



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Habitat Committee

October 30, 2019

Wentworth by the Sea

588 Wentworth Road

New Castle, NH

Members present: Marek Topolski (Chair, MD DNR), Jimmy Johnson (Vice Chair, NC DEQ), Lou Chiarella (NOAA GARFO), Wilson Laney (NCCF), Kate Wilke (TNC), Eric Schneider (RI DEM), Sharleen Johnson (SC DNR), Mark Rousseau (MA DMF), Russ Babb (NJDEP), Kent Smith (FL FWC), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Graham Sherwood (GMRI), Julia Socrates (NYSDEC), Josh Carolina (NH F&G)

Staff present: Lisa Havel (ASMFC)

Others present: Aaron Kornbluth (Pew), Zack Greenberg (Pew), Trish Murphey (APNEP), Tori Kentner (NOAA NEFSC on phone)

There was discussion on whether the ASMFC HC should take on the responsibility of developing SAV monitoring protocols for the Atlantic coast. The Gulf States recently formed a Community of Practice and developed protocols there, and we could modify them to meet the needs of the Atlantic Coast states. The HC was supportive, and Lisa will work with Toni and Bob to see if this should be handled by the HC or ACFHP.

Lisa provided an update on ACFHP. Dr. Andrew Tweel is now representing SC DNR on the Steering Committee. ACFHP received a grant from the FishAmerica Foundation to restore sponges in Florida Bay. NJ DEP has provided in-kind support for ACFHP communications projects. The Steering Committee discussed the Fish Habitat Partnership legislation. ACFHP is funding four projects this year through the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. ACFHP drafted its 2020-2021 Action Plan, and the Steering Committee received an update on the status of the Northeast habitat mapping project.

Michelle and Jessica updated the committee on the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment, and led a discussion on the data still needed. This is a three-year project and focuses on both inshore and offshore assessments.

The HC spent time during the meeting to work on the Fish Habitats of Concern designations for all Commission-managed species. The goal is to present these designations to the Policy Board in the summer of 2020.

The HC completed the Aquaculture Impacts to Atlantic Fish Habitat *Habitat Management Series* publication, which summarizes the aquaculture activities and impacts on fish habitat in U.S. Atlantic waters. The Acoustic Impacts to Fish Habitat *Habitat Management Series* publication is

on track to be completed in the spring of 2020, and the 2019 Habitat Hotline Atlantic, which focuses on aquaculture, will be released by the end of the calendar year.

The next *Habitat Hotline* publication will highlight some of the recent habitat assessments being carried out by HC members and other fish habitat scientists and managers along the Atlantic coast.