

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Executive Committee

*February 6, 2019
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Arlington, Virginia*

Draft Agenda

The order in which these items will be taken is subject to change;
other items may be added as necessary.

A portion of this meeting may be a closed session for Committee members and Commissioners only

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*J. Gilmore*)
2. Committee Consent
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Meeting Summary from October 2018
3. Public Comment
4. Discuss Priorities for Use of Remaining Plus-up Funding (*R. Beal*) **Action**
5. Update on Aquaculture Activities (*R. Beal*)
6. Update on ACCSP Recreational Data Collection Activities (*M. Cahall*)
7. Update on MRIP Outreach Efforts (*R. Beal*)
8. Discuss Use and Structure of Management Board Working Groups (*R. Beal*)
9. Finalize Awards Committee Standard Operating Policies and Procedures (*S. Woodward*) **Action**
10. Update on Primer for Legislators and Governors' Appointees (*D. Abbott*)
11. Other Business/Adjourn

Please Note: Breakfast will be available at 7:30 a.m.

The meeting will be held at the Westin Crystal City, 1800 S. Eads Street, Arlington, Virginia; 703.486.1111

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

**MEETING SUMMARY OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**The Roosevelt Hotel
New York, NY
October 24, 2018**

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda by Consent. (Page 2)**
2. **Approval of Meeting Summary from August 7, 2018 by Consent. (Page 2)**
3. **On behalf of the AOC, move to accept the FY18 Audit of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. (Page 2)**
4. **Move to move forward with the five short-term projects proposed using ~\$200,000 and wait until the February meeting to decide on long-term projects; i.e. additional stock assessment staff; and allocate any long-term increase to the baseline for the states. (Page 2)**
5. **Move to recommend the Policy Board approve the amended Appeals Process document developed by the Working Group. (Page 2)**
6. **Move to approve the folks named in the memo from Executive Director Beal; and fill out the committee with additional names from the states not represented. (Page 2)**
7. **Adjournment by Consent (Page 3)**

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Pat Keliher, ME
Doug Grout, NH
Dennis Abbott, NH (LA Chair)
David Pierce, MA
Craig Miner, CT
Jason McNamee, RI
Jim Gilmore, NY
Joe Cimino, NJ
John Clark, DE

Roy Miller, DE (GA Chair)
Andy Shiels, PA
David Blazer, MD
Steve Bowman, VA
Steve Murphey, NC
Robert Boyles, SC
Doug Haymans, GA
Jim Estes, FL

Other Commissioners

David Borden, RI (GA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)
Brian Langley, ME (LA)

Ed O'Brien, MD (LA proxy)
David Watters, NH (LA)
Spud Woodward, GA (GA)

Staff

Bob Beal
Laura Leach
Pat Campfield

Toni Kerns
Deke Tompkins
Max Appelman

Others

Lynn Fegley, MD DNR
John Hare, NOAA

Mike Millard, USFWS

CALL TO ORDER

The Executive Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Hudson Suite of The Roosevelt Hotel in New York, NY October 24, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chair Jim Gilmore.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

The summary minutes from the August 7, 2018 meeting were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

FY18 AUDIT

The Audit was reviewed by the Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) and forwarded to the Executive Committee with a recommendation for approval. **On behalf of the AOC, move to accept the FY18 Audit of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.** Motion made by Mr. Keliher. The motion passed unanimously.

PRIORITIES FOR PLUS-UP FUNDING

The Committee discussed the options presented by Executive Director Beal for utilizing the additional federal funds (roughly \$400,000) received this year. After a robust discussion, the Committee made the decision to use a portion (roughly \$200,000) on five short-term projects and decide at the February 2019 meeting how to proceed with the remaining ~\$200,000. The funded projects are:

1. Striped bass hook and line tagging
2. Travel funds to coordinate offshore lobster enforcement
3. Lobster maturity and growth data collection
4. Atlantic herring Georges Bank/Nantucket Shoals maturity sampling
5. Menhaden aerial and hydroacoustic survey design in the Chesapeake Bay

Move to move forward with the five short-term projects proposed using ~\$200,000 and wait until the February meeting to decide on long-term projects; i.e. additional stock assessment staff; and allocate any long-term increase to the baseline for the states. Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Boyles. The motion passed unanimously.

