

JCAA NEWSPAPER MAY 2009

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on April 21st, 2009)

Monthly Meeting Room Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd

"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, April 28th, 2009

Starting at 7:30 PM

At Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 14th, 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 Mark Taylor at (732) 929-2591 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
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2009 OFFICERS

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Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page

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 at the old meeting room in Brick. This is a major fundraiser for the JCAA. The eight 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. 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

IMPORTANT DATES

April 28th JCAA General Mtg back in the Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd

May 4th – 7th ASMFC Spring Meeting

May 7th NJMFC Meeting

May 14th JCAA Board meeting

May 26th JCAA General Mtg back in the Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd

June 13th JCAA Fluke Tournament

June 19th JCAA Fluke Tourn. Awards Ceremony

JCAA Fluke Tournament

June 13th Fishing Date

&

Awards June 19th

by Sharon McKenna

Like most people involved in JCAA, I wear multiple hats. Donning my Fluke Tournament Chair hat has been quite an adventure. Everyone is very well aware of the economic climate here in New Jersey, our nation and the world. JCAA is not immune to these economic factors and the Fluke Tournament Committee has had to be creative in ensuring that the tournament will continue to offer fabulous prizes, and a great time to boot. To be candid, this is the JCAA's largest fundraiser. Over the past 15 years, we have been fortunate to attract many port prize, door prize and grand prize sponsors. We are continuing to work with what sponsors are still available. Some have filed for bankruptcy, others have been absorbed by other companies, but those who remain have been generous, for which we are thankful. Please thank them by purchasing our sponsor's products over the coming year. They are supporting the JCAA and its important mission to represent you while you continue to enjoy recreational fishing.

One of the toughest decisions the Fluke Tournament Committee made is to cut down the ports from twelve to nine. The ports that were cut, Jersey City, Atlantic City and Avalon (Townsend Inlet), were chosen carefully through looking at the participation data, the geographic range and overall port support. The Committee is hopeful that when the economy turns around, these ports can return to the fold.

The good news is that although it has been a difficult year to be a recreational angler, we do have a 2009 fluke season: six fish at 18", open May 23rd through September 6. So, get your boats on the water so you will be ready to participate in the JCAA Fluke tournament on Saturday, June 13th. The tournament fee for early entrants (by June 5) is \$120. After June 5th, the tournament fee goes up to \$150, so early entry really pays off. Your participation not only guarantees a great time and a chance for many fabulous prizes for you & your crew, but it also supports the work that JCAA does for all recreational anglers. Remember the JCAA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to your interest.

Even with sponsorship changes, this year promises to be another great event in the tournament's 15 year history, as the first place prizes will again be sponsored by JCAA. Fisherman's Headquarters will be sponsoring their local port (Long Beach Island). Your crew, with up to six anglers, will only compete with other anglers for the ten port prizes to be awarded at the port you select when you enter. Just like in previous years there will separate port prizes for every port. Prize ranking may be adjusted. You do not have to be present at the June 19th award ceremony to win the port prizes.

The Grand Prize - \$10,000! - and all door prizes will be drawn at the Awards Presentation and Celebration at Trump Marina Hotel Casino. Remember, you do not have to catch a fish to be eligible for the Grand Prize or any door prizes. You only have to be registered. At least one member of your crew must be present for you to win the Grand Prize and door prizes. JCAA has reserved a limited block of rooms for a group rate at the hotel which can be booked by calling the Reservation Department direct at 1/800-777-8477, option #3. Be sure to state you are with JCAA and group code FJCAA9. The cut-off date is May 19, 2009, so once again, it pays to be an early entrant!

If you have been a past participant in the JCAA Fluke Tournament, you have already received an express entry form to register. JCAA Fluke Tournament T-shirt order forms will be included with your affidavit by return mail. We may not have all sizes available at the Awards Ceremony and you won't want to miss this year's great shirt. Full color image of the T-shirts can be seen at our web site. Extra order forms are available online. Last year some people were disappointed because we ran out

of shirts at the Awards Ceremony. If you have questions call 732-506-6565 or visit the web site at jcaa.org for additional information, complete rules, links to sponsors, and additional entry forms.

