



RHODE ISLAND

SALTWATER *Anglers*

Representing
OVER 7,500
Recreational Anglers

IN THIS ISSUE:

RELEASE MORTALITY REVISITED

PLUS: 2025 TOURNAMENT STANDINGS

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www.RISAA.org • 401-826-2121

EVENTS & MEETINGS

December 29
Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers, following the December Seminar. Open to all members

Seminar:
RISAA DIY Night!
(See Page 16 for details)

WANTED...

Merchandise Committee Chair
Bob Marco will continue to serve as the chair for a few more months so this would be a great opportunity for someone to learn what the position is all about and have Bob to help get up and running.

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The Official Magazine of the
Rhode Island Saltwater
Anglers Association
Published Monthly
RISAA
PO BOX 1467
Coventry, RI 02816

FROM THE HELM



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX WITH MY LUCKY CHARMS

As we come to the end of 2025, Let’s take a few minutes to pause and think about all the great things that have happened this year. Just to mention a few that come to mind immediately...

The 2025 NE Saltwater Fishing Show came together nicely in March with many new exhibitors and vendors, including a junior tackle manufacturer who set up a booth for his business for the very first time, with a little parental supervision by a very proud parent. Our Youth Fishing Camp in July was very successful, and I can’t remember having a better, more attentive, and polite group of participants. Our Surfcasting Committee won both the Spring and Fall Interclub Tournaments, something that has not happened since 2005, and they also raised a record amount for charity. We established a Collegiate Committee, led by our members who are also college students to help other students in the region overcome the barriers they face to learn how to fish. Our final tournament for the year, the tautog tournament, saw a larger than usual number of participants and fish submitted! The pressure was on for sure in the quest for the top spots!

These moments, along with all the other great things that happened in 2025, are what make me proud to be a part RISAA and help inspire me to make 2026 an even better year for all of us!

While we temporarily put down our rods and pick up our snow shovels, now is the perfect time to go through that tackle box, gear back, and / or bucket that smells like it might still have crabs in it and organize everything for next year. It’s also a great time to look at what worked and what didn’t over this past season. I am a huge fan of planning and preparing for what I am going to do. While we are cleaning, organizing and putting away our fishing gear this time of year, we should also be looking at what worked successfully, so we can reproduce those things, and remember what we used so we can replace those items as we will most likely use and lose those same items next year.

Remember, the holidays are coming. A gift certificate for a local bait & tackle shop might make a great present this year. Also, we have the 2026 NE Saltwater Fishing Show coming up March 6-8, 2026 which will be hosting the latest and greatest rods, reels, and accessories along with all our tried and true favorite items. I also encourage everyone to think outside of the box when sourcing and creating materials for your rigs for next year.

For instance, I found a great source for beads for my bottom fishing rigs at a local craft store. While there, I found various specialty beads shaped like little skulls, beads that were yellow and had emoji faces on them, UV paint in various colors, along with all sorts of other crazy things that I would have never found elsewhere. Last year I began using them on my bottom fishing rigs. I love the metallic and glass beads because they help add weight and get the rig to the bottom faster. For some reason the fish seem to like the emoji beads on my rigs. I don’t know why, but they, along with some other top secret items, are tops among my lucky charm rigs. You never know whether the fish love them or hate them but as long as they are hitting the rig, it doesn’t really matter.

So, get creative and have some fun building up your own unique inventory of custom rigs while we wait for spring to get here! I will be seeing you all on the water soon. 🐟

Scott **TRAVERS**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE WATCH

Reported by: Richard **Hittinger**, CHAIRMAN

FORAGE FISH ARE IMPORTANT!

RISAA members have long been concerned about the health of forage fish such as menhaden, herring, mackerel, sand eels and others in our waters. Over 20 years ago RISAA members were so concerned about purse seining in Narragansett Bay that the conflict sparked the “Pogy Wars” between recreational anglers and purse seining boats. At the RISAA Symposia in 2013, 2015, and 2018 protection of forage fish and ecosystem-based management were key topics that RISAA members were concerned about. (Ecosystem-based management assigns importance when harvest quotas are determined to how populations of particular fish, such as menhaden or other forage species are necessary to provide food for the rest of the ecosystem.)

Improved management of menhaden harvest through establishment of the Menhaden Management Area (MMA) more than 12 years ago by RIDEM calmed some of the Pogy War attitude, but there have been many attempts in recent years to liberalize commercial harvest of menhaden in the MMA. (The MMA includes all of Narragansett Bay, the RI portion of Mt. Hope Bay and the Sakonnet River.) In addition, there has been significant activity recently regarding forage fish regionally at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Management Commission (ASMFC) and the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC).

First, I would like to review recent changes and additional requests by commercial harvesters of menhaden in RI waters. For several years commercial harvesters have argued that because of the way that the MMA is regulated, the waters of Narragansett Bay are not open to commercial harvest of menhaden very often during most years. They argue that the regulations do not allow commercial fishermen to harvest the entire quota of menhaden and that the fishery should be more predictable so that small boat commercial harvesters can make a predictable season harvesting menhaden in Narragansett Bay. They pushed for the MMA to be open to “small” amounts of commercial harvest whether the base load of menhaden has entered the Bay or not. RISAA has stated both in verbal testimony and in written comments that opening up the MMA again could restart some of the old tensions between recreational anglers and commercial harvesters, but after several years of RIDEM turning down these requests, last year RIDEM passed new regulations allowing harvest of menhaden in the MMA even if the area was not officially opened because of observed biomass. These regulations allowed up to 6000 pounds

RI SALTWATER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION
Legislative Committee



of menhaden per vessel per week; allowed harvest on Monday and Thursday only; allowed only hand-hauled seine, cast net or floating gill net; and was limited to RI residents only. This new open commercial harvest of menhaden is why some RISAA members have been asking about why they now see commercial menhaden harvest in the Bay.

With this new rule now on the books commercial harvesters have gone back to RIDEM this year to ask for more harvest and less restrictions. At the time that I write this column I don’t know the final RIDEM decision on this matter, but here is what commercial harvesters are requesting. They want to increase the weekly limit from 6000 pounds to 12,000 pounds per vessel. They want to open up harvest to any day of the week. They want to allow any form of nets to be used, not just hand-hauled seine, cast net or floating gill net. Again, RISAA has submitted written comments that we are opposed to this additional opening of commercial harvest in the MMA and we hope that RIDEM does not increase commercial harvest when the MMA should be closed according to the rules that established the MMA.

Coastwide menhaden management is governed by the ASMFC. At their October meeting the ASMFC Menhaden Management Board voted to reduce coastwide commercial harvest of Atlantic Menhaden by 20% for 2026. This is in response to new information from the scientific committee regarding the estimated menhaden population that many groups said should result in a 50% reduction in quota for 2026. Commercial harvesters said this 20% quota reduction was unnecessary while environmental groups and fishing groups characterized this as far too small a reduction to be effective at managing menhaden harvest in a way that protects the fish’s ecological benefit. RISAA pushed for a much larger reduction, but after years of dealing with menhaden management I am happy that we got the 20% reduction in place coastwide. This 20% reduction will result in a lower quota for menhaden harvest in RI waters for 2026.

RISAA has been active recently in other forage fish management as well. On the herring front, we have been speaking out to try to reduce the harvest of Atlantic Herring and to reduce the by-catch of River Herring and Shad by the commercial Atlantic Herring fishery. Our best opportunity to see some reductions are for the NEFMC to approve Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Herring Management Plan. RISAA commented on the draft Amendment

(Continued on page 8)

MEMBER PHOTOS



Charlie Whipple with his largest striper—42 inches aboard the Dan-De.



Bob Marco with a tog caught from his kayak.



Orlando Savastano with an alligator blue from 13 miles south of Block Island.



Robert Pos with a striper from the surf.

SEND US YOUR PICS!

If you have a memorable outing, send your member photos to the editor definis@risaa.org



THE WELCOME COMMITTEE

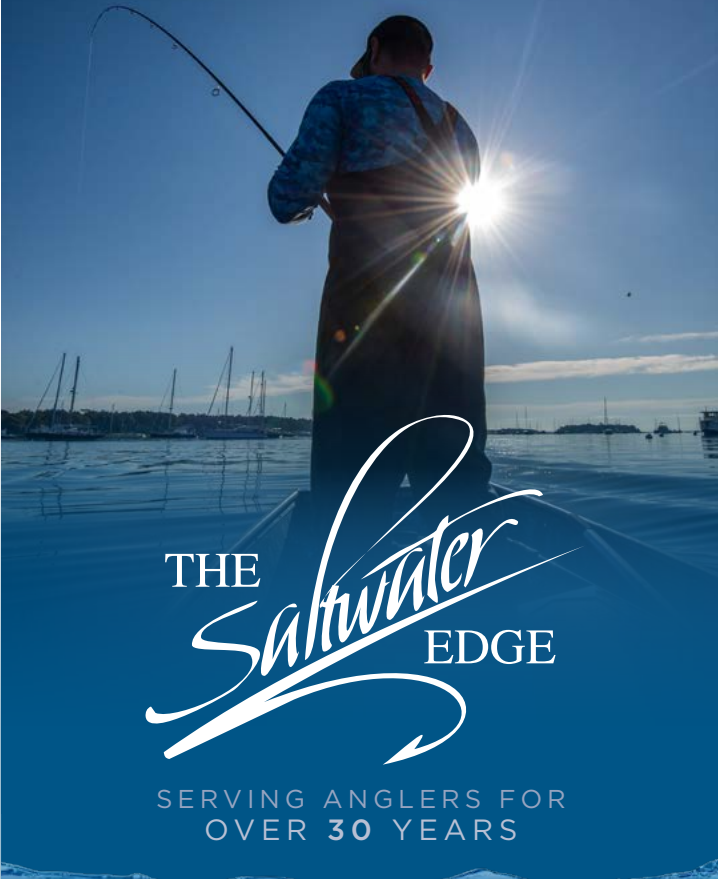
Dawn Filliatreault Wood, CHAIR

Welcome *NEW* Members!

