

JCAA NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 2019

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on October 21st, 2019)

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

JCAA REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, October 29th, 2019

Starting at 7:30 PM

385 Herbertsville Rd, Brick

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 7th, 2019

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 and Chairpersons listed on last page		

IMPORTANT DATES

October 27th ASMFC Annual Meeting

October 29th JCAA General Meeting

November 7th JCAA Board Meeting

November 10th JCAA Dinner

November 26th JCAA General Meeting

December 9th-12th Joint ASMFC/MAFMC Meeting

December 12th JCAA Board Meeting

December 17th JCAA General Meeting

February 8th Salt Water Sportsman Seminar Series

Sportsperson of the Year Dinner

By Paul Turi, Co-chairman

On Sunday, November 10th, 2019 we will be having our Sportsperson of the Year Dinner. This year the dinner will be held at the beautiful Martell's Water's Edge, 125 Bayview Ave., Bayville, NJ from 4:00-8:00PM. Tickets again this year are \$80.00 per person and \$650 for a table of 10. To reserve your tickets, call Dan Miller at (609) 641-7821 or email Dan at blueangray@comcast.net.

For dinner we will be starting with mixed field greens with a honey-balsamic vinaigrette. There will be three dinner selections: Chicken Marsala with wild mushrooms and marsala wine; broiled lemon sole with white wine and garden herbs; slow roasted prime rib of beef au jus. For dessert there will be a brownie bar station: Warm triple chocolate brownie served with vanilla ice cream. There will be a cocktail hour with a cash bar and six individual hand passed hors d'oeuvres; mini crab cake balls, herb & garlic cheesy stuffed mushrooms, filet mignon & vegetable skewers, chicken & pineapple skewers with teriyaki glaze, chilled jumbo shrimp and clams casino.

We *MUST* give a head count one month prior to the dinner, so please call or email Dan and let him know whether or not you or your club is attending and how many will be attending. *And when you place your dinner ticket order, tell us what you want to eat.*

At this time we are not sure who the guest speaker is going to be. And, as usual, we will be having a tricky tray auction, silent auction and plenty of door prizes.

I am also in need of door prizes and tricky tray Auction and silent Auction prizes. If you or your club have something to donate, please contact me at (609) 709-9215 or email me at pturi72@gmail.com. It would help if each of our member clubs donated a prize or solicited the bait and tackle shops that its members support.

Remember, bring your significant other. I always have prizes for the ladies too!

This year's honoree is John A. Tiedemann.

John is the Assistant Dean at Monmouth University's School of Science and Director of the Marine and Environmental Biology and Policy Program. Since 1978, John's career has been dedicated to protecting marine habitats and water quality. He has helped identify sources of marine pollution and developed best practices for the management of marine fisheries, watersheds and coastal zones. John also works with Stripers Forever to protect striped bass and to restore the species.

In addition to his work as a researcher, scientist and educator, John is an avid angler and waterman who has been recognized with appointments to the Fisheries Conservation Foundation Board of Directors, the Advisory Committee to the NJ Sea Grant Consortium, the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Education Sub-committee and various other organizations.

You may see John on the beach fishing or with Monmouth University students collecting striped data and biological specimens and tagging released fish. John has introduced his students to fishing and helped them to catch their first striper.

In 2015, 1,000 striped bass posters were distributed to every bait and tackle shop and marina in NJ. John helped develop and distribute those posters along with 10,000 copies of the Striped Bass Catch and Release length/weight cards available for free at shows, club meetings, and other events.

John presented at the American Fisheries Society 2018 Annual Meeting and 2019 Jersey Shore Surfcasters Surf Day.

John's work is built into his daily life and his continuous work to protect the marine environment makes him worthy of this award.

President's Report

By Mark Taylor

December General Meeting Changed to December 17th

It is important to mark your December calendar for the meeting change of date (Dec. 17th). As I mentioned in last month's newsletter this change is due to the December holidays falling on a Tuesday. I will need a head count by the November meeting of who is planning on attending the December 17th meeting so the food can be ordered. It is on the meeting agenda for October and November to remind the club representatives to bring back to their clubs. If you plan on attending, please email me at mtsport64@aol.com and put in the subject "JCAA December Meeting."

Volunteers and Nominations for 2020 JCAA Officers

If you ever thought of becoming more involved in JCAA or becoming a JCAA officer, now is the time. We are looking for people to step up and not be those misinformed recreational fishermen spreading incomplete information. Yes, there is a lot of information out there to digest, but learning how to access the most current and accurate information is key. You can do this by becoming more involved. You will learn a lot more of the fisheries management process. You can be a volunteer or if you're interested in becoming an officer let me know. JCAA will be having the elections for the 2020 Jersey Coast Anglers Association Officers at the December 17th meeting, so make sure your club representative is there to vote and speak for your club.

