

## **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 194 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 130 (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](http://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 2021 to February 2022.

**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 2020-21, the state facility was closed to the public due the SARS COVID 19 pandemic. It was temporarily reopened in the spring of 2022.

The CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Trophy Fish Award Program had a successful year in angler participation. Thirty-four marine anglers participated, by submitting 63 marine fisheries trophy fish award affidavits in this outreach program, catching 24 different species. Thirty-two adults and two

youth anglers participated in 2021. Bluefish, Tautog, and Striped Bass were the most common trophy species captured. Five harvest and six 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 (3 adults (male & 2 female) and 1 youth male) 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 along with their achievements were highlighted on the CTDEEP/Fisheries website. For a summary please see: [2021 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(s) 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 2020-21. Reopened in spring of 2022, attracting the public to outreach displays at the office (note: the office is closed in 2020-21 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).

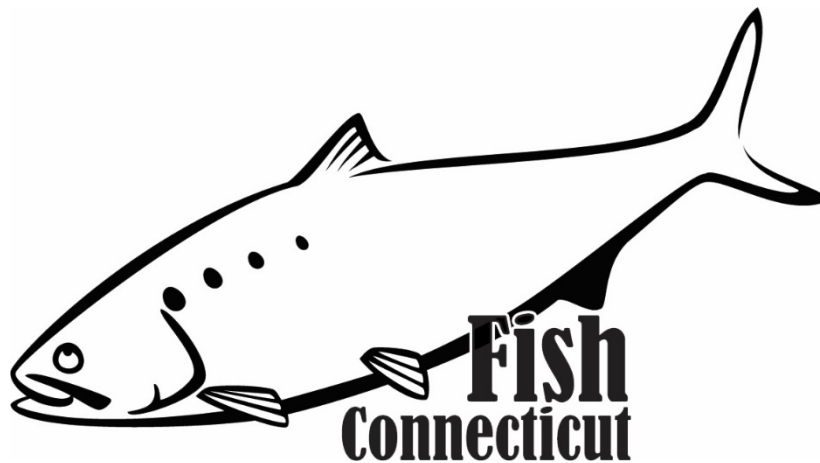
Two articles describing Sport Fish Restoration projects were published in the Department's Wildlife Magazine. The first summarized the State Public Access Locations and new projects for 2022. A second highlighted the Connecticut Marine Recreational Angler Survey, Critical for Managing CT's Marine Resources. 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 2021 (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 2021 – February 2022.**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Presentation Type</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Title / Topic</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Total</b>
3/25/2021	<b>ZOOM Presentation</b>	<b>Angling Public – State Record Holders &amp; Angler of the Year</b>	<b>Trophy Fish Award Program Ceremony</b>	<b>Trophy Fish Award Anglers</b>	<b>21</b>
4/22/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>Fairfield County League of Sportsmen/Interclub Mtg.</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Angler Survey</b>	<b>Marine Anglers</b>	<b>34</b>
4/29/2020	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>West Haven Yacht Club</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Management in Long Island Sound</b>	<b>Marine Anglers</b>	<b>16</b>
5/25/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>Milford Striped Bass Club</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Angler Survey</b>	<b>Marine Anglers</b>	<b>19</b>
5/30/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>Stratford Boat Owners Association</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Angler Survey</b>	<b>Marine Anglers</b>	<b>18</b>
06/07/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>CT Surfcasters Association</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Angler Survey</b>	<b>Marine Anglers</b>	<b>22</b>
07/30/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>CT Audubon Society</b>	<b>Mitten Crab &amp; ANS</b>	<b>General Public</b>	<b>31</b>
10/16/2021	<b>ZOOM Talk</b>	<b>Norwalk Parks &amp; Rec Department</b>	<b>Marine Fisheries Program – Mitten Crab</b>	<b>General Public</b>	<b>33</b>
				<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>