

**Wild
Oceans**
For the future of fishing

The Horizon

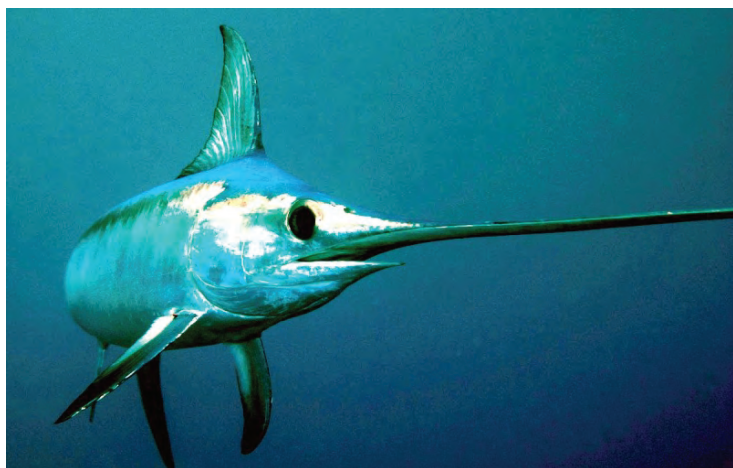
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NOAA'S PUSH FOR MORE LONGLINES JEOPARDIZES LONG-TERM CONSERVATION GAINS

Short-sighted

By Theresa Labriola, Pacific Programs Director



In the past two years, the gatekeepers of our public trust resources have been pursuing an aggressive agenda of increased exploitation that has reached the ocean. When Wilbur Ross was appointed Commerce Department Secretary, he announced a goal of reducing America's reliance on seafood imports, becoming more self-sufficient in fishing and perhaps even a net exporter. That's a high hurdle because 85 percent of the seafood consumed in the U.S. comes from abroad. It's also a valiant goal if we choose to promote innovation and sustainable fishing gear that opens new opportunities for a new generation of fishermen while protecting vulnerable

ocean resources and rebuilding coastal fishing communities. Unfortunately, in response to Secretary Ross's edict, NOAA Fisheries instead deployed a blunt strategy, resuscitating outdated industrial fishing gear to maximize our yield of swordfish.

NOAA Fisheries has its sight set on increasing the catch of swordfish in the Atlantic and Pacific. To achieve this goal, they intend to lure pelagic longline vessels back to ports to catch swordfish. Their ambition may backfire by disrupting nascent, smaller-scale swordfish fisheries, threatening the recovery of other valuable fisheries, harming recreational fisheries, and impacting protected species.

NOAA Fisheries Proposes to Allow Pelagic Longliners in Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Closed Areas

The average shallow-set longline (longline) extends more than 40 miles long

with over 1800 hooks. The hooks soak in the water overnight waiting for a bite. They target swordfish, bigeye and yellowfin, but also catch Atlantic bluefin tuna, marlins, sharks and sea turtles.

In the past 20 years, NOAA Fisheries has established a checkerboard of longline-closed areas and gear-restricted areas (GRAs) to protect juvenile swordfish, overfished Atlantic bluefin tuna, as well as marlin and sharks. (See map on page 4.) The Northeastern United States Closed Area and the closed areas in the southeast and eastern Gulf of Mexico were implemented in 1999. In 2014, NOAA Fisheries established Individual Bluefin Quotas (IBQ) for the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery and two new GRAs to protect spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf and safeguard the species recovery. These areas were identified as locations of high bluefin tuna concentrations and interactions with pelagic longline gear. The regulations worked. The longline fishery has not exceeded its bluefin tuna quota. Atlantic bluefin tuna longline mortality in the Gulf has decreased by more than 80 percent. The closures have also spurred development of new and sustainable commercial gear including buoy-gear and green stick gear.

(continued on page 4)

Is the menhaden fishery certifiably “sustainable”? Not yet it isn’t

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is recommending that the Atlantic menhaden purse seine fishery, the largest commercial fishery on the east coast, be certified as “sustainable”. We don’t believe it is, for the simple reason that the fishery does not meet the MSC’s own standard for protecting the ecological role of key low trophic level fish, or forage fish, of which menhaden is arguably the most important.

For menhaden, going by the MSC’s guidelines, “the default target reference point (TRP) shall be 75% of the spawning stock level that would be expected in the absence of fishing, i.e., 75%Bo”. The stock is currently well below that level, at 46.7% Bo, according to the most recent assessment.