APPEALS PROCESS

Dr. McNamee gave a presentation of the revision to the Appeals Process in the ISFMP Charter. After thorough discussion the Committee agreed to forward the amended Appeals Process to the ISFMP Policy Board for action. **Move to recommend the Policy Board approve the amended Appeals Process document developed by the Working Group.** Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Dr. Pierce. The motion passed unanimously.

AQUACULTURE COMMITTEE

Executive Director Beal presented a list of people recommended by the states to serve on the Aquaculture Committee. Several states that had not provided a name said they had a person and would send that name to Mr. Beal. **Move to approve the folks**

named in the memo from Executive Director Beal; and fill out the committee with additional names from the states not represented. Motion by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Keliher. The motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW QUARTERLY MEETING SCHEDULE

The Committee discussed the regional concerns with the current quarterly meeting scheduling practice, and staff was directed to explore options for arranging the quarterly meeting schedule to address the concerns from the Northern & Southern states. The Executive Committee also agreed to schedule a lunch for the Legislative Commissioners and Governor Appointees at the February and August Meetings.

REPORT FROM THE AWARDS COMMITTEE

Mr. Woodward presented a SOPP for the Awards Committee. The Executive Committee will review it and provide any comments to Mr. Woodward between now and the February meeting, at which final action will be taken on the SOPPs.

ADJOURN

CHAIR JIM GILMORE adjourned the Executive Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m.



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Committee
FROM: Robert Beal
DATE: 1/18/19
SUBJECT: ASMFC Plus-Up Funding Update

Background

During the Commission's Annual Meeting, the Executive Committee discussed the allocation of approximately \$400,000 in plus-up funding from Congress. The Executive Committee selected five priority projects for funding. These five projects used about \$200,000 of the available plus-up funding. This memorandum provides updates on the five funded projects, provides alternatives for use of the remaining funds, and details options for future year use of plus-up funds.

Update on Funded Priority Projects

1. Striped Bass Hook & Line Tagging - \$24,000

Tagging of coastal migrant striped bass in winter has occurred for most of the past 25 years via a tagging cruise off the North Carolina Outer Banks and lower Chesapeake Bay. USFWS, NC DMF, MD DNR, VMRC, and ASMFC have combined resources to conduct tagging in January and February since the late 1980s. Tagging results have been used directly in striped bass stock assessments to generate mortality estimates, as well as movement and migration information. Hook and line based tagging has proven to be a very economical method of tagging fish from the overwintering population. Funds would cover 10-15 charter trips to tag fish in winter 2019.

UPDATE: The tagging trips have begun and will likely be completed prior to the Commission's Winter Meeting. This project required significantly more staff time than anticipated due to the federal shutdown.

2. Travel Funds to Coordinate Offshore Lobster Enforcement - \$5,000

Enforcement of regulations in the offshore lobster fishery has been identified as a priority issue by the New England Commissioners and law enforcement staff. Significant progress has been made on the funding of a vessel to be used for offshore enforcement, however there are multiple details on operating, staffing, sharing, maintenance, etc. that will need to be worked out through in-person meetings and conference calls. These funds will be used to support meeting expenses.

UPDATE: A working group has been formed to develop a plan to operate and maintain an offshore lobster enforcement vessel. This working group has held one meeting and the Lobster Board will be updated on the progress at the Winter Meeting.

3. Lobster Maturity and Growth Data Collection - \$38,000

Increases in water temperatures over the past several decades have likely resulted in changes to lobster size at maturity and growth patterns, given temperature has a strong influence on these vital processes. Maturity data used in the 2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment are more than 20 years old, making it likely that changes have since occurred. Evidence to suggest that decreases in the size at which females reach maturity exists in both the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock (see Pugh et al. 2013) and the Southern New England (SNE) stock. Changes in sizes at maturity subsequently affect growth, since female molting frequency decreases after reaching sexual maturity. When females mature at smaller sizes, their growth slows down earlier than what the existing transition matrices in the stock assessment models predict. Additionally, growth is directly influenced by water temperatures, and evidence exists in SNE for increased molt frequency and decreased molt increments. It is critical to collect updated information on maturity in order to appropriately assign molt probabilities to lobsters in the assessment models.

