

The American Sportfishing Association

75 years of ASA advocating for the sportfishing industry

This year, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is celebrating 75 years of serving the sportfishing industry. The trade association was created in 1933 as a result of government pressure to create a body to oversee the industry. Since then the association has evolved from representing the interests of just tackle manufacturers to championing the entire sportfishing community.

As the nation's recreational fishing trade association, ASA supports the interests of hundreds of businesses, agencies and organizations and is *the* resource for protecting the sportfishing industry.

ASA's members include sportfishing and boating manufacturers and their representatives, independent and chain outdoor retail stores, state fish and wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, federal land and water management agencies, angler advocacy groups, outdoor media groups and journalists.

Through advocacy, outreach and special programs and events, ASA, and its conservation and habitat restoration arm, the FishAmerica Foundation, safeguards and promotes the economic and conservation values of sportfishing, keeping the nation's fisheries and waterways healthy and accessible to America's most popular outdoor activity.

ASA also represents the nation's 40 million anglers who generate more than \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$25 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for a million people.



75 YEARS
1933 - 2008

Conservation Efforts

Early on, the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTM), ASA's forerunner, realized the importance of ensuring there were abundant locations to fish and ample fish to catch.

The post-World War II years saw an explosion in the number of anglers. To accommodate this new interest, AFTM began promoting the conservation of recreational fisheries and advancement of fishery science.

To that end, AFTM created the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI) in 1949, although AFTM continued to sponsor conservation efforts as well. While SFI merged with ASA in 1993, the focus on access and participation remains two key concerns for the association.

The FishAmerica Foundation, in its 25th year, is ASA's conservation arm investing in fish and habitat conservation and research across the country.

1948—First Fish Restoration Project Marked AFTM's "Most Forward Step"

In April 1948, AFTM's new Fish Restoration Committee allocated \$9,000 for a University of Michigan-directed fish restoration project. Its goals were to demonstrate fish production, conduct research, educate the public, ensure fisheries personnel

received adequate compensation and implement the work of fish management agencies.

The June 1948 *AFTM News Bulletin* said the project was "the most forward step ever taken by this Association to improve fishing in the future."

1969—AFTMA Underwrote Bellwether Case to Ban DDT

In 1969, AFTMA donated \$10,000 to support a petition before Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources to ban the pesticide DDT.

Within three months the U.S. Department of the Interior abolished DDT use on its lands and the Environmental Protection Agency's almost-complete ban on DDT took effect on December 31, 1972.

AFTMA earned multiple honors for its leadership in the fight to ban DDT.

In its *Fish Conservation Highlights of 1954*, the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI), a partner with the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), published a series of more than 30 cartoons about the fundamentals of conservation. As is usually the case with fundamentals, the concepts they depict still hold true more than 50 years later, serving as an informative and entertaining primer on the basic principles of conservation.



1974–1979—Army Corps of Engineers Hired SFI to Evaluate Its Predictions

In 1974, the Army Corps of Engineers contracted with SFI to evaluate the efficacy and enhance the reliability of its predictions in fish and wildlife planning reports for reservoir projects.

In 1979 SFI presented its interim results, which encouraged

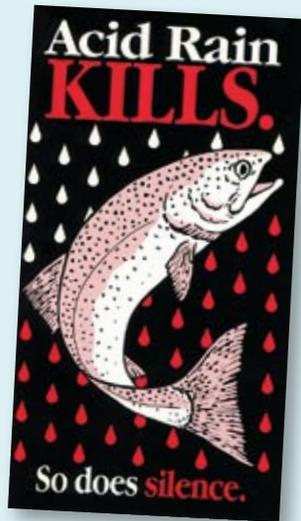
improving fish and wildlife resource assessment methodology and underscored the importance of follow-up studies to assess the impact of water-resource development projects on fish and wildlife.

1982–1987—AFTMA Was an Early Proponent of Acid Rain Legislation

As early as 1982 AFTMA was working to prevent acid rain. “Although the problem of acid rain is controversial and all of the facts are not in, it may be fatal to delay action,” the AFTMA’s Environmental Quality Committee chairman wrote in the early 1980s.

In late 1983 AFTMA called for acid rain-control legislation.

Four years later AFTMA funded the Izaak Walton League’s pamphlet *Acid Rain Kills*.



AFTMA funded this pamphlet the Izaak Walton League produced in 1983 about acid rain.

1998–present—FishAmerica Foundation Contributes \$10 Million to Conservation and Research

Established in 1983 as a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to improving sportfishing by what is now ZEBCO Brands, the FishAmerica Foundation became affiliated with ASA in 1998.

In 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized the foundation’s impact by awarding Johanna Laderman, the foundation’s executive director, with its Partners Award.

Now celebrating its 25th anniversary, FishAmerica has

contributed more than \$10 million to 1,000 conservation and research projects in every state and Canada.