So how does menhaden pass the MSC’s sustainability test? Unfortunately the performance indicator for evaluating key forage species like menhaden is only one of many indicators considered in an assessment (others include monitoring, available data, management measures, enforcement, etc.). The TRP cited above

is the minimum standard for achieving a passing score of 80 for ecologically-based reference points. The fishery can achieve certification by scoring less than 80 on some performance indicators and more than 80 on others as long as the average score for all components of the assessment is 80 or above.

In other words, menhaden passes because it is managed well as a single species, even though its role as prey in the ecosystem is unaccounted for in the setting of management goals. Isn’t this precisely what we’re all trying to get beyond?

Wild Oceans worked with the MSC from 2007-10 through numerous meetings and workshops convincing them to strengthen their fisheries assessment guidance on low trophic level fisheries, which they did in 2011. However, we pointed out throughout this process that because of the way the Council set up its scoring system, the biggest shortcoming is that fisheries targeting forage fish could still, in theory, be awarded the MSC label without any management

practices in place to specifically protect their unique and critical role in the ecosystem. Theory is now practice.

Finally, it’s noteworthy that in amending its Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan in 2017, ostensibly to incorporate ecological reference points, the ASMFC considered reference points that mirror those recommended by the MSC (target 75%Bo, limit 40%Bo) but rejected them in favor of developing its own ecosystem models to apply to the next assessment in 2020. Ironically, the menhaden industry dismissed the MSC’s standards for conserving forage species as inapplicable to menhaden.

A formal objection to menhaden certification has been filed by several fishing and environmental groups. Regardless of the outcome, what the MSC does or doesn’t do regarding menhaden should have no bearing on the ASMFC’s commitment to implement an ecosystem-based fishery management plan in 2020.

– Ken Hinman, President

For the Future of Fishing

Wild Oceans is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to keeping the oceans wild to preserve fishing opportunities for the future.

Our Goals:

- preventing overfishing and restoring depleted fish populations to healthy levels
- promoting sustainable use policies that balance commercial, recreational and ecological values
- modifying or eliminating wasteful fishing practices
- improving our understanding of fish and their role in the marine environment
- preserving fish habitat and water quality

Officers and Staff:

Tim Choate, Chairman

Tim Ervin, Vice Chairman

Ken Hinman, President

Pam Lyons Gromen, Executive Director

Theresa Labriola, Pacific Programs Director

Laureen Megan, Office Manager

Contact Us:
Wild Oceans
P.O. Box 258
Waterford, VA 20197
office: 703.777.0037
web: wildoceans.org

Board of Directors:

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WAHOO!

South atlantic council initiates action to conserve bullet and frigate mackerel



By Pam Lyons Gromen,
Executive Director

The Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan (FMP), when it was completed in 2004 by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, set the stage for proactive management. The FMP recognized the importance of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries to recreational fishermen and adopted precautionary strategies to head off the expansion of longlines to target dolphin.

Now the South Atlantic Council is building on the risk-adverse approach adopted in the original FMP. At its June meeting in Stuart, Florida, the Council voted to initiate an amendment to the plan that would designate two highly-important prey species – bullet mackerel (*Auxis rochei*) and frigate mackerel (*Auxis thazard*) – as ecosystem components, enabling the Council to develop regulatory measures that would protect the role of these mackerels in the food web.

In a presentation to the Council in December of last year, council member Steve Poland of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, gave a presentation on the ecological importance of bullet and frigate mackerel. Based on his own field research and studies conducted by colleagues who examined highly migratory species diets in South Atlantic waters, bullet and frigate mackerel comprise an impressive 30-50% of the wahoo diet. The same studies found that although dolphinfish feed on a wider variety of prey items, bullet and frigate mackerel contribute significantly to their diets at times. Of great economic importance to South

Atlantic fishing communities, blue marlin and yellowfin tuna are other predators in the pelagic food web that depend on an abundance of bullet and frigate mackerel.



Bullet Mackerel (top) and frigate mackerel (bottom). Images courtesy of ICCAT. Drawn by A. López 'Tokio'.

The first council to recognize the importance of bullet and frigate mackerel to our Atlantic big fish predators was the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Originally, the Mid-Atlantic Council had intended to include bullet and frigate in its 2017 omnibus amendment protecting unmanaged forage species in the region from new or expanded commercial exploitation. However, the Council was met with opposition from NOAA's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office because it could not directly link either bullet or frigate mackerel to a Mid-Atlantic Council-managed predator. So recognizing the strong predator connection to wahoo, the Mid-Atlantic Council asked the South Atlantic Council to consider taking action through the Dolphin Wahoo FMP.

