

# JCAA NEWSPAPER March 2012

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*  
(Published on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012)

**Monthly Meeting Room Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd**  
**"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"**

## **JCAA REGULAR MEETING:**

**Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Starting at 7:30 PM**

**At Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd**

## **NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

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

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**February 28<sup>th</sup>** JCAA General Meeting

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

**March 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>** Saltwater Expo

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

## **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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## **2011 OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	Joe Puntasecca	908-913-0551
<b>1<sup>st</sup> V.P.</b>	Mark Taylor	732-245-9445
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> V.P.</b>	Paul Haertel	908-913-0551
<b>Treasurer</b>	Doug Tegeder	732-341-5674
<b>Rec. Sec.</b>	Tom Siciliano	609-296-3774
<b>Cors. Sec.</b>	Paul Turi	609-660-2126
<b>Mem. Sec.</b>	John Toth	732-695-3431

**Tournament Dir.**

**Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page**

## **2012 High Rollers Raffle**

It is now time for the JCAA High Rollers 2012 Raffle. We have put together a terrific selection of rods and reels and other prizes for a raffle that will be drawn on April 24, 2012. This is a major fundraiser for the JCAA. The 8 prizes are listed below with a value of over \$3,832. 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. JCAA will have a booth at the Saltwater Fishing Show Mar. 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>. Stop by and say hello where the raffle tickets will be available for sale and the prizes will be on display. Raffle ticket books will also be mailed along with entries for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual JCAA Fluke Tournament. 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.

1. Penn 30VSX International Reel with Penn VS3080TS60 6' Rod Value \$709 *Donated by JCAA*
2. Tony Maja Products Bunker Spoon Rod, Reel, Metered Braided Line and Bunker Spoon Value \$623 *Donated by BarnegatFishinHole.com*
3. Minn Kota Riptide Trolling Motor model RT 55/SE/L&D Value \$550 *Donated by Johnson Outdoors Inc*
4. \$500 Gift Certificate to Fishermen Headquarters Value \$500 *Donated by Fishermen Headquarters*

5. Canyon Reels HS-15 Reel with G Loomis SWR84-40C 7' Value \$477 *Donated by Canyon Reels and JCAA*
6. Penn 965 Reel with Penn Torque TG1220C66 6' 6" Rod Value \$413 *Donated by Penn*
7. Two Gallons of Interlux Micron CSC Antifouling Paint Value \$400 *Donated by InterLux*
8. Shakespeare Ugly Stik SP1166 1MH 6' 6" Rod with Penn Battle BTL 4000 Reel Value \$160 *Donated by Penn*

## President's Report

*By Joseph Puntasecca*

I am humbled and honored that you have elected me to hold the office of President of Jersey Coast for 2012. I look forward to making Jersey Coast even stronger and take this position very seriously. There is much work to be done and I welcome the challenges that will be put before me as President. Also elected as officers of Jersey Coast are:

First Vice President: **Mark Taylor**  
 Second Vice President: **Paul Haertel**  
 Treasurer: **Doug Tegeder**  
 Recording Secretary: **Tom Siciliano**  
 Corresponding Secretary: **Paul Turi**  
 Membership Secretary: **John Toth**

Congratulations to the newly elected officers!

I would like to thank our past President Eileen Smith for all her hard work and dedication during her time as President. I am looking forward to Eileen keeping her dedication for years to come. We have many talented and dedicated individuals helping to keep Jersey Coast running and most importantly on top of all the issues that face our angling community. We are always looking for more to step up and help us further our cause. If you would like to volunteer, get more involved and help Jersey Coast, please contact either the Jersey Coast office at [info@jcaa.org](mailto:info@jcaa.org), 732-506-6565 or myself at [jpuntasecca@jcaa.org](mailto:jpuntasecca@jcaa.org) and 908-913-0551.

We have a lot to work on this year. To get all the latest information on the many issues we are working on, I encourage you to have your club representatives attend our General Meetings so they can bring this information back to their individual clubs for discussion.

Once again, it is time for our High Roller Raffle! This is one of our major fundraisers at Jersey Coast to help offset our expenses that run

your Association. Please help out by getting raffle books and distributing them to your member clubs, friends, family and fellow anglers. This year's drawing will be April 24, 2012 in Brick.

The Atlantic City Boat Show was a huge success this year with a much greater attendance than we have seen in years. We spoke with hundreds of recreational fishermen answering any questions they had. I would like to thank Mark Taylor for organizing the event and everyone that volunteered to staff our booth throughout the show. Our next show is the Saltwater Fishing Expo in Somerset, NJ. This year's Expo is from Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup> through Sunday March 19<sup>th</sup>. For complete details visit the Saltwater Fishing Expo's web site at [sportshows.com/somerset](http://sportshows.com/somerset). We always need volunteers to staff our booth. If you wish to volunteer please contact Mark Taylor at [mtsport64@aol.com](mailto:mtsport64@aol.com) or 732-929-2591.

I would also like to remind anglers to renew your NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry Program registration with the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife. Renewal is quick and easy. Just have your 2011 registration card handy, go to [www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov](http://www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov) and click on 'Renew Any Registration'. And remember that anglers with a valid license from another state or valid registration with the National Saltwater Angler Registry are still required to register with NJ.

### 2012 Summer Flounder & Black Sea Bass Options

We do not have the summer flounder and black sea bass options right now. We should have them before the February General Meeting. We will send out an alert to the club representatives as soon as we have them. We will vote on these options at the February 28<sup>th</sup> General Meeting for the March 1<sup>st</sup> NJMFCM.

### JCAA Comments on the Black Sea Bass Addendum

**Jersey Coast Anglers Association**  
 Working For Saltwater Resource & Marine Anglers  
 February 4, 2012  
 Toni Kerns

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**  
 1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200 A-N  
 Arlington, VA 22201

**Subject:** Draft Addendum XXII to the Summer Flounder Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan for Public comment (January 2012)

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association represents 75 fishing clubs and individual members who fish the waters off New Jersey. Our member clubs have reviewed the draft addendum and provide the following comments.

The JCAA feels that the ASMFC has completely mishandled the management of the sea bass fishery. The public comments submitted last year on Addendum XXI were not even considered when the quotas were set. In fact the commission members did not even see the comments until late in the day of the meeting. Massachusetts made a motion for a plan that was not even sent out for public comment. This proposal was rushed through the process since it was the last agenda item on the last day of the meeting and everyone was ready to leave. So this important issue was not given its fair time and was approved so people could leave. New Jersey was severely penalized in this total abuse of the management process. The setting of last year's quota was totally arbitrary and capricious and the anglers of New Jersey were shortchanged. Specifically, the ASMFC voted to base the 2011 quotas for each state based on their 2010 landings. They chose not to base the quotas on landings from multiple years, which would have resulted in fairer and more precise quotas for each state.

This year's Addendum does not clearly state what the problem is that they are trying to solve. Sea Bass have been managed on a coast wide basis and they do recognize that may not be the best way to manage a localized fishery. So this Addendum allows for states to develop their own measures to set seasons and limit to achieve their allotted quota. It does offer four options and does allow New Jersey to liberalize its regulations.

Option 1 would continue the same regulations as last year for each state except North Carolina. This would not be good for New Jersey as we had a shortened season that resulted in us significantly under fishing our quota.

Option 2 would allow each state to adopt regulations. New Jersey regulations would include a 100% liberalization.

Option 3 would allow the northern states including New Jersey to each develop regulations with a 57% liberalization.

