



JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

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

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September 2026

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Forked River Tuna Club

2026 Tournament Schedule

Ladies Catch of the Day - July 11

Tri-Club Fluke Tournament - August 1

Annual Fluke Tournament - August 8

Blowfish Tournament - September 19

Sea Bass Tournament - September 23-27

For information go to www.ForkedRiverTunaClub.com

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Surf Fishing Club of NJ, www.wsfcnj.org



A Saltwater Anglers Club

New Members Welcome

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JCAA NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 2026

Official Newspaper of the *JERSEY COAST ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION*

(Published on September 4th, 2026)

"WORKING FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS"

JCAA REGULAR MEETING

September 29th, 2026, 7:00pm

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

or via Zoom, for link contact:

tothjohn@verizon.net or mtsport64@aol.com

NEXT JCAA BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 10th

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOC.

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

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

Publisher Tom Fote, Editor Phil Celmer

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

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

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

Committee and Chairpersons listed on last page

IMPORTANT DATES

September 10th JCAA Board Meeting

September 29th JCAA General Meeting

November 9^h-12th ASMFC Annual Mtg. Newport RI

November 14th Sportsperson-of-the-Year Dinner

JCAA Sportsperson of the Year Dinner November 14

By John Toth

Save the Date! Our Sportsperson of the Year Dinner is going to be held on **Saturday evening on November 14th starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Spring Lake Manor** located at 414 Highway 71, Spring Lake, NJ. This dinner will be served as a buffet and will include:

- **Cocktail Hour** – 1 Complimentary drink ticket for Beer, Wine, Sangria and unlimited soft drinks. Cash Bar will be available. Includes an assortment of Cheeses, Fresh and raw Vegetables & Italian Provisions with crackers and Ranch Dressing
- **For Dinner** – Five Leaf Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette Dressing & Homemade Dinner Rolls with Butter. Dinner selections include Grilled Salmon, Sausage and Peppers, Eggplant Rollatini, Chicken Francese, Penne Vodka, Seasonal Vegetables, and Seasonal Potatoes. Carving Station for Roast Beef and Turkey.
- **For Dessert** – Dessert Platters served with Coffee, Decaffeinated and Assorted Teas

We will have many Tricky Tray prizes along with a Silent Auction and a 50/50. Clubs that want to make a donation to add to the list of prizes should contact **Don Marantz** at (908) 347-1434.

The price for the dinner is **\$850 per table of 10, or \$90 as an individual**. This dinner is a fundraiser for the JCAA to continue protecting the rights of all anglers who fish in New Jersey.

Nominations for the Sportsman of the Year Dinner will be made at the JCAA's General Membership Meeting on **September 29th**. Start **now** to think of who from your club should be nominated to receive this prestigious award. When writing your nomination, please limit it to 500 words or less so it can be easily read at our **September 29th** General Membership Meeting. Contact JCAA Dinner Chairman John Toth at (732) 656-0139 or tothjohn@verizon.net.

**Sandy Hook Bay Anglers
Nominate Bill Di Stasio for JCAA
Sportsman of the Year**



SANDY HOOK BAY ANGLERS
P.O. BOX 513
ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ 07716

August 18, 2026

Subject: Nomination of Bill Di Stasio for JCAA Sportsman of the Year

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Sandy Hook Bay Anglers, it is my distinct honor to nominate Bill Di Stasio for the JCAA Sportsman of the Year award.

Bill has long been a pillar of our organization, having previously served as Club President and continuing his leadership today as our Sponsorship Coordinator. Beyond his formal roles, Bill acts as a tireless ambassador for recreational angling, community outreach, and philanthropic service. His dedication and generosity are highlighted across several key initiatives:

Philanthropic Leadership & Tournament Sponsorships

- **Tournament & Non-Profit Fundraising:** Bill actively recruits and networks with club sponsors, significantly enhancing our fundraising capabilities for community initiatives and charity events.
- **Company Resources & Signage:** He generously leverages his own company resources to design and produce professional signs, posters, and promotional banners for our benefit fluke tournaments and philanthropic endeavors.

- **Captains Meeting Benefit Raffle:** Prior to our annual benefit fluke tournament, Bill organizes and manages a dedicated raffle at the captains' meeting to directly fund our veterans' fishing programs.
- **Community Contributions:** Bill is instrumental in directing club contributions, when funds allow, to vital local non-profits, including The ARC, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, and the Marine Mammal Stranding Center.

Dedicated Service to Veterans

- **Fins 4 Freedom & Club Charters:** Bill selflessly volunteers both his personal time and vessel for Fins 4 Freedom and club-organized veterans' charters, providing memorable on-the-water experiences for service members.

Public Outreach & Expo Representation

- **Saltwater Anglers Expo:** Bill dedicates significant time managing the club's presence at the expo in Edison, creating eye-catching booth visuals, promoting club activities, networking with industry sponsors, and raising awareness and funding for our veterans' charters.
- **Interactive Community Engagement:** He recently coordinated with expo organizers to run the interactive virtual fishing booth on behalf of the club, introducing and engaging the public with recreational angling.

Fellowship & Angling Spirit

- **Community Building:** Bill is a tremendous asset to the local fishing community, consistently welcoming new and existing anglers, inviting members and friends out on the water, and promoting sportsmanship and camaraderie across our region.

Bill Di Stasio embodies the very best values of sportsmanship, selfless volunteerism, and dedication to others. He is exceptionally deserving of being recognized as the JCAA Sportsman of the Year.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued leadership within our state's angling community.

Sincerely,

Tom Borkowski

President's Report

By Mark Taylor

As the fall season approaches, children are heading back to school and dedicated anglers are beginning to focus on the next species they hope to target. I hope you had the opportunities this summer to share your knowledge with future anglers, and I encourage you to continue doing so whenever possible. Passing along our experience, skills, and respect for the resource is extremely important to the future of recreational fishing.

The future of recreational fishing is in every angler's hands. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association is one of the organizations that works tirelessly every day to protect recreational anglers' access to, and fair use of, our shared fisheries resources. Unfortunately, many anglers on the water do not fully understand how the fisheries management process works or how quotas are determined. That lack of awareness is concerning for the future of the sport we all truly enjoy.

If anglers do not take the time to get involved in the process, it becomes difficult to complain when decisions are made that are not to their liking. The process is complex, time-consuming, and extremely stressful for the dedicated few who continue fighting every day for the future of our fisheries. If we want to preserve the opportunity to enjoy recreational fishing and ensure that our children and grandchildren can enjoy it as well, it is time for more anglers to wake up, get informed, and become involved.

There are several ways to start. Talk with fellow anglers who are already engaged in the process. Do your own research to learn when meetings are scheduled, educate yourself on the issues being discussed, and make an effort to attend. Read articles in credible fishing and conservation publications, and reach out to editors, writers, and knowledgeable members of the fishing community to better understand the topics. You can also join a local fishing club or become involved with the Jersey Coast Anglers Association.

Every one of these steps will enhance your comprehension of the process, illustrating how intricate and time-consuming it is for a small team of committed anglers to advocate for the recreational community. They are performing exceptionally well, but your support is essential if we aim to secure a robust future

for recreational fishing. I urge each club to address this topic in their meetings, encouraging their members to engage more actively and participate wherever possible. The Jersey Coast Anglers Association is here for you. If you would like to get involved, please reach out. We would be happy to help you find a way to participate in any area where you feel you can make a difference.

