The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) Board of Directors meets monthly. In order to keep all members apprised of Board business I will report here when appropriate. It is important to note that not all business will be reported here since there are often issues dealing with individual members and privacy will always be protected. Also, some Board business that doesn’t result in any action won’t be printed.

RISAA Board of Directors
February 18, 2020 Meeting Summary

The meeting started earlier than usual in order for staff from RIDEM to make a presentation on the Rhode Island Saltwater Recreational Fishing License Program 2019 Annual Report. Members of the RISAA Legislative Committee were invited to attend.

BOARD MEETING
The R.I. Saltwater Anglers Association Board meeting was called to order at 7:20 PM with 11 members present.

Financial Reports
• Treasurer’s Report was given by Peter O’Biso and approved by all
• Other Financial Report: Received report on RISAA Investments
• Annual Budget: Richard Hittinger presented the review of 2019 income/expenses and that the year ended with higher income than expected. He also presented 2020 budget, but held all expenses to 2019 levels.

In Other Business
• South Kingstown Parks Dept.: approved their request to help with their annual Kids Fishing Derby. RISAA has help for the past 7 years.

• Recovering America’s Wildlife Act: Approved a request to sign on to a letter urging passage of the Act

• 2020 Recreational Fishing Symposium: received an update from Dave Monti on the symposium with will take place on April 20 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. The main topics covered will be:
  * Climate Change: effects on fish and fishermen
  * Law Enforcement: how can anglers help
  * MRIP: impact on fishing, possible solutions
  * ASMFC: review/status of recent decisions
  * Conservation Equivalency: value of fish in the water
Dave noted several sponsors already signed on, including the URI Coastal Institute, the Ocean Conservancy, Marine Fish Conservation Network, Rhode Island Sea Grant, and RI Saltwater Anglers Foundation.

• Take-A-Kid Fishing Day, June 27: Dave Monti noted he has arranged meetings with various chapters of the YMCA to bring in new groups of children this year. Steve Medeiros informed that the Providence Recreation Department’s Zuccolo Center has already called asking to participate this year.

• Saltwater License Plates:
  * Approved $500 to place an ad for the Saltwater License Plates in the 2020 R.I. Recreational Fishing Guide.
  * Steve Medeiros gave an update on the plate progress and noted that Mike Laptew has offered to help with advertising.
  * Rich Hittinger attended a House hearing two weeks ago on a bill to reduce the minimum number of plates needed to be sold before production would begin. Work is underway for a companion bill in the Senate.

• Member Fishing Trips: Steve reported that all trips have been booked for 2020:
  * Squid Trip (already 50% sold)
  * Fluke Trip - 8 hrs (announced if March issue)
  * Adult/Junior Trip (announced in April)
  * Fall Tautog Trip (announced in May or June)

• Catch & Release. Rich Hittinger noted that, with the new striped bass slots coming, it is important that members know proper catch & release. All agreed and the conversation evolved into possibly creating a video that could be shared with members and the public, posted online, etc. Tabled to next month so he could contact DEM, etc. to be sure everyone is on the same page.

• ASMFC-MAFMC Allocations. Rich Hittinger led a discussion on the reallocation proposals coming up and the effect that MRIP has had on changing recreational catch, and that we advocate that if the fisheries managers are now saying that the new MRIP numbers are much more accurate, then they must go back to the times when the allocations were set, and plug in the numbers using MRIP and not the old MRFSS. RISAA will send a formal letter to ASMFC stating this.

• Marine Fisheries Enforcement. Bob Murray brought up the possibility of funding, via our Foundation, actual enforcement trips during the night to the Southwest Ledge off Block Island to help stop illegal fishing. Everyone agree. Steve will check with DEM Enforcement on whether or not this is possible.

• Aquaculture. RISAA was asked to support an effort to get the RI CRMC to being an Aquaculture SAMP process. Discussion was tabled.