

The American Sportfishing Association—1933-2009

76 years of advocating for the sportfishing industry

Encouraging People to Fish

Of course for the sportfishing industry to thrive, there have to be anglers. From one of its earliest major undertakings promoting a casting game in the 1930s to establishing and managing National Fishing and Boating Week, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) has helped create demand for its members' products by sharing with people the benefits of fishing.

1939-1958—Skish Turned Casting into a Year-Round Game

In the 1930s and 1940s the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTM), the predecessor of ASA, dedicated significant resources to promoting Skish (a combination of *skeet* and *fish*), a free casting game that introduced fishing to kids, made fishing tackle a year-round business and increased media coverage of the sport.

Skish grew in popularity to the point that in 1949 the first annual tournament was held. As it became competitive, however, participants started using tournament reel, clashing with AFTM's goal of making the game accessible to everyone.

AFTM delegated responsibility for promoting Skish to the National Association of Angling and Casting Clubs in 1951, but continued to subsidize it until at least 1958.



This medal was awarded to participants in Fish-O, a casting game AFTM sponsored whose name was later changed to Skish.

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1955—AFTM Begins Working With Schools

In 1955 AFTM allocated \$15,000 to the Outdoor Education Project, which added casting and fishing to schools' physical education curricula. It was AFTM's first foray into the schools.

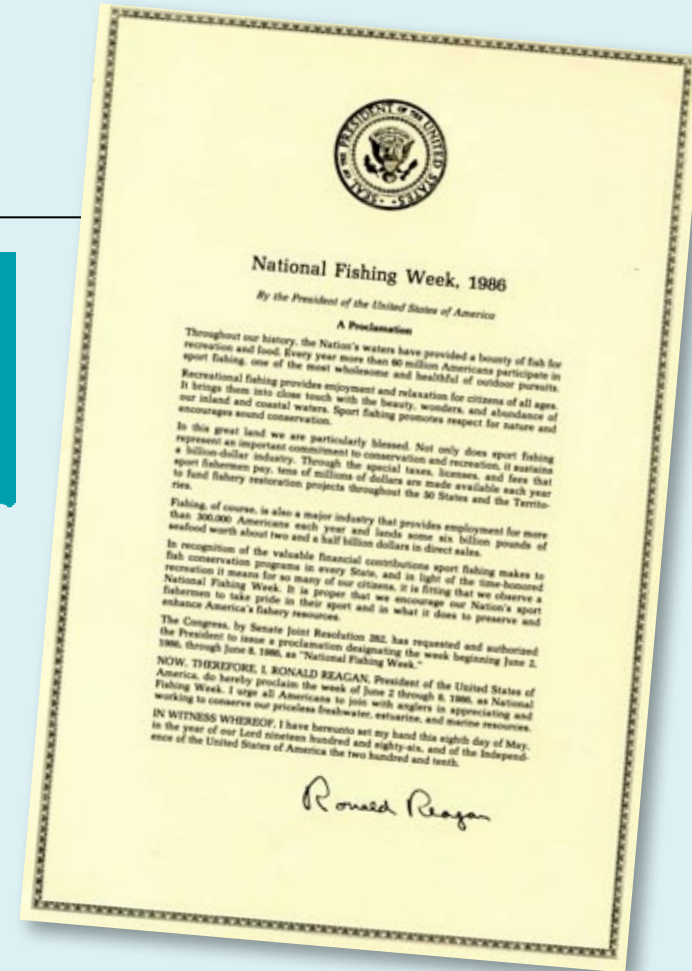
1979-2001—AFTMA and SFI Led National Fishing and Boating Week to National Prominence

National Fishing Week began in 1979, and its popularity grew during the next few years as more and more states endorsed the event. The American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA) and the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI), both forerunners of ASA, though, lobbied hard for National Fishing Week to be recognized nationwide.

Because of their efforts in 1986 President Ronald Reagan recognized the week, urging "all Americans to join with anglers in appreciating and working to conserve our priceless freshwater, estuarine, and marine resources."

As part of National Fishing Week 1989, President George Bush met with AFTMA and SFI's chairmen in the Oval Office. Bush also recognized the contributions the

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President George H.W. Bush met with AFTMA Chairman Dana Pickup and Sen. Bob Kasten, recipient of AFTMA's 1989 Award of Merit, during National Fishing Week in 1989.

tackle industry and American anglers make to fishery conservation and restoration.

Responsibility for the week was handed off to the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, an organization ASA helped found. And in 2001 the event's name was changed to National Fishing and Boating Week.



Throughout its history, many celebrities have lent their names to promoting National Fishing Week.



Ted Williams, a member of both the National Baseball Hall of Fame and the International Game Fish Association's Fishing Hall of Fame, distributed prizes provided by AFTMA at Comiskey Park as part of Fish 'N Feel Free Night in 1979.



AFTMA produced this sticker in 1964 and encouraged its members to order them to increase awareness of family fishing.



The Future Fisherman Foundation became affiliated with AFTM in 1990.

1990-present—Future Fisherman Foundation Brings Fishing Into Schools

The Future Fisherman Foundation, established in 1986 by Pure Fishing to increase sportfishing participation by youth, became affiliated with AFTM in 1990. Currently, its *Physh Ed* initiative awards grants for physical education teachers to include fishing or boating units in their classes.

1999-present—ASA Helps Create and Teams with Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation

In 1998 Congress passed the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act which required the creation of a national plan to improve communications regarding recreational boating and fishing, reduce barriers to fishing and boating participation and promote the use of aquatic resources. In June 1999 the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) was created to do just that.

ASA played a critical role in passage of the bill.



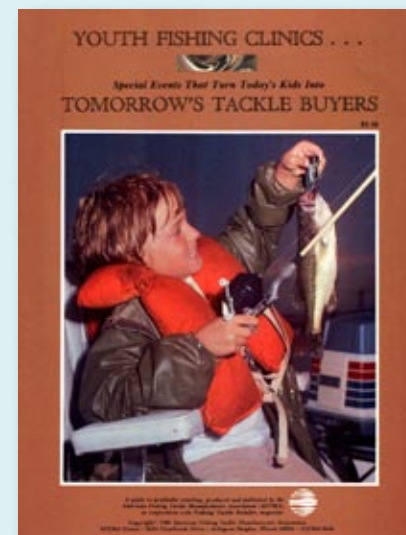
TAKE ME FISHING™
takemefishing.org

RBFF's Take Me Fishing program includes a Web site that makes it easy for people to find great places to fish and boat.



RECREATIONAL
BOATING & FISHING
FOUNDATION

ASA was instrumental in the creation of RBFF as part of the Wallop-Breaux bill.



In 1986 AFTMA produced and published this guide to holding youth fishing clinics.