Don Marantz served as the Event Chairman for the **Play HOOK-e 10th Anniversary Veterans, Disabled Children, and Active-Duty Military Fishing Day**, which took place on August 22nd at Lake Julianna. Special thanks are extended to Vito Cardinale, who graciously hosts this remarkable event annually. It was heartwarming to witness Veterans, Disabled Children, and Active-Duty Military personnel supporting one another in enjoying a day of fishing, alongside the dedicated volunteers at this private lake. I estimate that over 650 people attended this exceptional event. For further information, please refer to the Youth Education Report by Greg Kucharewski. If you know any veterans or disabled children who would like to participate in this wonderful event next year, please contact JCAA, and Don Marantz will reach out to you.



The **Annual Sportsperson of the Year Dinner** for 2026 is scheduled for **November 14th**. Because some clubs do not convene during the summer, clubs intending to nominate a candidate should promptly send their nominee along with a 500-word summary to Tom Fote (tfote@jcaa.org) and Vice President Steve Machalaba (smachalaba@aol.com). Upon receipt, these summaries will be distributed to all JCAA club representatives, enabling them to cast their votes at the **General Membership Meeting on September 29th**. This year's dinner will take place at Spring Lake Manor, a stunning Victorian mansion located in Spring Lake Heights, NJ, which offers a perfect backdrop for the event. Clubs are encouraged to reserve a table or gather friends to attend collectively. Anyone wishing to participate should reach out to John Toth (tothjohn@verizon.net) as soon as possible to help coordinate the numerous behind-the-scenes arrangements necessary for this occasion. Additionally, clubs or individuals looking to contribute gifts for the dinner should also contact John and me to assist in organizing the tricky tray and silent auction items. Let us all collaborate to ensure this event is a resounding success. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

If you haven't done so yet and you fish in New Jersey waters, it is essential to prioritize a visit to the NJDEP – [NJ Fish & Wildlife website](#). This site provides a comprehensive array of current information crucial for saltwater fishing in New Jersey. Make sure to carefully examine all resources related to saltwater fishing and [complete your annual registration](#) or renewal for the 2026 NJ Saltwater Recreational. Registration is free and must be renewed each year. By registering, anglers contribute to the accurate tracking of saltwater fishing activities in New Jersey. This information is critical for assessing eligibility and distribution of federal funding, which supports ongoing fisheries research and management initiatives.

JCAA is looking for dedicated individuals to get involved with the association. If you have the ambition to lead and are willing to devote time to something you truly care about, consider stepping up as a JCAA Officer. For more details about the roles and responsibilities, please reach out to any current officers, who will be happy to share information with you. I bring this up because the election for JCAA Officers is set for December 2027. JCAA is in need of many more committed individuals to take part; if you are not interested in serving as an officer for 2027, you might consider joining one of the committees. The JCAA and

the recreational community require a strong presence of individuals to effectively make a difference.

All anglers should stay informed and involved. By engaging in fisheries issues and tracking key developments, the recreational fishing community can strengthen its voice in decisions and help shape a better future for the sport.

Upcoming JCAA Meetings

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) has several important meetings scheduled for the coming months. These sessions provide opportunities for members and recreational anglers to stay informed, participate in discussions, and help guide the future of the organization.

- **September 10th at 7:30 pm:** JCAA Board Meeting. This session will be held exclusively via Zoom, allowing board members and participants to join remotely.
- **September 29th at 7:00 pm:** JCAA General Membership Meeting. All members are invited to attend either in person at 385 Herbertsville Rd., Brick, NJ 08724, or remotely via Zoom. This meeting will use a hybrid format to accommodate both in-person and remote participants and is open to recreational anglers.
 - Club Representatives will be voting on the person to be honored as 2026 Sportsperson of the Year

Your participation in these meetings is encouraged. Whether attending in person or via Zoom, members and anglers alike can stay connected, contribute to important discussions, and help shape the direction of JCAA. Please remember to add these dates to your calendar and join us for meaningful engagement.

Upcoming ASMFC September Meetings

- **Sept. 9, 2026 – 1pm to 2pm** - [Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 10, 2026 – 1pm to 3pm** - [Atlantic Striped Bass Steering Committee for Work Group on Future Management - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 14 - 18, 2026** - [South Atlantic Fishery Management Council - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)

- **Sept. 15 - 17, 2026** - [New England Fishery Management Council - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 15, 2026 – 6pm to 8pm** - [MD & PRFC Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 16, 2026 – 6pm to 8pm** - [NY & CT Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 16, 2026 – 10am to 12pm** - [VA Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 22 - 25, 2026** - [Methods Workshop for Atlantic Cobia Stock Assessment - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 23 – 24, 2026** - [Recreational Sector Separation Workshop - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 28, 2026 – 6pm to 8pm** - [VA Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Sept. 29, 2026 – 6pm to 8pm** - [ME, NH, MA & RI Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)
- **Oct. 1, 2026 – 6pm to 8pm** [General Public Hearing on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)

It is clearly evident that numerous meetings are consistently taking place within a single commission or council that governs our involvement in fishery resources. The Recreational Community must become aware and engage actively before the sport we cherish disappears.

JCAA New Ad Program

By Tom Fote

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

These ads can be for tackle stores, fishing clubs and any other individuals who would like to advertise in our newspaper. It is easier to change a full-page month to month so if your tackle store is running a special sale, you could have a new ad for that specific event for the month before and the month of. Clubs can

list their tournaments, flea markets or any other event by just submitting a new ad to replace the existing one. If you have any questions, contact Tom Fote at (732) 270-9102 or email at tfote@jcaa.org. This does not replace the \$500 or \$250 business ad already in place. We are hoping to use the ad money to pay for the operation of the newspaper. We hope that you will solicit ads and get your club to take an ad. It is a great way to publicize your club and get new members. We will also have a link to the sponsors' webpages. Please call me if you have any questions. Mark also has put together some forms that will be ready by the next newsletter.

Follow up Letter to Pres. Trump End Menhaden Reduction Fishing



Jersey Coast Anglers Association
Working for Marine Recreational Anglers
PO Box 1191, Wall Branch Post Office, Wall, NJ 07719

August 20, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States

Reference: Follow-up request to stop menhaden reduction fishing by Canadian-owned Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters/Cooke, Inc.

Dear President Trump,

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) corresponded with you by letter dated June 23, 2025, in regard to stopping the Menhaden Reduction Fishing by Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters, owned by Cooke Inc. (also known as Cooke Seafood, Inc.) a Canadian owned company. Respectfully, we are still waiting for this Executive Action to be ordered by you. Meanwhile, Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters continue to plunder this valuable United States resource and have brought Menhaden stocks to the point of collapse. Almost everything feeds on Menhaden and needs it to survive and thrive; This includes species such as Striped Bass, Bluefish, and others, Sharks, Whales, Dolphins, Porpoises, Marine

and Aquatic Birds and other species. The current absences of mature Menhaden have negatively impacted on the ability of these species to survive.

Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters continues to tell our Fisheries Management Agencies, government officials and certain elected legislators that there is an endless supply of Menhaden and no quota reductions or restrictions are necessary. Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters has disproven their own statements. Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters could not fill their Menhaden Quota in Chesapeake Bay this Spring and are having difficulty finding enough Menhaden in the Atlantic Ocean to fill their quota, simply because they have caught too many Menhaden the last several years. They caught and killed too many Menhaden before they even had a chance to reproduce at least one time. This has also had a dramatic negative impact on other species that depend on Menhaden.

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association and other groups that have contacted regarding this issue, asking for the proper action are NOT “Enviro-zealots” as you may have been mis-advised. The people that are members of the recreational fishing and diving clubs that make up the JCAA voted for and support you and need you to take the appropriate Executive Action before the Menhaden situation gets even worse. We acknowledge that this will impact on the people who are employed by Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters. However, they are solely responsible for this problem. The callous greed exhibited by Omega Protein/Ocean Harvesters causing the decimation of Menhaden stocks has ready caused economic losses to many charter and party boats, bait and tackle shops, recreational anglers and other businesses associated with recreational fishing. It has also caused many local Menhaden Bait operations, most of which are family owned to be unable to fill their orders for Menhaden to be used by commercial lobster and crab fisherman, whose livelihood depends on catching Menhaden. To be clear, any restrictions on Menhaden should only apply to Reduction Fishing; Menhaden Bait Fishing, which only accounts for a fraction of the total Menhaden quota, should be excluded from any reductions.