- Kyle Sheehan - North Providence, RI
- Jason Baillargeon - Dudley, MA
- Frank Tobin - Bristol, RI
- Brian Gerbutavich - Westerly, RI
- Gordon Chen - Providence, RI
- Christian Yeung - Providence, RI
- Shaoyang Ma - Tallahassee, FL
- Tamar Chameides - Providence, RI
- Daisy Benardo - Providence, RI
- Heewon Seo - Tallahassee, FL
- Mikael Savul - Providence, RI
- Joshua Marcus - Westport, CT
- Ben Marcus - Westport, CT
- Sebastian DeCosta - Niantic, CT
- Charles Kohl - Holly Springs, NC
- Audrey Zhang - Providence, RI
- John Cieslewski - Bridgeport, CT
- Lara Gamaleldin - Sunset Beach, CA
- Carter Bedford - Providence, RI
- Wali Hasan - Providence, RI
- Harry Meirowitz - Providence, RI
- Paul Browne - Randolph, MA
- Jeff Burke - Rutland, VT
- James Skipper - Providence, RI
- Ire Asojo - Hampton, VA
- Hope Prockop - Providence, RI
- David Prockop - Providence, RI
- Stephen Medeiros - East Freetown, MA
- Nicholas Loew - Providence, RI
- Mark Celio - Providence, RI
- Mark Schultz - Charlestown, RI
- Jackson Foster - Warren, RI
- Philip McGrath - Cumberland, RI
- Peter Cha - Cincinnati, OH

The purpose of the Welcome Committee is to contact new members, welcome them to the Association and answer any questions they may have about RISAA and its activities.

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RELEASE MORTALITY REVISITED: NEW RESEARCH FROM MASSACHUSETTS DMF

What’s going on? For decades, striped bass management relied on a 9% release-mortality estimate from a 1990s study that even its author warned wasn’t suitable for management. New research from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has finally set the record straight—release mortality is roughly half that rate, and can even dip further for artificial and fly anglers. Combined with sharp drops in overall releases and better handling practices, this science proves that responsible catch-and-release anglers aren’t the problem—and no targeting closures are scientifically indefensible.

Back in the early 1990s, Paul Diodati, then a striped bass biologist at the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), set out to answer one of the oldest questions in striped bass management—how many stripers actually die after being released?

Diodati designed an ambitious experiment. Roughly **1,000 striped bass** were captured from a fish weir, transported by boat, loaded into a stocking truck, and finally delivered to Smith Pool, a gated tidal impoundment. It’s important to pause here—this level of handling and confinement far exceeds what a fish would ever experience in normal recreational fishing conditions. But we’ll come back to that.

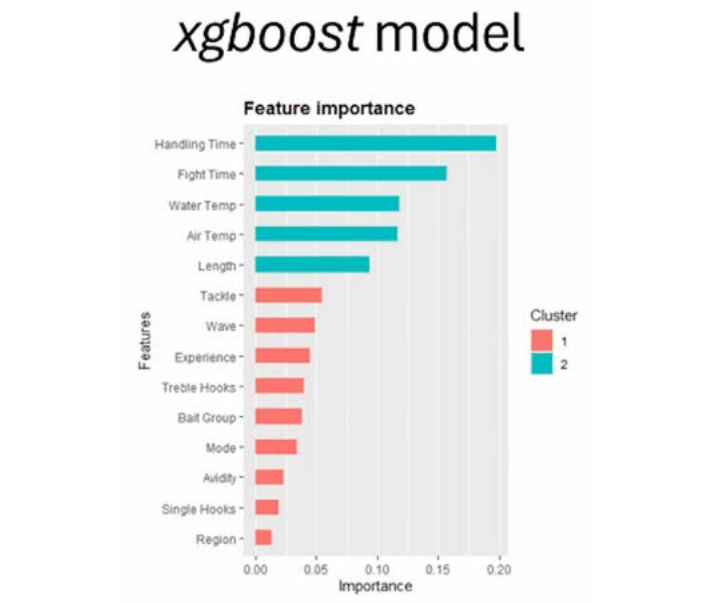
Recreational fishing groups were invited to catch and release these stripers inside the impoundment. The average fish measured about 12 inches, and 173 were caught and released with tags recorded. When the experiment ended, the tidal pool was drained. Fifteen fish were missing, leading to the now-famous estimate of 9% release mortality. That 9% figure came from assuming every missing fish had died due to release mortality. What wasn’t accounted for were other possible explanations—small fish escaping through the tidal gate, predation by ospreys or eagles, or even harvest by nearby residents. The pool itself offered poor striped bass habitat, more of a muddy bowl than an estuary, and anglers reported that fish health visibly declined as research progressed through the summer.

the time period of interest. One could collect such information by adding questions regarding significant hooking parameters to existing creel surveys (e.g., USDOC 1991). Our present model would not be sufficient for estimating coastwide hooking mortality of striped bass, as it does not include effects of such factors as fish size and environmental variables (temperature, salinity) on mortality. Developing a comprehensive model and applying it to coastal populations could be useful in shaping appropriate management strategies for important recreational species such as striped bass.

To be clear, Paul Diodati was an exceptional scientist whose work laid critical groundwork for modern striped bass management. Our goal is not to criticize his research—it’s to acknowledge its limitations in context. In fact, Diodati himself cautioned that his findings **should not be used** for management decisions and called for additional study. And yet, for decades, that 9% number has quietly guided management policy. A lot has changed since the mid-90s. The science of telemetry tags has evolved significantly.

The science community is more connected to the angling community than ever before. Our knowledge of striped bass has also increased exponentially. We are long overdue for a new approach. Thankfully, fast-forward nearly thirty years, and the Massachusetts DMF decided it was time to take Diodati’s recommendation literally—and run the most advanced study ever conducted on striped bass release mortality.

The new research, launched about five years ago, took a comprehensive approach. Massachusetts DMF went all-in. The goal was a more comprehensive and reliable mortality metric, which required a significantly larger data set. Every possible variable was considered, from fish condition upon release to hook type,



