

Coastal Recreational Fisheries Forum Summary

October 21, 2016

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Presentation available online at URL:

<http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/calendar/v2/event.asp?id=1263>

11 attendees and 5 Department staff

Summer Flounder

- Michael Luisi discussed quota reductions for 2017. Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) 2018 data will be reconfigured and likely to show a three to six fold increase in catch. This means that there have been more fish in the population. The epicenter of summer flounder has shifted to northern New Jersey to Connecticut. Luisi mentioned an idea about using slot limits. Fish being illegally harvested in New York and Long Island Sound have been a problem. Ocean acidification is having an impact on larval summer flounder. There will be a benchmark stock assessment in 2018.
- Attendee's suggested:
 - switching to circle hooks;
 - having DNR make a suggestion on hook size and type for summer flounder in the Fishing Guide (3/0 wide gap or circle hook);
 - maybe make hook type and size a requirement for tournaments. MSSA has a guide about it.
- An attendee asked if a summer flounder hatchery program could be created. Luisi responded that a hatchery would not be able to compete with nature.

Black Sea Bass

- Michael Luisi provided an update on black sea bass which is a data poor species and the complications of assessing them because of their life history. Delaware to North Carolina will have status quo regulations. The benchmark stock assessment should be ready for review next January and stocks are predicted to be larger than previously assessed. New England is constantly taking reductions because fishing is so good. We are hoping to drop the fall closure.
- An attendee suggested that the numbers are wrong because black sea bass are very difficult to sample.

Tautog

- Delmarva is one of four Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) tautog regions. Tautog are being assessed and we are hoping to be able to re-open December.

Cobia

- The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be developing a Fisheries Management Plan.

Spot & Croaker

- Peer reviewed stock assessments should be available early next year.

Sharks

- The Department intends to scope maximum survivability.

Cownose Rays

- The Department may scope possible regulations for cownose rays which is more of a concern in Chesapeake Bay. There are concerns about females being present in the summer, having only one offspring a year, and wanton waste. The Department will scope for in need of conservation, possible permits, and trip limits.
- An attendee was not supportive but was also against wasting fish.

Tilefish

- Mike Luisi asked the audience if there were many people that fished for tilefish. The audience responded that there are many blue-line tilefish captains and some recreational interest. It is a secondary species on fishing trips. An attendee thinks that seven golden tilefish is way too many.

Attendee Items

- The Department should keep sheepshead on the radar.
- The Department should do more for seatrout. There is competition from striped bass. As striped bass decrease, bluefish and weakfish increase.
- Concern was expressed for the funding the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) aerial survey, data analysis component.
- Natural Resources Police:
 - Attendee mentioned that there are issues with the no wake zones not being enforced.
 - The Natural Resources Police are doing better at catching poachers.

Commercial Clamming

- Fishing and Boating Services Director, David Blazer, described an alternative idea to dredging for clams so that there could be a winter fishery. Blazer discussed an idea to make a 40-50 acre aquaculture coop lease where watermen could plant and harvest

clams or oysters. The audience indicated that MSSA suggested this 10 years ago when the mechanical ban was implemented.

- The audience opposed mechanical dredging.
- Delegate Carozza said that the watermen will need our technical support to navigate the paperwork if this proceeds.