Funding from Maine is supporting a maturity study along coastal Maine that started in spring 2018; however, further funding is needed to conduct maturity studies in New Hampshire for the SNE stock (MA-NC). Because personnel from multiple agencies would be processing samples and determining maturity, it is necessary to convene two workshops. The first workshop would be for training purposes to standardize processing and maturity determination methodology. The second workshop would be to evaluate and characterize maturity determination error among project participants and attempt to reduce error to desired levels. Funds would be used by state agencies to (1) cover travel costs for the two workshops, (2) purchase supplies (dissecting tools, etc), and (3) collect and process samples through existing fishery-independent and fishery-dependent sampling programs, estimate maturity by means of ovarian staging, and enter data in state databases. Ovarian staging requires sacrificing the lobster and, therefore, would require purchase of any lobsters sampled through fishery-dependent sources. A report from the workshop series and final data will be provided to the ASMFC for future stock assessments.

UPDATE: The Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee will be planning the processors workshop component of the project and determining a protocol and timeline for 2019 sample collections during the Assessment Workshop in New Bedford, January 28-31.

4. Atlantic Herring Georges Bank/Nantucket Shoals Maturity Sampling – No funding needed if sampling current trips/\$80,000 - \$100,000 if fishery independent sampling is initiated (would require multi-year funding)

Given recent declines in herring recruitment and spawning stock biomass, several questions have been raised regarding the need for, and ability to implement, spawning protections in Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals. Both areas are recognized as major spawning grounds for Atlantic herring but do not have protections specific to spawning. This project would collect herring maturity samples from Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals to inform a potential spawning closure management strategy.

The existing GSI₃₀ spawning closure system requires enough samples to inform the relationship between GSI and maturity, and annually project spawning closures. In the Gulf of Maine, the long term use of closures to protect spawning aggregations has prompted the collection of samples to meet these needs. In contrast, significantly fewer samples have been collected from Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals. Staff from Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries summarized the number of herring samples taken in Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals over the last 20 years. The majority of samples are from Georges Bank (~96%), with only 2 samples taken from Nantucket shoals.

If a spawning closure approach is considered for Georges Bank, a higher number of annual samples will be required there to determine the spatial extent of specific spawning locations and their timing. In contrast, implementing a single, large spawning closure across the northern edge of Georges Bank would require fewer annual samples but would likely require a longer closure in order to protect asynchronous spawning. Potential economic impacts of this larger and longer closure may need to be considered.

UPDATE: The 2019 New England Fishery Management Council priorities include consideration of establishing spawning closures on Georges Bank. Commission staff, Council staff, and state staff will be coordinating on the best approach to address spawning protections for the offshore areas. One product of the staff coordination will be feedback on how to best use these funds to better understand the timing and extent of offshore spawning.

5. Menhaden Aerial and Hydroacoustic Surveys Design - \$30,000 – 50,000

An estimate of menhaden biomass in Chesapeake Bay is needed to better evaluate potential options for the Bay cap. The project could occur in two phases: 1) a study design phase where aerial and hydroacoustic survey experts work with the TC to design Chesapeake surveys targeting menhaden, 2) implementation of the surveys following the design recommendations of experts. Phase 1 is relatively inexpensive (~\$30,000-50,000) and could be in the form of 2-3 workshops and an associated report detailing new Chesapeake survey design elements. Phase 2 is expensive (~\$450,000 to \$650,000) and includes costs of hiring pilots for aerial survey and ship time and equipment for hydroacoustic surveying. There are two ways such a survey could be useful for management: 1) a one-time estimate of biomass could be useful for evaluating the

Bay cap; 2) multiple years of estimates may be a useful addition for the assessment. A time series would take 7+ years of surveying to be of value to menhaden stock assessments.

It should be noted that a new benchmark menhaden assessment will be finalized in late 2019. This assessment will have a list of research needs to improve future assessments. Input from the Technical Committee will be helpful in prioritizing the research needs following the assessment. In addition, Technical Committee input will be needed for survey design. Several members of the committee have significant workloads in 2019 in order to meet the SEDAR Peer Review of the assessment.

UPDATE: An RFP has been issued with a closing date of 1/18/19 seeking proposals to design an aerial survey for the coast and the Chesapeake Bay. The submitted proposals will be reviewed and a decision on the final contractor will likely be made prior to the Winter Meeting.

