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**2025 Tournament Schedule**

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Bi-Club Fluke Tournament - TDB

Tuna Tournament - TBD

Tournament Rain Date - TBD

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(p) 201.836.2100 x2118  
(c) 201.446.9047  
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L Raymond Humphreys, Jr., Pennsville, NJ  
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### A Saltwater Anglers Club

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[www.FISHHAWKSNJ.com](http://www.FISHHAWKSNJ.com)

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Paul Shafer, Bethel, CT

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Point Pleasant Fishing Club, [rmazz1428@gmail.com](mailto:rmazz1428@gmail.com)  
Newark Bait & Flycasting Club  
New Jersey Beach Buggy Association  
Round Valley Trout Association, Lebanon, NJ  
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David Strom, Jr., West Orange, NJ  
South Jersey Saltwater Anglers  
Surf Kings Fishing Club  
Douglas Vitale In Memory of Bruce Vitale Women's  
Surf Fishing Club of NJ, [www.wsfcnj.org](http://www.wsfcnj.org)



### New Jersey Beach Buggy Association

PO Box 511, Seaside Park, NJ 08752

Buggy Membership Info: Ken Hollins 732-814-7021

[www.NJBBA.org](http://www.NJBBA.org)

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### Manasquan Fishing Club

PO Box 513, Manasquan, NJ 08736

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Manasquan Woman's Club, 62 Main Street

[www.manasquanfishingclub.com](http://www.manasquanfishingclub.com)

# JCAA NEWSPAPER JANUARY 2026

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION*

(Published on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025)

**"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"**

## JCAA REGULAR MEETING

**December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 7:30pm**

Jersey Coast Shark Anglers Building  
385 Herbertsville Rd, Brick, NJ 08724

or via Zoom, for link contact:

[tothjohn@verizon.net](mailto:tothjohn@verizon.net) or [mtsport64@aol.com](mailto:mtsport64@aol.com)

## NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

**Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>**

## OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.

PO Box 1191, Wall Branch Post Office  
Wall, NJ 07719

Phone 732-506-6565 Fax 732-506-6975

Publisher Tom Fote, Editor Paul Turi

This publication is printed and mailed one week prior to each regular monthly meeting of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. One of the prime goals of JCAA is to get accurate information into public hands as soon as possible.

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**JCAA General Membership Meetings are for club representatives and invited guests only. These meetings are not open to the general public. If you would like to attend as a guest, call the President at (732) 245-9445 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
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## 2024 OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Mark Taylor	732-245-9445
<b>1<sup>st</sup> V.P.</b>	Stephen Machalaba	908-588-1426
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> V.P.</b>	Don Marantz	908-347-1434
<b>Treasurer</b>	Doug Tegeder	732-575-2661
<b>Rec. Sec.</b>	Karen Noe	732-245-2751
<b>Cors. Sec.</b>		
<b>Mem. Sec.</b>	John Toth	732-656-0139

*Committee and Chairpersons listed on last page*

## IMPORTANT DATES

**December 30<sup>th</sup> JCAA General Meeting**

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

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

**February 12<sup>th</sup> JCAA Board Meeting**

**February 24<sup>th</sup> JCAA General Meeting**

**February 25<sup>th</sup>-March 1<sup>st</sup> Atlantic City Boat Show**

**March 12<sup>th</sup> JCAA Board Meeting**

**March 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Saltwater Fishing EXPO**

## NJ Fish & Game Council Under Attack Again by Animal Right Activists

*By John Toth*

Here we go again with animal right activists who want to change how we fish and hunt in New Jersey. However, before I go further with this column, a brief explanation of the NJ Fish & Game Council is needed to better understand its important role in managing freshwater fishing and hunting in our state.

The Fish & Game Council has 11 members appointed by our Governor and with the consent of Senate members. The composition of this council includes three farmers, six sportsmen, a member of the Endangered and Non-Game Species and one Public Member. These members are chosen to be on this council because of their extensive background and knowledge of fishing, hunting and land use and soil conservation. They are selected from different regions of our state to ensure broad representation. In regard to fishing and hunting, they establish regulations that govern these sports that include but are not limited to permits, seasons, bag limits, and the number of wildlife that can be harvested. In short, the NJ Fish & Game Council manages all freshwater fishing and hunting that occurs in our state. Any changes to the composition of this council can and most likely will have a direct impact on the management of fishing and hunting in New Jersey.

During 2007, Assemblyman Panter and Senator Karcher introduced bills to reduce the number of council members from 11 to 7 and include representation from animal rights activists. Alarmed that fishing and hunting opportunities would be curtailed, anglers and hunters joined forces throughout the state to defeat these bills. Rallies were held throughout the state to oppose these bills, and I remember attending one at the Clarksburg Inn in Millstone Township on October 28th that drew 800 men and women. I and others spoke at this rally to oppose changing the Fish & Game Council and it was so exciting to see anglers and hunters join together to stop threats that would ultimately destroy their fishing and hunting opportunities. These bills were defeated and even the politicians who pandered to the animal right activists over us anglers and hunters in our state were ultimately voted out of office!

