

NOVEMBER 2017



# *Meet The Fish*

Congressional Seafood Co. Newsletter

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# NEWS

Three additional documents have emerged as part of the lawsuit filed against the U.S. Commerce Department that show an intent to end-run normal channels of public comment and regulated processes for regional council activities, only to serve the needs of the sports fishing industry.

The lawsuit, filed by Ocean Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund last July, focused on mismanagement of the Gulf Red Snapper fishery, but documents released last week show the recreational industry expects a level of allowance that flies in the face of the legal requirements of the Magnuson Stevens Act, and the processes for managing fisheries that is contained within it.

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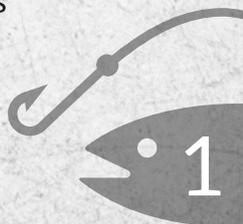
The documents are part of a 70-page package submitted by the government in response to the plaintiff's lawsuit. They show clear intent to receive special treatment when it comes to taking more of the annual catch, and broader influence on choosing who sits on the regional management councils, a process specified by the Magnuson-Stevens Act which is poised for reauthorization in 2018.

Moreover, employees of both the Department of Commerce and a state fish and wildlife agency, after briefing sports industry stakeholders on the requirements of MSA, go on to suggest various legislative -- not regulatory -- "fixes" for breaking the rules with the red snapper action.

**Continue reading on page 7**

## LAWSUIT DOCUMENTS SHOW PATTERN OF COLLUSION BETWEEN COMMERCE AND REC FISHERY

**SEAFOODNEWS.COM [SeafoodNews]  
by Peggy Parker - October 18, 2017**



# WHAT'S IN SEASON!

- Albacore Tuna
- Baramundi
- Black Bass
- Blue Catfish, VA
- Catfish
- Crab, MD & VA
- Crab, Venezuela
- Fluke, Carolina
- Golden Tile
- Grouper, Gulf of Mexico
- Halibut, West Coast
- Hamachi
- Hokkaido Scallops
- Lobsters, Canada
- Mahi
- Monk
- Nantucket Bay Scallops
- Norwegian Halibut
- Oysters, Canadian
- Oysters, Chesapeake
- Oysters, New England
- Razor Clams
- Sea Bass, Chilean
- Sheepshead
- Shrimp, Carolina
- Snapper
- Stone Crab Claws
- Striped Bass (Rockfish)
- Sword, Domestic
- Tautog
- Tuna (Yellowfin)
- Tuna (Bluefin)
- Wahoo

# MEET OUR TEAM LAUREN DRECHSLER



NAME: **Lauren Drechsler**

DATE OF HIRE: **08/17/2015**

ROLE AT CONGRESSIONAL: **Receiving  
Department/Data Entry**

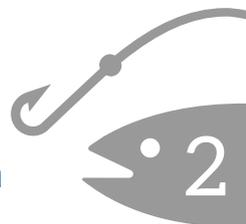
FAVORITE TYPE OF FISH AND

WHY: **Seafood: Crabs are the only  
seafood I eat and a Maryland  
tradition! Fish: Clownfish because  
they're bright and supposed to be  
funny!**

FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM:

**Baltimore Orioles**

DREAM VACATION: **Australia**





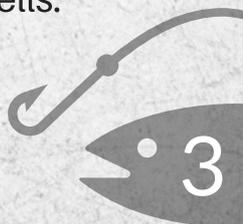
# LEROY FARM RAISED HALIBUT

## *Latin: Hippoglossus hippoglossus*

Farmed Atlantic Halibut from Lerøy is available fresh all year around. Atlantic halibut is now an established farmed variety of fish, ensuring a steady supply of fish throughout the year. This Halibut is farmed in the cold, coastal areas of Norway in limited volumes.

Atlantic halibut has a delicate white meat that is firm. It has a juicy texture. Atlantic halibut is excellent fried, poached, grilled, and as sashimi or sushi. Atlantic halibut is a good source for protein, and is also rich in vitamin D, vitamin B12 and selenium.

Atlantic halibut is especially rich in protein that builds and maintains every cell in the body. It is also rich in Vitamin D, which is necessary to get the right balance of calcium in the body to maintain and strengthen the bones and Vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 is important for the body in producing new cells, including red blood cells. And Vitamin B12 can contribute to preventing anemia. Selenium is also found in Atlantic halibut and is an important element in an enzyme that fights harmful chemical processes in the body.



# CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2017



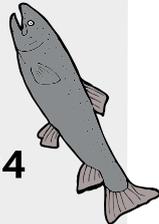
**VETERAN'S DAY**  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

**DC CENTRAL KITCHEN  
FOOD FIGHT**  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

**THANKSGIVING**  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23



**BLACK FRIDAY AND  
NATIONAL  
SARDINES DAY**  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24



**CYBER MONDAY**  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27

## COMING UP IN DECEMBER 2017

**HANUKKAH (1ST DAY)**  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13



**NATIONAL BOUILLABAISSE DAY**  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14



**WINTER SOLSTICE AND  
NATIONAL FRIED SHRIMP DAY**  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24



**CHRISTMAS**  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

**KWANZAA (1ST DAY)**  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26



**NEW YEAR'S EVE**  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

# WELCOME!

Congressional Seafood would like to introduce and welcome Mike Vatakis to the team!

Michael Vatakis brings with him a wealth of experience in the food sales industry. He has spent almost four decades representing some of the biggest food service companies in the region including Maryland Quality Meats, Halpern's Steak & Seafood, Gordan's, US Foodservice, United Seafood and Produce, and Alliant/Kraft Foodservice.

Mike is looking forward to bringing his professionalism and dedication to Congressional Seafood.





# FINVITATIONAL 2017





# Delicious recipe from **THE CHEF**

## NORWEGIAN FARMED HALIBUT

BY CORPORATE CHEF DAVID FYE AND  
INSPIRED BY CHEF THOMAS KELLY

with a Cassoulet of Mixed Beans  
and Tomato Confit!



1. To cook the dried beans: Remove and discard any beans that have risen to the top of the water. Drain and rinse the beans and place them in a saucepan. Add cold water to cover by 2 inches and bring to a boil. Remove and discard any beans that come to the surface. Drain the beans and run under cold water to cool.

2. Return the beans to the pot and cover with 1/2 cup of chicken stock and enough water to cover the beans by 1 inch. Add the leek, carrot and onion and bring to a simmer. Simmer the beans for about 1 hour or until they are tender. They can be cooked up to a day ahead and refrigerated in their cooking liquid.

3. Place the remaining 2 cups of chicken stock in a saucepan and reduce to 1 cup. Set aside.

4. Drain the cooked beans and combine them with 1/2 cup of the reduced chicken stock. Reduce the remaining 1/2 cup chicken stock to a glaze.

5. Bring the beans to a simmer and warm for about 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the butter, the fresh beans, tomato diamonds, brunoise and season to taste with salt and pepper.

6. Meanwhile: Season the halibut with salt and pepper. Lightly coat the skin side with flour, patting off any excess. Heat 1/8 inch canola oil in a large skillet. Place the fish skin side down in the hot oil and cook for 2 minutes or until a crisp, golden-brown crust forms. Turn the fish and cook for another minute. Let the fish rest a couple of minutes, then drain the fillets on a paper towel to absorb excess butter.

7. To serve: place a portion of the warm beans on each plate. Place a piece of halibut over the beans and top with a roasted tomato piece (recipe below) Drizzle with the chicken stock glaze. Scatter a few thyme leaves around the beans and sprinkle with a few drops of thyme oil (recipe below).

### Thyme Oil (about 1/3 cups)

1/4 cup thyme leaves and tender stems, 3 cups Italian parsley sprigs and about 3/4 cup canola oil

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Place the thyme leaves in a strainer and lower in the water to blanch for 30 seconds. Add the parsley sprigs and blanch for another 10 seconds.

2. Remove the herbs and plunge into an ice-water bath to chill. Drain the herbs and squeeze dry. Place half the herbs in a blender with enough oil to cover. Turn the blender on to medium speed and blend, adding more oil if necessary to allow the blade to spin. Blend for 2 minutes.

3. Add 1/2 the remaining herbs and blend another 2 minutes. Add the remaining herbs and blend a final 2 minutes. Remove the puree to a container and refrigerate for a day or up to 1 week.

4. Drain the oil through a piece of cheesecloth and store the oil in the refrigerator. Put the oil in a small plastic squeeze bottle for garnishing dishes. Store the oil in the refrigerator for up to 2 days or freeze for longer storage.

### Oven Roasted Roma Tomatoes (Fleur de Sel)

2 Roma tomatoes, peeled and quartered Extra virgin olive oil Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper A few thyme sprigs

1. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Blanch and peel 2 Roma tomatoes. Quarter them lengthwise into 4 "triangles".

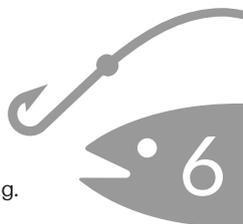
2. Place them flesh side down on a rack on a sheet tray so that the seed part is pointing up. Season with a little fleur de sel. Place in the oven for about 2-3 hours until the tomatoes have dried slightly, shrunk a little, and deepened in color.