Options for Use of Remaining Plus-Up Funds

With the five priority projects funded, about \$200,000 remain unspent. These funds must be used on projects that will be completed by the end of 2022. Therefore, a final decision is not required at the Winter Meeting. The following are two options for spending a portion of the remaining funds:

1. ASMFC Staff Hire - Stock Assessment Scientist - \$82,000 (would require multi-year funding)

Demand for new stock assessments continues to grow in order to generate scientific advice to fisheries managers. The Commission currently has three Stock Assessment Scientists on staff who contribute to all aspects of developing assessments for 17 of the 27 stocks in the Commission's portfolio. Hiring a 4th Scientist would increase capacity on staff to 1) take on new species assessment responsibilities (e.g., Jonah crab, cobia), 2) reduce the workload burden of the current Scientists, or 3) a combination of both. The intent of an additional staff Scientist would be to keep up with current demand. Continued contributions from state and federal scientists on assessment work would still be necessary. Note using plus-up funds for a new Commission hire would require a multi-year funding commitment of plus-up funds.

Summer Flounder Stock Assessment Support - \$50,000 - \$100,000 (See attached request from Greg Hueth to Chair Jim Gilmore)

The Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund (SSFFF) is seeking \$50,000 to \$100,000 support to obtain two years funding for a postdoc. The postdoc would work closely with both the SSFFF team and NEFSC to investigate a range of aspects of the summer flounder assessment and management and provide a candidate stock assessment model based on the Stock Synthesis program. The model will be sex-structured, but simulations will be conducted to determine the benefit of including sex-structure and alternative assumptions about sex-specific selectivity to

account for lack of sex-specific data. The project will also investigate using the Rutgers sex composition data. The analysis and simulations will investigate both the stock assessment results and management implications (e.g. reference points, including dynamic reference points, and ABC calculations).

A benchmark assessment of the summer flounder stock was recently completed and peer reviewed through the federal SAW/SARC process. The results of this work are not yet available due to the federal shutdown.

Future Plus-Up Fund Allocation

While federal budgets are not always predictable, it appears the baseline funding for ASMFC will remain higher and may increase in the future. The Commission will need to determine how the higher baseline and future increases are allocated. The options are:

1. Allocate to states based on existing formula (See attached spreadsheet).
2. Allocate to Commission office to support high priority projects, staff, and/or meetings.
3. Consider changes to state dues structure.
4. Any combination of the above three options

During the Annual Meeting, the Executive Committee postponed this decision in anticipation that a final budget would be available to better inform this discussion. Unfortunately, we are still waiting on approval of the federal FY2019 budget.

Proposed Allocation of the \$400,000 Plus-Up Funds

This spreadsheet details the formula used to calculate state assessments; and proposes the \$400,000 be allocated using the same formula.

State	50% Equal	2012-2016 comm %	Comm \$\$	2012-2016 Rec %	Rec \$	Total \$	Percent	Comission-hired SA Scientist
Connecticut	13,333	0.83%	\$ 829	3.72%	\$ 3,721	\$ 17,884	4.47%	\$ 14,218
Delaware	13,333	0.43%	\$ 426	2.11%	\$ 2,114	\$ 15,874	3.97%	\$ 12,620
Florida East Coast	13,333	3.02%	\$ 3,015	24.58%	\$ 24,576	\$ 40,924	10.23%	\$ 32,535
Georgia	13,333	0.80%	\$ 796	2.00%	\$ 1,997	\$ 16,126	4.03%	\$ 12,820
Maine	13,333	30.44%	\$ 30,438	1.49%	\$ 1,491	\$ 45,263	11.32%	\$ 35,984
Maryland	13,333	4.43%	\$ 4,430	6.57%	\$ 6,571	\$ 24,334	6.08%	\$ 19,346
Massachusetts	13,333	27.58%	\$ 27,585	7.42%	\$ 7,417	\$ 48,336	12.08%	\$ 38,427
New Hampshire	13,333	1.29%	\$ 1,291	0.74%	\$ 745	\$ 15,369	3.84%	\$ 12,218
New Jersey	13,333	8.49%	\$ 8,491	12.35%	\$ 12,346	\$ 34,170	8.54%	\$ 27,165
New York	13,333	3.00%	\$ 3,001	10.33%	\$ 10,334	\$ 26,669	6.67%	\$ 21,201
North Carolina	13,333	4.57%	\$ 4,572	13.66%	\$ 13,663	\$ 31,568	7.89%	\$ 25,097
Pennsylvania	13,333	0.01%	\$ 5	0%	\$ -	\$ 13,338	3.33%	\$ 10,604
Rhode Island	13,333	4.39%	\$ 4,394	2.94%	\$ 2,941	\$ 20,669	5.17%	\$ 16,432
South Carolina	13,333	1.27%	\$ 1,267	5.94%	\$ 5,936	\$ 20,536	5.13%	\$ 16,326
Virginia	13,333	9.46%	\$ 9,461	6.15%	\$ 6,147	\$ 28,941	7.24%	\$ 23,008
TOTAL	\$ 200,000		\$ 100,000	100.00%	\$ 100,000	\$ 400,000	100.00%	\$ 318,000