Fast forward to 2025, just when you thought that this threat to the Fish & Game Council would not happen again, bills A6055 and S4893 are moving through our legislature and pushed primarily by former Senator Raymond Lesniak who has championed having animal right activists on the Fish & Game Council for many years. Under this bill, three sportsmen from the Fish & Game Council would be replaced by animal welfare advocates. Council members who have considerable knowledge of conserving wildlife for conservation would be replaced by members who would advocate animal welfare over wildlife management. For example, seasons to hunt deer could be curtailed or fishing seasons reduced under this new type of management. Seasons for bear hunting would also be curtailed or stopped outright even though the population of bears has exploded in certain sections of our state causing crop damage and posing threats to humans. During 2007 we had some time to organize opposition to the Panter/Karcher threat. This time the new bills are being advanced during the Lam Duck Session of Governor Murphy leaving us not much time to organize opposition to these bills. During the Lam Duck session, bills can be approved by Unanimous Consent when speakers of both the Assembly and Senate along with the Governor agree to pass a bill. The Lam Duck session ends on January 15, 2026. As I write this column, there has been a groundswell of opposition to these bills by anglers and hunters, but I do not know yet if these bills have been defeated or passed.

I do want to share an experience that I had with an animal right activist when I testified in Trenton to

the Senate Environmental Committee to pass the "Hooked on Fishing not on Drugs" bill. The purpose of this bill is to take youths from inner cities on fishing trips and away from the drug scene. I told the committee that my fishing club (Salt Water Anglers of Bergen County) sponsors youths on an annual fishing trip and these youths enjoy fishing so much. I related how a 14-year-old girl told me that she could not fish and, with a little encouragement from me, she was catching fish and was so excited about it. She told me at the end of the trip that "this day is not going to end, is it?" The committee approved the "Hooked on Fishing not on Drugs" bill and disregarded the testimony of the animal right activist opposing it. When I was about to leave, the animal right activist came up to my face and angrily accused me of teaching kids how to kill fish and I should be ashamed of taking kids on a day of fishing.

Imagine if these types of people gained control of the Fish & Game Council. Fishing and hunting in our state would certainly die a slow death under their control.

#### **Legislators to contact to oppose A6055 and S4893**

- **Senator Nicholas P. Scutari**, Senate President (LD22) (732) 827-7480
- **Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin**, Assembly Speaker (LD19) (732) 855-7441
- **Senator Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez**, Economic Growth Chair (LD5) (856) 541-1251
- **Assemblyman Willam W. Spearman**, Commerce Economic Development and Agricultural Committee Chair (LD5) (856) 853-2960

## **Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder Update for 2026/2027**

*By Paul Haertel*

Below is a letter that JCAA sent to the ASMFC/MAFMC on December 9<sup>th</sup> regarding black sea bass. It is followed by a brief synopsis of what happened regarding both sea bass and summer flounder at their joint meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**To:** Executive Director, Dr. Chris Moore  
MAFMC/ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and  
Black Sea Bass Board

**Subject:** Comments on Recreational Sea Bass  
Measures

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association is a group of many marine sportfishing clubs that promote a united consensus on issues relevant to saltwater anglers in New Jersey.

Regarding sea bass, we have heard plenty about the Recreational Demand Model and the Percent Change Approach. What we are urging you to do now is use the common-sense approach. The SSB has been climbing steadily since 2012 and is now at 284% of its target. Still, there has been no significant liberalization since that year. It is time for that to change.

You need to consider the effect that this overpopulated fish is having on other species. These voracious feeders are competing for forage fish and eating the young of other desirable species such as cod and striped bass that we are trying to rebuild. They are also having a negative impact on other species as summer flounder, red and silver hake (ling and whiting) and other species including lobsters.

Further, liberalizing the recreational fishing measures for sea bass would reduce the pressure on some of the aforementioned species that we are trying to rebuild. It would also be a boon to the shore economy. With tight regulations on many other species, the local bait & tackle shops, the for-hire fleet, and many other businesses could certainly use a boost.

Lastly, please consider the fact that sea bass are protogynous hermaphrodites. With the 12 ½" size limit, we are harvesting almost all males while allowing the females to continue to breed. That may be why the population continues to explode and their range continues to expand.

Sincerely,

Mark Taylor  
JCAA President

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### Update

The ASMFC/MAFMC met on 12/17 and voted for status quo measures for summer flounder for 2026 and most likely 2027 as well. Their plan is to set regulations for two-year periods for both fluke and sea bass unless some sort of new data is developed that would cause

them to want to change it. Earlier this year, recreational fishermen were given a 38% quota increase for summer flounder, up from 6.35 million lbs. to 8.79 million lbs. Still, due to the Recreation Demand Model/Percent Change Approach that is currently being utilized, we are not being allowed to liberalize our regulations. This is because the summer flounder stocks are rebuilt to under 90% of their target.

What status quo measures means for the upcoming year is a little unclear. It could mean that we may only be allowed to change our opening and closing dates slightly or it could mean that we would be allowed to do a complete overhaul of our regulations as long as they are conservationally equivalent. That will be discussed further at the technical committee's meeting on 1/9.

The recreational quota for sea bass was increased by 30%, up from 6.27 million lbs. to 8.14 million lbs. The stock is rebuilt to 284% of its target. Still, there were some on the Council and Board who did not want us to liberalize at all! We have to be thankful for the motion made by Adam Nowalsky for a 20% liberalization that passed which will allow us to liberalize for the first time since 2012.

