

JCAA NEWSPAPER APRIL 2007

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*
(Published on March 19th, 2007)

Remember New Monthly Meeting Room
"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING:

Tuesday, March 27th, 2007

Starting at 7:30 PM

Brick Plaza at 270 Chambers Bridge Rd

NEXT JCAA EXECUTIVE MEETING

Thursday, April 12th, 2007

Starting at 7:30 PM at JCAA Office

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.

1201 Route 37 East, Suite 9, Toms River, NJ 08753

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

JCAA Newspaper Publisher Tom Fote

JCAA Newspaper Editor Paul Turi

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

Anyone wishing to reproduce any part of this newsletter has the permission of the JCAA and the authors. Wherever possible, please credit the JCAA Newsletter as your information source.

~~~~~  
**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 732-446-6298 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.**  
~~~~~

2006 OFFICERS

President	John Toth	732-446-6298
1st V.P.		
2nd V.P.	Bruce Freeman	732-793-7871
Treasurer	Doug Tegeder	732-341-5674
Rec. Sec.	Tom Siciliano	609-296-3774
Cors. Sec.	Paul Turi	609-597-3193
Mem. Sec.	Mike Tutela	732-281-8942

Committee & Chairpersons listed on last page

JCAA HIGH ROLLER RAFFLE

It is now time for the JCAA High Rollers 2007 Raffle. We have put together a terrific selection of rods and reels for one raffle with eight prizes that will be drawn on April 24, 2007. This is a major fundraiser for the JCAA. The 8 prizes are listed below with a value of almost \$3,000. Tickets will be two dollars each and Club Representatives can get books of tickets to sell by attending a JCAA meeting. When your club representative brings them to your club, please help with your purchase. Without your continued support we cannot function as an organization in protecting the marine resource and angler's rights. Shimano provided reels at a special price to JCAA. Profile, Folsom, and Quarow donated the rods and High Seas and Sufix donated line. Hummingbird donated the radio and Fisherman's Headquarters the shopping spree.

1. Shimano Tiagra TI-30WLRSA Reel with a Quarow 20-50 STD rod Value \$730
2. Fisherman's Headquarters, Ship Bottom, NJ donated a \$500.00 Shopping Spree Fishermansheadquarters.com / 609-494-5739 Value \$500
3. Shimano TLD 30 Reel with Sufix line & Profile GL5630 Stand up Rod Value \$430
4. Penn 955 International Reel with Sufix line & Penn ISW817C66XF Rod Value \$320
5. Penn 320 GT2 Reel with Hi Seas line & Tsunami TSTBC 701MH Rod Value \$220
6. Shimano Baitrunner 4500B Reel with Sufix line & Tsunami TSTSS 1102XH Rod Value \$220
7. Abu Garcia 7000C3 Reel with Sufix line & a Berkley IM7 Graphite Rod Value \$210
8. Hummingbird Fixed Mount White VHF Radio 255 SW Donated by Hummingbird Value \$150

**BAN POTS FROM
ARTIFICIAL REEFS GO TO
<http://www.njreefrescue.com/>**

Meetings And Other Dates

March 27 JCAA General Meeting
March 29 NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife Outdoor Writers Workshop
April 7 Opening Day of Trout Season **DEP Commissioner and staff there**
April 12 JCAA Board meeting
April 14 NJ Environmental Federation Summit
April 20 IGFA Dinner
April 27 Outdoor Writes Dinner
May 3 NJ Marine Fisheries Council meeting

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By John Toth

Fluke Update – On March 1st, a meeting was held by the NJ Marine Fisheries Council at the Galloway Township Library to decide the new fluke regulations for 2007, among other issues. There were approximately 100 in attendance and most, if not all, were members of the fishing community. The meeting place was packed and there was standing room only. Approximately 36 attendees signed up to comment on the four (4) options being considered. I went to this meeting for the purpose to tell the Council that the JCAA voted for option 3 at its February 27th meeting. The four options follow:

Size	Bag Limit	Dates	Number of Days
16.5	8	July 1 – September 3	65 day season
17	8	June 9 – September 18	102 day season
17	8	May 26 – September 10	108 day season
17.5	8	April 7 – October 21	198 day season

Nobody who took the floor supported the first and second options since the first option has the shortest season and the second has no advantage to it compared to the other options. All commentary focused on the third and fourth options. I counted approximately 28 comments made for the third option and 8 for the fourth. The party and charter boat captains indicated that a 16 ½ fluke is hard to catch for most anglers and going to 17 ½ inches makes it all the more difficult for the novice or average angler to land a keeper. Consequently, they expressed the fear that more anglers will give up on fluke and just stay home. Another fear about adopting option four (17 ½ inches) is that if further quota reductions come in the future by fishing management the size would start from 17 ½ inches

and then go to 18 inches or more. Consequently, it is better to go with the lower 17inch size limit. Given the overwhelming votes for option 3, the Council adopted it and this option will govern our fluke fishery for 2007. It must be said that almost everybody who testified said that **ALL OF THE OPTIONS ARE BAD AND NOBODY LIKES THEM. WE HAD TO PICK THE LEAST OF ALL EVILS!** We have to make the best of a bad season that will obviously hurt the tackle shops and party/charter boat industry.

We tried our best to change the thinking of fluke management by chartering buses to take anglers to make their voices heard at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on December 11th in New York to plead for a higher fluke quota. There was an intensive letter writing campaign to change the 5.2 million pound draconian quota first recommended by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The quota was increased to the present 17.1 million pounds and that was due to this letter writing campaign. While that is a measure of some success, we could not get the quota set to a higher level despite the abundance of fluke. The JCAA will closely monitor what happens during this new fluke season and keep members informed of any new changes in fluke management they should be aware of.

Don't Feed the Bears – It is incredible that hunters are prohibited from hunting bears, but more incredible that NJ's DEP now plans to hunt for those people who are intentionally or unintentionally feeding bears. Later this month, the DEP plans to deploy conservation officers, park police and environmental inspectors across five counties – Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren - to find out who may be feeding the bears directly with food, or leaving food in garbage cans, etc., where bears can easily forage for food. Violators will first receive a warning and subsequent violations will result in fines of \$1,000.

The state budget has \$850,000 appropriated for this DEP swat team searching for “bear enablers.” Meanwhile, the money spent for the management of New Jersey's marine resources is only around \$3 million. Is there something wrong here? Do they have their priorities mixed up? Also, a bear hunt would save the state \$850,000!

