# *American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists*

***Promoting excellence in fishery science***

Website: www.aifrb.org


# . . . BRIEFS . . .


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## Pres on mend

The grapevine reports that President Beamish has resumed some or all of his office duties.
Welcome Back!

*Bored of Control Ponders Future of AIFRB*
*Nashville, TN, August 2009*
*Clockwise from upper right: Tom Keegan, Ed Roseman, Steve Cadrin, Rich McBride, Doug Vaughan, Peter Haaker, Dick Beamish, Kathy Dickson*
*Picture is offered in evidence of existence of several Board members who based on submissions to Briefs, could have been suspected to have followed the path of the Labrador Duck.*

## Nominations Always Needed

Although we have already printed in *Briefs* calls for nominations for each of the major award programs of the Institute and in some cases announced deadlines have passed, I encourage members to aggressively participate in the nomination process and provide the selection committees with worthy candidates regardless of the calendar date. We have in some years not given some awards because there were no suitable candidates submitted. These bypassed awards were bad for Institute and bad for the profession. There were almost certainly worthy candidates who were deprived of recognition. If a deserving candidate for one of the award programs comes to your attention develop a nomination regardless of the date. Work with the committee chairs. Often the printed deadlines are softer than they appear to be in print. Moreover I know the committee chairs to be reasonable and understanding people who will make every effort to include all meritorious nominations in their considerations. If a nomination is absolutely too late for one year's selection cycle it may well be added to the list for the following year. (The Thompson Award being linked to a date of publication is not compatible with carry-over nominations). Again be diligent and enthusiastic about providing nominations. It is your duty to the Institute and your profession. Ed.

**Outstanding Achievement Awards - Individual and Group**
William Fox; wwfox@wwfus.org

**Research Assistance Awards**
Jerald Ault; jault@rsmas.edu
*Remember, these awards can be for research travel as well as travel to meetings.*

**Kasahara Early Career Award**
Steve Cadrin; Steven.Cadrin@noaa.gov

**Thompson Award**
Morris Southward; morlor31@comcast.net


The AIFRB is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (EIN 61-6050711).

# Two New Books of Interest

## AIFRB Fellows Contribute

### Handbook of Marine Fisheries Conservation and Management

*Edited by R. Quentin Grafton, Australian National University, AIFRB Fellow Ray Hilborn, University of Washington, Dale Squires, UC San Diego, Maree Tait, Australian National University, and Meryl Williams, Australian Institute of Marine Science*

This handbook is the most comprehensive and interdisciplinary work on marine conservation and fisheries management ever compiled. It is the first to bridge fisheries and marine conservation issues.

Its innovative ideas, detailed case studies, and governance framework provide a special global perspective over time and treat problems in the high seas, community fisheries, industrial fishing, and the many interactions between use and non-use of the oceans. Its policy tools and ideas for overcoming the perennial problems of over fishing, habitat, and biodiversity loss address the facts that many marine ecosystems are in decline and plagued by overexploitation due to unsustainable fishing practices. An outstanding feature of the book is the detailed case-studies on conservation practice and fisheries management from around the world. These case studies are combined with "foundation" chapters that provide an overview of the state of the marine world and innovative and far reaching perspectives about how we can move forward to face present and future challenges.

• Contributions from the world's leading marine researchers and practitioners
• Comprehensive (foundations chapters, case-studies, perspectives) in all parts of the world and across the key challenges in marine conservation and fisheries management

2010, 784 pp., 162 b/w line & 20 b/w halftone illus.
978-0-19-537028-7
Hardback $159.20
Oxford University Press

### Sharks and Their Relatives II

#### Biodiversity, Adaptive Physiology, and Conservation

*Edited by Jeffrey C. Carrier, John A. Musick and Michael R. Heithaus*

Bringing together a team of notable authorities in elasmobranch research, this volume:
• Presents topics at the forefront of shark research and other elasmobranch fishes
• Covers key topics on physiology and behavior, ecosystems and faunas, and conservation and management
• Examines the interrelationships between the organisms and their habitats
• Includes a 16-page, full-color insert with 29 color plates
• Includes an analysis of shark attacks by AIFRB Fellow George Burgess and Coauthors

Catalog no. 80474, March 2010, c. 704 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-4200-8047-6, $99.95 / £63.99
Receive FREE STANDARD SHIPPING when ORDERING ONLINE at www.crcpress.com

# Fellow Hilborn says eliminating global fishing would mean plowing world's rainforests 22 times over

**John Sackton, Editor and Publisher Seafood.com News March 15, 2010**

*Replacing the global fish supply would cost 22 times the world's rainforests. If we replaced the protein we got from fish with land based agriculture, we'd need extra grazing land equal to the entire world's rainforest 22 times over.*

At a recent conference in New Zealand sponsored by the New Zealand fishing industry council, noted Univ. of Washington fisheries professor Ray Hilborn shared some research on the impact of halting commercial fishing. He found that replacing the global fish supply would cost 22 times the world's rainforests. If we replaced the protein we got from fish with land based agriculture, we'd need extra grazing land equal to the entire world's rainforest 22 times over, said Hilborn.

