In the next few months you will see more information available on the JCAA webpage. We

have made some major changes with how we handle the webpage and we hope this will be more user friendly. There will definitely be more information available. We realize that newspapers are providing less fishing and outdoor coverage and we hope to pick up the slack. Hopefully, the newspapers will eventually come to their senses. Stay tuned and let us know how you like the new format. Suggestions are welcome.

Federal Registry and Saltwater Fishing License

The New Jersey Outdoor Alliance, NJ State Federation of Sportsmens Clubs and JCAA have all formed committees to look into the registry and funding options for the NJ Division Bureau of Marine Fisheries. At the JCAA meeting there will be a report on a presentation made to the NJ Outdoor Alliance by Dave Chanda. JCAA is in the process of deciding when to invite representatives from NMFS to brief us. One of the quirks of the M/S Act is that Pennsylvania and New Jersey freshwater anglers will be required to participate in the saltwater registry since they fish for anadromous species. I prepared a white paper for the Governor's Office and the legislature to discuss the registry and funding for the NJ Division Bureau of Marine Fisheries. That white paper is now posted on the JCAA webpage. It is being used by many of the groups as a discussion starter. I am disappointed that I have not heard from the Governor's Office or the legislature about this document.

Research Set-Aside and Stimulus Package

Below is a letter I sent to the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council on the improper use of research set-asides. I was unable to attend the meeting due to a major traffic jam on the Garden State Parkway but will make sure this is discussed at the next joint meeting.

I have also included information about the current stimulus package. As you can see from the figures below, there is money available for stock assessment. This is the money NOAA and NMFS should use, not money diverted from the research set-asides. We will be keeping our eyes on this issue and informing our congressional delegation.

House Passes Stimulus Bill

On February 13, the House passed a \$787 billion economic stimulus package with a 246-183 party line vote. Included in the bill is \$836 million in

appropriations to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), \$600 million of which would go to procurement, including \$230 million for procuring sensory equipment for studying the weather, and \$230 million would go to NOAA operations, research, and facilities to address a backlog of research, restoration, navigation, conservation, and management activities. Also included in the bill is \$7.2 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), \$4 billion of which would be appropriated to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, providing grants to states for wastewater treatment projects. \$2 million of the EPA funds would go to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund which provides grants to states for drinking water infrastructure projects. The Senate approved the bill 60 to 38 last evening, with three Republican votes (Collins, Snowe and Specter).

Legislative and Fisheries Management

Agenda

I sound like a broken record but the article below is in month three and nothing has changed.

Nothing has changed with our legislative priorities so I am including last month's article. Hopefully with the Legislature back in session we will begin to see some progress. Remember, this is an election year and we need to hold our legislators accountable.

The New Jersey legislature has been back in session since the election. We are still waiting for action on several bills. The Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs bill was passed by the Assembly. We still need the Senate Appropriations Committee to hear this bill before it can be posted for vote by the full Senate. We have been told by Senator Sweeney and Senator Buono that they will post this bill as soon as their committee completes its work on the economic stimulus package.

The Pots Off the Reef Bill has made no progress in the Assembly. It passed the Senate and the Assembly remains the roadblock as it was during the last session. We must keep reminding Assembly Speaker Roberts that this bill is of great importance to the recreational fishing industry and the recreational anglers of New Jersey. Working with Assembly Speaker Roberts is a task that should be a priority for the New Jersey Angling and Hunting Conservation Caucus.

Letter to Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council about Research Set Asides

I was going to present this letter to the MAFMC on Wednesday February 14th but got caught in a 3 hour traffic jam and never made it to the meeting.

Thomas Fote
22 Cruiser Court
Toms River NJ, 08753
Phone 732-270-9102
Fax 732-506-6409
New Jersey Commissioner to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Subject: The Inappropriate Use of the Research Set-Aside

To Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries Management Council

It's a case of poor federal planning causing recreational and commercial fishermen to remedy the situation by sacrificing part of their catch quota. This catch is used to support NOAA's federally required research. How can this occur?