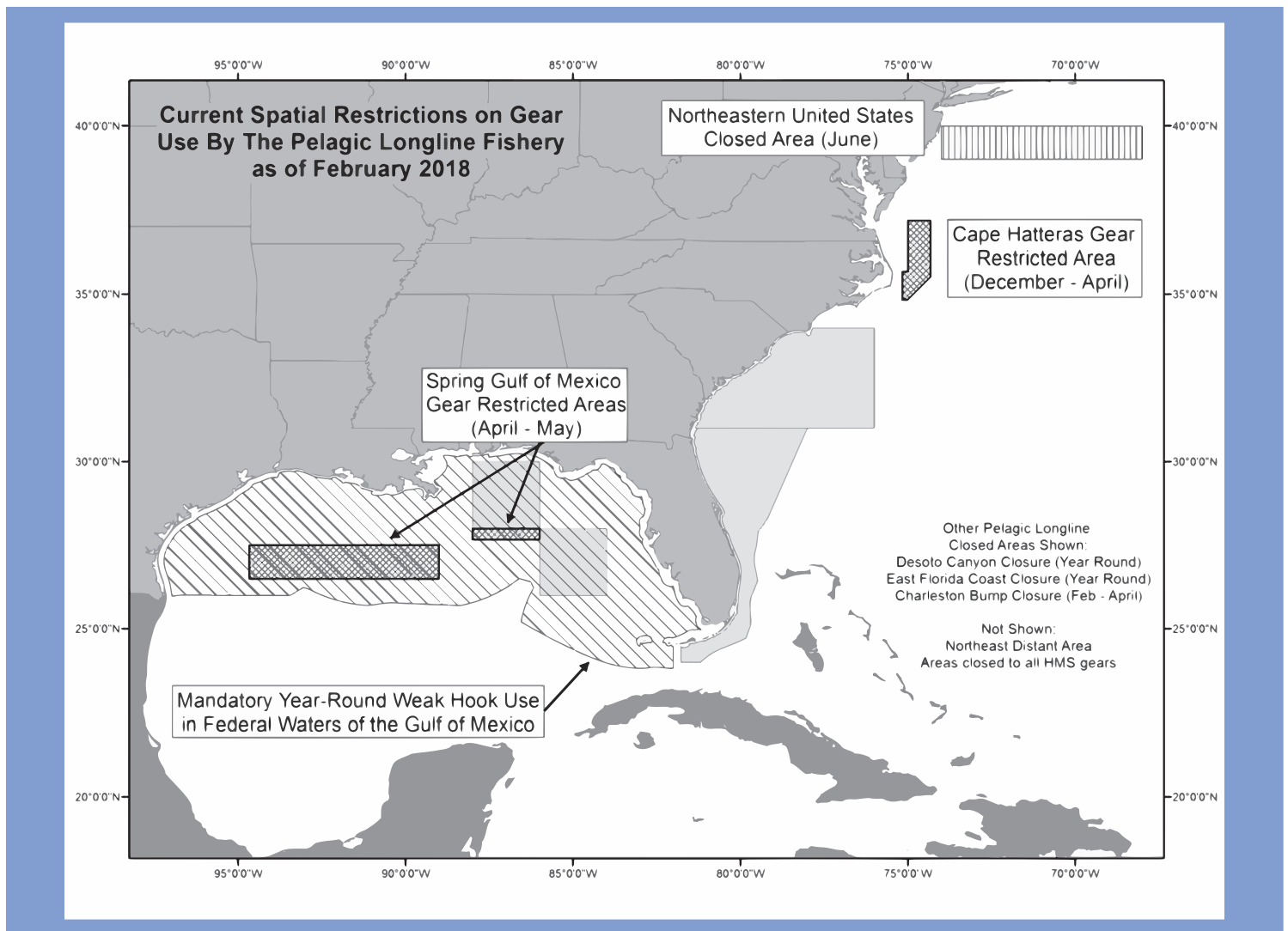
In response to the Mid-Atlantic Council's request, the South Atlantic Council asked the public to weigh in...**and did they.** Over 100 comments were received during the public scoping period,

most from individual anglers speaking to the importance of conserving forage fish and asking the South Atlantic Council to prevent commercial fisheries from targeting bullet and frigate mackerel.

