

JCAA NEWSPAPER MARCH 2021

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION*

(Published on February 22nd, 2021)

Monthly Meeting Via Zoom Meeting Until Further Notice "WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING
February 23rd via Zoom Meeting
Starting at 7:30 PM
385 Herbertsville Rd, Brick
NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 11th, 2021
Via Zoom Meeting

**OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.**
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This publication is printed and mailed one week prior to each regular monthly meeting of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. One of the prime goals of JCAA is to get accurate information into public hands as soon as possible.

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JCAA General Membership Meetings are for club representatives and invited guests only. These meetings are not open to the general public. If you would like to attend as a guest, call the President at 908-913-0551 or Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 before the meeting date to ask permission.

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Committee and Chairpersons listed on last page

IMPORTANT DATES

February 23rd JCAA Zoom General Meeting
March 11th JCAA Board Meeting
March 25th ASMFC NJ Striped Bass Hearing
March 30th JCAA General Meeting
Canceled Atlantic City Boat Show
Canceled March Saltwater Expo
April 6th-7th ASA Gov't Affairs Committee Meeting
April 6th-8th MAFMC Virtual Meeting
April 8th JCAA Board Meeting
April 27th JCAA General Meeting
May 3rd-6th ASMFC Virtual Spring Meeting

Note from the Board of Directors

Jersey Coast Anglers Association hopes you and your family are all healthy during these concerning times. There have been calls about upcoming events that JCAA is running or involved with. To keep informed, go to the JCAA web page or Facebook page for up to date information.

We are planning two more raffles to try and make up for the loss of revenue from our events. We need our member clubs to help in selling these tickets and increasing their sponsorship of JCAA to make up for loss of *revenue*.

JCAA'S General meetings and Board meetings will also be done online. If you are the person designated to be the club's representative, please make sure you are on our JCAA email list as a club representative.

President's Report

By John Toth

With the introduction of new vaccines, it is hopeful that the number of people contacting COVID-19 has started to decline. While we still have a way to go, maybe by the time summer comes around we will

start to live our lives like we did pre-COVID-19. For a long time, a lot of club events and fishing charters had to be canceled because of this virus and it is about time to change this!

The JCAA is looking forward to having its annual Fluke Tournament on September 4th (Saturday) at the start of the Labor Day holiday. The Awards Ceremony for it is scheduled on September 10th (Friday) at the Resorts Casino in Atlantic City. While the details have to be worked out with the Resorts Casino, we expect to have a discounted rate for anglers to stay overnight and discounts at participating restaurants. We have always had a fun time with our Awards Ceremony in Atlantic City and so many of you have expressed to me that you want the JCAA to have it there and now we will make it happen!

Also, JCAA Board member, Paul Haertel, is working on plans to have a “Sharpie” Fluke Tournament sometime in August with an Awards ceremony at a location to be determined.

So, the JCAA is getting us back into fishing and fun at the Resorts Casino and more information about our Fluke Tournament will be announced in the near future.

Stay tuned for these fishing events to do what we anglers are supposed to do – FISH!

Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

While listening to the public hearing on quota transfer, I remembered many other hearings with the same conversation. Unlike some people, I do not have a selective memory. I have a great memory of history.

Truthfully, some of the new folks were not involved when decisions were made, and they don't know the history. The recreational community was naïve when many of these quotas were set up and was not paying attention. In the 90's the recreational community never expected to have bag limits like we do now.

Both communities expected to receive the rewards that would come with rebuilding the stocks. We did not expect to worry about what the quotas would be. We know that didn't happen. NMFS never allowed us to reap the benefits of the rebuilding. All

the recreational community sees is constant reductions every year due to the new regulations.

As I have pointed out numerous times, when we set the original size and bag limits on summer flounder the average size of recreationally caught summer flounder was 1.1 pound. Because of regulations we have pushed the size of kept fish to an average weight of over 3.3 pounds. If we currently had the same quota that we did in the 90's, we would be harvesting less than 1/3 of the number of fish we were harvesting then. In order to catch 1/3 of the summer flounder to take home now, we have to cull through a huge number of fish causing more catch and release mortality.