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1999—FishAmerica Foundation Partners with NOAA to Restore Habitat

In 1999, the FishAmerica Foundation entered into a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Restoration Center that now provides more than \$850,000 in grants annually to restore habitat. The partnership doubled the Foundation’s investment in estuarine and marine projects.

1999—ASA Helped Rebuild Species by Closing Waters to Longline Fishing

ASA joined other recreational fishing organizations and the commercial longline industry to close

more than 160,000 square nautical miles of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico to commercial pelagic longline fishing. The goal was to rebuild over-fished species of swordfish, sailfish, tuna, marlin and sharks.

This alliance marked one of the first times sport and commercial fishermen collaborated on an issue.



- Yellow** — Approximate area proposed for year-round closure to longline fishing.
- Green** — Approximate area proposed for closure June through August.
- Pink** — Approximate area proposed for closure January through May (in addition to June through August).

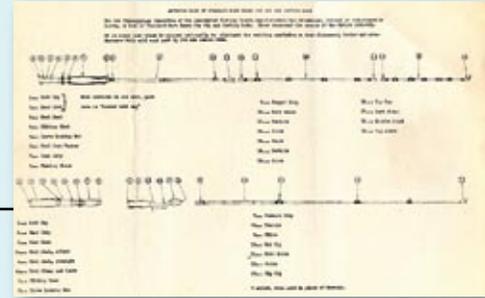
This map from a 1999 ASA newsletter informed members of the proposed longline closures.



AFTMA produced this bumper sticker to address water pollution. From the collection of Jason Liebig, www.flickr.com/photos/jasonliebigstuff/

The Business of Sportfishing

In 1949, AFTM's Rod Nomenclature Committee developed standard part names for fly and casting rods. There were 19 parts identified for fly rods and 13 for casting rods.



When the federal government prompted the creation of a unified organization to represent the fishing tackle industry in 1933, it wasn't to further conservation efforts or to encourage Americans to take up a healthy recreational activity. Rather the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTM), the American Sportfishing Association's (ASA) predecessor, was founded to improve the business of sportfishing and help the industry survive during the Great Depression.

Since then the association has evolved from representing the interests of just tackle manufacturers to championing the entire sportfishing community. During the past 75 years there has been one constant in the association's mission: serving the needs of the sportfishing industry.

1942—ASA Helped Members Convert Factories to Produce War Supplies during World War II

On June 30, 1942, fishing tackle production was stopped in the United States so factories could focus on manufacturing military supplies for World War II.

Having won a 30-day delay in the regulation's effective date, AFTM helped its members convert their plants from producing fishing tackle to making essential defense material. Two members

of the War Production Board attended AFTM's 10th annual meeting to address members' concerns.

During the war AFTM was alive but dues were reduced 50 percent and activities curtailed. AFTM continued its support of the Izaak Walton League, conservation efforts and promoting the casting game Skish.

1949 and 1981—Association Creates Industry Standards

In 1949, AFTM's Rod Nomenclature Committee secured the approval of all rod manufacturers to a standard list of voluntary guidelines for part names for fly and casting rods. AFTM distributed diagrams of both kinds of rods with the parts labeled to all

members, the media and sporting goods dealers.

In 1981, manufacturers were allowed to place a label on each rod listing, in descending order by percentages, the list of pre-dominate reinforcing materials in that rod.

1950—AFTM Emergency Meeting Enables Partial Production of Fishing Gear

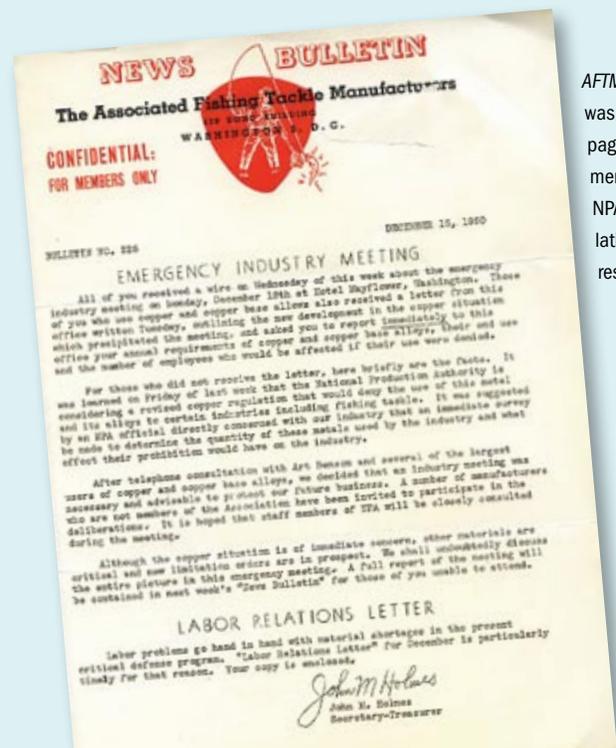
AFTM convened an emergency meeting on Dec. 18, 1950, as the National Production Authority (NPA), an agency of the Department of Commerce responsible for balancing the needs of civilian businesses with those of defense industries, was in the process of denying copper and

copper-base alloys to many civilian goods, including tackle.

