

EDITORIAL

We at CFN have much to be thankful for

In this season of giving thanks, we here at *Commercial Fisheries News* would like to offer a few simple words of heartfelt appreciation to those who consistently give so much and ask so little in return.

First, kudos to our dedicated staff, a group of extraordinary individuals who labor long and hard all year round to bring you what we hope is the best fishing newspaper anywhere.

Thank you also to our outstanding regular contributors and columnists who, while not staff, are an essential branch of the CFN family. Without them, the paper would lack much of its unique flavor and vitality.

Our thanks, as well, to our many industry friends and colleagues whose input often helps us plan and shape our coverage in these complex and confusing times.

And, of course, a huge thank you to our advertisers, without whom there would be no CFN.

These businesses — many of them local and family owned — are, like you and us, struggling mightily to ride out the current recession. But they have remained steadfast supporters of CFN and the regional fishing community that we serve. We hope you will support these businesses often and in any way you can.

Lastly, there just are no adequate words of thanks for you, our loyal readers.

For nearly 40 years you have been the lifeblood of *Commercial Fisheries News*.

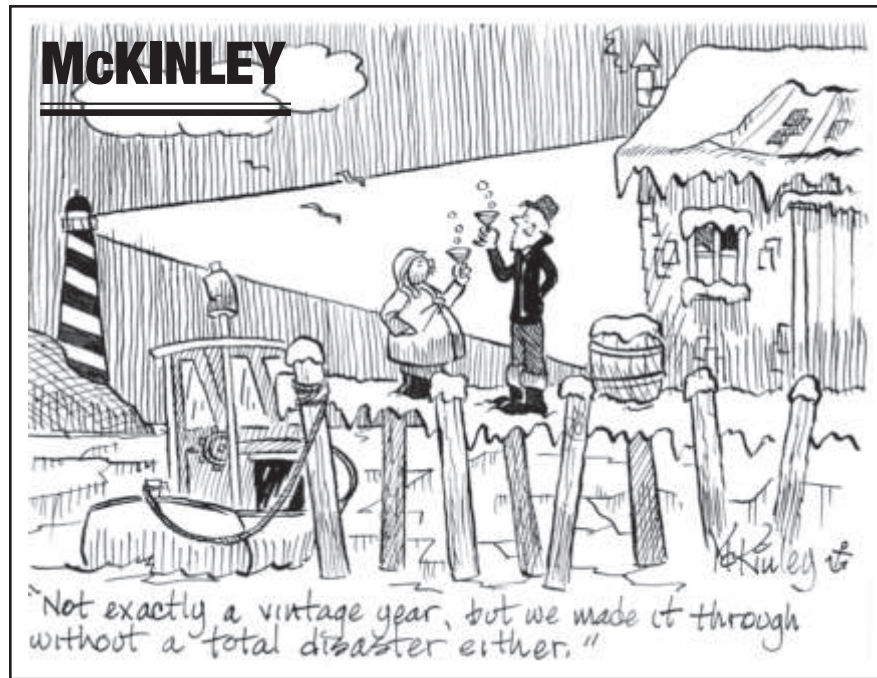
You let us into your homes and aboard your boats. You share your triumphs and your tragedies. You tell us when we get it right and when we don't. And you make all that we do here worth doing.

These are difficult times for sure. But

we are grateful to be a part of this very proud, resilient, and caring community. Thank you.

Here's to our collective good health, prosperity, and fair tides in the year ahead. Happy Holidays!

Rick Martin,
Publisher



Correction: ECC Globe was supplier

To the Editor:

Thank you for including Electronic Charts Company Inc. (ECC) in the article on the Martin family (CFN December 2009). I would like to make a small correction.

We are not Skymate ECC Globe. Skymate is a different product from a different manufacturer, which the F/V Crystal and Katie might very well have. We are ECC-GLOBE.

I do appreciate the mention, however, and just thought I would clear up the details.

Jim Brantingham, President
Electronic Charts Company Inc.

Council scallop cuts foolish, vindictive

To the Editor:

On Nov. 19, the New England Fishery Management Council voted to cut 25% of the limited-access scallop fleet's days-at-sea. This vote was both bone-headed and vindictive.