The other thing that has not been discussed recently is the fact that summer flounder, like some of the other species, had base years set up on years when the commercial community did the greatest damage through over harvesting. One of the reasons we started putting regulations on summer flounder was that the NMFS pushed the commercial community from harvesting yellowtail flounder. To compound the issue, the commercial fishermen had found the winter spawning grounds for summer flounder in the canyons. With the bigger New England boats fishing in these waters, the stocks were decimated in the 80's. What did the National Marine Fisheries Commission and the Councils do? They rewarded the commercial fishermen with the biggest quota based on the years they decimated the stocks. The recreational community was given a smaller quota because of the years chosen.

The history is there, and this is not just with summer flounder. The same story holds true for many other species. I was the young whipper snapper at that time and was told by the senior recreational advocates at that this is exactly what happened. The numbers are the proof. Instead of writing new articles, the articles from the January 2020 newspaper are below. Please read these articles and get involved to save the future of recreational fishing.

***FMLR: Reprinted from January 2020
Newspaper***

For a number of reasons, I did not make the Joint ASMFC/MAFMC meeting in Annapolis. I did listen to most of the webinar. It was really frustrating.

Scup: As I pointed out at the August Joint Meeting, I never saw such a crazy proposal with a total disregard for the impact on the recreational sector. Years ago when the scup quota was set up, we were recreational fishing between 26 – 30% of the scup fishery. The majority of the scup fishery was commercial bycatch. That bycatch was in several different commercial fisheries and was destroying the scup fishery. The bycatch was larger than both the directed commercial and recreational fisheries combined. To placate the commercial side and give them incentive to reduce bycatch, the Council through the NMFS proposed reducing the recreational quota by 18%. As usual, I was upset by this proposal. But back in 1996, people told me there would never be any regulations on scup, black sea bass and other recreational fisheries. I said they were wrong and regrettably I was proven right. Here we are in 2019. We are now looking at the fourth or fifth reiteration of surveys to gather recreational information. We keep tweaking the models and trying to get better response rates. In 2007, Dr. John Borman, in his Congressional testimony, pointed out that in order to get good recreational statistics we had to increase the funding from 11 million to 50 million dollars. We are still only spending 11 million dollars a year and think of what 11 million dollars bought 40 years ago compared to now. Though I went to college during the dinosaur days of punch cards, the adage holds true, garbage in garbage out. Here is the proposal. Presently we are at a 50 fish bag limit. Because of the MRIP numbers, we are now fishing above our 18% quota. To stay within the quota, the reduction necessary would have been 58%. In the heat of the discussion at the August meeting, I said we should never have been at 18%, the commercial sector is not harvesting 20% of their quota every year and the bycatch is still high, probably more than the recreational catch. But the most important thing is that we are two times over the threshold, way above the target. The scup stocks are one of the healthiest and NMFS doesn't see any immediate problem. I stated if they are going to destroy the recreational scup fishery, I will regrettably recommend New Jersey takes this issue to the Secretary of Commerce. Our rationale would be that this change in quota would not impact the stocks at all but have a huge economic impact from Massachusetts to Virginia on the recreational scup fishery. After the MAFMC members were balking at voting on this, NMFS said they had to vote. So they voted to take the 58% reduction with the idea that they would come up

with a correction. The correction is to ignore all their charts and graphs and punt. They didn't admit they were wrong but decided to leave the scup fishery at status quo. NMFS and ASMFC didn't want to look like fools if this issue went to the Secretary of Commerce.

Black Sea Bass: Again, another species where the catch has been overly restricted by the precautionary measures of the SSC and NMFS. The SSC and NMFS don't trust their own data. When the science says the quota could be much higher, NMFS says they don't trust the data. But when the data reduces the recreational catch, NMFS treats that data like the gold standard. There was a great deal of flack about the proposed changes for the recreational sector. There was a huge outcry from the recreational sector to increase the quota for both the recreational and commercial sectors since there is an abundance of black sea bass and an expansion of their range. NMFS thought they were magnanimous in suggesting staying at status quo. No one believes that this was an appropriate solution. I believe we will still go over the quota because of the abundance of black sea bass available. Actual catch in the recreational sector reflects availability, not quota.

