

POLICY Watch

Government Affairs Update

These items cover Government Affairs activities for July and August 2009. For more information on ASA's Government Affairs activities, contact [Gordon Robertson](#), vice president and Government Affairs lead, x237, [Patty Doerr](#), director, Ocean Resource Policy, x244, or [Mike Leonard](#), Policy fellow, x230. Please visit [ASA's Web site](#) for more information.

NOAA Administrator to Address Summit Attendees

On Tuesday, October 27, Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator, will provide remarks during the 2009 [Sportfishing Summit's](#) annual networking lunch. Tuesday, October 27 is the first day of the Summit and is focused on committee meetings. For more information, contact ASA Communications Director [Mary Jane Williamson](#), x227.

Zurn Named Government Affairs Saltwater Subcommittee Chairman

Gary Zurn, executive vice president of Big Rock Sports in Newport, N.C., is the new chairman of ASA's Government Affairs Saltwater Subcommittee. He takes the place of Ben Moore who retired from the industry last month. We thank Mr. Moore for his years of service to the Association and the industry and for his leadership on the Government Affairs Committee.

ASA Meets with NOAA Administrator

In August, ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman, along with staff from the [Coastal Conservation Association](#), met with Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) administrator, to discuss a variety of issues of concern to the recreational fishing community. Nussman

emphasized the need for and importance of better scientific data and statistics when it comes to the marine recreational fishing sector. He also stressed the vast economic contribution of the sportfishing industry, which is roughly equal to that of the domestic commercial fishing sector.

California Marine Life Protection Act Planning Update

ASA and the Partnership for Sustainable Oceans (PSO) which represents recreational fishing and boating interests in California, continues to be engaged in the MLPA South Coast Planning Process. The Blue Ribbon Task Force reviewed the scientific evaluations of the South Coast round two proposals during its July 28-29 meeting. The Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) began its third round of negotiations during its August 3-4 meeting in Carlsbad, Calif. The RSG will finish its negotiations during its September 9-10 meeting in Los Angeles, Calif., after which the final proposals will be considered by the Blue Ribbon Task Force in October.

North Central Coast MLPA Implementation—Final Commission Vote Taken

The California Fish and Game Commission (FGC) voted at its August 5 meeting to formally designate marine protected areas (MPAs) in the North Central Coast of California. A motion by Commissioner Jim Kellogg to delay a vote on the designations until

the state's fiscal conditions improved failed by a 2-3 vote. The FGC voted 3-2 to approve the "Integrated Preferred Alternative (IPA)," placing approximately twenty percent of the study area in MPAs. While the Partnership for Sustainable Oceans (PSO) supported Proposal 2-XA, it is proud that the majority of the IPA is comprised of components found in 2XA. The MPA designations for the North Central Coast will be final in 2010.

ASA Comments on Proposal to Close South Atlantic Red Snapper Fishery

In August, ASA sent a letter to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office to comment on their proposed [temporary rule](#) that would establish a 180 day closure of the commercial and recreational red snapper fisheries in the South Atlantic. In the letter, ASA strongly expressed its concerns with the proposal, especially given the potential economic impact it would have on the recreational fishing sector, and urged NMFS to find a balance between fishing restrictions necessary for the conservation of the fishery and economic impact. If approved, the closure would likely go into effect in late September or early October 2009, and remain in effect until an amendment to the comprehensive management plan is finalized.

article continues

Study Shows Promise for World's Fisheries

A landmark study published in the July 31 issue of *Science* titled, "Rebuilding Global Fisheries," indicates that the world's marine fisheries are not as threatened as much of the popular press has claimed, and that fish stocks in many areas are rebuilding and improving. The study, co-authored by 21 scientists, concluded that while many areas are still in need of rebuilding, efforts made to reduce overfishing are succeeding in five of ten large marine ecosystems studied. In particular, fish stocks off the coast of California were shown to experience the lowest fishery exploitation rate of any area included in the study, and fish biomass in the region was shown to have steadily increased over the last decade to a level above maximum sustainable yield. The study provides clear evidence that fish stocks in California can be rebuilt without marine reserves which have only recently begun to be implemented under the state's Marine Life Protection Act, passed in 1999.

Send a Letter to Support the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act

ASA continues to work with other members of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA) legislative team to advocate to Members of Congress for their support of the bill and to seek additional sponsorship. In order to ensure this important bill is passed, we need your help! Please [write a letter to your House of Representatives member today](#) asking for his or her support of the NFHCA. Additional co-sponsors are needed in order for this bill to succeed. The foundation for the NFHCA is the [National Fish Habitat Action Plan](#) (NFHAP). ASA Vice President Gordon Robertson sits on the NFHAP Board.

Legislation Introduced to Restore Cape Hatteras Access

In August, Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) introduced [S. 1557](#), a bill that would reinstate the Interim Management Strategy finalized by the Park Service in 2007 to govern ORV use on Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area (CHNSRA) until a long-term off-road vehicle (ORV) management plan is completed in 2010. Senator Kay Hagan (D-NC) also joined as a cosponsor. S. 1557 is a companion bill to [H.R. 718](#), which was introduced in the House in January 2009 by Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC). The reinstatement of the original Interim Management Strategy would set aside the onerous restrictions established by a May 2008 consent decree filed in U.S. District Court. This decree severely restricts ORV and citizen access to a significant portion of the seashore, including prime surf fishing locations on the East Coast. ASA supports S. 1557 and H.R. 718 because the bills will restore reasonable ORV and pedestrian access to CHNSRA while continuing appropriate resource protection. Please [send a letter](#) to your Members of Congress urging their support of S. 718 and H.R. 1557. **Note—This is a call to action for ALL members, not just those from North Carolina. Please show your support for the Hatteras community.*

ASA Comments on Proposed Marine Reserves in Biscayne National Park

In August, ASA submitted comments to Biscayne National Park (BNP) in response to the park's proposal to include no-fishing marine reserves to address overfishing as part of updating its Fisheries Management Plan (FMP). ASA stressed its position that marine reserves should be considered only after more conventional and less restrictive management strategies have failed. ASA is currently drafting its response to BNP's draft FMP, which includes five alternatives to guide future management of the park's fisheries. Three of the five alternatives would allow for marine reserves

to be used as a management strategy in BNP. For more information, please go to www.keepamericafishing.org/florida.html.

