

Winter Issue
December 2010



Tide Lines



COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

GRANITE TIDES

A newsletter from CCA NH

President's Report

Without involvement, there can be no commitment

The B.O.D. would like to thank Jeff Barnum for the fine job that he did the last few years he served as President. Don Swanson was elected our new President, and Mike Watosky was named Vice President.

Michael Reeve stays on as Treasurer, and Gordon Thompson as Secretary.

If you are getting your newsletter by snail mail, check out our Web site at www.ccanh.org for past letters. See

how much better it is in color. We still have a lot of members still not signed up. Printing and postage keeps going up all the time. Help us cut the cost of these items. Send us your e-mail to: ccanh@worldpath.net to sign

up, or call 603-731-2669

Check our Web site for current and upcoming events at www.ccanh.org

On Sept 13th I gave public comment on ASMFC Striped Bass Draft Addendum 11 to Amendment 6 on behalf of CCA NH. The Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire **opposes** Addendum II to Amendment 6 of the ASMFC Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan which would increase the coastal commercial harvest of striped bass. The rationale for our opposition to this proposed amendment follows.

Poor recruitment of the striped bass population of Chesapeake Bay, a major source of the fish in the northern and southern striped bass coastal range, has occurred in several of the past four years. While not yet triggering criteria for action by fisheries management, continued poor recruitment will. In addition, recent studies have shown extremely high rates of *Mycobacterium*, exceeding 60%, in striped bass sampled in Chesapeake Bay, with infection believed to have very high mortality rate. The full impacts of this infection to the stock and on recruitment are not yet fully understood. Given these potential threats to the health of the stock and recruitment, we feel that extreme caution is called for in management by ASMFC. Increasing commercial harvest at this juncture, given these

potential threats, is not a cautious approach to management.

CCANH will be moving forward with new website functions and fund raising options this year. Look forward to being able to sign up for events on our web site through PayPal. We are planning raffles or auctions online with tickets and other items sold from our website, or on E-Bay.

There is a Kayak Raffle going on right now with only 300 tickets to be sold at \$10.00 apiece. Anyone wanting to buy raffle tickets can call us at 603-731-2669 or contact any board member.

The new Freedom 12 represents the next generation kayak, taking stand-up kayak fishing to a whole new level. This ultimate fishing machine features a patented outrigger system that gives the angler a choice of three positions. The Freedom 12 paddles like a conventional kayak when the outriggers are in the first position. Position two offers additional stability when fishing or rigging a rod. The third position fully extends the outriggers into their patented in-line position for maximum efficiency when paddling, fishing or poling. Now you can stalk fish with less drag and water



movement or gain additional paddling stability in more challenging conditions. The Freedom 12 also features a new light weight hull with a break down carrying weight of only 49 lb. There's only

President's report cont'd...

one fishing kayak innovative and stable enough to put yourself in a position to catch more fish, the new Freedom 12 from Freedom Hawk Kayaks. Drawing to be held on March 9, 2011.

Freedom 12 Angler Fishing Sit-On-Top Kayak

- High-density polyethylene plastic
- Removable multi-position outriggers
- Watertight storage in each outrigger
 - Casting brace & stabilizing bar
 - High back seat
- Multi-position molded-in footbraces
 - 2 cup holders
 - Paddle holder
 - 2 flush mount rod holders
- Self-bailing scupper holes w/ plugs
 - Reinforced floor
- Stainless steel, aluminum, & plastic hardware

Tuna Mania 6 is coming On Jan. 29, 2011. As usual this will also raise funds for Tuna Research, and Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire. Call us for more info, or to reserve a seat at this event.

Don Swanson

President-CCANH

603-731-2669

ccanh@worldpath.net

salty4fly2@comcast.net

Calendar of Events

Rockingham Fishing & Hunting Expo

(Rockingham Race Track Ex. 1 off of Rt. 93)

Sat. Jan. 8, 2011 10am - 7pm

Sun Jan. 9, 2011 10am - 5pm

Sign up for Tuna Mania, and purchase your raffle tickets on the Freedom Kayak at our booth at this show, or at Tuna Mania.

Tuna Mania VI- January 29, 2011 (Red Hook Brewery)

Sign up for Tuna Mania by calling 603-731-2669

****Pre-registration required****

Pelham & TU Fly-fishing Show

March 6 & 7, 2011

Join NH Coastal Conservation Association at these events.

Coastal Conservation Association

Striped Bass – The Road Not Taken

For striped bass fishermen on the East Coast, there has been quite a bit of disturbing news recently regarding the most popular sport fish in America. Specifically, there have been two significant developments, and though it is easy to get lost in the technical language, it is important for serious conservationists to understand the game if CCA is to be successful in its efforts to bring this fishery back to its historical size and geographic distribution.