Summer Flounder: To refresh your memory, when the new MRIP numbers came out on summer flounder, NMFS told us they were underestimating the size of the stocks for many years. Because of the retrospective analysis, we have been taking larger numbers of summer flounder than has been estimated. In August of 2018, NMFS increased the commercial quota by 49% to reflect the larger biomass. What did they do to the recreational sector? They kept regulations in place that would cause us to underfish our quota. They didn't trust their own numbers, so they rewarded us with status quo. For the last four years we have been underfishing our quota and 2019 was no different. We are under quota by 24%. I was appalled when one of the staffers treated the underfishing as a non-issue. We all know if the commercial sector underfished by 24%, that would be a huge issue. Why are we treated differently? The commercial fishery spends money to get economic data on the value of the catch and uses that data to convince NMFS to rule in their favor. According to their own Magnusson Stevens Act, NMFS must do an economic study to show the impact of regulatory changes on the recreational sector. Because we never

won a lawsuit on the recreational data, NMFS feels secure in just ignoring this requirement. Why??? Because NMFS does not manage fisheries using common sense or to protect anglers. They pretend to protect the fish. What they are really doing is managing to avoid lawsuits that might be filed by NGOs. In the 80's and 90's they learned how much money the lawsuits would cost them and they manage to avoid this at all costs. Since the recreational and commercial sector's NGOs don't have deep pockets as other NGOs, they also don't have the same ability to sue as they do.

Bluefish: I was never so disappointed with Council and Commission members as I was when they failed to point out that NMFS has been transferring quota to the commercial sector from the unused recreational quota for years. Tens of millions of pounds of bluefish have been caught by commercial fishermen since the late 90's using the "so called" unharvested recreational quota. With the new MRIP numbers, it becomes apparent that NMFS should never have been transferring quota for all these years. NMFS, not the fishermen, have gotten us into this situation. But they will not suffer any economic impact. They will not lose any salary for the mistakes they have made. But they will certainly punish the recreational and commercial fishermen for NMFS mistakes. As always, we take it on the chin for their bad data and, once again, the commercial and recreational fishermen are the bad guys because we were overfishing. Understand, fishermen don't create the regulations. That is the job of NMFS. When they don't do their job correctly, the fishing industry suffers. In the last few years, NMFS has succeeded in putting many businesses that serve the recreational and commercial communities out of business. Once again, there was absolutely no reference to the economic impact of these new regulations and Magnusson Stevens was totally ignored. For the recreational community, there will be reduction to a 3-fish bag limit, down from 15. For the for-hire sector, the decrease will be from 15 to 5. For the commercial fishery, the reduction will be 18%. No one from NMFS admitted this was their fault and, as always, blamed us for over fishing.

With the party and charter boats and the private boats, there has always been a discussion about whether there should be separate regulations. Years ago, the recreational industry, considering the pros and cons, decided separate regulations would not work. If you do sector separation regulations

correctly, they are based on quotas; one for the private and surf and one for the for-hire sector. This would get us fighting among ourselves as we see in the Gulf of Mexico. It would also stifle the growth of the party and charter boat industry. When you set up quotas, you set them up based on historical catch. Often when the availability is low on a species, party and charter boats will fish for something else so their customers need to catch fish. This skews the historical data. When the stocks become abundant and other party and charter boats want to fish on that species, they are confined to the low percentage. If you are not in a separate sector, no one cares if the party and charter boats catch more fish since we are all recreational anglers. That is why we did not create separate sectors with these new regulations. We did not want to play one sector of the community against another. NMFS wouldn't mind since that would move the heat from them.

Since NMFS followed no rules in creating the new regulations, all the above discussion is moot. Sector separation was never part of the amendment or addendum on bluefish. It has never been used as a tool for bluefish. There is no precedent. And the results followed none of the normal rules. The public had no idea that this would be proposed and so the public was not represented at these decisions. There was no transparency. As always, no questions were accepted through the webinar. The one for-hire sector participant in the audience was always for sector separation without understanding the consequences for the recreational sector at large. There is no way to effectively monitor this and no penalties were built in. This was a travesty of fisheries management and I cannot believe not one of the Commissioners or Council members raised these objections.