This year it is more important than ever that we have a successful JCAA Fluke Tournament to show that the New Jersey angler is a force to be reckoned with. Looking forward to seeing you all on June 13! Mark your calendars!!!

President's Report

By Mark Taylor

Our High Roller Raffle will be drawn in Brick before our general meeting on April 28. We will also be having a presentation from Bill Figley, a former biologist for the Division of Fish and Wildlife about Reef Rescue's Pots off the Reefs as well.

I have also tentatively scheduled the Division of Fish and Wildlife to give a presentation on the Federal Saltwater Registry, so be sure to attend the general meeting on May 26th at Brick Civic Plaza, 270 Chambersbridge Road in Brick.

The 2009 JCAA Fluke Tournament is the next big event on the calendar for this year. We all are experiencing rough economic times so make sure you mark your calendar for June 5. This is the date that the entry fee increases for the 2009 JCAA Fluke Tournament. This year's fishing date is June 13 with the ceremony down at Atlantic City June 19, so be a part of this great event by filling out an entry form that is in this newsletter and send it in. We are looking for people to volunteer with the fluke tournament and if there are any questions about the Fluke Tournament, you can call the office or email jcaa@jcaa.org.

The JCAA Saltwater Registry Committee had their first meeting and they have a lot of information to go through. The committee's co-chairs Tom Siciliano and Bruce Smith will keep us all informed. Attend general meetings and read the newsletters to stay current with updates.

The letters of support for Bruce Freeman for the New Jersey seat on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council went out. He is very well qualified for the New Jersey seat on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Letters of support from your individual member clubs would go a long

way in ensuring that he gains the seat. If you have any questions, contact the JCAA Office.

As a reminder, the JCAA has an Operations Manager, Sharon McKenna, in the office to answer your questions or direct your call to the proper person. Sharon is only a phone call away.

I will be trying to make our Individual Committees more effective in this coming year. By being on one of these committees you can get more involved and see how the system works. If you are interested in serving, contact me or the JCAA Office.

Ed Cherry made comments at the Winter Flounder hearing. I have included his comments below. JCAA will be voting on a position at the General meeting to meet the April 30th deadline. We will use Ed Cherry's comments as a starting point.

A friendly reminder that the April 28th General Meeting will be held at the Brick Civic Plaza, 270 Chambers Bridge Road in Brick.

Ed Cherry comments on Winter Flounder **April 13, 2009**

As a recreational fisherman, I find the draft addendum 1 SNE/MA area, for the winter flounder management plan to be confusing and lacking in real information, making it impossible to make intelligent choices. The fact that the fishery is managed by 3 different entities also does not help. It appears that it is the intention of the plan to place a complete moratorium on the species.

The recreational community had to give up the winter fishery and engage in a reduced spring fishery a few years ago on the premise of helping the species recover. However, commercial fyke nets continued to proliferate in our bays and estuaries during the time period the recreational fishery was denied. We also had an offshore net fishery that had no quotas, merely restrictions of days at sea, that still accounts for 93% of the total catch, while the recreational fishery has given up so much. Both inshore and offshore commercial regulations allowed for the capture of winter flounder before they had a chance to spawn. Post spawn spring fish have to deal with fyke nets, a much restricted and reduced but still present recreational pressure and continued unabated commercial offshore netting plus the accelerated natural depletion by predation by large growing

populations of striped bass, bluefish and spiny dogfish.

We in New Jersey probably have the only viable inshore and near offshore stock of winter flounder on the eastern seaboard. However there appear to be other factors involved with the habitat of bays and estuaries that have prevented or limited spawn and survival of the fry. This is a fishery that requires state specific and federal eco-management as well as a multi-species approach to understand the true extent of natural predation on the species. If we are unable to determine and correct these eco problems, then the stock will surely perish because of fishery management short sightedness. Whatever eco habitat factors are involved in preventing the spawning cycle to complete itself here and in the northern ranges of the species must be determined to save a valuable recreational and commercial fishery. Otherwise we will just see fish get bigger and die of old age and become only a distant memory.

All the recreational choices presented in the plan other than status quo will basically shut the recreational fishery down. The recreational status quo choice is acceptable only if there is a complete fall-winter inshore and offshore commercial moratorium.