Hilborn evaluated published research into the effects on the environment of protein production (including farming animals on land and catching wild fish). He found that on average, commercial fishing has a lesser impact on the environment than land-based animal farming.

Seafood industries are held to 'higher environmental standards generally' when compared with other food producers, he says.

'Protein production is always going to have some effect on the environment. But it is important that we are aware of the trade off required to feed the world. It wouldn't be smart to suggest we stop producing any single category of food, especially

without thinking about how and with what we're going to replace it.'

'Commercial fishing in particular is held to higher environmental standards. If green groups were consistent and applied those same standards to other forms of food production we wouldn't have anthing to eat.'

Professor Hilborn examined existing published and peer reviewed research from a wide range of scientific sources into the environmental effects of food production. 'When you think about it, it makes a lot of sense that fishing has relatively small environmental impact. In terms of water use, water pollution, pesticides, fertilizer, antiobiotics and soil erosion, fishing barely figures. Then when you compare energy use and $CO_2$ footprint, fishing in general comes out on top again.'

Fishing also compared favourably in terms of biodiversity, Professor Hilborn said. 'This is interesting because biodiversity is an area where fishing has been strongly criticized.' He said the other scientists' work shows that fishing typically reduces measured biodiversity by 30 per cent and reduces abundance of fish by one half to three quarters. 'Land based agriculture has a far greater effect on biodiversity. For every acre that's ploughed you lose 100 per cent of the biodiversity.'

# Some Good News!!

## Most Endangered Rivers: 2009

## Updates at a Glance

## 6 of 10 improve

**1 - Sacramento-San Joaquin River System (CA)**

This river system continues to face dire threats from outdated water supply and flood control systems. However, a promising development since April is the launch of a process to develop a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan that could produce significant benefits to these rivers and the communities that live along them. American Rivers was awarded the 2010 Conservation Grant from Orvis, the oldest mailorder company in the United States, to support our restoration efforts on the Sacramento.

**4 - Mattawoman Creek (MD)**

While Mattawoman Creek continues to be threatened by a proposed highway, the U.S. Department of Interior recently announced that they oppose granting permits for the project until a more complete assessment of impacts and alternatives is conducted.

**6 - Saluda River (SC)**

The Saluda River is still choking from phosphorous pollution from wastewater treatment plants, but thanks to ongoing negotiations there is hope for meaningful phosphorus limits on the wastewater plants. Additionally, the town of Williamston has committed to completely halting their discharge of phosphorus to the river.

**7 - Laurel Hill Creek (PA)**

Laurel Hill Creek was spared from further harm when the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) formally denied a permit to a water bottling company to withdraw water.

**8 - Beaver Creek (AK)**

Although Beaver Creek flows entirely within three national conservation areas, a proposal would have transferred protected lands to a corporation for oil and gas development. American Rivers called on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to block this transfer, and they have tentatively agreed. We applaud them and urge them to finalize the decision quickly.

**10 - Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (MN, WI)**

The public attention caused by designation as a Most Endangered River prompted the state to reach out to local river groups to discuss increased protection. The Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has agreed to meet with American Rivers' local partner, the St. Croix River Association, to address concerns about threats along the state-managed section of this Wild and Scenic River.

*From: American Rivers, Winter 2010*

# Red Snapper in the Gulf of Mexico

## Catch Shares Reverses Overfishing

**Fishing Season Extended**: **+300%** With year-round fishing, the dangerous race for fish has ended. Fishermen bring higher-quality fish to the dock when demand is high.

**Value of Fishery Rises**: **+30%** As the fishery recovers, the value of catch shares has risen, a win-win outcome for fishermen and the coastal economy.

**Wasted Fish Declines**: **-70%** Nearly half the red snapper caught used to be thrown back, dying. Size limits and short seasons caused this waste. Now the discards, called "bycatch," have dropped sharply.

**Fish Populations Improve**: **+30%** As Gulf commercial fishermen waste less fish, red snapper populations are rebounding, allowing fishermen to catch more fish each year.

*From: Solutions, Winter 2010*

# Red Snapper Total Allowable Catch to Increase

Pretty much any fisherman will tell you that the Gulf of Mexico is thick with red snapper, and a recent stock assessment update does show an improvement in the stock, enough of one that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council approved a regulatory amendment that will increase the total allowable catch from 5 million pounds to 6.945 million pounds for 2010. Based on the current allocation, that amounts to 3.542 million pound annual quota for the commercial sector and a 3.403 million pound quota for the recreational sector. While the increase means nearly an additional one million pounds for each sector, it's not enough to allow for a longer season.

"The projections are, that because of the larger size of red snapper in recent years, the quota may actually be reached sooner," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director of Council.

