



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## Habitat Committee Meeting Summary

Waterside Marriott Hotel, Norfolk, Virginia

October 18, 2017

**Committee Members:** Russ Babb (NJ), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Josh Carolini (NH), Lou Chiarella (NOAA GARFO), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), John Gill (USFWS NE), Jimmy Johnson (NC), Wilson Laney (USFWS SE), Dawn McReynolds (NY), January Murray (chair, GA), Mark Rousseau (MA), Eric Schneider (RI), Kent Smith (FL), Tony Watkinson (VA), Pace Wilber (NOAA SERO), Kate Wilke (TNC)

**ASMFC Staff:** Lisa Havel

**Other Participants:** Graham Sherwood (GMRI)

The Habitat Committee (HC) met at the ASMFC Annual Meeting October 18 in Norfolk, Virginia. Michelle Bachman (NEFMC) held a discussion on the New England Fishery Management Council's work modelling fishing impacts on habitat in the North and Mid-Atlantic, and Tina Berger (ASMFC) led a discussion on the Habitat Committee's communications strategy and website presence.

The HC was charged with creating a new term for 'Habitat Areas of Particular Concern' by the Policy Board at the summer 2017 meeting, and they recommend 'Fish Habitats of Concern' as a replacement. In 2018 the HC will develop a document that compiles all of ASMFC's Habitat Areas of Particular Concern/Fish Habitats of Concern and identifies inconsistencies with federal designations, as well as recommends new targeted areas for designation in state waters.

The HC made progress on the Aquaculture Habitat Management Series publication, which summarizes the impacts of aquaculture on fish habitat in U.S. Atlantic waters. The HC is also working on a document that identifies gaps in state initiatives to address climate change, particularly in regards to fish habitat, and provides recommendations for the future. The ASMFC SAV Policy Update is also moving forward, which adds new information to the 20-year old document, as well as updates the recommendations and roles that ASMFC and state and federal agencies can take in conservation SAV. All three documents are projected to be presented to the Policy Board at the winter 2018 meeting.

The HC also finalized the tasks for 2018. In 2018, the *Habitat Hotline Atlantic* will focus on environmental monitoring, highlighting examples of long-term monitoring projects and different ways in which monitoring data is being incorporated into strategic planning and modelling efforts. The next Habitat Management Series publication will focus on the effects of underwater acoustics on fish physiology, behavior, and habitat. Finally, the HC will develop a

document that compiles the habitat recommendations found in Fishery Management Plans, Habitat Management Series publications, and other HC publications. The goal of this document is to provide Commissioners and habitat managers with all habitat-related ASMFC recommendations in one location for easier reference.