With stocks claimed to be around 9%, the only logical solution is to shut the recreational and commercial fishery down both inshore and offshore, with no by catch permitted, and no landings or sale of any kind permitted.

If this is not the case and we continue to have an inshore and offshore commercial fishery, then the recreational fishery quotas should be fully restored to what it was before we gave up the fall-winter fishery, and both sectors can race to see who catches the last winter flounder swimming. I bet it will be in a commercial net!

It appears there only two choices:

1. Continue to fish them as we are currently into virtual extinction. This is a really poor and totally irresponsible approach.
2. Place a total moratorium on all phases of the fishery and possibly give the species a chance to regenerate. Also insure and provide for proper federal funding for the needed

research to help provide for the resurgence of the stock.

Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Thomas Fote

Winter Flounder

There are two articles included below about winter flounder. The NMFS rule on winter flounder is published and as of May 1 you will no longer be able to keep winter flounder in the EEZ. In my role as a Commissioner to ASMFC, I attended the public hearing in Toms River on April 16th. There was important information presented by the commercial and recreational anglers in attendance. It is good that some of us know the history and understand that at one time there was a difference in the southern New England stock. There was one stock from Massachusetts to Connecticut and another from New York to Delaware. Because of the very poor science and lack of data, NMFS treats both stocks as one. This is another case where the lack of funding for adequate science is being used as an excuse to make a decision that has tremendous negative consequences. It would be nice to know the exact stock since some of the tagging studies show these two stocks migrate east/west rather than north/south.

There was complete frustration expressed by the anglers present. They feel that the anglers are the only ones who suffer the consequences when they are most likely not responsible for much of the problem. There is widespread feeling that many of the estuarine dependent species such as winter flounder are suffering the consequences of habitat depletion and contamination. Just read the article about crabs and what pollution does to them. Nobody tells a power plant that they can't kill the fish eggs and embryos in such great numbers. Nobody tells the sewer plants they can no longer degrade the environment by allowing all these chemical contaminants to leave their plants and enter the estuary, rivers, lakes and the ocean. The only thing that is ever done is to penalize the fishing industry and the people that depend on it by cutting the quota or closing the fishery. Add global warming to the mix and we have the perfect storm. Perhaps we need a "Network" moment and declare

“We Are As Mad As Hell And We’re Not Going To Take It Any More.”

Every Good Intention has a Consequence

Over the years I have watched well-meaning legislative actions create more problems than they solve. The latest example is the legislation that mandated fire retardant pajamas and other children’s apparel. Now we discover that the type of retardant used was water soluble and is entering our sewer systems every time we do laundry. From the sewer systems this water enters the bays, estuaries and the ocean. Mussels are used as an indicator species and NOAA has just completed a study that finds these chemicals in the tissues of mussels. These chemicals are known carcinogens. The shame is that the more expensive fire retardant that could have been used is not water soluble and would not have created this problem. But that was not mandated in the legislation and companies looked for the more cost effective solution.

The other example we currently are seeing is due to the increased use of ethanol. The corn growers are pushing Congress to increase the percentage of ethanol from 10 – 15%. Again, the good intention is to decrease our dependency on foreign oil and cut down on pollution. The consequence is ethanol damages two cycle outboard engines and the ethanol eats holes in the gas tanks of boats. This is causing a fire hazard. Boat engines simply stop, often out at sea, putting lives at risk. A leaking gas tank is an obvious environmental hazard. This is not the first time additives to gasoline designed to cut down on pollution have caused other problems. MTBE initially was billed as a "miracle additive" that would cause gasoline to burn more cleanly causing less air pollution. MTBE-treated gasoline gained popularity and market share by virtue of the government's oxygenate mandate. That was before it was discovered that MTBE was leaking from underground storage tanks along with the gasoline. This resulted in groundwater contamination in some communities. Studies have suggested high levels of MTBE contamination in drinking water supplies may cause cancer in humans.

Understand, there are good intentions behind each of these decisions but we need to spend more time investigating possible consequences.

