WITEK: STRIPED BASS (from page 36)

Lombardi has no plans to allow customers to take more than one bass per day, either; his customers will be limited to a single, smaller fish caught during the regular season, which begins on May 16. He will also avoid the summer catch-and-release striped bass fishery, which sees high levels of release mortality due to the warm waters and lower levels of dissolved oxygen. He noted that “You'll be out on a hot day and pass 40 or 50 dead fish on the way to a spot.”

Instead, he'll target species such as red drum, cobia, Spanish mackerel and bluefish because yes, despite the claims of the Maryland fisheries managers, there are other things to fish for in the Chesapeake Bay besides striped bass.

All of us, even though we don't run charters, can strive to emulate Capt. Lombardi’s example.

But the one thing we can’t do is quit. Whatever anger we feel must fuel future action.

No, Addendum VI’s outcome wasn’t as good as we might have hoped, but at least we’re only dealing with two rogue states, Maryland and New Jersey, when we could have been dealing with many more. And the comments of a number of Management Board members made it clear that we’re being heard, even though it would be nice if a few more people were listening.

In the end, though, Addendum VI and the February Management Board meeting were only preliminary scuffles. The main event will be the debate over Amendment 7 to the striped bass management plan.

That will be a long, difficult fight, but it is of the utmost importance, because the outcome of that debate will shape the way striped bass are managed for a very long time, and shape the health of the stock well into the foreseeable future.

For those of us born before man set foot on the moon, it will probably be, for all practical purposes, the last and most important striped bass fight we’ll face in what remains of our lifetimes.

REBUILD COD (from page 16)

• Implement a catch-and-release program for Atlantic cod in recreational fisheries. Such a program will still allow recreational charters to offer fishing trips without threatening this iconic species.

These steps will do three key things:

• end overfishing of cod,

• protect cod where they live and breed,

• and provide more accurate data on how many cod are killed so that scientists can better understand the species.

Cod Can’t Wait

We don’t have a moment to lose. Decades of overfishing put us in this crisis. Now, climate change will make it harder to get out of it. But with these actions, both Atlantic cod and the fisheries that rely on it might be there for future generations of New Englanders.

It’s time to give cod a fighting chance and not just relegate it to our history books.

New England Fishing (from page 13)

Fly Gear

Fly gear often excels in this environment, as the near-weightless flies do not hang up as often in the rocks and weeds as do plugs and jigs. While floating and intermediate-sink fly lines can be used, fast-sink shooting heads are generally preferred. The latter have a 30’ section of fast-sink line attached to a smooth length of running line. With this system, it’s easy to make a false cast or 2 and quickly shoot the fly into a fishy-looking spot at just the right time. Just be sure the running line is well lubricated several times per day to avoid tangles.

Leaders need not be long or light. In fact, heavy stuff is preferred in this rugged environment. Keep it simple and tie on 4’ to 5’ of 30-pound-test butt section connected to 3’ to 4’ of 20-pound-test fluorocarbon tippet via a Surgeon’s knot. If bluefish are in the area, attach a 6” trace of single-strand wire.

Top Flies & Lures

Fly selection varies according to season and baitfish availability. Small (1/0-2/0) Clousers and Deceivers work well early in the season, with longer snake flies, eel flies and “slab-type” bunker and mackerel imitations taking over as summer sets in. Mega 5/0 chartreuse-and-white Clousers, Deceivers and 6” green-and-white or blue-and-white “baby bunker” or herring-type flies also work well, especially when targeting big fish. The latter can be tied with lead wrapped around the shank to get them down through the current and into deep holes. Snake flies with long rabbit-strip tails that undulate in the current can be deadly, too. Top colors include olive, purple, and black.

In the lure department, soft-plastics (Slug-Gos, Hogies, Fin-S-Fish, Got Strypers) are terrific for this type of fishing, especially when rigged “weedless” to avoid snags.

Again, the key is to let the lure tumble in the turbulent zone while imparting the occasional twitch. Go-to colors and patterns include pearl, black-white, olive-white, and bubble gum, while sizes can range from 7” to 14” depending on the local bait.

NATURAL BAIT TECHNIQUES

Of course, live bait or chunks can often work wonders in the whitewater. Live mackerel are tops, if you can get them, and can be fished under a small float to keep them in the strike zone. Chunks of fresh bait can also be cast next to the rocks where the fish are feeding and allowed to settle toward the bottom. Again, try to keep in touch with the bait as it drifts downward and be ready to set the hook.

No matter what technique you choose, you’ll find that fishing the whitewater can be an exhilarating and productive technique, throughout the entire striper season!

(to page 40)