**MVSA August 2014 Newsletter**

**Ag Fair Display**

Paula Sullivan and Peter Johnson designed and set up the annual MVSA exhibit at the Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Fair. (Janet Messineo provided the taxidermy display) The exhibit won a Blue Ribbon as well as the Michael Wild Award of Special Merit. This is the second time in recent memory our exhibit has won both a Blue Ribbon and Special Merit award. In addition more than 400 MVSA web-site handouts were taken as well as a similar number of MA DMF rules and regulations pamphlets.

**Fishing Pier** *By: Dave Nash*

We recently received an update form state environmental officials regarding the fishing pier. Plans have been underway to address some “enhancements” to the pier and while not coordinated much outside of their agency it is beginning to go through the formal approval process. Club President Don Scarpone and I have been meeting with Ross Kessler who is the Public Access Coordinator for the fisheries department and the lead on this part of the project. Ross is very motivated to make some additions to the pier but we will have to see how the various approvals work out. He has already gone to the town Conservation Commission and the Martha’s Vineyard Commission. Don and Dave went with Ross on an inspection of the pier and we talked about the design of some of the changes and where on the pier items could be placed.

They received a “no approval necessary” to go ahead with the installation of some lifesaving rings as well as some fish nets. We believe the nets donated by Steve Morris will be acceptable so it should just be matter of installing them now.

Not so easy is the addition of the other items on the list Ross brought to the commission. The permit the state received contained a very specific restriction on lighting. Reflectors are allowed but not lighting so Ross is working to identify lighting that is very, very low impact. We suggested to Ross that he look for available lighting that would be solar powered and perhaps have a short battery life so the lights only serve a safety function rather than lighting things up too much. What fisherman doesn’t carry a flashlight or headlamp anyhow? We thought maybe the lighting would also have a benefit in attracting bait. The filet station that many Surfcaster members have suggested is actually a greater problem because filet stations are specifically prohibited by state law. Bait cutting stations are not prohibited however so that is what they are applying for and they have actually looked to Don for help in designing and installing once approval is obtained. The bait cutting stations they are suggesting are, of course, smaller than a filet table and will have running water from a hand pump.

We all met with the LUPC committee of the Commission last week and a meeting is scheduled for the full committee on Sept. 4. Ross will have more detail on the lighting and bait cutting station parts of the proposal and what is likely to happen at that meeting is that the commission will vote to either require a full hearing or vote that the changes do not require a permit change. The latter however is very unlikely and Ross is prepared to go through the formal hearing process but that would not likely occur until late fall.

**In House Derby**

Ron Domurat continues to lead both the striped bass and bluefish categories in the MVSA In House Derby with his 35.35 lb. striper and 10.94 lb. bluefish.

Ron also captured the August pins for stripers and bluefish. Jesse Oliver was second in the striped bass category with a 27.15 fish and Tony Rezendez third with a 21.00 lber.

In the bluefish division, Jim Cornwell took second with an 8.69 lb. fish followed by Lou Ferrucci’s 8.50 lber.

In the Boat Division, Jack Kimberly leads the bluefish category with a 12.25 fish. Jack also captured the August pin with a 10.00 fish. To date, there have been no boat striped bass entries.

**August Picnic and Meeting**

The monthly picnic and fishing contest was held on East Beach the evening of August 16. Seventeen members and guests attended and everyone caught fish this time. Once again Ralph Peckham took home the ***Grand Prize*** Ron McKee swimmer for catching a 6.5 lb. bluefish. President Scarpone was second with a 6.3 lb. fish followed closely by newcomer Brenda Beal with a 6.1 lber. Both won Roberts Lures for their efforts. Dave Nash won the Mystery Prize for the month, another Ron McKee handcrafted lure.

**September Picnic and Meeting**

President Scarpone had some leftover hot dogs and sodas from the August meeting so threw together an impromptu September meeting to unload them and hand out pins to the August winners. Jack Kimberly was the winner of the Mystery Prize drawn from names of all the members who entered fish in August. In the fishing contest that followed the hot dog feast Bob (Hawkeye) Jacobs was the winner with a 6.7 lb. bluefish, followed very closely by Ralph Peckham who won the last two contests. Ralphs fish was 6.6 lbs. “Prez” Scarpone was third with a 6.4 lb. fish.

