

New York SEAFOOD Summit 2024 Event Report



2024 Seafood Summit: Riverhead Post Event Report

New York Sea Grant's annual seafood summit brings together various sectors of New York's (NY) seafood industry to actively communicate, network, and explore opportunities to support NY farmed and fished seafood and seafood businesses.

During the 2024 NY Seafood Summit, an industry panel focused on access and opportunities for NY seafood discussed the industry challenges and potential opportunities for increasing awareness of and access to NY farmed and fished seafood. The panel consisted of two fishermen (Mike Bauhs, Al Schaffer), the Executive Director of the Long Island Commercial Fishing Association (Bonnie Brady), a Long Island based seafood processor/distributor/retailer (Mike Lucchesse), and an oyster farmer (Matt Ketcham).

In this report, the seafood summit planning team summarizes the challenges and potential solutions identified by panelists. The planning team separated each out into categories and drafted some ideas for short and long term efforts that could be helpful in starting to address the challenges and work towards the recommended solutions identified by panelists. The report was shared with panelists for additional insights and editing.

Friday, February 16, 2024

Cornell Cooperative Extension
423 Griffing Ave., Riverhead, NY 11901

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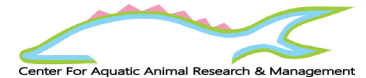
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Questions?

Contact Dr. Michael Ciaramella (mc2544@cornell.edu)
or call the NYSG Extension Office at 631-824-4746

Regulations and Permitting

The challenges and solutions sections outline the challenges and potential solutions that panelists identified during the facilitated panel discussion.

Challenges Discussed

- » Current reporting structure and requirements
- » Distribution of some federal fish quotas based on historical methods limit NY's access (State by State Box Method)
 - Lower quota in federal allocation for NY for fluke and black sea bass compared to other East Coast states
 - Lower quota for NY is resulting in higher regulatory discards (discard of fish in excess of allowed quota) to meet strict trip limits
- » Lack of political support; representation of seafood sectors comparable to that of other agriculture sectors in NY State
 - Limited funding available for supporting seafood sectors
 - Lack of grant-funding and subsidies for seafood sectors and infrastructure
- » Obtaining state and federal permits
 - Permit requirements and restrictions (for fishermen and dealers) make selling local seafood more challenging
 - Access to federal and state fishing permits is limited, which restricts access to commercially viable species
 - ◊ NYS personal permits cannot be sold, as is done in all other states
 - ◊ NYS does not reissue all relinquished permits
- » Impacts of Climate Change
 - Including species migration, ocean acidification, shifting weather patterns, etc.

¹<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-supports-us-seafood-industry-impacted-by-retaliatory-tariffs>

Solutions Discussed

- » Modernization and flexibility of regulations and permitting
 - Consideration of additional weekly trip limits instead of daily trip limits by the NYSDEC could optimize harvests by reducing the amount of regulatory discards of targeted species and lower overhead costs
 - Reduction of latent (dormant) permits and ability to sell personal permits
 - Additional permit transferability
- » Provide comparable support for seafood sectors similar to what exists for agriculture
 - Subsidies
 - Seafood trade relief¹
 - Tax incentives

Planning Team Summary

The planning team summary provides some suggestions for short and long term efforts that could be explored to work towards realizing the panelists proposed solutions.

Short Term:

- » Assess the current regulatory framework and explore potential strategies for streamlining and modernizing them in a way that will protect fisheries ecosystems, public health, and the associated industries.
 - Seek insights and examples of functioning frameworks in other states.
- » Increase and continue engagement among NY's seafood harvesters, industry stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and local, state and federal-elected officials (Annual Summit Event).
- » Increase engagement and discussion surrounding the impacts of climate change on NY industry to better advise research, extension and political support.

Long Term:

- » Modernize regulatory structure for harvesting, farming, processing, and marketing seafoods in NY State.
- » Increase statewide political and social support for NY wild-caught and farmed seafood.
- » Increase investment in infrastructure including working waterfronts, processing and cold-chain infrastructure.
- » Increase resilience of NY's seafood sector and ability to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.

Infrastructure and Resources

The challenges and solutions sections outline the challenges and potential solutions that panelists identified during the facilitated panel discussion.

Challenges Discussed

- » Lack of infrastructure and waterfront access (e.g. dock space and working waterfronts)
 - Existing infrastructure (e.g. docks) in disrepair
- » Lack of support industries in NY (e.g. electronics, gear, shipyard repair, etc.)
- » Limited opportunities for processing and cold chain infrastructure
 - Seafood is highly perishable
 - Most wild-caught finfish is shipped to Fulton Fish Market (NYC) to be processed and then back to Long Island for distribution
- » Limited workforce
 - Difficulties in some ports finding crew and cutters
- » High operating costs (i.e. fuel, dockage, shipping, gear)
- » Impacts of windfarms upon ocean ecosystems, safety, and active fishing

Solutions Discussed

- » Increase processing capabilities in NY
 - Mobile fish processing units, cutting houses
- » Increase opportunities for direct to consumer sales
 - Fish stands at commercial fishing ports
- » Career training for recruiting into the fishing industry
 - Apprenticeship seafood harvesting program (BOCES-like training program)
 - Apprenticeship seafood processing program (e.g. Fishadelphia)
- » More funding for vessel and fishing gear upgrades as well as infrastructure and support industries (e.g. electronics, gear, shipyard repair, etc.)