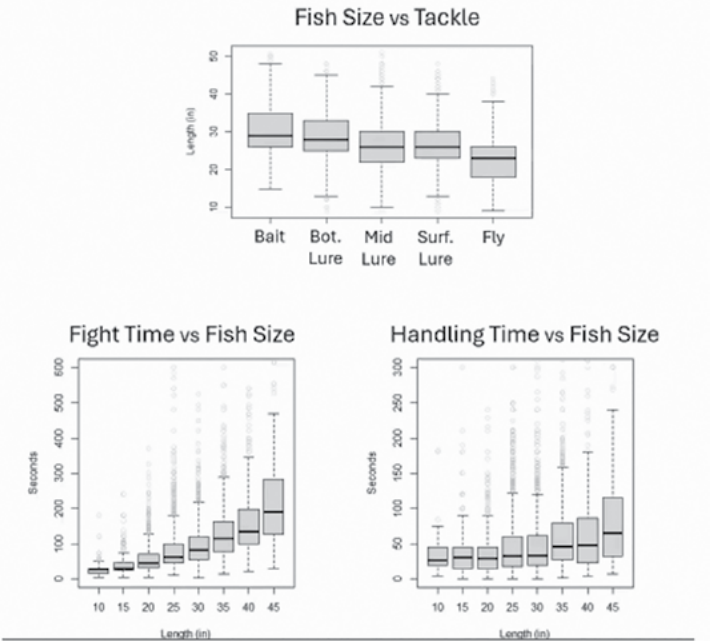
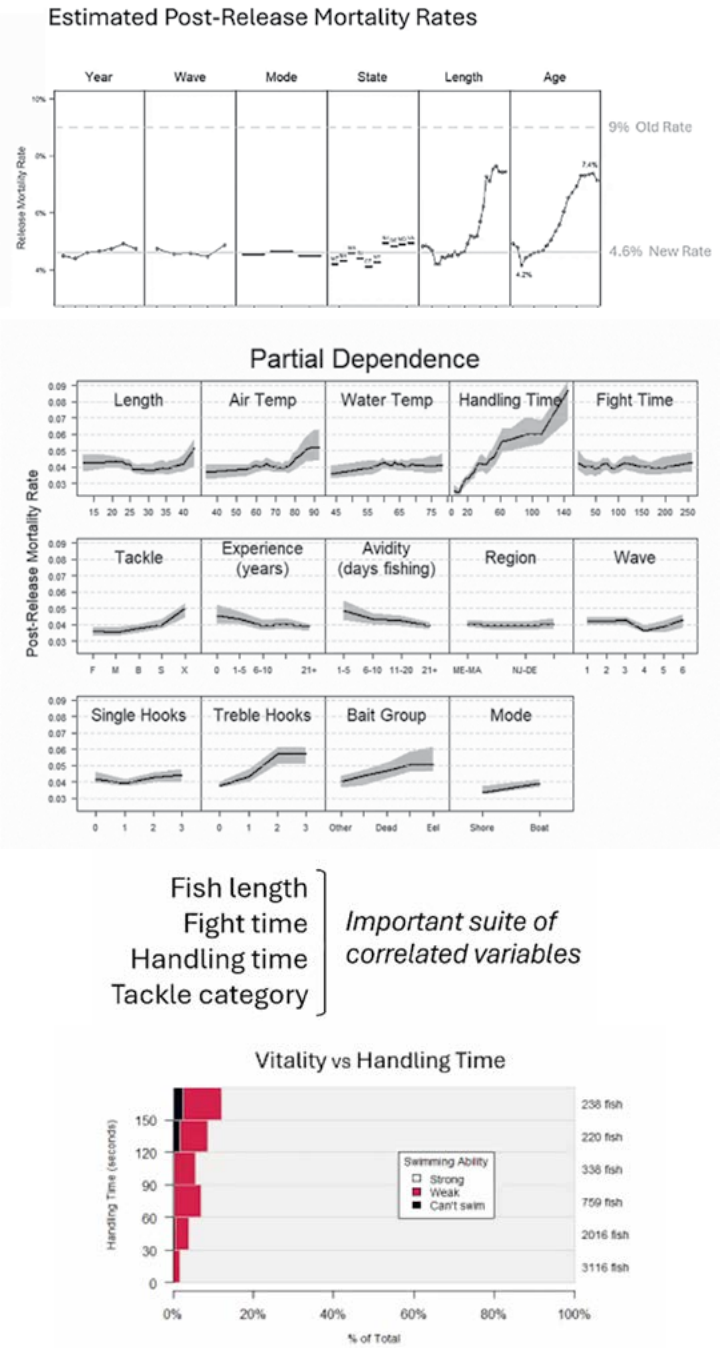
fight time, and temperature. Released fish were given grades on a scale. A “Level One” fish was hooked in the mouth and displayed no damage. Fish were rated from Level 1 (healthy, mouth-hooked) to Level 4 (unable to swim away). Telemetry tags capable of recording tail beats were implanted, allowing researchers to track survival in real time. A vast network of acoustic receivers along the striped bass migration corridor was deployed, with partner institutions sharing detection data. In short, researchers knew *exactly* which fish lived and which didn’t.

The Mass DMF team also compared four hook types (three circle, one J-hook), tracked fight time, fish length, handling time, air and water temperature, and recorded detailed tackle data. To top it off, they built in angler surveys and citizen science participation,

gathering data from over 8,300 striped bass—an unprecedented sample size for any saltwater species. One of the more compelling discoveries is that the most experienced and avid anglers are deciding to release their catch. Below is a few figures from this comprehensive effort. As you can see, fish length, fight time, handling time, and the type of tackle used all play a huge role in how many fish die upon release. Bait, multiple treble hooks, fight time, and time out of the water are all things that we as anglers can control – **and we should.**

Here is the important takeaway: **release mortality is roughly half of what we’ve been told for decades.**

Instead of 9%, the new data show **mortality between 4.2% and 4.6% across all methods.** For fly anglers, that number can drop below 4%. The rate for single hook artificials remains the lowest of all hook configurations, reemphasizing campaigns for conservation-driven gear choices. This has serious implications for striped



Source: Mass DMF Research Presentation
The Results: Cutting the Old Estimate in Half
Source: Mass DMF Research Presentation

bass management. It is worth noting that catch-and-release anglers are not responsible for half of total striped bass mortality, as has so often been claimed. For the past half a decade, the “kill-at-all-costs” crowd blamed the release community for “playing with fish”. Everyone knew this wasn’t the case, but without supporting science, there was little to do other than look for a few sane commissioners to stand up for what’s right. We must combine this updated science with two additional facts: First, the number of striped bass released alive has dropped by 85% in 2025. Second, the Fisheries Effort Survey may be overestimating angler effort by up to 40%. Suddenly, the entire mortality equation looks very different. Our community held the line. Now, we finally have what is the most comprehensive release-mortality research ever done for a saltwater species—and it tells a very different story.

Catch-and-release anglers handle fish responsibly. They treat them better. They catch smaller fish. They take the time to learn and improve. And now, the science backs those dynamics. So, where does that leave us?

No-targeting closures are not scientifically defensible with this information.

Education remains essential. Anglers can and should reduce multiple treble hooks, shorten fight times, be weary of water temperature and minimize time out of water—especially for big fish.

A debt of **gratitude to Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries** for this multi-year comprehensive effort to better understand and effectively manage the most critical inshore fishery on the Atlantic Coast. We say this all the time, but we do so with reason: Mass DMF should be a model for all other agencies along the coast.

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10 early in 2025 to be sure that this amendment included the possibility of establishing closed areas to protect River Herring populations that are marshaling up in winter to enter rivers in Southern New England. This type of seasonal closure in limited areas has been very effective off the coast of Maine but has not been used in Southern New England. We also want all future quotas for commercial harvest of Atlantic Herring to be set only after the ecological value of herring left in the ocean to serve the necessary food source for fish, marine mammals and birds has been considered. RISAA is fortunate to have Ryan Adams from the University of New Hampshire coming to speak about herring at our seminar on February 23. It will be very interesting to hear from Ryan and ask him about ways that RISAA can help rebuild River Herring populations.

Finally, because of the close link between commercial mackerel fishing and herring fishing, we are watching the regulation of the Atlantic mackerel fishery very closely. That fishery is also managed by the NEFMC and there has been a push by commercial fishers to increase the quota in that fishery. I don't have any specific information to share now, but we are watching carefully.

JOIN RISAA
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

All RISAA members are welcome to join the RISAA Legislative Committee. If you are interested send an email to me at hittinger@risaa.org and we will send you the link (via email) to the next Legislative meeting. The next meeting will be scheduled in February 2026 via Zoom.



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FISHING WITH
CAPT. DAVE MONTI

By: Gary Vandemoortele, RISAA member

RISAA member Hedley Davidson and I were lucky enough to win a charter trip at a RISAA meeting. The trip was with Capt. Dave Monti of No Fluke Fishing Charters on his Carolina Skiff. We left Apponaug Cove, Warwick at 7:30 a.m. and tossed lures at schools of bait on the way down the West Passage to the Jamestown and North Kingstown area. We had a couple of bumps from bluefish.

The boat was equipped with a Minn-Kota motor on the bow. And thank God we had it as Capt. Dave moved the vessel about fifteen times to find the fish and the electric motor allowed us to do this with ease.

We first fish the West Side of Jamestown in two locations. Our first stop was the most productive fishing on mussel beds in that area and then the bite slowed down and stopped. We moved to the Plum Island Light House, the General Rock Area and our last stop was the structure on the north side of Hope Island.



RISAA member Gary Vanemoortele with a Narragansett Bay West Passage tautog.

Moving the vessel to this last location was beneficial as at that last stop we started to hook up with larger fish to 18.5 inches. We tried jigs, conventional tautog rigs and Capt. Dave's egg sinker rig when over heavy structure which caught our largest fish on the last half crab in my bucket.

All the moving around and tackle changes paid off that day, we were ready to move as needed and change the rigs depending on how the fish wanted our crabs presented to them.

We had a smooth ride back up the Bay to Warwick. Ted and I would like to thank Captain Dave for the fishing trip, a wonderful day on our beautiful bay and the memories we made.



RISAA ANGLING
Hall of Fame

The RISAA Angler Hall of Fame lists the largest tournament entry of each approved species. Any angler who enters a catch that surpasses an Angler Hall of Fame record shall, upon verification of the catch, become the new record holder for that species. In addition, the angler shall receive 5 points toward Angler of the Year.