Artificial Reefs – There is a growing concern about the commercial pots that are littering the artificial reefs (two in NJ's waters and 13 reefs

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT & LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Thomas Fote

Summer Flounder

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

The only topic I need to share information and my concerns about is the lack of follow-up by NMFS in getting an outside peer review on the summer flounder science. Last August, both the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid Atlantic Marine Fisheries Management Council asked for an outside peer review. Congress, Governors and the public were unanimous in their support for this outside peer review. This peer review would be designed to find the appropriate summer flounder target. The only review done was by NMFS employees and former employees, hardly an unbiased group. They didn't report any information about why the recruitment has been so poor the last five years and, in fact, they changed the target from 204 million pounds to 214,833,150. And so we wait. The clock is still ticking for next year's quota. The huge negative economic impact of NMFS actions continues. And no answers are on the horizon. JCAA has realized that dealing with NMFS is useless. They don't seem to care that they are destroying the commercial and recreational fishing industries needlessly. So JCAA will be dealing directly with President Bush, the Secretary of Commerce, Congress and our Governors. We hope other states and organizations will join us in demanding that the outside peer review is done immediately. We need this done before we start setting the quota this August for 2008. The extension gave us a little more quota this year than first proposed but did not correct the problem of poor data. Waiting for the next deadline is not acceptable. If we had poor recruitment in 2006, we could have a smaller quota next year. We could wind up with the problem that NY is facing with a short season, small

directly outside of our waters) and the JCAA will ask anglers to sign petitions that will be at the JCAA booth at the Saltwater Expo in Somerset during March 16th thru March 18th. The petition will be directed toward Governor Corzine and it will ask him to ban commercial pots on the two reefs in NJ's waters and to direct NJ's Office of Environmental Protection to petition the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to declare NJ's thirteen artificial reefs in the EEZ as Special Management Zones. In this category, any commercial gear on the thirteen artificial reefs will come under management guidelines where none exist today. Working with NJ's Division of Fish & Wildlife, recreational anglers have paid to have these reefs constructed to increase fishing and diving opportunities. The numerous pots are limiting anglers from anchoring up on these prime fishing spots.

Committee Members Needed – There was intense pressure in Congress to get the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) passed and we were all concerned about how it would affect the fluke season. Now that it has been passed and the rules for the fluke season set, the provisions of the MSA need closer scrutiny. For example, we are now finding out that a Science and Statistical Committee will have a very large role in determining fishing quotas that fishing councils will have to follow. The time to end over fishing will become a two-year objective instead of a ten-year goal. The MSA provisions are very important to our sport and we need a committee to review the ramifications of the MSA and to guide the JCAA in providing an appropriate response. Can you serve on this committee? We need committee chairpersons and volunteers for those species that are also under attack such as blackfish, the highly migratory type, summer flounder and other concerns such as pots on the artificial reefs. If you can serve on any of these committees, please call me at (732) 446-6298 or email at tothjohn@juno.com.

**ENTER NOW JCAA FLUKE
TOURNAMENT
BETTER THAN EVER
JUNE 9 IS THE DATE
JUNE 15 AWARDS
CEREMONY**

bag limits and size limit choice of 18 1/2 and 19 inches. We will keep you posted.

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

Rebuilding fluke to 214 million pounds a pipe dream

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 02/16/07

BY JOHN GEISER
CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fishermen look back at what has been accomplished since 2000, and view these claims quizzically. They ask how the total biomass could grow from 112 million pounds in 2006 to over 214 million pounds at the end of 2012 — six years — when the biomass only grew from 60.6 million pounds in 2000 to 112 million pounds in 2006. This was an increase of only 51.4 million pounds in seven years with three spectacular years of recruitment and over 100 million new fish plus two years of good recruitment adding 53 million more fish.

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

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

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

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

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

The Need and Rationale for Special Management Zone Status for New Jersey's Ocean Reef Sites

By Bill Figley February 2007

This document is a formal request to the DEP and Marine Fisheries Council to take the necessary actions to protect the public benefits which New Jersey's ocean reefs were intended to provide by prohibiting all types of trapping on all of the state's reef sites for the reasons presented herein.

During the past 23 years, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has undertaken an intensive reef-building program, establishing a network of 15 ocean reef sites and constructing over 4,000 reefs from 14 million tons of rock, concrete and steel. This effort became an immediate environmental success. The reefs were quickly colonized by over 150 species of fish and marine life that formed biological communities far more productive than the sandy sea floor upon which reef structures were placed (Resciniti and Figley 2005). Marine anglers and divers welcomed and supported the program and greater numbers of these groups use the reefs each year. This state program

has resulted in the creation of a valuable, new public marine resource that did not exist just 25 years ago.

However, there is a growing concern that a proliferation of fish and lobster traps is reducing opportunities provided to the public by the reef program. While this was not an issue during the early years of the program, as reef-building efforts have increased, so have the numbers of traps set on reef sites. Now, the problem has reached a critical point where trap lines are restricting the use of reefs by hook and line fishermen, conflicting with reef construction activities and causing other problems.

In 2006, New Jersey issued 251 commercial and 26 recreational fish, lobster and conch trap licenses. Since the commercial figure includes conch pots and license transfers, the actual number of commercial lobster and fish trappers is actually much less than 251. This license allows commercial fishermen to set fish, lobster and conch traps within state ocean waters; the recreational license allows for the taking of lobster only and limits the number of traps to 10. A federal license is needed to set traps in federal waters (EEZ). The problem posed by traps has nothing to do with whether or not the fisherman setting them is trying to make a profit; it is simply a matter of the physical way in which traps and trap lines interfere with other activities on the reef sites. Both recreational and commercial traps cause the same problems.

The purpose of this report is to document the rationale for prohibiting the use of traps of any kind on New Jersey reef sites. The reasons for this action are as follows:

Access of Hook and Line Fishermen

While the primary objective of the reef program is to create hard-substrate habitat for the production of a diversity of fish and other marine life, other stated objectives presented in New Jersey's Reef Management Plan (Figley 2005; page 1) include creating fishing grounds for hook and line fishermen (anglers) and underwater attractions for scuba divers and providing economic benefits to recreational fishing and diving industries. New Jersey has a large recreational marine fishing industry, with 1.3 million resident and non-resident anglers, who spend over \$1.3 billion on fishing activities annually. Each year, reefs are becoming more important to anglers and divers. In 2000, reefs accounted for 18 percent of all the fish caught by recreational anglers throughout New Jersey's entire marine environment (Figley 2001). This is surprising

given the fact that reef sites only comprise 0.7 percent of the sea floor within 30 miles of the Jersey coast.

