

# The FRANCES FLEET

"Catch A Good Time!"



Located in the Port of Galilee, RI



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## BLACKFISH

Starts in October



## TUNA

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## THE WATCH (from page 3)

To rub some salt on the wound, Omega Protein is no longer a Texas-based company. Cooke aquaculture, a Canadian-based company purchased Omega recently. If you are familiar with Cooke Aquaculture, then you already know about their violations. If you don't, there's more than a few.

If you haven't heard about aquaculture salmon (a component of Cooke Aquaculture's overall harvest), you should probably read about it. First, these operations are accelerators for diseases. Second, aquaculture fish are not nearly as healthy to eat as wild fish. Piscine Reovirus is rampant in aquaculture and has been spread to wild populations from aquaculture operations. Please, don't let anyone tell you that this virus already exists in the wild. "Although PRV is in the natural environment, what we are now making our decision on is that PRV is not widely distributed in the wild. We sampled thousands of Chinook in the wild and we see an incidence of seven per cent or less, so the notion that PRV is natural and everywhere is not true. The incidence in the farmed fish we sampled was 75 to 80 per cent." We aren't against aquaculture; our country needs the food. But, turning pristine areas into concentrated animal feed lots on the water is unacceptable. Any of you trout fishermen recall whirling disease? How about chronic wasting disease that was spread by farmed deer? Closed system, land-based aquaculture is a much more friendly solution. That said, wild fish are still the best.

Omega also has a robust operation in the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf harvest of menhaden dwarfs the Atlantic harvest. That's three coasts where their impacts are being felt.

Since Omega operates as the only reduction fishery in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, they are protected under The Magnuson-Stevens Act by "The Rule of Three". "If there are less than three entities operating in any fishery at a local, state, or regional level, those data derived from those entities must be included in aggregate at a level that will not compromise individual confidentiality. In other words, if one state has

confidential landings, it must be combined with the whole region to prevent disclosure." In layman's terms, reporting is essentially confidential by law.

I've set you up for the most unbelievable facet of Omega Protein. All marine fisheries in Virginia are managed by VMRC (Virginia Marine Resources Commission). Well, all of them except one. You guessed it! (to page 32)

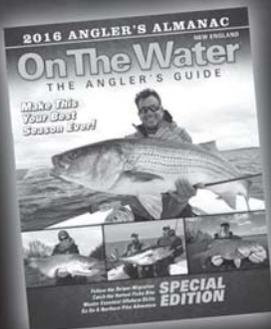


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