In late April we held a board meeting, a policy briefing for members, then set out for dozens of Hill meetings over the next day and a half. In 51 Congressional staff meetings – including 15 meetings with members of Congress themselves - we addressed critical topics like reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Coast Guard’s Alternative Safety Compliance Program (ASCP), and the permanent exemption for fishing vessels from prohibitions concerning ballast water discharges. Although not well known to the public, these issues impact commercial fishermen from coast to coast; they affect our ability to carry out our fishing operations responsibly and deliver fresh, sustainable seafood to consumers in every season.

Following the trip, we sent the Coast Guard a letter concerning its outreach to the fishing industry on the ASCP and have begun engaging directly with their district coordinators to ensure that commercial fishermen are at the table when fishery-specific “annexes” to the safety compliance program are drafted. We are also assisting with a bicameral Congressional letter on the same topic.

We appreciate very much the opportunity to meet with so many staffers and members of Congress while we were in town, and look forward to working with them in the future.

Will Ward Elected V.P. of Harvesters: Brings impressive breadth of experience to new role

At its meeting in April, the Harvesters board unanimously elected William (Will) Ward to the post of Vice-President. Will originally joined the board following the untimely passing of John Schmidt of the Gulf Fishermen’s Association (GFA), who served as Vice-President since our founding.

Will is a veteran fisherman, with over 25 years in reef fish and pelagic hook and line fisheries of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico (in both the commercial and charter/headboat sectors). He has served the GFA for years both as a board member and as Director of Government Relations. Will is a USCG-licensed Master Captain, and President and CEO of Captain’s Finest Seafood. He heads up Ward Consulting Partners, LLC, a consulting and government relations firm, and the William Ward Law Group, PLLC.

Will’s consulting clients include NOAA, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, Florida Institute of Oceanography, and the University of South Florida College of Marine Science. Florida’s Businessman of the Year in both 2001 and 2004, Will holds a law degree from Barry University School of Law. Please join us in welcoming Will to his new post!

Our Mission

As domestic harvesters of an American public resource, we recognize and embrace our stewardship responsibility. We strive for accountability in our fisheries, encourage others to do the same, and speak out on issues of common concern that affect the U.S. commercial fishing industry, the stewardship of our public resources and the many millions of Americans who enjoy seafood.
Electronic Monitoring - Straight Talk about New England’s Fisheries

By: Chris Brown and Bob Dooley

In any relationship, uncertainty and mistrust tend to circle back and magnify themselves over time. In the case of New England fishermen and federal regulators, the result is what we see today. These two parties — who can and should be working together to ensure the economic and environmental health of our fisheries — are deadlocked in mistrust while the fishing industry lurches between federal bailouts and major criminal busts.

As fishing industry leaders with a combined seven-plus decades on the water, we know it doesn’t have to be this way.

A far more promising fisheries future is unfolding today in Alaska and, increasingly, on the West Coast. Its watchword is “accountability.” It is based on the straightforward idea that fishermen need to keep track of their catch, both the fish they bring to the dock and any unwanted “bycatch” they may discard at sea.

Why? Because in the absence of comprehensive catch monitoring, there is no basis upon which fishermen and scientists can establish a productive level of trust and cooperation. This means that fishery managers often assume the worst when they estimate fish stocks and are required, under federal law, to take very conservative approaches in order to account for that uncertainty when they set catch limits and allocations. Completing the negative feedback loop, fishermen interpret low allocations as bad science and the cycle of mistrust rolls on.

In fisheries where catch monitoring is in place, an entirely different, positive feedback loop is established. Reliable catch and discard data from fishermen, combined with scientific survey results, give fishery managers not just critical and complete information, but the ability to eliminate a major source of uncertainty and to set catch limits with confidence. Over time, as more-reliable and verifiable data comes in, confidence grows and cooperation develops between fishermen and managers. Rather than fighting over who has the wheel, fishermen and managers navigate together using shared information. This “co-management” not only works better than top-down federal oversight, it is also a specific aim of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which governs our nation’s fisheries.

Increasingly, successful fisheries will be those that employ on-board electronic monitoring, or EM, systems using video cameras. EM programs are not a one-size-fits-all proposition; fishermen and managers design them together, considering a range of variables like vessel size, number of species, privacy concerns, data retention practices and so on. Consideration of economic burdens, risks and benefits is a critical element in EM program development, and these systems don’t have to be complex. In most fisheries, a captain’s logbook can provide the data on catch and discards, while videos simply act as a check of the log. Certified third parties periodically review videos against log entries and look for significant discrepancies. Needless to say, discrepancies are rare; fishermen engaged in co-management tend to be fully invested in the integrity of their data.

