



Louisiana Governor Jindal: "Come Fishing!"

Offshore trip with recreational fishing community leaders finds clean water, hungry fish

Saltwater recreational fishing reopened in the vast majority of Louisiana's state waters two weeks ago, and it's time for anglers to return to the water with their families and friends, according to Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal. The governor joined several representatives of the recreational fishing community on a fishing trip last week in the Gulf of Mexico south of Houma, Louisiana, catching a variety of popular sport fish.

Governor Jindal said, "One of the greatest traditions in the Sportsman's Paradise is recreational fishing. That tradition was put on hold the first half of our summer because of closures arising out of the Deepwater Horizon incident, but now most of our state waters are reopened to recreational fishing. From what I saw firsthand and what we caught, fishing is back!"

In a national show of support for regional anglers, Jindal was joined on his fishing trip by Center for Coastal Conservation President Jeff Angers; International Game Fish Association President Rob Kramer; American Sportfishing Association President Mike Nussman; *Sport Fishing* magazine Editor-in-Chief Doug Olander, and Coastal Conservation Association *Tide* magazine Editor Ted Venker.

These recreational fishing-industry leaders thanked the governor for his leadership to help ensure that coastal anglers can once again get back out on the water with families and friends. "Sport fishermen are America's first conservationists," Angers said. "Re-opening safe waters and getting anglers back to the coast is the best thing for conservation – and for recovery."

With coastal businesses still reeling from fisheries closures at the height of their busiest season, Nussman noted the importance of making whole the thousands of local businesses dependent on recreational fishing. Jindal promised to seek a timely resolution on reopening federal waters that remain closed to all fishing.

"Countless bait shops and tackle stores have seen their inventories nearly frozen on their shelves for more than three months, and while there may be a light at the end of the tunnel now, the effect of the closures will continue to ripple up the supply chain," said Nussman. "Getting anglers back on the water is the first step for those businesses to get back on their feet, but the long shadow cast by 100 days of little or no business activity must be addressed."

Support for coastal resources was atop the agenda on the trip. "If you look hard enough, every crisis presents an opportunity and though it is difficult to see a silver lining in this disaster, CCA is inspired by the governor's vision and leadership as a

true conservationist. He clearly sees the need for a long-term commitment to habitat and coastal restoration,” said Venker. “Proceeding with plans to build a hatchery and marine research center may be the key to safeguarding Louisiana’s amazing array of sportfishing opportunities now and in the future.”

Capt. Tommy Pellegrin of Houma, Louisiana, hosted the trip aboard his charter boat, *Reel Life*, a 39-foot custom boat built by Jeanerette, Louisiana boat-builder Gravois Boats. After a 50-mile trip into the Gulf of Mexico beyond the closed area on Wednesday, Pellegrin put his clients onto hungry fish swarming around oil rigs. With a request from his son to bring home fish for dinner, the Governor returned to Baton Rouge with an ice chest of mangrove snapper filets the Jindals grilled on Thursday and Saturday.

“We didn’t see a drop of oil on the two-hour boat ride across the closed area and passed several prime fishing areas that would certainly have been just as productive,” said Kramer. “You can tell by the nonstop action that these fish have been under no pressure. All the ingredients for spectacular fishing trips are here – all that’s missing are the anglers.”

While the state was able to act quickly to open inshore areas to recreational and some commercial fishing, Jindal expressed frustration that the federal process of testing fish samples for oil contamination has been so slow and said he has urged the federal government to expedite the testing so that federal closed areas can be reopened as soon as possible.

“We have a world-class recreational fishery here in Louisiana, and anglers around the country have been waiting to get the all-clear to plan their fishing trips to our waters,” said Jindal. “We need to see a sense of urgency from the federal government. Of course they must make sure these areas are safe, but we also want those determinations to be made in a more timely manner, so our citizens can begin to put their lives back together.”

