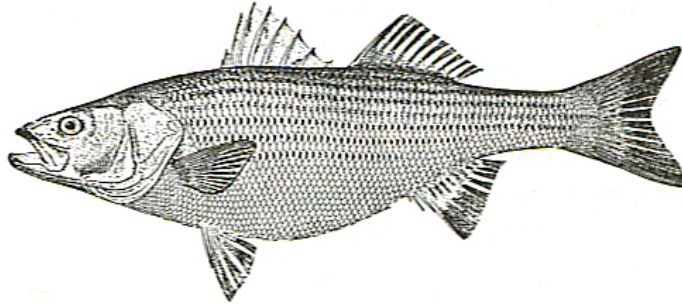


PATCHOGUE FISHING CLUB

P.O BOX 808 PATCHOGUE, NY 11729



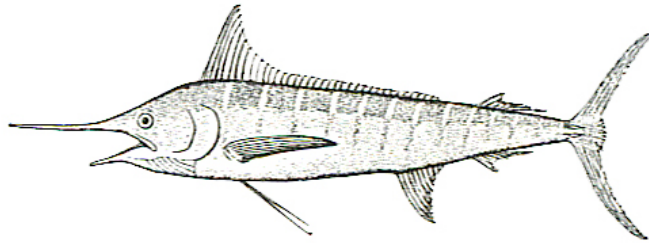
MARCH 2005
CONSERVATION REPORT

BUSH ADMINISTRATION ATTACKS MAGNUSON-
STEVENS ACT THROUGH A BACK DOOR

BUNKER STOCKS COULD BE GETTING SOME
RELIEF

SPINY DOGFISH IN THE NEW YET AGIAN

COMPILED BY JAMES F. SMITH



The Bush Administration Trying To Weaken Magnuson-Stevens Act

In an article published on the National Environmental Trust web site the Bush administration is alleged to be trying to undermine the Magnuson-Stevens Act by use a backdoor. They are attacking a very important section of this act, the over fishing standard.

The Magnuson-Stevens act was put into law in 1976; it was designed to close our costal waters to foreign fishing fleets. It set several measures that were design to prevent our fish stocks from being over fished by both commercial and recreational fishing. Some of those heavily pressured fish stocks still have not made a full recovery. In 1996 the U.S. Congress added a few more safeguards called "The National Standards to Protect the Nations Fish Populations and Promote Healthy Ocean Ecosystems. There were a total of ten (10) different national standards with in the Act. One of most important standards in the act is the one that deals with over fishing. Which is exactly the one this administration is putting under attack. I will be pursuing this situation, and will keep all abreast of any new details.

ASMFC Takes a Hard Look at Menhaden

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Menhaden Management committee is taking a long hard look at the east coast's Moss Bunker stocks, with an eye to preserving and strengthening the schools of this foundational forage fish. We have to look at the extremely import role these fish play in our local ecosystem. The Moss Bunker supports almost all of the recreational sport fish in our area at one time or another. Our baitfish stocks are dwindling each year. Sand Eels, Spearing, Bay Anchovies, and of course the

Menhaden numbers are all dwindling. These fish provide the food staple on which Stripers, blues, Weakfish, and even Fluke rely on to survive. If the forage fish numbers keep dropping the sport fish will also start to disappear. Or should I say continue to disappear. There is a delicate balance between predator and prey, if there are more predators than the forage stocks can support the fish on top of the food chain will either die off or stop inhabiting our local waters.

There is one problems with any restrictions the council puts upon the Menhaden catch, that is that their regulation go only as far as 3 miles off shore. The commercial fleet will simply move further of shore and continue to decimate the dwindling bunker schools.

The Spiny Dogfish is back in the news yet again.

In his Conservation Watch column, Capt. Al Ristori blasts the New England, & Mid-Atlantic Councils along with NOAA Fisheries for their mismanagement or should I say mismanagement of the Spiny Dogfish. These agencies idly sat back while the commercial draggers virtually wiped out the Whiting (Silver Hake) fishery from the NY Bite area. In addition they did little to stop the decimation of the inshore winter flounder grounds and the destruction of the local codfish stocks. But now these groups are all fired up about saving a species which no one cares too much about. The Spiny Dogfish is being protected to a point where they are now starting becoming a detriment to other species. It is now illegal to process spiny dogfish commercially except at by catch levels. These scavengers are starting to take over all of the offshore fishing grounds. They are now directly competing with other fish for the available food stores. With their numbers being so high and now that the powers that be have made it illegal to commercially catch them the spiny dogfish are crowding out the desirable species of fish. The dogfish were always considered a pest in the fall and spring, but now even in the middle of summer they are starting to create a nuisance for New England Giant tuna fishermen. I am unsure as to how or even why the council feels that the dogfish is in so much trouble. The population numbers that council has published look very grave but the real life facts do not seem to support those numbers. I feel this issue is a real hornets nest, and do not see anything good coming out of this management plan.

The Fishermen Announces That They Will Publish Neighboring States Marine Recreational Fishing Regulations

In a recent editorial the fishermen announced that the paper is planning to publish neighboring states recreational marine fishing regulations. This is an attempt to aid local anglers who travel into Connecticut & New Jersey waters to fish, to maintain the integrity of these other states laws when. I also feel this endorses the position of conservation and inter state cooperation.