Several years ago the Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council established a unique program, the Research Set-Aside Program, to help support research needed to answer important fishery questions. It allows up to 3 percent of the annual quota for fluke, sea bass, porgies, bluefish, and squid to be used to pay for this research. However, that amount of fish is subtracted from the yearly quota, thus, directly reducing what we are allowed to catch. While 3 percent is a comparatively small amount of fish, still, depending on the fish in question, it could extend the season for a week or more. And anyone who was involved in the fluke fishery last year knows that a season extension of a week or two meant a great deal to both the recreational and commercial fishing industries.

The Research Set-Aside Program was not designed as a substitute for research being conducted by federal agencies, but as a way to quickly get needed work completed or important questions raised by the fishing community answered. For example, one of the nagging questions deals with the efficiency of the otter trawl used in the survey conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) vs otter trawls used by commercial fishermen. The research gear first used by the NMFS in the 1960's was very similar to the groundfish gear used by the Northeast commercial fishermen at the

time. It was designed primarily to catch cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder, the important commercial catch then. While it served its purpose and worked well for monitoring fish living on open ocean bottom within 4 or 5 feet of the sea floor, it did a less than adequate job of monitoring fishes such as porgies and bluefish which frequent mid-water or surface water. It was also inadequate for sea bass which occur around obstructions, where the otter trawl cannot be worked. However, fishermen, being an innovative group, have developed and adapted a high rise net for porgies and other species which rises up to 30 or 40 feet off the sea floor. As a consequence, a survey net pulled along the sea floor at a given rate of speed yields a substantially different number of fish as compared to a modern day commercial net fished in the same location and at the same rate of speed. One of the uses of the Research Set-Aside Program was to compare the differences between the two nets.

Another use of the Research Set-Aside Program is to actually determine the amount of fish incidentally killed as a result of fishing operations. Some studies have been completed on measuring the incidental mortality rate of inshore trawlers and other studies are planned for offshore trawlers. In addition, studies are ongoing to determine the incidental mortality rates for several species of fish taken by anglers. As quotas become more restrictive and size limits even larger, more fish than ever are being released. How many of these fish are surviving to reproduce? Answers to this question will help guide future management plans particularly concerning slot limits.

An inappropriate use of the Research Set-Aside Program is to support a coast wide survey of near shore waters. Since the mid 1970's when the NMFS expanded its monitoring survey to include the entire Mid Atlantic region, both near shore (in depths from a boat 15 to 60 feet) and offshore (in depths from 60 to 600 feet) have been monitored. They did the inshore part with a shallow draft vessel of 60 to 90 feet in length and the offshore part with larger size vessels of 120 to 165 feet. Recently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the parent agency of the NMFS, has taken over the operation of all vessels. They have spent their budget mostly for the construction of large, deep draft vessels, apparently to concentrate on open ocean research. As a result they have abandoned interest in near shore waters, ostensibly leaving this area to

other federal and state agencies. The consequence of all this is that the NMFS must now take funds from its usual research operations to charter vessels to do the near shore monitoring. A few states, including New Jersey, fund monitoring of its ocean water to as far as 10-12 miles offshore; however, most states do not. Forced with inadequate funding, the NMFS has patched together a budget to pay for the work but included in the last two years is the use of the Research Set-Aside Program to support this work. As best we can determine, the NMFS seemed apprehensive to use this fund, but several states supported it realizing this may be the only way the monitoring would be done, even though they understand the Research Set-Aside Program was never intended to do this.

The solution to this problem is to require NOAA to live up to its responsibility and fund the monitoring of near shore water, as it has in the past. I support research in deep ocean waters, but certainly not at the cost of our near shore waters. JCAA will ask Congress to get this situation corrected as soon as possible. As a Governor's Appointee to ASMFC, I agree with the Jersey Coast Anglers Association position on this matter. I will no longer support research set-asides that take quota from the recreational and commercial fishing communities to fund NOAA's research. I will be recommending to other members of ASMFC and to New Jersey's Mid-Atlantic Council members that they oppose any research set-aside quota until this situation is corrected.