The most depressing part is many recreational anglers from Maine to Florida began their fishing for snappers. I am teaching my young great nephews and nieces to fish by catching snappers off my dock. I also teach them we should eat what we catch and at a limit of 3 snappers, do we stop fishing or fish and release. All those piers in Seaside will need to limit the young anglers as they learn to fish. What NMFS has accomplished is to reduce the growth of the recreational sector. The recreational fishery coastwide was down by 24% in 2019. There are plenty of fish but we can't keep them. The decrease in participation continues to get worse year by year. If you can't catch a fish to keep, many anglers don't bother to go fishing. They also don't bother to teach their children

or grandchildren how to fish. The next generation doesn't learn to be stewards of the resource. We are watching the demise of recreational fishing and the industries that depend on fishing.

Atlantic Striped Bass Board Approves Draft Amendment 7 PID for Public Comment & Hearing Dates

ASMFC Release, February 5, 2021

The Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved for public comment the Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass. As the first step in the amendment process, the PID seeks input from stakeholders and those interested in striped bass about changes observed in the fishery/resource and potential management measures.

The last time a new plan amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP was adopted was in 2003 (Amendment 6). Since then, the status and understanding of the striped bass stock and fishery has changed considerably which raises concern that the current management program no longer reflects current fishery needs and priorities. The results of the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment in particular led the Board to discuss a number of prominent issues facing striped bass management. Consequently, the Board initiated the development of Amendment 7 in August 2020.

The purpose of the PID is to solicit stakeholder input on prioritizing the importance of each topic for continued development and potential inclusion in the Draft Amendment. The PID considers the following management topics: (1) fishery goals and objectives; (2) biological reference points; (3) management triggers; (4) stock rebuilding targets and schedule; (5) regional management; (6) management program equivalency (conservation equivalency); (7) recreational release mortality; (8) recreational accountability; (9) coastal commercial quota allocation; and (10) other issues raised in public comments.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. It is anticipated that states from Maine through North Carolina will be conducting public hearings, likely in a virtual format, in March and April 2021. A subsequent press release

will provide the details of those hearings. The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board will meet at the Commission's 2021 Spring Meeting in May to consider public comment and provide direction to staff for items to be included in Draft Amendment 7.

The PID is available at [this link](#) or via the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org, under Public Input. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM (EST) on April 9, 2021** and should be forwarded to Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Striped Bass PID). For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Proposed Hearing Schedule for Amendment 7 PID All hearings will be from 6:00-8:00pm.

Monday, March 8	New Hampshire
Tuesday, March 9	Maine
Wednesday, March 10	Virginia
Monday, March 15	PRFC
Tuesday, March 16	Delaware
Wednesday, March 17	Rhode Island
Thursday, March 18	Massachusetts
Monday, March 22	Maryland
Tuesday, March 23	New York
Wednesday, March 24	Connecticut
Thursday, March 25	New Jersey

NJFMC to set Fluke Regs on March 4th COMMENT NOW

By Paul Haertel

The New Jersey Marine Fisheries Administration is accepting comments for the 2021 Recreational Summer Flounder Season. All minimum size and possession limit regulations will remain unchanged, including the Island Beach State Park and Delaware Bay special management areas. The possible options are as follows:

- **Option 1:** May 22nd – September 19th, 121 days (*the same as last year*)
- **Option 2:** May 28th – September 28th, 124 days

No other options are available for our 2021 fluke season. Please include the following in your comments:

1. Your preferred option (1 or 2)
2. The state or county you fish in or are from
3. Describe the type of angler or general public category that best fits you (shore angler, private boat, party boat, charter boat owner/captain, or other type of fishing industry)

Please make sure to include “2021 Summer Flounder Options” in the subject line when providing comments to the following email address:

NJMarineFishPublicComment@dep.nj.gov

The comment period will close on February 26, 2021 at 12:00 PM. Comments need to be received prior to that time to be included in this management decision at the March 4th, 2021 Marine Fisheries Council Meeting. When available the webinar information will be posted at [this link](#).