Option 4 would allow the four states north of us to each develop regulations with a 44% liberalization. New Jersey would be allowed to liberalize 100%.

The JCAA supports and recommends either Option 2 or option 4 which allow New Jersey to develop proposals that allow for an increase of up to 100% of the estimated 2011 landings.

As stated in the section entitled Stock Status the stock of Sea Bass is not over fished and over fishing is not occurring... It further states that the total biomass remains above the biomass maximum sustainable yield. The spawning stock biomass is 30.7 million pounds, which is 111% of the target. It is further estimated that the average recruitment (age one) in 2010 (2009 cohort) was 26.8 million fish. With this level of biomass and this many fish it does not make sense that the harvest limit is reduced from 1.78 million pounds down to 1.32 million pounds.

This means that the harvest level for 2011 will be 4.2% of the spawning stock biomass. Was there a mistake in the calculations? It is incomprehensible that the harvest numbers in Table 1 in section 5.0 are correct. The fluctuation in harvest in the years 1996 – 2008 don't pass the common sense test. The high harvest in the range was in 1997 with a harvest off 4.3 million pounds in 1997 then the next year it drops to a low for the series at 1.2 million pounds. Could it be the MRFS data is wrong?

The season was cut drastically in 2010 and 2011 so it is reasonable that the harvest would be less than previous years. A precipitous drop in harvest from 2010 (2.98 million pounds) to 2011 (0.99 million pounds) would indicate that something dramatic has happened; yet this is not addressed in the document. The same can be said of the years 1997 and 1998 when a similar drop in the harvest numbers occurred. Could it be that the MRFS data is wrong?

In reading the section Statement of the Problem it is difficult to determine what the perceived problem is. The problem is that the Harvest Quota is unrealistic and should be revisited and increased to a level consistent with the historical information provided in this document. What is happening with this fishery? Certainly the data must

be reexamined to determine the root cause of the problem. Could it be that the MRFS data is wrong?

There is another misconception in the document. On page 5 under the Note: in section 4.0 Proposed Management Program it states: "The MRFSS data used to set state by state specific conservation equivalent measures produces more variable results when used on a state-by-state basis. As the coverage area increases the variability of the data decreases; therefore, adopting regional or coast wide approaches will give more precision to the data."

This statement makes the incorrect assumption that the sample size has increased as the coverage area increase. Increasing the coverage area introduces additional variables such as different weather patterns and fish availability therefore the samples are separate entities and cannot be combined. Therefore the data in each individual area must be examined separately. Combining areas cannot be used as a justification that the variability decreases. What it does show is that the sample size in each individual state is totally inadequate.

In regard to landings as shown in table 3 of Addendum XXII New Jersey's percentage of the total coastal landings dropped from 38% in 2009, to 29% in 2010 and to 19% in 2011. If historical landings are used to set future quotas on a state-by-state basis then the landings from 2009 before the season was drastically changed should be used as the base year.

Sincerely,  
Joe Puntasecca, President

## **Membership Report**

*By John Toth*

I was the JCAA's Membership Secretary approximately seven years ago, and as the JCAA's new Membership Secretary, I have returned to my old roots! I decided to take this position again since I know that your membership is very important to the mission of the JCAA in protecting the rights of **ALL** anglers who fish in New Jersey! When our JCAA members go to Trenton or other locations that have hearings on fishery management issues, the fishery management conducting these hearings wants to have the knowledge that the JCAA represents

many anglers and that we are not some fringe element. Club membership and the Associate membership of the JCAA gives us the respect and attention we deserve in representing your interests at various meetings and hearings on all types of issues that continually confront us.

Accordingly, I want to have our membership information very up to date and timely. I have forwarded invoices to JCAA clubs for payment of your 2012 membership dues and sponsorship and you should have already received this information. Also attached is a document that requests club information. Please complete all the information on this form since addresses and telephone numbers of club officers continually change and we do not want to send JCAA information to the wrong addresses or contact wrong telephone numbers.

Finally, you will also receive a Youth Education "Hooked on Fishing Not On Drugs" HOFNOD survey. The purpose of this survey is to find out if your club may be interested in participating in programs that can introduce our American youth into fishing, even with some of them that come from dysfunctional families. As you already know, we are seeing less and less young people fishing on party/charter boats. The youth is our future and we need to bring them into this wholesome and pleasurable activity. So please complete this survey so we can find out if your club is interested in promoting fishing activity with our youth instead of their using drugs or doing other destructive behaviors.

The JCAA Board members are in the process of developing a power point presentation on the JCAA's activities and programs. When it is completed, we will let you know so that you can invite us to talk to your membership about what the JCAA is all about.

As always, **thank you** for your continued support!

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TO THE JCAA WEB &  
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# Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Thomas Fote

## Hooked on Fishing not on Drugs moves in Senate and Assembly

The Senate Bill S178 and the Assembly Bill A638 that establishes the Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program in DEP and appropriates \$200,000 from the Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund passed out of the Senate Environmental & Energy Committee and the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee respectively with unanimous votes. It now heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee to be heard. These committees have historically been the bottleneck. It is usually the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee that has failed to take action. We have several sponsors for the bill that are on that committee. We need to write to Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver and to the members of those committees, especially the sponsors, to make sure those bills are given a hearing in those committees. This is the fourth session this bill has been considered but never passed by both houses. You need to reach out to your elected officials in support of this bill.

### Senate Budget and Appropriations Members:

Chair Senator Paul Sarlo, and Vice-Chair Brian Stack, and committee members are Jennifer Beck, Anthony Bucco, Sandra Cunningham, Linda Greenstien, Kevin O'Toole, Steven Oroho, Joseph Pennacchio, Nellis Pou, Teresa Ruiz, Jeff Van Drew, Loretta Weinberg. The names of sponsors are underlined.

### Assemblyman Appropriations Members

Chair John Burzichelli, Vice-Chair Peter Barnes, Caroline Casagrande, Herb Conaway, John DiMaio, Pamela Lampitt, Alison McHose, Vincent Prieto, and Grace Spencer. The names of sponsors are underlined.

## Pots Off the Reefs

The Pots Off the Reefs Bill has been reintroduced both in the Senate and Assembly and is

moving through the Senate as usual. The Senate Environment Committee Chairman Senator Bob Smith posted the bill and it was moved out of the committee with only one negative vote. We already have over 43 cosponsors in the Assembly for the present bill. Much time and energy has been invested in this legislation. We need to keep it moving forward. First, we need for Senate President Sweeney to post the bill for a full Senate vote. Please contact him immediately. Senator Jim Whelan is a new member of the Senate Environment Committee. As you see below, he has always voted against this bill. His comments at the hearing showed that we have not done a good job educating him since he only commented on how this would impact the commercial fishermen. He does not seem to understand the recreational fishing industry is big business in New Jersey and the economic impact for New Jersey is far greater on the recreational industry. We need to better educate him and the other Senators who voted against the bill last year. Please contact Senator Whelan, Senator Kyrillos, Senator Stack and Senator Rice. Since Senators Van Drew, Beach, Lesniak, and O'Toole did not vote last time, we need to reach out to them as well. We need every yes vote possible.

The reason this is so crucial is there is another Assembly bill being proposed that represents an unacceptable compromise. We need a strong showing in the Senate to discourage the introduction of any alternative legislation. The alternative legislation that I have heard about would not meet the criteria for funding through the Sportfish Restoration Fund as set by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There is no purpose to legislation that has no funding source. We can't wait for funding from the State of New Jersey since there isn't even a line item for the Bureau of Marine Fisheries in this year's budget.

