



# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 31, 2019

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### **ASMFC Presents Thomas P. Fote Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award**

New Castle, NH – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Thomas P. Fote, New Jersey’s Governor Appointee to the Commission, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission’s 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in New Castle. Mr. Fote has admirably served the State of New Jersey and the Commission since 1991 when he replaced Captain David Hart as New Jersey’s Governor Appointee to the Commission.



Mr. Fote’s longstanding service to marine conservation and management is notable. His history is

one of dedicated volunteerism on a continuous basis. After volunteering to serve in Vietnam, Mr. Fote was medically retired from the US Army as an Army Captain in 1970. Upon his return, Tom began to carve out a critical spot for himself in the world of marine conservation through diligent study, hard work, the willingness to ask penetrating questions, and engagement into a wide spectrum of conservation and fisheries management roles, all as a full time volunteer. In the process, he has become a knowledgeable and staunch fishery advocate, acting locally on behalf of his fellow New Jersey anglers, while also considering the needs of other states.

From Left: ASMFC Chair Jim Gilmore, Hart Award Recipient Thomas Fote and ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal

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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.

A strong proponent of habitat protection and enhancement, Mr. Fote recognizes the critical role healthy habitat plays in fisheries management. As the founding member and first chair of the Habitat Committee, Mr. Fote was instrumental in the development of the Commission's Habitat Program. Throughout his life, he's become increasingly active in environmental issues and has been a powerful voice in opposition to those who would degrade the marine environment. Having seen firsthand the devastation of "Agent Orange" in Vietnam, Mr. Fote found that this same Agent Orange had been made in New Jersey and dumped into Newark Bay. Mr. Fote worked with numerous conservation agencies to rid New Jersey's waters of a whole spectrum of contaminants.

With his service to the Commission dating back to 1991, Mr. Fote's has become the onsite "functional historian" for the Commission. His long range perspective puts difficult decisions into context and brings clarity to confusing dilemmas. Understanding how important it is to bring new members up to speed so they can quickly and constructively engage in the Commission process, Mr. Fote goes out of his way to help new Commissioners understand the complexities of the organization and how to work through the sometimes confusing maze of options.

Mr. Fote firmly believes in the inherent strength of partnerships and collaboration. He frequently communicates with others to develop a compromise and/or coalition for the common good. His extensive knowledge, reputation, and impassioned viewpoint are key catalysts in bringing divergent groups together for a common cause. This is exemplified through his work as a volunteer with numerous organizations including the New Jersey Environmental Federation and the New Jersey Coast Anglers Association. Throughout his life, Mr. Fote has demonstrated that a conservation ethic and spirit of volunteerism can be lifelong passions. Atlantic coast fisheries management is better because of his involvement.

The Commission instituted the Hart 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, Captain David H. Hart, from the State of New Jersey.

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