

JOB 3: PUBLIC OUTREACH

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Job 3: Public Outreach

GOAL

Increase awareness among anglers and the general public of state and federal efforts to enhance, restore and protect marine sportfish populations and habitats.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase public awareness of research and monitoring activities that support sportfish management, as well as public awareness of how those activities are funded.
2. Administer the Marine Trophy Fish Award Program, an angler achievement program recognizing and rewarding anglers who catch trophy-sized marine fish.

SUMMARY

1. A total of 150 outdoor and environmental writers, marine anglers and boaters, marina operators, fishing tackle retailers, Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC) members, and members of the general public attended outreach events via ZOOM tele-communication. The importance of research and monitoring to good fisheries management was incorporated into the programs (Table 3.2).
2. These same audiences also learned that good water quality and proper pollution prevention (non-fishing impacts) are essential to good fisheries habitat management.
3. Total attendance at five ZOOM engagements with sportsmen clubs and other recreational environmental clubs was 89 (Table 3.2). The audience was encouraged to become actively involved in the fishery management process by attending public hearings and FAC meetings via ZOOM. Notices of public hearings were sent to tackle shops and various media outlets including the DEEP website (www.ct.gov/deep/fishing) and also through email.
4. The message that most of marine finfish research and monitoring are funded through Federal excise taxes on fishing and motorboat fuels was emphasized at major department ZOOM events (Table 3.2).

INTRODUCTION

Public outreach was formally incorporated into this project in 1997 (segment 18). An outreach plan was developed by project staff working closely with US Fish and Wildlife Service personnel. Six target audiences were identified in priority order (Table 3.1) in the outreach plan. This report summarizes F54R outreach activities conducted from March 2020 to February 2021.

Table 3.1:

Priority Audiences for Outreach Activities

1. Outdoor/environmental writers
2. Marine anglers
3. Marine boaters and Marina operators
4. Fishing tackle retailers
5. Fisheries Advisory Council (to CT DEEP)
6. General public

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outdoor and Environmental Writers

DEEP press releases, project summaries, FAC reports, and full annual reports were mailed, e-mailed and posted on CTDEEP Fisheries website to outdoor writers, members of the CT Outdoor Recreation Coalition (CORC) and Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC), media and also to the general public. Project staff were also interviewed concerning F54R activities at public and regulatory hearings (ZOOM Meetings), and over the telephone by writers and reporters for the news media.

Marine Anglers and Marine Boaters

Project personnel organized and participated in DEEP Inland Fisheries Division, and Marine Fisheries Program events via ZOOM. The theme for these ZOOM events were "Marine Fisheries Management - Enhanced Fishing Opportunities", "Trophy Fish Program" and "Marine Fisheries Program Angler Surveys". F54R activities were highlighted at these telecommunication events. Zoom meetings were entitled "Trophy Fish Award Program" and "Marine Angler Surveys, (a marine fisheries cooperative management program)". Audiences learned the importance of research and monitoring which are funded through excise taxes on fishing tackle and motorboat fuels. Colorful PowerPoint presentations and compelling images, along with project specific text helped draw attention to marine species monitored under F54R programs and solicit questions and discussion of those programs.

Several outreach displays were developed by project staff and mounted in the lobby and hallways at the Marine Headquarters in Ferry Point State Park. These displays highlighted unique characteristics of Long Island Sound, public access, species identification, the trophy fish award program, marine angler surveys and gave a brief description of current F54R programs designed to protect the Sound's resources. These fisheries displays can easily be viewed by anglers, boaters and their families at this very popular fishing and picnic area. However, in 2020, the state facility was closed to the public due the SARS COVID 19 pandemic. It was reopened in the spring of 2021.

The CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Trophy Fish Award Program had a successful year in angler participation. Thirty-three marine angler's participated, by submitting 43 marine fisheries trophy fish award affidavits in this outreach program, catching 16 different species. Thirty-one adults and two youth anglers participated in 2020. Tautog, Black Sea Bass, and Summer Flounder were the

most common trophy species captured. Four harvest and five catch & release new state record holders and four trophy fish records (3 female and 1 youth angler) were recognized via a ZOOM event. Marine anglers were presented with a framed Trophy Fish Award Certificate of achievement and trophy fish lapel pin (mailed to them) in either bronze, silver, or gold color (depending on award type). Another four marine anglers (2 adults (male & female) and 2 youth males) were recognized as Angler of the Year for capturing the most and largest marine fish species. They all received CTDEEP trophy fish award program hats. For a summary please see: [2020 Marine Trophy Fish Award Program Summary](#)

Fishing Tackle Retailers

Fishing tackle retailers provide an important avenue for communication between the department and anglers. A complete list of [fishing tackle retailers](#) is maintained and updated yearly on the CT DEEP website. Timely DEEP press releases, species fact sheets/regulations, Connecticut Angler Guides and Marine Fisheries Brochure are mailed to tackle retailers to keep them informed. Correspondence between the Marine Fisheries office staff and retailers are ongoing.

