



United States
 of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2023

No. 114

E628

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN
 SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION ON
 THEIR 90TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 2023

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the power of the sportfishing industry and to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). ASA has played a vital role in preserving and promoting our cherished fishing tradition in this great Nation. From striped bass off the Atlantic coast, grouper species in the southeastern United States and Gulf of Mexico, catfish and trout throughout America's rivers and lakes, to salmon and mahi on the west coast, the United States is truly the envy of anglers throughout the world. Over 52.4 million Americans participate in recreational fishing every year and thanks to ASA's efforts, this number continues to rise.

Anglers contribute over \$148 billion in economic output, contribute \$1.8 billion towards conservation, and support 945,500 jobs across the country. Sportfishing is a powerful driver of the U.S. economy, thanks in large part to efforts that ASA and all its members within the sportfishing industry have accomplished since their inception.

For the past 90 years, the American Sportfishing Association has been at the forefront of protecting and advancing the interests of recreational fishermen across the United States. Through collaborative partnerships with government agencies, conservation organizations and industry stakeholders, they have played a pivotal role in shaping policies that promote responsible fishing practices, support habitat restoration, and safeguard the rights of anglers. ASA has supported meaningful legislation that has advanced conservation efforts throughout the years, such as the Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, which established an excise tax for the conservation, management and enhancement of sport fisheries and their habitats. More recently, ASA has been a leading advocate for pivotal conservation legislation such as the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act, America's Conservation Enhancement Act and the Great American Outdoors Act. To this day, ASA supports conservation efforts on Capitol Hill and beyond and is a champion of access to fish, abundant fisheries, fair trade and commerce.

ASA has also been instrumental in fostering a deep appreciation for the great outdoors and inspiring future generations to enjoy the sport of fishing. Their educational initiatives and angler retention campaigns, such as "Fishing, Share the Fun," help to introduce new anglers, both young and old, to fishing and provide them with a lifetime of enjoyment in the sport. ASA is also a supporter of legislation that introduces children to fishing, as seen in their efforts to support the Youth Coastal Fishing Program Act.

Beyond their advocacy efforts, ASA serves as a unifying force within the angling community, bringing together diverse stakeholders, manufacturers, retailers, and fishing enthusiasts under one common purpose: the preservation and promotion of our Nation's rich fishing heritage. Every year the American Sportfishing Association hosts ICAST, the

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world's largest sportfishing trade show, bringing thousands of Americans from all 50 states and over 70 countries together to showcase the latest innovations in sportfishing equipment and technology that their members have manufactured. ASA's ICAST also provides a platform for anglers and the sportfishing industry professionals to collaborate, share knowledge and form lifelong friendships dedicated to the sport.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the American Sportfishing Association for their 90 years of service to the angling community. Their unwavering commitment to the sport, conservation and education has enriched the lives of countless Americans and will continue to do so for generations to come. Congratulations to ASA, their President Glenn Hughes and all their dedicated staff and members. Here's to the Association's next 90 years.