



From the Publisher

As this is written, it's been spring for a good ten days now and many of our readers have done it...they've splashed their boats or are beginning the "fitting out" process, ready for another new year on the water. Phone calls and e-mails are being traded briskly in the planning of fishing trips, cruises, explorations, and picnics. It's exciting to realize that our readers are looking ahead to "getting out there" - outfitting for all kinds of on-water activities, looking for new marine supplies and equipment and breaking out the warm weather clothing they've been longing to wear for months.

For early spring fishing locally, the new official 2008 fishing regulations have been difficult to come by, especially for fluke. That's because here in New York, the Department of Conservation (DEC) has yet to finalize them. We have fielded a number of queries about the popular species - fluke, flounder, stripers and tautog, as to keeper sizes and creel limits, but until these are announced by the DEC, we can assume nothing. Some will change, some will remain the same. There is some talk about the DEC's intentions to announce a much attenuated fluke season this year, or a season ranging from May 15 to September 1 and allowing a 20½-inch size minimum and a 2-fish creel limit. This reduction from last year's regulations will surely discourage many anglers and further increase the heavy burdens on the charter fishing industry and all those who derive their livelihoods from it. If you wish to comment on proposed regulations for recreational fishing, time is running short. Comments should be received by the DEC before April 7. By computer, go to www.dec.ny.gov, and navigate to the section on proposed regulations to submit your comments. It may well be time to contact your local authorities to determine what might be done to save this season.

We've been reading lately about the growing concern over the ongoing degradation of the world's oceans and the shrinkage of our maritime ecosystems. A major newspaper reported last month that a team of American, Canadian and British researchers concluded that "...not a single square foot of ocean has been left untouched by modern society and that humans had fouled 41 percent of the seas with polluted runoff, over-fishing and other abuses." Another major worry is the dead zone in the Pacific Ocean off the Oregon coast that has spread south to California and north to Washington laying waste to marine life in one of the globe's most productive fisheries. The culprit appears to be global warming, which is depriving the hapless fish of oxygen.

Another concern is the lack of significant progress out of Washington by the administration and Congress in working to protecting our waters and not taking a more

active leadership role globally. While the United States has plenty of room for improvement in these key undertakings, other major fishing nations like Japan and the European maritime nations must address these problems as well. The article indicated that while President Bush created one of the largest protected marine reserves in the world - 138,000 miles of unspoiled reefs and shoals near Hawaii - he should institute other reserves within American waters and urge other nations to follow suit. The article concludes that the President should keep pressure on Congress to finally approve the Law of the Sea. Without that, we will have no clout when decisions are taken on the rights of passage, exploring the ocean floors and fishing. "The United States should have that voice, and the rest of the world needs to hear it."

This issue brings you another in Bob Bachand's series about the early development of the submarine describing how Simon Lake formed the Lake Torpedo Company to design and manufacture subs for the Navy. Our contributing author and admiralty attorney, James Mercante, provides us with insights into the recently announced trial court decision and damage awards in the case involving the 2003 crash of a Staten Island Ferry into its terminal. Our editor, George Nammack reviews the history, accomplishments and extreme worthiness of the often overlooked and humble boats that we call tugs in his interesting article "Tugboats Work Hard."

Spring has sprung, friends, please enjoy every fragrant, colorful, warming and, from the waters, beckoning moment of it.

Bill

Editor's Note:

Boating World is pleased to begin publishing a series of articles about interesting ports located around Long Island and nearby coastal waters. Starting with this issue and running through the warmer cruising months, the series will feature destinations we believe our readers will enjoy visiting and exploring with their families and friends. These articles will be written at this time by contributing freelance writer, Capt. Gary P. Joyce. Besides being a seasoned boater in both power and sailing craft, Gary is a writer whose travels have taken him from the Falkland Islands to Labrador and from Bosnia to Viet Nam. Gary's new series will be published under the banner "Ports of Call". He and his wife, Linda, make their home on Long Island's North Fork.

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