- The latest striped bass stock assessment showed that the fishing mortality rate for fully recruited fish (fish over 8 years old) was $F=.62$. When factored with the estimated natural mortality rate (fish that die from causes other than fishing), that means about 43 percent of striped bass over 8 years old die each year as a result of both commercial and recreational fishing. According to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan, no more than about 24 percent (the target) of those fish should be taken by fishing gear each year, and we must never take more than about 31 percent (the threshold).

In fact, should more than 31 percent be taken in any year, the management plan requires that immediate action be taken in the following year to end overfishing. According to the latest assessment, based on the best scientific advice available, we have been fishing over the target of about 24 percent since 1997 and, most recently, fishing at a rate 100 percent over the target and 50 percent above the threshold.

However, managers not only dodged their obligation under Amendment 6 which requires action if the mortality threshold is exceeded, they dismissed the $F=0.62$ figure as “uncertain” and chose to wait an entire year to see what the next assessment says.

- However, the National Marine Fisheries Service apparently does put some credence in the latest mortality estimates, as they have put their efforts to open the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on indefinite hold until they can be sure that overfishing is not occurring. States control marine waters out to three miles. The area from three to 200 miles offshore falls under federal control and is referred to as the EEZ.

NMFS is clearly concerned that opening up thousands of square miles of federal waters to striped bass harvest can only increase the pressure on this already heavily fished stock and so it is taking a cautious approach. CCA agrees with this approach, as do most anglers.

When NMFS originally proposed plans to open the EEZ last year, CCA members and concerned anglers expressed strong opposition at public hearings. In fact, keeping the EEZ closed was one of the issues that CCA National Chairman Walter Fondren raised at a meeting with James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, during his visit with President George Bush at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, last year.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

CCA pushed hard for conservative management of striped bass during the two year run-up to Amendment 6. We argued the Atlantic Coast striped bass population was not fully recovered, despite its apparent abundance, because the historic age structure of the population was not yet restored.

Striped bass can live up to 25 years or more. However, in its zeal to finally declare a victory for fisheries management, the ASMFC declared striped bass fully recovered in the mid-1990s, long before fish more than 15 years old comprised a significant portion of the population. CCA believed then, and still believes today, that striped bass harvest should have remained limited until the historic age structure began to fill out and anglers were seeing fish over 15 years of age, weighing in excess of 40 or 50 pounds.

Coastal Conservation Association

Striped Bass – The Road Not Taken

Instead, the population was declared restored because the spawning stock biomass (SSB - the total poundage of sexually mature fish) had been restored to historic levels. Little emphasis was placed on the fact that the vast majority of that biomass was comprised of fish less than 10 years old. Most anglers believe a high spawning stock implies an abundance of large, old female fish. Most would be surprised to learn that the vast majority of the striped bass SSB resides in fish under 10 years old.

In the end, what this means is that the restoration of SSB had nothing to do with the presence of larger, older female striped bass in the population, but rather an abundance of newly mature fish. While we may have had a high SSB, it is because most of the fish belonged to a very few, relatively recent year classes, rather than older fish that have survived 15 or more years in the wild.

This population structure can create an unstable population that is very vulnerable to a sudden increase in fishing pressure or natural calamities, such as epidemic or consecutive spawning failures, both of which contributed to the population crash of the 1970s and '80s.

THE RIGHT ROAD

The only way to grow large, old fish is to reduce the mortality on the younger fish so they have a chance to grow up, a strategy in complete contrast to the manner in which ASMFC is currently managing the striped bass fishery. Managers are taking what is arguably the premier inshore game fish on the Atlantic coast, and perhaps the only fish that gives shore-bound and protected-water anglers a chance to catch a true “trophy,” and turning it into another pedestrian panfish that can often fit in a five-gallon pail.

With proper management, both high abundance and a fair chance of encountering a trophy fish (60 pounds plus) could have been realized, but managers sadly lacked the patience to attain such a complete recovery.

CCA's position supports precautionary management for striped bass. If there is uncertainty in the assessment, managers should take steps to reduce harvest sooner rather than later. As long as the fishing mortality rate stays high, the chance of restoring the historic age structure remains remote. Year-long delays to study a mortality rate that is twice the target pushes the day when females more than 15 years old make up a significant portion of the spawning stock far into the future.

Recreational anglers should abhor that delay. We need to support taking action now to constrain harvest, rather than waiting a year or two.

Had fisheries managers taken the advice of CCA during the Amendment 6 public hearings and set the mortality target at a lower level, the restrictions they would have had to impose then would have been minor compared to what they may have to impose if the fishing mortality estimate of 2004 again exceeds the threshold.

