

FISHERIES COUNCIL (from page 21)

This letter was a topic of discussion at the Council meeting. McNamee said DEM received a second similar letter from Connecticut, but it missed the comment deadline so it was not shared with Council members and the public.

McKiernan said, RI conservation equivalency “Alternatives would erode the conservation benefit of slot limit management in our region given how striped bass migrate between states.”

“Striped bass 35” to 40” in length protected in ME–MA and CT–NY, will be open to harvest in RI; while fish 28” to 32” (or 28” to 30”) length protected in RI, will be open to harvest in ME–MA and CT–NY... the projected reduction in removals associated with Rhode Island’s conservation equivalency options will not be realized,” said McKiernan.

Law enforcement in RI and the region said they oppose different coastwide regulations too.

Public comments

A request was made by a commercial horseshoe crab fishermen to revisit horseshoe crab regulations as they have not been reviewed in recent years. Jason McNamee said, “We will put horseshoe crabs on the agenda to be addressed in a workshop in the near future.”

Saltwater fishing license annual report

The RI Marine Fisheries Council recommended for approval DEM’s RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing License Program

annual report. The report provides an overview of the license program including the number of licenses purchased and funds raised, how funds were spent in 2019 and the plans and initiatives planned for 2020.

Highlights of this year’s report include the second highest totals since the program started in 2011 with 48,737 licenses issued in Rhode Island in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and gross revenue of \$324,817. It is important to note that state funds are spent with a three to one federal government match through US Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Program funds. For example if DEM has budgeted \$250,000 in spending, this 25% state of RI share would garner \$750,000 in federal funds for a total RI budget of \$1,000,000.

Commercial license legislative re-structuring initiative was also reviewed via a DEM white paper on the subject. The aim of the initiative is to streamline and improve the commercial fisheries licensing program.

Quahog week. Council chair **Bob Ballou** announced that Quahog Week will be held once again this year March 23 to March 29, 2020. Restaurant and fish markets throughout the state are expected to participate with daily quahog specials. For information visit www.seafoodri.org

Meeting minutes and videos of RIMFC March 2 meetings will be posted on their website at www.dem.ri.gov.



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2020 Tournament Schedule

Shark Tournament - July 11 & 12

White Chinner Challenge
Oct 10 - Dec 5

**see us at the
NE Saltwater Fishing Show - March 27-29
Booths 1133-1135 and 1313-1315**

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