Sincerely

Thomas P Fote

New Jersey Commissioner to ASMFC

New Jersey Outdoor Alliance (NJOA) **Hosts Meeting on Saltwater Registry**

The NJOA has invited David Chanda and Tom McCloy, Director of Fish & Wildlife and Administrator, Marine Fisheries Administration respectively, to its February 23rd meeting to discuss the details of the new registry program intended for saltwater anglers. This meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. and anglers interested in the details of this registry are invited to attend. The issue of a new saltwater fishing license will most likely be discussed since it is related to the new registry program.

The NJOA meets at the Clarksburg Inn located in Millstone Township and the meeting will

start sharply at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 23rd. The Clarksburg Inn is located on 465 Stagecoach Road in Clarksburg by Routes 524 & 571. The telephone number of the Inn is (609) 259-2558 and the website is www.clarksburginn.net

The JCAA is a member of the NJOA and regularly attends its monthly meetings and participates in its activities.

Watermen charged in illegal striped bass sales

State, federal investigators uncover extensive poaching ring in Md., Va.

By Candus Thomson
Baltimore Sun January 31, 2009

State and federal investigators have broken up a black market involving watermen and fish dealers who sold millions of dollars' worth of striped bass, illegally taken from the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River, to shops and restaurants across the country, according to court documents filed in federal court this week.

Four Maryland watermen, one Virginia waterman, two Washington fish dealers and an upscale Georgetown fish market have been named in criminal complaints, and officials said more are expected. In addition, two St. Mary's County watermen were indicted by a federal grand jury last fall for their part in the poaching scheme, which law enforcement officials in Maryland and Virginia say is the largest ever.

The timing couldn't be worse for Maryland. On Monday, the region's fishing regulatory agency is to meet in Alexandria, Va., and state officials fear that the news could trigger harsh penalties that would cripple the multimillion-dollar commercial fishing industry in the Chesapeake Bay and drive up retail fish prices.

"These were fish pirates," said a high-ranking Virginia official, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak about the case. "This was racketeering. Computers and records were seized. You're going to see some places go out of business."

The watermen and fish dealers have been charged under the Lacey Act, which prohibits the illegal taking of wildlife in one state for the purpose of selling it in another. Violations of the act carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, plus potential forfeiture of the boats and vehicles used.

Yesterday at U.S. District Court in Greenbelt, criminal complaints were filed against these watermen: Thomas L. Crowder Jr., 40, of Leonardtown; John W.

Dean, 53, of Scotland; Charles Quade, 55, of Churchton; Keith Collins, 57, of Deale; and Thomas L. Hallock, 48, of Catharpin, Va.

"It's news to me," Dean said when reached by phone yesterday. "It may be me. I don't know."

"There have been a whole bunch of plea agreements, but I can't talk to you about it," Crowder said.

Law enforcement sources said individuals have admitted to poaching as much as \$1 million worth of fish each over five years.

Annually, Maryland's 1,231 licensed watermen account for about 2 million pounds of the 7 million pounds of striped bass legally caught commercially on the Eastern Seaboard. The poaching scheme described in court documents and by sources means that the state vastly exceeded its annual striped bass quota for five years.

Maryland's watermen are required to report their catch at one of about 30 check stations, which are run by volunteers holding fish dealer licenses. Each fish must be tagged before it is unloaded from a boat. The check stations send the information - number of fish and weight of the catch - to the Department of Natural Resources in daily phone calls and file more comprehensive in weekly written reports.

But insufficient tag monitoring and allowing fish buyers to run check-in stations created a loophole that was exploited, Maryland officials acknowledge.

"This is a time to be sad about the lawlessness on the bay," said Maryland DNR Secretary John R. Griffin. "There's not a whole lot you can do to sugar-coat it. We toughened the rules last summer, but that obviously wasn't enough. It's become clear we need even more accountability."

The DNR is proposing regulations to tighten monitoring and enforcement of the commercial catch.