Is quick action justified? Ask yourself this question: If the best scientific advice was that the fishing mortality rate was half the target ($F=0.15$) instead of twice the target, would managers have been cautious about accepting the advice? Or, more likely, would they have fallen all over themselves to relax restrictions immediately?

The pressures placed on ASMFC and fishery managers are real. For every conservation-minded CCA member who works to recover this fishery the right way, there are vocal commercial fishermen who lobby to loosen the regulations as fast as possible to increase harvest. The crucial point to remember, and one that is frequently lost in the clamor of fishery management, is that if we manage the resource correctly, there will be plenty of fish for everyone.

If not, we'll be right back in the 1970s.

By Dick Brame, CCA Atlantic Fisheries Consultant

Conservationists praise ASMFC decision on striped bass Managers reject proposal to increase commercial harvest



News Release

Coastal Conservation Association

6919 Portwest, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77024

Email: twvenker@joincca.org Website: www.joincca.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 9, 2010

CONTACT: Ted Venker, 1-800-201-FISH

CHARLESTON, SC – After months of intense debate, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) announced today that it has denied a proposal to increase the commercial harvest of striped bass by up to 50 percent. Public sentiment has run intensely against the proposal from the moment it was introduced last February, as recreational anglers up and down the East Coast flooded their ASMFC representatives with calls to deny the proposal.

“This is a great day for conservation,” said Richen Brame, CCA Atlantic States Fisheries director. “Managers were very much in danger of increasing mortality at a time when the stock is declining, but they took the conservative approach in light of all the uncertainty surrounding the stock today. They should be commended for refusing to take a path that could have ended in disaster.”

Last February, conservationists were stunned when the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board chose to ignore a host of significant concerns from scientists and enforcement officers about the health of the striped bass population, and instead directed its staff to draft a proposal to increase commercial harvest. Anglers who remembered the dark years of the '70s were alarmed that managers were attempting to ramp up commercial harvest even as anglers were seeing serious warning signs on the water.

“CCA members, particularly in Maine and New Hampshire, have said repeatedly they are not seeing striped bass in the abundance seen just a few years ago,” said Mac McKeever, president of CCA Maine. “Anglers in the northern reaches of the striped bass range are the canaries in the coal mine when it comes to the health of the striped bass population, and anglers here are not encountering anywhere near as many fish as they did just a few years ago. There is definitely reason to be concerned.”

Other warning signs pointing to a need for managers to take a cautious approach include declining trends in the striped bass Juvenile Abundance Index, “significant and unreported” poaching in the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the potentially devastating impact of *Mycobacteriosis* in Chesapeake Bay, the primary striped bass spawning ground for the entire Atlantic Coast. Seventy percent of the fish sampled there had lesions associated with the disease and in aquaculture, *Mycobacteriosis* infections are virtually always fatal.

“Our members were especially motivated to contact their representatives on the ASMFC throughout this process and let them know this is no time to be talking about increasing harvest of striped bass,” said Charles A. Witek, chairman of CCA Atlantic Fisheries Committee. “The problems facing striped bass today are far more complex than simple overfishing. Managers did the right thing by taking a precautionary approach to management. Striped bass are the crown jewel of ASMFC’s management successes and should be treated as such.”

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CCA is the largest marine resource conservation group of its kind in the nation. With almost 100,000 members in 17 state chapters, CCA has been active in state, national and international fisheries management issues since 1977. Visit www.JoinCCA.org for more information.

Simple Facts about Catch Shares...

Given the complexity of catch shares, it is not unexpected that there are so many rumors and misconceptions swirling not only about the issue, but also about the organizations that make up the coalition, including CCA, American Sportfishing Association, The Billfish Foundation, the International Game Fish Association and the National Marine Manufacturers Association. This document was designed to clearly state the facts.



In response to a campaign to distort the position of our coalition of marine industry and fishery conservation groups, the bullet points below are meant to clarify some key points on the coalition's history of involvement with catch shares, and the related issue of allocation, and the coalition's position.