Therefore, in conclusion we continue to look to you to please take all of the above into consideration and stop this destructive Menhaden Reduction Fishery by

a foreign owned company and protect this valuable resource for the American citizens that depend upon it. Thank you in advance for your consideration and help.

Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Mark A. Taylor, President
mtsport64@aol.com

Stephen M. Machalaba, Vice President
smachalaba@aol.com

cc:

Mr. Howard Lutnick, Secretary, US Dept. Commerce

Mr. Eugenio Pineiro, Soler, Assistant Administrator,
NOAA Fisheries

Mr. Lee Zeldin, Administrator, US Dept. of
Environmental Protection

Atlantic Menhaden & Osprey: A Linked Conservation Warning for New Jersey

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

New Jersey’s 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan includes both Atlantic menhaden and osprey on its list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need. For those of us who spend our lives on the water, this designation simply confirms what we’ve been witnessing all season. The forage base is shrinking, and the predators that depend on it are struggling.

Menhaden remain the most important forage fish in our region. They support striped bass, bluefish, fluke, weakfish, humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins, and of course, ospreys. Their new conservation status reflects declining nearshore abundance, localized depletion in estuaries, and the removal of juvenile fish by industrial reduction vessels. When bunker become scarce, the entire coastal ecosystem feels the impact.

Ospreys rely heavily on menhaden during nesting season. This summer, multiple nests across coastal New Jersey showed adults struggling to find food, chicks starving, and complete nesting failures. The data is in from Virginia to Connecticut nest failures are WORSE than during the infamous DDT

crisis. The osprey's SGCN listing is directly tied to forage scarcity, and it serves as a clear indicator of broader ecosystem stress.

The most important point is that New Jersey listed both the forage species and the predator at the



same time. This is not coincidence. It is a direct cause and effect relationship. Menhaden decline is driving osprey reproductive failure, and the ripple effects extend across the entire coastal food web.

For anglers, this matters. When the forage base collapses, sportfish suffer. Striped bass, bluefish, and weakfish are already showing signs of stress. The dual SGCN listing gives us new leverage to advocate for ecosystem-based management, nearshore harvest protections, and improved monitoring of menhaden abundance.

As chair of the JCAA Forage Fish Committee, I will continue working with partners and agencies to document osprey nesting failures, track menhaden abundance, and push for stronger protection at ASMFC and NJDEP. New Jersey has acknowledged the problem. Now we need to make sure meaningful solutions follow.

Link to view New Jersey's little known program:
[*Species of Greatest Conservation Need*](#)

Capt. Paul Eidman Comments to Menhaden Management Board

August 5, 2026

Good afternoon, members of the Board. My name is Paul Eidman, Founder and President of Menhaden Defenders.

The signs of trouble are unmistakable. The experts at catching bunker — Omega Protein — are now flying spotter planes hundreds of miles from Reedville to Cape Cod Bay, searching for what remains of the adult biomass so they can maximize yields. Their vessels steam hundreds of miles to the New York–New Jersey Bight and return with only partial loads — almost entirely **pre-spawn juveniles**,

just 6–8 inches long, fish that have never contributed a single egg to the future of this stock.

Across the coast, the ecosystem is signaling distress: **osprey nests failing, striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, and fluke at historic lows, whale-watching vessels struggling to find marine mammals**, and coastal waters that look increasingly lifeless. **Outdoorsmen, fishermen, birders, and whale watchers are all demanding action** because they see this collapse happening in real time.

And the largest estuary on the East Coast — **the Chesapeake Bay** — is dying before our eyes. Once called the *jewel of the East Coast*, it is being exploited while its key forage fish is ground into dog food. **Taking the most vital food source out of the estuary — out of the mouths of striped bass, osprey chicks, and more — makes zero sense. It is insane.**

What I'm saying is straightforward: **for years, the ASMFC has catered to Omega Protein's push for the highest possible harvest levels**, even after the stock was previously declared overfished. Yes, we recognize the stock is *not classified as overfished at this moment*, but the record shows exactly where this approach leads — **right back to overfishing and ecosystem decline.**

Every Atlantic coast state has already stopped reduction fishing inside the 3-mile line — **except Virginia**, which continues to allow Omega Protein to remove **roughly a billion menhaden a year** to be ground into pet and aquaculture feed. And this is happening within an **already overfished East Coast forage ecosystem**, where river herring, shad, Atlantic herring, eel, and grass shrimp are all depleted.

We do not need to wait for a coastwide ecosystem collapse to act.

Menhaden Defenders calls on this Board to take meaningful action now: **suspend or restrict the reduction fishery, push Omega Protein out of the Chesapeake Bay past the 3-mile line, cut the quota by more than 50 percent — especially in the Bay, expand independent ecosystem-based research, and align management with the Commission's own ecosystem-based framework.**

Nature is not whispering — it is shouting. The ecosystem is failing in plain sight. You have the authority, the responsibility, and the obligation to act now. Delay is not caution — delay is collapse. Put the ecosystem first. Protect the forage base. Do your job.

Thank you.

Fisheries Management & Legislative Report

By Tom Fote

Winter Flounder & Endocrine Disruptors

I listened to the Winter Flounder Board Meeting at the Summer ASMFC Meeting. I made one public comment while they were talking about studies on winter flounder. I asked if anyone was doing any research on endocrine disruptors in connection to winter flounder low reproduction in the bays and estuaries.

I think you need some of my history. I am an Agent Orange Vietnam Vet. I am now fighting my third bout of cancer, each one a different type of cancer. When I started looking at the connection between fish and Agent Orange and the battles with the Port Authority of New York about dumping Agent Orange in the Ocean, I began dedicating much of my time to studying this issue. I probably have in my files about 50 studies on endocrine disruptors on fish and other living things. Many Vietnam Agent Orange Vets died in their 40s and there are examples of transmission of health problems to their children.

Once I read the studies I realized that much of the problem with fisheries management was that we had no control over what went into the water. There are other state and federal agencies that have control over clean water and the contaminants there. Fish and Wildlife and NOAA were doing studies but there was no response from these agencies. Please read my Congressional Testimony from 2009 to get a better understanding of this issue. Later I became aware of two additional studies done in Europe and I have included those. If you look at the studies, you will see that male sperm counts have dropped dramatically over the last 30 years. That means sperm that is less viable.

Back to winter flounder. When we started having a dramatic drop in the inshore stocks of winter flounder, we started looking for the reasons. I noticed that unlike species with issues that I could blame on climate change, didn't fit the problem with winter flounder. The stocks of winter flounder that are estuarine dependent and spawn in the bays, estuaries and rivers, were not reproducing in waters colder than in New Jersey. While in New Jersey, we were still seeing good reproduction and still having good harvest. Why is there this dichotomy and why is New Jersey

different than the rest of the coast? Unlike the rest of the coast, when New Jersey redid all of our sewer systems in the 80s and 90s, they built sewer authorities that built pipes that, instead of dumping the sewer water in the bays and estuaries, sent that effluent out a mile off the beaches. We were not getting the impact of medications, household cleaners and other pollutants in the bays and rivers. Eventually global warming did eventually impact on New Jersey's fish population, but the impact of pollutants was easy to see. If you talk to older anglers who used to travel to Rhode Island and other Northern fishing spots to fish for winter flounder, they will tell you they could fish near the sewer plants to get a good catch. The winter flounder could deal with the solids from the sewer plants but were negatively impacted by the increase of chlorine and the endocrine disruptors.