Andy Hughes, chairman of Coastal Conservation Association Maryland, called the poaching "both alarming in its scope and tremendously disappointing in that it was not dealt with many years earlier."

"We can't bring back the striped bass that have been stolen from us, but we can learn a lesson," Hughes said.

The investigation began in 2003, when Maryland Natural Resources Police tipped the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to poaching in the bay and the river. Here's how the scheme worked, according to sources and court documents:

Watermen, like Joseph Peter Nelson, 69, and Joseph Peter Nelson Jr., 45, of St. Mary's County, received additional tags by filing false reports with the

state about the number and weight of the striped bass they caught illegally in Maryland waters.

After reaching his Potomac River quota, the younger Nelson allegedly began using his tags designated for Chesapeake Bay use. From 2003 to 2006, he also used the commercial license of a waterman referred to in the indictment as "J.R." to secure more tags and falsify that catch.

Instead of carrying out transactions dockside, the indictment says, undercover officers from Virginia Marine Police posing as wholesale buyers took delivery of the fish from the Nelsons or unnamed men listed as unindicted co-conspirators at a private home in St. Mary's County, a walk-in cooler, a parking lot and near a bridge on a county road.

Other watermen joined the scheme, creating a supply of striped bass so vast that poachers and dealers brought workers into fish packing houses after hours to process the catch, sources say.

Both Nelsons have pleaded not guilty and contend that the statements they made to Maryland officers were made before they were read their rights. Louis Fireison, lawyer for the younger Nelson, said he could not discuss the case at this point. Lisa Lunt, lawyer for the elder Nelson, declined to comment.

To catch buyers, undercover officers peddled undersized, oversized and out-of-season striped bass.

Court documents show that for four years, beginning in April 2003, Robert Moore and Robert Moore Jr., who own Cannon Seafood Inc., in Washington, sold illegal striped bass and helped other unnamed people buy and sell fish.

Griffin said he hopes to see more joint enforcement efforts on the bay, an idea seconded by Rod J. Rosenstein, U.S. Attorney for Maryland.

"This is not the sort of case you can prove by looking at a fish once it's on a plate in a restaurant or somebody's kitchen. You have to actually be there when the fish are caught and when they're sold at the first stage," Rosenstein said. "I hope that this will be a model for other similar investigations because it's really critical that we join forces to pursue these kinds of cases."

DNR officials worry that this poaching scheme might eventually lead to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission sanctions.

ASMFC Commissioner Pat Augustine of New York predicted that his fellow commissioners "will demand some form of punishment when this hits the table ... that could shut down commercial striped bass fishing in the Chesapeake. Maryland needs to come to the table eating humble pie."

NJ's open space fund needs money

1/18/2009, 10:21 a.m. ET

By ANGELA DELLI SANTI

The Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Gov. Jon Corzine's nod to open space in his State of the State address could give new life to stalled efforts to direct long-term funding to the purchase of farmland, green acres and historic sites.

At least two bills already in the Legislature address permanent funding for open space, which environmentalists have long advocated and Corzine said he supports, though he has not said where he thinks the money should come from. Several proposals have come and gone since Corzine was elected in 2005, including a plan to dedicate a portion of the sales tax to open space preservation. A new legislative proposal is being drafted.

"It is my preferred approach that we put in place a long-term funding solution," Corzine said in the State of the State message Tuesday. "That said, we need, at a minimum, an interim bonding question for November's ballot to extend the financing the votes approved in 2007."

Voters approved an emergency \$200 million bond referendum in 2007, the same year they rejected borrowing for stem cell research and dedicating a portion of the sales tax to property tax relief. The open space money has all been spent. (No statewide open space funding question has failed in New Jersey in a dozen or so requests to voters dating back decades.)

Environmentalists said they are frustrated the question of long-term funding keeps cropping up without being resolved.

"A one-year stopgap doesn't get the job done, and I'm not even sure it would pass (in this economy)," said David Pringle of the New Jersey Environmental Federation. "We shouldn't be living referendum to referendum."

