

JCAA NEWSPAPER MARCH 2014

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on February 17th, 2014)

Monthly Meeting at Jersey Coast Shark Anglers, 385 Herbertsville Road, Brick
"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, February 25th, 2014

Starting at 7:30 PM

AT JERSEY COAST SHARK ANGLERS

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 13th, 2014

Starting at 7:30 PM at JCAA Office

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.

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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 908-913-0551 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
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Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page

High Roller Raffle

The JCAA High Roller Raffle for 2014 is now ready! Below is a list of this year's prizes. For 2014 we have added a 9th prize to the raffle donated by Oliso, Inc. Oliso, makers of vacuum food sealers, was kind enough to donate 4 machines to JCAA for use in our fluke tournament, our sportsperson of the year dinner, the Saltwater Sportsman Show raffle and our High Roller Raffle. The drawing will be held on **May 27th, 2014** at the JCAA offices located at 1201 Rt. 37 East, Suite 9, Toms River. JCAA will be selling tickets at our booth at the shows listed below or call the office and we will send you a book.

You do not have to be present to win

9 chances to win a great package

Support JCAA

Only \$2.00 a Ticket

1. Fin-Nor Sportfisher FSSU 5950RS Rod & Avet HX 2 Speed Reel, Value **\$580** *Donated by Fin-Nor & JCAA*
2. Lamiglas XTC 704 Travel Rod & Penn 975 International Reel, Value **\$560** *Donated by Penn & Lamiglas*
3. \$500 Gift Certificate to Fisherman's Headquarters, Value **\$500** *Donated by Fisherman's Headquarters*
4. 2 Cans of Interlux Micron CF Pain, Value **\$440** *Donated by Interlux*
5. 2 Cans of Interlux Micron CF Paint, Value **\$440** *Donated by Interlux*
6. Yukon 50qt. Cold Locker Cooler, Value **\$330** *Donated by Igloo/Yukon*
7. Shakespeare Ugly Stik SP1166 1MH 6' 6" Rod & Penn Battle BTL 4000 Reel, Value **\$160** *Donated by Penn & Shakespeare*
8. Shakespeare Ugly Stik SP1166 1MH 6' 6" Rod & Penn Battle BTL 4000 Reel, Value **\$160** *Donated by Penn & Shakespeare*
9. Oliso, Inc. Vacuum Food Sealer, Value **\$150** *Donated by Oliso, Inc.*

Total Value \$3,320

IMPORTANT DATES

February 25th JCAA General Meeting
March 13th JCAA Board Meeting
March 14th-16th Saltwater Expo
March 25th JCAA General Meeting
May 18th Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament
August 23rd JCAA Fluke Tournament

President's Report

By Paul Haertel

Well, we are off to a tumultuous start in the New Year as a fluke regionalization plan was shoved down our throats by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. This was done against the will of the public. Why would the ASMFC bother to have a public comment period and hold public hearings if they were going to do the exact opposite of what the vast majority of people wanted? People are not upset over this; they are incensed. There have been well over 10,000 views on just one website alone where I posted this information. Many are saying that because the ASMFC did not listen to them they are not going to listen to them and they are going to keep whatever fish they want. While I can sympathize with reactions like that, I cannot condone it. Successful fisheries management is dependent on compliance. Therefore, I urge all those who might consider illegally harvesting fish to instead become more involved with an organization such as the JCAA that will continue to fight for the rights of our recreational fishermen. Be sure to read the articles in this newsletter to see what happened and what we are doing about it.

There are a few other things I would like to mention. One is that we received a little bit of good news about winter flounder. The ASMFC approved no closed season in state waters for recreational fishermen. However, for this to become law, the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council must adopt this change. I anticipate that they will do so at their meeting on March 6th. However, the regulation will have to be signed off on by the DEP Commissioner before it becomes law. Therefore, the season won't begin until sometime in March but then it should remain open year round. The bag limit and size limit are expected to remain the same, 2 fish at 12".

I am not sure what the sea bass regulations will be this year but I am hopeful that they will be liberalized somewhat from what they were last year.

There was great concern about a recent letter from the DEP stating that the menhaden quota had been filled and the season was closed and would not reopen until 2015. However, this is for specific gear types and also a by-catch of less than 6000 lbs. is still permitted. Most, if not all of our bait boats that use this type of gear harvest less than that so this closure should have no effect on our fishermen or bait and tackle stores.

We are now accepting nominations for our Sportsperson of the Year so if you know of a worthy individual please submit a nomination.

Progress is being made on the Pots off the Reefs compromise. JCAA opposed the compromise as the majority of our member clubs favored not allowing pots on the reefs at all. However, we will be working with other groups to ensure that the details of the agreement are acceptable. There is an artificial reef committee meeting to discuss draft regulations on 2/19. Sometime shortly thereafter, I believe the proposed regulations will be open for public comment.

The Army Corps of Engineers have contracted a company to repair the north jetty of Barnegat Inlet. They are expected to repair a 740' section of the jetty in the area where fishermen normally park by the jetty. The project is expected to begin soon and last close to 9 months. Access to the jetty will be prohibited during that time. Trucks will still be permitted to enter onto the beach from the end of the paved road but will be prohibited from going within 400' of the jetty. The New Jersey Beach Buggy Association has done a wonderful job at Island Beach helping to restore areas that were damaged by Hurricane Sandy. They are hopeful that the contractor will also repair portions of the jetty out towards the end where rocks have been tossed around creating hazardous cuts for those fishing out there. JCAA certainly supports this additional repair work and will try to help ensure that it is done.

We need plenty of help with all our various committees. If you or one of your club members is interested in volunteering, please contact me at anglerpmh@aol.com

Just a reminder, you need to register or renew your NJ saltwater recreational registration for 2014. To renew go to [this link](#). Then scroll down and click on "Access current year" Enter requested info. Click on your

ID number Click on renew. In case you were not previously registered you may also complete your initial registration at this same link. The registry is free and there is an explanation as to who needs to register in the web site.

Sportsperson of the Year

At our last General Membership Meeting in January the membership voted to start accepting nominations for our sportsperson of the year in March and to have a vote at our General Membership Meeting in June. The reason for this is because we don't meet in July & August and we vote at the October meeting, which is very close to our honoring dinner date, it does not give our honoree too much time to contact family and friends who may want to be present at the dinner presentation. A lot of family and friends may be out of town and it does not leave much time to make travel plans. In addition to that, it does not leave us much time to order our plaques for our Sportsperson-of-the-Year honoree and the Youth Education Award honoree. This year it cost us double the amount of money to order our plaques because we had to pay an expedited fee. So all in all it seems to make sense to have the nomination and election process much earlier.

If you wish to nominate someone, please submit a bio of at least 250 words. Don't worry about typing and spelling, etc. When we have elected a nominee, if I need more or less words to make the bio fit in our brochure, I will work with the nominating club to accomplish this.