How that liberalization will be utilized will be up to the NJMFC. However, I expect that our NJBMF will develop options that would allow us to keep more than one fish in the summer, extend the season until the end of June or begin the season earlier in the fall to close the gap from when fluke season ends and sea bass season begins.

## President's Report

*By Mark Taylor*

It has been a tremendous honor to serve as your President for another successful year. I passionately believe that JCAA remains the leading association consistently advocating for the recreational fishing community, ensuring resources are available for future generations. Over the past year, we have welcomed several new dedicated volunteers who have become increasingly involved with fisheries issues and matters impacting our community, for which I am sincerely grateful. However, this is only the beginning. JCAA requires many more committed individuals to volunteer, ensuring that our association can continue to operate effectively. If you are interested in becoming more involved, please feel free to reach out to me.



As the new year starts, do not forget to renew your **NJ Saltwater Recreational Registry**. You can update your registration by visiting the NJDEP - NJ Fish & Wildlife Saltwater Recreational Registry Program website or going to [this link](#).

At the JCAA General Membership Meeting on December 30th at 7:30pm, the election of Officers for the year 2026 will take place. Members interested in serving in any elected position are encouraged to contact Don Martanz at (908) 347-1434 prior to the meeting. Serving as an officer offers the opportunity to contribute directly to the protection of the rights of New Jersey's recreational fishing community. While challenges may arise and outcomes may not always be as anticipated, it is important that we remain committed to advocating for what our member clubs believe is right.

I hope this holiday season finds everyone well and enjoying time with their families. In last month's article, I highlighted the commendable efforts of retailers and local bait and tackle shops that actively engage in fisheries advocacy and contribute to resource sustainability for the broader community, an involvement that is not always mirrored within the wider recreational sector. These businesses consistently supply the resources necessary for recreational fishing enjoyment throughout the year. While this message also served as a suggestion for holiday gifts, I encourage continued support for these establishments beyond the holiday season.

Recreational anglers are encouraged to prepare for the upcoming **2026 ASMFC Winter Meeting**, which is scheduled to take place from February 3–5 at the Westin Crystal City, 1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA 22202. For details regarding the meeting, pending action item such as the Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection Amendment, submission of public comments, and access to the meeting agenda, please visit [this link](#). The species scheduled for discussion include American Lobster, Winter Flounder, Spiny Dogfish, American Eel, Coastal Pelagics, Atlantic Menhaden, Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Atlantic Striped Bass. It is essential that members of the recreational community thoroughly review the information provided, attend the meeting if possible, and submit both written and verbal comments.

JCAA will have booths at both the **Atlantic City Boat Show** (February 25th to March 1st) and the **Saltwater Fishing Expo** (March 13th to 15th). We are looking for volunteers to help staff at our booth at each

event. Having a strong presence at these shows is crucial for the Jersey Coast Anglers Association so we can connect with the recreational community. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me so I can schedule you for your preferred time and date. You can reach me at [mtsport64@aol.com](mailto:mtsport64@aol.com) or (732) 245-9445. Let me know as soon as possible, I will need volunteer names several weeks before the shows to arrange free passes. You are welcome to visit other vendors at the event, at no cost, either before or after your scheduled volunteer time at the booth, which is a benefit of volunteering.

JCAA Membership Secretary John Toth will be preparing the dues notices for 2026 and sending them out in the near future. Saltwater clubs and individuals interested in joining are encouraged to contact John Toth at (732) 656-0138 or [tothjohn@verizon.net](mailto:tothjohn@verizon.net) for further information. It is essential that all current saltwater fishing clubs and individual members complete the provided form upon receipt to ensure their information is updated accurately. This process allows the appropriate representatives within each club to receive fishery alerts and important updates from JCAA, facilitating effective communication with their members.

The following excerpt was featured in my article last month and is strongly recommended reading for all recreational anglers. I encourage readers to thoroughly review and comprehend its contents, as increased understanding will likely lead to greater engagement within the community.

### **Essential Actions for Recreational Anglers:**

- **Participate in the Recreational Community**

Active involvement within the recreational fishing community strengthens the collective voice and ensures that the interests of recreational anglers are represented. Whether through volunteering, attending events, or supporting local bait and tackle shops, every contribution helps maintain and improve recreational fishing opportunities. Your participation not only benefits you but also supports ongoing efforts for conservation, education, and advocacy.

- **Communicate Your Views**

Sharing your perspectives and experiences is vital for effective representation within the recreational fishing sector. By expressing your

views to association leaders, attending meetings, and engaging in discussions, you help shape the future of recreational fisheries management. Open communication encourages transparency and fosters a sense of community among anglers, ensuring that diverse viewpoints are considered in decision-making processes.

- **Contribute to the Future of Recreational Fishing**

Each individual's involvement plays an important role in sustaining the future of recreational fishing. By volunteering, participating in elections, and supporting the association's initiatives, anglers contribute to the ongoing strength and success of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. These efforts promote fair fisheries management, enhance opportunities for all anglers, and ensure the sustainability of fishery resources for generations to come.

