

SALTWATER RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE REPORT (from page 1)

Further, it mandates this report by submitted to the Marine Fisheries Council and “one or more public meetings to solicit input from recreational fisherman and the general public.” The Fisheries Council then prepares an addendum to the report, setting for the Council’s opinion on whether the program is meeting its intended purposes.

The report is also annually submitted to the General Assumbly.

For the past several years, DEM **Marine Fisheries Division** (Division) staff presents this report to a meeting of the RISAA Board of Directors and Legislative Committee (which is comprised of delegates from 28 affiliate clubs).

On February 19, 2019 Division staff presented the current report to the RISAA Board of Directors, and all present approved of the 2018 expenditures and proposed plans for 2019.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Back in 2009 the federal government mandated that all recreational saltwater anglers be registered and that each state could create it’s own permit system, but if any state did not, it’s saltwater fishing citizens would have to purchase a \$15 federal permit.

That Federal Angler Registry permit **today costs \$29**, while the Rhode Island license is \$7. The Rhode Island license is also accepted in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and New York through a reciprocity agreement.

Not only does Rhode Island have a much lower cost than the federal fee, RI does not charge a fee to residents over 65, or to residents who are blind, permanently disabled and RI residents who are on leave from active military duty.

A portion of each RI license sold, \$2 for each license sold online and \$3 for each license sold at a vendor, is used to cover the costs of administering the program. The money goes directly to the vendors who administer the program, and are not revenues received by the state. In this way the program covers its own costs and is self-sustaining.

The balance of the revenues derived from license sales are deposited into a restricted receipt account, which is managed by the DEM and subject to the exclusive-use restrictions set for by law. Monies from the account can **ONLY** be used for

managing Rhode Island’s marine recreational fisheries, with particular reference to improving state-based recreational fishery catch and effort statistics and stock assess-ments; and e n h a n c i n g recreational fishing opportunities in the state.

The availability of this dedicated revenue source for use in supporting programs and activities that address the priority interests of RI’s recreational fishing community is a major benefit associated with the license program. Of particular value is the opportunity to use the state funds to leverage federal funds.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration Program provides federal funding for saltwater

recreational fishing programs. The funding is administered via grants to the state; projects written to these grants require a 25% state match. The fees generated by the RI saltwater license program are used to leverage an additional \$3 for every \$1 dedicated to projects and activities that enhance recreational saltwater fishing access, as well as science and mangement programs that directly relate to recreational fishing stocks.

INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Since the rollout of the RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing License, DEM has continued to provide information and outreach to the RI angling community.

Since 2013 DEM has contracted with a publishing company to create a “Saltwater Recreation Fishing Guide” for distribution throughout the state. **(to page 12)**

RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses Issued

License Type	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Resident Full Year	18,658	26,556	25,864	25,938	26,084	29,335	28,605	31,576
Non-Resident Full Year	5,249	7,649	6,975	7,432	7,381	8,428	8,378	8,762
Resident 7-Day	60	122	107	144	134	159	158	167
Non-Resident 7 Day	1,310	2,505	2,730	2,958	3,055	3,141	3,221	3,436
Resident Over 65	3,635	4,613	4,653	4,667	4,704	5,078	5,613	5,879
Active Military Stationed in RI	703	993	996	1,055	992	1,006	971	975
Totals:	29,615	42,438	41,325	42,194	42,350	47,147	46,946	50,795

RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing Gross Revenue

License Type	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Resident Full Year	\$130,606	\$185,892	\$181,048	\$181,566	\$182,588	\$205,345	\$200,235	\$221,032
Non-Resident Full Year	\$52,490	\$76,490	\$69,750	\$74,320	\$73,810	\$84,280	\$83,780	\$90,938
Resident 7-Day	\$300	\$610	\$535	\$720	\$670	\$795	\$790	\$835
Non-Resident 7 Day	\$6,550	\$12,525	\$13,650	\$14,790	\$15,275	\$15,705	\$16,105	\$17,639
Resident Over 65	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Active Military Stationed in RI	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals:	\$189,946	\$275,517	\$264,983	\$271,396	\$272,343	\$306,125	\$300,910	\$330,444