BOAT DIVISION

Species	Angler	Weight	Year
Black Sea Bass	Raymond Morrocco	7.20 lbs.	2012
Bluefish	Robert Matteson	20.46 lbs.	2017
Bonito	Micheal Neto	12.20 lbs.	2004
Cod	Robert Morel	49.10 lbs.	2001
False Albacore	Charles Bradbury	16.20 lbs.	2004
Fluke	Kyle Blount	15.65 lbs.	2006
Haddock	Nicholas Blount	7.85 lbs.	2004
Mahi Mahi	Jack Sprengel, Jr.	37.80 lbs.	2001
Pollock	Harry Templeton	27.70 lbs.	2001
Scup	Jack Sprengel, Jr.	3.74 lbs.	2014
Shad	Kyle Paparelli	3.80 lbs.	2009
Squeteague	Robert Roy	10.50 lbs.	2006
Striped Bass	Peter Vican	77.40 lbs.	2011
Tautog	Joseph Bleczynski	18.90 lbs.	2015
Tuna - Albacore	Harley Benton	55.00 lbs.	1999
Tuna - Bluefin	Jack Sprengel, Jr.	193.88 lbs.	2009
Tuna - Yellowfin	Randy Pereschino	112.00 lbs.	2001
Winter Flounder	Michael Lanni	4.40 lbs.	1998

SHORE DIVISION

Species	Angler	Weight	Year
Black Sea Bass	Joseph Pearson	3.85 lbs.	2009
Bluefish	Gilbert Bell	16.90 lbs.	2016
Bonito	Jack Sprengel, Jr.	9.99 lbs.	2007
False Albacore	Jack Sprengel, Jr.	12.22 lbs.	2007
Fluke	Michael Tilelli	6.60 lbs.	2018
Scup	Charles Underhill	2.69 lbs.	2012
Shad	Jonathan Pickering	1.75 lbs.	2008
Squeteague	Robert Moeller	16.54 lbs.	2007
Striped Bass	Richard Reich	51.66 lbs.	2013
Tautog	Richard Gallipeau	11.20 lbs.	2009
Winter Flounder	Dick Geldard	4.40 lbs.	2009

COOKING YOUR CATCH

By: Paula Smalec

TAUTOG WITH PESTO & ROASTED CHERRY TOMATOES

This recipe is all about technique - if you can pan sear fish fillets and roast tomatoes, you can easily customize the taste to suit own preference. Simply pan sear the fillets, spread pesto over them, and top with roasted tomatoes. You can substitute black sea bass or fluke for tautog with equally good results.

I prepared this recipe using tautog that I caught while on the RISAA "Ladies Only" charter aboard the Coral Rose. Read the recap of this trip in the September/October issue of the RISAA Magazine.



Ingredients:

- 2 tautog fillets
- olive oil
- pesto (store-bought or homemade)
- ½ pint cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1-2 cloves garlic, chopped
- salt
- black pepper
- Italian seasoning blend

Instructions:

Roast the tomatoes: Place the tomatoes and garlic into a bowl and drizzle generously with olive oil. Add salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning and stir to blend. Transfer this mixture to a dish and place into a 400 degree oven for approximately 10 minutes, just until the tomatoes soften a bit.

Pan sear the fillets: Pat the fillets dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil in a frying pan and allow the pan to get quite hot. Place the fillets in the pan (without crowding them) and sear on both sides until the flesh flakes when pressed with a fork, approximately 5-6 minutes total, depending on the thickness.

Transfer fillets to a plate, spread pesto over each, and top with the roasted tomatoes.

Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.

Attention Members! Do you have a favorite seafood recipe to share with the membership in our magazine? If so, please submit the recipe with a photo of the finished dish to definis@risaa.org

Where possible, try for recipes that use local or commonly available ingredients and fish of the season—e.g. tog recipes in fall, clams and shellfish in summer, etc..

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RISAA is lucky to have such great local bait and tackle shops that support us and our members. When making purchases please keep them in mind as without them many of our club activities would struggle to take place and they are a integral part of RI recreational fishing.

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Frances Fleet - Galilee, RI

Lucky Bait & Tackle - Warren, RI

Maridee Bait & Tackle - Narragansett, RI

Ocean State Tackle - Providence, RI

Pete's Bait & Tackle - Woonsocket, RI

Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle - North Kingstown, RI

Quonnie Bait & Tackle - Charlestown, RI

Riverside Marine Bait & Tackle - Tiverton, RI

Saltwater Edge - Middletown, RI

Sams' Bait & Tackle - Middletown, RI

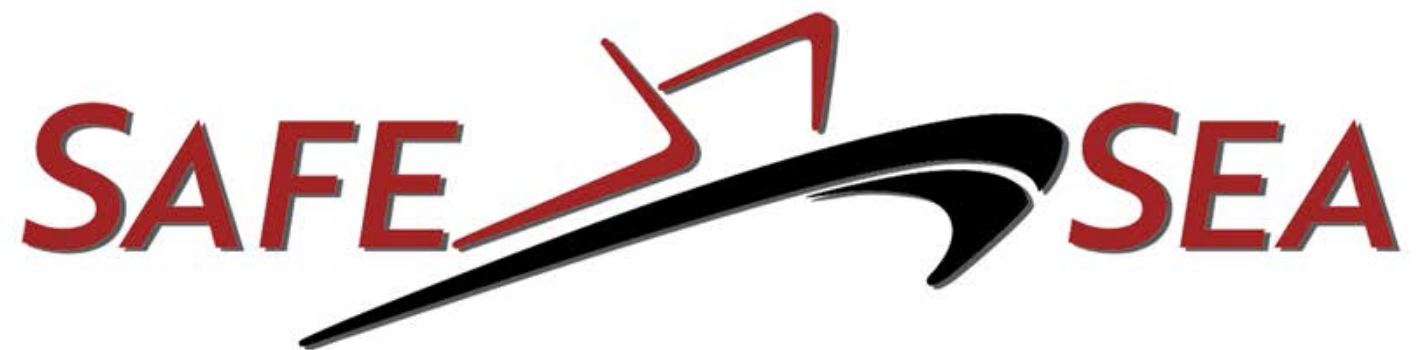
Snug Harbor - Wakefield, RI

Tackle Box - Warwick, RI

Watch Hill Outfitters - Westerly, RI

Weekapaug Bait & Tackle - Westerly, RI

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ADVENTURE AT THE FORT



On the weekend of October 11-12th the Narragansett Boy Scout Council held a Jamboree at Fort Adams in Newport. The jamboree included Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts from Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts, with a wide variety of activities for the scouts and their families. RISAA volunteers took on the challenge of introducing hundreds of scouts and their families to some basic saltwater fishing from the stone pier located at the southern end of the fort's grounds, overlooking Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay.

Dawn and Tommy Wood, Rich Hittinger, Bob Murray, Scott Travers and Fred DeFinis had a very busy but rewarding day working with the scouts. We were joined by Steve Medeiros (no relation to our Steve) and his two sons, Anthony and Blake. Steve is a volunteer scout leader and part-time charter captain on board his boat Smokin' Reels. Anthony and Blake are both scouts and avid and capable saltwater anglers who helped the inexperienced anglers clear snags, bait rigs, untangle lines and a host of other tasks.

As each family approached the pier, we gave them a rod with a simple weighted rig, a cup of cut crabs and some basic instructions on where to stand and how to fish. We then wandered among the anglers helping with tips and techniques. With rods from RISAA and Smokin' Reels, we had twenty-two rods in service constantly, generally with a line of waiting would-be anglers. Blake and Anthony cut up an entire bushel of green crabs while Scott, Dawn



and Tommy were busy tying rigs to replace those lost in the rocky bottom structure. It was constant action all afternoon.

The participants caught a variety of species including black sea bass, scup, tautog and even a bonito and monkfish. There were shrieks and howls as the different fish were swung up over the walls. Most of the fish were released unharmed, including some keeper sized tautog and black sea bass. One exception was a large scup that one of the scouts caught—he planned to clean it and cook it over the evening campfire. When Dawn asked him if he knew how to do it, he gave her a detailed recipe so it was obviously not his first fish!

Each year, RISAA volunteers help with a variety of events to introduce new anglers to the joys of our sport. These include people of different backgrounds and income levels, languages and cultures, abilities/disabilities and more. If you would like to participate, contact Scott Travers. We guarantee you will find it a rewarding experience. 🐟



HEAD-BOAT FISHING WITH BOB MARCO

Each season, RISAA sponsors a series for four or five head-boat trips for members. These trips coincide with the different seasons of the target species and often with the club tournaments—e.g. a tautog trip in fall during the tautog tournament. The trips are a great deal for members because RISAA absorbs about half the cost and the trips include bait, tackle (if you need it) and gratuity. It's a great way to try fishing in different areas and for different species under different conditions than you might normally fish. To get some extra insight and tips, we connected with experienced head-boat angler Bob Marco.

RISAA—When and how did you get started in head-boat fishing?

Marco—About seven years ago, one of my friends in the RISAA Surfcasters suggested we go on a cod trip on the Seven B's. I went, caught cod, had a great time and went on the Seven B's many times after that. Over time, I got to know the mates and felt like family.

Later on, I went on one of the Frances Fleet boats and didn't like the experience and complained to the management. They took it seriously and made many improvements to the service and we became friends and I became a loyal customer and still am.

RISAA—Do you go on head-boat trips in other areas?

Marco—Sometimes, I go on the Helen H out of Hyannis. It is a long day as you leave the dock at five am and don't get back until four or five pm. Even though it's a long day, I think it is something everyone should try once in their fishing lifetime—you get a chance to catch some very large fluke and fluke are my favorite fish to target.



RISAA—Are there any trips that you found particularly memorable?

Marco—Once my son and I went on the Seven B's and together we caught ten keeper fluke in four hours fishing side by side. We even shared some secret bait with a newbie who caught the pool winning fish. It was quite the day.

RISAA—How do you prepare for your trips?

Marco—I make my own rigs during the winter. I also organize my gear carefully to make the most of my time on the water. As an example, I color code my weights so I can grab what I need without fumbling around my bag.

My motto is "Bring Everything" and I do. I carry about thirty rigs and material to make more or different rigs if the need arises.

