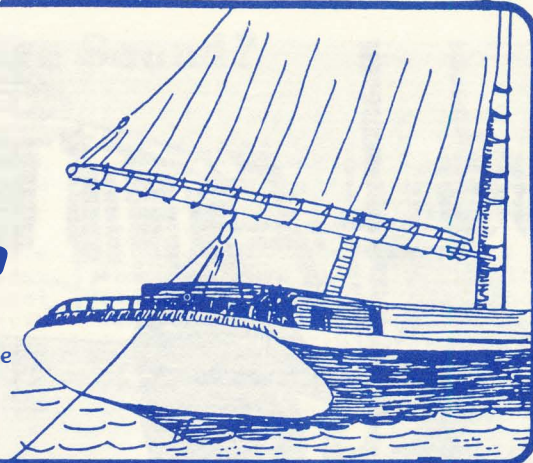


# THE TAFFRAIL

VOL. VI, No. 6 October 1981

By  
Long Island Sound Taskforce  
of  
The Oceanic Society

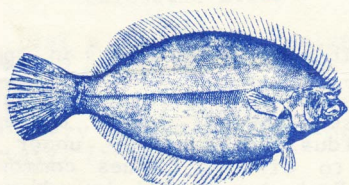


## A Real Fish Story?

BY WHITNEY TILT

Nearly eight million fish representing more than 30 species were taken in Connecticut marine waters during 1979. This is just one of the findings of the Connecticut Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey conducted by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The project was funded by the State Coastal Area Management Program and prepared by Robert Sampson of the Marine Fisheries Division, DEP.

In 1978, the National Marine Fisheries Service initiated a national marine recreational fishing survey which was designed to estimate the numbers of marine anglers, composition of their catches, and other related data for use in management of the near-shore fisheries. As part of this survey, the DEP Fisheries Unit conducted a field interview portion of the study. The data released is for the period 1979-1980.



The national survey estimated that some 304,000 resident anglers and 78,000 non-resident fishermen utilized Long Island Sound in 1979. Resident anglers made approximately 1.39 million trips while non-residents logged 202,000 for an average of 4.2 trips per person. The peak fishing activity occurred during the summer vacation period (July-August). A smaller peak, which occurred in April, is likely the response to improving weather, the "itch" to be on the water, and the onset of flounder fishing.

Most fishermen fish during the daylight hours with only 14% of the anglers interviewed claiming to have fished at night. The highest percentage of the night activity occurred early and late in the season when striped bass are most available.

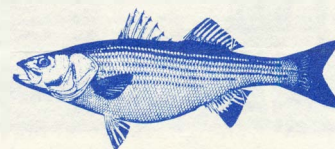
An analysis of the non-residents found the greatest numbers (47% of the total interviewed) from neighboring New York with Massachusetts (21%), New Jersey (8%), and Rhode Island (3%) next in line. As expected, the data show the greatest number of New York and New Jersey anglers in Fairfield County and the western end of the state. Conversely, Massachusetts and Rhode Island fishermen were more prevalent in the eastern end of the state.

The estimated 327,000 anglers have an economic impact. The individual cost of each fishing trip to the Connecticut shore ranged from less than a dollar for a "local" shore based outing to over \$66.00 per person for a chartered boat. The average cost of all trips taken was \$8.27. This figure includes costs such as bait, hooks, soda, beer, and lunch. Added up it accounts for more than a 12.5 million dollar annual expenditure. For the most part the above figure does not include "capital" outlays such as boats, rods, reels, etc. If these costs were figured into the equation, the tally would be considerably higher. The cost of a new boat, motor, and accessories may exceed \$10,000.

All this money and effort was expended for some thirty species of which 11 were consistently reported as the target species throughout the year. The effort expended on each species along with the success varied seasonally. Winter flounder is considered the most popular fish in Connecticut waters and is sought throughout the year. The tasty flesh along with an easy "catchability" contribute to its popularity.



After winter flounder, the order of popularity and directed fishing effort are bluefish, blackfish, striped bass, scup, fluke (summer flounder), tomcod, snapper bluefish, mackerel, weakfish, and cod. Fish such as snapper and mack-



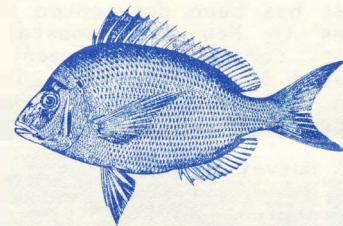
eral rank lower as a result of the short period of time that they are present in the Sound each year.

The seasonal and temporal distributions of fish stocks give Connecticut anglers a constant variety of species to fish for.