There will be additional meetings in the coming weeks and we will keep you informed. JCAA and many of our partner groups in Reef Rescue are adamant that there is no acceptable compromise on this legislation. We need to get the commercial pots off the artificial reefs. You need to support the present bill passed by the Senate Environment Committee **S1177** since this bill includes the language that the US Fish and Wildlife Service requires to restore the funding.

3/21/2011 - 3RDG FINAL PASSAGE

Yes {31} No {4} Not Voting {5}

Senator Jim Whelan - No  
Senator Joseph Kyrillos - No  
Senator Brian Stack - No  
Senator Ronald Rice - No  
Senator Jeff Van Drew - Not Voting  
Senator James Beach - Not Voting  
Senator Ray Lesniak - Not Voting  
Senator Kevin O'Toole - Not Voting  
Senator Andrew Ciesla, - Not Voting

### **Howard Lab Closing**

It is distressing to know that the Howard Lab is on the chopping block in the proposed Federal Budget. This Lab just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It began under the Department of the Interior doing research on recreational fishing. Bruce Freeman was at the Lab working for the Bureau of Sportfishing under the Department of the Interior. When NMFS was formed, it took over responsibility for the Lab. Read the articles below to learn what is going on at the Lab today. The excuse for closure is that New Jersey is charging \$200,000 per year for this facility, an arrangement that was made in the late 1980's. I was at the dedication of the new lab with Director George Howard. This Lab was named for Congressman Jim Howard, a supporter of the initial funding for the lab and fisheries research. Senators Menendez and Lautenberg and Congressman Pallone have already written to President Obama asking him to reconsider. Their letter includes the following, "The decision to close the NOAA laboratory will put all of this critical research at risk and limit our understanding of how we can best protect the ocean environment and the ocean-based economy." As the budget process continues, they will be working to maintain the funding necessary. But they need your support. Our colleagues from New York need to work equally hard to get support from their legislators. This lab provides vital research for their fisheries as well. In addition to the information included in the articles below, the Howard Lab is the only Federal Lab that provides research on bluefish and other important mid-Atlantic species. JCAA is already working with other fisheries and environmental groups on a coalition to protect the lab. The coalition will be creating a letter to President Obama about this issue. If you want to join the coalition, contact me at JCAA or Clean Ocean Action. We can have a greater impact if other organizations join the coalition.

Bruce Freeman will be writing a history of the lab for the next JCAA Newspaper. Below is the letter from Senators Menendez and Lautenberg and Congressman Pallone and the article from the Asbury Park Press and the Courier Post. You can also find information at the Clean Ocean Action Blog: (<http://cleanoceanaction.blogspot.com/2012/02/three-new-threats-to-our-ocean.html>)

### **Congressional Letter on Lab Closing**

Congress of the United States  
February 14, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposal in your Fiscal Year 2013 Budget to close the NOAA Fisheries Service James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The closure of this lab would have a negative impact on NOAA's ability to carry out its mission and damage progress that has been made in fisheries-based scientific research.

The NOAA laboratory, dedicated in September 1961, was the first federal scientific laboratory devoted solely to research on marine recreational species. The opening of this lab reflected the importance of acquiring scientific information to support the sustainability of marine resources that are greatly important to coastal communities. Today, the research that is performed at the NOAA lab produces vital information on marine species that serves as a foundation for our economy and jobs across the region.

The NOAA laboratory at Sandy Hook performs critical research that not only supports New Jersey marine habitats, but also provides greater insight into the issues our nation faces in maintaining a clean and sustainable ocean environment. The decision to close the NOAA laboratory will put all of this critical research at risk and limit our understanding of how we can best protect the ocean environment and the ocean-based economy.

This past September, NOAA staff including Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Eric Schwaab celebrated 50 years of important achievements made at the NOAA laboratory at Sandy Hook. Now, just a few short months later, your budget proposes to put an end to the important work that is done at the lab.

We will work to prevent the closure of this facility during the upcoming appropriations process and we ask that you reconsider your position. The NOAA laboratory at Sandy Hook is a vital facility and maintaining it will allow the important scientific research that is performed in one of the country's most unique and biologically diverse environments to continue.

Sincerely,  
Senator Frank Lautenberg  
Senator Robert Menendez  
Congressman Pallone

**NOAA Sandy Hook Lab could Close  
under Obama Budget Proposal  
Federal Fisheries Facility now in Obama  
Budget's Cross Hairs**

By Kirk Moore  
Asbury Park Press, 2/13/2012

Months after celebrating its 50th anniversary, the storied federal fisheries laboratory at Sandy Hook is now marked for closing in the Obama administration's budget plan, its 38 jobs to be reassigned at other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sites in 2013, according to agency officials and White House budget papers.

Named the James J. Howard Marine Laboratory after the late Democratic congressman from Monmouth County — the lab's longtime political patron — the facility is a center for research on coastal marine fish species and NOAA's ecosystem studies.

Rep. Frank J. Pallone Jr., D-N.J., said he was "totally opposed" to closing the lab and would fight to keep it open.

"It's a mistake on the part of the administration because that lab is very important," said Pallone, a Long Branch Democrat whose district includes Sandy Hook. "There is a lot of research

done there that is very important not only to New Jersey but to the whole northeast coast."

Sandy Hook scientists played a big role in uncovering toxic contamination in fish during the 1970s, and more recently has been investigating the effects of ocean acidification on marine life as carbon dioxide levels rise in the atmosphere.

"While NOAA values the activities conducted at the Sandy Hook laboratory, much of its activity can be conducted at other NOAA facilities without using leased space and incurring the associated lease costs," agency spokesman David P. Miller said in an email response to questions Monday.

The consolidations would also close a NOAA port base in Charleston, S.C., and a lab in Pacific Grove., Calif. No destinations have been revealed yet for the Sandy Hook jobs, but the closest NOAA facility is another Northeast Fishery Science Center lab in Milford, Conn.

It's a timely opportunity to move the Sandy Hook lab because its lease at the Department of Interior's Gateway National Recreation Area expires in December 2013, Miller said. No jobs will be eliminated outright, and the move "will be planned to minimize disruption of the ecosystem-based research taking place at Sandy Hook," Miller said.

In a statement, NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco said the agency's proposed \$5.1 billion budget "aims to provide immediate life-saving and job-supporting services needed to prepare and protect American communities and infrastructure, and invest in science and research that will enhance America's competitiveness." That "includes tough choices and sacrifices made in the face of tightening budgets," Lubchenco said.

The lab was founded in 1961 by a famed fisheries biologist, Lionel A. Walford, as the first federal research establishment dedicated to studying marine recreational species. The lab had a close association with the American Littoral Society, a nonprofit environmental group that still maintains its headquarters nearby at old Fort Hancock.

Walford and his colleagues used their outreach and contacts with recreational and commercial fishermen and divers to broaden research projects and get help from the coastal community. The lab's work on bluefish earned it a cameo role in author John Hersey's 1988 book "Blues," a paean to that era's enormous fishery.

Much of the scientists' work focused on the New York Bight, and their findings on toxicity in fish helped drive decisions to end ocean dumping and clean up New York Harbor. The lab amassed one of the nation's largest research libraries —some 33,000 volumes — but it was lost in a 1985 arson fire that leveled the original lab building.

In 1986 and 1987 Howard led an effort to get federal funding to rebuild, and a new building was started in 1989. Today it contains 11 individual seawater laboratories and a 32,000-gallon aquarium for close-up studies of fish behavior.