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### Important Info

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- The next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for **December 30<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30pm, held in person at 385 Herbertsville Rd., Brick, NJ 08724 with a zoom meeting invite (Hybrid Meeting).
- Additionally, the first JCAA General Membership Meeting of 2026 will be held on **January 27<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 pm, following the same hybrid format. For those that attend in person there may be something special.
- JCAA Board Meeting will be held on **January 8<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30pm (Zoom Only)

## Why Anglers Should Speak Up for NOAA

*By Capt. Paul Eidman*

Fishing in New Jersey is a big deal. It supports thousands of jobs, brings in billions of dollars each year, and creates over **13 million recreational fishing trips annually**. From tackle shops and marinas to party boats and seafood businesses, fishing keeps our coastal communities alive. To keep this fishing engine running, we need continued funding for NOAA.

NOAA helps keep fish populations healthy by doing the science that guides fishing rules. Their research ships and surveys—often done with help from fishermen—tell managers how fish stocks are doing. This science helps set seasons and size limits that are fair and based on facts. Without it, decisions would be made in the dark, leading to more uncertainty, stricter rules, and fewer fish to catch.



The ocean is changing, and anglers see it every season. Fish are moving, timing is off, and conditions aren't what they used to be. Warmer water, rising seas, and habitat loss are changing where fish live and how they survive. That's why research matters more than ever. NOAA's work helps managers adjust and respond instead of falling behind the changes.

NOAA also helps restore important fish habitat. Healthy bays, estuaries, and reefs mean more fish. In New Jersey, NOAA supports programs that protect places like the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve and improve water quality in the New York–New Jersey Harbor. These projects directly benefit anglers by improving spawning areas and nursery habitat.

### Why this matters right now:

The United States has one of the best fisheries management systems in the world, supporting **over 2.3 million jobs** and many healthy fish populations. Right now, that system is at risk. The current administration is proposing **deep cuts to NOAA's fisheries budget**, along with staff reductions, facility closures, and major deregulation of fisheries. While these changes are being framed as cost-saving measures, many fisheries experts and former NOAA employees warn they are poorly planned and could be **devastating for U.S. fisheries**. These cuts are happening quickly and with little public

transparency, which makes it even more important for anglers to speak up.

### **A personal note from me, your Forage Fish & Habitat Committee Chair:**

By popular opinion, the **2024 and 2025 fishing seasons were just awful and showed a clear decline**. In order to make recreational fishing worthwhile, **we must have an abundance of gamefish**, and it is clear that — for whatever the reasons — we do not right now.

This decline isn't coming from one problem alone. It's



not just beach replenishment. It's overfishing of bunker, pressure on fish stocks, increased commercial pressure, destruction of estuaries, polluted waters from heavy rain and runoff, and changing ocean conditions. The problems are coming from all directions. That's exactly why

**NOAA science is more critical now than ever before.** Without strong research, monitoring, and data, these declines will only get worse.

Many members of Congress come from inland states and don't hear much about fishing or the ocean. That's why New Jersey anglers need to speak up. Letting lawmakers know that NOAA funding matters helps protect our fisheries, our fishing access, and our coastal jobs.

### **Who to Contact — Please Reach Out ASAP**

If you can make a quick call or send an email, here are key offices to contact and urge them to support full funding for NOAA:

#### **Office of Rep. Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07)**

Oliver McIntosh, Legislative Assistant  
251 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC  
Office: (202) 225-5361  
Cell: (202) 913-1091

#### **Office of Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04)**

2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3765

#### **Office of Senator Andy Kim**

Sarah Taffet, Legislative Correspondent  
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 520  
Washington, DC  
Office: (202) 224-4744

A short message goes a long way. Please make the call or write. Your rep may not be on this list so please feel free to reach out to them as well. Tell them you're an angler, fishing REALLY matters to New Jersey, and NOAA funding is critical to keeping our fisheries healthy.

## **Fisheries Management & Legislative Report**

*By Tom Fote*

### **JCAA in the Late 80's through the Mid 90's**

In the late 80's I became the vice president of JCAA. JCAA was struggling with whether we would just support a New Jersey bill making Striped Bass a gamefish (no-sale fish) sponsored by Senator Lou Basana or work on HR393 which was Congressman Pallone's bill to make Striped Bass a gamefish (no-sale fish) at the Federal level. There were contentious meetings at JCAA. Some of you don't remember that many clubs, including the Berkeley Club, had many members selling their Striped Bass. The debate lasted through several meetings, but we finally voted to support bills at both levels. This was not well received by some of the clubs and they left JCAA. Some of these clubs never returned. Because I had free time, I took the lead for JCAA on both bills. There was a great deal of time in Trenton and speaking to many clubs to gain support for the NJ bill. Almost all the outdoor writers except one told JCAA that we were doing the right thing and we got their support. I remember going to my first Commission Annual Meeting in Virginia and talking to Senator Owen Johnson who was the legislative appointee from New York. After some discussion about what I was working on in NJ, Senator Johnson shared his experience in New York and let me know it never happened there. At the next Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Senator Johnson congratulated me on getting the bill passed in NJ. I suggest we work on a bill in New York to accomplish the same. The existing organizations in New York would not commit to a NY only Striped Bass no-sale bill so they asked me to help them organize a CCA that would work to get the bill passed. That was the beginning of my travels



through the coast trying to get other groups involved in the same task.