Fish and lobster traps (also called pots) are set on the sea floor on long lines that connect the traps together. Trap lines are hundreds to thousands of feet long and contain dozens of pots. Typically, a buoyed flag is tied to each end of the line to mark the location of the submerged line of traps. Once set, trap lines may be left in place for months at a time. For this reason, trap lines are termed fixed gear. The traps may not be checked for a week or more; the legal requirement is once a month.

Fixed trap lines set within reef sites are barriers to hook and line fishermen. Anglers fishing on wrecks and large reef structures snag their anchors in pot lines. When a fishing boat drifts across a pot line, the anglers onboard snag their sinkers and hooks in the bottom line and lose their rigs. In 2005, a survey estimated that there were 23,000 feet of trap lines set on the Axel Carlson Reef Site (Carlson et al.2005); that is a lot of submerged gear to have to avoid. The end result is that a few trap fishermen can set enough lines of pots to dominate a reef site, inhibiting or denying access to thousands of hook and line anglers for whom the reefs were originally constructed. And, this monopoly can be achieved without the trapper even having to be there.

The New Jersey Reef Plan (page 8) states that the “DEP’s goal in both constructing and managing reefs is to spread the benefits of the reefs among as many people as possible. To accomplish this goal, DEP may have to restrict or discourage uses of reefs that foster an inequitable share of either the fisheries resources or access to the resource being taken or dominated by a small group of people.” The trap fishery meets the requirements of a use that should be discouraged.

Anglers spend far more on their fishing activities and the fish they catch than they would be willing to pay if they were simply buying a fish for dinner. Anglers support an extensive industry that includes boat builders, marinas, tackle manufacturers, bait shops, fuel docks, restaurants, hotels and so on. The tourist industry benefits from the half-million nonresident anglers who come to New Jersey each year to fish.

Reef Construction

Over the past 23years, the State has constructed over 4,000 patch reefs, at an average rate

of 3.3 reefs per week. This statistic indicates that reefs are being built at an intensive rate. All 15 of New Jersey’s reef sites are considered to be under construction.

The presence of fixed, unattended fishing gear on reef sites inhibits planning and deploying reef materials. To construct drift fishing areas, barges loaded with over 1,000 tons of concrete chunks, pipes or Reef Balls are towed by tugs as heavy equipment disperse reef structures over one-square-mile areas of sea floor. The presence of trap line flags in the vicinity makes this operation difficult, at best. Often, reef-builders have to look for reef site areas without flags before deploying material. When several pot flags are present in an area, it is virtually impossible to accurately assess the number and lengths of lines or in which direction they radiate out from the flags. A 1500-foot line radiating around each flag affects a large area of sea floor that must be avoided during reef-building activities. As mentioned previously, a survey found 23,000 feet of trap lines spread out all over a reef site under construction. This represents an intricate, unseen gauntlet that must be negotiated during reef construction. And, to make matters worse, 30 percent of trap fishermen surveyed indicated that they do not always mark their submerged gear with buoys (Carlson et al.2005). The predicament facing reef builders occurs because trap gear is unattended. If a party fishing boat is at a planned construction site, the captain can be contacted by radio and asked to move. Pot flags, in contrast, do not respond to radio calls. The deployment of huge barge loads of rock also occurs at night when there is no hope of spotting pot flags. The presence of fixed gear precludes rational planning of a reef site. When pot flags are observed, the fear is that reef structures dropped to the sea floor will damage or destroy trap fishing gear. Even though trap fishermen are advised by newspaper notices, emails and warnings on licenses of impending reef construction, the traps are left in place on the reef sites. It is easy to understand why, despite best efforts, trap gear has been destroyed during reef construction operations.

Reef Funding

Anglers and divers provide the majority of the funds donated for the sole purpose of building reefs. Numerous fishing, diving and environmental clubs and individual sportsmen have donated money throughout the life of the reef program to pay for reef-building activities. While private companies and

public agencies have spent about \$60 million to prepare and deliver materials to the reefs, their intention is always in saving money not in building reef habitat. When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides rock, the military provides tanks or a contractor provides concrete from a demolished bridge to the reef program, there is a great savings over the alternative of land disposal. Whenever there is a cheaper way, the Reef Program does not receive the material. Thus, reef construction does not cost the taxpayer; it actually results in taxpayer savings. In the case of vessels, the ship owner's expenses for preparation and towing are subsidized by sportsman's donations, allowing such projects to be even more cost effective than other disposal options. In the case of Reef Ball construction, state taxes are used to fabricate the structures as part of an inmate work program; the cost of transporting the structures to the ocean to build reefs is paid for by sportsman's money. The primary source of funding used by the DEP to pay for the personnel and equipment needed to run the reef program is derived from a federal excise tax paid by anglers on all purchases of sport fishing equipment.

Many of these donors object to the presence of increasing numbers of fish traps on reef sites, complaining that it impinges with their ability to use the reefs which they paid for. Many have further questioned whether it is appropriate for them to continue donating funds to the program.

Conservation

Most reef fish, like sea bass and tautog, school around hard-substrate habitats (reefs) on the sea floor. During their shoreward, spring migration, once sea bass find a suitable reef structure, 80 percent remain there for the entire season (Figley 2003). For these reasons, while congregating around large structures like shipwrecks, reef fishes are vulnerable to fishing pressure. A boat anchored on a big structure can catch many fish quickly. To reduce catch rates and spread the available fish resource out among as many people as possible over a much longer time period, most New Jersey reef sites have been designed as drift fishing areas.

Drift fishing sites are created by randomly dispersing concrete chunks, pipes and Reef Balls over large reef site areas a square mile in size. The result is a sparse density of small (desk-sized) reef structures, perhaps five or ten per acre, which are too far apart to be effectively fished with hook and line

while anchored. Each structure has a small population of fish that can only be caught by boats randomly drifting the reef site. The catch rate is further reduced because drift fishing is only effective during calm, light wind periods. In addition to conservation, drift fishing areas are also designed to accommodate less experienced anglers that would have trouble finding and anchoring on a reef. Instead, all they have to do is find the site where other boats are congregated and start drifting. Because drift fishing areas reduce hook and line catch rates, they hold fish for the entire fishing season.

