



# The Watch

Capt. Dave Monti, 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.

## Council and Commission to Consider Transit Provision

A joint action on a black sea bass transit zone between Block Island and the Rhode Island mainland is being considered by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Under current regulations when scup and black sea bass recreational fisheries are closed in federal waters but open in state waters, vessels may not transit federal waters with scup or black sea bass caught in state waters. This has been problematic in Block Island Sound from September 22 – October 21 when black sea bass is closed in federal waters.

State waters in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York are open to black sea bass fishing during that time. Anglers fishing in state waters around Block Island must pass through federal waters to return to the mainland. If they retain any black sea bass, they are in violation of the federal regulations while they pass through federal waters, even if those fish were legally caught in state waters.

This has not been an issue for summer flounder as federal waters regulations for summer flounder are waived under conservation equivalency. It has also not been an issue for scup in recent years as the federal waters scup season has been open year-round since 2012.

Also, commercial vessels with state-only permits face potential obstacles when transiting between RI state waters around Block Island and state waters along the mainland.

**Bob Ballou**, chairman of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) and assistant to Janet Coit, Director of the Department of Environmental Management said, “Next steps will include further development of alternatives by staff in June and July; a Public Hearing Document/Draft Addendum is expected to be approved by the Council and Commission in August; with public hearings taking place in Fall so a final joint action can occur as early as December 2018.”



Ballou

At the June RIMFC meeting Councilman Capt. Andy Dangelo said, “The for-hire sector thanks DEM for pursuing the transit zone issue. It’s something fishermen have wanted for a long time.”

Proposed alternatives may include status quo, use of the

current striped bass transit zone or the use of a narrow zone running north and south from Block Island to the Rhode Island mainland. A variety of conditions will be considered including what species the zone is applicable for, good for recreational and/or commercial fishing; and would the law apply to state-permitted vessels only or dual state-federally permitted vessels.

We plan to follow progress on the proposed transit zone as it develops and keep you posted.

### Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council update

The Rhode Island Marine Fisheries council met June 26, 2018. Here are some agenda highlights.

First, the council thanked William (Bill) Mackintosh, III, commercial and recreational fishermen, for his service to the council. Bill provided the council with his fishing expertise, always weighing in on issues putting himself in the shoes of the fishermen to understand what the impact of Council regulation recommendations might be on fishermen. Thanks for your service Bill.



At the same meeting **Jason Jarvis** was welcomed as a new Councilman. Jarvis is a native of Westerly and has a broad range of experience working as a deck hand on commercial vessels, a mate on party and charter boats as well as having his own commercial fishing license. Governor Raimondo appointed Jarvis to the council on June 16 and his appointment was approved by the Rhode Island Senate on June 19.

Items on the agenda included:

1). Bay-wide quahaug stock assessment and Providence River water quality review. DEM related that conditional area B’s status had been changed to an open area early this year and that new Providence River shellfishing areas were being explored at this time with no immediate plans to open areas this year until additional input is obtained and proposals are developed.

2). Highlights of the June 4 public hearing were reviewed and presented to the Council for consideration including:

- modification and/or deletion of terms and removal of language to clean up regulations... the Council approved recommendations
- transfer of quota between the striped bass floating fish trap/general category fisheries... council approved DEM’s recommendation excluding the fall trigger date
- an increase in minimum size for recreational shortfin mako sharks. **(to page 33)**