

**Patchogue Fishing**  
**Club**  
**Conservation Report**  
**February 2004**

*Compiled by James F. Smith*

### Blue Fin Tuna

1. The National Marine Fisheries Services (NOAA Fisheries) has claimed that the 2003 recreational Blue Fin Tuna harvest was well over the quota. They are still tallying the numbers and are planning to severely restrict and or even close the Blue Fin Tuna recreational season for 2004. (E)

### Fluke & Porgy

2. There was a joint meeting between Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board. It was proposed that NY and Southern New England will take a 57% reduction in Porgy quotas in state controlled waters. New York will have to take a 48.5% decrease in Fluke. A present the ratio of the Fluke quota is set up with a 60/40 cut. With recreational anglers getting the short end of the stick. There is a proposal being submitted by the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) and is before the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Counsel to make the split even Steven, 50/50. We would get the same tonnage as the commercial interests. This proposal will probably die in the counsels laps unless there is serious political pressure brought to bear on the counsel to ratify the legislation.
  - The new proposals are out for this year's Fluke regulations. Even though fluke have been taken off the over-fished list and are well into a come back, the recreational fluke quota is taking another big cut. A study performed by Captain Dennis Kanyuk of Point look out is showing that we are catching less fish each year and yet we are still told that we are over our quota.

According this study the recreational fluke harvest in New York for the year of 1994 was 7,731,884 and the harvest for 2001 was 3,254,545. It seems to show that there is steady drop in fluke catches but we are told that there are too many fish being caught. On the following page is a list of possible options for the 2004 recreational Fluke season.

Size	Bag Limit	Season
18"	4 Fish	May 15-September 12
18"	3 Fish	May 1-September 15
17.5"	7 Fish	May 1-August 13
17.5"	7 Fish	June 20-September 6
17.5"	3 Fish	May 1-August 20
17.5"	3 Fish	June 10-September 6
18.5"	7 Fish	No Closed Season

Please send your opinions to either [tmelton@thefisherman.com](mailto:tmelton@thefisherman.com) or The Fisherman C/O Tom Melton Ramsey Road Shirley, NY 11967. (B, C)

### Spiny Dogfish vs. the Silver Hake

3. NOAA Fisheries and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council have closed Federal waters to the harvest of the Spiny Dog Fish. The closure started back in July 2003. It scheduled to be partially lifted July 18<sup>th</sup> of this year. A by catch season is scheduled to open this May and run in to the month of October with a quota of 2316 million pounds. Then a quota of 1.684 million pounds for November through April 2005. The only local commercial interest in dogfish is in local state waters where the catch is shipped to Europe. In state controlled waters the ASMFC mandate is 8,800,000 pounds for the year. This is set with 57.9% of the quota going to Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.  
The rest of the 42.1% will go to the waters of Rhode Island to Florida. NOAA fisheries claim that the local biomass of Spiny Dogfish has been depleted down some 75% over the last 10 years.

Adult females are said to make up only 15% of the current population. The rub is that local anglers are still fighting through the clouds of dogfish to reach the targeted species such as Codfish, Silver Hake (Whiting), Red Hake (Ling), and Pollock. Last summer some party and charter boats had to leave their chum slicks when Dogfish had risen up to shouldered out the Bluefish.

The Silver Hake (Whiting) which was once a very important fish to party and charter boats of Long Island's south shore during the winter months, is now all but gone. The problem with this fish occurred when the regional fisheries counsels were being formed after the Magnuson Act (set up the 200 mile limit).

- The different fish species had to be divided between the different regional counsels. Our counsel the Mid-Atlantic is responsible for Black Sea Bass, Scup, and Bluefish along with others. Whiting were allotted to the New England Council. There the only fishery concern was of a commercial nature. The small mesh trawlers literally slaughtered the Whiting population in the New York Bight area. These nets trap both mature and juvenile fish; the non-marketable fish were just discarded over the side. When the New England council held hearings to investigate the situation one NJ dragger captain flat denied the practice. He also claimed that they needed the smaller juvenile killing mesh to help them obtain squid.

Therefore, Whiting have been just about wiped out. New England stocks are still in good shape, and since little is none about the local Mud Hole stock it was said that the Whiting population is just fine. NOAA Fisheries declared that the Mid Atlantic Council Whiting is on the come back and is no longer on the over-fished list. NOAA is going to ask New England Regional Fisheries Council to investigate dealing with the Bight stock separate from those to the east.(D)

#### Striped Bass

4. The Congressional bill HR1286 was introduced by Congressmen Frank Pallone (D, NJ) in 2003, and co-Sponsored by Representative Mike Michaud (D, Maine) and Congressmen Tom Allen (D, Maine). This legislation if passed would prohibit the commercial harvesting of Striped Bass in coastal waters out to the 200-mile limit. This would reserve Stripers for est. 3,000,000 recreational anglers from Maine to Florida. The bill is starting to gain some supporters in congress, and it is unknown at this time if it will be voted on this year. (A)

#### FDA Advisory

5. There will be a new warning issued by the FDA releasing soon. The advisory will be about dangerous levels of a highly toxic form of mercury in some of the larger pelagic species. Right now actual guidelines for the advisory are not available at this time, but it should read some where along these lines. "Women who are pregnant, or expecting to become pregnant soon, as well as nursing mothers are strongly urged to limit their intake of Tuna, Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, and Tilefish."

Methyl Mercury, a particularly toxic form of mercury which can accumulate in the tissues of large palagics, and is being introduced in the environment by coal fired power plants. (A)

#### Personal Floatation Device Legislation

6. The USCG and The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators are working to introduce a new nation wide legislation that will mandate the wearing of PFD's on vessels less than 20 feet. The use of PFDs are required to be worn by minors on boats less than 20' right now and

there wearing is good and safe idea for adults when using a smaller boat. If this law goes into effect, it will be a requirement for adults also. (A)

### *Fishery Council Conflict*

7. Stanford University Fisheries Policy Project has released a bombshell. "Conflicts of interest on the part of the nation's eight regional fisheries management councils account for the federal government's failure to stop the decline of marine fish populations." They claim that many of the persons on these regional boards make their living from catching the very same fish they are supposed to be protecting. NOAA fisheries Chief Bill Hograth has vowed to look into these discrepancies and says that over all the regional councils are doing a good job. (A)

All information obtained through and from the following:

- A) Sport Fishing, "Sport Fishing News" Volume #12, Issue #2, February 2004
- B) Long Island Fisherman, "Conservation Watch" by Al Ristori, January 29th 2004, Volume 39, Issue 5
- C) Long Island Fisherman, "Conservation Watch" By Al Ristori, February 19 2004, Volume 39, Issue 8
- D) Long Island Fisherman, "Conservation Watch" by Al Ristori, February 5 & 12 2004, Volume 39, Issues 6 & 7
- E) Long Island Fisherman, "Conservation Watch" by Al Ristori, January 22 2004, Volume 39, Issue 4