While drift fishing areas have proved to be an effective design for reducing hook and line catch rates, the exact opposite is true for traps. Unfortunately, a long line with dozens of traps is the perfect gear for taking fish off dispersed reef material. As fish move around their tiny home structure to feed, they encounter traps. The traps are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the entire season. Since fish traps rely on a reef fish's natural attraction to structure, they do not have to be baited, and thus, they remain effective fish catchers without being tended by the fisherman. The number of traps a fisherman can set is unlimited. These factors allow a few trap fishermen to take an inequitable share of the finite resource present on the reef site.

An eight year study found densities of 15 juvenile lobsters per square meter of reef material (Resciniti and Figley 2005). Overall, New Jersey's reefs provide nursery habitat for tens of millions of young lobsters. As these lobsters grow, they will migrate off the reef sites and become available to trap fishermen without having to set traps directly on reef sites.

Historical Use

It is undoubtedly true that trap fishermen have set pots on every square mile of the sea floor along the Jersey coast at one time or another. In an effort to have the smallest possible effect on the various types of commercial fishing operations, the state has permitted the fewest number of sites needed to meet its objectives. Six of the state's 15 reef sites were existing chartered fish havens, formerly permitted by private sport fish groups. Important commercial fishing grounds were avoided in the selection of the nine new sites. In addition, hard or rough bottom areas containing rock, cobble or

“coral”, which may be prime pot fishing areas, were also avoided in the selection of reef sites. A public notice was issued and review period held for each federal reef site permit that was requested. The primary motivation for setting traps on reefs is to take advantage of the new structures placed there. Sites with the most reef material also have the most pot flags. During a survey of pot fishing effort, a total of 75 trap line flags were observed on surveyed reef sites and zero were counted on the open sea floor directly adjacent to the reef sites. These observations suggest that trappers were focusing their efforts on reef structures and not simply setting traps on historic fishing grounds (Carlson et al.2005). Potting on reefs did not become an issue until a significant level of reef construction had occurred. Reef sites only occupy 0.7 percent of the sea floor off New Jersey out to 30 miles; 99.3 percent of the sea floor is unaffected by reef construction and remains open to trap fisheries.

Action Needed

Based on 23 years of reef-building history, the number of fish and lobster traps set on reef sites has increased and will, undoubtedly, continue to do so. The number of traps that can be placed on reef sites is completely unregulated. For the reasons stated previously, it is important that the DEP take the steps necessary to prohibit traps of all types on all of New Jersey’s reef sites. The state and New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council, through regulation or legislation, has the right to prohibit trap fishing on reefs within state waters (3 miles). Two reef sites are within state waters. New York has already banned trapping on reefs within its territorial jurisdiction. In order to extend this ban to the 13 New Jersey reef sites in federal waters (EEZ), the DEP, as reef permit holder, is the sole entity that can petition the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council to grant Special Management Zone (SMZ) status to its reef sites. SMZ designation permits gear restrictions consistent with the intent of building reefs. The authority to grant SMZ status was included as a provision of the Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Management Plan so that the Council could address and resolve gear problems like the one under consideration. It is up to the Council to review all pertinent information and public input before making a final decision regarding the implementation of any regulations. New York is currently asking the Council for SMZ designation for its three reef sites

in federal waters. South Carolina, Georgia and Florida have already banned fish trapping on their reef sites by acquiring SMZ status through the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The initial SMZs were conferred upon pre-existing reef sites. The purpose of establishing SMZs in the South Atlantic was to prevent a small number of individuals from setting gear that could take a disproportionately large amount of the resource when the reefs were intended for a broader, long-term public use. Unrestricted use of such gear could diminish the economic benefits to recreational fishing industries for which the reefs were designed. Evidently, a number of states recognized that unregulated fish trapping threatened their reefs and took steps to eliminate the problem.

It is important to understand that the SMZ provision only applies to artificial reefs and manmade fish habitat (0.7 percent of near shore sea floor off NJ). SMZ status cannot impose restrictions on fish trapping or any other type of fishing gear on the natural sea floor (99.3 percent of near shore sea floor off New Jersey).

References Cited

- Carlson, J., H. Carberry, B. Preim and B. Figley. 2005. Pot fishing effort on eight New Jersey Ocean Reef Sits. NJDEP. 19 pp.
- Figley, B. 2001. Survey of New Jersey’s recreational wreck/reef fisheries, 2000: NJDEP. Federal Aid to Sportfish Restoration Project F-15-R-41. 59 pp.
- Figley, B. 2003. Micro-movements of black sea bass on Atlantic City Reef Site. NJDEP. Federal Aid to Sportfish Restoration Project. 17 pp.
- Figley, B. 2005. Artificial Reef Management Plan for New Jersey. NJDEP 115 pp.
- Preim, B., J. Carlson and B. Figley. 2000. A guide to fishing and diving New Jersey reefs. Artificial Reef Association. Oceanville, NJ. 64 pp.
- Resciniti, J. and B. Figley. 2005. Marine life colonization of experimental reef habitat in temperate ocean waters off New Jersey, 1996-2004. NJDEP. Federal Aid to Sportfish Restoration Project. 97 pp.

Potting a serious problem in state's artificial reefs

Sunday, March 04, 2007

BY AL RISTORI

Pressure is mounting to preserve the state's artificial reefs for the purpose they were intended for -- providing recreational fishing opportunities.

An ever-increasing multitude of fish and lobster pots on those reefs have made it difficult for anglers to drift in areas of the reefs created for just that purpose, as lines continually snag into the ropes connecting strings of pots, which are so numerous in many cases that it's even difficult to add materials to the reef without burying commercial gear. Adding insult to injury is the fact that the reefs were built with very little public funding involved, but almost entirely with monies donated by recreational fishermen and divers.

Bill Figley, who built or expanded those reefs while running the program for the Division of Fish and Wildlife before retiring recently, has prepared a white paper being distributed to state officials that details the history of the reefs and the problems created by potting. As bad as gear conflicts are presently, they could get much worse as hundreds of trap permits are issued by the Division and uncounted thousands of traps can be deployed anywhere.

A survey in 2005 estimated 23,000 feet of trap lines on the Axel Carlsen Reef that's convenient to anglers fishing from Manasquan Inlet. In effect, that provides potters with a monopoly of the reef 24 hours a day without even having to be there.