I want to be able to get to the bottom as directly as possible without my line scoping out a lot. My leaders are thirty pound fluorocarbon and my line is fifteen pound braid—usually Daiwa K-9. With this set up I can hit bottom with six to eight ounces of weight while others on the boat are using ten or more ounces.

RISAA—You have a nice fishing kayak and many friends with private boats you can fish on. What keeps you coming back to head-boat fishing?

Marco—I like a number of things about this kind of fishing—the boats go out in conditions that might keep a private boat at the dock, they take you where the fish are, they give you bait, clean

the fish and help you when you need it. It is as though they do everything for you.

RISAA—Can you give our members any tips that have worked for you or made the trips more enjoyable?

Marco—Certainly:

- Check the boats website to see how many people are on the boat the day before
- Avoid weekends (usually crowded)
- Watch the weather /wind
- Be prepared for whatever the Capt. may fish for
- Bring an assortment of sinkers/rigs/sunblock/sunglasses/water and snacks and don't forget a second pole. (have it rigged ready to go in case you lose a rig on the first one), you are fishing against time on the water



- I fish near the Pulpit/bow area as it is less crowded
- Fish with a friend. It makes the day go by better
- Enter the pool because it only takes one large fish to win it.
- Help others around you if the mate is not nearby
- Be patient / concentrate on your presentation of the bait you are using.
- If fishing for fluke don't take it out of the water unless directed by the mate
- Remember**No bait.....Long wait--** Check it often
- Get to know your mates and tip them well
- And finally, NO BANANAS!

Bob Marco is a member of the RISAA Board of Directors, Merchandise Chairman and active volunteer. Thanks Bob. 🐟

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RISAA DIY NIGHT!

Monday, December 29th @ 7pm

7 STATIONS including:

Bob Murray... showing people how to properly snell a hook

David Michel... teaching knot tying

Derek Ashcroft... showing how to create a custom bucktail

Fred DeFinis... showing how to build your own rod storage rack

Rich Hittinger... teaching how to tie a single dropper loop rig

Richie Reich... teaching how to tie a SNAFU Rig for Tautog

Tommy Wood... showing how to build a rod holder bait container for your boat.



SPECIAL NOTICE! This is an in person seminar at the West Warwick Elks Lodge, 60 Clyde Street, West Warwick, RI. We plan to have food available at 5:30 p.m. as in the past and plan to tape the seminar for members who were not able to attend.

CHARTER TRIP REPORT: SNAPPA CHARTER TRIP

By: **Ralph Orleck**

After several attempts to schedule the fishing trip aboard the Snappa, the trip finally happened on Nov. 13. It was a cloudy and cool day, The marine forecast indicated that there were small craft advisories, wind 10-15 with seas from 4-6ft.

RISAA members participating were **Ralph Orleck, Richie Reich, Mike Warner, David Ricks, Rene Blanchette and Walter Marti.** Everyone was at the boat by 7:00 and we departed shortly thereafter.

The Snappa is a 46' power boat piloted by Captain Charlie Donilon who was assisted by his mate, Bill Della Valle. The boat has a spacious heated cabin. The hull was built by Wesmec Custom Boat Company in Surry Maine. Captain Donilon informed us he had the boat for 17 years.

We did not travel far to get to the fishing spot, which was north of the Point Judith Lighthouse near the entrance to the bay. Captain Donilon shared that because of the direction of the wind, we would be fine, which we were.

Almost immediately we started catching the tautog. By the end of the day, we had 19 keepers on board.

Charlie and Bill could not have been any more helpful. Whenever a fish came up and it looked like a keeper, of them was there right away. They baited hooks as needed and provided assistance in getting our gear out from under rocks, which is a common



challenge in tautog fishing. Bill cut crabs continuously and like Charlie, was very helpful, always there when needed. Bill would exclaim, "hookem and cookem" whenever a good size fish was on the line.

Prior to Bill starting to filet, we assembled for a group picture with our fish. While getting his fish in position Rene dropped his overboard. Since dead fish do not swim, it was recovered.

We returned to the dock at 2:00 PM. All in all, a great day on the water. If you are thinking about going on a charter, you cannot do better than the Snappa. At the latter part of the season Charlie offers split trips for anybody who cannot put together a group, allowing individuals the opportunity to fish with him. Details can be found at www.snappacharters.com.



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DEM/ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE ARREST & CITATION LOG

OCTOBER 2025

RODRIGUEZ BRITO, Manuel A., 38, of Providence, RI, for Possession of Undersized Striped Bass – 1st Offense and Exceeding Daily Limit of Striped Bass – 1st Offense

WU, Yihua, 53, of Farmington, CT, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Exceeding the Daily Limit of Tautog

AQUINO, Arbin Diomendez, 25, of Everett, MA, for Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass and Exceeding Daily Limit of Black Sea Bass

MORBAN FELIZ, Gonzalo M., 28, of Everett, MA, for Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass and Exceeding Daily Limit of Black Sea Bass

ROSE, Charles J., 56, of Tiverton, RI, for Exceeding Commercial Daily Limit of Shellfish in a Management Area (Administrative Process)

DOS VAIS, Tiberio V., 67, of Fall River, MA, for Possession of Undersized Tautog

SERPA, Bruno R., 76, of Fall River, MA, for Possession of Undersized tautog, Exceeding Daily Limit of Tautog, and Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass

DECKER, Michael J., 48, of East Hampton, NY, for Exceeding Commercial Possession Limit of Black Sea Bass (Administrative Process)

HARRIS, Corey W., 38, of South Kingstown, RI, for Exceeding Commercial Possession Limit of Scup (3 Counts)

RUHLE JR., Philip R., 51, of Peacedale, RI, for Dealer Purchase of Illegally Landed Finfish - 5 Counts (Administrative Process)

WILLIAMS, Thomas H., 53, of Westerly, RI, for Exceeding Commercial Possession Limit of Black Sea Bass (Administrative Process)

QIN, De J., 65, of New York, NY, for Possession of Undersized Tautog, Exceeding Daily Limit of Tautog, and Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass

BARROS DA SILVA, Madoeno, 44, of Providence, RI, for Possession of Undersized Striped Bass and Exceeding the Daily Limit of Striped Bass

KUILAN ALLENDE, Jaime A., 45, of Providence, RI, for Exceeding Daily Limit of Striped Bass

VAZQUEZ RIVERA, Eduardo J., 36, of Providence, RI, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Exceeding the Daily Limit of Tautog

LIN, Yi Cai, 70, of Coventry, RI, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Exceeding the Daily Limit of Tautog

PIRES, Celia M., 37, of Brockton, MA, for Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass

PEREIRA, Ryan J., 42, of East Providence, RI, for Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass and Exceeding Daily Limit of Black Sea Bass

LE, Tan H., 75, of Worcester, MA, for Exceeding Daily Limit of Tautog

LIU, Wanzhao, 62, of Shrewsbury, MA, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Exceeding the Daily Limit of Tautog

ALVES PIRES, Manuel, 40, of Fall River, MA, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass

DARRIGO, Anthony G., 58, of East Hampton, NY, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Violation of Marine Fisheries Regulations -2 Counts (Administrative Process)

DACRUZ, Jorge, 55, of Pawtucket, RI, for Possession of Undersized Striped Bass – 1st Offense, Exceeding Daily Limit of Striped Bass, Possession of Undersized Tautog, Exceeding Daily Limit of Tautog, and Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass

RODRIGUES, Domingos, 53, of Brockton, MA, for Possession of Undersized Striped Bass – 1st Offense, Exceeding the Daily Limit of Striped Bass – 1st Offense, and Possession of Undersized Tautog

NOVEMBER 2025

LORA MEJIA, Freddy Alberto, 51, of Manchester, NH, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Possession of undersized Black Sea Bass

ORELLANA CRUZ, Jorge L., 41, of Clinton, MA, Possession of Oversized Striped Bass – 1st Offense



LI, Guoxian, 61, of Cohoes, NY, for Possession of Undersized Tautog

LIANG, Zhixiang, 41, of Uncasville, CT, for Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass and Exceeding Possession Limit of Black Sea Bass

YING, Wan Zeng, 44, of Norwich, CT, for Exceeding Possession Limit of Black Sea Bass, Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass, and Refuse to Move or to Stop on an Oral Command or Order of DEM Officer

CHAVES, Dennis F., 54, of Raynham, MA, for Possession of Undersized Tautog and Exceeding Daily Vessel Limit of Tautog

DO NASCIMENTO, Edson, 49, of Danvers, MA, for Possession of Undersized Tautog, Exceeding Possession Limit of Tautog, Possession of Undersized Black Sea Bass, and Exceeding Possession Limit of Black Sea Bass

The following is a breakdown of the citations issued for the period of: October & November 2025

*Individuals receiving citations have been civilly charged with violations under the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal.

TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE THROUGH OUR DISPATCH CENTER: 4,134

WARNINGS ISSUED: Verbal or Written Warnings issued to first-time offenders for a de minimis violation. Corrective action was taken at the scene and/or the occurrence was utilized as an educational opportunity in lieu of a summons. TOTAL: 202

VIOLATION CITATIONS ISSUED

State Property Violations	30
(Parking, Alcohol, Disorderly Conduct, Dumping/Littering, etc.)	
Motor Vehicle	25
Boating Violations	34
ATV Violations	14
Freshwater Fishing Violations	0
Saltwater Fishing Violations	14
CRMC Beach Violations	0
Hunting Violations.....	21
Total	138

*Arrest = Individual charged criminally with violations under the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island District or Superior Court or charged through Administrative Adjudication civil procedures by DEM

*Any indication of an arrest does NOT mean the individual identified has been convicted of a crime.