The dinner again this year will be held at the Crystal Pt. Yacht Club in Pt. Pleasant on Sunday, November 9th, 2014. Ticket prices are the same as last year, \$75 per head or \$600 for a table of 10.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the JCAA office or by email at pturi6@comcast.net.

Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Thomas Fote

In my report you will see the ASMFC press release and the votes for summer flounder. There is also another article on water treatment and the problems with drugs going back into the water. To find all the summaries from the ASMFC meeting,

you can go to their webpage and read not only the summaries but hear the voice recordings of the meetings. I think they are posted until the end of February. You should also read the concerns of Dr. David Pierce on regionalization included in the memo below.

Winter Flounder

You have probably heard the news that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has decided to allow for a year-round recreational fishery for winter flounder in state waters while remaining at the two fish bag limit. That will bring back the recreational winter fishery that has been closed for the past few years. This is a good thing for the anglers and the businesses that depend on the winter flounder season. The amount of fish we will catch recreationally is so small that it will not have a long-term impact on the rebuilding. But the reason the decision was made is not a good thing. There were many of us who were aghast last year when John Bullard, as Northeast Regional Director, allowed and promoted a directed fishery on winter flounder. This was done in spite of the fact that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries had put in close to a moratorium on winter flounder in state waters with the understanding that federal waters would remain closed. The ASMFC did this because of the dire condition of the winter flounder stocks. We are at an all-time low. If the New England Council was compelled to handle winter flounder as the Mid-Atlantic Council is handling summer flounder, there would be no fishery in the EEZ. But because New England, through the allowance of John Bullard, was able to fish on a stock that should not be fished on in the EEZ, the recovery of winter flounder will be slowed significantly. The fishing in the EEZ allows for 5,000 pound trip limits. One boat fishing in the EEZ making 10 trips catches more than the entire inshore commercial fishery in New Jersey will land in 7 years. This is an enormous amount of fish. To provide a comparison, the whole commercial fishery in state waters in New Jersey was 7,000 pounds last year. This action could have a long-term negative impact on the rebuilding of the stocks. The opening of this fishery in the EEZ made the ASMFC commissioners feel like hypocrites for keeping the recreational fishery in state waters to a 45 day season. Reluctantly, we voted to allow for no closed season because in most states the recreational catch will be no greater than New Jersey's commercial

catch. In fact, according to the tables provided in the ASMFC materials, the NJ recreational catch in 2012 was **40lbs. Yes, only 40lbs.** The actions that are taken in New England provide the motivation and evidence for some environmental groups to fight against any flexibility in the Magnusson/Stevens Act. New England's past practices were the reason Congress included greater restrictions in the 2006 reauthorization of the Magnusson/Stevens Act. John Bullard, with his leadership on the New England Council and as Northeast Regional Director, has confirmed the worst expectations of some environmental groups.

Summer Flounder

Summer flounder management under the National Marine Fisheries Service always amazes me. The new Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is proving to be a greater disaster than the old Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS). We covered this in last month's JCAA Newspaper and Paul Haertel is providing more information in this month's edition. According to the NMFS, the summer flounder stock is supposedly fully recovered, yet we are fishing on quotas as if it was not. Those are arguments over numbers and statistics and the concern that NMFS is not producing reliable information on the recreational fishing sector. But NMFS has now taken an action through the Northeast Regional Director that is completely out of line.

John Bullard showed up at the Summer Flounder, Black Sea Bass and Scup Board Meeting to reallocate fish from New Jersey to New York under the guise of regionalization. Everyone sitting around the table knew they weren't voting on regionalization. John Bullard made a statement that he was advocating for this change so fisheries regulations would be similar in adjoining states. This was accomplished by making New Jersey raise the size limit and reallocate thousands of fish to New York. What Mr. Bullard didn't say was that he had just screwed all of New Jersey's party and charter boats and anglers in South Jersey. The party and charter boats compete with Delaware for customers. The anglers who fish in Delaware Bay and off the coast of Delaware are also affected. Because of the regionalization that John Bullard was pushing and made motions for, Delaware will be fishing next year on a 16 inch size limit while in New Jersey we will be fishing on an 18 inch fish. Tell me how that is

regionalization. After talking to other state representatives before the meeting, I was pretty sure we had enough votes to go for option 1 and 2 which would allow for status quo and allow for New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to use the unused recreational catch from other states to allow us to avoid a severe reduction. A motion was made which I amended to accomplish just this. John Bullard was allowed to be the last speaker before the vote. He became a cheerleader for New York against New Jersey. He tried to dress this up as a regionalization plan which everyone knows is a joke. Senator Schumer has been putting pressure on the Regional Director to give New York New Jersey's fish. Governor Cuomo and his Attorney General has also been putting pressure on the Regional Director for the past year. John Bullard is a politician, not a fisheries scientist and he did what he thought was politically expedient as he did with winter flounder. On the motion to amend, as you can see in the summary below, the vote was 7 against and 4 in favor with the 2 services voting against. If you do the math, a change in vote by the services would have resulted in passage on the amendment. I had asked them to abstain. If they had abstained not only in their vote but in their comments, I am sure we would have had the votes to stay at status quo. I can understand why states like Delaware voted against the amendment. It meant that they could fish at 16 inches while NJ must fish at 18 inches. Even with John Bullard's bullying, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Virginia voted with New Jersey on the amendment.

Why am I so upset? I have been going to Council and Commission meetings since the mid-80's. It was interesting that he left the meeting once he got the vote he wanted. In 30 years under many regional directors, I have never seen a regional director promote the reallocation of fish from one state to another for political reasons. I may have disagreed with regional directors over the years based on the science but their actions were always equitable to every state.

I'm also not sure why the ASMFC went out with an addendum to get public comment since every state except New York did not support going to regionalization. The people who actually attended the public hearings and submitted comments all supported the options that I made in a substitute motion. In his memo of February 12th, Dr. Pierce, chairman of the Summer Flounder, Black Sea Bass

and Scup Board, addresses the same concerns JCAA, NJOA and NJSFSC had about how to deal with overages in case New York goes over this year. He also points out that the Regional Director, John Bullard, “argued at our Board meeting for the regional approach and who with his other federal counterpart voted in favor.” Mr. Bullard wasn’t clear how he would deal with overages and states Senator Schumer would take care of it.

New Jersey has always had a problem with the two services having a vote on the Management Board. This is a compact of states, not with federal agencies. Over the years, a few of New Jersey’s commissioners have made motions that would have made the services ex-officio members, not voting members. We have never been successful because of the purse strings that NMFS holds for ASMFC. Maybe it is time for the New Jersey commissioners to revisit this issue. Mr. Bullard may have made Senator Schumer happy but he has outraged New Jersey’s Congressional Delegation. New Jersey’s state officials are similarly upset with his actions. I will keep you posted. I saw a comment from one of New Jersey’s recreational anglers saying John Bullard should have worn an “I love New York” t-shirt to this meeting. My thought is his t-shirt should have said, “I love New York – Screw New Jersey.”