After enjoying the day’s calm seas and remarkably steady fishing, Olander said he was impressed by the resilience of Louisiana’s fisheries.

“The last few years have presented a tremendous set of challenges to Louisiana, but it remains one of the best places to fish anywhere,” he said. “I’ve fished all over and have long maintained that Louisiana’s sport fishery is truly one of the best in the world,” adding that the state’s residents, with a long and deep sporting heritage, appreciate what they have.

Oil spill closure maps, bulletins, CCA updates and other news items are being compiled on the [Gulf Oil Spill Response](#) tab in the [CCA Newsroom](#)

Recent Testimony:
[National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill](#)

- Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Coastal Conservation

[CCA comments to the Gulf Coast Restoration Plan Public Hearings](#)

Sportfishing Community Applauds Legislation to Improve Federal Marine Fisheries Management System

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) introduced legislation designed to safeguard the strong conservation standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) while addressing a growing crisis within the federal marine fisheries management system. S.3594, the Fishery Conservation Transition Act (FCTA), will give federal marine fisheries managers the time, resources and more specific direction necessary to address the chronic deficiencies in data collection and science. Nowhere are these deficiencies more acute than in the South Atlantic where the lack of proper data exacerbated problems in the red snapper fishery and may ultimately result in a closure of all bottom fishing in a 5,000-square-mile area. The bill quickly garnered bi-partisan support with Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) signing on as the first Republican co-sponsor.

A coalition of marine recreational fishing, boating, and conservation organizations and businesses, including the **American Sportfishing Association (ASA)**, **The Billfish Foundation (TBF)**, the **Center for Coastal Conservation (Center)**, the **Coastal Conservation Association (CCA)**, the **Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF)**, the **International Game Fish Association (IGFA)** and the **National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)** lauds the introduction of the FCTA and strongly supports the new bill. The coalition will continue to advocate with Members of Congress for their support of the bill and to seek additional sponsors.

While the Obama administration's outreach to the recreational fishing and conservation community has been encouraging, the need to address the current fisheries management crisis is urgent given 2010 and 2011 MSA deadlines. After working to find solutions outside the legislative arena to address the unintended consequences of the 2006 MSA reauthorization, the coalition has determined that a legislative remedy such as the FCTA is the only option given the lack of feasible solutions outside the legislative arena.

After the 2006 MSA reauthorization, it became apparent that NOAA Fisheries was ill-prepared to implement new provisions to end overfishing by 2010 and 2011 without resorting to abrupt and precipitous fishery closures. Throughout its history, NOAA Fisheries has virtually ignored the recreational fishing sector, its \$82 billion annual impact on the nation's economy, its support of 533,000 jobs and its critical contributions to marine resource conservation. Under the current administration, NOAA is taking steps to improve their understanding and appreciation of recreational fishing and the wide array of associated boating and fishing industries. The FCTA establishes a logical transition time for NOAA Fisheries to make improvements to data collection that will lead to science-based management decisions instead of hasty closures by default.

FCTA has five key areas that will steer NOAA Fisheries back towards the true intentions of the overfishing amendments made to MSA in 2006. (See FCTA Fact Sheet for more details.)

- Filling gaps in MSA regarding multispecies fisheries by mandating specific conservation and science-based actions that would be taken in part to allow fishing for healthy stocks;
- Allowing reasonable time to transition to a new management framework that will deal more rationally and scientifically with rebuilding of stocks undergoing overfishing;
- Sharpening MSA economic assistance programs to insure funding is directed to those most affected by closures after carrying out full examination of who would be affected by closure;
- Requiring the agency to look at alternative fishery management measures to enhance the sustainability of an overfished stock and carry out more frequent stock assessments;
- Directing the agency, along with the National Academy of Science, to conduct a long-needed study on questions surrounding multispecies complexes and how all stocks in such a fishery can be managed for maximum yield.