NOAA Fisheries Service is required to close the recreational red snapper fishery in federal waters when the quota is met or projected to be met in order to prevent overfishing and to keep the recreational fishery from exceeding its quota. One estimate projects that the 2010 season will be shortened to 51-60 days. The actual number of days in the red snapper season could be longer or shorter, depending on the catch rate and the size of the snapper landed.

*From: Gulf Fishery News, February-March 2010*

# No CITES Listing for Bluefin Tuna

On October 14, 2009 the Principality of Monaco tabled a proposal to have an Appendix I listing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Flora and Fauna (CITES) for Atlantic bluefin tuna. A CITES listing for bluefin would effectively prohibit international trade of the species but would still allow commercial fishermen to fish for and sell bluefin domestically. However, during the long awaited meeting that recently took place in Doha, Qatar in March, 72 out of 129 CITES members voted against a CITES listing for bluefin. Forty-three members voted in favor of the listing and 14 abstained.

Overfished for decades and with stocks depleted by as much as 75%, bluefin tuna sadly bear an uncanny resemblance to the North American buffalo or, worse yet, the dodo. Management of this iconic species falls under the purview of the International Commission for the Conservation of Tuna (ICCAT). Yet, despite the organization's ironic name, ICCAT has proven itself incapable of properly managing this species even when repeatedly presented with credible science indicating that is severely overfished.

Bluefin's imperiled status coupled with ICCAT's management track record prompted Monaco's proposal for a CITES listing. The proposal got backing from the United States, Kenya and Norway who also feared that an international trade ban would be the only chance to halt the rampant overfishing that bluefin is experiencing. However, support for the proposal was weakened by lobbying from Japan and several Arab countries. Japan imports nearly 80% of Atlantic bluefin tuna harvested and publicly expressed before the final vote that it would not comply with a CITES listing, if passed.

With the ball back in ICCAT's court, bluefin tuna's future is uncertain, at best. This species' survival again rests on ICCAT's ability to heed the advice of the scientific community and implement and enforce catch limits that will end overfishing and allow stock rebuilding. Much of this will be determined at the November 17-27th ICCAT meeting that will be held in Paris, France.

*From: International Angler, 73(3) May-June 2010*

# Proposal Would Let California Salmon Perish At The Pumps

## Major ag operators push to pump more water

**By JOHN McMANUS**

**February 19, 2010**

Thousands of jobs linked to the decline of Sacramento River salmon have been lost—but big agricultural interests in California are stepping up political efforts that may permanently extinguish salmon and the industries they support.

Even without this latest assault, the future of California's king salmon is in doubt. Salmon runs are at all time lows, due to large part to water pumps in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River delta that suck baby salmon in and kill them. The water is going to agricultural operators south of San Francisco Bay—and now they want more.

Those operators, addicted to the extra water delivered during the last decade, are fighting tooth and nail to have a federal restoration plan overruled, the plan was introduced last year, calling for a more balanced division of water between agricultural operators and salmon.

The ag operators enlisted the support of Sen. Dianne Feinstein who proposed ramping up delta pumping even while the 2012 class of salmon is currently trying to migrate through the delta past those killer pumps.

Sen. Feinstein's proposal drew a sharp letter from House Democrats from California and Oregon who oppose actions that will wipe out more salmon and communities that depend on them.

Salmon advocates enjoyed notable success during the 1990's, but in the year 2000, water pumping increased by an average of 16 percent, sending the salmon into steep decline.

# Mid Atlantic Black Sea Bass

## Loosening the Rules

The Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council requested the NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator to implement an emergency action to increase total allowable landings (TAL) of black sea bass (*Centropristis striats*)from 2.30 million pounds to 3.70 million pounds. Based on a 51% allocation to the recreational fishery, the recreational harvest limit is 1.83 million pounds, an increase of 61% over the 2009 level. Consequently, the Council passed a motion recommending a minimum size requirement of 12.5 inches total length, a daily possession limit of 25 fish, and suggested examining a split season of May 22 through August 8 and September 4 through October 4 to determine if these measures would meet the necessary required reduction in fishing mortality for the 2010 fishing year. If the reduction can not be met, the Council recommended accepting the same measures that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved: a single season of May 22 through September 12, a daily possession limit of 25 fish, and a minimum size requirement of 12.5 inches total length.

*From: Press Release Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council, February 16, 2010*

# Management of U.S. South Atlantic Corals

## ...at a glance

Not only does the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council manage popularly targeted commercial and recreational fishes, they also manage coral. The Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live / Hard Bottom Habitat Fishery Management Plan (Coral FMP) was developed in 1982 to address degradation of stocks, limited scientific information, resource susceptibility to stress, and lack of jurisdiction at the time. Under the FMP, only octocorals are allowed to be harvested, with the exclusion of two species of sea fans. The harvest of stony corals and "precious" corals, such as black coral, is prohibited. The harvested octocorals are sold for use in saltwater aquariums and a permit is required to harvest.