All of this took place before the passage of the Atlantic Coast Conservation Act. A number of us began attending the Striped Bass board meetings along the coast. The Fisherman Magazine would sponsor luncheons at the meetings to bring the groups together from North Carolina to Maine. Many of those clubs joined JCAA so when we lost the five clubs in NJ due to our support of gamefish and went down to 30 clubs, we increased our membership to 100 clubs. When ASA came into existence, the Fisherman Magazine would sponsor yearly workshops on this topic. I worked with the Maryland Sportfishing Association, the Rhode Island Saltwater Fishing Organization, the newly formed NY CCA, Connecticut CCA, Virginia CCA, Delaware Charter Boat Association and many other groups. We almost got a bill passed in New York and Maryland but the people against the bill managed to pit one segment of the recreational community against the other. Brad Burns and I started Stripers Forever with the purpose of making Striped Bass a gamefish. There were many efforts made in Massachusetts and other states, but they kept failing.

When we didn't get a bill passed at the Federal level or at the other individual states, the catch and release community began attacking the party and charter boats and others who wanted gamefish status. We have been going downhill ever since. In those days we had a united purpose and worked together toward that goal. That is what we need to do again to make sure we protect Striped Bass. We need to stop fighting amongst ourselves.

Back then the enemy was the commercial fisherman and that got most of our attention. What got lost in the dialogue was an emphasis on the environment and the issue of reproduction of Striped Bass. Because we had a very limited fishery and a moratorium in some states, the numbers were allowed to increase greatly, and we had good fishery into the 2000's. We ignored the impact of climate change, habitat destruction, chemical pollutants and blue catfish. We need to have the same coalition building we had in the 90's but this time to work on the real problems in the environment. If we do that, we will work on all the species that are estuarine dependent. All you have to look at is NJ to wonder where the winter flounder, ling, weakfish and whiting went. None of these species are impacted by overfishing. If you are interested in protecting the resource for the next generation of anglers, get involved with working on the

environmental issues that are impacting on the marine habitat and the fisheries that depend on it.

### **ASMFC Winter Meeting**

The agenda for the Winter Meeting is posted at the ASMFC Web Page. I also included it later in this newspaper. It looks like a light agenda — but little time left to discuss those issues. Most of the meetings are allotted for only 1-2 hours. Striped Bass, Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Menhaden are all on the agenda. Since it is not until February, we will include more information in next month's newsletter.

### **JCAA Still in Crisis**

In my first article I talked about Striped Bass and all the groups and clubs we worked with in the 80's. When I look at New Jersey, I see how many clubs have folded in the last 25 years. This year it was the Greater Point Pleasant Charter Boat Association. This is true in other states as well. The NY CCA is gone, the Virginia CCA is seldom heard from. The Maryland CCA is the only one still active on the East coast. Organizations like JCAA that are umbrella groups have also disappeared like the RFA. If you don't get involved, JCAA will also be gone in a few years. We have no young blood. And we keep losing board members. If you care about your sport and want to protect it for your children, you need to get involved. Your children will never have the same experience we all had in the 70's – 90's. John Toth, Paul Haertel, Don Marantz and Mark Taylor visited many clubs in 2023 and 2024 to make presentations about JCAA and try to get others involved. We didn't pick up one board member or committee chair. If you can think of another way to reach out to the broader recreational community, please share your idea with us.

### **Sector Separation**

ASA circulated their position paper on sector separation from 2013. I was involved in Government Affairs when that paper was developed. JCAA came to the same conclusion in the mid-80's. Back in the mid 80's, the United Boatmen recognized JCAA was correct, that the communities would be pitted against one another, and we began to work together. We saw how states pitted one sector against another and that was responsible for keeping 2 states from going with no-sale. This is still the JCAA position and we will continue to work against sector separation. Again, we need to work together to tackle the environmental issues and stop fighting against one another.



## ASA Position Statement on Sector Separation

*Revised April 2013*

Harvest of marine fish stocks in federal waters is presently allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors at levels determined by the regional fishery management councils. The concept of subdividing the recreational allocation of some fish stocks into separate private angler and for-hire components, known as sector separation, has recently been discussed for potential consideration by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Under the sector separation model, managers would assign quotas to the commercial sector, private boat anglers sector, and charter/for-hire sector. ASA is opposed sector separation because:

1. A fair process for allocation between sectors and schedules for revisiting allocation among sectors has not been developed by the Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service, and as a result many outdated and inequitable allocations remain in place. Standard guidance for addressing allocation that is measurable and predictable is needed before any discussions of sector separation.
2. Sector separation will create imbalances in quota allocations between for-hire/charter boat fishing and private boat anglers and will lead to serious conflicts within the recreational fishing community, particularly with no process in place for fairly determining allocation.
3. Sector separation will likely result in disparate public seasons for most offshore recreational fishing. Private boat anglers will often be unable to pursue many species unless they pay a charter/for-hire vessel.
4. The socioeconomic impacts of sector separation have not been adequately addressed.

Until these concerns are fully addressed, ASA urges federal fishery managers to remove saltwater recreational sector separation from all management plan discussions. ASA believes that federal fishery managers should focus on more pressing concerns, such as addressing the significant underlying issues within federal fisheries data collection and developing a fair allocation process.