"Recreational anglers have historically been the best conservationists and stewards of the resource," said CCA President Pat Murray. "We need the federal government to recognize the value and importance of the angling community and for managers to take the necessary steps in data collection, stock assessments, and reallocation to implement the Magnuson-Stevens Act the way it was originally envisioned. We look forward to working with Sen. Nelson to begin building a new future for recreational anglers and our shared marine resources."

[Click here for the complete release with comments from representatives of the other groups supporting Sen. Nelson' legislation.](#)

[Fact Sheet on S.3594, the Fishery Conservation Transition Act](#)

[Sen. Nelson's floor statement on the Fishery Conservation Transition Act](#)

Anglers Speak Out Against Increase in Commercial Harvest of Striped Bass

Anglers all along the East Coast either have already had or soon will have an opportunity to oppose an attempt to increase the coastal commercial harvest of striped bass by 20 to 50 percent at public hearings underway in different states from June to September.

[Conservationists were stunned when the ASMFC Striped Bass Board directed staff in February to draft the proposal](#), choosing to ignore a litany of significant concerns from scientists and enforcement officers about the health of the striped bass population.

"This is the wrong message at the wrong time for striped bass," said Charles Witek, chairman of Coastal Conservation Association's Atlantic Fisheries Committee. "Unlike the 1970s when rampant overfishing was the primary cause of the stock collapse, the current wide variety of factors that are negatively impacting striped bass will be much more difficult to address."

CCA is opposing the proposal for three key reasons:

- The coastal striped bass population is currently decreasing and additional harvest is not warranted at this time;*
- Mycobacteria has been found in more than three fourths of the striped bass sampled in the Chesapeake Bay and we believe the disease represents a serious threat to the recruitment of striped bass from the Bay to the coastal population;*
- Economic analysis indicates the greatest benefit to the states could be derived from increasing recreational quota of striped bass. Addendum II is lowering the economic value of the fishery by shifting allocation to the commercial fishery and away from the recreational sector.*

CCA is urging anglers to attend the public hearings and voice their opposition to Addendum II to Amendment 6 of the ASMFC Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. Click [HERE](#) for a copy of Coastal Conservation Association's formal comments on the proposal and for a schedule of the remaining hearings.



Wheels Starting to Turn for Better Menhaden Management

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has initiated an addendum to look at new levels of menhaden spawning stock in an attempt to begin restoring abundance of this important forage species.

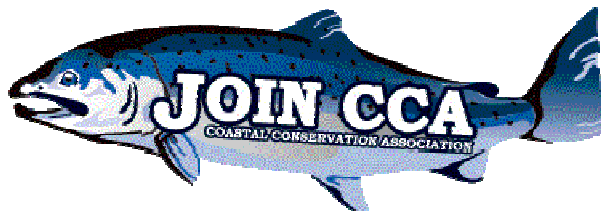
In a unanimous, 16-0 vote, the Menhaden Management Board directed the creation of a proposed management measure that would set the target spawning

stock at levels up to 40 percent of an unfished stock. It is currently at less than 10 percent of an unfished stock, and abundance is at an all time low.

With the vote, the Board seemed to signal its weariness with management as usual and directed this action while fishery scientists explore other measures to restore this stock in the long term.

"The stock has been declining for over 25 years and we still allow thousands of metric tons to be harvested every year," said Scott McGuire, chairman of the CCA Maryland Government Relations Committee. "Managers have to realize we can't continue to manage menhaden as we have in the past, and expect different results. It is long overdue, but we applaud the ASMFC for beginning this process."

Rating system on wild-caught salmon off the mark



The recommendation by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's popular Seafood Watch guide for consumers to avoid Oregon and California wild-caught salmon is the most recent distress signal illustrating the plight of our region's declining salmon runs.