I hope the fishing community wakes up and demands our legislators fund a clean-up for our bays and estuaries. These pollutants impact on all species that are estuarine dependent to raise their young or live out a large portion of their life cycle. This impact is not only for saltwater species but for every freshwater species throughout the United States. Please, take the time to read these studies. This is important not just for fish but for future generations.

Menhaden

Further below, I am posting part of the ASMFC [release on the dates for the States Schedule of Public Hearings on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II](#). Full release document can be found at [this link](#).

When I saw the email about the release, I thought there was a big mistake since NJ was not listed for having a public hearing, but I found out that NJ had not requested a hearing. For some of the years I have been involved in the management and protection of menhaden, the biggest harvest by the reduction boats was done in the federal waters off NJ since we used to have large schools of older menhaden. Most of the time those boats did not travel any farther north than NJ. There is a lot of concern about this issue from Recreational Fishing, Environmental Organizations and other NGOs. I would also think the Commercial Fishing Community that harvests species that depend on menhaden for their existence would also be concerned. I think the public that supports the protection of marine mammals and birds that also depend on menhaden for their existence would also like

to be heard. What was NJ Fish and Wildlife thinking? I assume that this will be corrected.

JCAA will have a position statement on this issue since we have been fighting for the protection of menhaden for over 45 years. We will be sending it to our email list. To get on the email list, just sign up to be an Associate Member by going to our web page and filling out the form. It does not cost anything. But if you want to see JCAA keep fighting this battle and many more battles, please make a donation. This is not required to get the newspaper and alerts.

At the time I wrote the article, we did not have a public hearing. JCAA sent a letter to the Commissioner, and he immediately took action and now we do. I am leaving this article as is because we should not have needed to write a letter. The importance of menhaden and NJ's role in the menhaden fishery should be obvious. We wanted a hybrid hearing, but we will need to settle for a virtual meeting on September 22nd.

**Congressional Testimony
House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs,
Oceans and Wildlife**

**Oversight Hearing on Endocrine Disruptors
in Fish and Wildlife**

Thomas P. Fote

*NJ Governor's Appointee to the ASMFC,
Legislative Chairman for JCAA*

June 9, 2009

I would like to thank Chairwoman Bordallo and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. I am one of New Jersey's Commissioners to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and am the Legislative Chairman for the Jersey Coast Anglers Association and the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. I am the longest serving member on the Policy Board of the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program, a board member of the New Jersey Environmental Federation, a member of the Government Affairs Committee of the American Sportfishing Association and serve in various capacities in other environmental and trade organizations. I am an unpaid volunteer in all of these capacities.

I am here today to discuss an issue that I have been concerned about since I first became involved in

fisheries management. As a disabled Vietnam veteran who was sprayed with Agent Orange and who has worked with Agent Orange Vets, I am particularly sensitive to the unintended negative impact chemicals can have on us. This is an issue Congressman Pallone and I have discussed endlessly. We began by working to stop the dumping of Agent Orange contaminated dredge spoils from Newark Bay in the Atlantic Ocean. Because of these experiences, I am always aware of other contaminants that affect the food chain, particularly in our water system. I recently wrote an article titled "The Consequences of Good Intentions." Most of the chemicals we deal with today were not deliberately placed in the system with a negative result intended. PCBs were designed so transformers would not overheat. Asbestos was used as insulation and as a fire preventative. Many of the cleaning fluids and drugs were intended to enhance our lives and our health. However, we are finding more and more that there are long term negative consequences to the inadvertent release of these chemicals into the environment. I knew the impact of Agent Orange on veterans, their children and the wildlife in Vietnam.

In the early '90's I attended a conference in Baltimore as the Chairman of the Habitat Committee for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. At this conference, Dr. Judith Weiss from Rutgers University presented her research on killies (mummy chubs), a form of bait fish. She was comparing the behavior of killies from Newark Bay and Tuckerton. She was looking at eating, predatory and other behavior in these different chemical environments. She found that killies in Newark Bay where there are significant chemical pollutants (PCBs, mercury, dioxin and estrogen) behaved differently. These killies did not catch prey as well, ate food that was not in their normal diet, and did not thrive. This was not true of the killies in Tuckerton where the chemical pollutants were far less significant. More recently Dr. Weiss presented four more papers from her Ph.D. graduate students on similar studies on grass shrimp, blue fish, fiddler crabs and blue claw crabs. In all studies they cited similar behavior patterns. When they transferred fish from cleaner areas (Tuckerton) to more polluted areas (Newark Bay), the fish soon developed the same inappropriate behaviors. The fish transferred to cleaner waters improved slightly but never returned to normal. The damage had been done. After Dr. Weiss' first presentation, I soon became aware of research on Native American Tribes who ate a significant amount of fish that were contaminated with PCBs. This study

noted a statistically high number of female births and statistically high number of children with learning disabilities. Why PCBs? We know that PCBs are an estrogen mimicker. When I began seeing the studies on sewer plants and how endocrine disruptors were impacting on the sexual development of fish, the red flags went up! I began to search for the current research on this topic. There is an amazing amount of research available worldwide. What is more amazing, with this abundance of research, is how little the public knows about this problem.

I am here today to talk specifically about the impact of endocrine disruptors on fish stocks and on the development of fisheries management plans. At the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, I work with fisheries management plans. Some of those plans are jointly managed with the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. One of the requirements of the Magnuson Stevens Act is to develop plans to rebuild fisheries stocks. In order to manage fisheries, you need accurate stock assessment and projections. This is not like counting deer in a forest. Fish swim. They migrate throughout the ocean. So scientists take the available data and build stock assessments and develop projections using various models. These models are based on assumptions about fish stocks, their reproduction, natural mortality and fishing pressure. Models need to determine natural mortality and the fecundity of the fish. Natural mortality includes all the environmental conditions; prey predator relationships, available habitat, climate, and other variables. Whenever there are issues that are not included in the models, there is a disconnect between the data and the actual conditions in which fish live.

I have been involved with some of these stocks for at least 20 years. In the last 30 years there are two species that have changed fisheries management and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, striped bass and weakfish. For both of these species, management plans relied on restricting commercial and recreational fishing to increase the spawning stock and thereby allowing for an increased harvest as the stocks rebuilt. Using this type of management, we dramatically increased the stock of striped bass. In the mid 90's we saw the same positive impact on the weakfish stocks. Councils and Commissions only manage the human harvesters. We have no authority to regulate the environment or the consequences of human activity on the environment. This was evident when weakfish stocks stopped rebuilding and began to decline. The fishermen were reporting this dramatic

decline, but it took some years before the stock assessment scientists recognized the same problems in their models. The models were not behaving the way they were planned to. The weakfish stock should be growing by leaps and bounds. Instead, the stocks are decreasing dramatically. It was clear that fishing pressure was not the cause. The scientists began to use the phrase "hidden background natural mortality." Where is this "hidden mortality" coming from?

Is this mortality caused by the impact of chemicals in the environment on reproduction? When we look carefully, we find the greatest problem with "hidden mortality" is with estuarine dependent fish, fish that live and reproduce in the bays, estuaries and rivers. Something is impacting the stock growth, and it is clearly not the human harvesters. For example, we have greatly restricted the catch of summer flounder since 1994. This is a fish that spawns in the ocean but spends the first year of life in the bays and estuaries. We have increased the spawning stock biomass and the current plan has allowed more summer flounder to have a greater age class distribution. We now have a huge amount of large female summer flounder that should be able to produce a massive amount of eggs but the recruitment (the number of new fish produced each year) is actually lower than it was in 1994. In 1994 we had 20% of the spawning stock biomass and few fish over 18 inches. Winter flounder is another example. They spawn in the bays, spend the first year there and then migrate to the ocean. The inshore stocks of winter flounder have collapsed. Usually when a stock collapses, we lose them at the fringe of their ideal habitat. New Jersey and New York are at the southern fringe of their habitat. We should be at the lowest levels of available harvest. Yet just the opposite is true. When you look at the recreational catch, New Jersey has the largest catch. Why is that true? The only difference I can see is that along the NJ coast we don't pump our treated sewage into rivers and bays. Treated sewage is piped directly to the ocean. Is it possible the impact of sewage that is untreated for endocrine disruptors and other chemicals is playing a major role in reproduction of winter flounder?