50-100% of the anglers interviewed concentrated their efforts on winter flounder during November-May.

Mackerel, with their short stay in the area, drew 5% or more of the boat fishing during May and early June.

June found some 15% of the overall effort centered on blackfish while striped bass, fluke and scup accounted for 5-10% of the fishing effort from May through October.

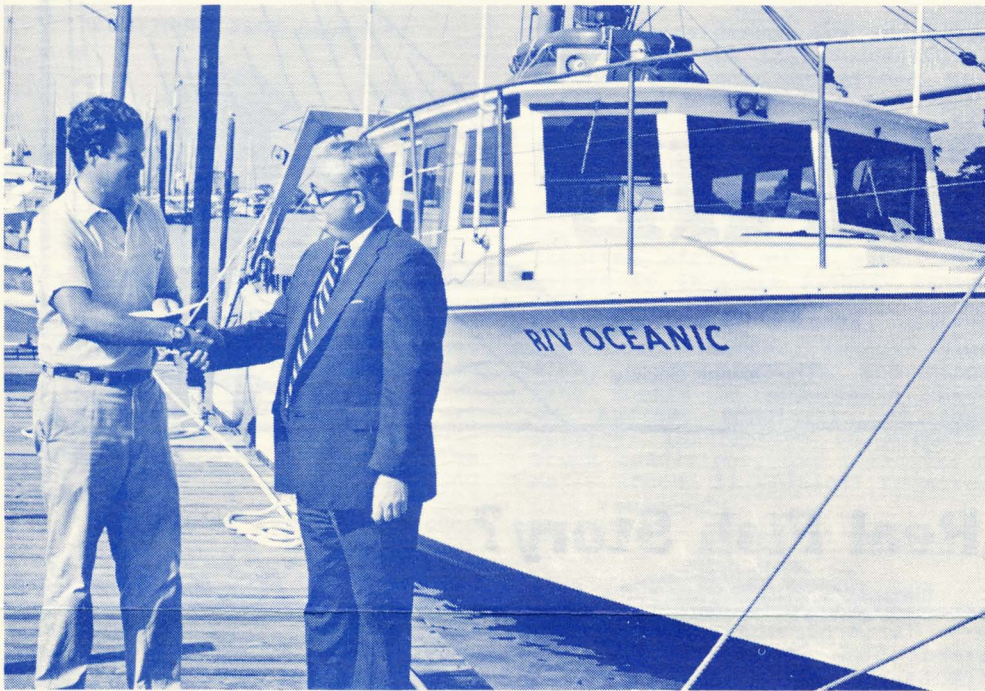


Bluefish focus 50% of the fishing effort in August.

It is interesting to note that the second most frequent response to the question, "Are you fishing for anything in particular?" (winter flounder was first) was "no particular species." (10-30% of monthly totals).

Boats and artificial structures are used more frequently for fishing than natural sites such as beaches and banks. The coastal distribution of angling sites averages approximately 1.14 sites per coastal mile if the 528 known sites are divided by a shoreline of 458 miles. This figure, however, is misleading as the distribution of sites is dependent on a combination of topography, land use, and coastal development. If these factors are accounted for,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



**SEA CAMP SCHOLARSHIP** - Whitney Tilt, Executive Director of the Long Island Sound Taskforce accepts a check for \$1,500 from Edward McGrath, Director of Public Relations for the Kennecott Corporation. These funds were used for scholarships for 10 underprivileged children in the Stamford area. Sea Camp '81 was a great success with 124 children taking part in this unique summer marine education program.

photo by  
Susan Dickson-Brown

## How anglers feel

As the cover article in this Taffrail suggests, the future of recreational angling in Long Island Sound and elsewhere may rest on research and management generated by funds directly from the salt water angling community and regulation of the industry.

The September/October issue of Coastlines, the publication of the New York Sea Grant Institute, offers an insight into the attitudes of the fishermen toward limiting saltwater angling.

It has been documented that the recreational take of several fish species in New York coastal waters exceeds that of the commercial harvest. Competition between recreational and commercial fishermen has escalated in recent years. Thus it would seem that management of this common resource demands limits on the recreational take as well as the commercial harvest.

A survey taken of 800 anglers found the following reaction:

Measure to Limit Catch	Supported	Neutral	Opposed
Set minimum size limits on fish kept	76%	10%	14%
Limit of two fishing rods and lines per angler	44%	23%	33%
Daily limit of fish kept	37%	22%	33%
Prohibit sale of fish caught by recreational anglers	30%	31%	39%

On the whole, anglers did not react overwhelming against restrictions. Eighty-four percent of those surveyed reported that they would fish about the same number of times in the future regardless of any constraints imposed.