## **Lawmakers Vow to Save Sandy Hook Lab**

By Malia Rulon Herman

Courier-Post Washington Bureau, 2/14/2012

WASHINGTON — One day after President Barack Obama proposed in his budget to close a fisheries lab on the Jersey Shore, state lawmakers are asking him to reconsider.

Sens. Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez and Rep. Frank Pallone, all Democrats, sent a letter to Obama on Tuesday to express “strong opposition” to closing the lab.

“We will work to prevent the closure of this facility during the upcoming appropriations process and we ask that you reconsider your position,” the lawmakers wrote.

The James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at Sandy Hook has been in operation since 1961; it was the first federal scientific laboratory devoted solely to the research on marine recreational species.

According to the Obama administration, the closure would “reduce administrative costs and improve efficiency” by reassigning staff to other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration labs. Savings would be \$200,000 a year after the lease in Sandy Hook expires in late 2012.

“The opening of this lab reflected the importance of acquiring scientific information to support the sustainability of marine resources that are greatly important to coastal communities,” the lawmakers wrote.

“Today, the research that is performed at the NOAA lab produces vital information on marine species that serves as a foundation for our economy and jobs across the region.

## **The House of Representatives is at it Again!**

The House of Representative passed a transportation bill that would make it easier to start drilling for oil in the mid-Atlantic bight. They have increased the areas of allowable drilling off the Virginia coast. It seems that many of our country's Congressmen and women have very short memories. Don't they remember the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico? Unlike the areas in the Gulf, the areas in the mid-Atlantic are more densely populated and any oil spill would have even greater impact. Just think of the tourism dollars that were lost when medical waste was washed up on New Jersey's beaches. Now imagine our beaches covered in oil. Only Congressman Garrett failed to support the amendment that would have deleted Virginia from the list of drilling possibilities. However, when that amendment failed Republicans Congressman Scott Garrett, Leonard Lance and Jon Runyon all voted to release the whole energy bill that allowed for drilling off Virginia. Republicans Frank LoBiondo, Chris Smith, and Rodney Frelinghuysen and Democrats Robert Andrews, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell, Steven Rothman, Donald Payne, Rush Holt and Albio Sires all voted against the bill. Included in this bill was more allowable drilling in other sensitive areas. Before the oil spill in the Gulf, “Drill, Baby, Drill” was the cheer. While it is less likely to hear that spoken aloud, the voting record of some of our representative speaks louder than words. Fortunately Senators Menendez and Lautenberg will be leading the battle in the Senate to save our beaches and the marine environment.

We will be working with our coalition partners (Clean Ocean Action, American Littoral and others) to make sure this does not happen. Please get involved. Contact me at JCAA or Clean Ocean Action if you want to join the coalition.

## **ASMFC Report**

I spent four days at the Winter ASMFC Meeting. The major decisions were made at the Menhaden Board and the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board. The meeting summary document is available on the ASMFC webpage. The webpage also has all the materials that were distributed and presentations that were made at the meeting. One of the hot topics was the National Marine Fisheries Service listing of sturgeon on the endangered species list. This will have broad



implications for the commercial fishing industry. The state directors were invited to a meeting the following week by the National Marine Fisheries Service. They will discuss this action and many other issues.

### **Black Sea Bass**

The President's Column includes the letter JCAA sent to ASMFC about the proposed addendum on black sea bass. Berkeley Striper Club also sent a letter on this issue which takes the same stand as JCAA. It was interesting that these were the only two letters circulated at the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board Meeting on this addendum. JCAA and Berkeley Striper Club supported option 2. Pat Augustine and Pete Himchak made a motion for option 2. The representative from Connecticut Rhode Island made a substitute motion that would be more beneficial to Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. The vote was one of the strangest ever at the Commission. To no one's surprise Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts voted for the substitute amendment that favored them at the expense of New Jersey and New York. New York and New Jersey voted against that substitute amendment. There were seven abstentions. One of the southern states lobbied the others to abstain since either amendment would treat them the same. I was disappointed that the southern states abstained since this was more a matter of fairness than a matter of allocation. This makes two years in a row that New Jersey and New York have paid an unfair price in the allocation of black sea bass.

### **Menhaden**

The process has begun to prepare the new management measures for menhaden. This process will take us into 2013. The Public Information Document is available for public comment. The release is below. Please make sure your comments are made before April 20. JCAA will be discussion this at the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **Atlantic Menhaden Public Information Document available for Public Comment**

The Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden is now available for public comment and review on the Commission's

website. As the first step in the development of Amendment 2, the PID presents the current status of the fishery and resource, and solicits public input on which major issues and alternatives should be included for consideration and analysis in Draft Amendment 2.

The PID's primary focus is to initiate discussion on the timing and implementation of achieving the new fishing mortality threshold ( $F = 1.32$ ) and target ( $F = 0.62$ ) reference points recently adopted through Addendum V. Since fishing mortality in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 2.28, overfishing is occurring, however, the stock is not overfished. The goal of the new reference points is to increase abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species. The PID also seeks public input on a more timely and comprehensive catch reporting system, and scopes potential options to be used in managing Atlantic menhaden commercial bait and reduction fisheries as well as recreational fishery.

Alongside the development of Amendment 2, the peer-reviewed stock assessment will be updated with data through 2011 to provide a more recent estimate of fishing mortality. Results of the assessment update will be used to estimate the harvest reductions needed to achieve the new threshold and target fishing mortality rates. Therefore, preliminary harvest reductions are provided in the PID but will likely change based on the results of the stock assessment update.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Public comment must be received no later than 5:00 PM (EST) on April 20, 2012 and should be forwarded to Michael Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Menhaden PID). A subsequent press release will announce the state's public hearing schedule. For more information, please contact Michael Waine at 703.842.0740.

## **Share Your Fun Take Someone New Fishing**

## Summer Flounder History in the JCAA Newspaper Part Two March 2007-December 2007

I was hoping to run part 3 of the summer flounder history, reprinting JCAA articles from February 2007 to the present. However, there are more articles than I can include this month. I am including from January 2007 to December 2007. The next installment of articles will be in next month's newspaper. If you would like to receive all of the articles in one document, I can email them to you.

### Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

*(from JCAA March 2007 Newsletter)*

#### Summer Flounder

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission showed absolutely no guts and simply rubber stamped the National Marine Fisheries Service's plan for summer flounder. Even though NMFS was asked at the New York meeting to provide ASMFC with tables based on 50% probability, these tables were never available. As a consequence, 75% probability was all that was available. What I find really interesting is that the Commission and Council members who had requested that NMFS review the target and provide this data, never called NMFS to task at the most recent meeting. I asked many Council and Commission members if they were aware that NMFS had increased the target from 204 million to 215 million pounds. No one I spoke to seemed aware of this change. This is no way to make decisions. Hopefully, ASMFC will demand that NMFS go to an outside peer review before ASMFC acquiesces anymore to NMFS draconian measures. JCAA paid \$1,000 in expenses for me to attend the 4 days of meetings. Taxpayers are paying for Commissioners to attend meetings and make decisions. To get those Commissioners there may cost well more than the \$1,000 JCAA spends. The members who are State Directors are away from their state jobs to attend these meetings. Most Governors' Appointees receive nothing beyond their expenses. They are giving up

their time and their salaries. If taxpayers are going to fund this operation and people give up their valuable time and money, we should expect at least a Commission that actually has the authority to make decisions in the best interests of the resource and the public without being required to rubber-stamp the decisions made by NMFS. If that is all they are going to do, we could just have a conference call or condense the meetings to just species where ASMFC actually gets to make decisions. The tables are included below for the choices for '07. I have also included the tables for Connecticut and New York. New Jersey is taking a serious economic hit but the outlook for New York is an absolute disaster and may actually destroy the recreational summer flounder fishery and all the businesses that rely on that fishery. All of the pain is needless since a considerably higher quota would have no long-term impact on rebuilding summer flounder. NMFS has actually admitted this drastic cut might have no long-term positive impact on rebuilding since the problems may be connected to environmental and natural mortality and not fishing.