### Brunoise Recipe

Brunoise is used often as a garnish at The French Laundry. Rather than making a small quantity, make a large batch and freeze it. 1 part carrots, sliced lengthwise into 1/16 inch-thick slices, 1 part turnips, sliced lengthwise into 1/16 inch-thick slices and 1/2 part leek greens (dark green part)

1. Cut the vegetables into 1/6-inch julienne strips and cut across to make 1/16-inch dices.

2. Blanch each vegetable separately in lightly salted boiling water to set the color and soften the vegetables. When all the vegetables are blanched and drained, mix them together in a covered container and refrigerate for up to a day or store in the freezer in a well-sealed plastic bag. You can use the brunoise directly from the freezer — just warm it before serving.



## From page 1

Indeed, the documents point to a blurred state of authorities and influence-wielding between the Commerce Department and the U.S. Congress. Whether it is a beleaguered agency's attempts to protect its standing among Gulf States or an intentional violation of the law remains unclear, but no one is disputing that the regulations within MSA are clear, and have, in the case of red snapper, been ignored.

A letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross from Ben Speciale, president of Yamaha Marine Group, was sent on April 3, less than a week after Ross met with Speciale, Mike Nussman, Scott Deal and Pat Murray to discuss the need for a NOAA Fisheries Administrator who had experience with the recreational sector. (Chris Oliver was hired as head of NOAA Fisheries two and a half months later.) Nussman is the president of the American Sportfishing Association, Deal is from Maverick Boats and Murray is from the Coastal Conservation Association. Ross posed questions to the group and asked them to respond later. One topic that may have been brought up -- Ross certainly raised it frequently during his confirmation hearing and in separate interviews following his confirmation -- was ways to reverse the seafood imbalance of trade. It was a topic Speciale responded to in his April 3 letter to Ross.

"We support imposing assessments on imported seafood based on the country of origin's management program," wrote Speciale. "We believe this will help level the playing field and allow our domestic commercial fishermen to increase revenue without increasing their landings. We also support efforts to promote aquaculture....and we must not forget that all recreational landed fish are consumed in the U.S.," Speciale pointed out.

"Promoting recreational fishing is a conservation-minded way of increasing the consumption of U.S. caught fish," he wrote.

Speciale did not elaborate on the ramifications of increased per capita consumption coming from sports landings and the impact on sustainably managed populations of fish.

Speciale's first request, not surprisingly, was about more red snapper for Gulf anglers. "...we must return to a recreational red snapper season of no less [than] the 60 days for the 2017 and 2018 seasons," he wrote.

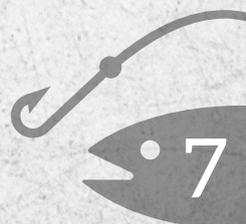
"I understand that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries in the Southeast Region will present obstacles to this initiative, but they must be overcome so that we may restore a sense of fairness for recreational anglers."

Speciale continued, "Excessive precaution and fear of frivolous litigation from the environmental industry has created a massive bureaucrat roadblock that has been unfair to anglers and stifled our industry.

"We ask that you overcome these obstacles at the regional fishery management councils and Regional Administrators' Offices."

Speciale's second request was to appoint a person within the Office of Policy and Strategic Planning (currently headed up by Earl Comstock) to have direct oversight on all regional fishery management council appointments. Further, that every appointment should be made only after coordinated consulting with the recreational industry.

Finally, Speciale asked for NOAA Fisheries to adopt a long-term strategy to increase public access to state and federal waters and "eliminate any management effort or technique that attempts to privatize federal fisheries, which are and should remain a public resource."



Almost two months later, as the red snapper season caught its quota in a matter of days, Dr. Shannon Cass-Calay, Chief of the Gulf and Caribbean Branch of the Sustainable Fisheries Division at the NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center ran the numbers on what the impact a 45-day extension would have on the red snapper stock in the Gulf.

She sent a summary of the research to five of her colleagues, asking them to consider it, emphasizing the uncertainties in the data, and warning that an extended season "...will very likely cause catches to exceed OFL (Over Fishing Limit) and delay recovery by 4-6 years. Each additional overage will degrade the condition of the stock further."

The final dissemination of that memo is not known, but it must have reached Earl Comstock, because he referenced it in one of two memos to Secretary Ross in early June.

After consulting with all five Gulf state fisheries managers, Comstock asked Ross if he could move ahead on crafting an extension to the red snapper season. At the bottom of his first memo to Ross, dated June 1, Comstock hand wrote "Secretary said go with two days plus holidays. OK to proceed."

On June 7, Comstock sent a memo to Ross preparing him for a hearing on appropriations where Senator Shelby (R-AL) may ask Ross about the Gulf Snapper issue. He also presented two options for the extension and asked Ross to pick one.