In New York marine waters, some 1.3 million sport fishermen and 9,000 commercial fishermen work the coastal waters. To limit one without similar regulation of the other is to incite conflict. Conversely, merely to regulate without regard to enforcement and/or socio-economic hardship is to erect yet another regulatory edifice.

## LIST NEWS

**OCEANIC SOCIETY MEMBER**  
APPOINTED TO STATE PANEL - Thomas C. Jackson, Vice President of the Oceanic Society and Board member of the Taskforce, has been appointed to serve on the nine-member Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality by House Speaker Ernest N. Abate, D-Stamford.

Tom has taken part in the Society's programs on toxic wastes, nuclear waste disposal at sea, coastal resources management and marine mammal protection. In addition he has worked on state and local issues concerning CAM, dredging, and toxic wastes. Tom is a good choice.

## Environmental Leaders' Workshop Set for Saturday, Dec. 5

Saturday, December 5, has been set as the date for the fourth annual Environmental Leader's Workshop. Last year more than 125 people representing some 55 organizations gathered at the Stamford Marine Center for this day-long workshop which centers its attention on key environmental issues affecting Long Island Sound.

This year's event will focus on: 1) the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) released by the Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division, for Long Island Sound dredging and a soundwide dredge management plan; Sound fisheries: commercial versus recreational; and Boat Safety: individual freedom or public safety? Other issues may be added to the agenda at a later date.

This workshop offers an opportunity for environmental leaders, government officials, industry representatives, and concerned individuals to gather under one roof to discuss issues common to all. Each issue will be addressed by a panel comprised of experts in the field. Participation from the audience is encouraged. Additional details along with the agenda and registration information will be forthcoming. Contact Whitney Tilt at LIST for further information. Save Saturday, December 5 for the fourth Environmental Leader's Workshop.

## Calendar

LIST is finalizing its winter course offerings: coastal navigation, weather for mariners, sail trim and handling, marine biology, and blue whales are likely subjects. A complete listing will be available in the near future.

# A New Disposal Site for The Sound?

A public hearing to consider the opening of a dredged material disposal site in western Long Island Sound will be held by the Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division at the end of October.

This hearing is in response to a growing number of petitions to investigate the reopening or initiation of a new disposal site in the western Sound. In September, private landowners in the Mamaroneck Harbor area formally requested permission to dump dredged materials at a site closer than New Haven. Westchester County and several government officials from New York and Connecticut have also supported this request. Currently the Center Long Island Sound disposal site off New Haven or Mud Dump site off Sandy Hook, New Jersey are the closest disposal sites for disposal from western Long Island Sound harbors. Such distances more than double the cost of dredge work for these harbors.

The Corps, in consultation with Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and New York Department of Environmental Conservation, has chosen a disposal site centered between the historic Eatons Neck, Norwalk, and

Stamford disposal sites. The Eaton's Neck site was also considered, but dismissed because it was a dispersal site and valuable to fisheries, especially lobster.

Historically 19 sites were used as disposal sites in Long Island Sound. As environmental awareness rose, pressure to curb the often indiscriminant dumping of dredge spoil also rose with the result that currently there are only three "interim" sites receiving dredged material.

Western Long Island Sound is characterized by predominately recreational harbors. If an imaginary line is drawn from the Housatonic River south across the Sound to Northport, there are 29 federal navigation projects west of that line. The majority of these projects are for recreational harbors like Greenwich, Westport, Mamaroneck, and Glen Cove. These harbors take a back seat to industrial harbors like Northport, Stamford, and Bridgeport in dredging priority. This has resulted in a backlog of projects that has left many of the recreational harbors badly in need of maintenance dredging. It is argued that a western Long Island Sound disposal site will help alleviate this backlog.

LIST supports the investigation of this site. But it is only one part of the achievement of a soundside dredge management plan. If a western site is approved, the Taskforce will call for the formulation of strict guidelines for what material would be permitted in such a site. The objectionable materials often associated with industrial ports should not be permitted in a western site. The timing of disposal operations will also be important.

This issue has been a heated one in the past with much screaming and gnashing of teeth. While such a performance is entertaining at times for the bystander, it does not accomplish much. The Taskforce asks all interested parties to become part of the hearing process either by written testimony or oral statement.

Public Hearing No. 24-81-563 will be held on; Tuesday October 27, Norwalk, Brien McMahon Annex, 125 East Avenue; Wednesday, October 28, Huntington, L.I., Town Hall; and Thursday, October 29, Mamaroneck, Rye Neck High School. The hearings will begin at 7:30 P.M. Please contact the Taskforce for further information and background information.