State	Annual Commercial Value (Dollars) ALL Species excluding Cod and Haddock		Average Number Recreational Trips (2012-2016)	
	2012-2016 Avg	Percent	2012-2016 Average	Percent
Connecticut	\$16,123,909	0.83%	1,377,208	3.72%
Delaware	\$8,287,076	0.43%	782,516	2.11%
Florida East Coast	\$58,633,047	3.02%	9,095,152	24.58%
Georgia	\$15,470,481	0.80%	739,054	2.00%
Maine	\$591,916,420	30.44%	551,859	1.49%
Maryland	\$86,145,874	4.43%	2,431,823	6.57%
Massachusetts	\$536,429,426	27.58%	2,745,129	7.42%
New Hampshire	\$25,097,149	1.29%	275,642	0.74%
New Jersey	\$165,119,831	8.49%	4,569,114	12.35%
New York	\$58,357,046	3.00%	3,824,609	10.33%
North Carolina	\$88,910,589	4.57%	5,056,459	13.66%
Pennsylvania	\$100,043	0.01%	0	0.00%
Rhode Island	\$85,444,943	4.39%	1,088,574	2.94%
South Carolina	\$24,630,206	1.27%	2,196,838	5.94%
Virginia	\$183,980,509	9.46%	2,274,880	6.15%
TOTAL	\$1,944,646,550	100%	37,008,857	100.00%



SAVE THE SUMMER FLOUNDER FISHERY FUND

P.O. BOX 86, BRIELLE, NJ 08730 WWW.SSFFF.NET

December 15, 2018

Mr. Jim Gilmore
Chairman, ASMFC

Mr. Gilmore: Thank you for taking the time to hear more about our plans for the Summer Flounder management model. This letter intends to summarize the plans that SSFFF and our team of scientists are building to create a sex-structured model for the NMFS review in the future.

Attached is a public testimony document submitted during the most recent Summer Flounder stock assessment. It provides an overview of our outlook and its components. The principal mission at this time is to obtain two years funding for a postdoc. The postdoc would work closely with both the SSFFF team and NEFSC to investigate a range of aspects of the summer flounder assessment and management and provide a candidate stock assessment model based on the Stock Synthesis program. We estimate these costs to be in the \$50,000 - \$100,000 range.

As per communications with Dr. Jon Hare and Dr. Jim Weinberg from the NEFSC we expect members of the Science Center will be an integral part of the project, joining our group of well-known experts that already plan to participate:

- Dr. Mark Maunder, who has been involved with the summer flounder assessment for over a decade.
- Steven Cadrin, who currently has a student working on MSE of the Mid-Atlantic ABC control rule based on surf clam and summer flounder.
- Andre Punt, who is a world leader in stock assessment.
- Rick Methot, who is the developer of Stock Synthesis.
- Pat Sullivan, who has been involved in the summer flounder stock assessment working group.

The work will predominantly be carried out using Stock Synthesis. The model will be sex-structured, but simulations will be conducted to determine the benefit of including sex-structure and alternative assumptions about sex-specific selectivity to account for lack of sex-specific data. The project will also investigate using the Rutgers sex composition data. The analysis and simulations will investigate both the stock assessment results and management implications (e.g. reference points, including dynamic reference points, and ABC calculations).

Thank you again for your time. If you would like to speak with me directly, I would welcome the chance to discuss this further. I can be reached at (732) 492-6936. I look forward to hearing from you.