"As discussed, under either option the increased angler catch will result in the overall catch limit for this year being exceeded by 30% and 50%," Comstock explained to Ross. "Either option would mean that, absent Congressional action to modify the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements for the Gulf, the recreational season next year would be significantly reduced. All the State fishery managers know this, but agree the coordinated action has the greater long-term benefit," Comstock wrote.

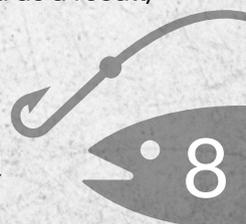
He acknowledged that either option will be opposed by commercial fishermen and charter operators, and "it will almost certainly draw a lawsuit."

Comstock noted that any plaintiffs in a suit "cannot get a temporary restraining order because the Magnuson-Stevens Act prohibits them. However, they might be able to get an injunction based on the argument we are violating a recent court order that stopped a 2% reallocation from commercial to recreational that the Gulf Council had adopted," he wrote.

A third new document is a disturbing example of a Louisiana fisheries administrator suggesting work arounds for an action that would be in direct violation of MSA. It's a memo from Harry Blanchet, Biologist Administrator of the Fisheries Division, Louisiana Department of Wildlife, to John Searle, the Congressional staffer to Louisiana Representative Steve Scalise. Searle had been in discussions with the state fisheries department regarding the red snapper situation.

Blanchet, who also sits on the Gulf Council's Science and Statistical panel, warned Scalise that "recreational red snapper harvest for 2017 may well overrun the recreational allocation by a substantial amount, and as a result, overall harvest may overrun the Total Allowable Catch."

Blanchet, like those before him, warned Searle that "Historically, and required by Magnuson, those over-runs would have to be paid back in following years, resulting in even lower recreational quota and thus Federal seasons," Blanchet told Seale.



Blanchet's solution was a waiver.

"My thought was that a simple waiver of those Magnuson requirements in another bill in the current Congress could help a lot in terms of allowing there to be a Federal waters recreational red snapper season in 2018. I understand that you may want to do a lot more, but just want to be sure that those payback provisions to not come back to bite next year," he wrote.

*Peggy Parker, Science and Sustainability Editor*

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# OYSTERS COULD REDUCE NUTRIENT POLLUTION, ACCORDING TO NEW STUDY

A new study shows that oysters could potentially reduce nutrient pollution.

Researchers at William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science published their new study in the September 29 issue of PLoS ONE. Their work is the "first to identify and quantify potentially denitrifying bacteria in the oyster gut and shell," as well as the first study to "do so using a new computer program that infers bacterial activities based on the sequences of ribosomal RNA genes."

**SEAFOODNEWS.COM [Seafood News]**  
**by Amanda Buckle - October 19, 2017**

The researchers used a technique called PAPERICA ("Pathway Prediction by Phylogenetic Placement"), which allowed for them to "infer metabolic pathways from gene sequences associated with a small subunit of ribosome called 16S rRNA." They used the program to identify the bacteria that carried the denitrification genes.

The results of the study found that it's possible to reduce nutrients at the beginning of an oyster restoration project, the reason being that shell microbiomes are "actively removing fixed nitrogen." Excess nitrogen, which comes from wastewater treatment plants, farm fertilizers and other human sources, can lead to dead zones.

"Most studies addressing denitrification associated with oysters have focused on sediments in and around oyster reefs," said lead author Ann Arfken, a Ph.D. student at William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science. "Our is the first to explore the capability for denitrification by microbiomes living inside and on the oysters themselves."

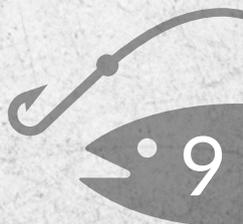
*Amanda Buckle, Staff Writer*

*SeafoodNews*

*Email: [abuckle@seafood.com](mailto:abuckle@seafood.com)*

*Phone: (732) 240-5330 ex. 254*

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**Congressional's VP  
Tim Sughrue  
presented during this  
month's FISH WEEK  
at the University of  
Pennsylvania School  
of Veterinary  
Medicine. Tim  
discussed seafood  
sustainability and  
future opportunities  
for vets in the  
aquaculture industry  
with the attending  
students.**





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6th ANNUAL

# FIN VITATIONAL

HOOK, LINE & SINKER FISHING TOURNAMENT



2nd Place:  
Damien Stewart,  
Ronald Reagan Building  
and International Trade  
Center and the Miss Susie

1st Place:  
Kurt Frevel, Atlantic Caterers and the Bonnie Sue

3rd Place:  
Bridget Hannon  
from Sequoia and  
the Loosen Up

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## MEET THE FISH NEWSLETTER

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