Figley points out that during a period of 23 years, the state has established a network of 15 ocean reef sites, and constructed more than 4,000 reefs from 14 million tons of rock, concrete and steel. Those reefs were colonized by more than 150 species of fish and marine life to provide a new public resource that didn't exist 25 years ago.

Furthermore, those reefs were purposely placed on unproductive open bottom rather than areas where commercial fishermen had previously been potting.

New Jersey's Reef Management Plan stresses the importance of providing fishing grounds for hook-and-line fishermen and underwater attractions for divers. New Jersey's marine recreational fishing industry boasts 1.3 million resident and nonresident anglers who spend over \$1.3 billion on fishing activities annually. In 2000, reefs accounted for 18

percent of all fish caught recreationally, though reef sites comprise only 0.7 percent of the sea floor within 30 miles of the coast.

The newly formed Reef Rescue organization is seeking special management zone status for the reefs. That can be done in state waters by Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lisa Jackson, and she may well cooperate in the effort.

Many of the reefs are in federal waters outside of the state's three-mile limit. Jackson, as the reef sites permit holder, can also petition the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council for Special Management Zone (SMZ) status that will permit gear restrictions. Some southern states have already accomplished that by petitioning the South Atlantic Council. New York, which has protected sites in state waters, is currently asking the Mid-Atlantic Council for SMZ designations on three reef sites in federal waters.

The New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council briefly discussed this issue at Thursday's meeting and agreed to move forward with consideration. Pat Donnelly of Point Pleasant, chairman of the Reef Committee, assured me he'd do so quickly.

A legislative solution has also been proposed. Assemblyman Sean Kean (R-Dist. 11) introduced bill number 3986 that would ban fishing gear other than rod-and-reel, hand line, spear or gig on artificial reef sites and preserves them exclusively for recreational fishing.

Those in favor of applying SMZ protection to artificial reefs should write to Gov. Jon Corzine at State House, P.O. Box 001, Trenton, NJ 08625 requesting SMZ protection for N.J. reef sites in both state and federal waters.

NMMFC February Totaug Meeting

By Tom Siciliano

The New Jersey Marine Fisheries Management Council meets bimonthly in Galloway Township for their public meeting. This is the meeting that most people read about. Between those meetings many things happen and many more meetings are conducted. On February 6 I attended the blackfish and sea bass advisory committee.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has mandated a 28.6% reduction in the blackfish quota. They have stated that recreational

Deck stacked against recreational anglers

Sunday, March 11, 2007

BY J.B. KASPER

anglers are responsible for 90% of the blackfish caught. The legal commercial fishermen are considered to be a minor contributor to the overall catch. The commission voted that the reduction only needed to come from the recreational side with no reduction on the commercial side. In addition, at their last meeting in January they refused to address the illegal catch and sale of live blackfish. The New Jersey representative made a motion at the ASMFC meeting to address this illegal live fish harvest. Unfortunately, only two other states voted for the motion and it failed.

Many recreational anglers feel that this illegal fishery represents a huge number of fish. A method needs to be developed to quantify this illegal fishery.

New Jersey has grave concerns and will continue to address this problem. It is a regional problem and not just New Jersey. Pennsylvania has less than 14" fish for sale in many stores and restaurants. Where do those fish come from? They certainly do not come from any legal commercial fisherman. Joe Meyer, the head of New Jersey Marine Fisheries Law Enforcement feels that a coast-wide size limit is needed along with a license requirement for dealers and raise the penalties to at least \$100 per illegal fish. The advisory committee will recommend that a letter be sent by the Governor to the ASMFC requesting that they address this illegal fishery. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife will also work with Pennsylvania to raise their size limit to 14".

The commercial fishermen were well represented at the meeting and made a plea to address the illegal fishery without preventing them from selling legal live blackfish.

There are currently 65 licensed pot fishermen in New Jersey. Only about 15 of them are fulltimers. One of the things I learned is that there is no limit to the number of pots that they can fish.

The statistician for the State of New Jersey will come up with a recommendation of what will be necessary in terms of season and bag limit to reduce the catch by 28% by April 6. Any changes will not go into effect until 2008 at the earliest. New Jersey has the option of making a reduction on the commercial quota. Since the commercial fishermen in New Jersey have not reached their quota the last few years this should not be a concern but they always resist any reduction in quota.

What do you call it when you hold a meeting a good distance away from most of the people the outcome affects; hold it in a room the size of a postage stamp, set a time limit on how long the meeting can last, then take up 55 minutes with business that almost no one in attendance was interested in? If you play cards, you know it's called stacking the deck. That's just how the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (NJMFC) handled the recent meeting at which they finalized the 2007 fluke regulations (the final decision was eight fish at 17 inches, with a season running May 26-Sept. 10).

Out of all fairness to the council, only about 40 of the 125-plus people who attended the meeting (some stood in the aisles and some walked out) actually got up and voiced their opinions on the four options the council came up with to meet the outrageous demands of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council (ASMFC) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Because only about 30 percent of the people in attendance spoke, the council was able to meet their 6:30 p.m. deadline.

The meeting started at 4 p.m. with a presentation by a representative of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife outlining why position No. 2, the one chosen, was the right one for recreational anglers.

First, the NJMFC meets down in Galloway Township, which is only a few miles out of Atlantic City. This means charter and party boat captains coming from Atlantic Highlands ports, or Belmar and Manasquan River ports, or from Delaware Bay ports, had to travel anywhere 2-2 1/2 hours in heavy traffic to get to the meeting. You would think that a council that makes regulations for recreational anglers would realize the importance of such a meeting and hold it in a more centrally located place. (While the Fish and Game Council normally meets at the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area, when an important meeting such as the game code comes up, they meet at the State Museum annex in Trenton, as they will do later this month.)

Another thing that fishermen should question is why the council meets at 4 p.m., when most people who have a stake in what the council does still are working. I guess another way to stack the deck is to hold the meetings when as few people as possible can attend, and that is what the council has

done time after time. The NJMFC should take a page from the Fish and Game council's book and hold the important meetings at 7 p.m., as is being done with the game code hearing.

Over the years I have attended quite a few council meetings. The idea that the meetings should be held in a different part of the state on a rotating basis and that the time of the meeting should be moved back so more interested parties could get to the meeting has been brought up; this suggestion always has been ignored. The fact is, this is the way the council stacks the deck to get as little of position as possible on controversial issues.

