

## TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Here is my two cents – CHARTERBOAT MISTY – Capt. Andy & Capt. Mark Ambrosia

I would like to say a few things about what is going on in the fishing situation concerning the striped bass. I have been fishing out of Galilee since I was 12 years old. I have been chartering since 1969. This will be my 48<sup>th</sup> year. My son Mark has been with me for 28 years. We both make our sole living from charter boat fishing. Our business and fishing are very important to us, as we have no other income except from the fishing industry.

Speaking for myself, these are my opinions only, and have nothing to do with other charter boats.

The words “commercial recreational” do not make sense, where did it come from? You are either a charter boat which makes a living by taking people out fishing and catching them fish, or not. That is how we make a living. I have been doing it for 48 years and my son has for 28 years. We have no pensions, no disability insurance, and no medical here.

A “recreational” is a boat that goes out for pleasure, catching a few fish, cruising around and enjoying the beautiful day by casting offshore or fishing off the wall. About 50% of them trailer their boats and go out only in good weather. Saves on docking fees also. I hope they enjoy the new state ramp that was just put in. Sounds good to me. I wish I could do it. Good jobs, good retirement and good medical benefits.

Any recreational fisherman, who thinks he is in my category, has a serious problem. I cannot believe a so-called “recreational fisherman” would want to cause problems to a person like myself and a few other charter boats.

By the time customers get done paying for the boat and crew, it costs them \$900. If they stay at a motel, that is another \$450 for 3 rooms. Also dinner, if they go out another \$300 at least. If you think these customers will be satisfied going home with one bass, one sea bass and maybe 5 keeper flukes, you have no idea what the charter boat business is about.

You recreational fisherman should be ashamed of yourselves. The state may listen to you for your vote.

We have a lot of people who come to Rhode Island and they spend a lot of money to our charter boats and to our state. The party boats also bring thousands of people to Rhode Island who spend money here.

We don't catch 16 bass per day, but we want the option to do so. When people call and ask about the bass limit this year, and we tell them only one per person, my customers will not go fishing only to only take home two fillets. My business would only last about 2 more years. If it comes down to one fish per man, I will be forced to make changes and it won't be in my prices.

Over the years, I have seen things go on that you would not believe. Just last summer, I know "recreational" boats that went to the southwest corner 4 times back and forth in one night. I also know of a boat with two men who took 17 bass to Massachusetts and received \$1500 for them. I have seen boats transfer bass from one boat to another boat. I have also seen at least 12 bass a week floating on top due to night bass fishing because the so called "recreational" fisherman are looking for big fish. They will catch 20 or more bass per night looking for that 50 pounder. These are the guys that want a charter boat like myself to catch one bass...what hypocrites and what a joke they are.

Any charter boat captain who wants one bass per man, probably couldn't catch 16 bass if he fished for a week.

I heard this comment a few years ago by a bass fisherman. He said charter boats get their money before they go out so they don't have to worry about catching fish. This guy has it ass-backwards. He is the one that doesn't have to catch anything because he does not support his family doing it.

If I didn't produce fish, I would go out of business soon. Every day I have to make 7 people plus myself happy when I leave the dock. Customers want their money back in fish and that is what we do. That is why for the last 48 years our business has been so successful. I have a lot of recreational friends and they don't oppose boats like myself having their own limits.

Well that's it for me. You can tell me a lot about the science of fishing such as percentages, etc, etc., but there is nothing about the charter boat business and people that you can tell me about and common sense.

Please fight for the rights of charter boats to be separately regulated from recreational pleasure boats.

- Captain Andy Ambrosia and Captain Mark Ambrosia