Interior Secretary Salazar Hosts Hearing

On April 16th Interior Secretary Ken Salazar hosted one of four national hearings on energy and the ocean in Atlantic City. The topics discussed were offshore wind, wave energy and offshore drilling for gas and oil. The fishing industry, both commercial and recreational, was well represented. Governor Corzine, Senator Menendez, Congressman Pallone, Congressman Holt and Congressman LoBiondo all testified against offshore drilling. There was considerable support for wind energy. I testified as a Commissioner to ASMFC expressing my concerns about fishing access around windmills and other renewable energy sources and against offshore drilling.

I have been to many hearings in the last 30 years. This is the first time a cabinet member actually chaired his own hearing. After the Governor and the Congressional delegation testified, it was interesting that Secretary Salazar orchestrated the agenda to allow members of the public equal access. Instead of calling all the elected officials, he simply shuffled the names of people who wanted to testify and pulled every fifth card. He also had a dialogue, asked questions and was clearly engaged in the conversation. He wanted answers to questions and was willing to spend the time to gather the information he needed. I find this openness truly refreshing and it gives me hope that someone at Interior is really listening. I also think this is a terrific way to give the public the access we have been asking for. At most hearings the public waits hours before being given an opportunity to testify. By then the press and the person for whom the testimony is intended have left the room. For two hours at this hearing, everyone had an equal opportunity to speak personally to the Secretary. I must applaud him for this action.

ASMFC May 4th – 7th Meeting Week

Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town

901 North Fairfax Street Alexandria, Virginia

(703) 683-6000

May 4, 2009

9:00 AM - Noon Winter Flounder Management Board

1:15 PM - 3:15 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

3:30 PM - 6:00 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

May 5, 2009

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board
Noon - 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee
1:45 PM - 2:45 PM Commissioner Workshop: Length-based Stock Assessment Models 101
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM American Lobster Management Board
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

May 6, 2009

8:30 AM - 11:30 AM Shad & River Herring Management Board
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board
3:15 PM - 5:45 PM ISFMP Policy Board

May 7, 2009

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM Executive Committee
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM ISFMP Policy Board (continued)
11:30 AM - Noon Business Session
Noon Lunch for Commissioners & Proxies
12:30 PM - 2:30 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

**NOAA Report Calls Flame Retardants
Concern to U.S. Coastal Ecosystems
Health Care Concerns Also Noted
April 1, 2009**

NOAA scientists, in a first-of-its-kind report issued today, state that Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs), chemicals commonly used in commercial goods as flame retardants since the 1970s, are found in all United States coastal waters and the Great Lakes, with elevated levels near urban and industrial centers.

The new findings are in contrast to analysis of samples as far back as 1996 that identified PBDEs in only a limited number of sites around the nation.

Based on data from NOAA's Mussel Watch Program, which has been monitoring coastal water contaminants for 24 years, the nationwide survey found that New York's Hudson Raritan Estuary had the highest overall concentrations of PBDEs, both in sediments and shellfish. Individual sites with the highest PBDE measurements were found in shellfish taken from Anaheim Bay, Calif., and four sites in the Hudson Raritan Estuary.

"This is a wake-up call for Americans concerned about the health of our coastal waters and their personal health," said John H. Dunnigan, NOAA assistant administrator of the National Ocean Service.

"Scientific evidence strongly documents that these contaminants impact the food web and action is needed to reduce the threats posed to aquatic resources and human health."

PBDEs are man-made toxic chemicals used as flame retardants in a wide array of consumer products, including building materials, electronics, furnishings, motor vehicles, plastics, polyurethane foams and textiles since the 1970s. A growing body of research points to evidence that exposure to PBDEs may produce detrimental health effects in animals, including humans. Toxicological studies indicate that liver, thyroid and neurobehavioral development may be impaired by exposure to PBDEs. They are known to pass from mother to infant in breast milk.

Similar in chemical structure to polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, they have raised concerns among scientists and regulators that their impacts on human health will prove comparable. PBDE production has been banned in a number of European and Asian countries. In the U.S., production of most PBDE mixtures has been voluntarily discontinued.