*All persons arrested are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

History of the RISAA Political Action Committee or PAC

By Brad Waugh

Back in the Summer of 2004 Steve Medeiros, Bruce Getchill, and I were fishing for Fluke off of Nomans Island. Steve was well known on my boat for his sandwich making skills...fishing...not so much! I had recently been named as a commissioner for the RI Convention Center Authority (RICCA), which managed the events at the convention center, and did the marketing of the facility. As Steve was making a sandwich, he told us of the success RISAA had with that year’s RI Saltwater Fishing Show, and how some vendors were disappointed that they couldn’t get space. He also said the current location at the Coventry High School was causing issues with logistics, parking, and that RISAA had basically started to outgrow the location. I mentioned that RICCA was actively looking to attract RI based enterprises to the convention center, and that they had grants to entice new customers, which ranged from \$2,500 to \$25,000. Now, for those of you that knew Steve, you will remember that he was very conservative, and I don’t mean in the political form. The biggest risk for Steve might be mixing the mayonnaise and Dijon mustard!

What I always loved about fishing with Steve and Bruce was the banter between them. Those guys were merciless to each other and would make a day of fishing into a comedic event, but with the banter that day, what I will remember most is that Steve had a dream of creating the largest saltwater fishing show in New England. He wanted an event that could not only help in the funding of RISAA, but one that could fulfill the dream he had at bringing all fisherman together, along with their families to share in camaraderie, fun, and GREAT DEALS!! Thus, was born the idea of the New England Saltwater Fishing Show!

So, what does this story have to do with politics and the birth of our PAC? Well, here is where it gets interesting! Steve had a vision, and he and Bruce went to the RISAA Board with the idea, but they needed the maximum grant of \$25K to pull it off, as the costs to put together the event were staggering when compared to Coventry High School. We also had a problem with the folks who handled boating and camping events at RICCA, who felt that we would be infringing on their customer base if we had boats and/or other ancillary products that could take sales away from them. We needed someone powerful enough to get us the grant, figure out a compromise regarding the boat show concern, and most importantly, to cut through the “red tape.” That person was then Speaker of the House, John Harwood, who Steve and I met at a restaurant in Providence. While casually introducing ourselves, Steve brought up the grant, and some of the red tape we were dealing with. Although Steve would call himself shy, when he was speaking of RISAA, he was the best salesperson I have ever seen! It also didn’t hurt that the Speaker and Steve loved hockey. The next day, Steve called me to let me know that RISAA had been

awarded the grant for two years, and that the compromise with the boat show owners was a limit to the number of boats that could be displayed.

Two weeks after that first meeting with Mr. Harwood, Steve, Bruce, and I were invited to a meeting at the Statehouse, as the Speaker not only wanted to know about RISAA, but he asked to have other legislators in on the meeting, who the Speaker explained represented commerce and environmental. All told, about eight representatives met with us to talk about boat ramps, quotas, and the early idea of the saltwater fishing license, It was at that meeting that Mr. Harwood said to Steve, “You know, politics is NOT a spectator sport!” Steve, Bruce, and I looked at him very bewildered, and he explained to us that the commercial fishing industry, marine trades (boats), and environmental groups all had PACS (Political Action Committees). He said, “Steve, RISAA has the power in numbers of people, but nobody knows who you are, or what you do!” What was most concerning is that the looming saltwater fishing license was on the horizon, and some constituents wanted to go the federal route, which would have been more expensive, while others wanted a State license, with the revenues going into the general fund, rather than what we have today.

From that day Steve, and the then RISAA Board, were committed to establishing a PAC to give our organization a unified voice that represented the interests of our members. We’ve won many battles, with the license work passing in our favor back in 2010, but we lost a few as well. The PAC gave us access and clout, but most importantly, and through your efforts, RISAA was heard. In the early years, Steve made it a point to invite State Officials to our events, and encouraged politicians to go fishing with members, so they understood more about recreational fishing. Both Speaker Harwood, and later, Speaker Bill Murphy, attended some of our events. Our PAC will be ten years old in 2026, and today, Rich Hittinger is Chairman. The group has attended more events than in previous years and has already attended (15) political events in 2025. Donations average about \$200 and range from \$50 to \$500 per donation. The current PAC balance is is dangerously low as we move into gubernatorial elections in 2026.

After Steve’s untimely passing, I received a phone call from the former Speaker, Mr. John Harwood, who shared in the sadness of Steve’s passing. He said, “You know, Steve wasn’t a good guy...he was a great guy, and boy, he sure made a great sandwich!” I ask you to dig deep in the memory of Steve and Bruce, to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the RISAA PAC, so the vision they had continues with a strong voice representing the interests of the recreational fishermen. 🐟



Escape Rhode Island's Winter: FISHING THE EVERGLADES

By: **Kenneth Mendez**

OCTOBER 19, 2025

When February winds howl across Narragansett Bay and your boat sits winterized, there's a subtropical paradise three hours away where you fish in a sun shirt and ball cap like July back home.

I learned this when I hooked a 150-pound tarpon on fly in the murky Everglades flats. But the real shock came while fighting that silver king—a 60-pound tarpon literally jumped into our boat. You simply cannot make this up.

NOVEMBER THROUGH APRIL: PRIME TIME

One time of year when the Everglades hits its fishing prime is in the winter months when day time temperatures are 70-80 degree days, minimal bugs, and aggressive fish.

GETTING THERE AFFORDABLY

Multiple airlines serve Miami (MIA) and Fort Lauderdale (FLL) from Providence's T.F. Green—Southwest and JetBlue often offer winter deals under \$200 roundtrip. From either airport, it's about two hours to Flamingo less time to Homestead or Florida City, gateways to the Everglades.

DIY OR GO WITH A GUIDE?

Kayaking the Everglades is exceptional. Rent kayaks and canoes at Flamingo Marina and paddle into mangrove tunnels, tidal creeks, and hidden ponds with minimal pressure.

But this vastness intimidates. I hired a local captain with a custom 15-foot skiff, and within minutes he made a game-changing call: "The tarpon showed up. We're going after them instead of snook."



A good guide spots rolling tarpon hundreds of yards away, reads wakes in murky conditions, and positions you perfectly for sight-casting. Worth every penny.

MY TARPON BAPTISM: SIGHT FISHING AT ITS BEST

The water isn't gin-clear—it's murky like our Rhode Island salt marshes. But you still spot fish pushing wakes, tailing, or rolling on the surface. I hooked two tarpon that day, both 150-160 pounds. The first tracked my fly, and when it ate, the surface erupted. The fish immediately went airborne, twisting its massive silver body in a display that made every striper look like bait and bluefish look tame. It threw the hook on the third jump.

The second fish was different. When it ate and I set the hook, reality hit: I'm connected to a 150-pound fish on a fly rod. It's like the dog that catches the car—what do you do now? Twenty minutes into the fight, my guide was poling his custom 15-foot skiff toward the tarpon when chaos erupted.

A 60-pound tarpon launched itself over the transom and crashed into the boat's cockpit. In a small skiff, there's nowhere to go. My wife jumped onto the bow with me as the fish thrashed wildly, breaking rods and equipment. My guide had to jump off his poling platform to wrangle the fish and release it over the side—all while I'm still connected to the 150-pounder. We got back to business and I kept fighting.

The battle seemed endless. My arms were spent, my back ached, but eventually I brought that 150-pounder boatside. We revived and quickly released it—no photos, just respect for a fish that fought that hard. Watching it a fish that size swim away was all the reward I needed.

After that intensity, my wife and I needed something different. We switched to targeting seatrout on spinning rods—still exciting, but far less punishing. She caught several beautiful fish. It felt more like the light tackle striper fishing we do back home, without the visual fireworks of the tarpon flats. Variety is what makes this fishery special: juvenile tarpon hang around mangrove edges with aerial acrobatics that surpass any striper, snook lurk in backcountry channels with golden coloration, plus redfish and largemouth bass.



WHERE TO STAY AND WHAT ELSE TO DO

Florida City is closest to Flamingo—about 45 minutes from the park. We stayed there in affordable hotels. Homestead offers more options. Flamingo Lodge has 24 rooms in the park. Rates: \$159-299/night summer, \$259-399 winter.

Non-anglers enjoy boat tours through mangrove tunnels, kayaking, biking, and the Guy Bradley Visitor Center. Wildlife viewing—manatees at the marina (we saw three), roseate spoonbills, dolphins—provides days of entertainment. The Everglades is the only place where alligators and crocodiles coexist.

And don't miss Robert Is Here, a legendary Homestead fruit stand since 1959 with exotic tropical fruits, Key Lime milkshakes, and a petting zoo.

PACK YOUR BAGS

World-class fishing is just three hours away. Whether sight-casting to snook, battling tarpon on fly, or paddling through pristine wilderness, the Everglades delivers an experience impossible to replicate in the Northeast.