Sportsperson of the Year Dinner

Check with your club to see if they reserved a table or two at this year's **JCAA Sportsperson of the Year Dinner** which will be held on November 10th and sent their dinner selections along with the money to Dinner Co-Chairman Dan Miller. If you read last month's newsletter, and again in this newsletter, there is a more detailed article about the dinner with dinner selections written by Dinner Co-Chairman Paul Turi. This is one of the major fundraisers for JCAA to help fight for you, so get a club table. You can come as an

individual to support yourself through JCAA. Reach out and get your tickets in the next few weeks. Tickets again this year are \$80 per person and \$650 for a table of 10. To reserve your tickets, call Dan Miller at (609) 641-7821 or email Dan at blueangray@comcast.net. The venue has changed to Martell's Water's Edge, 125 Bayview Ave., Bayville, NJ from 4-8 pm. You don't want to miss this amazing time.

Striped Bass

The deadline date of October 7th has come and gone. I hope your club was able to write your comments and submit them to Max Apeman, FMP Coordinator, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on the Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI. This addendum could make some significant changes on how we fish for them and regulations. If your club missed the deadline you as a member should ask why. All New Jersey clubs as well as individuals need to be more involved and have that voice. If not we will lose something we all enjoy doing now as well in the future.

Show Time

The time is fast approaching for clubs having fishing flea markets and the big shows. I will be putting together a list of volunteers to work for JCAA, so contact me if you can help out. It is time to start thinking about it and let me know when you can help. I will have the signup sheets at the next meeting. JCAA will be having a booth at this time at the following:

- **2020 Salt Water Sportsman Seminar Series**
Atlantic City at Resorts Casino Hotel on
Saturday, February 8, 2020
- **Atlantic City Boat Show** February 26th – March 1st 2020
- **Saltwater Fishing Expo** March 15th – March 17th 2020

JCAA had a table at some clubs fishing flea markets last year but as of the time I am writing this article we have not committed to any. If your club is having one and would like to have JCAA there contact me at mtsport64@aol.com and put in the subject "Club Fishing Flea Market."

Jersey Coast Anglers Association will always be there for you, but we need more people to get involved to help protect the future of our fisheries. There is power in numbers.

The 2020 Salt Water Sportsman National Seminar Series will be in Atlantic City at Resorts Casino Hotel on Saturday, February 8.

The next JCAA General Meeting is November 26th at 385 Herbertsville Road.

What a Mess the New Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Has Caused

By Tom Fote

Where We Started

When there were two separate agencies (the Bureau of Sport Fisheries under the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries under the Department of Commerce) dealing with marine fisheries, the statistics were separately controlled by each bureau. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries was looking for accurate catch numbers landed by the commercial fishery by having port agents and trying to record every fish caught and sold. This was a combined effort of the states and the federal government. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries was observing the trends in the recreational fishery and used a survey to compare recreational catch from year to year. They also compared their information with the information from the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries to see what each sector caught. The Bureau of Sport Fishing published figures from this comparison. Unlike the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the Bureau of Sport Fishing had a much smaller budget for gathering their data since they were not looking for precise landing data.

When the Magnusson Stevens Act was passed, the two Bureaus were combined under NOAA and placed under the Department of Commerce and was called the National Marine Fisheries Service. It also established the council system. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries was a much smaller agency with fewer employees so in the combination the commercial fisheries employees vastly outnumbered the employees from sport fisheries. This difference in

number had the impact of placing more value on the commercial issues and more emphasis on commercial statistics. Vast amounts of money were spent to record every commercial fish landed. Because of the efficiency of the new gear, we realized the commercial catch could quickly deplete stocks. This led to a collapse of stocks and NMFS put in regulations to stop the overharvesting of the resource by the commercial fisheries. NMFS did not concentrate at all on the recreational fishery since it was felt that this sector had little impact on the overall stocks. The recreational equipment is less efficient and a large recreational catch only happens when there are large stocks. The recreational catch is largely a catch of opportunity.

I got involved in fisheries management in the 1980s with the Atlantic States Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC). NMFS and the states were hoping to work together to develop plans to insure the survival of multiple stocks. When the foreign fleets were put out of federal waters, we saw an immediate drop in the commercial landings of some species. Through grants and tax breaks, the government helped expand the commercial fleet and also NMFS pushed them to fish what they considered was underutilized species. A perfect example is when NMFS convinced the west coast tuna boats to come to the east coast and target bluefin tuna, then considered an underutilized species. We are still suffering the consequences in the bluefin tuna stocks.

In the 90s the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council began creating fisheries management plans that not only divided the commercial fishery into sectors but also placed quotas on both the commercial and recreational sectors. This is when I was a Commissioner to the ASMFC and saw how the process developed. There were some species for which were jointly managed by ASMFC, MAFMC and NMFS which continue to this day. This required joint meetings to approve plans for these species. The species that are jointly managed by the ASMFC and the MAFMC are bluefish, summer flounder, black sea bass and scup. With the passage of the Atlantic Coast Conservation Act, the ASMFC got a powerful tool in managing their individual fisheries. At that time the ASMFC had more power than the MAFMC since the ASMFC had the power to put in place a moratorium on a specific species.

