



The Watch

Doug MacPherson, 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.

ASMFC Summer Meeting

Many species are affected

So, the big summer meeting of the ASMFC, held on August 3-4, has given the recreational fishing community some good news, some puzzling news and a look at what we can expect going forward.



coastal producer areas, regional reference points, recreational discard mortality, conservation equivalencies, Recreational Accountability and coastal commercial quota allocation.

In reading the executive summary, and a reading of the monthly meeting summaries of this group, will certainly raise some eyebrows.

There is much discussion over regional vs coastal regulations where areas such as the Chesapeake Bay fisheries have quite different ideas of what constitutes recreational and commercial management.

Another heavily debated area is whether the statistical targets, certain to include SSB (spawning stock biomass), should remain the same; how to improve the accuracy of recreational catch and release; reduce mortality; and of course our old friends, conservation equivalencies, which has let some states seriously overfish and not suffer any penalty.

As is required, this new amendment will have scheduled public hearings in all the affected states which would of course include Rhode Island. I know it is summer, but if you have concerns about how stripers are being managed we really need your participation and voices when these hearings are scheduled. They are usually held in the off-months when you are not fishing anyway.

Menhaden

The ERP (Eco System Reference Point), the move from managing from a single species to this new model of prey/predator dependence, has unanimously been passed by the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board. This measure was widely supported by rec’s and a long time in coming.



Now the reality of fishery management steps in. Over the immediate future this is not going to have much current impact on the current coast wide menhaden catch allowances. The science of how many pogies does it take to feed the striped bass along the Atlantic Coast will be an interesting next step.

Striped Bass

The headline here is not unexpected. The ASMFC Striped Bass Advisory Board has initiated Amendment 7 to address the train wreck this fishery became after the 2018 release of the new MRIP (recreational survey data).

The current committee chairperson, **David Borden** of RI, pointed out that the previous amendment was in place from 2003 and the board needed to “focus on addressing a number of issues that have been at the forefront of striped bass management for a long time.”



David Borden

To that end a work group of 7 board members, met four times between the spring and summer meetings to generate a list of issues to be incorporated into the new amendment public information document (PID). These areas of interest range listed for consideration are fishery goals and objectives, stock rebuilding/



time frame, management triggers, biological reference points, regional management (recreational measures,

Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass

The Management Board for these three species has approved revisions to the total catch limits based upon a new revised “Risk Limit” policy.

For **Summer Flounder** a revised commercial/recreational harvest will increase about 8 percent from the previously set limit set in December of 2019. This is reflected in the new quota for the recreational fishery and will be an increase from the last two years.



How that will impact current regulations is hard to say at this point as the catch data from 2020 will need to be factored in. If there is an overage in recreational catch for this year, we may not see much benefit next year. The coastal MRIP data for this year is likely to be very spotty due to the limitations created by the current pandemic. **(to page 27)**