JCAA encourages all those who wish to comment to do so via email and/or during the public comment period during the meeting. We also realize that some people have different opinions and we respect that as well. We know that some back-bay fishermen and others prefer the early season. Those who favor the early season believe that fluke bite better in their areas during May, they are anxious to get the season started and pointed out that there are often storms during September that ruin the fishing.

However, that being said JCAA member clubs strongly support Option 2 with the later season for the following reasons:

1. We need to close the gap between when fluke season ends and sea bass season begins. With an early season there will be an 18-day gap with little for the inshore and shore-based anglers to fish for. With the later season this gap will be narrowed to just 9 days.
2. In the spring there are plenty of other fish to fish for. Sea bass season opens on May 15th and good-sized striped bass, bluefish and black drum are available as well as a smattering of weakfish.
3. The water in the ocean and even the bay is too cold for fluke to bite in May.
4. Tackle stores, marinas and other businesses will suffer during the fall since other than being able to

keep one blackfish there is not much to fish for unless you run offshore.

5. With the later season we will have the opportunity to fish 124 days as opposed to 121 days with the earlier season. This could at least give us a little buffer if the ASFMC/MAFMC forces us to cut back again.
6. Many fishermen like to target large and even trophy sized fluke as they migrate offshore and feed heavily stopping at reefs and wrecks along the way. There is a good chance of catching a true doormat during this time of the year.
7. Most surf fishermen prefer to fish for fluke during the fall as their best opportunity to catch keeper fluke is during the mullet run.
8. Polls were conducted on various Facebook fluke fishing groups and with over a thousand responses people favored the later season by a margin of more than 2-1. Even the Back-Bay Anglers group favored the later season by a margin of 30-18.
9. After losing most of our fall season in 2017 we were able to extend it again in 2018. At that time, we agreed to begin the season on the Friday before Memorial Day (5/25) and ended it on 9/22. In 2019 we lost a day at the tail end of the season which ran from 5/24-9/21. Then in 2020 we lost two more days at the end of the season which ran from 5/22-9/19. It seemed that the Friday before Memorial Day had become our traditional opening day and we would like to keep it that way. It's time for the pendulum to swing the other way and have a later season. Next year and for the next few years Memorial Day will come earlier again so we can start the season earlier then. To reiterate, we now have an opportunity to close the gap until sea bass season begins from 18 days to just 9 days. Let's do it!

Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Developer Seeks Input from Fishermen

By John Toth

Atlantic Shores hosted a Webinar on January 13th with the purpose of receiving input from fishermen. I participated in this Webinar, along with about 64 other individuals, to receive information on

this new developer who wants to place windmills 10 to 20 miles off the coast between Barnegat Bay and Atlantic City. This new wind farm will be approximately the size of 183,000 acres! The developers' goal is to deliver three gigawatts of wind energy, enough to power 1.5 million homes. The windmills would provide 40% of Governor Murphy's goal of 7,500 megawatts of offshore wind-generated energy by 2035.

After the developer presented an overview of their project, the floor was open for questions. The question of whether anglers will be able to fish by the windmills was raised. Atlantic Shores emphatically indicated that anglers will be able to fish by their windmills, but not during the construction phase for safety reasons which is understandable. While fishing is allowed by the windmills, it will not be allowed at their substation where energy is transferred to land by cables. This substation is a sensitive area since terrorists would target it to shut down this whole energy project. It is not worthwhile for terrorists to target a few windmills when they could shut down everything by taking out this substation.

Some familiar areas of concern were raised by participants and they include the safety of cables and their electromagnetic effects on fish migration. Atlantic Shores indicated that their cables would be buried at least six feet to reduce electromagnetic effects. This issue has been raised a number of times with other developers and the answer that usually follows is that the cables do not seem to have any adverse effects on fish migrations. However, I have yet to hear any developer come out to say that their cables will NOT have any adverse effects on fish migration patterns!