Continued on Page 3
And that investment is a very good one, because it eventually yields a priceless result — mutual trust between fishermen and regulators. Here in New England, it will reduce uncertainty and lead to more opportunities to co-manage our fisheries with confidence. It will enable fishermen to demonstrate, over time, the sustainability of our fisheries.

More and more — as we are seeing from the Gulf of Mexico to Dutch Harbor, Alaska — it is fishermen who work closely with fishery managers that earn the most for their catch. In fisheries where 100 percent catch accounting is in place today, overfished species are rapidly rebuilding; organizations like the Marine Stewardship Council and Seafood Watch are certifying entire fisheries as sustainable; and fishermen benefit from marketing initiatives that leverage the benefits of proven sustainability.

This month, three groundfish sectors on the West Coast were green-lighted to move their EM projects from pilot phase to full implementation, and we can do the same in New England if we adopt the right approach. Our concern is that the National Marine Fisheries Service will default to an expensive, overly complex and burdensome design process that will attempt (and certainly fail) to address every conceivable variable that might arise in the future. A more modern approach would pull stakeholders together, address demonstrated deficiencies in our current fishery management, then adjust over time as fishermen work with regulators to identify gaps. A straightforward logbook system with camera verification would enable us to lower costs, get EM on the water more quickly, demonstrate our accountability, and establish trust — the foundation of every good relationship.

**EM Updates from our Members**

Claire Fitz-Gerald, manager of the George’s Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector reports that roughly a dozen New England groundfish boats will be testing a fully operational electronic monitoring program this year to meet federal monitoring requirements.

Heather Mann checks in to say that the EM programs championed by Harvesters member-organizations Midwater Trawlers Cooperative (which Heather heads up) and United Catcher Boats have been a big success. She is optimistic that both groups can take their model from the West Coast whiting fishery north to Alaska and apply something similar in Alaska’s cod and pollock fisheries.

For more about EM breakthroughs on the West Coast, check this story from Seafood News: Pacific Council Green-Lights Electronic Monitoring Aboard West Coast Trawl Fleets Starting in 2017

**New Associate Member: Puget Sound Hydraulics**

We want to welcome Puget Sound Hydraulics as our newest Associate Member and encourage you to learn about them at their website, pugetsoundhydraulics.com. Established in 1990, PSH is a premier, full-service manufacturing and service shop located in Seattle. Since the company’s founding, the folks at PSH have worked very hard to retain skilled employees who produce top-quality work. Contact PSH anytime to talk to one of their highly trained professionals, at (877) 702-3109.

**Brett Returns to Fishing**

On May 1st, Harvesters executive director Brett Veerhusen made good on his plan to return to his family’s Alaskan fishing business. As this newsletter goes out, Brett is aboard the F/V Taurus fishing sockeye salmon out of Chignik, Alaska. Interim executive director and veteran fisherman Scott Coughlin is working with the board, overseeing an executive search for Brett’s replacement. Brett did a great job for the Harvesters, and we wish him good fishing!
**Encouraging Indicators on Fishing Safety**

It has become a custom that we begin board meetings of the Seafood Harvesters with a moment of silence to honor our compatriots - anywhere - who have lost their lives. No matter the size of one's vessel, the species sought or the waters we harvest from, all commercial fishermen share deeply the joys and dangers of our profession. Recent years have seen improvements in fishing safety, and we want to acknowledge the critical role that Coast Guard dockside examinations have played in that. Safety drills, improved outreach, and mandatory life rafts and immersion suits also contribute a great deal. We were amazed when the Coast Guard reported earlier this year that from October 1, 2014 to the end of September 2015, there were zero operations-related commercial fishing fatalities in Alaska. The Harvesters are big fans of the Coast Guard, and we will do everything we can to assist them in taking their Alaskan lessons-learned to every port in the country.

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**Our Member Organizations**

![Member Logos]

**Big Thanks to Our Associate Members**

- Ocean Marine Insurance Agency
- Northern Enterprise Boat Yard
- Bulletproof Nets
- Coal Point Seafoods
- Smoot Tewes Group, Washington
- Gardener Boat Repair
- Alaskan Observers, Inc.
- Puget Sound Hydraulics, Inc.
- Fish for America USA

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**Our Board Members & Staff**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRESIDENT</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen’s Association</td>
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<td>VICE PRESIDENT</td>
<td>Will Ward</td>
<td>Gulf Fishermen’s Association</td>
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<td>SECRETARY/TREASURER</td>
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<td>Jack Cox</td>
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<td>North Pacific Fisheries Association</td>
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<td>Keith “Buddy” Guidon</td>
<td>Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance</td>
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<td>STAFF</td>
<td>Scott Coughlin</td>
<td>Executive Director ’Interim’</td>
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