Striped Bass

Below is a letter by Desmond M. Kahn, Ph.D sent to the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board in response to Draft Addendum IV on Striped Bass. Dr. Kahn addresses a point made in the recent peer-reviewed striped bass stock assessment. Dr. Khan has been involved with the striped bass technical and stock assessment committees for as long as I can remember representing the state of Delaware. He is now retired.

The information in italics below was done by a New Jersey’s Bureau of Marine Fisheries staff person after a discussion we had on the status of the stocks. It will help you understand Dr. Khan’s comments. I can also email the stock assessment pages he references. Those pages will be posted on our web page and our facebook page.

*Tom,
I was able to find the information related to Des Kahn's 28 January 2014 letter to the Management Board. I looked over his letter and I think he draws attention to an important part of the assessment*

report - I got the sense that you & the other Board members did too. As I mentioned when we met this morning, the retrospective bias issue was raised in the benchmark report, but the specific language that I was thinking of is in the 2013 update assessment report (with data through 2012 - final 2012 data; the benchmark assessment language is sparse and more general). I have attached the relevant pages (and underlined the most relevant parts) of the update report (see Figure 9, 2nd panel down on the right, for the basis of Des Kahn's comment) which notes, starting on page 9:

"...because of error associated with these [point estimates of F and SSB] estimates, there is a probability of 0.46 that the 2012 female SSB estimate is below or equal to the SSB threshold... If the estimates are adjusted for the average retrospective bias in the last five years (fishing mortality = 12% overestimate; SSB = 14% underestimate), the probability of the 2012 female SSB estimates being below or equal to the SSB threshold declines to 0.12..."

"...because of error associated with these [point estimates of F and SSB] estimates, there is a probability of 0.46 that the 2012 female SSB estimate is below or equal to the SSB threshold... If the estimates are adjusted for the average retrospective bias in the last five years (fishing mortality = 12% overestimate; SSB = 14% underestimate), the probability of the 2012 female SSB estimates being below or equal to the SSB threshold declines to 0.12..."

Which is to say that if we adjust upwards the 2012 SSB estimate to account for an average retrospective bias, 88% of the Monte Carlo run point estimates of SSB are at or above the SSB threshold.

The other issue in the assessment regarding management uncertainty is in the projections - i.e., if we implement management action X, what is the probability of SSB being at or above/below the threshold. The benchmark report notes that: "By delaying action [reducing F] until 2014, the probability of SSB being below the SSB reference is 0.59 in 2014 and 0.63 in 2015." The retrospective bias issue would lower those probabilities, but the trend would likely be the same - increasing probability of SSB being at or below the threshold until ~2015 at which point the probability starts to

decline. If recruitment in 2013 were substantively above or below average the story could change (the projections are roughly based on an average recruitment).

Letter to ASMFC on Striped Bass by Desmond M. Kahn, Ph.D

Board letter Jan 2014
January 28, 2014
916 Rahway Drive
Newark DE 19711
Striped Bass Management Board
ASMFC

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to draw your attention to a point made in the recent peer-reviewed striped bass stock assessment. The retrospective analysis in that document examined how stable and reliable the estimates of spawning stock biomass and fishing mortality from the Statistical Catch at Age model were as additional years of data were added. The estimates for 2005 were examined as an example. These estimates were based on data through 2005.

What this retrospective analysis showed was that, as additional years of data were added, the estimates of these management parameters were unstable and unreliable in the Statistical Catch at Age model. The estimate of biomass increased as each additional year of data was added, until by the time the 2012 data was added, the estimate of biomass had increased by 37%.

This result is of serious concern. It indicates that the terminal year's estimate of spawning biomass, which is the one that managers such as yourself normally base decisions on, are biased low and are not reliable estimates of spawning biomass. These estimates for 2012, for example, will increase as additional years of data are added.

By the same token, the retrospective analysis in the assessment showed that the estimate of fishing mortality is overestimated, since the estimate of F for 2005 decreased as more years of data were added.

Consequently, the retrospective analysis indicates that the model estimates of spawning biomass and fishing mortality for the most recent years have become unreliable and unstable.

My final point is that a dominant year class was produced in the Chesapeake Bay in 2011, which has already caused some increase in total coastal recreational catch-per-unit effort, although these fish

were only two years old in 2013. This year, they will begin to move out onto the coast and abundance experienced by the recreational fishery will increase. To increase female spawning stock biomass, they will have to grow up and mature, however.

Yours Truly,
Desmond M. Kahn, Ph.D.
Former member, ASMFC Striped Bass Stock Assessment Subcommittee
Former Chair, ASMFC Striped Bass Tag Subcommittee
Former Chair, ASMFC Striped Bass Technical Committee

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Summer Flounder/Scup/Black Sea Bass Management Board & Technical Committee

FROM: David E. Pierce, Board Chairman

DATE: February 12, 2014

RE: 2014 Summer Flounder Recreational Fishery Measures

As Chairman, I begin by thanking the Board for agreeing to a regional approach for our fluke recreational fisheries. Difficult choices were made with most states being willing to “take a chance” on the approach primarily to accommodate New York’s concerns.

Addendum XXV and our February Board discussions made it clear that it’s critical for states, especially those with the majority of harvest (notably, New York and New Jersey) to be quite careful with their 2014 management measures. If the 2014 RHL is exceeded, I suggest it will be difficult for the Board to consider and adopt regional management for 2015, and we likely will return to state-by-state measures using 1998 as the baseline – an outcome some states will abhor.

For example, if the 2014 RHL of 2,421,720 fish is exceeded, individual states will be held accountable based on their 1998 allocated portion of the RHL. Consider that status quo would have given

New York a 2014 target of 426,223 fish and New Jersey 946,893 fish. The Board selected option (3b) giving New York and New Jersey a 2014 projected harvest of 1,546,871 fish.

Let's assume we go over the 2014 RHL. Let's also assume New York achieves its projected 2014 harvest of 640,523 fish (option 3b) helped by the drop in minimum size from 19 to 18 inches, great abundance of fluke off its shores and continued high effort by that state's recreational fishermen and for-hire industry. If the RHL is exceeded, New York will have to cut back from 640,523 fish (or whatever is caught this year) to 426,223 fish. New Jersey is less likely to be as dramatically impacted because the 3b projected harvest is 906,348 fish compared to the status quo (1998-based percentage) of 946,893 fish.

What's most concerning is the impact on Connecticut. If the RHL is exceeded and Connecticut reaches its 3b-projected 2014 harvest of 227,939 fish (even much less), it appears that state's fishery likely would be closed in 2015! Its 2014 status quo target is 89,604 fish.

Clearly, it is critical that the RHL not be exceeded. For this reason, as your Chairman not wanting the Board to deal with 2014 ruins and implications for 2015, I remind the Board that the major harvesting states must for 2014 be very careful and precautionary. I suggest simply selecting the option 3b size limit, possession limit, and # days open likely will put the regional approach at risk for 2015.