Neither bullet or frigate mackerel are managed in U.S. waters, so there are no restrictions on commercial catch of these valuable prey species. Globally, both bullet and frigate mackerel are targeted by commercial fisheries with the FAO reporting annual landings around 200,000 tons for both species combined. Commercial U.S. landings are low, indicating that the few landed are likely taken as bycatch in other fisheries.

Though landings of bullet and frigate mackerel are low, the chub mackerel fishery in the mid-Atlantic offers a cautionary tale of how a fishery can escalate without the regional councils being aware of the situation. Chub mackerel landings exceeded 5 million pounds before the fishery was discovered, and the Mid-Atlantic Council was put in the position of having to react quickly to develop a full management plan, fulfilling all legal requirements for a stock in need of conservation and management. (See chub mackerel update in "Turning the Tide," pp. 8-9)

As a long-time steward of our big fish populations, *Wild Oceans* is proud to play a leading role in protecting the little fish our big fish depend on. We will continue to support the South Atlantic Council's work on this initiative, with the next step taking place in September when the Council will review options for regulatory measures to conserve bullet and frigate mackerel. ■



Despite this success, NOAA Fisheries is now advancing an amendment to eliminate the longline closed areas. Their stated goal is to allow longliners access to no-longline zones to increase swordfish, yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna catch, but the action will also increase bluefin tuna catch and bycatch of marlin, oceanic sharks and sea turtles eroding their own success.

By overturning thoughtful management measures, NOAA Fisheries will allow unfettered access to the GRAs relying on one tool, IBQs, to limit the fishery based on the amount of bluefin caught.

By relying on one trick, IBQs, NOAA Fisheries is rewarding industrial fishing techniques that indiscriminately catch and kill ocean wildlife instead of rewarding and expanding innovative fishing.

It foregoes an opportunity to conduct more comprehensive bycatch reduction research. Worse still, it could lead to a permanent re-opening of protected areas resulting in increased bycatch of a wide range of species. Instead of looking for a short-term solution to current industry problems, which may or may not be related to the closures, NOAA Fisheries should be exploring a range of ways to create a sustainable longline fishery, with minimal bycatch of all vulnerable species, for the long-term. The conservation gains achieved by the closures cannot be sacrificed for economic gain to a small segment of the longline fishery.

NOAA Fisheries Tries to Overturn a Decades Old Moratorium on Pelagic Longlines In the Pacific

Pelagic longlines have been prohibited

within 200 miles of the California coast since 1989. Ten years ago, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and NOAA Fisheries considered and rejected a plan to allow a west coast based longline fishery outside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The end result: California-permitted vessels are not allowed to fish using longline gear outside (or inside) the EEZ. The industry and NOAA Fisheries want to change the status quo (the Council is scheduled to consider initiating a public scoping process at their November 2019 meeting).

The most ecologically compelling reason to keep a shallow-set longline (SSLL) fishery out of the eastern Pacific is bycatch. The Hawaii-permitted SSLL fishery, which operates in the same area, discards more than half of

its catch, including thousands of marlin and sharks. The mortality associated with bycatch and dead discards of marine life in pelagic longline fisheries throughout the world is appallingly wasteful.

The longline fishery poses a credible threat to protected species such as the leatherback and loggerhead sea turtles which take 15 to 30 years to mature. In the past twelve years, the Hawaii fishery has caught 193 endangered sea turtles. Most often, these sea turtles are taken from areas east of 140°W, an area of the Hawaii-based fishery that overlaps the same area where NOAA Fisheries proposes to increase West Coast-based longline fishing effort.

NOAA Fisheries makes the same argument in the Pacific as they do in the Atlantic, authorizing a west coast-based longline fishery will increase domestic swordfish production. This short-sight-

edness fails to consider the negative impact to non-commercial resources and the ecosystem. Unlike Hawaii or the western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, the eastern Pacific has never been subjected to an industrial longline fishery. The removal of top pelagic predators can reshape the entire structure of ocean food webs. The California Current ecosystem still teems with sharks, seals, tunas, swordfish, whales, albatross and sea turtles in part because of the absence of industrial longliners. This diversity fuels a multi-billion dollar ocean-based recreational industry that includes fishing, whale watching and bird watching. It is difficult to conceive of the death and destruction that could lie in the wake of indiscriminate longlines. It is unimaginable to even consider the use of such a blunt fishing tool in this delicate ecosystem.

