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National Fisherman

SEPTEMBER 2008

Incorporating ALASKA FISHERMAN'S
JOURNAL

INFORMED FISHERMEN • PROFITABLE FISHERIES • SUSTAINABLE FISH

Justice denied

- Exxon's empty promise — p. 4
- Sadly, no surprise — p. 5

Tackling tuna

**Quality reels a
must for bluefin**



OUND THE COASTS

News for the nation's fishermen



Researcher Evan McOmber tends a catch of skates (with some scup and fluke) taken off Long Island this spring in a coastal survey.

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

ATLANTIC

"It's a scientific package I have a lot of confidence in."

— Jimmy Ruhle, North Carolina fisherman

new ground by sampling inshore waters

ists join Virginia-based project, complement NOAA's offshore research

foot dragger Darana to Northeast ports this back fishermen and a much better under-

er's work. ore survey, and it's a Woods Hole (Mass.) Carolina fisherman leased his boat to the of Marine Science for Monitoring and As- (www.ncamap.net) Atlantic States Marine on.

stitute's survey is build-

ing a time series of sampling inshore of the 60-foot depth contour, using the same gear as NOAA's new research vessel the Woods Hole-based Henry B. Bigelow that will operate outside the 10-fathom line, says Jim Gartland, the multispecies survey leader with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

Ultimately, Ruhle says, the goal is "to get an inshore survey that's never been done before, from Cape Hatteras (N.C.) to Martha's Vineyard (Mass.)."

"I'm really excited about it. It's a scientific package I have a lot of confidence in," Ruhle said after he and his crew

brought scientists and guest observers back to Cape May, N.J., to wind up its spring survey May 15.

"Jim is a highliner, and his crew is one of the best. We're very fortunate to be working with them," Gartland says. "We've got work stations set up on his deck, computers all over the place. We converted his fish hold into a wet lab."

Ruhle said he's already impressed with the numbers of scup, skates and other fish thought to be scarce. Gartland says cautiously, "We really need to get our time series, and get like three years under our belt. But I think this survey will prove very useful."

— Kirk Moore

Union hopes to organize fishermen on Long Island

Membership offers alluring lobbying power

A union that represents some 1.4 million workers in seafood, food processing and grocery industries has reached out to recruit commercial fishermen, starting with Long Island, N.Y.,

ports that supply the new Fulton Fish Market.

There is a lot of interest among fishermen on Long Island's east end, because they feel outgunned by NMFS and the influence environmental groups have in Washington, says George Miller, a Montauk captain whom Local 359 of the United Food and Commercial Workers asked to help organize preliminary meetings.

"We're going to get things together. We're in the process. You know how it is with trying to get fishermen together," Miller says.

Local 359 President Dennis Faicco met with Montauk and Shinnecock fishermen in early June, and talked about how Fulton workers see that difficulties at the re-located market in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx are related to the diminished supply of domestic seafood.

The main attraction of the United Food union is its force of lobbyists and lawyers, Miller says. Fishermen hope they could be a counterweight in Congress to environmental groups, who had a lot of influence during the last reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

But a union that deals mostly with the processing and sales end of the business has a steep learning curve to understand the science and politics of catching fish, Miller says: "We have to educate them on a lot of things on our end. It's a massive mess."

— K.M.

Chesapeake crabs turn up, but dock prices are sinking

Fuel costs pinch fishermen and processors

Chesapeake Bay crabbers are catching crabs, but price at the dock is sinking in a year when fuel and other expenses have gone through the roof.

In Virginia, the spring hard crab and peeler catch have been "pretty good," says Michael J. Oesterling, commercial fisheries specialist with the Virginia Institute