Jeff Tittel of the New Jersey Sierra Club said \$200 million a year is needed, and that there are many ways to get it: through a modest water-user fee, from the sales tax or gas tax, by taxing those who develop farmland, through a multiyear bond referendum, or by taxing billboards, SUVs or recreation equipment.

The proposal to dedicate a portion of existing sales tax revenue to open space purchases had support from a majority of lawmakers in both political parties, Tittel said, but became a casualty of the caustic budget battle of 2006 that shut down state government. A similar proposal became a political casualty the next year, when Corzine tried to tie permanent funding for open space to a failed plan to pay down state debt by raising tolls.

"This is the first time since 1961 that we are out of money for open space," Tittel said. The governor should never have allowed us to get into that situation in the first place."

Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean Jr. of Westfield agreed, accusing Corzine, a Democrat seeking re-election in November, of "playing politics with land preservation goals as opposed to finding a real solution that has worked very well for two decades."

Kean said he continues to support a Senate resolution he and Democratic leader Steve Sweeney co-sponsored dedicating \$175 million in existing tax revenue to open space through 2038, if voters approve the idea.

Assemblyman John McKeon, D-South Orange, said he is drafting a bill that would provide \$350 million a year to the open space preservation fund by imposing a water use fee that would cost the average household \$2 per month. The proposal also would require voter approval.

McKeon, long a champion of open space funding, said failing to replenish the fund would cause economic peril.

For example, if the Highlands watershed region were to be developed rather than preserved, he said the costs of treating and delivering clean, safe tap water to the state would become so astronomical no one could afford to live in the Garden State any longer.

"The bottom line — it's unpalatable to do nothing," he said.

Highly Migratory Species

By John Koegler

Sharks

NMFS sharply lowered commercial shark landings continue to be a surprise. During 2008 large coastal shark (LCS) commercial landings were all far short of their 2008 quota. This is unusual because in previous years commercials had filled or exceeded their quotas.

The large coastal shark complex has many species. Several species cannot be kept or sold. Sale of the most popular commercial shark, the sandbar shark, has been banned due to collapsing landing numbers. This species was the dominate shark species in the commercial LCS landings prior to 2007.

There is a research quota for sandbar sharks. The Shark Research Fishery quota is 87.9 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) or 193,784 lb dw. Only 13.9 mt was caught by research vessels in 2008. But 54.9 mt or 120,939 lbs. dw was sold by state registered shark dealers. This has occurred because ASMFC rules for LCS were not approved until their summer quarterly meeting. Federally licensed dealers cannot legally sell sandbar sharks.

Given the very high current price being paid for shark fins, it is difficult for me to believe that sharks are not being finned for the current high price being paid.

The small coastal shark (SCS) commercial landings were only 282.2 mt dw of their quota of 454 mt dw. This means only 62% of the SCS quota was landed! Given previous years' full quota landings, it is difficult to accept that the total commercial quota for the SCS species was not landed and sold.

The pelagic shark quota was lightly harvested. Only 108.2 mt dw out of a total quota of 488 mt dw was sold. This is only 22% of the quota. The blue shark quota was hardly touched at 1.5 mt dw sold from a quota of 273 mt dw or .05%.

Is there a pending shark population collapse? Sharks are important key predators in all fisheries. Commercial quotas were not landed. Is there a major problem with the size of the remaining shark population? It could be a marketing problem. Most commercial sale has historically been in two species. If these species were not available dealers may not desire to ship strange new species to fish and supermarkets through their distribution network.

Given the explosion in the number of rays I have observed last August, large coastal sharks are definitely not controlling the exploding ray population. Rays are major predators of crabs, clams and oysters. Fishery managers better pay attention. Managers cannot allow super abundant rays and spiny dogfish populations and expect their totally out of control populations not to affect everything they target as food, such as blue crabs, surf clams, muscles and oysters. Considering the collapsing blue claw crab populations in our bays, the problem is currently out of control.