It was bone-headed in that it cost the fishery and the economy at least \$100 million. At a time when Congress and the president are trying so hard and spending so much to stimulate the economy, I do not see how this action advances that agenda.

This \$100 million loss not only hurts fishermen but also has an immediate and devastating impact on the entire local economy. This represents money that won't be spent or made by icehouses,

scallop processors, welders, painters, shipyards, food providers, engine hydraulic companies, banks, and the people who work for these businesses.

The vote was vindictive in that it was made in the face of the recommendations by the council's own Scientific and Statistical Committee. These experts agreed that fishing at the present rate is both reasonable and sustainable in a fishery that has been rebuilt to 150% of its target biomass. This 150% of target biomass has been achieved by years of sacrifice and innovative cuts proposed, supported, and implemented by industry.

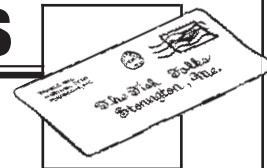
At a time when we should be getting catch increases, industry only asks for what we had last year, which was both sustainable and profitable. When more and more of the scallop landings are sold into the world market, the last thing the fishery needs is a wildly fluctuating supply, affecting both price stability and market share.

I am becoming disillusioned by this process in which council members are driven by their own agendas. The head of the scallop committee who led this vote is an employee of the Environmental Defense Fund. This is comparable to having the head of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) run a livestock auction in Kansas City.

The rest of the council members who voted to cut and punish the scallop industry did so to serve their own self-interests as well. These interests range from garnering favor from the environmentalists to snatching a bigger share of the bycatch resource for their pet recreational and groundfish fisheries.

On the other hand, the scallop fishery itself and the supporting businesses, which have helped elevate New Bedford to the #1 port in the country for the last 10 years,

LETTERS



has no representation on the council.

As we continue down this slippery slope of ignorant people making wrong, self-serving decisions, we are on the brink of rendering an industry and its infrastructure as its own endangered species.

Edward Welch
Captain, F/V Westport
Mattapoissett, MA

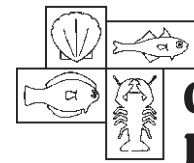
NE council's scallop decisions clarified

To the Editor:

At its Newport, RI meeting in November, the New England Fishery Management Council approved an action to adjust scallop days-at-sea and set the area rotation schedule for the 2010 fishing year beginning this March. Because of extensive misreporting in the general media and misunderstandings, I would like to provide a number of facts that may shed light on the council's decisions.

Framework 21 includes an overall fishing mortality target of 0.20, which represents the percentage of a stock removed by fishing each year. It also includes four access-area trips and 29 open-area days-at-sea for full-time limited-access vessels. Understandably,

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MORE LETTERS

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this has generated strong industry concerns about negative economic consequences.

As background, some of the reasons for the council's decisions date back to last fall when it received an acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendation of 65.2 million pounds from its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). That value included over 7 million pounds for scallop discards and incidental mortality in the fishery, leaving an actual ABC of 57.8 million pounds.

An important factor in the council's decision was that the total catch for 2009, operating under a fishing mortality target of 0.20, is expected to reach nearly 56 million pounds. This amount is uncomfortably close to the recommended ABC.

Further, the revised Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act specifies that regional fishery management councils cannot adopt annual catch limits that exceed the fishing level set by their SSCs.

With respect to concerns about negative economic impacts, the council's action admittedly is expected to result in the industry generating \$304 million in revenues in 2010 vs. \$344 million under a higher fishing mortality rate for 2010.

Most compelling to the council, however, was that nearly \$12 million more in revenues are projected to be generated each year from 2011-2016 at the 0.20 rate, compared to the higher rate of 0.24 that also was under consideration.

Another factor swaying the council was that a significant portion of the currently available scallop resource is comprised of small scallops. Fishing on smaller scallops in 2010 would reduce the growth potential of the stock and reduce long-term yield. Lower fishing effort in the short-term will allow those same scallops to grow to a size that will produce higher profits in the future. Some would call that a savings account with a pretty good interest rate.