Based on recommendations from its Coral Advisory Panel and Habitat Advisory Panel, the Council recently proposed designation of five areas as Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern to protect deepwater coral ecosystems against potential impacts from bottom-tending fishing gear. Once the designation is in place, coral ecosystems in an area roughly the size of West Virginia, will be protected from fishing related impacts. The Council also proposed establishment of "allowable gear areas" in the region to focus fishing activities away from known areas of deepwater coral ecosystems.

The Council is now developing an amendment to the Coral FMP to establish fishing levels for octocorals, such as Annual Catch Limits, in order to meet the mandates in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act. Currently, the harvest quota for octocorals in Federal waters of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, combined, is 50,000 colonies.

For more information on the Council's coral management efforts, visit www.safmc.net or contact Myra Brouwer, Fishery Scientist at myra.brouwer@safmc.net at the Council office.

*From: The South Atlantic Update, Winter 2010*

# A Dog Ate My Homework—Honest!!!

Because of several lag-inducing factors affecting the production and mailing of *Briefs*, the document usually reaches members long after it is prepared. This issue is even more delayed, and it is clear that the gods of obstruction were at work. First there was Eyjafallajokul which to the delight of spouse and I delayed the return of our British grandchild and his parents to soggy East Anglia by over a week but which pretty much put the production of *Briefs* on hold. And when that distraction ceased I, with a magnificent display of coordination and dexterity, managed to figure out how to stick my index finger into the mouth of a pit viper. This and attendant medical treatment further delayed the completion of the current issue. But I assure you that everything is now under control ——— Eeeek!! Hey Fido, Please don't swallow that paper! Ed.

# Experimental Sardine Fishing Wins Council Approval

The Pacific Fishery Management Council considered an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application by Northwest Sardine Survey, LLC and the California Wetfish Producers Association to conduct the industry-sponsored West Coast Aerial Sardine Survey. The aerial survey involves spotter planes with photo equipment, in conjunction with fishing vessel point sets to validate survey parameters. The application proposes utilizing the 5,000 metric ton (mt) research set-aside for a broad-scale aerial survey (4,200 mt) and a pilot project (800 mt) in the Southern California Bight to evaluate alternative survey methods.

The applicants presented a revised EFP application in response to Council suggestions from the March 2010 meeting, and an addendum that further modifies their proposal based on suggestions from the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team at the April Council meeting.

The Council recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the EFP with the addendum.

# Film Highlights Cause of Amur River Fish

*Amur River Basin: Creating a Lasting Sanctuary for the Mighty Taimen*, a film by Craig Miller Productions and World Wildlife Fund, was one of 40 finalists out of 425 entrants at the most recent Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. The film brings to life a unique collaboration between conservationists, fly fishermen and local communities to protect the taimen, the largest member of the salmon family. This piscine predator, which can reach lengths of 5 feet, is a critical indicator of ecologial health in the Amur headwaters of Mongolia, but is threatened by poachers. Watch a clip of the film at worldwidlife.org/taimen to discover the solutions that inspired others to recognize the value of a healthy taimen population.

*From: Focus 32(2) March-April 2010*

# Guide to mercury levels in different varieties of fish and shellfish

**LOW-MERCURY FISH AND SHELLFISH**

**Very Low:**

Shrimp, Sardines, Tilapia, Oysters & Mussels, Clams, Scallops, Salmon, Crayfish, Freshwater Trout, Ocean Perch & Mullet

**Below Average:**

Pollock, Atlantic Mackerel, Anchovies, Herring & Shad, Flounder, Sole & Plaice, Crabs, Pike, Butterfish, Catfish, Squid, Atlantic Croaker, Whitefish

*Why are Pike so low? Ed.*

**MODERATE-MERCURY FISH AND SHELLFISH**

**Above Average:**

Pacific Mackerel (Chub), Smelt, Atlantic Tilefish, Cod, Canned Light Tuna, Spiny Lobster, Snapper, Porgy, Sheepshead, Skate, Freshwater Perch, Haddock, Hake, Monkfish

**Moderately High:**

Carp & Buffalofish, Halibut, Sea Trout, Sablefish, Lingcod & Scorpionfish, Sea Bass, Pacific Croaker, American Lobster, Freshwater Bass, Bluefish

**HIGH MERCURY FISH**

**High:**

Canned Albacore Tuna, Spanish Mackerel, Fresh/Frozen Tuna, Grouper, Marlin, Orange Roughy

**Very High:**

King Mackerel, Swordfish, Shark, Gulf Tilefish, Tuna Sushi/Bluefin Tuna

*By Janet Raloff*

*From: Science News, May 22nd, 2010; Vol.177 #11*

*http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/58464*

# Officials trawling for answers

## Unusually large numbers of sick or dying sea turtles are washing up along Texas shores, leaving advocates worried

**By HARVEY RICE, *Houston Chronicle***

**April 23, 2010**

GALVESTON — Federal officials are concerned about unusually large numbers of dead Kemp's ridley turtles, once the world's most endangered sea turtle, that have washed up on beaches along the upper Texas Gulf Coast in the last 11 days.