There are studies that confirm the impact of endocrine disruptors on fish. I am going to summarize information from many studies but will make the original documents available to you on disc. One study comes from Boulder Creek in Colorado. This study looked at the impact on white suckers by sewer discharges. The study finds, "The fish sampling results on Boulder Creek were also disturbing. Just below the

sewage plant outflow pipe, the team collected 101 females, 12 males and 10 intersex fish. Upstream of the sewage plant outflow, the team found 42 females, 37 males and zero intersex fish.” (Mutant Fish Prompt Concern - Study Focuses on Sewage Plants by Theo Stein and Miles Moffeit, Denver Post Staff Writers). The difference is dramatic. Above the sewer plant there is a normal male/female distribution. Below the plant, the male/female relationship is bizarre, and you begin to see hermaphrodites.

If we look at the Potomac River, we find another disturbing study. In this study the subject was small mouth bass in the West Virginia area of the Potomac River ('Human Activity' Blamed for Fish Ills, By David A. Fahrenthold, Washington Post Staff Writer, Friday, February 8, 2008). Again, what was found was a disturbing impact on the ratio of male/female fish and many males attempting to lay eggs. They had both male and female sex organs. In the 2003 study they studied the upper reaches of the Potomac River. In the more recent study, they find the same problems as far as the Chesapeake Bay.

New York Sea Grant has been studying winter flounder in Jamaica Bay, an area that received sewage from both Brooklyn and Queens, population more than 6,000,000. Again, what we are seeing is a disruption in the male/female relationship (13:1, 12:1, 11:1). This study was completed by Dr. Anne McElroy from Stony Brook University and Dr. Martin Schreiber from Brooklyn College – CUNY. They reported also that the males had female genes. Using sophisticated data gathering they reported high levels of “natural estrogens, estradiol and estrone” and “estrogenic detergent breakdown products, nonylphenol and its 1,2, and 3 ethoxylate metabolites (collectively termed NPEOs) were thousands to tens of thousand times higher, ranging from 100 to 600 parts per billion (µg/L).” They further concluded, “Young flounder throughout Jamaica Bay showed biochemical signs of exposure to estrogenic compounds in their environment. High levels of vitellogenin were observed and the young winter flounder also showed signs of female reproductive tissues within the testes of male fish. Altered sex ratios were observed in Jamaica Bay winter flounder with many more females caught than males as compared to the reference site, Shinnecock Bay, NY. Preliminary evidence also indicated that healthy winter flounder embryos exposed to sediment from Jamaica Bay showed delayed development and reduced hatching success. Winter flounder exposed to sediments dosed with nonylphenol showed some of the

same responses seen in fish collected from Jamaica Bay, indicating that this estrogenic contaminant could be responsible for the effects observed.” (R/CTP-28 Endocrine Disruption in Jamaica Bay: Are Winter Flounder Being Affected? May 2007)

I sit on the Policy and Advisory committee of the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program. Since Ocean Country pumps its sewer water directly to the ocean we are not recharging the ground water and pumping the aquifer dry. Twelve years ago, we thought we should be using that wastewater for recharging and irrigation. Again, our good intentions would have had a serious negative consequence. According to a study (Presence and Distribution of Wastewater-Derived Pharmaceuticals in Soil Irrigated with Reclaimed Water). “Three sites in the Front Range of Colorado, USA, were monitored from May through September 2003 to assess the presence and distribution of pharmaceuticals in soil irrigated with reclaimed water derived from urban wastewater...Nevertheless, the present study demonstrates that reclaimed-water irrigation results in soil pharmaceutical concentrations that vary through the irrigation season and that some compounds persist for months after irrigation.” There are many places using the reclaimed water and that is something that should be seriously reviewed. Every time it rains the golf courses that use reclaimed water are washing pharmaceuticals into the nearest rivers, bays and estuaries.

Changing the sex of fish has been used by the aquaculture industry for some time. They add hormones at specific points in development to create the stock they want. On the disc I have included studies on oysters including a Canadian study on fathead minnows that found that you can manipulate the sex of fish by adding certain endocrine disruptors. A scientific paper (**Complete sex reversal of fish is accomplished routinely in aquaculture practices by exposing fish to exogenous sex steroids during gonadal differentiation**) states that “A variety of environmental chemicals are also active at sex steroid receptors and theoretically possess the potential to alter normal sexual differentiation in fish... These results clearly indicate that a weakly estrogenic pesticide, o, p'-DDT, when presented during the critical period of gonadal development, can profoundly alter sexual differentiation.” A study on oysters showed similar results (Nice, HE, D Morritt, M Crane and M Thorndyke. 2003. **Long-term and transgenerational effects of nonylphenol exposure at a key stage in the development of *Crassostrea gigas*. Possible**

endocrine disruption? Marine Ecology Progress Series 256:293-300). “In experiments exposing larval oysters to a single dose of nonylphenol at levels commonly found in the environment, a team of English scientists finds that **nonylphenol can alter the sex ratio of oysters, cause some to become hermaphroditic, and dramatically impair survivorship of offspring...**” They conclude that these effects are extremely deleterious to the survival of oysters and “may result in severe consequences, not only for natural populations but also for commercial hatcheries situated in areas where nonylphenol is present in the water.”

All you need to do is google endocrine disruptors in fish and you will find research papers and studies from around the world; Australia, European Union, Canada, and more. The truth is any country that is discharging endocrine disruptors into lakes and estuaries are finding the same problems. I had a scientist visiting from Germany who is familiar with Lake Geneva. Once I began to talk about endocrine disruptors, I realized we had many concerns in common.

The list can go on and on. The accompanying disc has many more studies. Since there are many others who will cover the human health issues, I want to focus on the impact on rebuilding fish stocks. When you add endocrine disruptors to the existing loss of habitat, fish kills by power plants, global warming and the increasing demand for water that is diverting water from our rivers and bays, you have the perfect storm. These are all complicated issues, but we need to just begin. How can fisheries scientists predict a target rebuilding for stocks that are estuarine dependent? How can scientists get an accurate handle on the natural mortality? How do we account for this in the management process? We are destroying the recreational and commercial fishing industries. We are also having a terrible negative impact on the quality of life for recreational fishermen and keeping subsistence fishermen from harvesting for their families. We cannot rely on fisheries management to rebuild stocks until the environmental problems are solved. Fishermen were sold the idea that short term pain (not harvesting fish) would mean long term gain (healthy fish stocks). This has not proven true and has frustrated everyone. We need to stop pointing fingers and blaming one another for why stocks are not rebuilding and focus more clearly on the real problems, not the symptoms.

Based on the available research and my personal experience with fishing and environmental organizations, I would recommend the following:

1. Take a more precautionary approach.

We need to stop allowing new chemicals to enter the system without the most rigorous possible study. We need the European approach which is more precautionary. The European Union does not allow new chemicals to come to the marketplace on their way into the environment unless it is proven that there is no possible harm. The onus is on the chemical producers to prove they will cause no harm. Until they do, they cannot market the chemical. That is the opposite of our approach in the United States. The burden of proof is on the government and the people, not the manufacturers.