By focussing on industrial longline

fishing, NOAA Fisheries misses the opportunity to build smaller-scale, higher profit fisheries based on emerging sustainable gear, like deep-set buoy gear and linked buoy gear which can bring swordfish to market with minimal bycatch.

In the short term, NOAA Fisheries proposed actions may increase profitability, participation and production in the swordfish and tuna fisheries, but expanding longline fisheries in the Atlantic and Pacific undercuts decades of successful conservation measures to protect juvenile swordfish, spawning bluefin tuna, marlins and endangered sea turtles. Even if we increase our catch of swordfish two-fold, we will barely dent the \$14 billion per year seafood deficit. We may, however, reverse decades of conservation and economic benefits found through multifaceted management of our pelagic fisheries. ■

Atlantic councils, alarmed by tuna overfishing, urge caution

The five Atlantic regional fishery management councils (New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean) wrote a joint letter urging the U.S. Section to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to pursue meaningful conservation and management measures for Atlantic bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and skipjack tuna. The most recent stock assessments indicate:

- Bigeye tuna stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing.
- Yellowfin tuna is also overfished and although overfishing is not thought to be occurring, the fishery continues to exceed its total allowable catch (TAC) and it is possible the stock is now subject to overfishing.

"The successful management of these tuna species is of critical importance to our fishermen. The United States should take a strong leadership role in rebuilding these stocks." The councils supported the following steps to prevent further stock declines and promote rebuilding:

- Submit a proposal to implement a new management system for bigeye and yellowfin tuna that includes an enforceable TAC and purse seine management in order to recover the stocks within ten years.
- Advance quota allocation negotiations for both bigeye and yellowfin tuna that include all major harvesters.
- Pursue measures that limit bigeye and yellowfin catch on fish aggregating devices.
- Advocate for an eastern Atlantic skipjack TAC.
- Seek enhanced observer coverage requirements. ■



Forage fish conservation act

By Ken Hinman

The law of fishing at sea, the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), does not specifically address conservation of key prey populations, except to say that fishery managers should consider the effects of fishing on marine ecosystems. The Forage Fish Conservation Act, introduced as HR 2236 this spring, seeks to change that. But the question is, will the bill as written actually change the way industrial-scale forage fisheries like those that target sea herring, squid, sardine and mackerel are now being managed? Maybe yes, probably no.

A number of provisions in the bill are problematic, as *Wild Oceans* pointed out in a written analysis provided to colleagues working on the bill. For example, HR 2236 requires that annual catch limits (ACLs) of prey fish be reduced by the dietary needs of predators. In the case of squid and other forage species that are short-lived (lifespan of less than 1 year), ACLs are not even required, so the bill has no impact on managing these critical components of the forage base. For longer-lived species, the regional councils' scientific advisors are asked to recommend ACLs to meet these needs, which will either allow them to say they've done it even when they haven't (the old natural-mortality-estimate-includes-predation argument), or if they must be specific, say they can't do it until complex ecosystem models are developed for the species in question. The Pacific Council and North Pacific Council both affirmed our fears in this regard when they said forage fish and ecosystem concerns are already adequately addressed by the existing fishery management plans de-

veloped under MSA in June letters to Senator Cantwell.

Because of the work of *Wild Oceans* and others, the councils are already wrestling with these issues, and it's hard to see how this requirement will accelerate this process or give it more direction.

The requirement to account for impacts on predators does not even go into effect for 5 years after enactment, 2024 at the earliest. What happens in the interim? Because we are skeptical of the ability of scientists to determine the diet needs of a large number of predators because of the complexity of marine ecosystems and the limitations of models (see *Next Year's Model*, Horizon, Summer 2016), we've been advocating interim action while this work goes on. Unfortunately, this bill would preclude taking a more generalist, best practices approach to conserving forage fish now, such as the ecological reference points recommended by a broad consensus of fishery ecologists (see *Resource Sharing: The Berkeley Criterion*, Wildoceans.org, Publications).

In the end, this new requirement may be no more prescriptive than existing plan objectives to take the needs of predators and the ecosystem into account. It won't speed up the timeline on forage fish conservation but will more likely slow things down.

The bill does direct the Secretary of Commerce to develop guidelines to assist the councils in setting annual catch limits for forage fish. In 2009, with the help of the Marine Fish Conservation Network (MFCN), *Wild Oceans* pressed NOAA Fisheries to revise its National Standard Guidelines to do just that.

In response, their guidelines were revised to encourage fishery managers to set a population target for forage species higher than for other species in order to "maintain adequate forage for all components of the ecosystem."