The NOAA Mussel Watch survey found that the highest concentrations of PBDEs in the U.S. coastal zone were measured at industrial and urban locations. Still, the chemicals have been detected in remote places far from major sources, providing evidence of atmospheric transport. Significant sources of PBDEs introduction into the environment include runoff and municipal waste incineration and sewage outflows. Other pathways include leaching from aging consumer products, land application of sewage sludge as bio-solids, industrial discharges and accidental spills.

NOAA and the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project have recently held meetings with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the California State Water Resources Control Board to discuss water quality monitoring of emerging contaminants. NOAA's research and monitoring information found in this report will be used by relevant resource managers to better understand, assess and address the threats from PBDEs.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

[http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090401_](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090401_ecosystems.html)
ecosystems.html
Full Report
[http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/about/coast/nsandt/PBDErep](http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/about/coast/nsandt/PBDEreport.html)
ort.html



National Distribution of 200X PBDE tissue concentration in parts per billion lipid weight (where 200X = between 2004 and 2007). Categories low (green dot), Medium (yellow dot), High (red dot) were determined by cluster analysis.

High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

Watersheds that include the Southern California Bight, Puget Sound, the central and eastern Gulf of Mexico off the Tampa-St. Petersburg, Fla. coast, and Lake Michigan waters near Chicago and Gary, Ind. also were found to have high PBDE concentrations.



National Distribution of 1996 PBDE tissue concentration in parts per billion lipid weight. Categories low (green dot), Medium (yellow dot), High (red dot) were determined by cluster analysis.

High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

Scientists say "that crab just won't hunt"

April 10, 2009

Asbury Park Press

By KIRK MOORE

Here's some more raw material for those North Jersey vs. South Jersey jokes: The North Jersey blue crabs are slow eaters.

Researchers at Rutgers University found that blue crabs from the Hackensack Meadowlands are less adept at capturing agile prey, such as killifish or juvenile crabs, than their country cousins from the Tuckerton area. Scientists blame the striking difference on the long-term effects of mercury and other pollutants in the Meadowlands, and they found that Tuckerton crabs began

to show similar behavior shifts after feeding on Meadowlands marine life.

"We found the contaminants within the Hackensack Meadowlands estuary system cause adult blue crabs to have impaired coordination and become inefficient predators on more active prey," the researchers wrote in a paper published this winter in the journal *Estuaries and Coasts*.

The team included Jessica M. Reichmuth, Ross Roudez, Terry Glover and Judith S. Weis, a longtime Rutgers professor with extensive experience studying the effect of pollution on New Jersey's marine life. Previous work by Weis traced contaminants through the Meadowlands and their effect on the behavior of killifish (also called mummichogs).

In the latest three-year Rutgers study, the group collected crabs from two spots in Little Egg Harbor Township: the popular Graveling Point fishing spot on Great Bay, and at the first bridge on Great Bay Boulevard, from a creek that links Tuckerton Cove with the Sheepshead Meadow wetlands complex.

Bergen County crabs were collected near Lyndhurst in the Meadowlands, 51 square miles of wetlands that in the mid-20th century was one of those spectacularly polluted places that gave industrial New Jersey its bad name. Contamination persists in Meadowlands sediments, stormwater runoff from surrounding towns, and emissions from Superfund sites. Weis in 1986 documented effects of high mercury levels in the Berry's Creek tributary.

Previous studies have shown how metals affect European crabs and fiddler crabs, in ways that researchers had described as a kind of lethargy, including poor hunting performance. The Rutgers study found that stomach contents in the Meadowlands crabs averaged around 60 percent algae, plant material and detritus from the bottom.

The crabs were studied in both laboratory aquariums and in the field, where they were confined in minnow or green crab traps. The crabs were provided with food, and the laboratory setting allowed researchers to compare the animals' prey behavior around juvenile blue crabs (the species is notoriously cannibalistic), killifish, fiddler crabs and mussels.

The Meadowlands crabs were slower to go after food, and the scientists also noted the crabs were more likely to spend longer periods at rest, while the Tuckerton crabs would spend more time scuttling around the aquarium and probing its sand bottom.

They tied that behavior to diet, with experiments that transferred crabs from one site to the other, and switched their food supplies. Results were soon seen: "Hackensack Meadowlands crabs transplanted into the Tuckerton environment for 8 weeks became significantly better predators," the study notes.