By the late 90s, the ASMFC and the MAFMC were placing quotas on the recreational sector,

implementing these quotas with bag limits and size limits. NMFS had long since rejected the original survey used by the Bureau of Sport Fishing and replaced it with the Marine Recreational Statistical Survey. This survey was not designed to get accurate catch data but rather to show trends in recreational fishing. This survey was, in its time, the best available data and was used to manage recreational fishing, set bag limits, size limits and quotas. The problem was that data that was only designed to show coastwide trends was now used to manage state-by-state quotas for recreational fishing. The recreational community has never had any trust in these figures as they are used to create management plans. There was an outcry from the recreational community to Congress. Congress assigned the task of reviewing MRFSS to the National Academy of Science. The report they created pointed out the flaws in MRFSS and explained that it cannot be used for any accurate management decisions. The passage of the 2007 Magnusson Stevens Act required NMFS to fix the problem within three years.

Magnusson Stevens Act Mandates – Creation of a Valid Recreational Statistical Program by 2009

In this case, Congress created a requirement without providing the funds necessary to complete the task. Dr. John Borman, former head of the Northeast Science Center, was assigned this task. He went to Congress and requested a budget of fifty million dollars. The existing budget was only eleven million dollars which was totally inadequate to survey the millions of recreational anglers. This is another example of a totally unfunded mandate. To their credit, NMFS and their scientists tried to update the existing program with the available funds by using more and more statistical models without any additional data. As the old computer expression goes, “garbage in garbage out.” In this case, the lack of data guaranteed more problems.

The lack of money also created a serious time lag in creating a new program. Instead of having a fix available by 2009, we are now just seeing the new program in 2018/2019. The MAFMC has become the testing ground for numbers gathered using this new program (Marine Recreational Information Program).

Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

One of the big problems with MRIP and the previous program is the phone calls used to determine the number of trips. With the advent of spam calls and the use of cell phones, calling people based on random numbers from a phone book has no reliability. NMFS has tried multiple ways to get better phone lists and better responses to no avail. Eventually NMFS decided to scrap the telephone survey and implement a mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES). There appears to be a better response than there was to the phone call system. In most instances the data gathered shows a huge increase in recreational participation and the amount of fish caught.

The other part of the program is the dockside interviews. Historically this was done by contractors in whom the recreational community placed little confidence. The ASMFC has facilitated the states taking charge of the dockside interviews. That is where we actually count the number and size of recreational fish landed. Those numbers are used to extrapolate the entire recreational participation and catch numbers. There are still problems with this method. Using New Jersey as an example, like many NJ anglers I live on the water and have a boat at my dock. I am never available for a dockside interview. The only way they could count my information is to interview me while on the water. The survey now includes additional intercepts with shore-based anglers. Again, the surveying occurs where it is convenient. These numbers are also used to extrapolate total catch.

Comparing Numbers

Over the years, there have been many attempts to correct MRFSS numbers. NMFS scientists would create new models that were designed to get better results from the available data. Every time this was done, it included a retrospective analysis and previous numbers were modified. Even though numbers were modified to give a better understanding, the previous quotas were never changed. The new retrospective analysis has gone back to 1982. This has shown that NMFS and the ASMFC made dramatic errors in dividing the quotas between the recreational and commercial sectors by underestimating the total recreational catch. It is my understanding that the South Atlantic Council will not use these numbers

until NMFS has done quota adjustments. The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and the ASMFC have not chosen to make this demand. Instead they are moving ahead without any adjustments in the previous quotas. Changing previous quotas will have no impact on what was caught in those years. But new quotas are often developed based on the old quotas. If the split between recreational and commercial catches in the old quotas is incorrect, a new quota based on the same split will be inherently incorrect. We have seen this already happen. Just dealing with the quotas is only part of the problem. The new data also suggests that we are overfishing stocks that were previously estimated as not overfished. This happened because the new numbers estimate the recreational catch and participation is much larger than previously thought. If the managers do not also acknowledge that this data suggests the existence of larger biomasses, anglers continue to be penalized for having more fish to catch. Two examples will help us understand how complex this issue is.

We just had a joint meeting to deal with the scup quota. MRIP estimated that the recreational scup catch was much larger than previously thought and that this catch exceeded the assigned quota. We know this species is many times larger than estimated and is fully rebuilt. In 1996 10% of our recreational quota was given to the commercial sector as incentive to reduce bycatch. We already began this discussion with a split that was based on old, completely flawed numbers. NMFS wants to reduce the recreational catch to maintain the 18% recreational allowance. This would require a huge reduction on the recreational catch with changes in bag limits, seasons and size limits. The economic impact on the recreational community will be a disaster for the charter and party boat fleets from Massachusetts to North Carolina. There will be additional negative impacts on tackle stores and private boat owners. All the attendees acknowledge that the reduction was not needed. The abundance of the spawning stock and the underage of landings by the commercial sector of their quota would more than make up for any recreational increase and we would be way below the target. NMFS could have also restored the recreational quota to our quota. Instead, NMFS pressured the MAFMC members to vote on a reduction they did not believe was necessary and the ASMFC Commissioners fell in line. NMFS promised that there would be further discussions but insisted on a vote that day. The

message to the recreational community is clear, “We are going to cut back on your scup fishery but trust us.” There is no way I trust NMFS. We have all been lied to before. They need to show us, not just keep telling us they are going to fix things.