Greg Hueth

Public testimony for the summer flounder independent expert review



Introduction

It's been a decade, and the Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund (SSFFF) continues to support research on the summer flounder. This research has ranged from data collection to full stock assessments. SSFFF has contracted and engaged internationally-renowned scientists, whose research has been published in well-respected scientific journals. We believe that their research and findings are vital and should be considered in the development of the summer flounder stock assessment and in the subsequent management advice.

Numerous improvements are still needed in the summer flounder stock assessment and the SSFFF has funded the creation of several scientific documents that provide advice and recommendations to foster improvement. In particular, we believe the scientific evidence suggests that a sex-structured model should be implemented that uses the coast-wide survey data collected on the sex ratio and the limited sampling on the fisheries. We believe that this sex-specific information should be developed for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. Historically, a major concern for us with the management advice of summer flounder is related to the conservative nature of the assumptions used in the stock assessment model and the generated reference points. We believe that the setting of the ABC incurs penalty due both to low recruitment as well as to conservative reference points. An assessment model that takes into account the sex-specific dynamics as well as the current environmental regime should be considered, and dynamic reference points should be used as recommended in journal articles and reports that have been provided previously.

Stock assessment model

Numerous improvements can be made to the current assessment structure including model development and expanded data acquisition. Some of the biological processes (e.g. natural mortality and recruitment) have been extensively reviewed, but improvements in understanding are not yet fully reflected in the assessment. Other factors (e.g. growth, fishery structure and selectivity) still need thorough review. Sex structure is obviously an important component of this sexually dimorphic species. Several articles and reports provided advice on improving the summer flounder assessment in this regard. Some recommendations are summarized in Table 1 at the end of this document.

Sex structure

The development of a sex-structured model for summer flounder is practical, has been available in several forms for over a decade, and despite the need for some assumptions about the sex structure of the catch or selectivity, would be expected to be a more appropriate modeling approach to use than using a single sex model that assumes that males and females have the same characteristics. A sex-structured model should be used when data is available on processes (e.g. growth) that differ among males and females. We believe that such a model would reflect the best available science. Future analysis may require the evaluation of the sensitivity of management advice to different assumptions, including those about the difference between male and female selectivity.

Other data

In 2010, Rutgers University and Cornell University collected coast-wide data on the sex ratio of summer flounder landed in both the commercial and recreational fisheries. They also evaluated the adequacy of summer flounder sex-at-age and sex-at-length keys developed from NMFS-NEFSC ocean trawl surveys in describing the sex ratio in recreational and commercial landings. The study concluded that the sex-at-length and sex-at-age keys developed from NMFS-NEFSC ocean trawl data would not be appropriate for describing sex ratio of recreational landings. NMFS should consider using the currently available data in the assessment model and developing methods for ongoing collection of sex specific information from the recreational landings to provide information on differences in selectivity and reproductive contributions of males and females.

Management

Reference points

As mentioned above, a major concern for us with the management advice on summer flounder is related to the conservative nature of the assumptions used in the stock assessment model and the reference points. We do not believe it is appropriate to include additional conservation measures when calculating the Annual Catch Limit due to uncertainties that have already been taken into consideration. Specifically, the reference points imply a low value for steepness of the stock-recruitment relationship. However, there is substantial evidence that steepness is higher for summer flounder. If reference points are developed for summer flounder by selecting an appropriate proxy for steepness of the stock-recruitment relationship and are designed to maximize yield, both the target and threshold fishing mortality reference points should be based on lower SPR_{MSY}/SPR_0 . A conservative 0.8 value of steepness suggests a maximum $SPR_{MSY}/SPR_0 = 30\%$ target proxy and accordingly a lower SPR_{MSY}/SPR_0 threshold proxy. If the environment is driving recruitment, then dynamic reference points that take the current levels of recruitment into consideration should be used. If the stock assessment and reference points cannot be recalculated based on the best available scientific information rather than using overly conservative values, then no additional precautionary measures are needed and thus the P^* should be higher.

Dynamic reference points

Finally, we wish to emphasize that the ABC is over penalized due to the recent low recruitment for summer flounder, the harvestable biomass is low and P^* is reduced. Fishing at FMSY should move the stock to BMSY on average and biomass is expected to fluctuate around a target, so there is no need to reduce catch from B^*FMSY unless the biomass has been substantially reduced. This is the purpose of the threshold and not the target. The use of dynamic biomass targets that take recruitment fluctuations into consideration are more consistent with fishing mortality targets. The difference between static and dynamic reference points can be consequential. Using the average of recent recruitment in reference point calculations can serve as a proxy for developing dynamic reference points. The current ABC for summer flounder could potentially be higher if dynamic reference points are used. Care should be taken when using dynamic reference points for stocks that show a strong relationship between stock size and recruitment, which is not the case for summer flounder, because reference points and management may follow the recruitment down as biomass decreases.