## ASMFC Preliminary Agenda for Winter Meeting

*February 3 - 5, 2026*

*Visit the meeting summary landing page at [this link](#) where you can also find the preliminary agenda. The agenda is subject to change. The final agenda will include additional items and may revise the bulleted items provided below.*

### **Tuesday, February 3**

#### **9 – 11 a.m. American Lobster Management Board**

- Consider Report from the Technical Committee on Board Tasks
- Consider Report from the Advisory Panel
- Consider Annual Data Updates of American Lobster and Jonah Crab Indicators
- Reports from Gulf of Maine States on Industry Surveys and Meetings
- Update on Request for Information for Alternative Gear Marking Framework

#### **11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Winter Flounder Management Board**

- Review 2025 Management Track Assessments for Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Stocks of Winter Flounder
- Set Specifications for Fishing Years 2026-2028
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review for 2024 Fishing Year
- Elect Vice-Chair

#### **1:15 – 2:15 p.m. Spiny Dogfish Management Board**

- Set Specifications for the 2026/2027 Fishing Year
- Review Spiny Dogfish Accountability Measures Framework
- Elect Vice-Chair

#### **2:30 – 3:30 p.m. American Eel Management Board**

- Update on Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species
- Consider Technical Committee Report on Board Tasks
  - Review of Aquaculture Provisions
  - Review of Florida Young of Year Survey

**3:45 – 4:45 p.m. Marine Recreational Information Program Presentation on Fishing Effort Survey**

**Wednesday, February 4**

**8 – 10 a.m. Executive Committee**

**10:15 a.m. – 11:45 p.m. Coastal Pelagics Management Board**

- Consider Terms of Reference for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia Stock Assessment
- Review Next Steps, Timeline, and Challenges for Cobia Management
  - Specification Setting Process
  - Evaluation of 2025 Regional Recreational Landings Against Targets
- Consider Cobia Fishery Management Plan Review for the 2024 Fishing Year
- Consider Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan Review for the 2023 and 2024 Fishing Years
- Update on South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Spanish Mackerel Future Amendment

**1:15 – 3:30 p.m. Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**

- Progress Update on Plan Development Team Drafting of Draft Addendum II for Public Comment
- Advisory Panel Report on 2025 Single-Species and Ecological Reference Points Stock Assessments
- Progress Update on Technical Committee Tasking on Changing Environmental Conditions

**3:45 – 5:30 p.m. Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board**

- Consider Regional Distribution of Black Sea Bass Liberalization for 2026-2027 Recreational Management Measures
- Consider Technical Committee Report

**Thursday, February 5**

**8:30 – 10:45 a.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**

- Board Guidance on Biological Reference Points
- Board Discussion on Work Group on Future Striped Bass Management: Composition of Work Group, Details, and Timelines for Work Group Tasks

- Consider NOAA Aquaculture Report on Atlantic Striped Bass

**11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board**

- Review 2025 Commissioner Survey
- Review Commission Guiding Documents
- Highly Migratory Species Update on Coastal Sharks
- Consider Habitat Management Series Report on Atlantic States Shell Recycling
- Review Noncompliance Findings, if necessary

**12:30 – 12:45 p.m. Commission Business Session**

**MAFMC & ASMFC  
Joint Meeting**

*December 17, 2025*

**2026-2027 Recreational Management Measures for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass**

The Council met jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) to discuss 2026 and 2027 recreational management measures (i.e., bag, size, and season limits) for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. For all three species, the Council and Board followed the Percent Change Approach as outlined in [Framework 19/Addendum XXXVI](#). The first step of the Percent Change Approach is to compare the upcoming two-year average recreational harvest limit (RHL) to a confidence interval around an estimate of expected harvest in the upcoming two years if the current measures were to remain in place. The Recreation Demand Model developed by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center was used to calculate the estimates of harvest under current measures and the associated confidence intervals. The Percent Change Approach also requires consideration of biomass compared to the target level when determining the required overall percent change in expected harvest.

**Summer Flounder**

The Council and Board agreed the Percent Change Approach requires no change in recreational harvest of summer flounder in 2026 and 2027. This is because the 2026-2027 RHL (8.79 million pounds) falls above the confidence interval around estimated harvest for these years, and stock biomass is greater than 50% but less than 90% of the target level.

The Council and Board approved the use of regional conservation equivalency in 2026 and 2027. Non-preferred coastwide measures, which are written into the federal regulations but waived in favor of state measures, include an 18.5-inch minimum size, 3 fish possession limit, and open season from May 8-September 30. Precautionary default measures include a 20-inch minimum size, 2 fish possession limit, and open season from July 1-August 31. These measures are only intended to be used for states/regions which do not comply with the conservation equivalency process.

Under the no change in harvest outcome, the [current measures](#) are expected to remain in place for states/regions in 2026. Measures for 2027 will be reviewed in 2026 but are expected to remain unchanged unless new information suggests a major change in the expected impacts of those measures on the stock or the fishery. If states/regions would like to make minor changes to their 2026 measures (e.g., to maintain a Saturday opening), those changes will need to be approved through the Commission process in early '26.

### **Scup**

The Council and Board agreed the Percent Change Approach requires no change in recreational harvest of scup in 2026 and 2027. This is because the average 2026-2027 RHL (12.38 million pounds) falls below the confidence interval around estimated harvest for these years, and the stock is greater than 150% of the target level.

Under the no change in harvest outcome, the Council and Board agreed to [status quo federal water measures](#). Status quo state water measures are also expected to remain in place in 2026. Measures for 2027 will be reviewed in 2026 but are expected to remain unchanged unless new information suggests a major change in the expected impacts of those measures on the stock or the fishery. If states would like to make minor changes to their 2026 measures (e.g., to maintain a Saturday opening), those changes will need to be approved through the Commission process in early '26.