Twenty-one stranded Kemp's ridley turtles, most of them dead, were found in a zone stretching roughly from Galveston Island to Sabine Pass, said Donna Shaver, Texas coordinator for the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network.

The law enforcement arm of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which enforces laws protecting the turtles, is consulting with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the U.S. Coast Guard, said Mark Kinsey, Galveston assistant special agent in charge with NOAA said.

"It's a concern," said Roger Zimmerman, director of the NOAA Fisheries Laboratory in Galveston.

Zimmerman, whose office tracks stranded turtles and sends the information to Shaver at the Padre Island National Seashore, said that between April 13 and April 18 four dead turtles were found on the Bolivar Peninsula, five on Galveston Island and one at Surfside Beach.

Zimmerman said turtles decompose rapidly in warm water, and most were so decomposed it was impossible to determine the cause of death. But a turtle restoration organization blamed the deaths on shrimp trawlers.

"The cause of strandings is not totally clear, but it does correspond with the opening of the shrimp season," Zimmerman said.

### Advocate cites trawlers

Shaver said that most strandings usually occurred along the lower Gulf Coast, which is closer to the prime turtle nesting grounds in Rancho Nuevo, Mexico. Shaver and Zimmerman said there could be several explanations for the large number of turtle deaths, including an unusually large number of turtles being attracted to a food source in the area. The large number of deaths could also reflect a rebound in the Kemp's ridley population, Zimmerman said. As their numbers increase, more will run afoul of fishing nets, predators, boat propellers or debris, he said.

Ben Higgins, National Marine Fisheries Service biologist, said many turtles are weak after enduring an unusually cold winter. "This is the time of year turtles start migrating back, and the turtles in bad condition don't make it," Higgins said.

Those explanations carry little weight with Carol Allen, director of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project's Gulf office. Allen blames shrimp trawlers. "They are killing the turtles," Allen said.

A 1996 study found that shrimp trawling was the primary cause of sea turtle deaths.

Federal law required shrimp trawlers in 1987 to install a turtle extruding device, or TED, on their nets. The device was developed by a fisherman in the 1970s as a way to reduce the amount of unwanted fish in his nets.

A turtle strikes a set of bars and is diverted out of the net, but the smaller shrimp pass through the bars and into the net.

Allen said there are always a few shrimpers who don't use the TEDs. "There's a few people who may be stupid enough not to have a TED," she said. "There are some who tie the (TED) shut. When they see the Coast Guard, all they have to do is pull a cord and open the net."

She said that the device must be placed at the proper angle or it won't work.

Kinsey said the majority of shrimp fisherman obey the law, but some mistakenly believe that TEDs allow shrimp to escape.

Cooly Nguyen, captain of the shrimp trawler Sea Angel, dislikes the devices, although his net is equipped with one. He said it costs him $800 for a TED, and he gets no benefit. "Nobody likes TEDs on the nets," Nguyen said. "Save the turtles? For what? The turtle is just an animal. Let the turtle go to hell."

The deaths also coincide with the beginning of the Kemp's ridley nesting season, roughly from April 1 to July 15. Shaver said no Kemp's ridley nests have been discovered on the Texas Gulf Coast this year as of Thursday, probably because of an unusually long and cool winter.

Shaver said most of the dead turtles were juveniles, a fact Allen said supported her belief that shrimp trawlers were to blame.

### Only 3 agents

Kinsey said NOAA only has three agents on the upper Texas Gulf Coast and depends on Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Coast Guard for help. The Coast Guard assists, but many of its vessels have been diverted to Haiti to assist in earthquake relief.

The biggest enforcement effort is when the shrimp season opens July 15 after being closed for two months.

*Submitted by: Charles Wax Calillouet, Jr.*

# South Atlantic Council Reduces Size of Area Closure

### Measures to end overfishing and set Annual Catch limits for red snapper further reviewed in March

After reviewing management alternatives for red snapper members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council chose a new preferred alternative for an area closure under consideration to end overfishing and rebuild red snapper stocks. The Council is considering an area closure that would prohibit the harvest of all snapper grouper species, targeting areas where red snapper landings have traditionally been highest to reduce the bycatch mortality associated with the red snapper fishery. The latest preferred alternative includes an area off the coasts of Georgia and Northern Florida extending slightly south of Melbourne, Florida in waters from 98 feet to 240 feet deep. This alternative chosen by the Council last week, is smaller in size than an initial preferred management alternative chosen by the Council during its December 2009 meeting.

The Council kept a preferred management alternative to allow spearfishing within the closed area, excluding red snapper, because there is no bycatch associated with the use of the gear. A preferred alternative to allow fishing with black sea bass pots was removed due to the change in configuration of the area closure. The Council also chose to use generalized boundaries with smaller number of waypoints in defining all of the alternative for the area closures based on recommendations from its Law Enforcement Advisory Panel and Committee. A map of the preferred alternative is available on the homepage of the Council's web site.

Alternatives for a red snapper monitoring program and the use of circle hooks for the snapper grouper fishery north of 28 degrees N. latitude are also included.

