

## **Brust, Jeffrey [DEP]**

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**From:** philip <psuwelsh@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 29, 2022 5:44 PM  
**To:** Brust, Jeffrey [DEP]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fishing regs

Hello,

As the summer fluke season has ended, I wanted to again bring up a topic that many in the recreational fishing community feel is needed, that is, expanded seasons and the use of fishable days in setting regs.

The last fishable day for ocean fluke fishing (fishable meaning ability for the average boater to go to the fishing grounds) was Sept 21. Sure, some larger charters and party boats were able to go but for most of us winds and sea conditions have kept us dockside. And, if we look ahead it won't be until possibly October 8 when conditions are favorable and seas have reasonably calmed to make fishing for fluke a good option (drift speeds, sea clarity, ability to go deepwater in South Jersey as the fish are moving out). In fact, I was able to fish only 4 days in the month of September.

For those of us below Atlantic City, the fluke fishing grounds move from the 5-20 mile range to the 15-30 mile range. Wildwood reef, Cape May reef, TI reef, Ocean City reef and other inshore reefs and structure areas are no longer prime fluke grounds necessitating traveling to deeper waters. Fluke are moving into the 80-130 feet+ of water depths as they begin their migration to the deep waters for the winter. To get to these grounds, conditions need to be decent, with 2-3ft seas and at least 7 second intervals with winds under 10MPH. Certainly, days like that are few.

Finally, if we couple this with the tremendously unpopular fluke slot system imposed on us this season, an informal survey of my fishing friends yields comments of the worst fluke season many can remember.

While I understand that there is a very detailed and formal process in regulation setting, it is now more than obvious and sensible that something needs to be done to correct what is a travesty for the recreational fishing community. The economic impact for lost fishing activity is immense while those of us who own boats spend more and more each year for less ability to utilize our investment.

October and November are prime time for deepwater ocean fluke fishing and we continue to miss out. One way to correct this is to carve out a separate schedule for ocean fluke fishing vs backwaters and/or to incorporate a fishable days measurement. It makes zero sense to open the season in early May for the ocean fluke season. The fish are in the backwaters. By not beginning the ocean fluke season until June 1 we could easily add weeks into October.

Meanwhile, for those of us in South Jersey, we watch Delaware have a 365 day season and fish the exact same locations.....RS11, Old Grounds, NJ-DL deepwater reef, etc.

We just can't sit back and wait for the "process" each and every year. Somehow, those in charge must think that we have endless years to fish. It's time to take action.

I would appreciate your thoughts and especially how we can elevate this issue.

Thanks,

Philip Welsh  
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