

THE WATCH (from page 25)

Al Conti of Snug Harbor Marina, South Kingstown said, "The traffic and sales have been fantastic."

Capt. BJ Silvia of Flippin' Out Charters said, "I like the traffic and interest we received for the charter business, our summer flounder (fluke) fishing rigs and new this year the interest we received for the electric Minn Kota motors we are representing. The motors feature "Spot-Lock"; a GPS based system that allows you to automatically hover in the same location (over structure, over fish)."

But the fishing show was about a lot more than fishing gear and tackle. Two programs that caught my attention included Veterans Angler Charters and Anglers for Offshore Wind Power.

Capt. Kathy Granfield, Director of Veteran Angler Charters said, "We are an all-volunteer organization that offers free, small group charter fishing trips to injured and recovering veterans. Our mission is to provide our troops with recreational rehabilitation and therapeutic support." Granfield said, "We started in 2009 in Connecticut and due to our success now have **Capt. Randy Bagwell** of River Rebel Charters working Rhode Island waters and have the program in Massachusetts too." Visit www.veterananglercharters.org for details.

Keep fishing law conservation measures strong

In March 2018 I was in Washington, DC armed with the RISAA Board-approved final report and recommendations from the 2018 Southern New England Recreational Fishing Symposium. The Symposium was sponsored by RISAA and focused on the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the fishing law of this nation.

Several House and Senate bills have been submitted and at press time all of them continue to be revised with various recreational and commercial fishing amendments. So letting

our congressional delegation know how recreational anglers feel about MSA was perfectly timed.

Many RI and MA members of Congress (who received a copy of our Symposium report) were appreciative as they plan to use the input when considering MSA legislation.

The present MSA has rebuilt 43 fish stocks with conservation measures in place such as Allowable Catch Limits (ACLs) and with rebuilding timelines in place.

Most Symposium attendees felt it paramount to keep MSA conservation measures strong. Other key recommendations included funding for ecosystem-based management and climate change models that account for fish movement and quota adjustments due to warming water.

Attendees also felt that MRIP should be beefed up with additional funding for surveys as well as the creation of new and better ways to electronically report recreational angler catch and effort.

Thank you to Rhode Island **Senators Jack Reed** and **Sheldon Whitehouse** and **Representatives Jim Langevin** and **David Cicilline** for being such strong advocates for the fish and fishing.

Traveling in Washington 'fish' and 'conservation' circles I have come to learn how our congressional delegation has earned the respect of many in Washington.

Also, thank you to **Senator Ed Markey** of Massachusetts and **Senator Maggie Hassan** of New Hampshire for their good work on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation that regulates fishing in our nation. We were fortunate enough to meet with the fisheries staff of these two Senators and they were grateful for the Symposium report and recommendations and hope to use the input when giving MSA legislation consideration.

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