Conversely, Tuckerton crabs sojourning in the Meadowlands lost their hunting edge, and became more like the slow-moving native crabs, the researchers reported. They saw similar results in aquarium trials.

And Tuckerton crabs built up mercury in their tissue, according to laboratory analyses. The transplanted Meadowlands crabs lost little mercury, a reminder of how long-lived heavy metals are in the environment.

That's why the state has restricted crabbing in the northern New Jersey counties for years, which in turn the researchers note is a factor in crabs there living longer despite a poorer diet. They find consistently larger crabs in the north than at Tuckerton, probably as a result of the state ban on crabbing and human consumption, the authors wrote.

More rocks for artificial reefs
Asbury Park Press April 17, 2009
By John Oswald

"Our goal is to get the gear off and keep it off," said Peter Grimbalas, director of Reef Rescue. Reef Rescue, along with other organizations like the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance, has been very active in Trenton trying to get the legislature to act on removing the traps and lines.

Grimbalas said the legislation was close to being finalized last year but stalled at the last minute and the fight has been renewed this year.

There will be a Reef Rescue Rally on June 25 held in conjunction with the Mako Mania Fishing Tournament. For those interested in more information on Reef Rescue visit www.njreefrescue.com.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife advises boaters that during these reef construction efforts, the work will be continuous so they must constantly be aware of the reduced maneuverability of the tugs and allow them the right-of-way.

The nine reefs that will be receiving dredge rock are Shark River, Axel Carlson, Garden State North, Atlantic City, Great Egg, Townsend Inlet, Wildwood, Deepwater and Cape May.

The woeful state of winter flounder
Asbury Park Press April 3, 2009
By John Oswald

If you thought things couldn't get any worse for winter flounder, think again.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has released Draft Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for the Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder for public review.

And it looks ominous.

It's a sizable document, and in the way of most government documents, a bit confusing.

In a nutshell, the draft outlines several options states can implement to reduce mortality of winter flounder. They are:

Option A. Status quo. States are not required to make reductions in their recreational fishery.

Option B. States are required to implement regulations that reduce fishing mortality in the recreational fishery by 50 percent.

Option C. States are required to implement regulations that reduce fishing mortality in the recreational fishery by 75 percent.

Option D. States must close their recreational fishery.

Option E. States that implemented restrictions to the recreational fishery that were more restrictive than those required by Amendment 1 are exempt from further recreational reductions in Addendum I.

A public hearing on Draft Addendum I has been scheduled for 7 p.m. on April 16 at the Ocean County Administration Building, Room 119, 101 Hooper Ave., Toms River.

Tom Fote, one of New Jersey's representatives to the ASFMC, believes the crux of the problem in winter flounder is eco-system management.

"Winter flounder are very bay and estuary dependent. We don't know all the factors affecting the fishery but we know runoff and development are having an impact on the fishery. Yet, all that seems to get done, says Fote, is to put more regulations on anglers. "The fishermen take it on the chin," he said.

Other states have closed their winter flounder fisheries, but have not see a rebound in stocks. Such restrictions, he continued, don't seem to be the answer.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum I, either by attending public hearings or providing written comments.

Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's Web site at www.asmfmc.org under Breaking News.

Public comment will be accepted until 5 p.m. on April 30, 2009 (EST) and should be forwarded to Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 I Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at

comments@asmfc.org. Subject line should read: Winter Flounder Draft Addendum I.

According to Fote, a decision on the winter flounder will probably come at the ASFMC spring meetings in May.

Added protection for winter flounder
by Al Ristori/For The Star-Ledger
Thursday April 16, 2009, 10:04 PM

The National Marine Fisheries Service has announced interim fishing rules, taking effect on May 1, which will protect southern New England winter flounder by prohibiting retention of them in federal waters. Windowpane flounder and ocean pout also receive similar protection, and these rules apply to recreational fishermen as well as the commercials they are aimed at.

Since the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) controls state waters, anglers can continue following their regulations (12-inch minimum, 10-fish bag, and a season closing May 21) inshore. Landing winter flounder during the summer, when they migrate to offshore waters, is already prohibited by ASMFC rules.