Swordfish

Swordfish have become the angler's fish to catch in Florida replacing sailfish. It is popular in the NE for anglers but requires good canyon fishing in September and later because this is the time swordfish are along the 100 fathom line in numbers. This year yellowfin tuna vanished in mid-August and did not return before the October weather closed the fishery resulting in far fewer swordfish landed in the NE this year. Despite the low NE numbers this year, NMFS reposts anglers landed 42,284 pounds of swordfish in 2008. It requires special skills to land a big swordfish. Successful charter boats use a 12 foot or longer harpoon to dart the sword prior to

attempting gaffing. Large swords over 100 pounds are very difficult to land if the angler's boat is anchored.

Despite sharply increased commercial fishing in Florida using the commercial buoy long line system, landings were 25% short of their assigned quota. Their landings represent a major increase from 2007.

Bluefin Tuna

Bluefin tuna fishing in North Carolina during the winter fishery was way below previous years' success. Many charter boats chose a commercial license fish for NC. NC giant fishing has a recent history of good fishing. A super prime bluefin of 400 pounds or more often brings \$10 or more per pound. Massachusetts and Maine giant bluefin tuna landings greatly improved last year. This is a good indication that tough new restrictions on inshore commercial herring landings using pair trawlers has allowed enough herring schools to remain to attract giant bluefin again. HMS species need abundant bait species to stay in any area. Some canyon anglers believe the collapse of the 2008 yellowfin fishery is due to the commercial over harvest of squid along the canyon edges.

I have not seen NMFS 2008 report on angler's Bluefin school and large school landings. Due to the disappearance of the NE Canyon yellowfin tuna, fishing for bigger Bluefin over 47" became a major recreational fishery last August and September. NMFS limit was only one large bluefin per boat. But landing one 100 pound plus tuna was better than yellowfin fishing that resulted in zero yellowfin last fall.

Right Whales---Wrong Program?

It never fails to amaze me how a well-intended NMFS program often becomes absurd. The Right Whale is an Atlantic coastal whale that likes to cruise on the ocean's surface. As a result it has been occasionally hit by ships and killed. Because it feeds inshore it also gets tangled in commercial fishing gear. Major commercial fishing gear restrictions have been imposed. This whale has been listed as endangered since scientists estimate that there are only 300 to 400 remaining. Nothing is like a 25% variation in estimated population size.

NOAA's new Right Whale regulations are much too broad. On December 9, 2008 a new regulation requires "ships 65 feet and larger to travel

at ten knots or less in areas where Right whales gather within 20 nautical miles of major US ports."

The next paragraph states: "These speed restrictions apply to Mid-Atlantic areas from Rhode Island to Georgia from November 1 to April 30." Rhode Island to Georgia is not a reasonable distance to impose such tough limits! November 1 to April 30 is a six month restriction and seems like it is a total abuse of regulatory power!

NOAA states they will impose temporary voluntary speed limits in other areas or times when a group of three or more Right whales presence is confirmed. What comes next? Restricting all recreation boats to 10 knots within 20 nautical miles of the coast every summer?

JCAA Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

NATIONAL YOUTH FISHING & BOATING GRANT REQUEST

The JCAA Youth Education Committee received confirmation that the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) has accepted our National Youth Fishing and Boating Grant Request for review. During the review process proposals will be screened to ensure completeness; we may be contacted for additional information. All applicants will be notified of grant award or denial by letter. The JCAA will be contacted during the following important dates for the 2009 award cycle: Award Notification, Week of March 23-27, 2009. Award Period, April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010.

FATHER-TIME BOLGER SCHOOL EVENT

The JCAA Youth Education Committee supported the Keansburg Father Time 4th Indoor Fishing/Environmental Exposition by conducting a fly tying station for middle school age children. The Indoor Fishing/Environmental Exposition was well-attended with over 100 children and their families attending. Jeff Johnson, Project Director and his team, did a great job of organizing the stations and prizes. Several JCAA fishing clubs supported the expo by providing other aquatic learning stations for the children. Ron McClelland, Hi-Mar Striper Club, was awarded the **Father Time Torch of Friendship** plaque at the 4th Annual Fishing/Environmental Expo on Jan. 24, 2009. Ron has been an original and tremendous community supporter of Father Time after reading an article about Father Time in 2005.