Monthly meetings will be suspended until after the Derby.

**The Derby**

The Derby is upon us once again. In the past MVSA members have distinguished themselves as outstanding Derby fishermen, and last year members Bob Clay, Ralph Peckham and Cooper Gilkes were Grand Leaders. The impressive list below is a history of the Derby accomplishments by MVSA members. It’s notable that we have had 19 Grand Leaders and Bob Clay, Jim Cornwell, Cooper Gilkes, Jack Livingston and Keith McArt have done it twice. Tom Kieras and Cooper Gilkes have also won the Grand Prize Truck or Boat.

**Ed Amaral l** 2007 Ray Metcalf Memorial Award, Senior Boat Striped Bass 2013 Flyrod Release Award

**Dave Balon** 2009 Shore Grand Slam, 3rd

2009 Abe Williams Memorial Award, Shore Grand Slam

**Chip Bergeron** 1984 All Tackle Shore Bass, Non Resident 1st

1991 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 1st

1992 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 3rd

1995 Flyrod Shore Bass, 1st

1995 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 3rd

1995 Flyrod Shore Bonito, 3rd

1995 Flyrod Shore Grand Slam, 1st ***(Derby Record)***

1997 Flyrod Shore Bass, 2nd

2004 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 1st

2005 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 2nd

2010 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 2nd

2013 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 2nd

**Fran Clay** 2001 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 1st

2012 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 2nd

2012 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Boat False Albacore

2012 Vintage Jewelry Award, Heaviest False Albacore caught by a senior woman

2013 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

**Bob Clay** 2001 All Tackle Boat Bonito, 1st **(*Grand Leader*)**

2005 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 3rd

2006 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 3rd

2008 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Boat False Albacore

2012 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 1st

2013 Arnold Spofford Memorial Award, Senior Boat Bonito

2013 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

2013 Arnold Spofford Memorial Award, Boat False Albacore

2013 All Tackle Boat Bonito, 1st, ***(Grand Leader)***

**Jim Cornwell** 2003 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2003 Brickman Award, Senior Shore Bonito

2003 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Shore Bonito

2008 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2008 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

**Win Crocker** 2005 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 3rd

**Phil Cronin** 2005 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 1st

2006 Flyrod Boat Bonito, 1st

2007 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 2nd

2007 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 2nd

2011 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

**Joe Dart** 2010 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 3rd

2011 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 1st

2012 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 3rd

**Ron Domurat** 1993 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 1st

2004 Kastmaster Joe Memorial Award. Heaviest Shore Bluefish Weighed in on First Day of Derby

2008 Chamber of Commerce Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2008 George H. Pye Award, Senior Resident Shore Bluefish

2008 Madison Alwardt Award Senior Shore Bluefish

2008 Ray Metalf Award Senior Shore Striped Bass

2008 Shore Top Rod Award

2008 Team Competition, Shore, 1stt

2009 Team Competition, Shore, 1st

2009 David Finkelstein Award, Shore Team Competition

2011 Thomas Nessa Award, Heaviest Striped Bass Weighed in on the First Day of Derby

2011 George H. Pye Award, Senior Resident Shore Bluefish

2011 Madison Alwardt Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2011 Shore Top Rod Award

2012 Madison Alwardt Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2012 George Pye Award Senior Resident Shore Bluefish

2012 James P. Catlow Memorial Award, Heaviest Shore Bluefish Caught by a Male Resident

2012 Shore Top Rod Award

2013 Howie Leonard Memorial Award Senior Shore False Albacore

**Frank Dougherty** 1995 All Tackle Shore Striped Bass, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2005 Howie Leonard Award Senior Boat False Albacore

**Thor Farrish** 2011 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 3rd

**Jim Fraser** 2011 Flyrod Boat Bonito, 3rd

2012 DaRosa Award, Boat Team Competition

2012 Team Competition, Boat 1st

2013 Flyrod Boat Bluefish, 3rd

2013 Team Competition, Boat 2nd

**Dan Geary** 2002 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2002 Bob Post Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bluefish.

