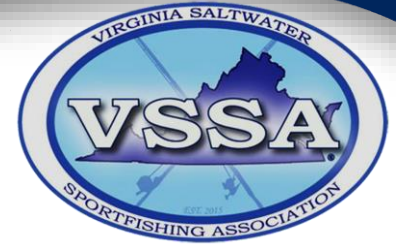


Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Association (VSSA)

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Mike Avery
President

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Commissioner Steven Bowman
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Building 96, 380 Fenwick Road
Ft. Monroe, VA 23651

Dear Commissioner Bowman,

March 26, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft rule; Pertaining to the snagging or towing of fish, Chapter 4 VAC 20-740-10 ET SEQ. Our anglers support the new rule and we recommend the Commission approve as written. This new rule should not preclude the live baiting or trolling of legal fish from a fishing line such as croaker, spot, spanish mackerel, or bluefish.

VSSA ran a poll on the question and have enclosed the results as of March 24, 2019. We also asked a second question on the larger issue of culling fish in general. The results can be found at:

<http://joinvssa.org/action-plan/rockfish/>

VSSA asks the Commission to consider the larger issue of culling and should ask staff to work on reducing mortality through the practice of culling. Towing of fish is but one possible method of many for culling and believe all culling of large fish should be banned to reduce mortality.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mike Avery

Mike Avery
President

Board of Directors

John Bello,
Chairman

Jerry Aycok,
Webmaster

Steve Atkinson

Jerry Hughes

Mark Roy

John Satterly

Kevin Smith

Stan Sutliff



VSSA ran a poll on the issue and are providing the results as of March 24, 2019. We ran a second poll to gauge the interest in the larger issue of culling. For details visit: <http://joinvssa.org/action-plan/rockfish/>

Do you support the draft VMRC rule that prohibits the towing of a striped bass or cobia by a line behind a boat that is in gear?

Yes, the towing of striped bass and cobia while in gear should be banned. (76%, 241 Votes)

No, there should not be a rule against towing. (24%, 78 Votes)

Total Voters: 319

Second Poll Question:

Question 1. Should read (question is too long for poll box): Yes, VMRC should prohibit the culling of large fish. No culling (releasing) of large fish (36 inches or bigger) from the fish box, live well, cooler, towed line, deck, or anywhere within or connected to the boat . If the fish is out of the water for more than 2 minutes it will be considered caught.

Do you believe VMRC should instead create a rule against the culling of large fish?

Yes, VMRC should prohibit the culling of large fish. No culling (releasing) of large fish (36 inches or bigger) from the fish box, live well, cooler, towed line, deck, or anywhere within or connec (78%, 240 Votes)

No, VMRC should not create a new rule for the culling of fish. (22%, 66 Votes)

Total Voters: 306