It also should be noted that the majority of the council is from South Jersey.

Councilman Ed Goldman brought up an interesting point before the vote. He mentioned that a recent study done by the ASMFC's fluke advisory board showed that the majority of the fluke over 16 inches are egg-producing females. A troll survey of 500 fluke over 16 inches showed that the overwhelming majority of the bigger fish were females. This means that by raising the size limit on the fluke, you are targeting the spawning biomass females and thus doing more damage to the fishery than good. When you combine this fact with the unreliability of the data gathered by the ASMFC (the National Academy of Science and other major U.S. scientific groups have condemned this data as worthless) and the fact that the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has said the fluke biomass is the highest in the last 50 years, you can see why the current changes in the regulations are totally unwarranted.

It also was pointed out that the higher the size limit goes, the higher the catch-and-release mortality will be and the more anglers will simply ignore the law and take illegal fish. Despite all this evidence pointing to not raising the size limit and staying with the 2006 regulations, recreational anglers still were forced to choose a poison.

I spoke with Tom Fote, who is the legislative chairman of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association, and he said anglers should be extremely concerned about the way regulations are going, not only with fluke, but other fish as well. Since bag limits on recreational fishermen are on individual fish and the ASMFC uses pounds in their data, the higher the size limit means that each fish will weigh more, and there is no way New Jersey anglers will not over-harvest their 2007 quota. This means the feds will want more

concessions next year. Tom said there is an effort underway to get Congress to investigate the fluke regulation mess.

To sum things up, fluke fishermen got a bad deal, but most at the meeting said they were in favor of the option that was chosen because it was the least evil of the four proposals. The fact is recreational anglers never really had a chance because the deck was stacked against them, and it only will get worse since the feds want cutbacks in blackfish, weakfish and porgies.

The council needs to become more recreational-angler friendly by alternating the meeting sites and moving the time back so more people can be heard on critical issues. To not do so shows the public how little they care about the welfare of saltwater angling in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Environmental Federation (NJEF) is pleased to invite you to our 21st annual conference, *Winds of Change*. The conference will be held at Rutgers University School of Law, 123 Washington Street, Newark, NJ on April 14, 2007 from 8 am to 5 pm

New Jersey is facing dramatic challenges and changes that will impact the way we use and receive energy, the future of our cities and the pollution burdens in our neighborhoods and children. Our conference seeks to open discussion on these issues with an eye towards positive actions and resolutions. Governor Jon Corzine has been invited as the keynote speaker. NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson, Assemblyman William Payne, Newark Mayor Cory Booker, and Irvington Mayor Wayne Smith will lead an exciting environmental justice plenary. And our informative workshops will include pesticides, children's health, healthy towns/schools, global warming/energy, drinking water, site remediation, and clean water regulations.

Registration is \$30 per person, \$25 before March 30th, \$25 for groups of 5 or more, and \$15 for students. It includes a light breakfast, lunch, workshops and a reception at the end of the day. To register, visit:

www.cleanwateraction.org/njef/events.html

Become a Conference Co-Sponsor!
Help make our annual conference a valuable tool

for people to network with other groups and learn about key public health and environmental issues that affect our lives. Your sponsorship will entitle you to one conference registration and your name will be listed on the program and in our ad journal. Contact Jenny Vickers at 732-280-8988 or jvickers@cleanwater.org to become a co-sponsor!

Table at the Event! If you are part of an environmental organization or company that wishes to feature your group at the event, please contact Peggi Sturmfels at 732-280-8988 or psturmfels@cleanwater.org. Tabling is free for NJEF member groups (does not include registration) and \$50 for non-member groups (includes 1 registration).

Advertise in our 21st Annual Conference Ad Book! Promote and our feature your business, government office/agency or organization! Ads range in all sizes and all prices (from \$5.00 up to \$300). Please contact Peggi Sturmfels at the number and email address above!

Thank you in advance for your support and we'll see you on Saturday, April 14th!

The Shocking New Magnuson Fisheries Management Act

By John Koegler

The recently passed Magnuson Stevens Conservation and Fishery Management Act (MSA) of 2006 contains an unbelievable number of major changes. These changes directly influence how councils operate and manage fisheries. The great latitude permitted councils in the past has been eliminated. The time allowed to end over fishing now becomes an immediate 2 year objective and not a distant 10 year goal.

The new law assigns to the council's Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) the new job of setting quotas now renamed the Overfishing Level (OFL) and a lower Annual Catch Limit (ACL). Under the MSA law, councils cannot exceed the SSC proposed ACL. Then councils must write new Accountability Measures (AM). All these changes were designed to end overfishing within in a two-year time span. The previous MSA time span of 10

years has been modified to require rebuilding overfished species in the shortest possible time.

Assigning a former advisory panel the authority to set ACLs is an unbelievable reduction in council authority. This committee's membership has also been specified by the MSA law limited to "Federal employees, state employee, academicians or independent experts with a strong scientific or technical credentials and experience."

Look at the additional jobs that MSA has mandated be given to the SSC. "Each SSC shall provide its Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing over fishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impact of management measures and sustainability of fishing practices.

All the above items were previously councils' exclusive responsibility. The SSC had been limited to offering scientific advice. Now, the SSC will state the harvest limits and the councils will write the rules that support these limits with little council latitude in changing the ACL specified.

NOAA fisheries will write **new** guidelines for all of the above and cover many other issues that require guidelines. NOAA Fisheries intends to close their guidelines public comment period by April 17. At their March 9 meeting NOAA fisheries did not offer a single position on the 16 key issues they listed as important! It is very difficult to comment on new guidelines that have yet to be published by NOAA Fisheries.

One change that was a negative shocker is: "MSA shall **not** apply to a fishery for species that have a life cycle of approximately 1 year unless the Secretary has determined the fishery is subject to overfishing of that species."

Also new is, "MSA shall apply to a fishery unless otherwise provided for under an international agreement in which the US participates."

ACL must be implemented (a) in fishing year 2010 for fisheries determined by the Secretary to be subject to overfishing, and (b) in fishing year 2011 for all other fisheries.

NOAA fisheries have identified 530 species for management. Less than 200 species are currently covered by the 48 active fishery management plans. The new MSA demands major changes never before handled by their system. The information and

analysis required to convert current quotas into OFLs and ACLs alone by 2010 are overwhelming. To cover all the remaining species (530-200= 330 new species) by 2011 is an impossible job. How much of the mandated MSA changes can be accomplished with the current level of scientific expertise in the time frame specified? How many anglers have read a single page of the new MSA?