All of our discussions to date have been quite optimistic about the RHL. Many of us have said, "It won't be exceeded in 2014 with a regional approach." This might be wishful thinking. Therefore, I suggest consequences of going over the RHL might not have been given enough consideration/evaluation. This memo highlights what could go terribly wrong for some states, such as New York and Connecticut. Adopting the regional approach to deal with perceived equity issues, especially for New York, would be tragically ironic if New York's 2014 harvest, in particular, increases well beyond the 3b expectation and the RHL is exceeded.

This memo also serves to call this issue and concern to the Technical Committee's attention and to alert GARFO's RA John Bullard who argued at our Board meeting for the regional approach and who with his other federal counterpart voted in

favor. At the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015, we all hope John will be able to say, "Job well done ASMFC!" Let's make him happy and by doing so we'll have the satisfaction of having achieved our Addendum XXV objectives – not to please GARFO (although, why not) – but having successfully solved the problems described in the Addendum.

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board Approves Regional Management for 2014 Recreational Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Fisheries

ASMFC Press Release

Alexandria, VA –The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, establishing regional recreational management for both species for the 2014 fishing year. For summer flounder, the Addendum creates management measures by region with the intent of providing more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast, especially between New York and New Jersey. The approved summer flounder regions are Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina. For black sea bass, the Board also approved the continuation of management measures by northern (Massachusetts – New Jersey) and southern regions (Delaware – North Carolina).

Addendum XXV was initiated to address a growing concern that current summer flounder management measures are not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities to the resource. Its adaptive regional management approach is designed to allow the management program to adjust to past, current, and future changes to the resource and the fishery. Under this approach, all states within a region will be required to have the same possession limit, size limit, and season length. The Technical Committee will work with the states to develop, for Board consideration and approval, measures for each region that will collectively achieve, but not exceed, the recreational harvest limit. The adaptive regional management approach has been approved for the 2014 fishing year only.

For black sea bass, the Board approved the continuation of ad hoc regional management measures by northern (Massachusetts – New Jersey) and southern regions (Delaware – North Carolina). This approach has been used since 2011 and offers some advantages over coastwide regulations, which can disproportionately impact states within the management unit. Specifically, regional measures address geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance and seasonality) while maintaining the consistent application of management measures by neighboring states. States in the northern region will reduce their catch based on the region's performance in 2013. The Technical Committee will work with the states to develop regional management measures for Board consideration and approval. States in the southern region will implement measures consistent with federal regulations (current recommended federal measures are a 12.5 inch TL minimum fish size, 15 fish possession limit, and open season from May 19 – September 18 and October 18 – December 31). The regulations of the two regions combined will achieve the required coastwide harvest reduction in order to not exceed the 2014 recreational harvest limit. The Board approved the ad hoc regional measures approach for the 2014 fishing year, with the option of extending it through 2015 by Board action.

Addendum XXV will be available on the Commission website by the end of February. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Meeting Summary

The Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board met to consider final approval on Draft Addendum XXV, consider approval of state scup recreational proposals, and elect a Vice Chair.

At the December 2013 joint Commission/Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting the Board approved the use of adaptive management approaches to set state scup recreational measures for 2014. All states indicated that they would maintain status quo management measures for the scup recreational fishery in 2014. Mike Luisi from Maryland was elected as Vice Chair.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan

Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to adopt Adaptive Regional Management Option 3a under Addendum XXV Summer Flounder for the 2014 fishery for one year.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Miller.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute Option 1 Conservation Equivalency and Option 2 for Option 3a under Addendum XXV for Summer Flounder.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Bellavance.

Move to call the question (for substitute motion).

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute Option 1 Conservation Equivalency and Option 2 for Option 3a under Addendum XXV for Summer Flounder.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion fails (4 in favor, 7 opposed).

Motion to Amend

Move to amend the motion to make RI its own region, so the Northern Region would consist of CT, NY and NJ.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion fails.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to adopt Adaptive Regional Management Option 3b for Option 3a.

Motion made by Mr. Ballou and seconded by Mr. Bullard. Motion carries.

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to adopt Adaptive Regional Management Option 3b under Addendum XXV Summer Flounder for the 2014 fishery for one year.

Motion carries.

Move to adopt Option 2 Ad Hoc Regional Measures under Black Sea Bass section of Addendum XXV.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move to accept Option 2 (one-year extension) on the timeline for black sea bass.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion carries.

Move to approve Addendum XXV as amended today.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carries (Roll call vote: In favor – MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, MD, NC, USFWS, NMFS; Opposed – NJ, VA; Abstentions – PRFC).

Decision puts more New Jersey Fluke on New York Hooks for 2014

By Richard Degener,
Atlantic City Press, February 4, 2014

New Jersey anglers will see reduced fluke catches this year, to the benefit of neighboring New York, under a decision made Tuesday by an interstate fisheries panel.

The decision also could mean two different fluke sizes in the Delaware Bay, with a smaller keeper size in Delaware waters and a larger one on the New Jersey side.

New Jersey was on the short end of a 9-2 vote at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in Virginia as the East Coast states that land the popular flatfish, also known as summer flounder, voted in new measures for the 2014 fishing season. Only Virginia voted with New Jersey.

“Virginia realized it wasn’t fair,” said Tom Fote, a New Jersey representative on the ASMFC, an interstate panel that regulates migratory fish. “Our allocation is basically going to New York. It sets a bad precedent where they basically take fish from one state and give it to another, because New York has been crying for six years.”

New York has complained its anglers are allowed fewer fish per day, and they must be larger to be considered keepers. The system in place since 2001 awards each state a quota, and the states get to determine their own measures, called a “conservation equivalency,” to meet that quota. New Jersey has received 39.1 percent and New York 17.6 percent of the East Coast quota, the two highest amounts of the nine states that fish for fluke, since 2001.

The disparity between New York and New Jersey quotas resulted in a minimum fish size last year of 17.5 inches in New Jersey and 19 inches in New York. Garden State anglers got five fish per day while Empire State fishermen got four. But New

York did have a longer season, at 151 days compared to 133 in New Jersey.

Measures approved Tuesday lump New Jersey, New York and Connecticut into one of four regions. Every state within a region must have the same measures. While officials from the three states still must meet to determine them, one proposal would include an 18-inch keeper, a four-fish bag limit and 128-day season. Each state can determine which days fishing is allowed, but it must be the same number of days.

“It puts the fishermen at an equal opportunity to harvest the fish,” said Toni Kerns, the ASMFC’s Interstate Fishery Management Plan director.

Fote said the result will be higher catches in Connecticut and New York and less fish for New Jersey.

“We didn’t win anything here. They just did a better job of lobbying than us,” said Fote.

President Paul Haertel of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association said it will cost New Jersey anglers an estimated 41,000 fish and seven fishing days this year.

The region including Delaware, Maryland and Virginia is projected to get a keeper at 16 inches. This would lead to two sizes on the Delaware Bay. Haertel said New York argued that anglers from New York and New Jersey fish the same waters, so they should have the same keeper size. Numerous party and charter boats, as well as private boaters from Cape May to Cumberland counties fish the bay for fluke. “How is that fair for boats out of Cape May that fish similar waters?” asked Haertel.