Lastly, reduced yield in 2010 will be a single year event. By 2011, the scallop plan development team expects that, as part of the council's area rotation strategy, Hudson Canyon will be ready

for reopening, Delmarva may support one to two trips, the Elephant Trunk may still be open, and at least one trip in Georges Bank is expected.

The council must weigh the short-term costs of an action against long-term benefits. In this case, a lower fishing mortality in 2010 yields more favorable benefits long-term for the industry and society overall.

The documents that formed the basis of the council's decisions regarding scallops are posted online at <www.nefmc.org>.

Paul J. Howard,
Executive Director
New England Fishery Management
Council
Newburyport, MA

A call to action on health care reform

The following letter was forwarded by J. J. Bartlett, president of the Massachusetts Fishing Partnership Health Plan, to CFN for publication. —Editor

Dear fishing families:

I strongly encourage all fishing families to contact their senators and representatives in support of national health care reform.

Health care reform will ensure that individuals and small businesses, including fishermen, will have real health insurance options. Insurance companies will need to offer good coverage. They will not be allowed to deny anyone coverage because they have a pre-existing condition and they will not be allowed to stop anyone's coverage just because they become sick.

Furthermore, the insurance will be subsidized to make it affordable (the amount of subsidy will depend on the applicant's income and will depend on which bill passes).

Without a doubt, health care reform is good for fishing families.

In addition, I am hopeful that national health care reform will include funding for fishing organizations to provide health care outreach and education to their members.

Most people in this country get their health insurance through work and can depend on their employer's human resources department to guide them through the challenging health care system.

Hard to reach workers, including fishermen, deserve this same level of support, and I am hopeful that funding for this outreach will be in the final health care reform bill.

Therefore, funding for community-based health care outreach and education through fishing organizations is another important reason to support national health care reform.

Please call your senators and congressmen today and tell them you support national health care reform.

Contact information for US senators is available online at <www.senate.gov> and for congressmen at <www.house.gov>.

J.J. Bartlett
Newton, MA

Letters policy

Commercial Fisheries News

publishes Letters to the Editor as they are submitted, except correcting for spelling, grammar, and newspaper style. Length is usually held to 300-400 words and we reserve the right to shorten letters.

We do not publish letters that violate standards of good taste or make libelous statements.

Catch share social impacts devastating

To the Editor:

Our coastal fishing communities are about to lose their fishing traditions that date back to before the Pilgrims landed. The "catch share" regime of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) shows zero concern for social and economic impacts to our towns.

Last August, Dr. Julia Olson of the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center put out a paper titled "Social Impact Assessment Literature Review: Leasing and Permit Stacking" that looked at how these practices work in fisheries and how they will affect our communities. It is not a pretty picture.

She wrote, "The primary social impacts ... (include) employment loss, decreased income, decreased quality of life, changing relations of production, structural disadvantages to smaller vessels and firms, dependency and debt, patronage, concentration of capital and market power, inequitable gains, regulatory stickiness, reduced stewardship, decreased community stability, loss of cultural values, and so on."

The bottom line is that the minority is gifted with catch shares and the majority loses jobs. This has been true in ITQ (individual transferable quota) fisheries around the world.

A low price of fish could shake more

fishermen out, forcing them to sell out to investors. To prevent this, there should be a minimum price for fish to protect us.

It has been proven in other ITQ fisheries that many quota holders end up being nonresidents and nonfishermen. This debunks the whole owner-accountability theory of catch shares. Dr. Olson states that ITQs lead to reduced stewardship, not increased stewardship. Why is NMFS ignoring this study from one of its own? There should be a requirement for the owner/operator of a vessel to be on board.

We need to demand that our politicians have an inquiry on the social and economic impacts of catch share programs. The federal Government Accountability Office needs to conduct an economic analysis of NMFS's projected TACs and their effects on us. Furthermore, we need a Fishermen's Economic Impact Recovery Act to help us hang on until we have balance brought back into our fisheries management. Special interests on the council have skewed objectives.

If you need verification of the destruction that ITQs cause, just ask all of the Alaskans who lost their jobs in catch share fisheries. There is no valid reason to convert to catch shares. Just ask the Europeans. We need to protect our fishing families and communities. After all, we are important too.

Mary Beth de Poutiloff
Harrington, ME
Provincetown, MA

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