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Striped Bass Endangered

Disquieting word has reached here from Bob Pond, founder of Stripers Unlimited, citing facts and figures indicating strongly that striped bass here and elsewhere along the east coast should be listed among the "endangered species".





Pointing to the consistent lack of small stripers this year and last year, Pond said: "In the spring of 1970, probably in April, the future of the striper (called rockfish here) and its fishing as we know it today will be decided."

Pond blames the persistence of such chemical pollutants as chlorinated hydrocarbons (PCB and DDT) for the decrease in spawning success and the increase in deformed young stripers since the 1970 peak year.

What Pond hopes to accomplish through Stripers Unlimited (SU) and the U.S. Department of Commerce is the initiation of a multi-state program to gather striped bass eggs — primarily from Maryland waters — hatch the eggs and stock the young fish in suitable waters to help offset or even overcome the loss of natural spawning success.

One of Pond's initial steps was a request to the U.S. Department of the Interior to establish a hatchery in Maryland, remove female stripers from pollution damaged rivers, rear them in a clean environment and collect the "clean spawn" thus produced as an augmentation of the natural hatches that have been damaged or reduced.

Though SU has been conducting laboratory studies of stripers since the 1970 peak hatch, Pond asks that fishermen credit the evidence of their own eyes in terms of the lack of small fish and the abundance of big ones caught during the past two years, at least.

As local striped bass fishermen are aware, Pond is correct when he asserts a decided lack of small stripers in Chesapeake Bay, especially.

Adding to his charge that much of the loss of spawning success and deformity was caused by pollutants are the fears expressed by many veteran bay anglers who say that the abundance of hungry bluefish has further decimated the bay's basic striper population through bluefish predation on the young stripers that were present.

Pond believes that spawning populationsthat are due to return next year to the bay's natural spawning areas must in some way be protected until we can build up and overcome the critical losses we have so far suffered.

The way to assure a viable spawning population, according to Pond, is to be prepared then, by next April or sooner, to collect females ready to spawn, strip the eggs from them — a well known technique — and raise the young as a hedge against a dangerously depleted natural population.

Pond's points are well taken and are amply documented to cause any interested fisherman to at least stop and think about his (Pond's) claim that stripers are endangered and should be treated as such under the "Endangered Species Act of 1973" (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

He hopes to further the aims of SU through additional membership, which is voting power, in the non-profit organization and its current striper program,which he adds need the support of striper fishermen throughout the range of the striped bass.

To help convince anglers of the need for decisive action, Pond has put together a "fact-package" which includes the documentation of his claims plus his letters of petition to the U.S. Government requesting intervention and remedial measures under the "Endangered Species Act".

Having known Pond for nearly 20 years I can attest to his utter sincerity and dedication to striped bass. His latest effort finds nothing but applause here.

For further information and/or membership in SU write to: Bob Pond,Stripers Unlimited, P.O. Box 45, South Attleboro, Mass. 02703.

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"Do-it-yourself" advocates note: Dick Wood, an accomplished angler in his own right, has produced for Gudebrod Company (rod building materials) a detailed book on building your own fishing rods.

Devoted mainly to the design and placement of rod guides for best efficacy and rod loading required for various "actions", Dick's illustrated book offers the reader a step-by-step guide from the bare rod blank to the finished product.

Dick's book is titled: "How To Wrap A Rod With Gudebrod" and is well worth the $1.00 price tag. It is available by writing to: "Rod Wrap Handbook, Gudebrod Bros. Silk Co., 12 South 12th St., Phila., Pa. 19107.

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