Fote said Delaware should be included in the region with New Jersey. “Delaware threw New Jersey under the bus. They voted in favor of regionalization,” Fote said.

Complicating matters, Fote said, is that Connecticut wants to talk about allowing a 16-inch fluke just for shore-based fishermen.

Fote offered a substitute motion that would have kept the old system, but allowed states that did not catch their quota to transfer it to other states. This could conceivably have solved New York’s issues, but the vote failed 7-4. Fote complained that it would have passed 6-5 if the National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (who each get one vote along with the states) had not voted against it.

Kerns said the regional plan only was approved for 2014, so the system could revert to the 2001 regime in 2015.

Pressure from New York likely will continue. Fote said the New York attorney general had threatened to sue for changes. And U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. has pushed a bill called the Fluke Fairness Act. Schumer could not be reached for comment Tuesday, but he has said he would continue pushing for federal legislation unless the changes are made permanent.

Recreational fluke catches meanwhile, are being cut from 7.55 million pounds to 7.01 million pounds this year, due to spawning stock concerns. Kerns said the stock is getting older and that could be pushing more fish into New York waters, as larger fish tend to migrate north, though climate change could be a factor.

“Some papers say they are migrating north due to climate change,” Kerns said.

The 2001 quotas are based on 1998 landings data. Fluke may be moving north, but the new three-state region is the hotspot on the East Coast. New Jersey, New York and Connecticut were the only three states to overfish their quotas last year.

Regional Fluke Measures Approved

By John Oswald
Asbury Park Press, February 7, 2014

Despite overwhelming opposition, regional management measures for summer flounder for the 2014 season have been approved by the ASMFC.

The approved summer flounder regions are Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina.

The addendum was drafted, ostensibly to create management measures to provide more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast, especially between New York and New Jersey. However, the Addendum was perceived, mainly by New Jersey anglers, as a thinly disguised fish grab by the state of New York. New York fishery managers claimed that the current system of conservation equivalency, which allows states to set its own size season and bag limits, was unfair as it was based on data collected in 1998 and the size and distribution of the stock had changed dramatically in that time.

Last October, Capt. Anthony DiLernia, a voting member of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council from New York, said that if the MAFMC elected to stay with coastal equivalency at its December meeting, New York was ready to take that decision to court. The tactic worked.

According to the plan, all states within a region will be required to have the same size, season and bag limits. A size and bag limit of four fish at 18 inches for this region has been mentioned as a possibility but nothing has been decided.

“The final decision was incredible,” said Chris Zeman, one of New Jersey’s representatives to the MAFMC. “I’m shocked that they are going through with this one year experiment. They are playing with people’s livelihoods here. “This is a major change in management that never should have been done as part of the annual specification process,” he said.

Zeman said no real details have been laid out regarding regulations, but he believes the plan will certainly result in a reduction in the amount of fish caught in New Jersey, with 20 percent the best case scenario “New York was threatening litigation to get this through and NOAA clearly listened to New York,” said Zeman. It’s totally appeasement. And in the history of western civilization, has appeasement ever worked?

“John Bullard (NOAA’s regional administrator) made a very impassioned plea in support for New York and that inappropriate position won the day,” Zeman said. “I was half-expecting Bullard would finish his testimony by putting on a ‘I love NY’ t-shirt and breaking out in song.”

Captain Adam Nowalsky, chairman of the New Jersey Chapter of the Recreational Fishing Alliance, said that while the vote was a tremendous disappointment, he couldn’t say it was a surprise.

“New York pushed hard and had the backing of NOAA, which carried a lot of weight,” said Nowalsky “Ultimately, nothing was going to be good enough unless New York had the same regulations as New Jersey. That was the end game.”

What Nowalsky found most troubling was the decision’s impact on state’s rights.

“Individual states have lost their autonomy to go ahead and select regulations that are most beneficial to that state’s anglers, and that loss of autonomy is extremely disconcerting,” he said. It’s

especially tough, he added, considering all these states have done to constrain harvests and manage the resource.

Now that the decision has been made, Nowalsky says anglers have to look for ways to make the best of what's ahead. He hopes states push, not only to have the same regulations but better regulations, and if overages occur at the end of this experiment, everyone works together to fix the problem.

The bigger problem for fluke, said Greg Hueth, one of the founders of the Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund, is the science.

"Working together to get the right science to get more fish is key, it's worked before and it will work again," said Hueth, referring to the Fund's success in developing new models to get a more accurate picture on the health of the stock. "The goal of the SSFFF," said Hueth, "is to get the best available science and provide as many fish as we can. That's what we have tried to do for fisherman on the east coast and we will continue to do so."

The Ultimate Saltwater Fishing Expo! March 14-16, 2014

Garden State Exhibit Center
Somerset, NJ

Welcome to the Saltwater Fishing Expo in Somerset, NJ. Over the past nine years this show has grown to become the fishing destination that kicks off the New Jersey and Tri-State coastline's saltwater fishing season. It's where avid anglers congregate to plot out their season and buy the gear they've been dreaming about all winter.

With many of the major tackle manufacturers here to answer all your questions and local tackle retailers available to fill your orders, this is truly one stop shopping. Meet face to face with guides and charters, compare and buy saltwater fishing boats and kayaks, and learn the latest techniques from local experts March 14-16, 2014 at the Garden State Exhibit Center.

Whether your saltwater fishing passion is surf casting, inshore or offshore all are well represented through large and small manufacturers based up and down the east coast. Mark your calendars now and don't miss the 9th Annual Saltwater Fishing Expo in Somerset, NJ.

2014 Fluke Regulations

By Paul Haertel

On 2/4/14 the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission voted in favor of regionalized management for fluke in effect reallocating some of New Jersey's fluke quota and giving it to New York. Further, of the two regionalization plans that had been considered, the one that was least favorable to New Jersey was chosen. Under the adopted plan, New Jersey will be in a region with New York and Connecticut. Under this plan New Jersey is only projected to harvest 906,348 fluke. If the other regional option had been chosen there would have been a projected harvest of 947,337 fluke. Had the ASMFC voted in favor of continuing state-by-state quotas along with the utilization of additional RHL, we would have been able to harvest more fish than in either of the regionalized plans.

By adopting a regionalized plan, the ASMFC completely disregarded the will of the public. Hearings were held in various states and there was a public comment period where the vast majority of the public opposed the regionalized plans. For more details about the meeting be sure to read Tom Fote's article in this newsletter. To see exactly how many groups and individuals opposed regionalization and for a complete comment summary go to [this link](#).

Additionally, the ASMFC claimed they wanted to have similar size regulations between bordering states but it seems all they are doing is shifting the problem to pacify New York. For example, last year New York had a 19" size limit and New Jersey had a 17 1/2" size limit despite the fact that they sometimes fish in similar waters. This year both New York and New Jersey most likely will have an 18" size limit. However, Delaware will most likely have a 16" size limit. How is that fair for our boats out of the Cape May area that fish similar waters?