2002 DaRosa Award, Senior Shore Bluefish.

2002 James P. Catlow Memorial Award, Heaviest Resident Shore Bluefish.

2002 George H. Pye Award, Senior Resident Shore Bluefish.

2002 Chamber of Commerce Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2002 Madison Alwardt Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bluefish.

**Cooper Gilkes** 1987 All Tackle Boat Bonito, 1st ***(Grand Leader and Boat Winner)***

2003 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

2009 Creek Company Fly Rod Award

2009 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

2011 Ray Metcalf Memorial Award, Senior Shore Striped Bass

2011 Cooper & Lela Gilkes, Martha’s Vineyard Surfcasters Sportsmanship

Award

2012 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 2nd

2012 Howie Leonard Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

2013 All Tackle Team Competition, 2nd

2013 Arnold Spofford Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bonito

2013 Abe Williams Memorial Award, for the first shore angler

to record a Grand Slam

2013 Shore Grand Slam, 1st

2013 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 1st, ***(Grand Leader***)

**George Gomez** 2005 George Pye Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2005 Madison Alwardt Award Senior Shore Bluefish

2005 Chamber of Commerce Award Senior Shore Bluefish

2005 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Shore Bonito

2007 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

**Phil Horton** 2006 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 2nd

2006 Abe Williams Memorial Award, Shore Grand Slam

2012 Martha’s Vineyard Surfcasters Sportsmanship Award

**Bob (Hawkeye)** 1995 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 3rd

**Jacobs**  1997 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 3rd

1998 All Tackle shore Grand Slam, 3rd

2001 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

2001 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 3rd

2001 Robert “Huff” Langley Award

2002 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

**Ed Jerome** 1982 Dan Hull/Ben Morton Memorial Award

1983 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st

1983 All Tackle Shore Weakfish, 3rd

1995 Tom Nessa Award

2001 All Tackle Boat Bluefish 2nd

2001 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

**Tom Kieras** 2003 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st ***(Grand Leader and Truck Winner)***

2003 David Finkelstein Award, Shore Bluefish

2003 The DaRosa Award, Heaviest Shore Bluefish

2005 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 2nd

**Karen Kukolich** 1986 Flyrod Boat Bluefish, 3rd

1988 Flyrod Boat Bluefish, 3rd

1995 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 1st

1995 Pierre Aetello Award, Women,s largest False Albacore

2001 All Tackle Boat Bluefish, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2001 Dr David Finklelstein Award, Boat Bluefish,

2001 Carol Driscoll Memorial Award, Boat Bluefish

2001 The DaRosa Award, Boat Bluefish

2001 The Musia Fly Fishing Award

2006 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 2nd

**Bob Lane** 1993 All Tackle Shore Bass, 2nd

**Jack Kimberly** 2010 Roberto Germani Catch & Release Award

**(Bonito) Ed Lepore** 1991 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 3RD

1992 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 3RD

1993 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 2nd

2003 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Boat Bonito

2006 All Tackle Boat Grand Slam, 3rd

2006 All Tackle Top Rod Award

2008 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Boat Bonito

2010 All Tackle Boat Bonito, 2nd

2010 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Boat Bonito

2011 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Boat False Albacore

**Walter Lison** 2004 Chamber of Commerce Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2004 George Pye Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2004 Madison Alwardt Award, Senior Shore Bluefish

2004 Howie Leonard Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

**Jack Livingston**  1985 Resident Shore False Albacore, 2nd

1996 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 1st, ***(Grand Leader)***

2001 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2001 James P. Catlow, Memorial Award, shore bluefish.