Other documents

This assessment

Maunder, M.N. 2018. A concise guide to developing fishery stock assessment models.

Maunder, M.N. 2018. The importance of sex structure in fisheries stock assessment models.
 Maunder, M.N. 2018. Reference points and management for summer flounder.
 Maunder, M.N. 2018. Dynamic reference points for summer flounder.
 Maunder, M.N. 2018. Stock Synthesis Implementation of a Sex-Structured Virtual Population Analysis Applied to Summer Flounder
 Maunder, M.N. 2018. Updated Stock Synthesis Implementation of a Sex-Structured Virtual Population Analysis Applied to Summer Flounder

Journal publications

Maunder, M.N. 2012. Evaluating the stock-recruitment relationship and management reference points: application to summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) in the U.S. mid-Atlantic. Fisheries Research, 125–126: 20–26.
 Maunder, M.N., and Wong, R. A. 2011. Approaches for estimating natural mortality: application to summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) in the U.S. mid-Atlantic. Fisheries Research, 111: 92–99.

Table 1. Summer flounder recommendations

Category	Recommendation
Model structure	Use an age- and sex- structured integrated model
	Use a seasonal time step
	Start the model in 1976, but consider 1982 and 1994
Stock Structure	Model a single stock and use the areas as fisheries approach
Recruitment	Assume recruitment is independent of stock size
	Model random variation in recruitment
	Model autocorrelation
Natural Mortality	Estimate separate natural mortality rates for males and females inside the stock assessment model
	Estimate a separate M for ages 0 and 1
Growth	A thorough evaluation of growth is needed
	Growth should be estimated inside the model using a Richards growth curve while integrating the age-length data into the model.
	Consider modelling temporal variation in growth
Fishery definitions	A comprehensive evaluation of fishery structure is needed
	Fishery structure should consider: commercial, recreational, scallop discards, commercial and recreational discards, season, north, central, and south area structures, North Carolina as a separate commercial fishery, inshore and offshore commercial fisheries.

Selectivity	Use flexible selectivity curves
	Assume the commercial offshore fishery has asymptotic selectivity and the other fishery and surveys are dome shaped.
	Maintain current time blocks in selectivity
	Allow fishery selectivity to change over time
	Use length based selectivities
	Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the options to model differences in the sex specific selectivity
Data weighting	Only use the NMFS surveys in the assessment
	Integrate the surveys as aggregated catch and catch composition data
	Compute the composition sample size from the sampling design if possible
	Include an aging error matrix
	Use sex-structured data where available
Process variability	Model process variability for recruitment and fishery selectivity. Process variability should also be considered for growth and for natural mortality of the younger fish.
Diagnostics	Apply all the diagnostics and the accepted model should satisfy all diagnostics tests

MRIP SURVEY SPECIFICATION / STATE CONDUCT INVESTIGATION
May 2018

Based on the success of conducting the APAIS through a cooperative approach between the Atlantic states, MRIP, and ACCSP, NOAA expressed interest in collecting more data through state conduct (Goal 5 of the 2017-2022 MRIP Strategic Plan). MRIP has expressed interest in state conduct of the for-hire telephone survey, and this document contains a brief overview of tasks and estimated staff time to conduct the FHTS. If state conduct is pursued, then state conduct would include ACCSP centralized coordination, with data distribution, storage, editing, delivery and other administrative tasks handled through the ACCSP's existing online Assignment Tracking Application (ATA). In all cases, MRIP maintains responsibility for survey design and generation of estimates.

For Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS) (Annual cost unknown)

Developed to measure charter and party boat angler effort. The FHTS was implemented for Gulf Coast states in 2000 (charter boat only), and all Atlantic Coast states in January 2005.

