

## RECREATIONAL FISHING SYMPOSIUM (from page 3)

2. Before the MSA state and regional managers would often set catch levels above sustainable levels to address short-term economics, or they would exceed sustainable quotas, but there was no accountability for those overages (such was the case of cod in New England).

3. The Morris-Deal report suggested the nation develop a national recreational fishing policy and that we revise our recreational fishing management approach to change stock rebuilding timelines and allocation of marine fishery resources for the greatest benefit of the nation.

4. Recreational and commercial fishing are fundamentally different activities that require different management approaches, however federal laws and policies have attempted to shove recreational fishing into management approaches designed just for commercial fishing.

5. The ten "National Standards" of MSA serve as the guiding principles for managing fishing under MSA. In the past nine years the percentage of stocks not overfished increased from about 83% to 91%... and fish stocks not subject to overfishing increased from about 76% to 84%.

6. MSA has successfully managed stocks with annual catch limits so overfishing does not occur. However, MSA is not perfect: some challenges include the quality of data from the recreational sector, regulatory stability, access and opportunity.

7. Some believe recreational and commercial fishing are essentially different (experiential vs pounds of fish), however species caught for consumption (or meat vs catch & release) that are dominated by recreational fishers could be easily damaged if overfishing is allowed with no allowable catch limits (ACL). Species dominated by the recreational sector include 74% of black sea bass, 90% of south Atlantic dolphin, 74% of bluefish, 70% of red snapper in the Gulf, etc.

8. The ability of regional councils to use recreational management measures other than catch limits are already permitted by MSA. MSA currently allows alternative management measures allowing numbers of fish rather than pounds. It is just a mathematical calculation so this ability already exists in Magnuson.

9. The aim of MSA was precautionary management to grow fish to abundance and provide for Maximum Sustainable Yield or more recently Optimum Yield. MSA=Precautionary Management=Abundance=Angler Opportunity.

10. Over 40 recreationally and commercially important species have been rebuilt under MSA. It has been good for the fish, as well as those of us who depend on healthy and abundant fish stocks. It's important that we preserve and enhance conservation measures in our national fishing law. We need regulations that aim to grow fish to abundance for all rather than taking more fish



**Jason McNamee, Chief of Marine Resource Management, RIDEM, spoke about ecosystem based fisheries management**

to fulfill short term economic gains of a few.

### Top scoring directions from group work

Speakers and panelists (see speaker guide and agenda at [www.rissa.org](http://www.rissa.org)) first addressed participants and then had an open panel discussion with questions from other panelists, the facilitator, as well as participants attending the Symposium. Participants then broke into eight work groups of 6 to 8 people in each group and were asked for their input on what they might recommend to enhance the Magnuson-Stevens Act for recreational anglers.

The three top recommendations from each work group were posted in the front of the room, each one was read with duplicates deleted and then each participant was given four 'voting' dots. Attendees could put all four on one recommendation or vote for four different recommendations or anything in-between. Here were the top six recommendations made by Symposium participants.

**1. Improving recreational stock assessment data as well as catch and effort harvest data** were top scoring recommendations. Participants wanted the quality of existing data enhanced and wanted improved new data sources, creating avenues to accommodate electronic reporting in the recreational sector. Some participants wanted to both enhance existing data sources with more funding and surveying as well as explore electronic recording of catch and effort.

The key in both cases was development of federal criteria and standards for reporting, not state or regional criteria for reporting. The aim of 'better data' recommendations was to accommodate the collection and reporting of data in a timely manner to impact regulation.

**2. Protect forage fish and promote ecosystem-based management** was another top recommendation. Participants felt that the forage fish complex should be defined and managed separately from non-forage species exempt from optimal yield. Many participants felt that forage fish and ecosystem-based management were linked and should be addressed at the same time.

**3. Ending the redistribution of quota** from the recreational to commercial sector. Many felt that leaving unused quota in the recreational sector was a good conservation practice. Additionally, participants felt the regulation should put a value on 'the fish left in the water' from catch & release. **(to page 12)**

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