2001 Dr. David Finklestein Award, shore bluefish.

2004 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

2004 Abe Williams Memorial Award, Shore Grand Slam.

**Don MacGillivary** 1990 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 1st ***(Grand Leader) (Derby & State Record)***

1993 Boat Bonito, 1st

1993 All Tackle Boat Triple Crown, 1st

1995 All Tackle Boat Grand Slam, 2nd

1995 All Tackle Boat Bluefish, 2nd

2000 Flyrod Boat Bonito, 1st

2000 Arnold Spofford Award, Senior Boat Bonito

2007 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Boat False Albacore

2013 All Tackle Boat Bonito, 3rd

**Matt Malowski** 2013 Thomas Nessa Memorial Award for the heaviest striped bass weighed in on the first day of the Derby

**Keith McArt** 2003 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

2003 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 3rd

2004 All Tackle Shore Striped Bass, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

2005 All Tackle Shore Striped Bass, 2nd

2008 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

2008 All Tackle Shore Striped Bass, 2nd

2008 All Tackle Shore Bonito, 2nd

2008 Abe Williams Memorial Award, Shore Grand Slam

2008 Shore Team Competition, 1st

2009 Shore Team Competition, 1st

2009 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 1st, ***(Grand Leader)***

2009 David Finklestein Award, Shore Team Competition

**Holly Mercier**  2012 All Tackle Boat False Albacore, 3rd

**Janet Messineo**  1984 All Tackle Shore Resident Bass, 2nd.

1984 The Thomas Goode Special Memorial Award

1985 All Tackle Resident False Albacore, 1st

1985 Resident Bonito, 1st

1987 & 1988 CB Stark Award, woman’s heaviest shore fish.

1991 CB Stark Award, woman’s heaviest shore false albacore

1996, 98, 99, 00, 01 Carol Driscoll Award, woman’s heaviest shore bluefish

1998 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam 2nd.

1998 Sunglasses USA Award, woman’s heaviest shore striped bass.

1998 Sunglasses USA Award, woman’s heaviest shore bluefish.

2005 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

**Gary Mirando** 2002 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 2nd

2003 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 3rd

2008 Flyrod Boat Striped Bass, 2nd

2008 Flyrod Boat Bluefish 3rd

**Don Mohr** 1984 All Tackle Shore Striped Bass, Resident 3rd

2003 Inducted into the Derby Hall of Fame

**George Moran** 2004 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 1st

2007 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 2nd

2008 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 1st

2008 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 1st

2008 Creek Company Flyrod Award

**Dave Nash** 1993 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 2nd

2002 Fly Rod Shore Bonito, 3rd

2009 Roberto Germani Memorial Flyrod Catch & Release Award

2010 Flyrod Shore Striped Bass, 3rd

**Kathi Pogoda** 2010 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

2011 Howie Leonard Memorial Award, Senior Shore False Albacore

2011 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 3rd Place

2012 Arnold Spofford Memorial Award, Senior Shore Bonito

**Scott Patterson** 2005 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

2007 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

2008 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

2010 Flyrod Boat Bonito, 1st

2010 Flyrod Boat False Albacore, 3rd

2010 Roberto Germani Catch & Release Award

**Ralph Peckham** 1999 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 3rd

2008 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st

2009 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 3rd

2013 James P. Catlow Award, largest Shore Bluefish Caught

by a Male Resident

2013 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st. (***Grand Leader)***

**Paul Schultz** 1995 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st

1999 All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 1st ***(Grand Leader)***

**Jeff Sayre** 1996 Flyrod Shore False Albacore, 1st

2001 Flyrod Shore Bluefish, 1st

**Chris Scott** 2011 All Tackle Boat Bluefish, 3rd

**Victoria Scott** 2010 Junior All Tackle Boat Bluefish, 1st

2011 Junior All Tackle Boat Bluefish, 3rd

**John Shillinger**  2000 All Tackle Boat False Albacore ***(Grand Leader)***

2009 All Tackle Shore Grand Slam, 1st

**Peter Sliwkowski** 2009 Shore Top Rod Award

2010 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 3rd

2013 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 2nd.

