



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.

Marine Monuments, MSA, Menhaden Quota

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Activities that should be allowed include “active timber management” in Maine’s Katahdin Woods and Waters; a broader set of activities in New Mexico’s Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte; and commercial fishing in the two Pacific Ocean marine monuments, as well as in one off the New England coast, Northeast Canyons and Seamounts.”

In an article from the Conservation Law Foundation, author Priscilla Brooks said, “It’s clear this administration’s motives for this “review” were not about protecting the public good at all. And while we’d like to remain cautiously optimistic that President Trump won’t follow the recommendations, this administration’s touted support from fossil fuel companies and other extractive industries – who may want access to national monuments – doesn’t give us much hope.”

With the fate of National Monuments and Seamounts in limbo, the CLF is not waiting for a decision and is planning to file suit to prevent modifications of national parks and seamounts.

The Conservation Law Foundation said “When it comes to the law through which national monuments are established, the president’s power is clear. The Antiquities Act of 1906 allows the president the authority to *make* proclamations – but not to undo them. The power to modify national monuments rests solely in the hands of Congress and is not an implied power of the president.”

In all, about two million comments were submitted during the review of national monuments – 99 percent of which were in favor of keeping our national monuments in place.

Rhode Island needs Atlantic menhaden quota

Rhode Island’s Atlantic menhaden allowable catch limit is very low. Actually our catch limit has been below one percent (.02) of the coastwide quota. Over the years the Rhode Island Atlantic menhaden fishery has been nearly nonexistent with one or two boats fishing the Bay and landing their catch in Massachusetts. By landing Rhode Island’s catch in another state contributed to our low catch history, which in the past was used to set each state’s quota.

Since the 1990s Rhode Island did not have enough Atlantic menhaden or enough of an Atlantic menhaden fishery to make it worth a fish processor’s time to land and process the fish here.

Then, in 2002, RISAA spearheaded legislation to prohibit the taking of menhaden for reduction purposes.

Rhode Island *does* need a commercial Atlantic menhaden fishery to use as bait in bait shops, as bait in lobster traps, etc.



In recent years Rhode Island has taken advantage of the ASMFC’s ‘episodic event’ status. Basically, if an unusual amount of fish are in the water (an episodic event), Rhode Island was able to take advantage of that and land additional fish to satisfy the needs of the bait fishery.

If Amendment 3 with a 2% quota reallocation for Rhode Island (a position that has RISAA’s support) does not pass Rhode Island will need to advocate for an episodic event program (or something like it) that gives us the fish we need for our bait fishery.

By the time this issue hits your mailbox, the ASMFC public hearing on menhaden would have already happened (Oct 4). I hope most of you showed up for the hearing or sent emails advocating for more quota for RI.

Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) Reauthorization

Last month *the Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard held a hearing entitled, “Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act: Oversight of Fisheries Management Successes and Challenges.”*

Most invited to testify at the hearing were those in the fishing industry that support modification of the law to liberalize catch limits adding flexibility to the national fishing law.

Jim Donofrio, executive director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance who testified before the Senate Subcommittee said, “Quite simply, while the system under the current provisions in the MSA has been successful in rebuilding some key fish stocks it has been a dismal failure at translating that success into socioeconomic benefits to fishermen and the recreational fishing industry... The needs of fish have been put at an inordinate level of priority while the needs of the fishing community and industry have been made an afterthought.”

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