2. Invest in wastewater treatment plants and industrial systems that discharge into the environment.

Some of these chemicals are part of the drugs that are essential for people's lives. We are not going to stop manufacturing or using these drugs. There are other chemicals that are not so essential in personal care products, detergents and household cleaners that are in everyday use. It may take years before we can convince the public to stop using these products. There are also large amounts of illegal drugs that are entering the system as well. That means that we need to develop new treatment options for both our sewage plants and our industries that discharge into our water ways. These options must remove chemicals from waste before they enter the environment. This is not only an issue for water that supports our fish populations but for the water-drinking public. Although the short-term investment will be great but will be more cost effective than cleaning up later and dealing with all the health problems for humans and wildlife that these chemicals will cause.

3. Develop a more efficient delivery system for our current medications.

Many of the drugs we take for health problems are prescribed in large doses because our bodies don't absorb them well. This means that our bodies are discharging significant percentages of the drugs we take, some as high as 90%. We are one of the chief polluters. The pharmaceutical companies need to

research more efficient and effective delivery systems for these medications. The medical profession must stop over-prescribing and do a better job of explaining how drugs are best used to their patients. More is not necessarily better for your health and is certainly not better for the environment.

4. Educate the public about their responsibilities.

Most of the public have not real awareness of this problem. We need a massive educational program to make people more aware, to help them shop environmentally and to use and dispose of drugs appropriately. I know Lisa Jackson, the EPA's new Administrator, is well aware of this problem and will take a leadership role. We need Congress to provide appropriate legislation and funding so the EPA can take the necessary steps. We need to tell the public which chemicals to avoid in their household cleaners and other products. We need to publish a list of things to buy. We need a system to return or dispose of unused prescription and non-prescription medications.

5. Demand that our elected officials take action.

At the Federal, State and local level, there is much to be done. Leadership by our elected officials is crucial. Gone are the days when we could wait for the public to figure out the problem and solve it. The investment in time, money and education is far too big for individuals to subsidize.

6. Fund the fisheries science.

Since I emphasized the impact this has on fisheries management, it is appropriate that I end with a plea. Good management is not possible without good science. Good science costs money. Unless the Federal government takes funding good science seriously, the problems of fisheries management will never be solved. We need to get a handle on the biology of the fish and the impacts of environmental contamination. We need that science to build useful models for projecting stocks and managing fisheries. We need to increase the funding for stock assessment by \$60,000,000. Then we need additional funds for the biological research for the necessary data. The National Marine Fisheries Service is the appropriate vehicle. They just need adequate funding.

The great strides in civilizations often grew around the availability of healthy drinking water and a means for disposing of our waste. The Romans invested heavily in aqueducts to bring plentiful water to their towns. The monks in early European times developed beer as an alternative to the polluted water. Our early settlements in this country were built around the availability of water for human and animal consumption and growing crops. When the cities were heavily populated, many diseases were passed through the water system. When we added chlorine to our urban water systems, the potential for harm was diminished. The last big change in water infrastructure and waste disposal occurred in the 1970s with the passage of the Clean Water Act. We cleaned up the water enough that oxygen returned. At the time, striped bass did not exist in the Delaware River due to oxygen depletion in the Camden/Philadelphia area. The return of striped bass to the Delaware is directly attributed to the upgrading of the sewer systems after the passage of the Clean Water Act. Today, we seem most concerned about a terrorist attack on our drinking water when the fact is we are contributing potentially lethal chemicals to our water systems every day. Since the effects are not immediately apparent, they are easier to ignore.

The chemicals that we are putting in our water have the potential to make some species of both fish and wildlife extinct. If you don't reproduce, extinction is the next step. It is just a matter of time. Right now, New Jersey and other states are concerned about the Red Knot. We can sit on the beach and count the decreasing number of these birds. It is much more difficult to count the fish in the ocean, bays and estuaries but the results are the same.

In my experience, scientists have a tremendously important role to play in shaping our decisions and our actions. However, it is also possible to study a problem to death and never do anything. Scientists studied asbestos, tobacco and Agent Orange for years before they had enough studies to point the finger. We needed to act much earlier and save lives in the process. Right now, we have sufficient studies to get started identifying and solving the problems. More studies can be done, but we can't wait to begin cleaning our water.

In conclusion, at certain times in history we have tremendous challenges and opportunities. The problems created by endocrine disruptors and other chemicals going into our water systems have produced one of those historic moments. This is a worldwide

problem and is increasingly recognized by governments throughout the world. We cannot solve this problem by relying on local governments to take piece meal action. Rebuilding the sewer system throughout our country is a perfect job creating opportunity and a perfect start in solving this problem. This is truly money spent for the next generation. It is an opportunity to offer our children and their children the same quality of life we have enjoyed. We owe them nothing less.

Men's Sperm Counts are Down Worldwide: Study

*By Alexandra Sifferlin,
TIME Health, July 25, 2017*

A new report reveals that sperm counts among men in Western countries, including men in North America, Australia, New Zealand and Europe, have dropped substantially over the years. According to study authors, in less than 40 years, collective sperm count among this group of men has declined more than 50%. Sperm count is currently considered the best measure of male fertility.

The new study, published Tuesday in the journal *Human Reproduction Update*, not only shows that men's sperm counts are dropping, but that the continued decline does not appear to be leveling off.

"The results are indeed very profound, and even shocking," says study author Dr. Hagai Levine, head of the environmental health track at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine in Jerusalem.

While the study is not the first to suggest that men's sperm counts are dropping, the researchers say it's the first ever meta-analysis on the subject. The new findings have limitations—they don't include men from non-Western countries, for one—but the researchers say the study adds to a growing body of research on how changes in environments might be affecting male fertility.

"For me it was an important scientific and public health question I had to answer: have sperm counts really declined?" says Levine. "The impact of the modern environment on health of populations and individuals is clearly huge, but remains largely unknown."

The researchers screened 7,500 studies and found 185 that met their criteria. Studies were included

in the analysis if they looked at either men who were unaware of their fertility (for example, men who had never tried to conceive) or men who were deemed fertile (for instance, men known to have conceived a pregnancy). They excluded studies with men who had been included for suspected infertility, such as men attending an IVF clinic.

They found that from 1973 to 2011, there was a steep decline of more than 50% in both sperm concentration and total sperm count among men from Western countries. The researchers also restricted the analysis to studies after 1995 and reported that the decline does not appear to be abating.

Other male fertility experts say the study helps confirm what has been suspected for some time. "This has been a recognized phenomenon for over 50 years," says Enrique Schisterman, chief of the epidemiology branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health. (Schisterman was not involved in the study.) "There has never been a systematic review of the literature as this analysis has done," he says. "I think it's confirmatory and well done. This is a serious problem."

The study did not explain why sperm counts might be down in this group of men, but there are several theories based on prior research performed by the study authors and other groups. Levine says that drops in sperm counts have, in the past, been associated with environment and lifestyle factors including prenatal chemical exposures, adult pesticide exposures, smoking, stress and obesity.

"One possible explanation is that men residing in Western countries over the last decades were exposed to new manmade chemicals during their life course, and there is more and more evidence that these chemicals hurt their reproductive function," he says. "We don't know for sure why this is happening, but our findings should drive massive scientific effort to identify the causes and modes of prevention."

Schisterman also suspects that environmental factors may be having an impact. "I think there is a consensus in the scientific community that if the results are real, it has to be an environmental factor," he says. "Genetics would not explain such a rapid decline."

Levine and his co-authors argue that more research needs to be done to understand the potential causes for these widespread drops in sperm counts, as well as to find ways to prevent possible issues from arising in the first place.