In all likelihood, New Jersey along with New York and Connecticut will end up with a 4 fish limit at 18" and a 128 day season which was an option that was previously approved for our region by the ASMFC. I previously thought that was etched in stone but have now learned a little bit more about the process of setting regulations for this year. The way it works is that our region is assigned a quota. Each of the three states in our region has a target quota but

the states must work together to develop regulations that collectively will not be projected to exceed the regional quota. Right now all three states are working together to do this. The size and bag limits must be the same for each state. However, the states might agree on something other than 4 fish at 18" with a 128 day season. As examples, they might agree to a 17 1/2" fish with a much shorter season or an 18 1/2" fish with a much longer season.

Within the next few weeks the New Jersey Bureau of Marine Fisheries is expected to hold an advisors meeting where our options will be further explained. The advisors give input and the list of various options is narrowed down to just a few. These options are then presented to the public at a New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council meeting. The public is encouraged to voice their opinions before the council votes to adopt one option that will become law. This is traditionally done at their March meeting but I am not sure that it will happen that soon due to the complications created by having to have the same size and bag limits as the other states in our region.

It is also important to note that the regionalized plan was only approved for one year. Next year the ASMFC may opt to continue it or go back to state-by-state measures. We also have ongoing problems with the inaccurate Marine Recreational Information Program's data that is being used to set our quotas. As explained in more detail in previous articles, the MRIP data shows that New Jersey over fished its fluke quota in 2013. This is despite the fact that many of our boats and marinas were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Participation was off by approximately 40% as evidenced by significant drops in our salt water registry and boat registrations. The JCAA is continuing its fight to have these numbers adjusted and we are continuing to push for better science. Concerning the unfair regionalization program that was forced upon us, JCAA is working with other groups and will be contacting the President, our Governor and various other legislators to let them know how unfairly we were treated. We are soliciting their support so that this problem will be corrected in the future.

Bunker Bait Closure Confusion

*By Capt. Paul Eidman,
Forage Fish Committee Chair*

This week the NJDEP sent the following letter to bunker bait selling tackle shops around the state:

“Dear Atlantic Menhaden Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, Bait Net License Holder, New Jersey Menhaden Dealer:

As of February 10, 2014 the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife has determined that the Atlantic Menhaden quota allocated to the commercial Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, and Bait Net fisheries will be harvested by February 12, 2014. Based upon this information and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 23:3-51.11(d)1 (L. 2013, c.74, s.13) the New Jersey directed harvest of menhaden in the commercial Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, and Bait Net fisheries will be closed as of 11:59 PM, Wednesday, February 12, 2014.

Therefore, effective 12:00 AM, Thursday, February 13, 2014, no vessel shall land or possess nor shall any dealer accept any Atlantic menhaden harvested by Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, or Bait Net in excess of the by-catch trip limit of 6,000 pounds through December 31, 2014. The commercial Atlantic Menhaden Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, and Bait Net fisheries will re-open on January 1, 2015.

If the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife determines the directed commercial quota for harvesting Atlantic menhaden using Pound Net, Otter Trawl, Gill Net, or Bait Net was closed prematurely, notification re-opening those gear types will be provided.

If you have any questions, please contact the Bureau of Marine Fisheries at 609-748-2020.

Sincerely,
Brandon Muffley, Administrator
Marine Fisheries Administration”

Naturally, this letter which was originally intended for bait dealers, made it quickly around the internet and took off like wildfire, in the wrong direction. Some recreational anglers read this and quickly jumped onto the keyboards and announced they would not be able to snag or cast net their own bait off private boats, have any bunker for crabbing

or bait shops wouldn't have any bait to sell. None of this is true, but at the speed at which information travels these days, it caught on and confused many fishermen out there.

Note that New Jersey's bunker fishery is split 95% to purse and 5% to other gear. It is this "other" gear sector that has been shut down. Specifically, a trawler exceeded quota earlier this year and got this sector shut down for 2014. Gill, cast and pound netters that normally provide bait to shops at a rate less than 6,000 pounds per day will still be allowed to do so. This bycatch "loophole" seems like it will save the day right when bait shops need it the most.

The purse seine fleets out of local ports like Cape May, Pt. Pleasant and Belford will continue business as usual this year providing bait to not only New England's lobster fleet and to crabbers down south, but NJ recreational anglers as well. Last year, this sector caught its quota pretty quickly and was closed down July 25th, and they normally fish thru October. This hurt the bait fleets in the short term, but over time they will benefit because there will be more bunker and they will be able to stay closer to port and fish, cutting costs.

As anglers we are hoping that these new regulations will enable more adult bunker to spawn and begin the rebuilding process and, in turn, bring more and more gamefish into New Jersey waters for us all to fish for. It's all connected. A healthy bunker population equates to better fishing which converts into big dollars for our struggling economy.

After seeing this week's reaction, it's very clear just how important the bunker is to our sport, as well as crabbing and other uses. Bunker are a big part of the fabric of our Jersey community and deserve a lot more respect than being ground up for fish meal and oil.

Note that my grassroots organization, Menhaden Defenders, advocated hard for a 30/70 split of the overall catch. That's 30% to the bait fleet and 70% for reduction. We tried to work with the bait fleet like in the old days, but this time they chose to side with Omega Protein Inc. and got the short end of the stick. The vote in 2012 came out to more like 80/20 and now all types of bunker bait harvesters are paying the price for a selfish Omega power play.

Know that the 2015 stock assessment is coming and Omega Protein Inc. will fight hard to regain the 20% of the quota that was taken away to rebuild the stock back to historic levels. As a

fisherman, you will really need to step up to the plate and fight for the bunker when the time comes. Just remember, No Bunker = No Bass!

For your reference, here is last year's letter from the NJDEP which states last year's changes very clearly:

Commercial Menhaden Fishery Management
Changes in 2013
July 3, 2013

The NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife is informing the public that recently signed legislation (A4036/S2726) has established new licensing and monitoring requirements for New Jersey's commercial Atlantic menhaden fishery in 2013. The significant changes in how menhaden will be managed this year result from the implementation of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. As part of Amendment 2, New Jersey was allocated 11.19% of the newly established total coastwide quota for Atlantic menhaden. In 2013, this equates to an allocation for New Jersey's commercial Atlantic menhaden fishery of 18,924.42 metric tons (MT), equivalent to approximately 41.728 million pounds.

New Jersey has allocated its 2013 menhaden quota by gear type, with each gear type having qualifying criteria to obtain a recently established New Jersey Menhaden Landing License, a separate season, and mandatory electronic reporting requirements. Additionally, a New Jersey Menhaden Dealer License is also being established and all menhaden landed in New Jersey must be sold to a licensed menhaden dealer who must report landings electronically on a weekly basis. These licensing and reporting requirements are necessary to effectively and efficiently monitor the State's Atlantic menhaden quota since any overages occurring in 2013 will be deducted from the State's 2014 commercial menhaden quota.