Planning Team Summary

The planning team summary provides some suggestions for short and long term efforts that could be explored to work towards realizing the panelists proposed solutions.

Short Term:

- » Create capacity within the state to begin assessing opportunities to enhance and support infrastructure development.
- » Create a space for regular communication among agencies, non-profits, and the private sector to ensure progress and increase impacts of efforts.
- » Create a list of opportunities for the private sector to access capital (e.g. loans, grants, crowdshares, etc.).
- » Conduct grant-writing workshops and assistance to share effective strategies to increase chances of funding to those that are interested.
- » Begin to discuss opportunities for workforce needs and effective workforce development programs.

Long Term:

- » Increase infrastructure for seafood landing, processing, and distribution across Long Island and NY State.
- » Create opportunities and tax incentives that will promote growth.
- » Workforce development programs for the seafood sector and shoreside support industries.

Marketing and Education

The challenges and solutions sections outline the challenges and potential solutions that panelists identified during the facilitated panel discussion.

Challenges Discussed

- » Low ex-vessel price (price/lb paid to fishermen at landing) for seafood compared to high retail and restaurant values
- » Negative perception of industry as being unregulated and not conservation minded
- » Seasonality of seafood (seafood is available year round but most species are seasonal)
- » Limited direct-to-consumer opportunities
- » Minimal general seafood marketing and promotion of NY farmed and wild-caught products
- » Selective and biased support for commodities/groups (farmed shellfish vs. wild capture)
- » Competition with seafood imports, which are often regulated differently and cheaper
- » Low consumer awareness of local seafood options

²Gephart, J. A., Henriksson, P. J. G., Parker, R. W. R., Shepon, A., Gorospe, K. D., Bergman, K., Eshel, G., Golden, C. D., Halpern, B. S., Hornborg, S., Jonell, M., Metian, M., Mifflin, K., Newton, R., Tyedmers, P., Zhang, W., Ziegler, F., & Troell, M. (2021). Environmental performance of blue foods. *Nature* 2021 597:7876, 597(7876), 360–365. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03889-2>

Solutions Discussed

- » Increase promotion of local and underutilized species
 - Consumer education on local species and benefits of buying local (e.g. carbon-miles/carbon footprint²)
 - Marketing programs, events, and seafood festivals
 - Educate consumers about the year round availability of wild-caught seafood and seasonality of certain species
- » Encourage equal support for commercial fisheries as compared to agriculture
- » Facilitate direct-to-consumer sales
- » Increase awareness and appreciation for Long Island’s heritage commercial fishing communities
- » Create or expand NY seafood campaign to increase consumption of NY fish on a local and national level (e.g. Localfish.org)
- » Incentivize local seafood purchases by restaurants and patrons
- » Purchase and serve local fish in institutions (K-12 schools, universities, hospitals, prisons, and county facilities)



Planning Team Summary

The planning team summary provides some suggestions for short and long term efforts that could be explored to work towards realizing the panelists proposed solutions.

Short Term:

- » NY seafood-centric events highlighting local wild-caught and farmed products.
- » Increase engagement among various sectors of the seafood industry and decision-makers at the local, county, and state level.
- » Include wild-caught and farmed seafood alongside agriculture in representation and in new promotion programs in NY State.
- » Evaluate existing programs and remove barriers (language, requirements, etc.) to include wild-caught and farmed seafood sectors in all NYS food promotions/advertising.
 - Consider adjusting the NY Grown and Certified Program to include wild-harvest seafood by port landed rather than by individual fisherman.
- » Coordinate a NY state seafood marketing campaign along with national programs (Seafood Nutrition Partnership, Sea-to-School programs).

Long Term:

- » Build capacity within Ag & Markets to provide marketing and promotional support for NY seafood
- » Develop large scale and sustained marketing programs for NY seafood (e.g. I Love NY Seafood).
- » Develop a more unified voice for the NY seafood industry as a whole.
- » Increase opportunities and access to funding and resources for NY's seafood sectors.

Overarching Solutions and Recommendations

Continued cooperative research over time will be necessary to address some of the technical challenges and issues. Ensuring continuity will help to build resilience over time. To truly address these challenges and increase growth to all sectors, continued engagement among the various sectors (industry, agency, academic/extension) of NY's seafood and shoreside support industries will be crucial. This could take advantage of existing platforms, including the annual seafood summit events and the existing processing and marketing task forces coordinated by New York Sea Grant.



A variety of New York farmed and fished seafood and seafood products were available for tasting at the summit event.