I returned home with an aching shoulder and a memory that would get me through any future fishless days. My wife came back with wildlife photos and manatee stories. We're already planning our return.

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SUPPORT RISAA’s Political Acton & Legislative Committees

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association was founded to add horsepower to fish advocacy work in the region. Fishing clubs and organization came together under the RISAA umbrella to create a loud voice for habitat, fish, anglers, and angler access in New England.

Our affiliates and members serve on our Legislative Committee and Political Action Committee that advocates for fish conservation, weighing in on important Fisheries Management Plans and plan changes ever year for striped bass, summer founder, tuna, tautog, bluefish and a host of other species we like to catch, eat and/or release.

The Legislative Committee sets the agenda for the year, what we will be advocating for, while the Political Action Committee is working twelve months a year supporting legislators that have been champions for the environment, fish conservation and generally serve on environmental or fisheries related committees.

Donate today and for further information on our Political Action and Legislative Committees contact Rich Hittinger at (hittinger@risaa.org).

Here are three case study shorts that RISAA’s Legislative, and Political Action Committees have been engaged in that have led to successful conclusions.

Mini case study I: Who’s watching out for the fish?

RISAA members and leaders attend every related legislative session and committee meeting, every RI Marine Fisheries Council meeting monitoring and watch out for the interests of anglers as well as healthy habitat and fisheries.

This past year alone RISAA PAC members attended twenty political fundraisers, over fifty fisheries Council and Advisory Panel meetings, submitted conservation-minded comments weighing in on over thirty fisheries issues, along with a number of congressional office visits and opinion articles expressing our fish conservation views.

Issues have ranged for the new Striped Bass Addendum, to tautog and Atlantic menhaden regulations, NOAA funding to keep their fisheries division strong, as well as important ocean access issues from South County to the East Bay.

The Association has weighed in on every aquaculture and wind farm lease proposal as well as supported important habitat restoration initiatives such as the elimination of dams and rebuilding of herring runs.

Join or donate to our Political Action Committee and Legislative Committee. To learn more email Rich Hittinger at hittinger@risaa.org

Mini case study II: Who fought for CRMC and aquaculture lease reform?

Mini case study III: Who fights hard for Atlantic menhaden?

For more than 20 years RISAA has been speaking up on behalf of all anglers in southeastern New England. Our Legislative Committee and PAC have reached out to regulators and legislators on the issue of menhaden in Narragansett Bay since the “pogy wars” of the early 2000’s. We worked with RIDEM to get a Menhaden Management Area to restrict harvest of menhaden by industrial purse seiners. This regulation, passed by RIDEM around 2012 is a model used in other states to guide formulation of regulations that allow commercial harvest only when the biomass of menhaden present is great enough to support all of the ecological needs provided by menhaden.

RISAA Legislative Committee and PAC members have been active participants in coastwide groups to protect forage fish including menhaden, herring and other species. We currently work with the Atlantic Menhaden Coalition and the Herring Protection Coalition and have joined both groups in writing and signing letters to fisheries managers to protect these very important forage fish from overharvest by the commercial fisheries.

RISAA members have provided direct testimony at several New England Fishery Management Council meetings to emphasize how important these fish are to the entire food chain including many popular game fish as well as marine mammals and birds. We are now looking to see a reduction in commercial harvest of menhaden because new data indicate a significant overharvest in the past few years. We continue to stress that allowing one foreign owned company (Omega Protein) to harvest vast quantities of menhaden just to process them into animal feed and oil is a poor use of a valuable resource. These fish are worth much more left in the ocean than the small amount of revenue that they generate when harvested for this purpose.

Please do what you can to support RISAA when we take a stand on these issues by signing on or commenting directly. If you are interested in providing monetary support you can donate to the RISAA PAC or if you want to join the Legislative Committee you can contact Rich Hittinger at hittinger@risaa.org

SAPOWET MARSH

A Case Study of RISAA Influence



The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) played a crucial role in the passage of a new law that protects the waters of the Sapowet Marsh Management Area from commercial development.

The marsh’s long-standing protection faced a significant challenge beginning around 2020 when commercial aquaculture operators proposed establishing an oyster farm in the waters of Sapowet Cove. The Tiverton Community voiced strong objections to locating commercial aquaculture in these waters, with concerns that the operations would interfere with the area’s heavily used recreational activities sparking a grassroots movement, “Save Seapowet”

Protection of this area from commercial development dates back to 1948, when the area was established under a federal grant from the Truman Administration to the Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources. The original purpose of purchasing the land using federal funds was to protect the marsh from commercial and residential development while preserving it for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-related pursuits. Over the decades, the protected area expanded to encompass nearly 300 acres of critical coastal habitat in Tiverton. However,

During the legislative process, RISAA representatives Richard Hittinger and Fred DeFinis testified before legislative committees on the unique recreational fishing value of those waters. After considerable community testimony and support from stakeholders including RISAA, Rhode Island’s State Legislature passed the protective legislation, which was signed into law in June 2024 and took effect immediately, ensuring that the waters of the Sapowet Marsh Management Area would remain free from commercial development and accessible for recreational angling and other wildlife-related activities for future generations.

RISAA Annual Business Meeting & Election of Officers

We’re pleased to announce that the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) will hold its Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers on Monday, December 29, 2025.

This important gathering will include the election of our leadership team for the upcoming year. The slate of officers is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| President: Dawn Filliatreault Wood | Directors: |
| 1st Vice President: Richard Hittinger | Robert Murray |
| 2nd Vice President: Fred DeFinis | Gary Johnson |
| Treasurer: Stephen Skenyon | Richard Reich |
| Secretary: Susan Lema | Kraig Ruth |
| Sergeant at Arms: David Michel | Robert Marco |
| | John Kim |

We encourage all members to attend and participate in shaping the future of RISAA.

Thank you,
Heather Low
Election Committee Chair

2025 STANDINGS

YEARLONG TOURNAMENT

The Yearlong Tournament is a continuing tournament that runs from January 1 to December 15 each year. All RISAA members are eligible to participate, and there are no fees. Official Weight Slips are available at each monthly meeting and at all sanctioned bait shops. Only authorized weigh-in stations with certified digital scales may be used. Meeting or exceeding State minimal sizes required is eligible.



BLACK SEA BASS

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Bill Hubert..... 4.20 lbs.
2. Michael Lynch..... 3.16 lbs.
3. David Ricks..... 2.93 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Lucas Blagburn..... 3.00 lbs.
2. Jonah Rosebrock..... 2.74 lbs.
3. Domenic Bianco 2.00 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. Paul Chapman 4.90 lbs.
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

KAYAK DIVISION

1. Michael Roy..... 2.85 lbs.
2. Thomas Houde 2.33 lbs.



FALSE ALBACORE

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Ronald Lynch 8.96 lbs.
2. Michael Lynch..... 6.86 lbs.
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. Michael Lynch..... 7.90 lbs.
2. Ronald Lynch 4.90 lbs.
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



Bluefish

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Stephen Skenyon 13.65 lbs.
2. Gilberto Aguilar..... 12.12 lbs.
3. Paul Phillips 11.11 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. John Migliori..... 10.80 lbs.
2. Paul Chapman 5.90 lbs.
3. Michael Tilelli..... 4.25 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

KAYAK DIVISION

1. Thomas Houde 7.21 lbs.



BONITO

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Robert Murray..... 5.80 lbs.
2. Donald Goebel..... 5.60 lbs.
3. Thomas Houde 4.46 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Domenic Bianco..... 3.64 lbs.
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. Paul Chapman 6.80 lbs.
2. Michael Lynch..... 4.82 lbs.
3. Michael Tilelli..... 4.10 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



Fluke

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Charles Murphy..... 11.84 lbs.
2. Robert Murray..... 10.90 lbs.
3. Matthew Haczynski 6.65 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Jonah Rosebrock..... 5.52 lbs.
2. Arabella Kim 4.40 lbs.
3. Domenic Bianco 3.10 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Paul Chapman 4.30 lbs.
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

KAYAK DIVISION

1. Roger Cichy 2.98 lbs.



HADDOCK

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



MAHI MAHI

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Robert Murray..... 4.28 lbs.
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



POLLOCK

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



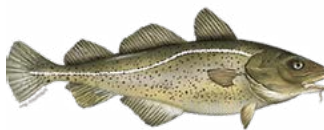
GRAY TRIGGERFISH

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Richard Reich..... 3.22 lbs.
2. Thomas Houde 2.50 lbs.
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



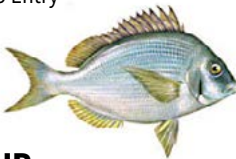
COD

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



SCUP

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Todd Treonze 2.60 lbs.
2. Roger Cichy 2.20 lbs.
3. Richard Reich..... 1.78 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Domenic Bianco..... 1.40 lbs.
2. Reid Decker 1.06 lbs.
3. Lucas Blagburn..... 1.05 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. John Migliori..... 1.64 lbs.
2. Michael Tilelli..... 1.48 lbs.
3. Michael Lynch..... 1.05 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



TAUTOG

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Robert Coupe..... 10.45 lbs.
2. Paul Chapman 10.30 lbs.
3. Philip Matteson..... 9.52 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Domenic Bianco 4.36 lbs.
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. Paul Chapman 8.20 lbs.
2. John Migliori..... 7.64 lbs.
3. Richard Reich..... 4.56 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

KAYAK DIVISION - ADULT

1. Robert Marco 8.51 lbs.
2. Thomas Houde 7.99 lbs.
2. Roger Cichy 5.66 lbs.



SEA ROBIN

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. Bill Hubert..... 2.95 lbs.
2. Richard Reich..... 1.42 lbs.
3. Thomas Houde 1.34 lbs.