In April I wrote a long column on what happened with summer flounder. It is available on the JCAA webpage. Even though the catch numbers increased dramatically based on the new MRIP numbers, NMFS did not declare summer flounder was overfished or that overfishing was not taking place. Instead they just increased the size of the stock and gave a 49% increase to the commercial sector. Since the recreational community has been 11% under its quota for the last five years, we asked for an increase of 3.5%. NMFS fought this and was successful in blocking any increase. Our 2018 numbers were actually 24% under our quota. NMFS has no problem with the recreational catch being 24% under quota but wants to maximize the commercial catch. They still don’t get the economic impact of recreational fishing to the economy. We will have to wait until December to find out what will be proposed for 2020.

Correcting the Problems

First, there should not be any more management using the new MRIP numbers until we have done quota adjustments. We should put all decisions on hold until that is done. Any decisions about the couple of stocks designated as overfished using these numbers should be delayed because of the huge economic impact to both the commercial and recreational sector.

Second, we need Congress to fully fund the necessary research to develop reliable data. If NMFS felt they needed fifty million in 2007, the price has surely gone up. But I would settle for the original fifty million.

Third, the recreational anglers need to get involved. Letters and phone calls need to go to Governors, State and Federal Legislators and the President. We need them to fully understand we are voters and we are tired of being ignored. In New Jersey, we are 10% of the population and if we ever behave as though that is so, we could accomplish a great deal. We need to tell them to fund recreational data collection.

To be continued next month.

ASMFC & MAFMC Set Specifications for Jointly Managed Species and Initiate a Joint Action on Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocations; and ASMFC Initiates Addendum on Black Sea Bass State-by-State Commercial Allocations

ASMFC News Release, October 11, 2019

Durham, NC – The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) and Bluefish Board met jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to adopt 2020-2021 specifications for scup, black sea bass, and bluefish and review previously-implemented 2020 specifications for summer flounder. During the meeting, the Boards and Council reviewed the results of operational stock assessments for black sea bass, scup, and bluefish, which were peer-reviewed and accepted for management use in August 2019. The assessments incorporated fishery catch and fishery independent survey data through 2018, including revised recreational catch data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). The revised MRIP data are based on a new estimation methodology accounting for changes to the angler intercept survey and the recent transition to a mail-based effort survey. For these four species, the revised estimates of catch and landings are several times higher than the previous estimates for shore and private boat modes, substantially raising the overall catch and harvest estimates.

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Specifications

The following table summarizes commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits (RHL) for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. In setting catch and harvest limits for scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, the Boards and Council also took into account recommendations from the Council’s Statistical and Science Committee (SSC), Monitoring Committee, and Advisory Panels (APs) for each species. The summer flounder limits, which were previously approved by the Board and Council in March 2019, were maintained. No changes were made to the commercial management measures for the four species. For scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, the

Commission's actions are final and apply to state waters (0-3 miles from shore); the Council will forward its recommendations for federal waters (3 – 200 miles from shore) to the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Administrator for final approval.

Table 1. 2020-2021 Commercial Quotas and Recreational Harvest Limits for Scup, Black Sea Bass, Summer Flounder and Bluefish (2019 values are provided for comparison purposes). Note: Landings limits shown in the table are initial limits prior to any deductions for past overages.

Year	Scup			Black Sea Bass			Summer Flounder			Bluefish		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Commercial Quota (millions of pounds)	23.98	22.23	18.06	3.52	5.58	5.58	11.53	11.53	11.53	7.71	2.77	2.77
Recreational Harvest Limit (millions of pounds)	7.37	6.51	5.34	3.66	5.81	5.81	7.69	7.69	7.69	11.62	9.48	9.48

Scup

The 2019 scup operational assessment concluded the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2018. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be about two times the target. The assessment indicated the stock experienced very high recruitment in 2015 and below-average recruitment during 2016-2018. The Board and Council approved an acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 35.77 million pounds for 2020 and 30.67 million pounds for 2021. After accounting for expected discards, this results in a commercial quota of 22.23 million pounds and an RHL of 6.51 million pounds in 2020, and a commercial quota of 18.06 million pounds and an RHL of 5.34 million pounds in 2021. Compared to 2019 landings limits, this represents a 7% decrease in the commercial quota and a 12% decrease in the RHL in 2020, and a 25% decrease in the commercial quota and a 28% decrease in the RHL in 2021.