#### Connecticut

2006 Harvest Limit: 138,000 fish

2006 Landings: 105,763 fish

2007 Harvest Limit: 91,300 fish

Alteration for 2007: 13.7% reduction

Proposed 2007 Measures: Other options may be created using the same methodology.

#### Option size bag open season

1	18	6	June 7 - Dec 31
2	18	6	April 30 - August 28
3	18	5	May 30 - Dec 31
4	18	5	April 30 - September 5
5	18	4	May 18 - Dec 31

#### New York

2006 Harvest Limit: 650,000 fish

2006 Landings: 837,457 fish

2007 Harvest Limit: 430,262 fish

Alteration for 2007: 49.0 % reduction

2006 Regulations: Minimum Size: 18.0"

Possession Limit: 4 fish

Open Season: May 6-September 12

Proposed 2007 Measures: Other options may be created using the same methodology.

Option	Size	Bag	Open Season
1	18.0"	4	June 22 - July 31
2	18.0"	3	June 22 - July 31
3	18.0"	2	June 19 - July 31
4	18.5"	4	May 25 - July 31
5	18.5"	4	May 6 - July 25

6	18.5"	4	June 22 - August 31
7	18.5"	2	June 22 - September 12
8	19.0"	4	May 6 - August 31
9	19.0"	4	May 12 - September 9
10	19.0"	3	May 12 - September 9
11	19.0"	2	May 6 - September 9
12	19.5"	4	All Year
12	20.0"	4	All Year

New Jersey

2006 Harvest Limit: 1,443,000 fish

2006 Landings: 1,578,349 fish

2007 Harvest Limit: 954,272 fish

Alteration for 2007: 39.5 % reduction

2006 Regulations:

Minimum Size: 16.5"

Possession Limit: 8 fish

Open Season: May 6- October 9

Proposed 2007 Measures: Other options may be created using the same methodology

Option size bag open season

1	16.5	8	July 1-September 3
2	16.5	2	June 26- September 7
3	17	8	June 10- September 19
4	17	8	June 9-September 18
5	17	2	June 5- September 22
6	17.5	8	May 6-October 9

## Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

(from JCAA April 2007 Newsletter)

### Summer Flounder

As the publisher and assignment editor for the JCAA Newspaper, I usually wait until I receive the articles from our contributors and then decide what important topics have not been covered. This month, the JCAA writers and the articles we have reprinted from other newspapers have covered all the hot topics.

The only topic I need to share information and my concerns about is the lack of follow-up by NMFS in getting an outside peer review on the summer flounder science. Last August, both the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid Atlantic Marine Fisheries Management Council asked for an outside peer review. Congress, Governors and the public were unanimous in their support for this outside peer review. This peer review would be designed to find the appropriate summer flounder target. The only review done was by NMFS employees and former employees, hardly an unbiased group. They didn't report any

information about why the recruitment has been so poor the last five years and, in fact, they changed the target from 204 million pounds to 214,833,150. And so we wait. The clock is still ticking for next year's quota. The huge negative economic impact of NMFS actions continues. And no answers are on the horizon. JCAA has realized that dealing with NMFS is useless. They don't seem to care that they are destroying the commercial and recreational fishing industries needlessly. So JCAA will be dealing directly with President Bush, the Secretary of Commerce, Congress and our Governors. We hope other states and organizations will join us in demanding that the outside peer review is done immediately. We need this done before we start setting the quota this August for 2008. The extension gave us a little more quota this year than first proposed but did not correct the problem of poor data. Waiting for the next deadline is not acceptable. If we had poor recruitment in 2006, we could have a smaller quota next year. We could wind up with the problem that NY is facing with a short season, small bag limits and size limit choice of 18 1/2 and 19 inches. We will keep you posted.

Again, thanks for all the contributors to this newspaper. It is good to have so many different informed perspectives represented.

## Rebuilding Fluke to 214 Million Pounds a Pipe Dream

By John Geiser, Correspondent  
(from Asbury Park Press on 2/16/2007)

Fluke anglers should not be surprised if the National Marine Fisheries Service starts talking in June about further cutbacks for 2008.

It is as inevitable as the prediction that there will be a hurricane in Florida between August and November. Some things are bound to happen. NMFS executed an impressive display of legerdemain late last year, and Congress and many fishermen bought the "temporary fix." Unfortunately, lost in the wonder-working was the fact that, although the target date for rebuilding the fishery moved from Dec. 31, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2012, the target number was increased from 204 million pounds to 214 million pounds.

All fishermen wanted to see a bigger fluke quota this year. Anything was better than the 5.2 million pounds that Patricia Kurkul, the regional administrator, wanted to see last June.

Pressure from recreational and commercial fishermen escalated as the summer wore on, and NMFS began its intra-office incantations or conjuration with the result that by December the quota had been escalated to 17.1 million pounds. Most people breathed a sigh of relief: 17.1 million pounds is a lot better than 5.2 million pounds. True, but 17.1 is a far cry from the 30 million pounds the service had predicted we would be getting in 2006. The quota was 23.6 million pounds last year.

The shiplaster the service has applied to the compound fracture of the leg that is the fluke fishery will not suffice, if NMFS's target is rebuilding the spawning stock biomass to 197 million pounds by the end of 2012. If the service, aided and abetted by environmentalists, continues to insist the overall stocks can be built to 214,833,150 pounds by Dec. 31, 2012, as demanded by law, then it had better invest in a hatchery.

The alternative will be the firestorm resulting from cutting the harvest every year until sometime in 2010 or 2011, and then prohibiting the landing of fluke altogether to meet the arbitrary target.

The summer flounder biomass was declared to be 112 million pounds in November when the target was still 204 million pounds in 2010. The service figured that the median recruitment for the period 1982 to 2005 was 33 million fish. The average recruitment, because of the disastrous year of 2005, with 14.5, was 28.5.

The federal government has not released the recruitment figures for 2006, for some reason, and the longer this continues the more uneasy many close observers of the management process become. One more recruitment failure, and the spawning stock biomass will be in big trouble by utopian standards. Sexual maturity in fluke occurs at two to three years of age and an average length of 10 inches for males and 13 inches for females.

Two bad spawning years back-to-back would mean that the 2005 and 2006 year-classes would be contributing young from this year through 2009, which, before the passage of the Magnuson Act, would have been the last year of the 10-year rebuilding plan. Since passage of Magnuson, this schedule was pushed back. The target will have to be met before Jan. 1, 2013. NMFS claimed in December that this can be done.

Fishermen look back at what has been accomplished since 2000, and view these claims quizzically. They ask how the total biomass could

grow from 112 million pounds in 2006 to over 214 million pounds at the end of 2012 — six years — when the biomass only grew from 60.6 million pounds in 2000 to 112 million pounds in 2006. This was an increase of only 51.4 million pounds in seven years with three spectacular years of recruitment and over 100 million new fish plus two years of good recruitment adding 53 million more fish.

