

## THE WATCH (from page 3)

It is my observation that we may see further efforts to lower recreational catch for some popular species. NMFS however has stated, "Higher rates of fishing activity do not necessarily equate to overfishing nor does it mean we have underestimated fishery abundance. Recreational data is often just one input into a stock assessment."

I am also concerned that these major changes concerning recreational salt water fishing statistics and catch estimates were not, in my opinion, previously given greater visibility by those responsible for fisheries management at the national, regional or local level.

We have been well-informed on how the new APAIS program was implemented and administered at the state level, we have had APAIS representatives in Rhode Island at our own monthly meetings, at their request, to explain their mission and methods in their public outreach. I commend them for that.

But it seems at the next level of management (NMFS, regional councils and state marine fisheries management) there has been little attempt to make us aware of these new statistical methods until the recent release of several new population estimates incorporating these new estimates, particularly summer flounder. This overhaul of the methods has been in the works for years and should not have come as a surprise.

The source for my references in this column is the *MRIP Data User Handbook* and is available for download at... [https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/MRIP-Handbook/MRIP\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/MRIP-Handbook/MRIP_handbook.pdf)

## SEA POTATO (from page 28)

"That might also be because the environmental conditions are such that it's not doing so well here. We do have some preliminary data that shows that there are herbivores - snails primarily - that eat it, so that's good."

"Often you think that when a new species comes on the block, there isn't something that consumes it. But we've done studies that show that the common periwinkle will readily and happily pursue it."

That's a good sign, since there is little that can be done to stop it.

"We need to continue monitoring it to see if its going to increase in abundance," she said. "We expect it to continue spreading. Whether it moves up into the bay or west to Long Island Sound is unknown. And whether it's a good thing, a bad thing, or neither, only continued research can tell us."

Green-Gavrielidis and URI colleague Niels-Viggo Hobbs will be conducting a new research project this summer and fall that involves sampling rockweed habitats — the native seaweed most closely associated with the sea potato invasion — so they will be keeping an eye out for the newly arrived seaweed. Their students are also conducting laboratory studies to determine whether native seaweed-eating marine life will eat it and if it is preferred over native seaweeds.

*Rhode Island resident and author Todd McLeish runs a wildlife blog: [narshaleslefttooth.blogspot.com](http://narshaleslefttooth.blogspot.com)*

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## FISHERIES TERMS (from page 11)

- **MT = Metric Ton** = 2,204.6 pounds
- **NEFMC = New England Fishery Management Council** - Manages fisheries in New England federal waters
- **Recruit** = An individual fish which has entered a defined group through growth, spawning, or migration, such as those fish above minimum legal size (fishable stock) or which are sexually mature (spawning stock).
- **Recruitment** = A measure of weight or number of fish which enter a defined portion of a stock, such as fishable stock or the spawning stock.
- **RHL = Recreational Harvest Limit** - A measure that sets an upper limit for annual recreational harvest for species that are jointly management by ASMFC and Regional Mgmt Councils
- **SPR = Spawning potential ratio** = SPR compares the spawning ability of a stock in the fished condition to the stock's spawning ability in the unfished condition
- **SSB = Spawning stock biomass** = total weight of fish which are sexually mature; generally pertaining only to females
- **TAC = Total allowable catch**
- **Threshold** = that point where the fishery is regarded as overfished
- **Target Values** = that value or below which allows the fishery to be self sustaining
- **Z = Total instantaneous mortality** = The sum of fishing F and natural mortality M