The Board and Council also reviewed an evaluation of scup discards by mesh size, quarter, and statistical area in the commercial fishery. While discards have been well above average in recent years, the Board and Council agreed with the Monitoring Committee recommendation that no immediate management action was needed but discards should continue to be monitored.

Black Sea Bass

The 2019 black sea bass operational stock assessment concluded the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2018. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be about 2.4 times the biomass target in 2018. Recruitment was above average in 2015 and below-average during 2016-2018. The Board and Council adopted an ABC of 15.07 million pounds for 2020 and 2021, which results in a commercial quota of 5.58 million pounds and an RHL of 5.81 million pounds for both years after accounting for expected discards. This represents a 59% increase for both the commercial quota and the RHL compared to the 2019 measures. This could allow for a notable increase in commercial landings. However, because the recently revised recreational harvest estimates are higher than the 2020 and 2021 RHLs managers will not be able to liberalize recreational measures in 2020, despite the increase in the RHL. Changes to recreational measures (bag, size, and season limits) to constrain harvest to the RHL will be considered at the Council and Board's December 2019 joint meeting.

Summer Flounder

For summer flounder, the Board and Council received a data update, including updated catch, landings, and fishery-independent survey indices through 2018. State and federal survey indices indicate the stock increased from 2017 to 2018 and recruitment in 2018 was above average. Considering the positive status of the summer flounder stock and recommendations from the SSC, Monitoring Committee, and AP, the Board and Council maintained the previously-implemented specifications for summer flounder. For 2020, the commercial quota is 11.53 million pounds and the RHL is 7.69 million pounds.

Bluefish

For bluefish, the 2019 operational assessment designated the stock as overfished though overfishing was not occurring in 2018. Based on the SSC's recommendation, the Bluefish Board and Council adopted an ABC of 16.28 million pounds for both 2020 and 2021. After accounting for discards, the ABC translates to a commercial quota of 2.77 million pounds and an RHL of 9.48 million pounds. Compared to 2019, this represents a 64% decrease in the commercial quota and an 18% decrease in the

RHL. Because the recreational fishery is anticipated to fully harvest the RHL, the Board and Council did not authorize a quota transfer from the recreational sector to the commercial sector for 2020-2021.

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocations Amendment

The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board and the Council initiated the development of a joint amendment to reevaluate the FMP's commercial and recreational sector allocations. This action aims to address the allocation-related impacts of the revised recreational catch and landings data provided by MRIP. The initiation of the amendment directs Commission and Council staff to begin preparing analyses to guide development of a Public Information Document and scoping process. The Board and Council will discuss this issue during their next joint meeting in December 2019.

Black Sea Bass Commercial Addendum

After reviewing potential management strategies and engaging in a joint discussion on Council involvement, the Board initiated an addendum to consider changes to black sea bass commercial state-by-state allocations. Consistent with the Board's August 2019 discussion, this action will consider the current distribution and abundance of black sea bass as one of several adjustment factors to achieve more balanced access to the resource. Proposed strategies for adjusting the commercial state allocations include: 1) a dynamic approach, referred to as "TMGC," which gradually shifts allocations over time based on a combination of historical landings information and current stock distribution information; 2) several trigger-based allocation approaches; 3) a method to raise the Connecticut quota to 5% in addition to any other reallocation method; and 4) hybrid approaches. Although this is a Board-specific action, both the Board and Council agreed future discussions of the addendum should occur at joint meetings to allow for Council input. The Council deliberated the need for a joint action, but decided to postpone further consideration of a joint action until the December 2019 meeting.

For more information on the Commission's actions pertaining to black sea bass, please contact Caitlin

Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at cstark@asmfc.org and contact Dustin Colson Leaning at dleaning@asmfc.org for more information pertaining to the Commission's actions on bluefish and summer flounder.

Public Access Committee Report

By George Brown

On October 7th there was a public access meeting at the DEP headquarters in Trenton. I attended the meeting on behalf of JCAA and the Berkeley Striper Club. This meeting was the third meeting regarding new regulations that are to be drafted as required by the new public access law signed earlier this year. The two prior meetings with DEP were for different groups of stakeholders in public access. As public access users we were at the first meeting and this third meeting was for all stakeholders.

I have to say I was encouraged by what I heard at the meeting. DEP said they realized that it was not possible to fix public access just by regulations and that the solutions included an educational campaign for both the public and public officials responsible for ensuring public access. We have said that from the beginning, so it was good to hear that someone at DEP was listening. We have also been talking about enforcement and when there was time for public comment at the meeting, improved enforcement was brought up. Not only do we need to know how to file a complaint about denial of public access, we need to have a way to follow up. I have given DEP information on public access issues but have never heard back on the resolution of the issue. If we file a complaint, we need to know who is handling it, what they have done about it and what the proposed resolution will be. We said that at the first meeting in July and brought it up again at this meeting. DEP was receptive to that and said it was a great idea. The idea of having towns adopt model public access ordinances was also brought up to DEP again. This time there was some support from DEP. Now we must make sure that these ideas become part of the regulations.

