



RISAA
Events & Meetings

All events and meetings can be found online at www.risaa.org/calendar.html

Mar 9-11 • 15th Annual New England Saltwater Fishing Show

Mar 20 • 6:30 PM RISAA Board of Directors

Mar 26 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar and Quarterly Meeting

Apr 9 • 7:00 PM Kayak Committee Spring Meeting

Apr 16 • 7:00 PM Fly Fishing Committee Spring Meeting

Apr 24 • 6:30 PM RISAA Board of Directors

Apr 30 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar

May 19 • 5:00 PM Fly Fishing Committee Cinder worm hatch fishing, Ninigret Pond

May 19 • RISAA Party Boat Night Squid Fishing Trip

May 21 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar

May 23 • 5:00 PM Fly Fishing Committee Cinder worm hatch fishing, Potter Pond

June 7 • 3:00 PM Fly Fishing Committee fishing Chepiwanoxet Point, East Greenwich

June 23 • Take-A-Kid Fishing Day

June 25 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar

July 27 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar

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Notes from the
President's Desk

Stephen Medeiros



Why can't they get black sea bass right?

It just seems ridiculous. There are so many black sea bass in Rhode Island waters that it's nearly impossible to fish without catching them. Go fishing for fluke, scup or tautog and you'll catch a sea bass.

But it looks like we're facing another year where RI anglers have to reduce the number of black sea bass we're allowed to catch.

The fisheries managers say we all caught too many. Well "DUH", that's because there are too many out there!

(I just need to get that off my chest.)

I really DO understand the problems with managing black sea bass, and why they can't get the counts right.

Black sea bass (BSB) are "protogynous hermaphrodites" which means they change sex. All BSB are born as females. When they reach 9-13 inches, 2-5 years old, 38% of them will change sex and become males.

This confuses the fisheries computer models that tell how many males and females are in a coastal stock of fish.

To add more doubt into the situation, some of the males will become "dominate" breeders (those you catch with a large hump on their heads), while others become "subordinate" males with no humps.

They can't tell 100% for sure how many breeding adult females and males are in the stock. Are there enough males for the quantity of females?

Black sea bass are managed jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) which we are in.

The ASMFC has just announced approval of a recent addendum that BSB will now be managed by regions. MA & RI are a single region so both states must match regulations, and we share a small portion of the coastal stock. And both states equally take the reduction hits when they come down.

As I'm writing this column, the RIDEM

has a public hearing scheduled for a number of recreational fishing regulations for 2018. Among them is, of course, black sea bass.



We already had strict regulations in 2017, but now we are faced with another cut.

We're looking at options for very

short seasons that will start as "early" as June 21 to as late as July 1! And when we could keep 7 fish last fall, that's going to drop to either 5 or 6 fish.

No one is going to be happy when the final rule comes out, probably something in late April.

The rest of the 2018 regulation changes aren't at all bad.

We're getting an increase in recreational scup. It looks like the minimum size will drop from 10" to 9". We also are pushing to keep the "special shore areas" in place where anglers would be able to keep an 8" scup.

Summer flounder will likely keep the current 19" minimum, but the daily bag will increase from 4 fish to 6 fish. Sounds nice, but it's really not a big increase in our quota. Fisheries managers know that the average angler catches 2 fluke on a trip, and very few actually can catch 6.

Tautog will change. Bay anglers have been pushing for years to get an earlier season opening because tautog are up in the bay and it gives bay anglers (and tackle shops) the change to start fishing earlier. The current proposal is to open April 1, instead of current April 15. To offset this the fall bag limit will drop from 6 fish/person to 5 fish/person.

Keeping in mind that there is a 10-fish boat limit, going to 5 fish per person puts two anglers on a boat at the max they could keep anyway, so it's not really going to hurt.

The 2018 regulations for bluefish and striped bass won't change.

By the time you read this, we MIGHT know the results. See you later...