Another issue that came up was Cold Pool and Atlantic Shores indicated that their windmills would have no effect on it. Cold Pool is a huge band of cold bottom water in the ocean extending from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras that is fed by fresh water from multiple rivers and estuaries. This area experiences one of the largest summer-to-winter temperature changes of any part of the ocean around the world. Cold Pool has impacts on shellfish, pelagic and other fish. The migration patterns of Atlantic Butterfish and others are influenced by this Cold Pool. This is a complex issue and one that affects our fisheries and cannot be easily dismissed by Atlantic Shores. More research is needed to determine what effects that the windmills planned off our coast will impact this sensitive Cold Pool.

Atlantic Shores staff indicated that they intend to visit fishing clubs and do a PowerPoint presentation on their energy project so anglers can better understand their windmill project. However, because of COVID-19, club visits are off the table until public gatherings are permitted. Atlantic Shores indicated that they want to sponsor tournaments of fishing clubs and will be reaching out to clubs for this sponsorship. While this can help clubs with their tournaments, it is a way to "buy" support of clubs for Atlantic Shores. There should be no need to "buy" support; the Atlantic Shores project should stand on its own merits.

Atlantic Shores is a partnership between Shell New Energies US LLC and EDF Renewables North America. If it's successful with the public review process, which includes approval of its environmental impact report, this developer's goal is to have their windmills in place around 2027.

Public Access Report

By George Browne

There is not much to report in this month's public access column. There are not a lot of people using the beach.

The recent big nor'easter did produce significant beach erosion in some of the oceanfront towns. Those towns immediately began wringing their hands saying how they would need federal and state taxpayer money to put their beaches back in shape for the summer. For those of us who are on the beaches year-round, we know beaches are different in the summer than they are during the winter. In winter, the sand moves offshore and forms bars further out to sea. In the summer, the sand moves back onto the beach and creates wider beaches and sandbars near shore. That is what the ocean does. If the beach is on a barrier island, the island is essentially a sandbar. Sandbars move. Spending 100's of millions of tax dollars to put sand back on the beach is only a temporary solution. What is so hard to understand about that? Then again, federal and state tax dollars is free money for the towns. I am always amazed how some of the towns, after they accept taxpayer dollars, then work hard to keep out the taxpayers who paid for the sand for "their" beaches. I am not sure which is more difficult, keeping sand on the beach or keeping public access open.

To follow-up on my last column, I reported that Spring Lake quickly sold out their 2021 season badges in December. Earlier this month, the borough suddenly discovered they could fit 2,000 more people on the beach (maybe they plan on pumping more sand this year). There are now an additional 2,000 season beach badges for sale. It is amazing what public pressure can do when people call out the towns and their elected officials. Nice job by everyone who wrote letters and made calls.

The Borough of Deal planned to sell an oceanfront lot at the eastern end of Roosevelt Avenue to an adjacent property owner. The quarter-acre lot was next to a storm water pump station. In 2015 Deal received a grant of \$361,000 to shore up the wall protecting the pump station after Sandy damaged the wall. The grant, along with the CAFRA permit for the work, required a permanent public access easement at that location. Deal had promised that they would never sell the property, but this was the second time in two years that the borough tried selling the property. Surfrider Foundation, COBRA, CRAB and the American Littoral Society took the lead in fighting the sale and, as of right now, DEP has blocked the sale. I guess Deal's promise to never sell the land lasted as long as beach sand does in a nor'easter.

Have a public access issue? Email me at publicaccess@jcaa.org.

Omega Protein Using Striped Bass Regulations to take more Bunker??

By Capt. Paul Eidman, Forage Fish & Habitat Committee Chairman

The ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board is considering major revisions to the striped bass management plan and one issue is not getting much airtime. New Jersey recreational fishermen need to pay close attention to this issue, as it could have a cascading impact on many of the species we target.

For decades New Jersey anglers have fought to conserve their favorite food of striped bass: Atlantic menhaden (aka BUNKER). We banned reduction fishing here in NJ and so did every other state--except. Two years ago, when Omega's reduction fleet couldn't find any fish in Virginia waters, the motherships motored all the way up to the NY/NJ bight where they

caught millions of fish just outside of state lines, to the great frustration of local fishermen and whale watchers. Somehow, this one company continues to exploit hundreds of millions of forage fish every year, despite being universally hated by recreational fishermen and conservationists.

