



RISAA
Events & Meetings

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

Mar 11 • 6:00 PM RIDEM Public Hearing on multiple recreational species. Corless Auditorium, URI Bay Campus

Mar 19 • 6:30 PM Board of Directors

March 22-24, 2019 New England Saltwater Fishing Show

Mar 25 • 7:00 PM RISAA Monthly Seminar

Apr 8 • 6:30 PM Kayak Committee Spring Meeting, Gregg's, N. Kingstown

Apr 15 • 6:30 PM Fly Fishing Committee Spring Meeting, Gregg's N. Kingstown

Apr 16-18 N.E. Fisheries Mgt Council, Mystic, CT

Apr 23 • 6:30 PM Board of Directors

Apr 27 • 9:00 AM Fly Fishing Committee fishing at 100 Acre Cove, Barrington

Apr 29 • 7:00 PM RISAA Seminar

Apr 29-May 2 ASMFC Spring Meeting, Arlington, VA

May 4 • 10:00 AM Kayak Committee Annual Meet & Greet, Goddard Park

May 7 • 6:30 PM Fly Fishing Committee fishg the worm hatch, Charlestown

May 11 • 9:00 AM Kayak Committee fishing the worm hatch, Charlestown

May 14 • 6:30 PM Fly Fishing Committee fishing the worm hatch, Charlestown

May 20 • 7:00 PM RISAA Seminar

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Notes from the
President's Desk
Stephen Medeiros



Time for slot limits?

It looks like we have arrived at the point where there is no denying that the Atlantic striped bass stock is in trouble.

For the past couple of years, members have said that there aren't as many large striped bass around. There have been plenty of small fish, but numbers of the 30+ pound fish have dwindled.

It was no surprise when word came from the ASMFC Striped Bass Technical Committee that the 2018 benchmark stock assessment shows that the female spawning stock biomass for 2017 was below the threshold, and that the stock is "overfished" and is experiencing overfishing.

For the fisheries biologists to come out with those overfishing words is a big deal.

The report also noted that unless the harvest was reduced, "the probability of female (spawning stock biomass) being below the threshold in 2023 was very high, equal or close to 100%."

The threshold is at the point where the stock would begin to collapse and unable to sustain itself.

It's time to stop pretending everything is fine with striped bass.

One of our members, **Tom Poirier**, in a recent email said, "Why are we killing the big breeding females? The management is backwards!"

He said it's time for a slot limit.

Although I had always been a catch & release striper fisherman, I've never been a fan of a striped bass slot limit. I figure it would only contribute to wiping out all of the fish within the slot and sooner or later, those fish would be gone and not be the big fish of tomorrow.

But now I'm rethinking this. If we don't protect the large breeding females, the whole future stock could just collapse.

I've talked to several members about

this problem.

What if a slot was established that allowed recreational anglers to keep one fish between (example) 18 to 32 inches. Every striper 33+ inches had to be released.

One member said that even though recreational anglers could be forced to release all those larger fish, commercial fishermen take fish that's a minimum of 34 inches. What about all the large fish they will still be killing? Well, the fact is that the commercial striped bass quota in RI is very small (10%) and has very little effect on the total population.

One solution could be with the use of special "trophy" striped bass tags issued by DEM. A tag would allow an angler to keep one fish over 32 inches. Each angler could get one tag per year that is non-transferable. Most recreational anglers never catch/keep a 33+ inch striper anyway. But more important, this would restrict the "sharpies" who catch dozens (hundreds?) of large stripers each year.

One problem will be that the charter boats would object. Will charter customers want to pay \$600+ to be able to catch one striper less than 32 inches? Maybe the charter boats would get a limited number of trophy tags to use.

The biggest issue with a slot limit if ever adopted is that it would need to be applied coastwide. There's no way RI anglers couldn't keep 33+ inch stripers when the next state over does.

Other solutions may come forward in the following months, but for sure, something needs to be done.

Recreational fishing thrives on fish abundance.....

We are all more likely to go fishing if there is the chance we will find and catch fish. No fish = No fishing. If fish abundance dwindles, so will the sport of recreational fishing.

We all have a responsibility to do whatever is necessary NOW for the sake of striped bass fishing in the FUTURE.