**Connor Smith** 2005 Junior All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 2nd

2006 Junior All Tackle Shore Bluefish, 2nd

**Tom Smith** 2005 All Tackle Shore False Albacore, 3rd

**Wayne Smith** 1998 Flyrod Shore False Albacore 1st

**Lois Kelly Stout** 2005 Ray Metcalf Award Senior Boat Striped Bass

**Hank Unczur** 2001 Ray Metcalf Memorial Award, Senior Boat Striped Bass

**Wallace White** 2007 Ray Metcalf Memorial Award, Senior Shore Striped Bass

**Abe Williams** 1998 First Place Shore Bluefish ***(Grand Leader)***

**Fishing Report**

It’s shaping up to be a good Derby. There appears to be plenty of bait around and bluefishing remains good on East Beach and Norton point with fish to nine pounds being taken nightly. Lelands is particularly good as is the area in front of Dike Bridge.

Recently, Peter Sliwkowski graciously reported on our Facebook page that after a short lull, keeper size stripers are back on the Chappy side of the breach, but in the channel rather than the bowl near Wasque. Bigger fish to 35 lbs. are being taken regularly by up -Island and north shore anglers using “Mr. Hanky” darters and clear amber Super Strike needlefish.

No legitimate reports of bonito being taken from shore yet but some good reports are coming from the Hooter, Horseshoe Shoal and Bonito Bar. Albies arrived in force on August 29 and have been thick from Lobsterville through West Chop. The Edgartown outer harbor is also good.

***Note: Fishing reports will be suspended until “after” the Derby!!***

**Beach Report**

As with last month, there is good news and bad news on the beach front-most of it good.

All of Chappy beaches including access to the Gut are open and on Sept. 5, the Trustees intend to open the bathing beach to OSV travel. The bad news is that the trail and beach around and in front of Wasque Point has washed out again and is currently closed.

Norton Point is open for more than two miles almost all the way to the breach.

**It’s The Derby**

**69th Annual Martha’s Vineyard Striped Bass & Bluefish Derby,** 12:01 AM Sunday September 14, thru Saturday October 18, 10:00PM.

**Please Do Your Part for Striped Bass**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has recognized what most of us have known for the last five or six years-that our beloved fish is in serious trouble and have finally resolved to take some action next year to halt the slide. Below you find a detailed explanation of the options that are being presented to the public for comment. Please take a few minutes to read John Murray’s recent blog post. John is the Director of the Grants Program for the Norcross Wildlife Foundation as well as a very successful charter captain on Long Island. He also served as the first Executive Director of the NY Chapter of the Coastal Conservation of New York and is a staunch and outspoken advocate for the conservation of striped bass.

In language the average fisherman can understand, John explains the ASMFC fishery management terms as well as the how’s and why’s of the various options to be presented and suggests actions that can be taken by the average fisherman.

**If you have never attended a fisheries meeting or written a letter of support, now is the time for you to get involved. Do not be complacent. Many of us spend countless hour pursuing this magnificent fish, Please take just fifteen minutes to help save it. The threat of another crash is real.**

***Time to be heard, but know what to say…***

[](http://www.reel-time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lou-close-bass.jpg)

Photo by Capt. John McMurray

Well, after about eight years of a painfully noticeable decline in striped bass abundance, and the slow and arduous crawl toward doing something about it, the rubber is finally beginning to hit the road here. A draft version of Striped Bass Draft Addendum IV, which seeks to reduce fishing mortality on striped bass, has been released, and public hearings are set. You may find the complete document here: [*Draft Addendum IV*](http://asmfc.org/uploads/file/53f3cd5cStripedBassDraftAddendumIV_PublicComment.pdf)*.* And the hearing schedule here: [*Public Hearings*](http://asmfc.org/uploads/file/53f3d2dapr29StripedBassDraftAddIV_PublicHearings.pdf). (Note: If you are not a regular reader of this blog, or are not familiar with the situation, you may find some background here: [*Where we are With Striped Bass*](http://www.reel-time.com/articles/conservation/striped-bass/).*)*

The Draft Addendum isn’t a terribly difficult read if you are familiar the subject matter, but it is filled with the sort of technical jargon that can take a little time to understand if you don’t immerse yourself in this stuff daily. So I’m gonna try and simplify it here and maybe boil it down to a few things we should really be aware of, including what we should support and what we should oppose.