Fisheries Advisory Council

The Fisheries Advisory Council, which represents a cross section of Connecticut residents with interests in fisheries issues, met quarterly to discuss statewide fisheries issues. For each quarterly meeting, staff produce a report via ZOOM of recent project activities which is then distributed to FAC members and their constituents. After each meeting most Council members report Council discussions back to the fishing and environmental groups they represent. Council members also discussed monitoring and funding issues at these Zoom meetings with state legislators. Many Council members attended Marine Fisheries Zoom meetings and 'A Study of Marine Recreational Fisheries in Connecticut' was emailed to Fishery Advisory Council members to keep them informed.

General Public

The facility was closed in 2020. Reopened in spring of 2021, attracting the public to outreach displays at the office (note: the office is closed in 2020 due to the SARS COVID-19 pandemic). Display topics included all F54R projects. Activities funded under other Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration projects were also highlighted, including Connecticut Pumpout Stations and Waste Reception Facilities (V-4), Motorboat Access Renovation and Development (F60D), Motorboat Access Area Operation and Maintenance (F70D), and Habitat Conservation and Enhancement (F61T).

Two articles describing Sport Fish Restoration projects were published in the Department's Wildlife Magazine. The first summarized the State Close to establishing National Research Reserve. A second highlighted the Connecticut Marine Recreational Angler Survey, Critical for Managing CT's Marine Resources. Some of these articles were based on data gathered in Jobs 1 & 2.

Sport Fish Restoration projects were also highlighted at conservation organizations throughout the year via Zoom. Presentations titled "Marine Fisheries Management / Sportfish Restoration and

Marine Resource Management” were presented along with Invasive Species Information. These outreach events highlighted the importance of coastal resources and all facets of marine resource protection. Approximately 47 conservationist attended Marine Fisheries Division ZOOM presentations.

Finally, project staff led speaking engagements throughout the state via ZOOM in 2020 (Table 3.2). These talks reached all target audiences, especially the business community, teachers, and concerned citizens. Audiences learned how to become active participants in the fisheries management process, through public informational hearings and FAC Meetings via ZOOM and using the CTDEEP website.

MODIFICATIONS

None.

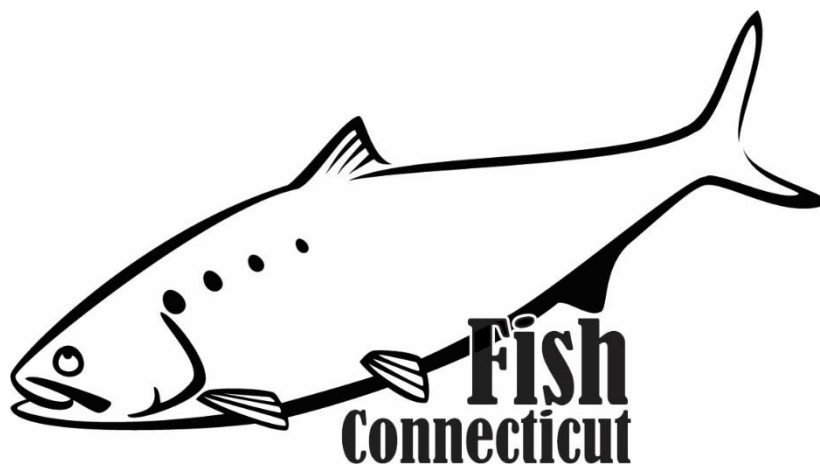


Table 3.2: Summary of talks, tours, career days and workshops given by project staff highlighting F54R activities, March 2020 – February 2021.

Date:	Presentation Type	Organization	Title / Topic	Target Audience	Total
3/30/2020	ZOOM Presentation	Angling Public – State Record Holders & Angler of the Year	Trophy Fish Award Program Ceremony	Trophy Fish Award Anglers	14
4/17/2020	ZOOM Talk	Fairfield County League of Sportsmen/Interclub Mtg.	Marine Fisheries Angler Survey	Marine Anglers	22
4/22/2020	ZOOM Talk	West Haven Yacht Club	Marine Fisheries Management in Long Island Sound	Marine Anglers	13
5/20/2020	ZOOM Talk	Milford Striped Bass Club	Marine Fisheries Angler Survey	Marine Anglers	19
5/30/2020	ZOOM Talk	Stratford Boat Owners Association	Marine Fisheries Angler Survey	Marine Anglers	18
06/10/2020	ZOOM Talk	CT Surfcasters Association	Marine Fisheries Angler Survey	Marine Anglers	17
07/23/2020	ZOOM Talk	CT Audubon Society	Mitten Crab & ANS	General Public	31
08/16/2020	ZOOM Talk	Norwalk Maritime Center	Marine Fisheries Program – Mitten Crab	General Public	16
				Total	150