The "Avoid" rating shines a national spotlight on an imperiled resource that has been in a downward spiral for decades. And while the usual suspects of habitat loss, dams and climate shifts are cited as reasons for the decline, Seafood Watch also acknowledges the factor that has had the most prolific and devastating impact on our region's salmon runs: overfishing. The guide goes on to point out that the most immediate solution to the problem is to stop overfishing the stocks. We agree with that common-sense conclusion.

The efforts of the Seafood Watch program are to be applauded. But while the plight of salmon that originate in the Sacramento River is real and needs to be acknowledged, it's no more a problem than the plight of Columbia River salmon, which are equally imperiled. And the program should also take into consideration the method of harvest when determining the sustainability of a certain population of fish.

Edward Cassano, who directs the Seafood Watch program, recently emphasized that salmon caught north of Oregon's Cape Falcon -- largely Columbia River salmon -- are a "Good Alternative." The aquarium's guide lists wild-caught salmon from Alaska as the "Best Choice" and wild-caught salmon from Washington as a "Good Alternative."

We respectfully disagree with these designations.

It's important to note that large numbers of salmon runs in Oregon and Washington are in decline, with many runs either extinct or endangered. In spite of this precarious situation, the commercial exploitation rate on some of these stocks is nearly 60 percent. And, the method of harvest for Columbia River salmon -- gill-netting -- means that Oregon and Washington are one of the few places in the world where a species listed under the Endangered Species Act is harvested and sold for food. We would not define this as a "Good Alternative."

Currently, the commercial fishing gear used in the Columbia River (gill nets and tangle nets) is nonselective -- it does not distinguish between a hatchery-raised salmon and a wild salmon. Gill nets are designed to snare fish, leading to injury,

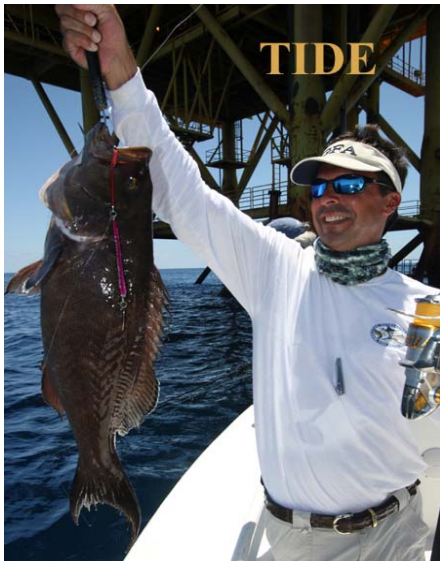
suffocation and death before unharmed release is possible. As a result, these kinds of nets kill large numbers of ESA-listed and wild salmon each year. Oregon is one of the few places in the country to still allow gill nets, a method clearly at odds with the state's longstanding commitment to sustainable practices.

It's equally important to remember that many Columbia River salmon travel through Alaska waters on their far-reaching migratory journey before returning to their home waters to spawn, meaning that many "Alaska-caught salmon" are actually Columbia River salmon. That's not really a "Best Choice" scenario.

We agree with Cassano's statement that our top priority must be the long-term health of salmon populations. Using commercial gear on the Columbia that can selectively harvest hatchery fish -- while allowing for the release of wild fish -- is an effective, achievable way to help recover wild salmon and create a sustainable fishery for recreational and commercial harvest -- and ultimately consumer enjoyment.

Seafood Watch can help in this effort by taking a closer look at the overall health of Columbia River salmon runs and placing a greater emphasis on the method of harvest in its evaluation criteria. Only then can consumers be confident in the designation of "Best Choice" for any salmon they purchase.

Look for the September/October issue of TIDE magazine.



Clean Booms and Calm Seas – By Ted Venker

Get the Drift – By Larry Bozka

Fishing For Data – By Jeff Dennis

The Fish of a Thousand Casts – By Pat Hoglund

Putting the "Great" Back in the Bay – By Marianne Potje

Growing the Future – By Bob Stearns

Rocky Road – By Mike Wicker and Patty Matteson

CASTING COMMENTS - United We Stand