



BLUE WATER FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

TERRI LEI BEIDEMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
email terri@bwfa-usa.org
website <http://www.bwfa-usa.org>

PO BOX 779
FORKED RIVER, NJ 08731
phone (609)891-8672
fax (732)279-4522

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Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the members of BWFA, I would like to invite you to join us in our efforts to defend our profession and way of life. BWFA is proud to continue its long history of speaking up for our members on issues that affect Atlantic highly migratory species fishermen, fish dealers, and their supporting supply companies. 2011 was a year of transition for BWFA, with my return to the Association as Executive Director and a number of efforts initiated to revitalize BWFA, which has now served our industry for nearly 22 years.

It was a very busy year for regulations of our fishery. BWFA provided written and oral comments on a variety of issues that affect our members, including species quotas, protected species issues, National Standards guidelines, VMS requirements, dealer reporting rules, and dolphin/wahoo management.

This spring, BWFA was engaged in a public debate about bluefin tuna which highlighted the differences between various sectors of the commercial HMS fisheries. BWFA representatives emphasized the flaws in the obsolete allocation percentages which are based on average annual landings (not catches) from 1983-1991. This point resonated with the NMFS leadership who announced that a formal amendment to the HMS FMP would be required to resolve the issue. BWFA's members were independently represented during the hearing, comment, and HMS AP process to raise this and other critical points specific to our fishery.

BWFA was instrumental in encouraging NMFS to provide room for future growth in the ICCAT-mandated document describing a Development/Management Plan for the U.S. swordfish fishery submitted in September 2011. Due to our efforts before and during the recent ICCAT meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, U.S. negotiators stood firm in support of our domestic swordfish fishermen and resisted efforts to reallocate our north Atlantic swordfish quota underharvest to other countries.

Looking ahead to 2012, BWFA will continue to remain alert to the ever-growing list of issues affecting our livelihoods. Without vigilance and participation, regulators will have a "free rein" to implement measures that restrict our ability to make a living. **We must be proactive, not reactive, in shaping our future and our issues.**

For instance, BWFA is working to develop an industry-supported, dynamic system, based on the best available science, to fairly apportion a reasonable bluefin tuna allocation in the future. In addition, BWFA has initiated an offer to work with other industry sectors to support the participation of independent industry scientists in upcoming ICCAT bluefin tuna stock assessments. Ultimately, a higher Total Allowable Catch will benefit all fishermen who catch bluefin tuna.

I know that the current economic climate is hard on everyone, and especially very hard on our industry with increased prices for fuel and other expenses. However, I personally appeal to you to stand together with your industry colleagues in BWFA in 2012. Enclosed is a 2012 membership application for your convenience. If you are unable to pay the full dues amount at this time, please give me a call and we will work out a payment arrangement. I have also enclosed an extra membership application. Please feel free to pass it along to your friends and colleagues. **Spread the word about BWFA's continued fight for our industry.** If you need more applications, you can download them on BWFA's website at the following link: <http://www.bwfa-usa.org/join>

I personally look forward to you being a part of our HMS fishery's key advocacy and service organization - BWFA. Working together, we can face our fishery's challenges and shape the future of our fishery in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Terri Lei Beideman
Executive Director