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. Grayson Decker..... 0.92 lbs.
2. Domenic Bianco 0.90 lbs.
3. Reid Decker..... 0.28 lbs.

SHORE DIVISION - ADULT

1. John Migliori..... 2.42 lbs.
2. Michael Lynch..... 1.28 lbs.
3. No Entry

SHORE DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



TUNA - BLUEFIN

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry



TUNA - YELLOWFIN

BOAT DIVISION - ADULT

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

BOAT DIVISION - JUNIOR

1. No Entry
2. No Entry
3. No Entry

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*Celebrating 30 Years of
Newport Fishing Charters!*



FISH WITH TWO PROS!

Captain Joseph Aiello and Captain Coral Aiello are a highly experienced father daughter team. Joe has been fishing in New England for 43 years, both as a commercial fisherman and private charter captain. Captain Coral, widely followed on social for her fishing skill, has been showing newcomers and veterans alike how to catch the big ones for more than a decade!

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Father & Daughter Duo!
Captain Joe Aiello & Captain Coral Aiello

401-623-1121
Captjoeaiello@yahoo.com
sarastarcharters.com



WHO'S WHO

in the Rhode Island Saltwater's Anglers Association

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2ND VICE PRESIDENT

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Mitchell S. Riffkin, Esq

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(401) 826-2121
WWW.RISAA.ORG

New England Saltwater Fishing Show™

www.nesaltwatershow.com

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OPEN - Volunteer Needed

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OPEN - Volunteer Needed

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Menhaden Subcommittee

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Public Access Subcommittee

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Mike Roy, Chair
roy@risaa.org

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Dawn Filliatreault Wood, Chair
wood@risaa.org • 401-263-3919

If you would like more information or would like to join a committee contact:

Scott Travers • Travers@risaa.org

MAGAZINE DESIGN & LAYOUT: Eddy Stahowiak - LBEddy9@gmail.com



AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

The Rhode Island Saltwater Angler's Association (RISAA) believes in the sensible management of fisheries and the conservation and restoration of all marine resources. RISAA has accepted a leadership role in order to provide a unified voice to preserve and protect the rights, traditions and future of recreational angling. In order to achieve these goals, it is important for organizations who have the same goals to join together, uniting their voices and votes for the good of present and future generations of anglers. Therefor, RISAA is proud to be **AFFILIATED** with these respected organizations:



COALITION PARTNERS

In order to promote fisheries management and conservation on a regional, national and international scale, the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association has associated with these organizations:





2025 FOUNDATION DONATIONS

A non-profit, IRS recognized (501c3) charitable and community service foundation.
Contributions to the RISA Foundation are deductible on your federal income tax.

PLATINUM (\$500+)

The Rhode Island Community Foundation
Lynn Medeiros - *In memory of Steve Medeiros*
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Gino DeFeudis
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Bradley Waugh (Total 2 donations, \$1000)
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Jane and David Jachym - *In memory of Eric Tarpinian Jachym*
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Vieira & Diganfilippo Attorneys - *In memory of Stephen Babigian*
Nancy and Howard Buice - *In memory of Steve Babigian*

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Or fill out the form below and mail to the RISA Foundation.



PLEASE PRINT

Any donation over \$10 will be sent a receipt that proves your contribution for tax purposes.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Foundation

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____


Enclosed is cash or check for: ☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ It's OK to Print My Name ☐ Please DO NOT Print My Name

☐ Donation Made In The Name Of: _____

THANK YOU!

MAIL TO:
RISA Foundation
P.O. Box 1467
Coventry, RI 02816



The Rhode Island's Saltwater Anglers Association's

Political Action Committee

One of the missions of RISAA is to represent the concerns of the recreational community on regulatory and legislative issues. That means that we have to deal with elected officials.

Fortunately, there area number of legislatures who have worked hard on our behalf and others who support RISAA's principles. We need to be sure those officials remain in office.

It is also important that legislatures understand who we are. If we don't advance our own causes, no one will do it for us.

By law, our Association can not contribute funds to any candidate, therefor we have established a **legal, incorporated and registered Political Action Committee** which CAN make contributions on our behalf. It has an independent treasurer and its own bank account.

Only donations specifically made to the RISAA PAC can be used. Under no circumstances can any membership dues money - or any other contributions made to the Association - be used for the PAC. It would be a violation of state election laws for any money from RISAA to be used for PAC purposes.

Also, all money received by the PAC must come from *individual donors*. *No contribution can be accepted from any organization or business interest.*

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!

To be effective, we must participate in the system.

With your help, we can continue to work within the political system to safeguard the rights and traditions of recreational fishing.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!



PLEASE PRINT

Donations ONLY accepted from individuals. No company or organization check can be accepted. (R.I. Law)

Political Action Committee

THANK YOU!

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is cash or check for: ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

(Make checks payable to **RISAA PAC**)

Sometimes RISAA acknowledges the names of contributors in our newsletter, do you prefer that:

☐ Please DO NOT Print My Name ☐ It's OK to Print My Name:

MAIL TO:
RISAA PAC
P.O. Box 1467
Coventry, RI 02816

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Bradley Waugh

SILVER (\$100+)

Kenneth Cooper

Garth Fondo

Carl Tiska

John Turchetti

Dickson Boenning

Peter Jenkins

Jean Bowen

Adam Kaufman

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Robert Barrett, Jr.

Bradley Waugh

Robert Oliveira

COPPER (UP TO \$49)

James Riggs



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association is a nonprofit Association established to provide a forum for saltwater anglers; to provide education to members concerning fishing techniques and overall enjoyment of fishing; to foster sportsmanship; to support marine conservation and the sound management of fisheries resources; and provide a unified voice to preserve and protect the rights, traditions and the future of recreational fishing.



Complete the form below and mail to: RISAA, P.O. Box 1467, Coventry, RI 02816
or **REGISTER ONLINE** at www.risaa.org/register to

☐ **RENEWAL** MEMBERSHIP ☐ **NEW** MEMBERSHIP

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date Of Birth _____ Phone # (_____) _____ E-mail _____

☐ Put me on RISAA E-mail list: ☐ YES ☐ NO Thank You

Occupation _____ Employed At _____

Children (up to 17 yrs): _____

☐ Register them as Junior Members (FREE). ☐ **YES (Complete Below)** ☐ NO Thank You

INFORMATION

Prefer to Fish From (check all that apply):

☐ Rocks & Piers ☐ Charter Boats ☐ Party Boats ☐ Fly Fishing ☐ Surfcasting ☐ Other _____

☐ Own Boat: Length: _____ ft Maker/Type: _____ Boat Name: _____ Docked at: _____

How did you hear about RISAA?

☐ Friend ☐ Tackle Shop ☐ Facebook ☐ News Article ☐ RISAA Newsletter ☐ Fishing Show ☐ Web Site

☐ Saw Advertisement at: ☐ Internet ☐ Magazine ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV ☐ Other _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

☐ **Regular Adult:** \$60/year **Adult Multiple Years** (save \$5/year): ☐ \$100 (2 yrs) ☐ \$165 (3 yrs) ☐ \$220 (4 yrs)

☐ **Senior (Age 65+):** \$35/year. Requires date of birth: _____

☐ **Life Member:** \$500 (one time, single payment)

☐ **Student (College/Trade School):** \$35/year (max .6 yrs). Requires copy of current student ID card

☐ **Junior Member:** FREE (Up to 17 years. Requires parent membership or a RISAA sponsor)

Junior's Name: _____ Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Junior's Name: _____ Age _____ Date of Birth _____

RISAA Sponsor (if parent not a member): _____ Relationship _____

(Membership dues are subject to change, contact RISAA at 401-826-2121 for current pricing)

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY APPLICATION

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (Payable to: RISAA)

To pay by credit card, visit: www.risaa.org/register

MAIL TO:

RISAA
PO BOX 1467
Coventry, RI 02816

Meetings: Held on the last Monday of each month at the West Warwick Elks in West Warwick, RI at 7:00 pm. (attendance not required)

Membership Benefits Include: Monthly Seminars • Fishing Tournaments • Fishing Trips • Monthly Newsletter • Discounts at Tackle Shops & Marine Dealers • Social Events • College Scholarships • Adds your voice to fisheries management and conservation issues.



RISAA

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And Over 30
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Stephen J. Medeiros Fishing Area at Black Point
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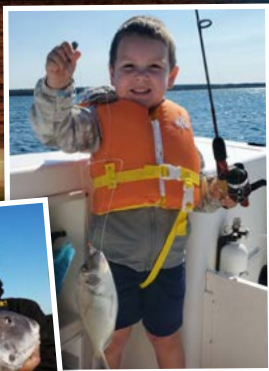
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