### **Black Sea Bass**

The Council and Board discussed application of the Percent Change Approach for setting 2026 and 2027 recreational measures for black sea bass, including consideration of the appropriate confidence interval. When viewed as a percentage range around the median, the updated confidence interval for black sea bass is much wider than the those for summer flounder and scup. It is also wider than the confidence intervals used

in the past for all three species. The degree of this difference was not anticipated prior to the availability of updated Recreation Demand Model results but can be explained by differences in the input data. Specifically, the black sea bass stock assessment recently transitioned to the Woods Hole Assessment Model (WHAM), which characterizes uncertainty differently than the assessment model structure used for black sea bass in the past and currently used for summer flounder and scup.

Council and Board members emphasized that Framework 19/Addendum XXXVI calls for consideration of the appropriate confidence interval methodology each specifications cycle. In addition, the Recreation Demand Model, as well as stock assessment models and projections, continue to evolve and improve over time. The Council and Board tasked staff to plan a more comprehensive review of confidence interval methods for all three species to better inform future decision-making.

The Council and Board discussed that use of the prior confidence interval method would have resulted in no liberalization for black sea bass in 2026 and 2027, while a slightly narrower interval would have resulted in a 39 percent liberalization. The Council and Board ultimately approved a 20 percent liberalization. They agreed this is appropriately precautionary, especially as harvest would still be expected to be below the 2026-2027 RHL and biomass has been increasing and has been well above the target level for more than a decade. Consistent with the Percent Change Approach, the 20 percent liberalization will be implemented in 2026, with 2027 measures remaining unchanged unless new information suggests a major change in the expected impacts of those measures on the stock or the fishery.

The Council and Board also agreed to waive federal waters measures in favor of state waters measures, as has been done for black sea bass since 2022. They adopted non-preferred coastwide measures consisting of a 14-inch minimum size, a 5-fish possession limit, and a May 15–September 30 open season. These measures are intended to be waived in favor of state waters measures. Precautionary default measures remain unchanged at a 16-inch minimum size, a 2-fish possession limit, and an open season of June 1 – August 31. These measures will only be implemented if needed for states/regions which do not follow the conservation equivalency process.

Measures in individual states/regions will be determined in early 2026 through the Commission process.



## Recreational Sector Separation Amendment

The Council met jointly with the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board to review and provide guidance on revised draft alternatives for the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. This amendment considers two main issues: 1) recreational mode management (separate for-hire and private mode management measures or strategies), and 2) for-hire permitting and reporting requirements.

The Council and Policy Board discussed [questions and areas of feedback](#) identified by the Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT). While some of these questions were addressed, the Council and Board recognized that additional stakeholder input and discussion among managers is needed in order to continue development of alternatives. The groups delayed development of a draft amendment/public hearing document in order to hold a workshop in 2026 to further refine the draft alternatives. Staff will prepare draft workshop objectives and logistics for review by the Council and Policy Board in early 2026.

In addition, the Council and Policy Board removed from consideration an option that would have required states to consider or implement state-level mode management during the recreational measures setting process. This option was removed due to concerns about potential administrative burden and stakeholder confusion. However, they intend to further explore an option that would adopt uniform guidelines and best practices for implementing mode management at the state and/or federal levels. Additional guidance is needed on guidelines and best practices that may be included, which will receive further discussion at the workshop. The workshop will also cover the remaining options related to a for-hire Letter of Authorization (LOA) program, as well as for-hire permitting and reporting requirements.

The groups also discussed, but did not approve, removing bluefish from the amendment and pursuing further development of the LOA options only for summer flounder and black sea bass. Some members also expressed concern that mode management approaches using separate allocations had been removed from the document in August and discussed whether these types of options should be discussed at the planned workshop but rejected a motion to do so.

## JCAA New Ad Program

*By Tom Fote*

The full-page ads in our newspaper cost \$1,000 for the year and we are pleased to announce [Engel Coolers](#) as our first full-page ad under our new ad program.

These ads can be for tackle stores, fishing clubs and any other individuals who would like to advertise in our newspaper. It is easier to change a full-page month to month so if your tackle store is running a special sale, you could have a new ad for that specific event for the month before and the month of. Clubs can list their tournaments, flea markets or any other event by just submitting a new ad to replace the existing one. If you have any questions, contact Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 or email at [tfote@jcaa.org](mailto:tfote@jcaa.org). This does not replace the \$500 or \$250 business ad already in place. We are hoping to use the ad money to pay for the operation of the newspaper. We hope that you will solicit ads and get your club to take an ad. It is a great way to publicize your club and get new members. We will also have a link to the sponsors' webpages. Please call me if you have any questions. Mark also has put together some forms that will be ready by the next newsletter.

## JCAA Membership Report

*By John Toth*

Where did the time go and we are now entering 2026! Our Office Manager, Karen Noe, and I will be preparing new club membership invoices that will be mailed during January of 2026.

Along with the invoice there will be forms that show what you want to pay for membership and possible sponsorships. Another form will ask for an update on your club membership that changes with new club officers. Please take the time to complete this form so we can update our files on who is the president of your club and other officers. What is also important is to complete on this form is the **contact person for the JCAA**. We need this contact so that your club can be notified of important issues that come up so that your club can be on top of them.

