



# The Watch

Doug MacPherson, Chairman



The RISAA Legislative Committee’s mission is to provide, in partnership with the Affiliated Clubs, a forum for improving the knowledge and understanding of fishery-related and government issues that affect recreational anglers. An informed membership encourages involvement and advocacy. The Legislative Committee will strive to advocate responsible fishery decision.

The Committee is comprised of RISAA Members and delegates from the Affiliated Clubs. The Committee meets two or three times a year, depending on the number of fishery and/or legislative issues that develop.

## New Year, New Regs and Other Issues

There are two Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) meetings scheduled to discuss and make recommendations for 2019 recreational fishing regulations.

On February 11 DEM will hold a workshop on recreational regulations to recommend to the RIMFC. The public is welcome to attend and voice comments and suggestions.

Then, on March 4, the RIMFC will meet to decide what to recommend to the RIDEM Director Janet Coit.

During a previous meeting on Dec 13, 2018, Jason McNamee, Chief of the Division of Marine Resources, indicated that although there were new stock assessments for both striped bass and summer flounder, he did not think the assessments would be finalized in time for new addendum from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

### Striped Bass, Summer Flounder, Scup and Tautog

The February 11 DEM meeting will be an opportunity to comment on any proposed changes from last years regulations. While it is likely that striped bass will be status quo for 2019, it has been indicated that summer flounder will also be status quo. I am not certain that there may not be some late changes, but the unknown is what effect the Federal budget shutdown will have.

Of note is the following agenda item on the ASMFC’s Winter Meeting agenda on February 5-7 as “Consider Methodology Adjusting 2019 Recreational Measures for Summer Flounder.” No details are provided, and I only bring this up because it is an unknown.

Scup will likely be status quo as well as tautog with no changes going into 2019.

### Black Sea Bass

As many of you recall, the black sea bass season was given a late spring start (6/24/18) to extend the season at the request of the party and charter boat participants.



The real effect here was leaving very little for shore and bay fisherman to legally catch in the Spring due to regulations as well as impacting local bait and tackle shops.

These meetings are when we recreational fisherman can voice our opinions on the proposed rules and regulations for the 2019 season. You can check on the latest meeting schedules

and workshops for saltwater regulations at [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/marine-fisheries/rimfc/index.php](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/marine-fisheries/rimfc/index.php).

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### Future Recreational Fluke (Summer Flounder) Allocations

For the last four years the State of New York has been trying to force a reallocation of the recreational summer flounder quota to increase the number of fish available for their residents.

After attempting to bring this issue up with Mid-Atlantic Council (MAMFC), ASMFC as well as direct appeal to the Secretary of Commerce, New York has now decided to file suit in Federal Court.



New York Attorney General Letitia James alleges that, “The federal government’s reliance on inaccurate and outdated data to set limits on commercial fluke fishing in New York is a direct threat to our state’s fishing industry.”

She also said, “This suit asks that the federal government use the best available science to allocate fluke fishing quotas, and to ensure that New York’s fishermen and women are no longer denied their fair share of the permitted catch. The federal government’s reliance on inaccurate and outdated data to set limits on commercial fluke fishing in New York is a direct threat to our state’s fishing industry.”

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