Federal Highway Trust Fund Reauthorization

ASA, along with other members of The Transportation Coalition, a broad alliance of fishing, hunting and conservation organizations, is currently working to develop transportation legislation that will improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality as part of the reauthorization of the Federal Highway Trust Fund (FHTF). The [Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund](#) (Wallop-Breaux) must be reauthorized with the FHTF in order to capture the revenue from that part of the federal fuel tax attributable to motor boat and small engine use. ASA is working within the Coalition to promote language in a FHTF bill that would improve fish passage at road crossings; promote canoe, kayak and fishing access along roads and bridges; and improve public access in federal lands. President Obama recently signed a bill into law that will transfer \$7 billion from the United States Treasury Fund to the FHTF to keep it solvent through the end of the fiscal year until Congress passes a bill to reauthorize the FHTF.

USFWS Announces Changes in Leadership Staff

On July 31, 2009, the U.S. Senate confirmed Sam Hamilton as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Since 1997, Hamilton served as director of the agency's Southeast Region. ASA applauds Hamilton's appointment and looks forward to working with him to continue and strengthen ASA's positive relationship with the USFWS. Additionally, the USFWS recently announced that two members of its senior leadership team will trade positions. Bryan Arroyo, currently assistant director for Endangered Species, will become assistant director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, while Gary

article continues

Frazer, currently assistant director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, will assume management of the Endangered Species Program.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

In his fiscal 2010 budget, President Obama created the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which proposed \$475 million to fund high-priority restoration projects for the Great Lakes. This proposal was in response to the recommendations put forward through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. The Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with the Great Lakes Commission, is holding a series of public meetings to discuss the GLRI. These meetings are being held July 21—August 4. A full list of meeting dates, times and locations may be viewed [here](#). The total amount appropriated to the GLRI still must be resolved, as a bill to provide full funding has cleared the House, while the Senate Appropriations Committee recently approved just \$400 million.

ASA and Partners Meets With Council on Environmental Quality

In July, ASA, along with the [Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation](#), the [Center for Coastal Conservation](#), and the [Coastal Conservation Association](#), met with Amy Salzman, associate director, Policy Outreach for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), to discuss President Obama's June 24 memorandum that ordered the development of a national ocean policy. The policy development process will be lead by CEQ and could lead to marine zoning. The meeting's purpose was to seek clarity on the goals of the task force established by the memorandum, and to initiate dialogue to ensure that the sportfishing community is a strong part of the discussion regarding a national ocean policy going forward.

ASA Comments on E15 Petition

In July, ASA submitted public comment to the Environmental Protection Agency on the waiver application submitted by Growth Energy, a coalition of ethanol producers, which requests an increase in the amount of ethanol blended into a gallon of gasoline to up to 15 volume percent (E15). ASA stressed its opposition to the petition until tests are conducted and prove that such an increase would not detrimentally affect marine engine durability, performance or emissions. Most marine and other small gasoline-powered engines are designed, calibrated, and certified to run on not more than 10 volume percent ethanol, and higher concentrations of ethanol in fuel pose serious problems to these engines.

NOAA Releases Fisheries of the United States 2008 Report

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently issued its [Fisheries of the United States Report for 2008](#), a detailed annual report on the nation's commercial and recreational fishing, landings, export, per capita fish consumption and consumer expenditures for fish products. According to the report, saltwater recreational anglers took an estimated 85 million fishing trips in 2008, down slightly from the 93 million trips estimated in 2007. Saltwater anglers caught an estimated 464 million fish in 2008, down slightly from the 475 million caught in 2007. Despite similar economic impacts, recreational harvest by weight was only 3 percent of commercial harvest in 2008, further reinforcing the need to differentiate the two when no-fishing zones and other such restrictive fisheries management strategies are considered.

Coastal Game Fish Bill Introduced in North Carolina

Bill [H918](#) was recently introduced in North Carolina that would give game fish status to red drum and spotted sea trout in coastal waters. If enacted, commercial harvest and sale of these species would be prohibited, allowing only for recreational fishing and harvest. Similar restrictions are in place in other states, including Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina. ASA encourages its North Carolina members to contact their local state representatives in support of the bill.

CSF Launches Governors Sportsmen's Caucus

In July, the [Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation](#) (CSF) announced the formation of the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, a bipartisan caucus of governors that will work to protect the interest of America's hunters and anglers and advance sound fisheries and wildlife management policy. The Governors Sportsmen's Caucus will facilitate communication and information exchange between participating offices in support of policies and regulations that promote and protect hunting and fishing. At the official launch, members selected Gov. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Gov. Mike Rounds (R-SD) as the inaugural Co-chairmen and also selected Gov. Haley Barbour (R-MS) and Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D-WY) as the inaugural Vice-chairmen. A total of sixteen governors from across the country joined the caucus as inaugural members. ■