Now, Omega Protein appears to be scheming to catch even more fish and they may be doing it through Amendment 7 to the striped bass plan. Because the ASMFC finally implemented a new ecological management system for menhaden last year, the menhaden catch is now determined by the management of other species. The dietary needs of striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish are now considered when menhaden catch limits are established. Amendment 7 considers the possibility of lowering the "biological reference points" for striped bass. If this happens, then Omega Protein may be able to increase harvest levels and catch more fish. If the ASMFC changes the goal posts for striped bass management, it will be bad news for striped bass recovery, bad news for menhaden and bad news for our coastal ecosystem and economy. We cannot let this happen.

Reduction fishing should come to an end, not increase its volume and intensity, particularly when striped bass are already overfished. We need to hold the line on striped bass management in part to hold the line on the reduction fishery. Let's not change the biological reference points. Let's make sure that the ASMFC does its job and rebuilds the striped bass population. Get involved today and refuse to let Omega Protein (or the commercial striped bass fishermen in Delaware) win on this one.

Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

NJ HOFNOD NEWS

I spoke to Liz Jackson, DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife and she informed us of the following:

1. New Jersey HOFNOD facilitator training is in the process of being updated as an online training.
2. A winner was selected for the NJ Hooked on Fishing not on Drugs new logo design contest.

3. The DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife NJ Fishing Challenge is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2021. NJ HOFNOD will support fishing teams at the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament. Visit their website at: [NJ Fish & Wildlife](#). If you are interested in attending a NJ HOFNOD workshop, please phone or email Liz Jackson, NJ HOFNOD Coordinator Phone: 908-637-4125 x122 email: liz.jackson@dep.state.nj.us
4. Youth Fishing Challenge - The Hooked-on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program's Youth Fishing Challenge is a statewide event to promote fishing among youths and their families. It is being held on the first of the state's two Free Fishing Days, Saturday, June 5, when no license is required to fish regardless of age. For more information and to register your group location visit: [Youth Fishing Challenge](#).

NJ FISH AND WILDLIFE

Share your photo campaign! New Jersey Fish and Wildlife is offering a good opportunity to share your photo on the NJ Fish and Wildlife [website](#). Taking pictures of the outdoors and memorable moments is part of an outdoor experience. Share the beauty of what you witness on your outdoor adventures. Read about how to submit your photos. Full details can be found at [this link](#).

30TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S SURF FISHING TOURNAMENT

The 30th Annual Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament (GSFT) will be held at Island Beach State Park on Sunday, May 23, 2021. Get ready to enter the largest surf fishing tournament along the Jersey Shore. Don't miss a day of family fishing fun! Pick up a brochure about the tournament at Island Beach State Park or at your favorite tackle dealer. Remember admission to the park is FREE for the tournament.

Tournament officials and sponsoring organizations are excited about the 30-year

anniversary and are looking forward to another successful event. This year, Yamaha Motors has joined us to setup an outdoor booth to support the tournament and provide items for the high school and NJ HOFNOD fishing teams.

This is the time to start preparing your fish catching strategies so that you can catch a trophy fish that will win the 2021 Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament and win PRIZES. If you catch the largest fish, your name will be inscribed on the Governor's Cup, with previous winners and displayed at the IBSP for all to see. High school fishing clubs, along with other school-based fishing teams, will have a chance to win the high school team competition trophy and it will be on display.

We would like to remind our physically challenged anglers that there is an area at OBA 1 with beach wheelchairs available. Anglers that are not able to walk in the sand can now get to the water and try surf fishing. The JCAA Youth Education Committee is helping novice and physically challenged anglers at the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament. World Jeep – Chrysler – Dodge - Ram, Shrewsbury, NJ will assist physically challenged anglers with a NEW 2021 4x4 VIP vehicle to transport anglers that will be fishing the reserved area in front of OBA 1. Members of the Vietnam Veterans of America (Chapter 12) and volunteer anglers from various fishing clubs will also assist physically challenged anglers. If you know a disabled veteran or angler that would like to fish the tournament, please phone Greg K at 732-785-9278 or email gkucharews@jcaa.org.

Support our Troops
