

# ***GLOUCESTER TIMES***

## **Current Magnuson Act not viable in real world**

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To the editor:

If the uninformed or misinformed general public don't know why we, as fishermen, are so upset, allow me to present, for your consideration, a hypothetical analogy for the moment.

Let's suppose that Magnuson-Stevens Act landed on shore regulating a variety of issues. What would be the implications of its implementation, as it is currently interpreted and applied, mean to the general public?

Would we be required, within a 10-year time frame to rebuild native flora and fauna to their historic levels of abundance?

Would neighborhoods be bulldozed and families dislocated to replenish spotted salamanders? Would it be mandated that we bring back wolves, panthers, and other high level predators, to their former niches in the ecosystem?

Perhaps most importantly, consider the indigenous people of this continent: Would we return their traditional lands?

Sometimes, what looks good on paper, fails miserably when applied to the real world in which we live. Magnuson-Stevens is one of those papers!

The act is creating more problems than it is solving.

Although initially well-intentioned, it has been abused by certain individuals and entities to carry out their agendas, at the expense of the families, communities and their respective economies.

While flexibility is an immediate necessity, in the long run MSA needs an overhaul. As it is currently being administered, Magnuson pits all the stakeholders — whose cooperation is the fundamental basis of its success, or failure — against one another and the government as a whole.

The real progress that has been made over the last 25 years has been spurred largely by fishermen's suggestions and collaboration. We suggested the mesh size increases that have led to the reductions in juvenile mortality, as well as their commensurate increases in legal landing sizes, which have greatly increased reproductive rates.

Cooperative research lead to the development and implementation of the Nordmore grate, in the shrimp fishery, and the raised foot-rope trawl in the whiting fishery. Those two developments alone have all but eliminated discards in small mesh fisheries.

Now is the time to build upon this solid foundation, and yet the funding for these, and similar ongoing programs, is being gutted to further the interests of those who seek the consolidation of the fishery into the hands of corporate speculators and investors, and out of the hands of the traditional family fishermen and their communities.

Make no mistake; there is no "sharing" in catch "shares."

In fact, there isn't much catching allowed either!

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