The ASMFC Winter Flounder Public Hearing was held Thursday night in Toms River, with a moratorium under consideration for next year. Check my blog at blog.nj.com/saltwaterfishing for information on that

Mixed opinions at winter flounder hearing
by Al Ristori For The Star-Ledger
Friday April 17, 2009, 8:28 PM

The winter flounder public hearing in Toms River on Thursday night only drew 23 people, with commercial interests dominating. Not surprisingly, since they are being shut down on winter flounder as of May 1, the trawler crews wanted inshore fisheries to also be shut down for a quicker recovery though the vast majority of the catch in recent years has been coming from the summer offshore fishery rather than the inshore recreational fishery as had been the case historically. Fyke net operators wanted to protect their share of the inshore fishery, though most of that is taken in the winter -- and before the flounder spawn. There was no enthusiasm for any of the options other than status quo, which isn't likely to prevail with the flounder spawning stock at a record low. The ASMFC will make a decision during their spring meeting, and a moratorium seems likely for next year.

NJ Outdoor Alliance Report
By John Toth

The New Jersey Outdoor Alliance (NJOA) held a meeting on March 24th at 7:00 p.m. at the Clarksburg Inn in Millstone for all fishing clubs and organizations to discuss the new federal law requiring all saltwater anglers to be registered by 2010. The purpose of this meeting was for the NJOA to arrive at a general consensus on what the NJOA should use as its position on the registry in discussion with management officials. Only one member from each organization was allowed to attend this meeting to prevent overcrowding and dominance of discussion by any group. All too often, fishing organizations go on separate paths on a pressing fishing issue and this division weakens and not strengthens us when we meet with fishing management officials on various management issues.

The registry takes effect in 2010 and it is free. In 2011, a fee for anglers to register becomes effective and that fee would be about \$15 to \$25 and it would go into the general treasury if this registry is administered by the federal government. If the registry is administered by the states, then a much lower fee can be levied.

After much discussion on the registry by various fishing clubs and organizations, three main approaches to the registry are under consideration and they are:

1. The registry should be free.
2. The registry should have a nominal/administrative fee of approximately \$2
3. A license can be considered to satisfy the registry requirement.

The alternative of "doing nothing" and allowing NOAA to institute a registry fee was quickly dismissed by committee members since monies derived from the registry (\$15 to \$25) would go into a general fund with no benefit to anglers.

Other major points of discussion included:

1. Concern that if the registry is free, then the Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) would have to absorb the administrative fee estimated to be at least \$600,000. The DFW is currently under funded and this additional cost would further undermine the DFW to perform its managerial objectives.
2. NJ has a hiring freeze in effect and the DFW cannot hire more staff to administer the registry.

3. One committee member suggested that the registry should be free, but the angling community should aggressively pursue greater appropriations for the DFW since \$100 million in various taxes and fees are paid by anglers that go into the general fund with very little benefit to anglers. Another suggestion was made that if exhaustive measures for increased funding for the DFW fails, then consideration should be given to the implementation of a fishing license at a later timeframe to provide the funding needed for the DFW. The license would, in effect, then satisfy our state's registry requirement. In comparison to other states, NJ's DFW is very under funded and under staffed and this situation is hampering the DFW in managing over 20 fishing management plans put in place by ASMFC or NMFS.

No vote for consensus was taken for a NJOA position on the registry. This is a complicated issue with so many other related issues. Committee members were recommended to reflect on the information provided during this meeting and to bring this information to their respective organizations for discussion and to arrive at a consensus on their position in regard to the registry. The NJOA will have another meeting in the near future for the committee members to again meet and vote on what will be the position of the NJOA on the registry issue.

The registry issue was brought up at an earlier JCAA General Meeting and a number of JCAA club representatives agreed to serve on a JCAA committee. The committee is scheduled to meet on April 20th to discuss the registry and to present their recommendations and thoughts on the registry to JCAA members at its April 28th General Meeting. Club representatives will then take this information back to their clubs to help them determine their position on the registry.