“We should solve this by addressing the root causes, whether by regulation of chemicals or health promotion in the broad sense to improve diet and physical activity or tobacco control,” says Levine. “On the personal level, every man can live healthier life by reducing stress, not smoking, being physically active and keeping a good diet and weight.”

[Link](#) to original article

States Schedule Public Hearings on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum II

ASMFC Release, September 2026

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coastal states of Maine through Virginia have scheduled hearings to gather public input on Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The Draft Addendum considers options to reduce the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap (Bay Cap) by up to 50% and distribute the cap more evenly throughout the fishing season. The options aim to alleviate a concentration of effort that may be affecting other fisheries within the Bay and other potential ecological impacts.

The Board initiated the Draft Addendum in response to concerns regarding declining pound net harvest and catch per unit effort in the Bay in recent years, coinciding with an increase in the concentration of reduction harvest in the summer months, and the possible downstream effects on menhaden predators.

The Draft Addendum also includes options that link the Bay Cap to the coastwide total allowable catch to maintain a more fixed proportion between the two, as well as options to distribute the Bay Cap into three quota periods to prevent a concentration of reduction harvest in the spring and summer of the fishing season.

Some hearings will be conducted in-person, some will be hybrid, and others will be conducted via webinar. **If you are unable to participate in your state’s scheduled hearing, you are welcome to participate in any of the virtual or hybrid hearings.** The public hearing details follow. Please note that the hearing location for the MD/PRFC hearing has not been set. The Commission will issue another press release once the hearing details have been confirmed. All updated meeting info can be found at [this link](#).

Tuesday, September 15 (6-8pm)
In-Person Hearing

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and Potomac River Fisheries Commission

Wednesday, September 16 (6-8pm)
Hybrid Hearing ([link](#))
NY State DEP and Connecticut DEEP

Saturday, September 19 (10am-noon)
In-Person Hearing
Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Tuesday, September 22 (6-8pm)
Virtual Hearing ([link](#))
NJ DEP and Delaware DFW

Monday, September 28 (6-8pm)
In-Person Hearing
Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Tuesday, September 29 (6-8pm)
Virtual Hearing ([link](#))
Maine Dept. of Natural Resources, New Hampshire Fish and Game, Mass. Division of Marine Resources, and Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Mgmt.

Thursday, October 1 (6-8pm)
Virtual Hearing ([link](#))
General Public Hearing

Recreational Fisheries Statistics Queries

*By Russell Dunn,
NOAA Fisheries*

Dear All:

NOAA Fisheries has [published](#) updated recreational fishing effort and catch estimates for hundreds of species dating back to 1981, reflecting the [improved Fishing Effort Survey \(FES\) design](#).

Bottom Line:

This data revision does not trigger immediate fisheries management changes or adjustments to catch limits. NOAA Fisheries and regional partners will begin integrating the improved data into prioritized stock assessments to help determine the health of stocks and provide new management advice, if warranted, through standard public processes.

The revised estimates will be used in stock assessments in late 2026 going forward. Of note, an assessment for South Atlantic red snapper is scheduled in late 2026, and assessments for striped bass and Gulf of America vermillion snapper are scheduled in 2027. Management advice from these assessments will be made in 2027 and 2028. For more information on regional fishery assessment schedules, visit [the Northeast Region Coordinating Council schedule](#); [Southeast Data Assessment, and Review schedule](#) and the [West Pacific Stock Assessment and Review schedule](#) for the full list of species and timelines.

Key takeaways:

- The historical trends in recreational fishing activity remain largely the same, but the updated historical total catch estimates are systematically lower with smaller margins of error. This is because the improved FES design addresses overreporting of private boat and shore fishing trips and produces lower effort estimates.
- The magnitude of the reduction in total catch estimates varies by species since the updated effort estimates differ by state, fishing mode (shore vs. private boat), and time of year.
- Reductions are most pronounced for fisheries occurring in low-activity months via private boat.
- Data outliers across the time series are reduced.

***Note:** The FES effort estimates are multiplied by the catch-per-trip estimates from in-person dockside interviews to calculate total catch. For-hire effort estimates come from the For-Hire Survey, not FES, and are unaffected by this revision. Highly Migratory Species estimates in the Northeast region are derived primarily from the Large Pelagics Survey. This revision does update information for Southeast HMS species as well as Atlantic and Gulf of America coastal shark species.*

Why we made this change:

Implementing the updated FES in 2026 and revising the historical estimates is a result of listening to partner and industry feedback, conducting thorough research, and aiming to continuously improve our survey methods and data. An independent peer review panel found the

revised FES to be a substantial improvement that produces more accurate data by mitigating overreporting of fishing trips. The calibration model used to rescale the historical estimates was also favorably independently peer reviewed. More detail on the improved FES and calibration model is available [here](#). Each improvement we make to our survey program helps strengthen our scientific understanding of the health of our fisheries, aligning directly with the Gold Standard Science Executive Order (EO) in ensuring our federal decision-making is rooted in the most rigorous and objective science available.

Improving the FES and resulting data also supports the [Recreational Angler Partnership Improvement Directive](#) (RAPID), which aims to build a new, modernized state-federal recreational fisheries data collection enterprise. This enterprise will combine all available and approved recreational catch and effort data collection programs to help reduce uncertainty in fishery management decisions. RAPID aims to increase data precision, accuracy, usability, and credibility for all surveys across the partnership.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to katherine.papacostas@noaa.gov or me.

Thank you,
RBD

JCAA Membership Report

By John Toth

First of all, I want to **Thank** all clubs that have already paid your 2026 dues and sponsorships!

A number of clubs still have not paid their dues. Please pay your club's dues to keep your JCAA membership active. The following are checks we have already received from clubs to date:

Clubs:

- Spring Lake Live Liners - \$300
- Seaside Heights Fishing Club - \$100
- NJ Beach Buggy Assoc. - \$300
- Hi-Mar Striper Club - \$500
- Surf Kings Fishing Club - \$100
- Salt Water Anglers of Bergen County - \$100
- Belmar Fishing Club - \$100

- Manasquan Fishing Club - \$300
- Beach Haven Marlin & Tuna Club - \$50
- Delaware Shad - \$150
- Fun Under Boats (FUB) - \$50
- NJ Council of Diver's Club - \$50
- Menhaden Defenders - \$100
- Sandy Hook Bay Anglers - \$300
- Berkeley Striper Club - \$300
- Forked River Tuna Club - \$500
- Fish Hawks - \$50
- Village Harbour Fishing Club - \$50
- Hudson River Fishing Association (HRFA) - \$50
- Bi-State Shad Fisherman's Association - \$300

Sponsorships:

- Paul Shafer - \$259
- Susan Gene Geld - \$50
- Barnegat Animal Clinic - \$100
- Adam T. Piaseki - \$50
- Fins on Feathers - \$50
- In Memory of Tom Ortman - \$100
- Linda/Charles Jules - \$100
- John Zingis - \$50
- L. Raymond Hunphreys, Jr. - \$100
- Jon Brunetti - \$100
- Louis Schott - \$100
- Joe Palumbo - \$500

Our next JCAA General Membership Meeting will be held on **September 29th, 2026**, at the Shark Anglers Building in Herbertsville. It will be done as an in-person meeting and by ZOOM starting at **7:00 p.m.**

At this meeting, nominations for the recipient of JCAA's Sportsperson of the Year will be heard. Please start now to consider who you would like to nominate to receive this prestigious award from your club. Confine your nomination statement to about 500 words.

I can be contacted at tothjohn@verizon.net or at (732) 656-0139 if you have any questions.