Try to imagine what fisheries management will look like in 2012. How will anglers make out in this new environment? What is the consequence of not closely following and demanding changes in the proposed new rules? Based on anglers past experience with major fisheries management changes, you better hold onto your hat. Then quiet that stomach reflex or get to work. Dedicate yourself to make sure that this new tough new law benefits anglers as was intended by Congress.

Highly Migratory Species

By John Koegler

Roundscale Spearfish

The determination of white marlin's status under the Endangered Species Act will become more interesting since scientists have recently identified a white marlin clone. To make an even bigger issue, they have called it a spearfish. Current HMS rules require you release all "longbill" spearfish alive and not bring them to the dock.

What surprised me the most about this issue is that big-time billfish fishermen and major billfish tournaments have known about this look-alike species for many years. It had been called a "Hatchet Marlin" by the tournaments and specified that it is a white marlin for tournament purposes. This species has also been identified in one saltwater fish identification book as a hatchet marlin.

Last year, in the November, 2006, issues of the "Bulletin of Marine Science," Guy Harvey Research Institute, a part of Nova Southeastern University scientists working with NOAA fishery scientists, published their report about this new billfish. The Institute scientists found major genetic differences in this fish. As a result, they considered this billfish a new and different species.

A NMFS fishery scientist had first identified this species in 1974 from just 4 specimens. C.R. Robins first identified this species with a NMFS technical report SSRF-675. Within the last 10 years,

George Hinteregger, a NMFS scientist, brought one of these species back to his NMFS lab. While researching this new species he uncovered the previous report.

Over the last 10 years NMFS scientists could only recover an additional 15 specimens from among the huge landings of commercial fishermen. Given that a few years back US longline fishermen had discards of over 40 MT of white marlin in a single year, how abundant can this species be?

Do the math: 40 MT of white marlin discards at an average weight of 40 pounds each equals 55 marlin per MT or a grand total of 2,200 white marlin discards per year. Multiply 2,200 per year times 10 years equals 22,000 white marlin that could have been discarded over that period. It took 10 years to find 15 additional roundscale spearfish. So how big a deal are only 15 specimens compared to 22,000 discards over the same 10 years?

But writers and scientific types must wax at great length about the implications of a new misidentified species swimming with the white marlin population, especially since white marlin are undergoing a current ESA review to determine if this species population has dropped so far that it should be considered threatened or endangered.

Are not the press and fishery scientists wonderful? You must know that in a 2006 population report, ICCAT scientists found a white marlin rebound since their previous study in 2002. Last year, the two biggest east coast white marlin tournaments had high numbers of white marlin releases, the best in many years. So something has happened.

The major population rebound of the swordfish population has been identified as due to the closure of the Straits of Florida to longline fishing. Vast numbers of white marlin and other billfish migrate north with the gulf stream every year. Previously, they had to avoid vast numbers of longline hooks. The elimination of Florida longline fishing must be identified as the major reason all these species have rebounded.

In the February issue of "The New Jersey Angler" magazine there was a great article about a winning crew who fished last year's Mid-Atlantic \$500,000 tournament. A sidebar at the end of the article makes identifying this new spearfish species easier.

Three identifying features were:

- 1- Location of Anus: In a white marlin, the vent is about 2 inches forward of the anal fin. In a roundscale spearfish it is about 6 inches in front.
- 2- Scales: The side of a white Marlin is fairly smooth in coloration while on a roundscale spearfish it appears almost polka-dotted. Similarly, if you run your hand forward on a white marlin you will get stuck by the scales. That does not happen on a roundscale spearfish, hence the name roundscale spearfish.
- 3- Branchiostegals: These are the rays below the fill cavity on the ventral side of the fish's head. In a white marlin these are relatively short, extending about two-thirds of the way out of the gill cover. In a roundscale spearfish these extend almost all the way to the end of the gill cover.

The best short article about this new species is available online from Science News online for the week of March 3, 2007, www.sciencenews.org/spearfish, or you can use yahoo and request spearfish.

Important: Read this newest request for public comment from NMFS-HMS division.

Blue Water Fisherman's Association has requested an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) from NMFS for 13 fishing vessels to collect important fisheries data in fFederal waters about the rebuilt status of swordfish and other species in federal waters. The rules require NMFS to issue a request for public comment so the public would have the opportunity to comment on their issuance of an exempted fishing permit. The NMFS release states: "At this time, given the nearly rebuilt status of North Atlantic swordfish, NMFS is considering issuing this proposed EFP."

If you can not find time to write, you lose.

Your comments must be received by April 17, 2007 and addressed to:

Michael Clark
 HMS Division (F/SF1)
 NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries
 1315 East-West Highway
 Silver Spring, MD. 20910
 Fax 1-301-713-1917
 Identifier--- ID 030107C

Can you appreciate a tiny bit of good news? NMFS proposes to suspend existing regulations that require Atlantic billfish tournament participants to use non-offset circle hooks when fishing with any kind of natural or live bait in tournaments. This proposed rule would provide additional time for

recreational tournament anglers to become more familiar and proficient with circle hooks and increase awareness among tournament anglers of circle hook conservation benefits. Under this proposed rule the circle hook requirement would be reinstated unchanged on January 1, 2008. If you have a few minutes do an internet search and read NMFS HMS final consolidated FMP.

The New Magnuson Act of 2006

Many changes are contained in the New Magnuson Act of 2006. This act which governs all US fishermen changes how fishery management councils will operate in the future especially in how they will set quotas. The act is highly focused on ending all species overfishing in the shortest possible time. There are many good items, such as new Marine Protected Area limits. The MSA now requires that the councils are to consider the economic impact of harvest restrictions or recovery benefits on the fishery participants in each sector, an increased emphasis on reducing bycatch. There are new buyout provisions for overcapitalized commercial fleets. The money for these buyouts comes from imposing new fees, not the government.

NMFS is currently writing new management guidelines for this new MSA. They should release them shortly. They must be commented on before April 17, 2007. How NMFS writes these new guidelines is a big issue since the new MSA has made so many major changes. Someone must be appointed by each club to make sure your club sends written comments on these guidelines in a timely manner. NMFS plans to have their new guidelines in force by December 2007.