Other issues were discussed including DEP's support for perpendicular access (to allow you to get to the water). It is just as important to have parallel access so that once you get to the water, you can walk along the shoreline, especially on replenished beaches.

There was some discussion of permits, back bay areas, inlets and rivers that flow to the ocean, equivalency access, the possible establishment of a public access fund, and Island Beach State Park as a model for access. It was interesting to hear from NJDOT and their support for including public access in things like bridge projects. So, we are being heard, we just need to make sure that people continue to listen to us.

DEP's plan is to write the rules in 2020, put the rules out for comment and then adopt the rules in 2021. That means in the next 6 months or so there is a lot of work to be done between now and the publication of the proposed rules. And that work must include YOU! I am one voice representing many, but you will need to be ready to submit comments on the proposed rules. The more comments, the more influence we can have.

As part of the rule writing process "stakeholders" will be included in task groups to help shape the rules. I plan on being one of those stakeholders. Not just as a representative of JCAA and BSC, but as someone who fishes, surfs and uses the beaches, bays and rivers. We will be looking for the broadest interpretation of public access.

One public access issue I brought up at the meeting was the Borough of Avon in Monmouth County. I had someone send me a copy of Avon's ordinance regulating fishing. The ordinance is Chapter 102, FISHING and includes § 102-1- Places for fishing restricted and § 102-2 - Violations and penalties. If you want to fish the north side of the Shark River between the Route 35 and the Ocean Avenue bridges, you are very restricted. There is about three quarters of a mile of shoreline in Avon on the north side of the river. You may only fish the first one-tenth of a mile between Ocean Avenue and 1st Avenue where there is a public park. You may not fish anywhere else on the Shark River in Avon. There are six streets that end at the Shark River and could provide direct fishing access. There is ample on street parking but every one of those streets is posted "No Fishing." Should you decide to ignore the signs, you can receive a ticket for violating the Avon ordinance. The fine for a first-time offense of fishing from one of those street ends is "a fine not exceeding one thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250.), a term of imprisonment not exceeding ninety (90) days or a period of community service not exceeding ninety (90) days." That's not a typo. Fish in Avon where it is prohibited, and you will be fined at least \$1250.00. Commit the same crime again within a year and the

fine goes up. This may be the most egregious abuse of public access in the state, but we know that others are out there.

There is a lot to do and we need you to support our efforts. We will let you know when we need written comments and when we need to hear your voice. This is just the beginning, but what we gain or lose in public access as these regulations are written will be with us a long, long time. We need to get it right the first time.

If you have a public access issue you'd like to bring to our attention, please email me at xobmaps@live.com. Include some details of the issue and whether or not you have firsthand knowledge, or you heard about the issue from someone else. Please include a contact number so I can call you. I will follow up.

Time for Accountability: Omega Protein & Cooke Seafoods Violating the Chesapeake Bay Catch Cap

By Capt. Paul Eidman, Board member & Forage Fish Committee Chairman

Copy of a letter sent to the ASMFC menhaden commissioners as well as NJ state commissioners and NJDEP:

"Omega Protein recently formally announced that they will exceed the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishing Cap of 51,000 MT, undermining conservation in the Chesapeake Bay and directly impacting recreational fishing. The ASMFC should now allow this to stand.

Omega Protein is a foreign-owned industrial harvester that sucks up more than 70 percent of the coast-wide menhaden catch, and this announcement of the Bay Cap violation is yet another example what a bad actor this company is. Omega Protein has violated the Clean Water Act on numerous occasions and earlier this month was fined by the SEC for mispresenting their violations of federal law in connection with Federal loans provided to the company. Omega vessels frequently run recreational anglers off their fishing grounds, setting nets around boats to suck up vast quantities of menhaden. The company has also had dozens of OSHA violations and conducts a dirty fishery with numerous on-the-Bay

accounts of wasteful by-catch, including cobia, red drum and bluefish.

Recreational anglers and the recreational fishing economy pay the price for all of this bad behavior. Research suggests that the reduction fishery could be responsible for as much as a 30 percent decline in striped bass. At a time when anglers are being asked to reduce their take of striped bass, this violation of the Chesapeake Bay Cap adds insult to injury.

The striped bass fishery generated \$7.8 billion toward our nation's gross domestic product and recreational anglers accounted for 98 percent of the total economic contribution. The economics of recreational fishing dwarf whatever economic benefit that comes from the foreign owned reduction industry.

Menhaden are critical to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and Omega Protein's claim that there is no scientific basis for Bay Cap is false. Omega has been unable to prove that their industrial fishery does not adversely impact the Bay. Every other state on the East Coast has banned the practice of reduction fishing and now is the time for the ASMFC to hold this company accountable to the fishery management plan.