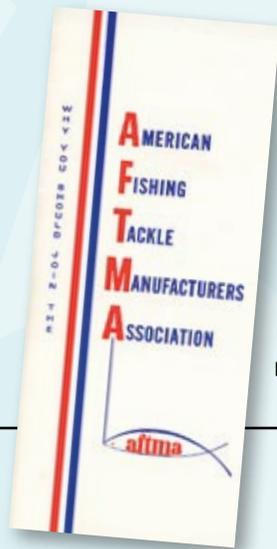
When the NPA issued its regulations 12 days later, some of the exceptions AFTM recommended were granted, allowing its members to continue with partial production of rods, reels, baits, lures, rod mountings, swivels and snaps.

“Never has it been more necessary to fully equip these men, and maintain and advance this front. A part of this is our job from now on. We will do our part until victory is won and then we shall be able to look back with satisfaction on the part we had in the greatest job this country has ever undertaken.”

— Arthur Benson, AFTM president, during the organization's 10th annual meeting



AFTM Bulletin No. 225 was a special one-page alert informing members about NPA's pending regulations and AFTM's response.



Among other membership benefits, the 1963 *Why You Should Join AFTMA* brochure mentioned credit reports of delinquent customers, shipments and order indexes, the patent service and export-import reports.

1952—Members Begin Sharing Sales Statistics

In October 1952, AFTM voted to compile sales statistics through Ernst & Ernst. “Approximately 40 companies responded to the first appeal for hitherto jealously guarded figures,” AFTM’s 25th anniversary article recalled.

Four years later 80 companies were supplying data for the reports.

1955—Members Begin Sharing Names of Delinquent Jobbers

In 1955, for the first time, AFTM members were mailed forms for listing jobbers at least 30 days past due. AFTM’s office compiled the reports and distributed them to members that had shared their information. One report was more than 40 pages long.

1977—AFTMA Helps Members Audit their Freight Bills

In 1977, the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA), a predecessor of ASA, began offering a freight-auditing service. Interested members forwarded their freight bills to a company AFTMA hired for it to audit and review for possible overcharges.

1999—National Sporting Goods Association Hired to Provide Members with Retail Sales Data

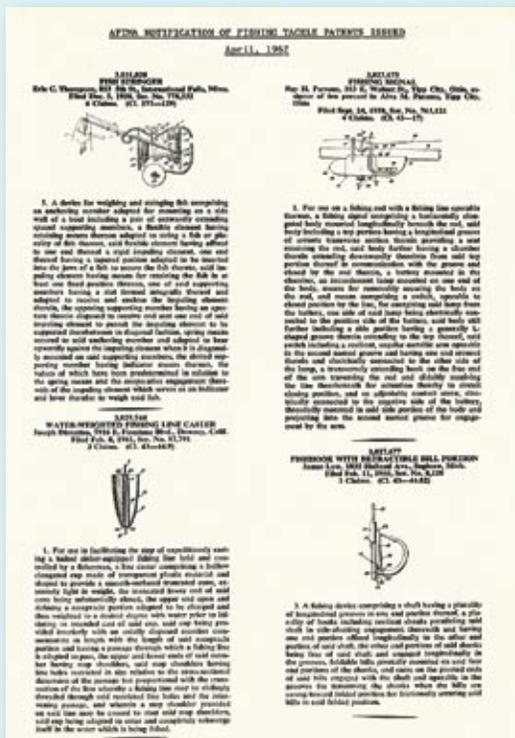
In response to member demand, ASA contracts with the National Sporting Goods Association to provide monthly retail sales data on fishing equipment sold through mass mer-

chandisers and chain sporting good stores.

It is estimated that the data system allows ASA to monitor 60 to 70 percent of the retail market for fishing equipment each month.

1962—AFTMA Informs Members about New Patents

Beginning in April 1962, a booklet of new tackle patents often was included with the Association’s newsletters.



This first AFTM Notification of Fishing Tackle Patents issued featured illustrations and descriptions of 16 items, including a fishhook with retractable bill portion, ice fisherman’s angling hole plug and multi-purpose fish trap.

2004 and 2008—Today’s Angler Gives ASA Members Information about Anglers

In 2004 ASA produced the first *Today’s Angler: A Statistical Profile of America’s Angler*, a detailed analysis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2001 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. The publication uses graphs and tables to provide its members with details about their target markets.

In 2008, ASA updated the publication to reflect the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2006 study. The 2008 report is free to members and available to non-members for a fee.

In 2004 and 2008, ASA published *Today’s Angler*, a detailed analysis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*.