In regard to sponsorships, the JCAA needs your continued support so that we can represent and protect

your rights to fish, especially in our state. Please be as generous as you can to support the JCAA.

Our next JCAA General Membership meeting be on **December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025**, and it will be held as an in-person meeting at the Shark Anglers Building in Herbertsville and by ZOOM starting at 7:30 p.m.

**Wishing you all a Happy New Year and Great Fishing for 2026!**

## Youth Education Report

*By Greg Kucharewski*

### NJ HOFNOD 2026 FUNDING BILL S229

The NJ HOFNOD bill S229 will most likely be carried over for 2026. When it becomes public, we will post the new bill number in our JCAA newspaper. Please help us continue to support increased funding for NJ HOFNOD. This bill needs to move forward we are asking you to contact your legislators. The importance of properly funding NJ HOFNOD is essential to provide needed funds to expand NJ HOFOD. The bill appropriates \$450,000 to the Department of Environmental Protection to fund the cost of implementing the "Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs" Program. The money would be appropriated from the "Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund," a statutory account established to receive fines and penalties from convicted drug offenders that are used to support State-authorized drug and alcohol abuse abatement programs. The bill encourages the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funding annually from the "Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund" or any other appropriate source to maintain the operation of the program in future years.

We also ask if you would like to become a certified NJ HOFNOD instructor, please contact Liz Jackson, NJ DEP Division of Fish & Wildlife, HOFNOD, 605 Pequest Road, Oxford, NJ 07683, (908) 637-4125 x122. Visit the NJ [HOFNOD website](#) to view a group near you.

### FISHING AND BOATING SHOWS

Be sure to visit our JCAA booth at upcoming fishing and boating shows. Stop by and meet our team. They will answer all your questions about saltwater fisheries

management and pending regulations. Don't forget to support high school fishing flea markets that help our youngsters learn about fishing and become ethical anglers.

### PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY EVENTS

Families are welcome to try this fun winter fly fishing program at Pequest Trout Hatchery. Take a road trip this year and explore all the educational opportunities the Pequest Trout Hatchery has to offer. Winter Hiking Essentials will be available on January 29, 2026, registration is required. Register early for any upcoming event at [this link](#).



### LUNCH AND LEARN FOR KIDS

We just completed our third "Hooked on Lunch and Learn" activity for middle school students. If you are a JCAA member club and would like a copy of one of the



following Lunch and Learn activities: Hooked On Lunch and Learn Fish Anatomy, Guess the Fish, and our NEW "Check It or Lose It" learning activity, send us an email. The activities are designed to teach students about how they

can successfully catch fish by knowing more about fish anatomy, species of fresh and saltwater fish and how to check and maintain fishing equipment so you don't lose that fish of a lifetime.

### SUPPORT LOCAL TACKLE DEALERS

Don't wait till the fish are biting to have rod and reel repairs done. January, February, and March are the perfect months to get your equipment ready for the 2026 fishing season. Tip: Shop locally and [visit our tackle dealers](#) list for veteran discounts.

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Membership is now free! Sign up as an Associate Member and receive monthly JCAA News that gives you the most up-to-date news about Fisheries Management and Environmental Issues. If you would like to support the goals of JCAA, please contribute if you are able. Look for the [Subscribe](#) button on the JCAA home page or complete application below.

### JCAA Associate Member Application

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## COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

<b>Legislative</b>	Tom Fote	732-270-9102
<b>Operations Manager</b>	<i>Open</i>	-
<b>Office Manager</b>	Karen Noe	732-245-2751
<b>Fluke Tournament</b>	<i>Open</i>	-
<b>Access</b>	Paul Eidman	732-614-3373
<b>Blackfish</b>	Paul Haertel	973-943-8201
<b>Blue Claw Crab</b>	<i>Open</i>	-
<b>Lobster and Clam</b>	Frank Macalik	732-754-5345
<b>Bluefish</b>	Paul Haertel	973-943-8201
<b>Habitat</b>	Paul Eidman	732-614-3373
<b>Pelagic Species</b>	<i>Open</i>	-
<b>Forage Species</b>	Paul Eidman	732-614-3373
<b>Striped Bass</b>	Paul Haertel	973-943-8201
<b>Science &amp; Research</b>	<i>Open</i>	-
<b>Website</b>	Philip V. Celmer	jcaa@jcaa.org
<b>Youth Education</b>	Greg Kucharewski	732-429-9637

## JCAA SPONSORSHIP

### The JCAA has 4 levels of sponsorship \$50, \$100, \$250 & \$500

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Become a JCAA sponsor and help our cause. As you can see by our newspaper many of our member clubs are also JCAA sponsors. If your club is not contact us today to become one. With all the new battles we are engaged in, we need to raise more funds in order to be effective. Become a sponsor now and help us to continue the fight.

If you would like to receive JCAA Email alerts email your Name, Club, if you belong to one, and your interest to [tfote@jcaa.org](mailto:tfote@jcaa.org) or just go to the JCAA site and [subscribe](#) from there.

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**Yacht Club**  
Trailers



**43rd Annual 2-Day  
Fluke Tournament**

**July 12 & 13  
2025**

[sandyhookbayanglers.org](http://sandyhookbayanglers.org)

P.O. Box 513 Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716

Monthly Meetings: 2nd Friday of the month at the  
senior building in Atlantic Highlands

Compliments of  
Janice & Joe Blaze  
Brielle, NJ



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