Sincerely,
Capt. Paul Eidman
Forage & Habitat committee chairman"

Update on the NJ DEP Public Access Meeting Held on October 7th

By John Toth

With the urging of many fishing and environmental organizations, Governor Murphy signed the Public Beach Access Bill into law on May 3, 2019 and it became effective on July 3rd. It codifies the Public Trust Doctrine (PTD) into law and confirms the public's longstanding right to use our state's tidal waters and adjacent shorelines. It also provides direction to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to protect and enhance public access when permitting development and approving publicly funded projects. The NJDEP is now directed to make all tidal waters and their shorelines available to the public and remove physical and other impediments that limit this access.

The NJDEP Division of Land Use Management has taken the lead on implementing this new law and has had a number of stakeholder meetings with a number of associations and individuals to receive input on developing and codifying the new Public Access Rules that the NJDEP would enforce. The NJDEP is looking to have a draft of these new regulations for review during January of 2020 and final rules in place during 2021. To receive more input from the public, a stakeholders meeting was held on October 7th at the NJ DEP office in Trenton with anglers, homeowners, business trade groups and others to receive comments from a wide spectrum of individuals. Approximately 50 individuals were in attendance and I represented the Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) and the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance (NJOA) This meeting was chaired by Ms. Ginger Kopkash, Assistant Commissioner, Land Use Management. This meeting lasted for two hours and while I cannot record all of what was said, the following bullet points capture some of the main points that were raised at this meeting:

- Ms. Kopkash indicated that this is a complex issue involving competing interests with homeowners, municipalities, anglers and "we are on a journey" to arrive at the new regulations to enforce the PTD.
- We need to look at not only the deficits that currently inhibit the PTD, but also new opportunities to enhance it.
- Dialogues with stakeholders will still continue well after this October 7th meeting.
- Access not only includes beaches, but waterfront locations as well (a couple living by the Hackensack River complained how people walk over their private property and wanted to know how the new regulations would address this issue). Walking over private property for access to and from beaches and waterways is a major comment that has emerged from previous stakeholder meetings.
- New locations for beach access by municipalities should be explored including new offsite locations to increase fishing opportunities. A new funding

mechanism to develop these new locations should be considered through new permit fees or funding from other sources and placed in an escrow account. (I made the comment that if this new funding is approved, it has to be secured so that it is not diverted to other budget shortfalls).

- All municipalities should develop an access plan, possibly by following the guidelines of a new access template developed by NJDEP.
- Determine what is required through an access plan and what is not, like repairing a bulkhead.
- When new projects are being considered in the design process by a municipality, consideration should be given to access first and not last.
- Specific violations of access were raised in Avon and Deal. Ms. Kopkash indicated that they were being put on a spreadsheet for future resolution. I indicated that these were so egregious that they should receive immediate corrective action so that anglers would have more faith that something is being done as a result of this new law. She responded that NJ DEP would look into these violations but they may have some legal ramifications that need to be reviewed first.
- The question was raised about what type of system will be in place that anglers cannot only report access violations but also be aware of the progress being done by NJDEP to correct them. Ms. Kopkash indicated that NJ DEP will work on its design and implementation.
- Ms. Kopkash asked the audience if it had any objections to the creation of a special fund dedicated to expand access opportunities at municipal locations or other locations like possibly bay areas. The audience response was positive and nobody responded that it was a bad idea.

- After this meeting, I approached Ms. Kopkash and indicated that I have attended a number of these access meetings in Trenton. I said to her that there are so many competing interests that make accommodations for access in shore communities for NJ residents very difficult to achieve. She recognized this problematic issue and that is why she is seeking access to beaches and waterways at other locations instead of what are the traditional locations.

The question was raised on how the audience can be aware of future progress being made on access and she gave us the contact of Jill Aspenwall who has our emails from the signing in process of this meeting.

In summary, I have given you some of the many issues that were raised at this meeting. I thought that overall this meeting gave Ms. Kopkash a lot of useful information that can be used to develop legal guidelines to improve access. This is a “journey” as Ms. Kopkash indicated in the long road to follow the legal requirements of the Public Trust Document. I will keep you updated on the progress of this journey as it unfolds.

Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

BHSFC VISIT IBSP NATURE CENTER

Brick High School Fishing Club (BHSFC) traveled to Island Beach State Park Nature Center on October 4th. Tim Brennan, Health & Physical Education Teacher and NJ HOFNOD certified instructor, introduced students to Kelly Scott, Park Naturalist. Kelly gave students a tour of the Nature Center, nature path, and bay/ocean shoreline.

Students learned about aquatic conservation and what they can do to protect waterways and wildlife. Several members of the class had a chance to go seining and collect different species of fish for classroom discussion.

During November, Brick Township High School Fishing Club is supporting our veteran Play HOOK-e from PTSD program. Students care about our veterans and plan to assist with our veteran fishing program. Members of the VVA Chapter 12 School

Speakers program will visit their school on November 13, 2019 to teach students about the Vietnam War.

View BHSFC NJ HOFNOD [Facebook page](#) to see their progress.