This new act contains a requirement for the establishment of a national regionally based registry program for individual recreational fishermen. This is a saltwater fishing license mandate since it covers all federal waters. The act encourages states to impose their own license which they will approve, then accept in place of a federal registry. A federal registry fee cannot be imposed before Jan 1, 2011. It also requires: "If appropriate the registration of vessels used in such fishing, including the ownership, operator, and identification of the vessels." How would a good bureaucrat interpret that sentence?

Rejoice and remember how much your government has given you to be happy about.

YOUTH EDUCATION

BY GREG KUCHAREWSKI

FISHING AT THE BOAT SHOW

Over 175 children received HOFNOD stickers and a small prize for catching a magnetic plastic fish at the JCAA Youth Education aquarium fish game booth on Sunday, February 25th. Some of the parents also tried their luck at the aquarium fish game and won a small book about drug awareness.

KID'S FISHING NIGHT

The JCAA Youth Education Committee provided a seminar for children at the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club on Tuesday, March 6, 2007. Children learned about the "Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs" program and "How To Catch A Whopper." Over 45 children attended the NBFC Kids Fishing Night and learned the basics of fishing. The membership of the Newark Bait and Flycasting Club set up learning stations for children to learn about the following: casting, lure presentation, fly tying, New Jersey fishing rules and regulations, and knot tying. The Newark Bait and Flycasting Club had refreshments for everyone and supplied goodie bags for all the youngsters. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association's Youth Education Committee would like to thank Mat Muzley for his donation of salmon eggs and fish attractant for all the children attending the JCAA learning station.

JCAA JUNIOR ANGLER PROGRAM

On Tuesday, May 8, 2007 the JCAA Youth Education Committee will present a program about the JCAA Junior Angler program to the membership of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association. Some of the topics for the night will include: how to keep kids fishing, HOFNOD Certification, school fishing clubs, summer youth fishing tournaments and fishing safety.

TROUT CONTEST FOR KIDS

The contest is sponsored by the Shark River Surf Anglers Saturday, April 7, 2007 8 a.m. till 3 p.m. at Spring Lake, NJ. On opening day of trout season, members of the Shark River Surf Anglers will host another trout contest for children fifteen years old and under. Hundreds of anglers are expected to circle around Spring Lake waiting for the start of opening day. Don't forget to get there early.

Otherwise you must park along the side streets of Spring Lake and walk a great distance to find a spot to fish. Every year, the membership of the Shark River Surf Anglers spent a lot of time and energy to make this event a success. Come out and enjoy some fishing fun and refreshments at the awards tent.

KAPTAIN KATCH 2007 IS BACK

Hey kids, get on board with Kaptain Katch. On April 21, 2007 HRFA will host their second annual Catfish Tournament on the Piermont Pier. Don't miss this fun event. If you do not have fishing equipment (don't worry) the friends of Kaptain Katch will supply everything, rods, reels, bait and lunch. All you need to do is show up. The fun-filled day is open to all children up to 16 years old. So, grab a rod and reel and catch a trophy Catfish. For more information contact: Kaptainkatch7@yahoo.com

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Join the NJ DEP Division of Fish & Wildlife Earth Day Celebration at the Pequest Trout Hatchery & Natural Resource Education Center Saturday, April 21, 2007 beginning at 1pm. Pequest is located off Rt. 46 in Oxford, Warren County. This one-day event highlights the beauty and diversity of wildlife thriving in the Garden State. Featured activities include a lecture series: Butterflies of NJ, Nature Photography, Rizzo's Reptile Discovery; guided interpretive nature hikes focusing on wild edibles, birding basics and reading the landscape; and a native plant giveaway. There will also be limited opportunities for trout fishing and trying your hand at archery on a first-come-first-serve basis. Activities seep into the evening to include storytelling with Chief Long Bow of the Cherokee Nation of New Jersey, astronomy, nighttime games and a campfire (weather permitting). **Registration Is Required** beginning April 7th. Bring your own binoculars and campfire chair. This event is free and for all ages. For more information and to register, call (908) 637-4125 or send an e-mail to Jessica.Griglak@dep.state.nj.us. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is pleased to announce that they now have a Wildlife of New Jersey coloring book. The coloring book is designed for elementary aged children and the coloring book covers a variety of wildlife habitats including wetlands, farms, forests, neighborhoods and coasts. A special section near the end of the book covers different conservation efforts that children can do for the wildlife of the Garden State. The books are available free of charge on a first-come-first-serve basis for pick-up only at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center in Oxford, NJ.

We need the support of your club and its members

Your club should be a member of JCAA and make a difference for only \$50 a year. Your club will have a voice in all JCAA positions that affect your fishing future. Your club will receive up-to-date info on vital issues each month.

Club Membership Application

Date _____

Club Name: _____

President's Name: _____

Pres. Address: Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Ph. # _____

Fax # _____

Please make check \$50 payable to JCAA

JCAA SPONSORSHIP

The JCAA has four levels of sponsorship, \$50, \$100, \$250 & \$500.

The sponsors are recognized in our newspaper. For more information call JCAA at 732-506-6565. Become a JCAA sponsor and help our cause. As you can see by our newspaper many 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.

Join JCAA as an Associate Member

Only \$25 per year! Support the Goals of JCAA and receive a subscription to JCAA NEWS that gives you the Most Up-To-Date News about Fisheries Management and Environmental Issues

JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATE MEMBER APPLICATION

Date _____ New ___ Renewal _____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Check if you would rather receive newspaper by email instead of by regular mail. Yes ___

Ph. # _____

Fax # _____

COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

Legislative	Tom Fote	732-270-9102 tfote@jcaa.org
Office Manager	Phil Celmer	609-693-3414 jcaa@jcaa.org
Access: (North)	Ray Marione	201-843-1711
Access: (South)	Robert DeLeonard	732-793-8080
Blackfish	Pat Donnelly	732-295-1755
Blue claw Crab	Jack Miktus	732-477-5184
Blue Fish	Al Marantz	732-280-2643
Habitat	Pat Donnelly	732-206-1407
Large Pelagic	John Koegler	610-687-2208
Menhaden	Len Fantasia	732-872-1862
Striped Bass	Ed Cherry	edwardwc@verivon.net
Sponsorship	Frank Richetti	732-477-3120
Webmaster	Dave Franceschina	732-364-3168
Youth Education	Greg Kucharewski	732-840-9197

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> or just go to the JCAA Web and subscribe from there.