Youth Education Report

By Greg Kucharewski

PLAY HOOK-e 10th ANNIVERSARY VETERANS, CHILDREN & ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY FISHING DAY A GREAT SUCCESS

On Saturday, August 22, 2026, veterans, active-duty military personnel, and disabled youngsters along with their families enjoyed a fun day at Ponderosa Estates Farm, Millstone, NJ to catch and release fish at Lake Julianna. The theme of the fishing day was "Catch a Smile for the Red White and Blue" and everyone that attended had plenty to smile about as they enjoyed the health benefits of getting in touch with nature while making good memories.



Don Marantz, Event Chairman, Vito Cardinale, Cardinale Enterprises and Randy Johnson, Laurita Winery provided a fun filled day for all in attendance. Over 650 attendees enjoyed the festivities at Lake Julianna.

As children and veterans arrived at the event, they were greeted by volunteers that handed out welcome bags and provided instructions for the day. David Cardinale from USA tees supplied 10-year anniversary tee shirts for volunteers. Many thanks to John Reinhart for coordinating the opening ceremony. Members of Corporal Philip A. Reynolds Detachment Marine Corps League, Freehold, NJ helped set the tone for a patriotic fishing event by providing a Color Guard and Meagan Bethaney Solomon Rodgers sang the national anthem. Guitars 4 Vets supplied music and audio for veteran presentations. During the opening ceremonies our host Vito Cardinale stated: "this is the

“Welcome Home” that our Vietnam Veterans never received” and we are here to honor all our service men and women every year at Ponderosa Estate Farm.

The New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen Clubs presented an eagle monument to Mr. Cardinale that read, “In memory of Linda Cardinale and the eagle who flew here, now gone from sight but never from our hearts.” The eagle monument will be dedicated and installed at a later date at Lake Julianna. Mr. Cardinale will decide the place that represents his endless love where eagles soar and heroes walk.



During 2023, we added a special Eagle Award to the annual Play HOOK-e Veterans, Children and Active-Duty Military Fishing Day. Mr. Vito Cardinale, Cardinale Enterprises and Randy Johnson, Laurita Winery were the first to receive the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 award for their contributions to our military veterans and families. We chose the Eagle Award because it symbolizes patriotism and strength, inspired by the sight of eagles flying over Lake Julianna during a previous event. Eagles are also a part of Vito’s life journey within his family. Other recipients include: 2024 Don Marantz, Event Chairman, and 2025 Jersey Shore Surfcasting Foundation. This year, Project Healing Water Fly Fishing, Jersey Shore Chapter receive the Vietnam Veterans of America Shore Area Chapter 12 Eagle Award for their 10 years of serving our disabled veteran community at Lake Julianna. PHWFF not only provided support to veterans at the event but also at Lake Julianna throughout the year for veterans that struggle with PTSD.

New Jersey State Police provided an airboat show, K-9 demonstrations, and a flyover to salute our military heroes. Members of the Armed Forces Heritage Museum conducted demonstrations for youngsters and there were plenty of activity booths and food stations. This year, Italian ice was a big hit with the children and veterans. Youngsters also enjoyed interaction with pony therapy and service dogs.

Mr. Cardinale’s friends and family, along with vendors, served food to everyone in the BBQ area. We

thank our gracious hosts and all the volunteers who helped make the 10th Play HOOK-e Anniversary a great success.

We regret there is an overwhelming number of contributors, individuals, and merchants to mention in this article. We look forward to publishing a picture pictorial in the next JCAA Newspaper. If you would like to be part of our free programs for children and veterans register [here at Play Hook-e](#).



2026 JCAA YOUTH EDUCATION AWARD

The JCAA Youth Education Committee is accepting nominations for the 2026 Youth Education Award. Youth Education Award Criteria: Promoting “Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs (HOFNOD),” Certified HOFNOD instructors, number of fishing or aquatic education events, JCAA lending library usage, and creativity for promoting youth events. We already have one nomination from Berkeley Striper Club. Submit your nominations in writing and email to gkucharews@jcaa.org.

3rd ANNUAL FREE VETERANS FISHING TRIP

Jersey Coast Shark Anglers - John Ballman, Michele Kohler Vietnam Veterans of American Shore Chapter 12 Play HOOK-e - Karen Noe with Special Thanks to the Manasquan Elks Veterans Committee - Dick Mercora, Frank Vario. Frank Geraci won largest fluke and \$25 gift certificate for Fisherman’s Den. Frank also won the raffle for a custom Play Hook-e rod donated by Tim Lang.



NJ HOFNOD workshop, please phone or email Liz Jackson, NJ HOFNOD Coordinator Phone: (908) 637-4125 x122 email: liz.jackson@dep.state.nj.us.

SUPPORT LOCAL TACKLE DEALERS

Karen Noe and Michele Kohler setup our Play HOOK-e display booth and informed veterans and their families about our local “Play HOOK-e from PTSD” programs. All our Play HOOK-e anglers are encouraged to shop at [local tackle dealers](#). Most tackle dealers offer discounts to our active-duty military and veterans.

Veterans that stopped by our booth received a welcome gift bag supplied by Vietnam Veterans of America Shore Area Chapter 12 and Jersey Coast Anglers Association. We informed veterans about our JCAA newspaper and Play HOOK-e by-monthly newsletter. Many thanks to our participating tackle dealers for supporting our veterans and allowing us space. If your business would like us to set up a Play HOOK-e Go Fishing display, please email Greg at the email address below.

During September and October, we are offering veterans with PTSD an opportunity to relax for a few hours by the water and visit natural calming areas. If you would like to experience saltwater and freshwater fishing, we have a short one-to-one fishing program to get you outdoors to fish and boat. Connect with nature at Lake Julianna, Island Beach State Park, and other open spaces. To schedule a day and time, please email Greg @ gkucharews@jcaa.org.



NJ FREE FISHING DAY

During Free Fishing Days, anglers of all ages may fish without purchasing a license or trout stamp, but all other fishing regulations still apply, including catch limits, size restrictions, and seasonal rules.

Saturday, September 26, 2026, aligns with National Hunting & Fishing Day, offering another opportunity for license-free freshwater fishing in New Jersey.

This fall, think about becoming a HOFNOD instructor. New Jersey HOFNOD facilitator workshops are hosted by the DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife it is well worth the time to learn creative aquatic activities to teach youngsters the importance of becoming environmental stewards. This workshop is a great learning experience. If you are interested in attending a

NJBBA YOUTH FISHING

New Jersey Beach Buggy Association will host their annual surf fishing contest for children on Saturday, September 12th at Island Beach State Park (IBSP). The FREE EVENT is for youngsters 16 yrs. old and younger. Registration starts at 7:30 am at the first swimming area, “OBA-1”. The kids will receive an event t-shirt and a grab bag full of goodies after attending 5 Learning stations. “Prizes will not be given out before the awards ceremony. Fishing starts at 10 am, any fish caught could be a winner. When the 3-hour fishing period ends, everyone returns to OBA-1 for a FREE lunch. Please contact Ken Hollins at: njbbawebmaster@gmail.com for more information follow this [link](#).

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Club Membership Application

Club Name: _____

President's Name: _____

Pres. Address: Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Ph. # _____

Fax # _____

Please make check \$50 payable to JCAA

Individuals can join JCAA as an Associate Member

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

JCAA Associate Member Application

Date _____ New ____ Renewal ____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Ph. # _____

If contributing, please make check payable to JCAA

COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

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

JCAA SPONSORSHIP

The JCAA has 5 levels of sponsorship \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1,000

Dues paying clubs or individuals can also provide additional help by becoming Sponsors. Sponsors are recognized in our newspaper. Become a JCAA sponsor and help our cause. As you can see by our newspaper many of our member clubs are also JCAA sponsors.

- **\$1,000 - Full-page Ad**
- **\$500 - Full-size Business Card**
- **\$250 - Half-size Business Card**

For more information call JCAA at (732) 506-6565

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 site and [subscribe](#) from there.

Meetings:
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