Unless the Secretary is going to endorse something like the 75% solution, i.e., leaving 75% of the unfished population in the water to serve ecosystem needs – which we wouldn't expect to happen – we've asked the bill's authors to incorporate the language we drafted for the MFCN.

Require fishery management plans (FMPs) for designated forage species to specify a minimum biomass threshold that is at least as high as the biomass level associated with producing MSY and, in accordance with NS 1 guidelines, recommend that forage species abundance be maintained safely above this level. Also require FMPs to consider the ecological importance of maintaining a balanced age structure and geographic and seasonal range for forage species.

Finally, *Wild Oceans* supports a provision in the bill that would advance much-needed federal protections for river herring and shad. We also support a provision prohibiting new fisheries for unmanaged forage fish. But because this precautionary approach has already been adopted by the Mid-Atlantic, North Pacific and Pacific Fishery Management Councils and the South Atlantic Council recently started this process for bullet and frigate mackerel (see p. 3), we see no reason for the bill to delay this requirement taking effect until 2 years after enactment of the Forage Fish Conservation Act. ■

The keep finfish free act

Citing the importance of wild fisheries to Alaska's economy, Congressman Don Young introduced H.R. 2467, a bill that prohibits the Administration from authorizing commercial finfish aquaculture in federal waters unless and until Congress draws up strict rules on managing such operations to protect the wild fish stocks and the environment.

Echoing a recent *Wild Oceans* Horizon feature on salmon farming entitled "Born to Be Wild" ("...salmon were meant to swim free."), Young's bill is titled the "Keep Finfish Free Act". As we noted in our 2018 article, the U.S. Department of Commerce continues to aggressively promote expanded marine aquaculture for both domestic markets and export. HR 2467 would put the brakes on until Congress establishes national guidelines with input from the affected communities, notably U.S. fisherman and ocean conservationists. It's a position we have

consistently advocated for well over a decade.

It's not surprising to us that this bill originates in Alaska. As *Wild Oceans* president Ken Hinman pointed out in these pages back in 2005 ("Protect Our Wild Fisheries", Issue No 111):

"Alaska jealously guards its wild salmon fisheries. The salmon outside of Alaska fill the Endangered Species list. Alaska's fears of losing its native river-runs of wild fish have come to pass in the Pacific Northwest and New England. There, fisheries are propped up by hatcheries, basically stocking programs. Their markets are supported by the farming of fish in pens, or what are essentially offshore feed lots."

"A major element of Alaska's wild fisheries program is a statewide prohibition on the sale of farmed fish. Once welcomed by many as a way to take the pressure off wild fish

stocks, aquaculture has a serious downside. For one thing, it tends to promote a foolish complacency when it comes to fish conservation, recalling the old potato chip slogan: 'Kill all you want, we'll make more.'

"But more than that, there is a scary list of environmental problems associated with certain types of ocean aquaculture. Infections common among farmed fish are spread to wild populations by escapees, who interbreed and weaken the gene pool. Chemicals and other pollutants used in farming foul the waters near the pens. Forage fish are taken out of the mouths of wild fish and turned into fish meal for aquaculture."

Cong. Young introduced the bill on May 1st. The next step will be hearings before the House Committee on Natural Resources, where Young serves as Chairman Emeritus of the full committee. ■

Legislation *Wild Oceans* is Tracking

Bill #	Title	Purpose	Status
S. 754 H.R. 1747	National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act	to encourage partnerships among public agencies and other interested persons to promote fish conservation	S. 754 introduced on March 12; H.R. 1747 introduced on March 13
S. 877	Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act of 2019	to prohibit the sale of shark fins	Ordered reported to Senate for consideration on April 3
S. 906 H.R. 1979	Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act	to conduct a transition program to facilitate the phase out of large-scale driftnet fishing and to promote the adoption of alternative fishing practices that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources	S. 906 ordered reported to Senate for consideration on April 3; H.R. 1979 introduced on March 28
H.R. 2236	Forage Fish Conservation Act	to address the management and conservation of forage fish	Introduced on April 10
H.R. 2467	Keep Finfish Free Act of 2019	to prohibit the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce from authorizing commercial finfish aquaculture operations in the Exclusive Economic Zone except in accordance with a law authorizing such action	Introduced on May 1
S. 1982	Save Our Seas 2.0 Act	to improve efforts to combat marine debris	Introduced on June 26

Turning the Tide

Wild Oceans News and Activities

Since our early days, we've recognized that fishing in wild oceans, where billfish, sharks and tunas roam, requires us to fish conservatively, to avoid indiscriminate gears that harm other species, and to preserve open-ocean habitat and the prey base they need to survive. Whether it's conserving large ocean predators or protecting the prey base that supports all life above it on the food chain, we've initiated and/or been a driving force behind many of the most significant actions taken to keep the oceans wild and full of fish, big and small. As we continue to fight for the future of fishing, we are pleased to provide our members with the latest updates on our activities.