The flip answer is that the fish are getting older and heavier, thus the biomass gets larger faster than in the earlier years of rebuilding. Unless, of course, something happens on the way to the fisheries coliseum — such as what occurred in 2005 when the total biomass shrank to 104.3 million pounds from 105.8 million pounds in 2004. Granted, it leaped from 104.3 million pounds to 112 million pounds last year on the back of the great year-class of 2004, but the reverse is likely to be found this year in the spring stock assessment.

So what is coming down the marine interstate? Some predict a serious collision.

The National Marine Fisheries Service reported that recreational fishermen landed 12,200 metric tons of fluke in 1980 and 15,900 metric tons in 1983. Commercial fishermen landed 11,500 and 11,800 metric tons of fluke in those same two years. NMFS announced Jan. 19 that, effective that date, the commercial fluke quota for 2007 would be 4,656 metric tons, and the recreational harvest limit would be 3,194 metric tons. The research set-aside amount remained at 389,490 pounds.

The total allowable landing of 17.1 million pounds is the lowest in the time series beginning in 2000. The TAL was 17.9 million pounds in 2001 when the total biomass was only half as large as in 2006 and the spawning stock biomass only a third of that in 2006.

New Jersey's share for this season will be 954,272 fish, down from landings of 1,578,349 fish in 2006.

## **Fisheries Management & Legislative Report**

By Tom Fote

*(from JCAA June 2007 Newsletter)*

### **Summer Flounder**

I attended the ASMFC Summer Flounder, Black Sea Bass and Scup Management Board meeting on May 9, 2007. I have included the ASMFC summary below. It is interesting how

opposed NMFS seems to be to an outside peer review. A letter was sent by Dr. Holgarth to Congressman Saxton explaining that NMFS would not do an outside peer review but would continue the traditional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW). The ASMFC voted to fund an independent outside peer review due to the many questions that continue about the summer flounder stock assessment and targets. It was extremely interesting to me that the only person who voted against this ASMFC proposal was NMFS. Surprise, surprise! What are they afraid of? Are they afraid that we will find out that they were wrong all along and there are real problems with the stock assessment? People and agencies that are confident about their information are not generally opposed to outside reviews and transparency. It does make me wonder!

The problem is that none of the peer reviews will be available before setting the quotas for 2008. This leaves party boats, charter boats, tackle stores, the commercial and recreational fishing industries and the everyday angler suffering the consequences. This outside peer review was first requested by ASMFC and MAFMC in August of 2006. The scientists and fisheries managers have suffered no economic consequences from their inaction. That damage has been left for the states from Massachusetts to North Carolina and all of their anglers. We need to keep pressure on our legislators, governors and fisheries managers and inform them, again and again, that this is totally unacceptable. If this was any other major industry, the federal government and their state counterparts would have plans in the works to fix the problem. Are they ignoring our industry because we are 'just fishermen'?

## **Fisheries Management & Legislative Report**

By Tom Fote

*(from JCAA November 2007 Newsletter)*

### **Summer Flounder: The Problem of Bad Scientific Assumptions and People that Force us to Live with those Assumptions**

The summer flounder debate continues hot and heavy. Congressman Frank Pallone is requesting a Congressional Hearing on the controversies surrounding stock assessment and targets. There will be some organizations that will be pushing for

NMFS to support the quota suggested by the monitoring committee regardless of the hearing or any outside peer review. I believe these organizations misinterpret Magnuson Stevens Act. Magnuson/Stevens Act require that quotas do not exceed the recommendations of the Science & Statistical Committee (SSC) Committee. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council does have an SSC Committee and they have never used this committee to make recommendations for a summer flounder quota. This year JCAA and our Congressmen demanded an SSC review of the Monitoring Committee and it was never done. The membership of the Monitoring Committee and the SSC are entirely different and would bring different perspectives to the discussion. The quota of 15.77 million pounds was approved by both ASMFC and MAMF. In August 2006 ASMFC and MAFMC requested an outside peer review of the model and the targets that NMFS uses for summer flounder. NMFS has given nothing but excuses for their inaction on this request. Numerous Congressmen, Senators and Governors have also requested this review. ASMFC is equal partners in this plan and each state is represented on ASMFC. Those state agencies have turned to their Governors and have questioned the science used by NMFS. JCAA published a letter from Governor Corzine requesting this peer review. This request has been echoed by other Governors and various state agencies.

JCAA is an environmental group and I am reluctant to place the blame broadly on all environmental groups which include other recreational anglers. However, there are some NGO's who don't all include representation from the fishing public and the fishing industry. They are the ones calling on NMFS to support the lower quota. They have not a clue about the science or the 17-year history of this plan. They simply take NMFS science without question and react. They are very quick to excuse NMFS for not following the rules in determining the quota without going to the SSC's and ignoring the requirements for providing a study of the economic and social impacts. They blatantly ignore that this study is also required under NEPA rules. They can't have it both ways. Either we follow Magnuson Stevens to the letter or we ignore it altogether.

JCAA understands we need to rebuild stocks, even if the process is painful. However, summer flounder is not a collapsed stock. It is a stock that has

been rebuilding since 1990. The stock has gone from SSBMSY a 1994 spawning stock biomass (SSBMSY) of 22 million pounds to a 2007 estimate of between 80 – 109 million pounds. This means the spawning stock biomass has increased by 4 – 5 times in the last 13 years. It also means that we could be at half of the total of the proposed SSBMSY and then overfishing would not be taken place and the quota recommendations would be much higher. There is a very good distribution of older year class fish. If you compared to other species, summer flounder has 80% of a fully recovered stock for older year class fish. We have discussed the problem of flat line or below average recruitment for the last five years in numerous articles in the JCAA newspaper. Please read those articles for the information you need. Remember, recreationally we are not harvesting any summer flounder until they have spawned 3 – 4 times. Summer flounder spawns at 13 inches and New York is fishing at a 19 ½ inch fish recreationally.

I pulled the following from NMFS' SARC Documents (all numbers in pounds):

	1993	2000	2005	2006
<b>Spawning Stock Biomass</b>	20,460,000	20,460,000	67,320,000	93,290,810
<b>Total Biomass</b>	46,860,000	61,380,000	104,060,000	103,914,887

What I find the most discouraging is the people at these NGO groups will actually ask and get increased funding because things look bad. It makes me wonder if they don't create "bad" to prove they are doing something and they need more money. They don't seem to care who it hurts. The people who depend on the commercial or recreational fishing industry won't get increased funding – they'll just go out of business. Look around. There are tackle stores going out of business and charter and party boat owners laying off staff and failing to make their loan payments. I attended a meeting in Florida with the tackle manufacturers and their sales are way down on the east coast. These are not corporations like General Motors that can sustain years of loss. These businesses just go bankrupt and people lose their homes, boats and hope. No one at NMFS or the lobbyists at the NGO's won't lose their jobs or their homes. They keep promising if we wait, we will see the benefits. I can't imagine who will still be in business to reap those promised benefits. And,

finally, the quality of life issue is really important. For many anglers, this is their recreation, not golf, just fishing. Summer flounder is the fish sought out by most recreational anglers to take home and eat. The point is there is no point. All of this is needless if rebuilding summer flounder is your goal.

## Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

*(from JCAA December 2006 Newsletter)*

### Summer Flounder and PEW

I received an email from someone who works at the PEW Foundation. The writer questions the science that backs up a quote from Bruce Freeman that appeared in the Asbury Park Press. The quote came from a statement made at the New Jersey Outdoor Writers Workshop on November 15th. The entirety of his statement was not included, just this quote. "Historically, we have more summer flounder now than we've seen in living memory, at least 60 years," Freeman said. "We're going to destroy the fishery, and in three or four years the stock will be doubled, and people can't rationalize that. . . . People won't accept it."

Rather than just respond to the writer of the email, I am compiling information that I want to share more broadly.

Bruce Freeman has a lot more history in the fishery than anyone I know. His work goes back to the sixties and the seventies when he was responsible for compiling the recreational catch figures for summer flounder at the Federal Bureau of Sportfishing. When it was merged into NMFS he continued that work. Nobody on the current MAFMC staff who is dealing with this issue has been involved for more than a couple of years. Bruce's comments, taken in total, reflected exactly what NMFS has been saying by setting these targets. At various times in public forums, NMFS has been asked, "Will these low quotas actually result in reaching these imaginary targets?" We know NMFS is required by law to set a quota that will meet the rebuilding targets. For summer flounder, this means setting targets that will reach a doubling of the present spawning stock biomass and biomass. Yet, when asked the question, the answer has been a refusal to guarantee any specific outcome. However, NMFS continues to set targets using imaginary numbers and refusing to adjust these targets when

actual data is available. Even if we consider that slight overages or the contention that the regression analysis would have called for a smaller target, there is no way this minimal difference would have had a dramatic impact on the total outcome. We are talking about a stock that was producing 33 million fish into the system in 1993 with a spawning stock biomass of 20 million pounds. We now have a spawning stock of between 80 and 109 million pounds, yet the actual production has averaged 27 million fish, a drop of 5 million fish per year in recruitment. That is fish, not pounds! The total spawning stock biomass, even with the 3 year increase from 2005 to 2007 of 30 million pounds, the total biomass went down by 1 million pounds. NMFS admits that their targets, using their questionable science, are not producing desired results. Their solution is to blame some unforeseen background mortality. Even though they admit this problem is not due to fishing pressure, reducing fishing pressure is their only solution. We all know the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

PEW and some other environmental organizations are pushing for compliance with the newly passed Magnuson/Stevens Act based on their interpretations of the Act. The Magnuson/Stevens Act requires that the Federal Management Council's Science & Statistical Committee (SSC) sets the targets. PEW never questions that Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council (MAFMC) and NMFS refuse to send the monitoring committee report to the MAFMC Science & Statistical Committee (SSC) as required by the M/S Act. The MAFMC gave the excuse to Congress and the fishing community that it could not be done before their meeting in early August. That was three months ago and there have been opportunities to be in compliance and send the report to SSC to set the quota. The SSC has a different makeup than the ASMFC and MAFMC Monitoring Committee. We rely on SSC to look at a variety of factors. Why hasn't PEW joined with Congress and the commercial and recreational fishing communities to demand this is done?

Under this act, NMFS is required to set quotas that will rebuild any stock within 10 years. In looking at summer flounder, NMFS is restricting the quota with the intention of reaching their imaginary target for the spawning stock and the biomass during the ten year rebuilding period using targets that are based on assumptions rather than facts. If you read

the Magnuson/Stevens Act, the clear intention is that the targets and quotas are developed using actual data, not the personal assumptions made by the modelers. What PEW and other groups are doing is basing their decisions on the assumption that NMFS uses actual data. What PEW and other groups fail to do is question the recent failures of the projections. When NMFS sets up an unrealistic target and fails to meet that target, we need to be asking about other factors (environmental, competition for habitat and prey, poor data) rather than repeating the same mistake again and again. When PEW questions Bruce Freeman's statement that the stocks will double in the rebuilding period, you are, in effect, questioning everything NMFS has done. Has PEW come to the realization that what NMFS is projecting won't happen? Does PEW believe that we cannot increase this stock to 197 million pound spawning stock biomass and 215 million pound biomass from its present level of 93 million spawning stock biomass and 104 million pound biomass? I think that looks like doubling the stock to me. I was at the Congressional briefing with Bruce Freeman when NMFS said this is the largest spawning stock biomass and biomass they have on record. That is what the facts show. I can only imagine that PEW believes we will actually meet some imaginary target set by projections that have not considered any ecosystem management. It makes no sense to me when so-called environmental groups totally ignore environmental concerns when decisions are made. That is bizarre!

I need to mention that, according to the newspapers, PEW is suggesting we should implement a moratorium on summer flounder fishing like we did on striped bass without any regard for how many small family businesses will go bankrupt and how many people will lose businesses and jobs. I guess PEW wants people to do something else besides fish. That is how it looks to me and a lot of the fishing community. PEW has never questioned NMFS refusal to do an economic study of the effects of the regulations on the recreational fishing community as required by Magnuson/Stevens. Striped bass and summer flounder were two completely different plans. There was never a ten year rebuilding plan with striped bass. The striped bass plan called for us to protect the 82 year class until they spawned at least once which took almost 7 years. If you understand summer flounder, you know they spawn after one year. The plan required that we

look at a specific three year running average for the young of the year index. This was based on actual sample and data collected, not on assumptions. There was never a target for SSB or total biomass. We were also striving for good age class distribution in striped bass just like we have with summer flounder now. The older age class distribution is just as good as or better than on striped bass. Is that what PEW wants to do on summer flounder? JCAA would love those criteria for summer flounder. If that plan was in effect right now for summer flounder, we would be basing the quotas on fishing mortality and I am sure the quotas would be much larger than anything proposed by NMFS for 2007 or 2008. For the record, there was no coastwide moratorium on striped bass. Maryland and Virginia put in a moratorium after a period of time and were in discussions how to reopen the fishery before the good YOY Index that allowed the ASMFC to relax regulations. There were large striped bass being sold during that entire period. I was at all those striped bass board meetings back then and I know PEW was not represented. I don't believe PEW was even involved in fisheries management during that time period.

JCAA has always supported rebuilding stocks and our membership has been willing to make hard choices for the greater good. However, JCAA has never supported developing targets or quotas based on faulty science. We have always supported looking at all of the science, not just the models. We understand ecosystem management and have been supporting making decisions with the environment in mind for over 25 years. It was JCAA that pushed for predator/prey information in 1995 that led to an ongoing study of these relationships. Right now, I see a group of NGOs that have lost sight of environmental causes and have made the fishermen the "bad guys" and blamed us for all of the environmental problems. Before these NGOs point the finger at us, they need to look at their own practices. JCAA leaves a small footprint. Some of these NGOs spend more on décor than JCAA has ever raised or spent. I guarantee their rent on their fancy offices is greater than JCAA's and other fisheries organizations' 25 year budgets. Of course, we don't have huge foundations' oil money funding us. In fact, we pride ourselves in not funding with polluters' money. JCAA has been offered but refused to do that for all the years that I have been involved with it. We fund ourselves from contributions from people who fish and care about

the environment. Think about who stands on the higher ground!