NJ HOFNOD MI-JO PARTY BOAT TRIP

NJ HOFNOD youngsters and veterans will have an opportunity to fish Saturday, November 2, 2019 on the Mi-Jo party boat out of Atlantic Highlands. Veteran NJ HOFNOD instructors will assist youngsters fishing and discuss selective harvest conservation.

If you would like to volunteer time with a NJ HOFNOD program near you and become a certified NJ HOFNOD instructor, please contact Liz Jackson, NJ DEP Division of Fish & Wildlife, Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs, 605 Pequest Road, Oxford, NJ 07683 or call at 908-637-4125 x122.

Visit the [NJ HOFNOD website](#) to view their website and Leader groups.

2019 JCAA YOUTH EDUCATION AWARD

Liz Jackson, NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife, was selected by the JCAA Youth Education Committee to receive the 2019 Youth Education Award. We received the following nomination from Sue Rothermel, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen Clubs.

“I am pleased to nominate Ms. Liz Jackson for your 2019 Youth Education Award. Liz is committed to promoting and creating the practices that contribute to a sustainable HOF-NOD program while making significant commitments to the Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs program along with its program participants.

Liz Jackson reformed the HOF-NOD program from a one-day, one-shot fishing derby model of the past by seeking partnerships with youth organizations and individuals willing to create or enhance ongoing activities that involve learning to fish, appreciating aquatic and environmental resources, and developing positive life skills. These entities were directed to prove sustained engagement in HOFNOD content by submission of a calendar or schedule that illustrated their program offering (where, when, what and how). She required teams to organize their program with

roughly 22 to 24 contact sessions with participating youth, where each course was not less than 1.5 hours per session. Each group was encouraged to include multiple all-day field trips, webinars, and guest-speaker events.

She transformed each team on a case-by-case basis to allow the program to be readily integrated into their setting or situation. Program settings include curricular integration with middle schools and high schools, school-based extracurricular activity, content for afterschool programs, supplemental units for a summer day and sleep-over camps, community-based non-school activity in partnership with not-for-profits or NGOs, and county-based youth development club within the Rutgers' Cooperative Extension 4H model.

Liz takes it upon herself to provide exceptional support and service to new instructor groups; She discerns quickly their individual needs and moves efficiently to provide essential information, recommendations, or direction. “Liz is a beautiful ambassador for our State...in assisting teams, instructors, and students as they navigate the HOF-NOD program.

Liz is always willing to pitch in for the good of the program. She has made a difference in our Statewide HOF-NOD program and has positively impacted the program participants of our state. Her skills, knowledge, willingness to help others, and dedication to Hooked On Fishing Not on Drugs make her the Excellence candidate for the 2019 JCAA Youth Education Award.”



Digital image courtesy of NJ Fish and Wild Life

FISHING SEMINARS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

During November and December Veteran Play HOOK-e fishing seminars will be held at VFW Post 2226, 212 Norwood Ave., Oakhurst, NJ.

The program is geared towards Veterans struggling with PTSD & TBI but all Veterans and their families are welcome to attend. The goal is to connect veterans and their families to VA Service Offices/Outreach Centers, NJ Coastal Parks, Fishing Clubs, Veteran Organizations, and help Veteran men and women take time to heal by utilizing eco-therapy to limit PTSD symptoms.

Attendees will learn how and where to catch that fish of a lifetime. Topics include: Tackle Tricks and Surf Casting Techniques - Know how to use bait rigs and artificial lures - Identify productive fishing areas along the beach - Understand NJ rules and marine regulations - Learn about fishing tips and other items you might need to have a safe fishing experience .

Refreshments, door prizes, and printed handouts are no cost to veterans and family members.

Greg K, Shore Surf Club President, Jersey Coast Anglers Association's Youth Education Chair, and Member # 164 New Jersey Beach Buggy Association will be the speaker. To Register: Phone: 732-785-9278 or check out their [website](#) for more veteran fishing opportunities.

IBSP SURF FISHING CART

The surf fishing cart at IBSP that is used to teach new anglers, students, and veterans the sport of surf casting and fishing was recently refurbished by George Brown, NJBBA, Tom Sheehan, George Murnyak, Lou Fusco, Dan Weidmuller and Tim Burden. A lot of work went into repurposing equipment and organizing the layout of the surf cart that holds seining, waders, surf bags, rod/reels, tables, terminal tackle and maintenance equipment. The cart is also used for NJ HOFNOD schools and community-based programs.

Due to the success of the surf instructional classes over the years, replenishment of equipment is needed for the 2020 fishing season. A list of terminal tackle and maintenance supplies for 2020 will be submitted to the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament Committee for consideration.

HRFA YOUTH FISHING

I receive the following from Dan Harrison, President HRFA: Since, July they supported a few organizations with youth fishing programs: Hoboken River Day on July 13, Spectrum for Living July 16, Kingston Special Needs Children on August 1 and they had such a good time they asked if we could help on their last day of school party on the river. August 16, Yonkers River Fest Sept 14. Members of HRFA do a great job of hosting youth fishing programs and supporting community events for children.