Keeping Longlines Out of West Coast Waters

- In April, Theresa Labriola, our Pacific Program Director, organized a day-long meeting in Santa Ana, California with recreational and ocean conservation partners to discuss cooperative strategies to build a sustainable commercial swordfish fishery in the Pacific. Topics included transitioning the drift gill net fishery to deep set buoy gear, reviving the historic harpoon fishery and preventing pelagic longline fishery from expanding.

Then in June, Theresa teamed up with Robert Kurz of the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and on behalf of local, national, international recreational organizations, provided joint comments opposing the authorization of a pelagic longline fishery during the Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in San Diego. (See front page story, "Short-sighted")

Restoring a Depleted East Coast Forage Base

- Wild Oceans Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen joined with Blue Planet Strategies, Conservation Law Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts in submitting a joint letter to NOAA Fisheries requesting revisions to the Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Plan that is pending final agency ap-

proval. Atlantic mackerel were declared overfished following a 2017 United States stock assessment, and in response, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council developed a plan to rebuild the stock. However, a newly released Canadian stock assessment shows that mackerel are in deeper trouble than originally thought. Recruitment, the number of fish born within a given time period that survive to the juvenile stage, is at the lowest levels in recent history. The Mid-Atlantic Council's rebuilding plan relies on more optimistic recruitment levels and calls for quota increases over the next 3 years. Because the Atlantic mackerel resource is shared between Canada and the United States, the more recent Canadian assessment should be taken into account as the best available science.

Pam traveled to New York City June 4-6 to represent the group letter to the Mid-Atlantic Council and to urge the Council not to reopen the Atlantic Mackerel fishery this year. The fishery was closed on March 13 for reaching its cap of river herring and shad bycatch. Populations of American shad and river herring (alewife and blueback herring) are at historic lows. Though there are a few positive signs of recovery in some river runs, population increases can be quickly negated by a large bycatch

event offshore.

To avoid an early shutdown next year, the mackerel fishing industry is asking for an increase in the river herring and shad cap. While the Council agreed not to reopen the mackerel fishery and adjust the river herring and shad cap for 2019, it did agree to evaluate options for a more liberal river herring and shad cap for the 2020 fishing year at the August Council meeting in Philadelphia.

- In May, NOAA Fisheries announced that Atlantic herring was approaching an overfished condition. A 2018 stock assessment concluded that poor recruitment is to blame for a steep decline in biomass that could result in the population falling below the limit reference point, triggering a rebuilding plan. Atlantic herring are the linchpin in the New England food web: they are fed upon by a wide variety of predators, from striped bass to tuna to seabirds and whales.

The New England Fishery Management Council responded with an action (Framework 6) to set conservative quotas for the next three years in hopes of halting the decline. Notably, the Council-approved framework is based on a catch control rule that is proposed in Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring FMP but has yet to be implemented by NOAA Fisheries. Wild Oceans participated in workshops to develop the Amendment 8

control rule and strongly supports its use in quota-setting because it is designed to leave more herring in the water as forage.

Engaging our Allies

- *Wild Oceans* Board Member Larry Dahlberg and president Ken Hinman would like to thank the Fly Casters of Boston for inviting them both to speak on March 14th. Larry is best known for his TV series *The Hunt for Big Fish*, traveling the world showing anglers how to catch giant fish of all species. He mixed stories of some of his most memorable experiences with the importance of conservation. Ken talked about *Wild Oceans* programs, with an emphasis on striped bass and menhaden, stripers being one of the Fly Casters favorite quarries. The event was held at the Union Club in downtown Boston.
- *Wild Oceans* Board of Directors and Staff met in Coral Gables, Florida for our annual meeting on May 23. Board Chairman, Tim Choate, hosted a welcome reception the night before. We were joined by members of our Advisory Council and several long-term and gracious supporters. Ken and Theresa gave presentations about *Wild Oceans* 45-year track record of marine fish conservation leadership and our goals for the year to come, including expanding our work to protect prey fish to the South Atlantic and the connection to our foundational work of restoring the big fish of the sea. Justin Grubich, a scientist with The Pew Charitable Trust, provided an overview of the Florida Forage Fish Research Program and opportunities for *Wild Oceans* to engage with future program activities.