Celestial Offer

LIST will offer a twelve week course in practical celestial navigation. To be held at the Stamford Marine Center, classes will be held every Thursday beginning mid-February, 1982.

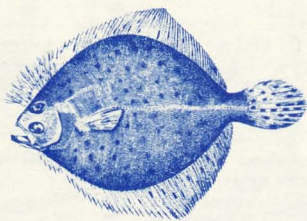
Interested individuals should have a working knowledge of coastal navigation including compass conversion, bearings, fixes and running fixes. The course will cover the sextant and its use, the celestial sphere, the nautical almanac, sight reduction methods, time and the construction and use of plotting sheets. Students will gain practical experience in taking sights on the sun, moon, planets, and stars.

While the course requires a good background in coastal navigation, it does not require any mathematics higher than simple arithmetic.

Space is limited; call (203) 327-9786 for information and reservations.



READY ON THE PEAK? Ready on the Throat? Heave! Staff and friends of the Society show a variety of hauling styles as they raise the main on the sloop Clearwater. The vessel's weekend in Stamford was a great success with more than 300 people enjoying a sail on the Hudson River Sloop.



fishing considered, the small boat fishery was the most successful in catches per unit of effort on a year round basis.

The survey concludes with several specific recommendations for the future:

• The DEP should continue to participate in the national surveys while developing additional sampling effort of a more useful nature to in-state fishery management;

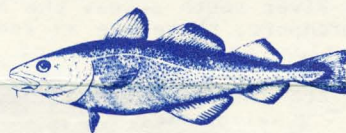
• Species specific research on winter flounder, snapper bluefish, adult bluefish, and blackfish should be undertaken. Given the extreme popularity of these species, information on mortality stock conditions, and locations of major stocks is critical to effective management.

the number of acceptable sites available to the shore-based angler is closer to 0.3 per mile or less. The survey also found that very few of these sites are accessible to the severely handicapped. Only 13 sites had the right combination of parking and access.

The greatest reported catches in Connecticut in 1979 were for bluefish and scup with 2.0 million and 1.9 million fish respectively. Winter flounder, cunner, blackfish, and mackerel followed. Cunner landings were not discussed in the survey because they are not a target species. When the numbers of fish caught per hour of effort are considered, the following data emerges: bluefish (August-September) = 30 fish/100 hours in the private/rental mode (small boat fishing) and 400 fish/100 hours for charter/party mode; snapper blues (August) = 350/100 hours from shore; winter flounder = 110 fish/100 hours from boats (May-June) and 170/100 from shore (November); fishing effort for scup translates into 180 fish/100 hours from boat (September) and 10 fish/100 hours from shore.

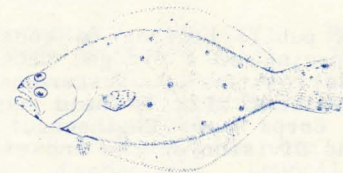
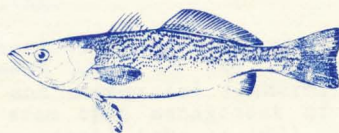


During 1979 and 1980, approximately 42% of the fishermen interviewed caught no fish. On certain days, fishermen who had caught nothing comprised 100% of the sample taken. Of all the modes of

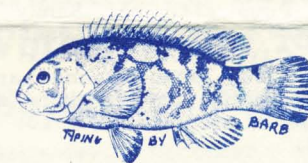


• Saltwater angling opportunities should be improved by the construction of additional launch sites, redeveloping existing high quality fishing structures, and construction of fishing piers.

All the above takes money. In a time when cut-backs are the norm, it is unlikely that the marine recreational fishery can anticipate additional funding under current constraints. Unlike the freshwater counterpart, there is no salt water license to produce funds for use exclusively on marine fisheries. Traditionally the way to create a disturbance among fishermen is to just mention



the creation of a salt water license (and then duck). However, as the fishing pressures from recreational and commercial sources increases and as the pressure between these factions also increases, management decisions are going to become extremely important to the resource and to those who rely on it for a livelihood and recreation. Money is a prerequisite for the research on which wise management decisions will be made.



The end result may be that marine anglers will have to bear a small out of hand cost through an excise tax on fishing gear, boats, etc. and on a salt water license if they are to continue to enjoy successful marine angling. If they do, at least they will know that the money is ear-marked to be used for something they enjoy - which is something that can not be said for other taxes.

The issue of recreational fishing versus commercial interests will be one of the issues discussed at the upcoming Environmental Leaders Workshop on Saturday, December 5. (See page 2).



The LIST of

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