



Representing Over 6,500 Recreational Anglers

Like it or not, New England, it's here.....

Saltwater Recreational Fishing License Becomes A Reality

*Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York
- and now Rhode Island - all have bills introduced for a saltwater fishing license*

A few years ago, the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) conducted an online survey of members. It touched on a number of issues such as seminars, events and menhaden, but one of the important questions was:

Would you support a recreational saltwater fishing license?

- A. Yes, if there were guarantees that funds were protected and the money raised went back to the marine environment
- B. No, not under any circumstances
- C. Other responses

The unexpected result was that over 70% responded in favor of a license "if the funds were protected" and those "other responses" mostly agreed, but wanted to say how the money should be spent or protected.

This survey took place before anyone could know that in the near future there would be a federal law mandating a national registry, and that every state would eventually have a saltwater fishing license.

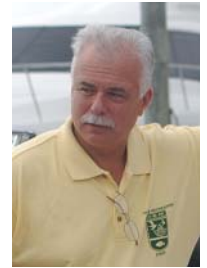
It appears that time has arrived. By 2011, every coastal state in the U.S. will have a recreational saltwater license in place. What will that license look like for Rhode Island? What will happen to the money generated?

Thanks to an 8-month cooperative effort of a Study Group of leaders of many saltwater fishing clubs, charter industry representatives, and bait & tackle shops, working in partnership with Rhode Island DEM, and the cooperation of several key legislators, a saltwater license for Rhode Island has come forth that incorporates all of the requirements that recreational anglers have called for in past years. Key features include:

- Funds generated would go into restricted account and used only for recreational fishing
- It would be among the lowest cost compared to other states
- Exemptions for under 16 yrs, over 65 yrs, disabled, military
- Easy online registration or at local bait shops
- Annual report by DEM to Marine Fisheries Council & public

"I am proud of the product and the process," said RIDEM Director **W. Michael Sullivan**.

"On a personal level, I feel the group did a good job," said RISAA President **Steve Medeiros**. "I'm satisfied that the Study Group came up with the best possible solution for all Rhode Island anglers."



Director Sullivan

The members of the Study Group were all quick to thank Director Sullivan for his willingness to compromise and listen to the concerns of the recreational fishing community. The Group also thanked **Bob Ballou**, Sullivan's assistant who co-chaired the Group through 8 months of meetings.

The final product is legislation that will be introduced in the both House and Senate, and legislators who have proven to be friends of public access and recreational fishing will be asked to sign on and introduce the bill.

For the text of the legislation, go to page 48

RISAA Foundation contribution helps to keep Ninigret night fishing open

In an effort to keep the Ninigret Wildlife Refuge open for later anglers to fish the worm hatch at night, the RISAA foundation partnered with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to purchase night surveillance equipment that would be used by the Charlestown Police so that the Town Park could remain open beyond sunset so anglers could have access to this fishing area. **(Complete story on page 23)**

2009 Fluke regulations for R.I.

After much anticipation, the 2009 recreational summer flounder regulations for Rhode Island was finally settled, but anglers were not pleased with the result. Rhode Island had to take a 42% reduction in quota for 2009. The new regulation:

- Minimum size: 21 inches
- Daily Bag: 6 fish per angler
- Season: June 17 to December 3

