



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Presents Paul J. Diodati Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award

Norfolk, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Paul J. Diodati, former Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF), the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission's 76th Annual Meeting in Norfolk, Virginia. For over four decades, Mr. Diodati has been a prominent figure in the marine fisheries management community throughout New England and along the Atlantic coast. While now retired, the impact of his accomplishments to Atlantic coast fisheries conservation and management will be felt for much longer.



Mr. Diodati's career in marine fisheries began at MA DMF in 1975 as a contracted sea sampler for northern shrimp. Over the years, he worked his way up through the ranks to Division Director, a position he served in for his final 15 years at DMF. In between, Mr. Diodati served as technical and policy advisor for striped bass and northern shrimp, Sportfish Program Director, and co-creator and co-Chair of the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute. Understanding the need to address user conflicts before they begin, he was heavily involved in the development of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan and the Federal Ocean Management Plan. Mr. Diodati closed major data gaps by requiring comprehensive reporting from dealers in 2005 and all commercial harvesters in 2010. In 2009, he was instrumental in establishing the state's saltwater fishing license.

As Massachusetts' Administrative Commissioner since 2000, Mr. Diodati chaired numerous management boards, overseeing the development and implementation of interstate management plans for species such as striped bass, shad and river herring. From 2010 – 2013, he provided leadership to the Commission serving as Vice-chair and Chair and worked tirelessly to raise the Commission's profile both on Capitol Hill and within the Administration – ensuring the 15 Atlantic states were well equipped to tackle both current and emerging issues.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.

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Mr. Diodati's outsized role at the Commission is not limited to his term as Chair. He also helped to improve coordination and the sharing of information between the states and their federal partners. He had impeccable foresight, as evidenced by his role as a principal supporter of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program; a Program he would later Chair.

Mr. Diodati's lifetime has been marked by a commitment to science and sound management and his efforts have been instrumental in improving fisheries programs both in Massachusetts and along the coast. But his legacy is more than scientific papers, surveys conducted, and recovered species; Mr. Diodati will be remembered for his extraordinary way with people. From recreational and commercial fishermen to his peers at the Commission and New England Fishery Management Council, he was well known and trusted as a coalition builder and deal maker.

In honor of Mr. Diodati's lifelong dedication to the conservation of Atlantic striped bass, his innate ability to sense and adapt to changing winds, and the unerring guidance and direction he provided throughout his long career, Mr. Diodati will receive a striped bass weathervane. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Diodati was not able to attend the award ceremony. Dr. David Pierce, current MA DMF Director and lifelong friend and colleague of Mr. Diodati accepted the award on his behalf.

The Commission instituted the Award in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The Hart Award is named for one of the Commission's longest serving members, who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

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