Promoting Ecosystem-based Approaches to Management

- Theresa attended the Climate and Communities Core Team Strategic Planning Workshop in Portland, Oregon on May 30-31. The goal of the meeting was to better understand the climate change scenario planning process. Theresa shared *Wild Oceans*

goals: to ensure consideration of ecosystem resilience as a necessary component of any plan to adapt to climate and include adequate public participation from non-consumptive users, recreational fishermen, and a diverse field of stakeholders outside the Council family.

- NOAA Fisheries hosted a Recreational Roundtable on June 18 in San Diego, California. Theresa was there to advocate for our goals of maintaining healthy ecosystems and ensuring fishing opportunities for the future.
- The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is in the process of developing a new 5-year strategic plan that will guide Council activities from 2020-2024. Stakeholder input was gathered earlier this year through an online survey, hearings, interviews and through the Council's Advisory Panels. Pam supported the Council's achievements in advancing ecosystem-based management approaches, including protecting unmanaged forage species from large-scale commercial exploitation and safeguarding deep sea coral habitat. She urged the Council to stay committed to its vision of "healthy and productive marine ecosystems" by developing optimal forage fish harvest strategies for their Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish Plan. Pam also encouraged the Council to prioritize habitat conservation.

Managing Forage Fisheries to Provide for Predator Needs

- On March 7th, The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted to bring chub mackerel into the existing fishery management plan (FMP) for Atlantic mackerel, longfin squid, shortfin squid and butterfish. Pam was in attendance for *Wild Oceans* to support the Council's decision, emphasizing that chub mackerel, like the other species in the FMP, are an important component of the prey base and that the commercial fishery should be managed to ensure that predator needs are met.

Schools of chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*), also known as "tinker" mackerel, are a welcome sight for anglers fishing offshore in the mid-Atlantic during the summer and early fall. Tunas, sharks and billfish pursue schools of forage fish like chub mackerel to the region's canyons, creating spectacular fishing opportunities that attract thousands of recreational fishermen to the region each year. It's no wonder anglers were alarmed to learn that a commercial chub mackerel had emerged in the northeast with no management oversight and urged the Council to take action. The new management plan will now be reviewed by NOAA Fisheries.

- The Pacific Council met April 9-12 in Rohnert Park, California to discuss management strategies for northern anchovy. Theresa presented a joint statement encouraging the Council to move forward on active, annual anchovy management that explicitly recognizes and protects their role in the food web. The Council made no final decision, but highlighted its desire to better understand inshore anchovy abundance and to develop alternatives for accountability measures that would be triggered at specific stock levels. Theresa continues to advocate for active and precautionary anchovy management at Pacific Council meetings.
- At its June meeting in Stuart, Florida, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted to begin development of an amendment to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan that would designate two key prey species, bullet and frigate mackerel, as ecosystem component species, enabling the Council to develop regulatory measures that would prevent commercial fisheries from developing in the absence of sound science to guide sustainability. Pam was in Stuart to provide public comment commending the Council for its work on the issue. (See, "Wahoo! South Atlantic Council Initiates Action to Conserve Bullet and Frigate Mackerel," p. 3) ■



Wild Oceans Welcomes Frankie Labriola to the Board of Directors



We are excited to welcome Frankie Labriola and his life-long passion for fishing, ocean conservation, and business development to the *Wild Oceans* Board of Directors. Frankie has established an impressive 35-year career in the hospitality industry, running restaurants and bars from New England to the Virgin Islands. For the past two decades he has owned and operated Paddy's Beach Club just steps from the high-tide line on Misquamicut Beach, Rhode Island. Before getting into the restaurant industry, Frankie made fishing his business: running a small commercial fishing venture out of Charlestown, Rhode Island while also crewing on charter boats throughout the Atlantic. A relentless optimist and savvy entrepreneur, Frankie can find opportunity in any situation, as evidenced by his rebuilding of Paddy's

from the sand up following Superstorm Sandy in 2012. When not entertaining guests or designing new menu items, you'll likely find Frankie on his boat with his daughter Gia at his side, chasing bluefin, dolphin, and wahoo from New England to southern Florida. ■