The red snapper fishery closed in federal waters in the South Atlantic for both commercial and recreational fisherman on January 4, 2010. The Council requested the interim rule be used to close the fishery until more long-term measures are implemented through Amendment 17A.

Closing the red snapper fishery is not enough to end overfishing and rebuild the stock because of the high bycatch mortality associated with the fishery. It is estimated that 40% of the red snapper captured and released by recreational fishermen die. Although primarily a recreationally harvested species, the bycatch mortality climbs to 90% for the commercial fishery because of fishing practices and deeper waters that are fished. Based on a 2008 stock assessment for red snapper, it is necessary to reduce the mortality (both harvest and bycatch) by 83% in order to meet the requirements of the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act to end overfishing by 2010 and begin rebuilding stock.

*From: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, News Release, March 8, 2010*

# World's Most Endangered Sea Turtle Threatened by BP Oil Slick

**By ALEX MORALES**

**April 30, 2010**

April 30 (Bloomberg) — The world's most endangered species of sea turtle is threatened by an oil slick that's expanding in the Gulf of Mexico as 5,000 barrels a day of fuel gushes from a BP Plc well.

The Kemp's Ridley turtle only nests in the western Gulf of Mexico, with one of its main feeding grounds in the area of the oil spill, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website. The species is critically endangered, the highest degree of threat on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's "Red List."

"Oil cannot be good for these animals because it's toxic and can kill them," Andre Landry, a marine biologist who runs the Sea Turtle and Fisheries Ecology Research Lab at Texas A&M University at Galveston, said in a phone interview. Oil nearing shore waters "will affect Kemp's Ridleys from juveniles through to adults as well as their food and habitats."

The leak, which began when a drilling rig burned and sank a week ago, would surpass the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska by the third week of June if it continues at the current rate. That imperils marine and coastal habitats, and creatures from whales and dolphins to shrimp and crabs.

"BP is working with all agencies to try and protect the environment," spokeswoman Sheila Williams said today in an e-mail. "An extensive shoreline protection plan is being implemented with over 100,000 feet of boom put in place. We are continuing to monitor the coastal situation."

Twenty-one species of protected marine mammals "routinely" inhabit the northern Gulf of Mexico, NOAA said. They include sperm and killer whales and the bottlenose dolphin.

### Starvation, Death

"The greatest threat to whales from the oil spill is probably fouling of the baleen," NOAA said on its website, referring to hair-like teeth some whales have. "If Bryde's whales are skim-feeding in the slick or otherwise get oil in their mouths, the oil would quickly clog and foul the baleen. Fouled baleen could affect feeding, leading to starvation and death."

The number of nesting females of the Kemp's Ridley, which has only one major nesting beach — in Tamaulipas state in eastern Mexico — fell to as low as 350 in 1985, and has now climbed to about 8,000, according to Landry. In 1947, as many as 40,000 females nested in a single day, he said.

"Kemp's Ridley turtles numbers have been reduced over a long period of time and here they are being battered again," Richard Page, oceans campaigner with the environmental group Greenpeace, said in a telephone interview in London. "It's the most endangered species of sea turtle that there is, and they'll be ingesting oil and toxins. I'm sure there will be deaths."

—With assistance from Kari Lundgren in London and Jessica Resnick-Ault and Jim Polson in New York. Editors: Randall Hackley, Reed Landberg

# Coastwide Salmon Seasons Opened for First Time in Three Years

For the first time since 2007, the Pacific Fishery Management Council has recommended allowing commercial and recreational ocean seasons for Chinook salmon in most of California and Oregon. The commercial season in California is very limited, with only eight days in July for most of the coast, plus two quota periods in July and August for the Fort Bragg area. The recreational seasons are closer to normal, with most of the state open now through September 6 (Labor Day), although the ocean will be closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays south of Point Arena, and the minimum size limit is 24 inches, up from 20 inches. The north coast area around Eureka and Crescent City will have a Memorial Day to Labor Day recreational season, but no commercial season.

The Council took a conservative approach to managing salmon fisheries this year because of the recent collapse of the Sacramento River fall Chinook stock. The stock has fallen below its minimum spawner goal for the last three years, and while the forecast is somewhat improved for 2010, the Council targeted a higher escapement level this year to increase the likelihood of achieving the minimum spawner goal in 2010. The increase in the recreational minimum size limit is intended to reduce impacts on Endangered Species Act-listed Sacramento winter Chinook, whose numbers have also been low the last two years.

Oregon will also see the return of Chinook fishing, including May, July, and August commercial seasons on the south coast; and May, June, July and August commercial seasons on the central coast. Recreational seasons will be Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day south of Cape Falcon for Chinook, with a mark-selective coho season beginning June 26. However, the coho quota is only 26,000 this year, compared to over 100,000 last year, so coho opportunity may not extend through Labor Day weekend.