- Catch share programs have been used sporadically in commercial fisheries for decades.
- Allocations between recreational and commercial sectors have historically been based on catch history, often using time frames as short as selected three-year segments. Given the history of federal managers to promote commercial fisheries, the time frames were often not favorable to the recreational sector.
- The allocations are essentially frozen, despite the growth of recreational angling and the growing economic contribution of the recreational sector. More and more recreational anglers have been trapped chasing a stagnant allotment of fish, resulting in shorter seasons and tighter restrictions.
- The Obama Administration created the Catch Share Policy Task Force in 2009, signaling a new focus to widely force catch share systems into federal fisheries, including those enjoyed by recreational anglers. As previously implemented, catch shares threatened to lock in outdated allocations forever.
- In an effort to be involved in the process of shaping the new policy, our coalition of marine industry and fishery conservation groups engaged the Administration on the issue of catch shares. The decision to engage was spurred by the Obama Administration's tendency to enact far-reaching policies in extremely short time frames.
- The coalition also initiated debates and exchanges with environmental groups that were heavily promoting catch share systems, including Environmental Defense Fund.
- As a result of its engagement with the Administration and the environmental community, the coalition created a list of position points to pursue in the creation of any federal catch share policy:
 - The coalition is against catch shares in any purely recreational fishery. The coalition does not believe they are a tool to manage recreational anglers in any instance.
 - The coalition is against separating the recreational sector into for-hire/charter and private boat designations.
 - In mixed-use fisheries – those that have a quota for both recreational and commercial fishers – catch shares may be an appropriate tool for the commercial sector. However, before implementing a commercial catch share system, the allocation must be redefined and updated using economic, social and conservation criteria.
 - Once set, the new allocation must be reviewed periodically using those same criteria.
 - In mixed-use fisheries that employ a catch share system for the commercial sector, the commercial shares must be made available for purchase by the recreational sector to allow for the growth of the recreational sector. The mechanism for purchasing commercial shares could include state agencies.

The groups of the coalition have engaged to shift the Catch Share Policy from one that was initially poised to work against recreational anglers, to a tool that may be used to address the persistent allocation problems that have plagued anglers for decades. Other groups took the position early in the debate to "Just Say No" to catch shares. The coalition of groups listed here did not believe that was an effective policy strategy given the momentum that was behind this Administration's ocean management initiatives.

TUNA MANIA VI Seminar



Presented by: Coastal Conservation Association
Of New Hampshire

Where: Red Hook Brewery, Newington NH
At Pease Tradeport

When: January 29, 2011

Time: Doors open 9:30 am Presentations begin 10 am

Presenters/Speakers:

First Light Anglers Capt Derek Spingler and Capt Nat Moody:

Derek and Nat helped to pioneer the inshore light tackle Tuna fishery over 12 years ago here on the MA and NH coasts. They helped developed several new methods for taking these inshore Tuna on both the fly and lures. They will be speaking about new fishing and tackle techniques for the Giant fishery which has developed along our coast.

Dr. Molly Lutcavage PHD:

From the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Lutcavage will be showing and discussing her latest footage of tagging, New results on movements and behavior of juvenile bluefin tuna returned by "X-tags". Along with the current state of the fishery worldwide.

Chris Weiner– The Traditional New England Harpoon Fishery:

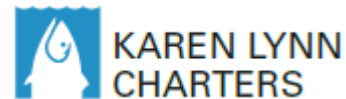
The Weiner family from Perkins Cove, Me. has over 50 plus years of experience in the Harpoon fishery in New England. Chris will be sharing spectacular video footage of this traditional New England fishery in the Gulf of Maine. He will be discussing their techniques in this fishery along with their thoughts on the current state of the Tuna fishery here in New England. Also, he will cover the recent Georges Bank fishery this past season with video.

USCG and National Marine Fisheries

Lt Dan Satterfield and Special Agent Chris Schoppmeyer will discuss Coast Guard safety regulations and Tuna Permitting Rules for all angling categories

YETI COOLERS

SHOALS BAIT PENS & HARPOONS



Come and listen to the experts on this exciting inshore Tuna fishery in NH, ME and MA. There will be **raffles and auctions a portion of which will benefit Dr.Molly Lucavage's Research.** There will be **Tackle displays** and a chance for everyone to learn and ask questions about this exciting fishery along our coast **Seats are limited to the first 180 attendees – this has been a sellout every year.** The cost is **\$45.00 per person includes a buffet lunch;** there will be a cash bar. Please call **603-731-2669** for reservations. **We will be accepting Credit cards by phone.** Pre-registration is required!

CCA New Hampshire Website www.ccanh.org

Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 4372, Portsmouth, NH 03801

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



Membership Application/ Renewal: Please cut out and send to:

Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 4372, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

CCANH New Membership CCANH Gift Membership CCANH Membership Renewal Member ID # _____

\$25 Standard Membership– 6 issues of *Tide Magazine*, 4 issues of *Granite Tides*, membership card, window decal and bumper stickers

\$15 Associate Membership– for each additional family member; all Standard member privileges except *Tide Magazine*

\$10 New Tide Membership– all individuals 17 and under receive member privileges, *Rising Tide Magazine*, logo patch and iron on Tshirt transfer

\$100 Membership– your choice of a current CCA Membership print, 6 issues of *Tide Magazine*, 4 issues of *Granite Tides*, window decal and bumper stickers

Or enroll online at CCANH's secure website www.joincca.org

How did you hear about CCA New Hampshire?