Before getting to it though, I wanted to point out Section 2.2.3, which talks about “Ecosystem Considerations” in the decision-making context. Yes, of course it’s good to incorporate ecosystem considerations (to greatly simplify it, we’re talking about the what-eats-what here) into any fisheries management decision. But I have to admit, the way that this was done concerns me a little. It seems to set up and support arguments for those folks who have historically, and still do claim that striped bass are eating all the blue-claw crabs, river herring, winter flounder, weakfish, you name it.

This sort of thing gives managers cover to allow excessive harvest of striped bass, and to disregard pleas to manage striped bass for abundance… And, well, it’s bullshit. There is very little if any science to back up the notion that striped bass abundance harms other species. Yes, they’re opportunistic feeders, which means that at some point in their lives, along some section of coast, they’re likely eating a little of everything that’s managed by ASMFC. I’ve said it before in other blogs, striped bass have existed in abundant numbers alongside these other species since, well, since they existed. Believe me, it’s no coincidence that the folks often making such arguments are the ones who just want to kill more striped bass, or allow their constituents to do so.

But moving on, let’s talk about what we should be focusing on for the purpose of providing public comment on the document.

The first section we should be concerned about is ***Section 2.5.1 Coastwide Reference Point Options****.* “Reference points” in this case are simply the thresholds that require management action. In other words if fishing mortality gets above a certain point, something needs to be done about it. Likewise if the spawning stock biomass gets below a certain point there should be some management action. If you want a better understanding of this I suggest reading my blog on this from last year. [*ASMFC Moves on Striped Bass*](http://www.reel-time.com/articles/conservation/asmfc-moves-striped-bass/). If you are a regular reader you know that there was a new stock assessment completed last year, which of course uses better, more up-to-date science. It recommends a lower, more appropriate fishing mortality reference point.

There are, two options in this Section *2.5.1*: Option A, Status Quo (in other words, using the older outdated science) or Option B, using the 2013 Benchmark Assessment reference points. Obviously, we should support Option B in Section 2.5.1. I don’t expect there to be a lot of debate on this one, but we should still let it be known that we support the use of the new and better science.

[](http://www.reel-time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lou-bass-close.jpg)

Photo by Capt. John McMurray

We should also be somewhat concerned with ***Section 2.5.2 Chesapeake Bay Stock Reference Point Options****.* Historically, the Chesapeake fishery exploited smaller fish, and fished under a lower reference point, than did fishermen on the coast. Option A would reverse that relationship, and permit Chesapeake fishermen to exceed the overfishing threshold in the latest stock assessment. That should be a non-starter. Everyone should support *Option B: Use coastwide population F reference points as established in Section 2.5.1*.

The really important part of this document is ***Section 2.6***, which deals with whether or not we choose to reduce fishing mortality in one year, or phase in (read: “delay”) such reduction over three years. We most certainly want **Option A** here, which would require the reduction to occur all at once in the 2015 fishing year. Option B would allow a much smaller reduction to be imposed over three years. Seriously man… we’ve had enough delay up to this point. I think most readers of this column would agree, we need a significant reduction ASAP. So… Support Option A under Section 2.6. Make a note.

***Section 3.0 Proposed Management Program*** kinda piggybacks on this. *Option A* is status quo, meaning no reduction in fishing mortality at all. Obviously we *do not* want this! *Option B* requires a full 25-percent harvest reduction from 2013 levels to take place next year. *Option C* requires a 17-percent harvest reduction next year, which would achieve the required harvest reduction over three years. *Option D* would require an incremental seven-percent reduction over the course of three years, which is well, pretty close to doing nothing at all. So… what we want here is ***Option B*** under Section 3.0, which would achieve the full 25-percent reduction in harvest by next year. Got it? Okay, let’s move on.