The Council also included allowances for an experimental genetic stock identification study in Oregon and California. The study will contract with commercial salmon trollers to catch and release salmon during closed times and areas from May through September. Salmon will have a small piece of fin and some scales removed before being released. The tissue sample will be used to determine the river of origin so researchers can improve their understanding of stock distribution, and provide information to consumers of fish where their fish came from. Tissue samples from fish landed during open seasons will be used as well. For more information on this study, see the Pacific Fish Trax website at: http:// www.pacificfishtrax.org/.

Fisheries in the Columbia River and Washington coast regions will benefit from improved Columbia River Chinook forecasts. Non-Indian commercial fisheries will have a Chinook quota more than double the 2009 quota for the May-June Chinook fishery and the July through mid-September all-salmon fishery; however, coho quotas will be about one third last year's. The recreational seasons will include a late June Chinook-directed (all-salmon-except- coho) fishery in addition to the usual July to September all-salmon fishery. While the June seasons have occurred in the past, for the first time in 2010 the fishery will be mark-selective for Chinook. The June quota is small at 12,000, but the fishery will be intensively monitored to allow a thorough evaluation. The all-salmon fishery will be mark-selective for coho but not for Chinook. Because of the low coho quotas, fishing will be initially limited to five days per week in the Westport, La Push and Neah Bay subareas to keep from reaching the quotas too quickly. Treaty Indian ocean fisheries off Washington will also have greater Chinook quotas and lower coho quotas, and have similar season structures with Chinook fisheries in May and June, and all-salmon fisheries in July through mid-September.

*From: Pacific Council News, Vol 34 Number 1, spring 2010*

# NO CIGAR - But Close

### Seemingly Invulnerable Record Tied in Japan
### 22 lb 4 oz Japan Largemouth Bass Ties Perry's Record

Even if you're no a bass angler, you probably know that the IGFA All-Tackle largemouth bass record represents the "holy grail" of records for much of the freshwater fishing community. On June 2, 1932, George Perry was fishing Georgia's Lake Montgomery when he caught the mother of all largemouth bass. The 22 lb 4 oz behemoth won *Field and Stream's* annual fishing contest and 46 years later, when IGFA took over freshwater records from the magazine, it became the All-Tackle record.

For nearly 77 years the record stood as bass fanatics debated when and where the record would be broken. Over the years there have been rumors and unsubstantiated reports of bass that tied or eclipsed Perry's record, but nothing ever passed IGFA criteria. Some anglers did come close, however. In 1991, Robert Crupi caught a 22 lb bass in lake Castaic, California, USA that still reigns as the 16 lb line class record and the third heaviest approved bass record in IGFA history.

Most people thought that the next All-Tackle record largemouth would come from California. Until recently, the seven heaviest bass records have come from California lakes. Although not native to California, it appears transplanted bass have adapted quite well to the deep, clear lakes and reservoirs.

Little did people know that introduced bass grow big in places besides California, and that there are true monsters swimming on the other side of the world in Japan.

## Kurita's Catch

On July 2, 2009, avid bass angler Manabu Kurita pitched a live bluegill next to a bridge piling on Japan's expansive Lake Biwa. It was Kurita's first cast to the piling where he had seen a big bass swimming, and he only twitched the bait a couple of times before he got bit. After a short three-minute fight he had the fish in the boat.

Kurita has been quoted as saying "I knew it was big, but I didn't know it was that big.' But big it was. When weighed on certified scales his fish weighed in at 10.12 kg or 22 lb 4 oz. The fish had a fork length of 27.2 inches and a girth of 26.7 inches. It was exactly big enough to tie George Perry's All-Tackle record.

Kurita caught the fish on a Deps Sidewinder rod and a Shimano Antares DC7LV reel, loaded with 25 lb Toray line. IGFA has line classes up to 20 lb for largemouth bass, so Kurita had no chance at a line class record. However, the tackle he used for his momentous catch is an interesting story in itself.

Earlier in May, Kurita was on Lake Biwa using his favorite combo and fishing a live Ayu baitfish. After casting his bait, he laid down the rod on the deck of the boat to organize some tackle. As luck (the bad kind) would have it, a bass inhaled his bait and, before he knew it, dragged his rod and reel overboard. Since Lake Biwa happens to be Japan's largest lake and can reach depths of over 300 feet, Kurita thought that he had seen the last of his favorite rod and reel.

Fortunately for Kurita, luck (this time the good kind) would visit him again. Several weeks later, back on Biwa, Kurinta saw a large dead bass floating on the surface. When he motored up to the fish, he saw that it had line coming out of its mouth. Kurita began pulling in the monofilament and after several minutes he was amazed to see that his lucky rod and reel was attached to it!

## Being Stringent

The IGFA Record Review

Word spread like wildfire after Kurita weighed his fish. IGFA immediately contacted its sister organization, the Japan Game Fish Association (JGFA), for more information. Established in 1979, JGFA compiles and translates all record applications for fish caught in Japan before sending them to IGFA.