Highly Migratory Species

By John Koegler

Spiny Dogfish

Spiny dogfish are small sharks that are vicious predators. They are best described in a book titled *Fishes of the Gulf of Maine*. "Voracious almost beyond belief, the dogfish entirely deserves its bad reputation. Not only does it harry and drive off mackerel, herring and even fish as large as cod and haddock, but it destroys vast numbers of them.

At one time or another they prey on practically all species of fish smaller than themselves."

When they show up they totally end any chance for wreck fishing drift trips such as the artificial reefs. In recent years, they've stayed longer making early and late season fishing very difficult. Most New England hook fisheries are now much less profitable because of the over abundance of this dogfish.

There has been a commercial fishery slowdown mandated by the FMP that permits only 12 million pounds to be landed in 2009. The fishery management plan is based on the protection of the female spiny dogfish population. The FMP did this because the female dogfish were the main commercial targets. Fish dealers wanted the larger filets that only a larger female dogfish could provide. It is possible to target female dogfish exclusively because during most of the year female dogfish and male dogfish separate and group together by gender.

Fishery managers have ignored the exploding spiny dogfish population biomass, claiming there was nothing they could do. As a direct result, the female population is now over 190,000 MT and male population is over 425,000 MT. NMFS 615,000 MT estimate is believed by many scientists to be far too low. A University of New England scientist, J. Sulikowski, estimates that the spiny dogfish population is almost 2,000,000 MT. This is more than 3 times NMFS biomass estimate! Based on my experience, I believe the Spiny population is closer to the 2,000,000 MT estimate.

New NMFS data determined the female population is very much higher than NMFS trawl surveys had previously estimated. This is supported by new scientific trawl surveys that for the first time surveyed deep water beyond 100 fathoms and inshore waters less than 10 fathoms. These new surveys found a major population of young dogfish that the traditional NMFS surveys had missed in water as deep as 1000 feet. These new surveys fully support a population biomass that is much higher than NMFS current numbers.

This is a major disaster because the current spiny population is many times larger than at any time in fishery management history. Only in the last few years have the NMFS trawl surveys located the female schools. As a result, NMFS female survey numbers have exploded from a low of 50,000 MT of Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) to 190,000 MT of SSB in just 5 years. Clearly, this is a major NMFS

trawl survey error. Spiny dogfish females are not sexually mature until they are over 12 years old!

The huge spiny dogfish overabundance is affecting all other species. The eco-system is so out of balance that NMFS now estimates that dogfish, skate and ray populations now make up 60% of the Mid-Atlantic bight's total biomass. This is a huge super destructive population that must be immediately reduced to allow any angler desired fish species to rebuild their population numbers.

The current harvest target of 12 million pounds of spiny dogfish yearly will never accomplish any goal. NMFS estimates spiny yearly recruits exceeds 15 million pounds. Many fishery scientists believe this NMFS estimate is far too low. Only a huge increase in the commercial harvest of spiny dogfish will make the required dent in this awful over population problem.

Spiny dogfish yearly commercial landings must be revised to well over 30 million pounds per year to make any difference in the total dogfish stocks. This will not happen without major recreational support. Anglers must totally support a huge increase of the commercial spiny harvest in the immediate future to over 30 million pounds yearly.

Bluefin Tuna

US insanity at ICCAT continues. NMFS has totally lost all their common sense. The US lost some of the bluefin quota to other countries because they did not harvest it! While the prime commercial giant fishery landings lag, anglers have been once again hammered down to one bluefin per boat trip for 2009. Understand, ICCAT does not divide the US quota. Only NMFS allocates the US quota. So keeping angler landings extra low serves zero purpose other than giving away the US quota to accomplish zero for US fishermen. The winter giant fishery in North Carolina was again extra poor. Only 23 MT out of the total US general quota of 623 MT was landed. Not a good sign for rebuilding the US bluefin tuna fishery.

Swordfish

US commercials landed only 17% of the US swordfish quota during the first quarter. While this is better than previous years, it is still historically low. Recreational angler landings were also low due to a stormy weather in Florida during this quarter.

Yellowfin tuna

NC fishermen are catching a few yellowfin per trip as the spring progresses and winter fades.

JCAA Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

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.

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