Ron has donated valuable time, skill and knowledge on behalf of children and families who are involved in Father Time. He has volunteered at our twice annual derbies for the past four years and has been a vital link to the Hi Mar Striper Club which has generously donated hundreds of dollars in prizes at our events. Ron's diligence and genuine commitment to families and to Father Time has served as an inspiration to our organization, especially in our start-up days. We are grateful to have the loyal support of Ron and a family-centered club like Hi-Mar.

NEWARK BAIT - KIDS' FISHING FUN NIGHT

The JCAA Youth Education Committee will visit the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, 2009 and present a "PASSPORT TO FISHING" event for youngsters attending their Kids' Fishing Night. The Newark Bait and Flycasting Club will host the event at the Knights of Columbus Hall, located in Union, NJ. Children and their families are welcome to come and enjoy a night of fun-fishing activities and refreshments. The Newark Bait and Flycasting Club is committed to teaching the joys of fishing to our young people. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association's Youth Education Committee will also support this worthwhile event by conducting a seminar about how to start a youth fishing club and providing "Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs" packets/prizes for all the youngsters.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE PRESS RELEASE

Project WILD and WILD Aquatic are widely-used interdisciplinary conservation and environmental education programs that emphasize wildlife and wildlife ecosystems. Designed for educators of students in kindergarten through high school, the activities are based on the premise that young people and educators have a vital interest in learning about our natural world. Emphasizing wildlife because of its intrinsic value, Project WILD addresses the need for human beings to develop as responsible citizens of our planet. These 6-hour hands-on workshops are perfect for formal and non-formal educators wanting to connect students with their surrounding environment using math, science, social studies, literacy and art. Project WILD and WILD Aquatic explores how people can understand wildlife and habitat and make decisions that use natural resources wisely. The focus is on teaching students how to think, not what to think. At each workshop you will participate in a variety of selected activities and will

be shown how to incorporate them into your classroom. At the end of the workshop you will receive the Project WILD or WILD Aquatic K-12 activity guide filled with activities that have been correlated to NJ Core Curriculum Standards. For more information visit www.njfishandwildlife.com or contact Karen Leskie at kleskie@dep.state.nj.us 609-748-4347 (WILD Aquatic) or Liz Jackson at ejackson@dep.state.nj.us or 908-637-4125 (Project WILD).

NJ VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL 2009 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Many members of JCAA are Vietnam Veterans and we would like to pass along information about the 2009 scholarship program. During this time of economic uncertainty all financial resources must be considered to help our youngsters with their education dreams. Graduating seniors have until April 17, 2009 to submit their applications and essays to qualify for one of two (2) scholarships offered by the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation. The scholarships, each in the amount of \$2,500, will be awarded to high school seniors from New Jersey who plan to further their education either at a college or university or trade/technical school. Winners will be notified in early May and will be awarded the scholarship on Monday, May 25, 2009 during the Memorial Day Ceremony held at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. In addition to the scholarship application and proof of acceptance to a college or trade school, all applicants must submit an essay about his/her visit to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, located off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116 in Holmdel. To assist students in writing their essays, the Foundation offers free, veteran-led guided tours of the Memorial. Beginning February 7, 2009, and continuing through April 11, 2009, these tours are held every Saturday at 11 AM and at 1 PM. These tours are also available to the members of the general public who would like to learn more about the Memorial. Tours are approximately 45 minutes in length. The deadline for application and essay submissions is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2009. Applications may be mailed or delivered to the NJVVM Scholarship Program, 1 Memorial Lane, P.O. Box 648, Holmdel, NJ 07733. For a scholarship application form or more information about the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation, please visit www.njvvmf.org or call (732) 335-0033.

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 information on vital issues each month.

Club Membership Application

Date _____

Club Name: _____

President's Name: _____

Pres. Address: Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Ph. # _____

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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 _____

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Email _____

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

Ph. # _____

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