## **Fluke Stock Assessment Update**

By Bruce Freeman

*(from JCAA December 2007 Newsletter)*

Anyone following the summer flounder (fluke) fishery is very concerned about the allowable catch quota for 2008. The federal law mandates that the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council develop annual quotas for federal waters, i.e. from three to 200 miles offshore. Annual fluke stock assessments are used as a basis to set the yearly quotas. Because of the importance of the stock assessments, it is extremely important that they include all of the most complete and accurate fishery information as well as having the assessments use the most complete analytical techniques, referred to as modeling

As stock assessment scientists gain experience and the biological data being collected becomes more extensive and complete, some of the analytical techniques are continually modified or new ones applied in order to provide the very best scientific advice possible. Because of the important nature of the fluke stock assessments, the JCAA has requested that a totally independent scientific review be done this year by the National Academy of Science. At the same time, we requested that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) support this request. The Commission voted to fund such a review, but at its August meeting it was persuaded to change its position and instead support what is called a benchmark assessment. This process will involve the use of three federal scientists and a fourth independent scientist to serve on the Stock Assessment Workshop this coming June.

Because of the importance of the stock assessment for fluke and the reluctance to have a truly independent stock review, the JCAA, RFA, United Boatman of NY and NJ, and the Garden State Seafood Association and the NY Tackle Trades Association have formed an ad hoc group to determine how best to be involved in the Benchmark Stock Assessment Workshop scheduled for June 2008. We have agreed that we need several independent stock assessment scientists to be involved not only with the June meeting but also in several preliminary meetings leading up to the June



workshop. We are in touch with scientists from Rutgers University and we will be looking for other scientists from New York and Virginia. In addition, we will need to hire a highly respected stock assessment scientist to lead this effort. We have contacted a highly qualified scientist and we are getting cost estimates to form a budget to pay for his services and travel expenses.

We will present this budget to our membership clubs for final approval and action. I will become directly involved in the stock assessment process and I have already contacted the Mid Atlantic Council to have my name added to the Workshop group roster and plan to attend the preliminary meetings and the June workshop in Woods Hole in MA.

I will keep you continually updated on the progress of this most important and urgent study which is so crucial to the problems we face with the fluke fishery.

## Show Time

*By Mark Taylor*

I would like to thank all the people that volunteered to work the JCAA Booth at the **Atlantic City Boat Show** on February 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time this show season that we had our High Roller Raffle tickets at the Booth. A special thanks to the Saturday Crew of Dan Miller, Daniel Miller and Bruce T. Halstater for doing an outstanding job. JCAA would not be able to go to these shows without all the volunteers. JCAA has a booth at these shows to educate the public on the correct information of issues that are always affecting the recreational fishing community, so stop by our booth. A well informed fisherman is an educated and smart fisherman.

JCAA had a table at the **Salt Water Sportsman National Seminar** on February 11<sup>th</sup>. It was a great seminar as always. This seminar was held at the Monmouth Regional High School Performing Art Center in Tinton Falls which was a great place to hold this event. I would like to thank **George Poveromo** and his staff of the Salt Water Sportsman for having us there. All of the pros from the local waters did a great job. I would suggest that if you did not make this one make sure you are at the next one. So check out their web site at

[www.nationalseminarseries.com](http://www.nationalseminarseries.com) and I hope to see you there next year.

JCAA will have a booth at **The Saltwater Fishing Expo**. That show runs March 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> at the Garden State Exhibit Center in Somerset. There will be many local tackle stores, tackle manufactures with displays showing what is new on the market. This also is not a show to miss. So stop by and talk to the volunteers that are manning the booth and get the latest JCAA Newsletter, this year's fluke tournament application with a special category for Striped Bass and take a chance on the High Roller Raffle and help support JCAA which in turns helps you. I will be there to answer any questions that you have. Without all the people working together we will not be able to enjoy this sport in the future. Hope to see you all at the show.

## YOUTH EDUCATION

*By Greg Kucharewski*

### HOFNOD BILL SENATE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE PASSES

The bill establishes the Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program (HOFNOD) in the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife. The bill establishes the HOFNOD program on a statewide basis by enabling the Division of Fish and Wildlife to implement and model the program after the pilot HOFNOD program implemented in Ocean County in 2000. To the maximum extent possible, the division will implement and operate the program in every county in the State. The bill appropriates \$200,000 from the Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund to the Department of Environmental Protection to fund the cost of implementing the program. The appropriation will support the initial salary costs of a full-time program director who will oversee and coordinate a predominantly volunteer staff. This funding may also be used to purchase fishing kits, an essential part of the program, and other program materials. The bill establishes the program's funding source as the Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund, a statutory account established to receive fines and penalties from convicted drug offenders that are used to support state-authorized drug and alcohol abuse abatement programs. The bill encourages the Legislature to appropriate

sufficient funding from this source on an annual basis in the state budget to support this program.

### **HI-MAR STRIPER CLUB PROFILE**

The Hi-Mar Striper Club has been in existence for almost forty years and during that time members of the Hi-Mar Striper Club have always shared their fishing knowledge with others and especially children that wanted to learn about saltwater fishing. Many club members assist children that participate in club sponsored fishing trips from fishing piers, boats, and along the shore. Each year the Hi-Mar Striper Club volunteers time to support the following: Hooked on Fishing Not On Drugs, Jason's Dreams for Kids Foundation, Big Brothers – Big Sisters of Monmouth County, Point Pleasant Fire Explorers, Father Time Family Fishing Tournaments and the Arthur Johnson High School Fishing Club. Recently, members set up a learning booth for children at Bogler Middle School, Keansburg, NJ to support the Father Time Environmental Expo and teach children about fishing. The Father Time program promotes fathers spending time with their children. During the year club members volunteer time and coordinate charter boat trips for a number of youth groups that get the chance to go fishing and enjoy a day on the water. The Hi-Mar Fishing Flea Market, Hi-Mar Spring Striper Tournament, and Hi-Mar forty hour Fall Striper Tournament are three major fundraisers that are conducted annually to provide funding for the children's activities. The amount of volunteers that are needed to make this happen is unbelievable, but members of the Hi-Mar Striper Club work hard to make fishing a reality for children that might never have an opportunity to experience saltwater fishing.

Members of the Hi-Mar Striper Club have taught fishing to children for many years and their club was the proud recipient of the 2007 Jersey Coast Angler Association, Youth Education Award.

The Hi-Mar Striper Club welcomes new members, and if you like to fish Sandy Hook and Raritan Bay waters, you might want to attend a club meeting. If you would like additional information on the Hi-Mar Striped Bass Club, feel free to contact the membership director, [info@himar.com](mailto:info@himar.com). The club membership includes some top-notch local recreational and charter captains who are available to share a wealth of fishing knowledge at each meeting. All captains are very open and eager to help other

fellow members increase their catch with new methods and the latest fishing information.

I always wondered how the Hi-Mar Striper Club got its name so I emailed the President, Steve Machalaba, and he informed me the Hi-Mar Striper Club was started by a group of fisherman in the Highlands Marina during the 50's that concentrated on fishing for Striped Bass. The name Hi-Mar is a contraction of that marina.

### **NEWARK BAIT - KIDS' FISHING FUN NIGHT**

The recently appointed JCAA President Joe Puntasecca will visit the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club Tuesday, March 6, 2012 to assist the JCAA Youth Education Committee by presenting a "Fish Biology/Species Identification" program for youngsters attending their Kids' Fishing Fun Night. The Newark Bait and Flycasting Club hosts the event annually 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. Members of the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club are committed to teaching the joys of fishing to our young people. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association Youth Education Committee has supported this worthwhile event for a number of years by providing seminars for children, "Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs" decals, pledge cards, and prizes.

If you would like to help with our youth education efforts and offer some of your time to teach children the joy of fishing, please phone 732-785-9278 or e-mail [Gkucharews@aol.com](mailto:Gkucharews@aol.com)

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