The New Jersey Marine Fisheries Administration has recently mailed a notice to as many prospective Atlantic menhaden commercial fishery participants, as possible, informing them of the significant changes occurring within the State's menhaden management program this year. Prospective participants are requested to submit eligibility documents for the new landing license and prospective dealers are being requested to obtain

their dealer license, as soon as possible. Timing is critical since all landings to date will be applied to the State's 2013 quota and subsequent landings this year will have to be closely monitored to prevent a quota overage.

The entire 5 page letter that was sent to Atlantic menhaden commercial fishery participants is available on the Division's website. The letter contains extensive details on who needs a landing license to participate in the menhaden fishery, the fees for such a license, eligibility criteria for obtaining a landing license for each gear type, the specifics of the dealer license and information on where/how to have specific questions answered.

For more info visit:

www.Menhadendefenders.org

www.facebook.com/menhadendefenders

NJ Outdoor Alliance Report

By John Toth

On behalf of the JCAA, I attended the January 27th meeting of the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance and the following issues were discussed:

1. The guest speaker was Lauren Townsend of US Strong, a non-profit, non-partisan initiative focused on protecting communities from extreme weather in New Jersey and across the country. The purpose of US Strong is to develop an "Extreme Weather Relief and Protection Fund" to help our citizens and businesses recover from weather-related disasters like Sandy. Ms. Townsend indicated that the primary source of this funding to help residents and businesses recover would come from a tax on carbon emissions from energy generators, but other revenue streams would be considered. She wanted the NJOA to be informed of this initiative and to be involved in its development.
2. Traps Off The Reefs – we may see a draft statute for public comment coming from Commissioner Martin's office in March. Discussion also included NJOA helping to set up new reefs in the Delaware Bay with the Fish & Wildlife's Hugh Carberry. Concern was expressed over where to place them for maximum advantage for anglers.
3. Frank Virgilio, President of the NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Club, indicated that the NJOA will hold a NJ Sportsmen's Caucus in Trenton for legislators during March, a date that still has to be determined. It is often difficult to pin down the date since legislators have to attend various meetings and respond to unforeseen issues. Frank indicated that the caucus we have with legislators is very important since they often do not understand our issues and this type of meeting gives them a chance to understand them and get our bills passed in Trenton. It is also very important that we have a lot of hunters and anglers at this meeting so that legislators see we are interested in issues that are important to us.
4. The NJ/NY fluke situation over regionalization was discussed and John Toth gave a report on the January 13th meeting in Toms River with the ASMFC. John reported that the NJOA, JCAA and the NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Club was against regionalization and made testimony to that effect. John also reported that the meeting was well attended and that the attendees were very upset over the data given that they overfished their 2013 quota by 27% even though Sandy destroyed thousands of boats. Paul Haertel at this NJOA meeting said that he researched some of the data used to come up with this terrible data we often see and sited some examples of it. For example, the data showed anglers had 5 million fishing trips in 2012 and just 3 ½ million in 2013, yet we still went over our quota! Serge Radossi said that the data we are using is seriously broken and that if such data was used in private business, the people using it would be fired. We have to find a way to scrap it altogether and come up with a better way of developing data that has credibility.

It appears that placing them closer to the ocean would be better to attract the size and type of fish anglers want. Moving them deeper in the bay would attract smaller fish and the undesirable ones like oyster crackers. Glen Arthur reported that the senate version for the traps legislation we have been working on has been reintroduced with the same sponsors, a routine procedure since the bill has not been passed during the previous year.

River Herring and American Shad Catch Cap Decision

*By Capt. Paul Eidman,
Forage Fish Committee Chair*

This past week there was a Mid Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council meeting and I submitted the following public comment. Note that an additional 75 comments were also sent in via email by other recreational anglers to try and sway the vote.

Mr. John Bullard
Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

February 10, 2014

RE: Public Comment on Proposed Rule for Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries; 2014 Specifications and Management Measures ([NOAA-NMFS-2013-0172](#))

Dear Mr. Bullard:

We support implementation of this proposed rule as soon as possible to reduce the mortality of these species, which serve as vital food for numerous ocean predators from striped bass to seabirds. Well-monitored catch caps are important first steps until these ecologically, economically, and culturally important species are added as stocks to the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan ("MSB FMP") and the related Atlantic Herring FMP, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

We are asking you to take action and vote in favor of:

- Implementation of the river herring and shad catch cap as soon as possible;
- Retroactively account for all river herring and shad catches to from January 1, 2014 forward, both in calculating the ratio for extrapolation methodology purposes and in deriving the effective total estimated catch towards the cap;

- Waive the 30-day delay of the final rule to effective date (i.e., cooling-off period) for good cause; and,
- Move forward on critical improvements, including at-sea monitoring reforms, the transition to a biologically based cap, and the addition of these species as stocks in the MSB FMP.

We feel strongly that adequate monitoring and bycatch avoidance measures are vital to ensuring that overfishing is prevented. Once this cap is in place, NOAA Fisheries and mackerel fishing vessels must monitor and report on the catch of river herring and shad in the fishery. Although monitoring and reporting requirements approved in Amendment 14 may prove beneficial, 100 percent observer coverage of midwater trawlers is necessary to adequately monitor and enforce catch limits, given this fleet's fishing power and its demonstrated propensity for episodic and high-impact bycatch events.

One-hundred percent observer coverage will also improve the accuracy and precision of data used to make management decisions, and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

We are requesting that full federal conservation and management measures be put in place NOW. The record is clear that river herring and shad are in need of strong federal conservation and management. The proposed catch cap is a first step, but ultimately insufficient, to prevent further population declines. The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires all stocks in need of conservation and management to be added to an FMP.

To comply with applicable federal law and align federal conservation and management more closely with state moratoria and sustainable fishery plans, river herring and shad should be added as stocks to the FMPs for all of the fisheries that they are involved in, including the MSB FMP and Atlantic herring FMP.

We implore you to remember the NMFS own mission statement when making your decision. **"Stewardship of living marine resources for the benefit of the nation through their science-based conservation and management and promotion of the health of their environment"**

We are hopeful that your final decision on this matter will benefit ALL creatures and human user groups that depend upon a healthy forage base for survival.

Sincerely,
Capt. Paul Eidman

NOTE: Decisions regarding the catch cap and on board observer coverage are pending...

The April meeting coming up in Montauk is going to be a big meeting so stay

Membership Report

By John Toth

Invoices for 2014 club membership dues have been sent out. Please make every effort to send in your club dues in a timely manner. Also, please take the time to completely fill out the Dues and Sponsorship form and the Club Survey form that we need to update our mailing list.

Several clubs have already paid their 2014 dues and they are: West Orange Anglers, Belmar Fishing Club and the Berkley Stripper Club.

If there are problems with the JCAA sending newsletters to the wrong addresses or to the wrong club members, please let me know so that corrections can be made. I can be reached at (732) 656-0139 or at tothjohn@verizon.net.

As always, **Thank You** for your continued support of the JCAA!

Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

FAMILY FISHING COMPETITION

During a snowy winter day, I was looking out the front window of our home, day dreaming about fun things to do with our family this coming summer. So I thought, several relatives in my family fish and spend time on the water, why not organize a family fishing competition for relatives. I also thought this could become a family tradition and we could have another reason to celebrate with family. Fun times! I can't understand why I didn't think of this idea before. Then I thought, we could expand it and invite friends that are like family to join us. I came up with a plan to organize our first family and friends fishing competition.

The following ideas are very flexible to enjoy a Family & Friends Fishing Competition: Any

family member or friend is welcome to fish at a designated area on our list of weekend fun places to fish. A good example of places to fish and crab for our family and friends would be: Island Beach State Park, Seaside Heights Bayside Docks, Point Pleasant Inlet, Sandy Hook, Cheesquake State Park, Bass River, Brick Beach, Mantoloking Bridge County Park, Godfrey Lake and Briant Park Pond. Our family selected fishing locations close to each family/friends' homes to keep travel time easy for everyone during holiday weekends over the summer. We decided to schedule a few party/charter boat trips during Fluke season and enter the JCAA Annual Fluke Tournament. This will give us a chance to support the JCAA Fluke Tournament and possibly win some great prizes at the awards ceremony.

Depending if we go fishing or crabbing, we will measure all fish/shellfish caught and take a digital image of each to record the length according to NJ Fish & Wildlife Freshwater/Marine Digest Rules and Regulations. However, if the fish or crabs we catch are not legal size we can still have a winner for our Family & Friends Fishing Competition because we will record the size and time with a digital picture. If a family member catches a fish or crab the same size the winner will be the first fish/crab caught. Remember to practice water safety and proper catch/release techniques.

We also included an option of bragging rights; a "Big Fish Barbeque" at a relative's home or we can go out to eat at a local restaurant to celebrate our fun time and the winners catch. Prizes for the winners can be local tackle dealer gift certificates that are bought in advance. We all can use more fishing stuff. If you have several youngsters in your group you can purchase small consolation prizes that are safe from a dollar store. Dollar stores have inexpensive items for kids at low prices. Everyone has a family member that is creative and computer savvy. Ask them to design a family/friend certificate of recognition for their catch. Don't forget to name your family/friend fishing team (Cook & Catch K's, Jackson Keepers) and pick fishing nicknames such as; Big Tony Tuna, Chaplin Billy, Summit Skate Sue, and No Fish Johnny. This is also a great intergenerational opportunity for elder family members to get together with their grandchildren. The certificate can be signed by the oldest member in your family (Grandmother or Grandfather.) Having a prop like a certificate makes a great

photograph and includes everyone even if they live far away.

Since everyone will be using digital photography, your Family & Friends Fishing Competition can be posted on social media. Another idea is to create a digital album of pictures or a family and friends fishing competition calendar. Calendars make great holiday gifts. Don't forget to include pictures of celebrations at barbecues and restaurants. Funny thing happened while I was writing this, my sister (AKA Mojo Ruthie) called from Ohio. As I read the article to her over the phone, she said; "I have one question? What date and where we fishing?" She can't wait to get her "Fluke Mojo" working. The best part of a Family & Friends Fishing Competition is the memories last a lifetime. Think about starting something similar for your family.

FLY TIER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are need for the following two events: Fly tying program at Chews Landing, for NJ HOFNOD. Fly tying date is Thursday, June 19, 2014, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. We will need about five volunteers to help 15 – 20 youngsters tie flies.

Urban Promise High School Environmental Learning Community, Pennsauken, NJ, Wednesday, April 2, 2014, Thirty-three 10, 11, and 12th grade students. Program starts at 8:15 am and ends at 10:15 am. Students will be split into two groups. Group 1 will learn macroinvertebrate training while group 2 is receiving fly tying the first hour and then flip for the second hour.

We designed a fly tying presentation that will teach students about the Anatomy of a Hook, Tools and Materials, Match the Hatch, and Basic Fly Tying Instruction. At the end of the training students will: Understand hook types and sizes, feeding habits and artificial presentation, how to use basic fly tying tools and materials and the sequence to tie basic flies that catch fish. We are looking for a volunteer to teach students about macroinvertebrates. 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.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

We completed our first NJ HOFNOD lesson plan for Brick High School Fishing Club students. Student will learn Fish Biology, Species

Identification and the JCAA Youth Education Committee will provide a brief overview of the expanded NJ Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs program. Some of the activities include: Discussing how fish breathe and why they are slimy, demonstrating how you can hurt a fish and a fish can hurt you, knowing where and why fish live in different bodies of water, local fishing opportunities and students will view the HOFNOD video and discuss how fishing can provide a constructive use of leisure time. Fishing club students will participate in an independent study project and take digital images of saltwater, brackish and freshwater access areas where anglers can go fishing locally.

FREE YOUTH FISHING SEMINAR (NBFCC)

The JCAA Youth Education Committee will support the Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club's Free Youth Fishing Seminar by providing a demonstration about Japanese Fish Printing (Gyotaku). Members of the Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club hosts this annual event at the Knights of Columbus Hall, located in Union, NJ. The seminar is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, 2014 and it's always a lot of fun for the youngsters.

Children and their families are welcome to come and enjoy a night of fun fishing activities and refreshments. We always enjoy working with the membership of this club because they are devoted to teaching the joys of fishing to our young people. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association's Youth Education Committee will provide a rod/reel door prize and "Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs" packets for all the youngsters.

TROUT CONTEST FOR KIDS

The Trout Contest for Kids is sponsored by the Shark River Surf Anglers, on Saturday, April 5, 2014, 8 a.m. till 1:30 p.m. at Spring Lake, NJ. The contest is FREE and open to children fifteen years old and under. Hundreds of young anglers are expected to circle around Spring Lake waiting for the start of the contest. Don't forget to get there early, otherwise you must park along the side streets of Spring Lake and walk a great distance to find a spot to fish. Every year, the Shark River Surf Anglers spend a lot of time and energy to make this event a success. Every contestant goes home a winner. Come out and enjoy some fishing fun, catch big fish, and win prizes. For more information

phone: 732-492-6936 or visit
www.sharkriversurfanglers.com.

29TH ANNUAL HOOKED ON THE HUDSON

May 3, 2014, the Hudson River Fishermen's Association will host the 29th Annual Hooked on the Hudson, at Ross Dock, Palisades Interstate Park, Hudson Riverfront located immediately north of the George Washington Bridge in Fort Lee, New Jersey. For detailed directions check njpalisades.org or go to the Hudson River Fishermen's Association's Web site www.hrfanj.org.

Stay Connected with JCAA

It's easy to stay connected with JCAA and what's going on with our fisheries. Please visit our [Facebook page](#) or just go on www.facebook.com and type "Jersey Coast Anglers Association" in the box at top of the page.

Please be sure to LIKE our page and share it with all of your friends and forward the link to your club's mailing list.

This is a great way to stay connected and be alerted instantly when fishery issues that affect all of us come up.

If you are not a fan of Facebook then please be sure to visit us on the [web](#) often as our monthly newsletter and other important information is posted there as well. Thanks!