The rest of this section goes on to specifics, i.e. bag and size limits. Of course this all depends on whether or not the Commission chooses Option A, B, C or D, so I’m not gonna go into them all, but assuming the Commission does the right thing and chooses Option B, requiring the full 25-percent reduction to be taken in 2015, we should support **Option B3** – **a one fish bag limit and a 32” size limit**. This is the most conservative and most precautionary option and appears to result in a greater than 31-percent harvest reduction. For the Chesapeake Bay Management Areas we should support most conservative option there also. There appear to be two equally conservative options here: **Option B10** – **one fish at 18” or Option B15 which sets a hard quota. It would be up to the states to set size and bag limits. If we go by numbers alone B15 results in a slightly greater reduction (32-percent vs. 31-percent), so we should probably go with Option B15… but either one works.**

Of course if the Commission doesn’t go with Option B then, well, it’s a whole different ball game. Intuitively, none of those size and bag limit options under Option C and D really appear to do much to me, especially not the ones under Option D. Look at the table for yourself. We shouldn’t support the three year timeline in any case, so I’m not sure we should even consider commenting on any of these options. Doing so might make some managers believe that we’re not completely opposed to the phase-in.

[](http://www.reel-time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Bass-release.jpg)

Photo by Capt. John McMurray

Moving on, let’s talk about the **Proposed Commercial Fishery Management Options** for a minute. **Option** **B16** takes a 25-percent reduction from the Amendment 6 coastal quota. The draft addendum doesn’t give us a lot of choice here, as the Management Board voted to remove what was really the right option—a 25-percent reduction from the actual commercial catch (which would subject the commercial fishery to the same standard being imposed on us.) Option B16 won’t necessarily achieve the needed reduction, but as it’s better than nothing, it’s what we’re going to have to live with.

Down in the Chesapeake, **Option B17** takes a 25-percent reduction from 2013 commercial quota**. Option B18** Takes a 25-percent reduction from 2012 commercial harvest. This is a difficult call. Option B17 yields the greatest harvest reduction, and is consistent with the approach taken with the coastal quota. On the other hand, Option B18 is a reduction from actual harvest, and is consistent with how the recreational reduction is calculated. For reasons of both consistency and practicality—it keeps more fish alive—B17 is probably the preferable option.

So, in short here are the basics you should know if you plan on attending one of the hearings or submitting writer comments (and you certainly should be doing one or the other.) First, in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, we want Option B, which simply adopts the best available science, as set out in the 2013 Benchmark Assessment. In Section 2.6, we should be supporting Option A, which would prevent the three-year phase-in of the harvest reduction from being adopted. Option B of Section 3.0 affirmatively requires the full reduction to be imposed next year, so we should support that one, too, and oppose any option to stretch out harvest reductions over

three years. We DO NOT want more delay. As far as size and bag limits go, we should support the most precautionary option, **Option B3** – a one fish bag limit and a 32” size limit—on the coast, and B15—a hard quota—in the Chesapeake. These options are certainly the most important, and really the only ones that you need to comment on at this point.

**I would also, however, recommend commenting about your personal experiences with striped bass. How the decline has affected you and the businesses around you. Because Commissioners need to hear about the real public and economic pain that has come from the decline of this once abundant resource. They need to know that there are real people and real businesses that have and are depending on this resource. They need to know that managing for abundance benefits more than just the few narrow interests that may benefit from liberal size and bag limits.**

**Please do go to a public hearing. If you can’t, well, then you *have* to submit written comments, which will be accepted until September 30. Such comments should be sent to Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at** [**mwaine@asmfc.org**](mailto:mwaine@asmfc.org) **(Subject line: Draft Addendum IV.)**

**Here is a simple sample letter that can be mailed or e-mailed. Please feel free to change or add your own personal comments.**

*September 3, 2014*

*Mike Waine*

*Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator*

*1050 N. Highland Street, Suite A-N*

*Arlington, VA 22201*

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*Subject-Striped Bass Draft Addendum IV*

*I believe that reductions in striped bass quotas should conserve the greatest number of large fish in the shortest amount of time. It has taken too long to get a commitment to conservation while the harvesting limits have stayed level in spite of a documented decline in the species.... especially large breeders. I support a 25% reduction in one year, a reduction in the daily bag limit from two to one fish, and an increase in the size limit to 32” in length. I further support a coast wide reduction of 25% in the commercial harvest of striped bass*

*Respectfully*