IGFA received the complete application from JGFA on September, 19, 2009. The application was meticulously documented and complete with the necessary photographs. Since IGFA requires three months from the time of capture before a record can be approved, the official word would have to wait until October 2, 2009. However, almost immediately rumors began to circulate that Kurita may have caught his fish in a "no-fishing zone."

In response, IGFA contacted JGFA to speak with the angler about this issue and to gather information regarding the legality of fishing where Kurita caught his bass. Official word came back that the location of the catch was not a no-fishing zone, but was an area where anchoring or stopping was prohibited. This spurred more correspondence with JGFA and the angler, including affidavits asking the angler if he stopped his boat at anytime. Again, the testimony and affidavits that came back indicated that the angler did not violate any laws and that his catch was indeed legitimate.

During this time, IGFA was besieged with letters and emails from the bass fishing community. Many were incredulous that the All-Tackle record could be tied by a fish from Japan. Others beseeched IGFA to approve the record and give Kurita the credit he deserves. Still others wanted to know why the entire process was taking so long.

It soon became clear to staff at IGFA that this would be a contentious issue no matter if the record were approved or rejected. IGFA was also sensitive to this particular record because in past years there have been several attempts to sue IGFA over largemouth bass record claims. Although none of these claims had been successful, they have resulted in considerable legal fees for IGFA.

In the end, IGFA staff concluded it would be both in the best interest of IGFA and that of the angler if the angler submitted to a polygraph analysis. IGFA reserves the right to employ polygraph analysis for any record claim, and this is explicitly stated in the affidavit section of the world record application form.

Again, more correspondence was issued to JGFA to request that Kurita take a polygraph test. When Kurita received JGFA's request from IGFA for him to take the test he immediately agreed. On December 15, Kurita was examined by a professional polygraph analyst in Japan. Among some of the questions he was asked: was he truthful about the information reported on the application form and did his boat ever come to a complete stop while fighting the fish?

The results from the polygraph concluded that Manabu Kurita answered the questions honestly and that the catch was legitimate. George Perry's 77-year old record was officially tied.

### What's Next?

Six months may seem like a lot of time to determine if a fish ties a record. Hopefully, people now understand the amount of due diligence IGFA conducted on this record. Although we treat all records with equal rigor, the All-Tackle largemouth bass record is nothing less than iconic and the bass angling community deserved nothing less.

IGFA applauds Manabu Kurita on his outstanding catch and commends hims on his patience and candor during the entire review process. We would also like to thank JGFA for their diligence and tireless assistance in corresponding with Kurita and fisheries officials.

*From: International Angler, 73(1) January/February 2010*

# Feds say NC noncompliant

**By MIKE SHUTAK**

***Carteret County News-Times***

Morehead City — The Secretary of Commerce will have to decide the future of the North Carolina commercial weakfish (*Cynoscion regalis*) fishery. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has declared North Carolina out of compliance with its weakfish regulations.

The commission's weakfish board voted North Carolina out of compliance 12-2 Tuesday, May 4 at its meeting in Alexandria, Va. North Carolina and Rhode Island were opposed to the declaration and one representative abstained.

Now that the commission has made its decision, the case will go before the U.S. Secretary of Commerce within the next 30 days. If the secretary doesn't rule in favor of the state, the federal government could close the entire weakfish fishery in North Carolina. Weakfish are also known as gray trout.

Patricia Smith, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) public information officer, said Thursday the division doesn't know what to expect.

"North Carolina has never gone out of compliance before," she said.

The state is in this situation because it refuses to agree to a 100-pound bycatch commercial trip limit and a one-fish per day recreational limit for weakfish. Currently the recreational limit is six fish per day. For commercial fishermen, there is a 150-pound trip limit for gill nets, fly nets, shrimp and crab trawls and no trip limit for seines.

The minimum size limit for weakfish is 12 inches for both commercial and recreational fishermen. The only exception is a 10-inch size limit for pound nets and long haul seines from April 1-15.

Ms. Smith said under the ASMFC's trip limit, North Carolina fishermen would have to discard a million pounds of legal-sized weakfish caught as bycatch.

"As evidence, the state showed that many different commercial fisheries in North Carolina catch weakfish as bycatch," she said. "Eighty percent of those landings are greater than 100 pounds per trip."

Dr. Louis Daniel, director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), proposed a bycatch allowance to the ASMFC that would reduce mortality by 43 percent. According to a press release from the N.C. Fisheries Association (NCFA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the state seafood industry, Dr. Daniel's proposal fell on deaf ears.

"In a very troubling moment immediately after the N.C. motion failed for lack of a second, the staff of ASMFC produced a motion that seemed to have been crafted long before the North Carolina presentation, calling for the out-of-compliance vote," the association said.

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) first decided to go out-of-compliance with the ASMFC regulations at its March meeting in Kitty Hawk. The MFC is concerned the Atlantic commission's regulations will deny commercial fishermen access to a valuable fishery when weakfish stocks begin improving.

*From: Carteret County (NC) News-Times, May 7, 2010*

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