Overview of State Tasks:

- Staff Management: Hiring, training, supervision of interviewers. (Note: not in time estimates below)
- Notification Letter: Mailing letters to each captain 2 weeks prior to the sampling week to inform that their vessel has been selected for the FHTS and they will be called after their fishing week is complete.
- Telephone Calls: Weekly telephone calls made to charter/headboat captains to determine fishing activity for the previous week.
- LPTS Add-on: Vessels selected for the FHTS in Maine through Virginia who have a current HMS permit are asked additional questions associated with the Large Pelagic Telephone Survey (LPTS).
- Vessel Directory: Updates to the online Vessel Directory are performed to ensure vessel records have the most current information. (Note: task partially performed under APAIS)

Staff time estimate per wave:

Estimated staff time to conduct telephone calls and mailings for the FHTS with LPTS Add-on (hours/wave)

State	Wave 1 (JAN/FEB)	Wave 2 (MAR/APR)	Wave 3 (MAY/JUN)	Wave 4 (JUL/AUG)	Wave 5 (SEP/OCT)	Wave 6 (NOV/DEC)	Yearly Total	Avg Weekly Sampling Hours
ME *	-	-	31	50	42	-	123	5
NH	-	-	34	37	33	-	104	4
MA	-	189	275	278	247	259	1248	29
RI	-	47	58	60	54	58	277	7
CT	-	37	42	39	35	39	192	5
NY	-	107	136	139	123	136	641	15
NJ	-	165	189	173	156	165	848	20
DE	-	24	34	34	30	37	159	4
MD	-	128	141	144	144	152	709	17
VA	-	39	45	47	40	45	216	5
NC *	147	173	189	207	158	178	1052	21
SC	-	89	94	94	86	86	449	11
GA *	-	52	45	45	40	45	227	6

* State currently conducts FHTS

BLACK text = FHTS only

RED text = FHTS with LPTS Add-on

Recommended approach by ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee: State Conduct

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION AWARDS COMMITTEE SOPPS

The Commission, through the work of the Awards Committee, annually recognizes outstanding individuals in the field of interstate fisheries management and conservation. The Awards Committee is charged with the important responsibility of soliciting nominations and selecting recipients annually for the Captain David H. Hart Award (Hart) and the Annual Awards of Excellence (AAE).

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION: The Awards Committee is comprised of, at a minimum, an Administrative Commissioner, a Legislative Commissioner, a Governor's Appointee Commissioner, representatives of the Management & Science Committee and the Law Enforcement Committee, and two additional Commissioners. This Committee and its Chair are appointed annually by the Commission Chair.

CHAIRMAN RESPONSIBILITIES: The chair of the Awards Committee is responsible for the following: working with Commission staff to assure issuance of the call for nominations; conducting meetings of the committee; presenting the awards; and assuring dissemination of information about recipients of awards.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES: The members of the Awards Committee are responsible for the following: participating in conference calls and meetings; reviewing nomination materials thoroughly and without prejudice; and working collaboratively during deliberations to reach a consensus when deciding which nominees are to be recipients of awards.

WHEN ARE THE AWARDS PRESENTED? The David H. Hart Award is presented at the Commission's Annual Meeting to an individual who has contributed to the betterment of the fisheries of the Atlantic coast through significant biological, legislative, enforcement and/or management activities. The Annual Awards of Excellence are presented at the Commission's Spring Meeting to individuals who have made highly significant contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coastal fisheries in one of the following areas: Scientific/Technical/Advisory; Congressional/Legislative; Law Enforcement; Management/Policy and Outreach/Advocacy. Such contributions must be for activities conducted in support of interstate fishery management through the Commission.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS? Nominations will be solicited by the Awards Committee in late February (two months prior to the Spring Meeting) for the AAEs and in early – mid June (four months prior to the Annual Meeting) for the Hart Award. The staff member assigned to the Awards Committee will receive the nominations and prepare the package for distribution to the committee. The AAEs will be selected during an Awards Committee conference call in late March – early April. The Hart Award will be selected during an in-person meeting of the Awards Committee at the Summer Meeting of the Commission. If a meeting is not possible at the Summer Meeting a conference call will be held.

CRITERIA: Following is the criteria used to evaluate nominees:

1. Did the individual(s) participate in an activity that had direct positive impact on a species or group of species managed by ASMFC?
2. Did the actions of the individual(s) improve public awareness of ASMFC?
3. Did the actions of the individual(s) improve the credibility of ASMFC?
4. Did the actions of the individual(s) contribute to improved cooperation amongst the stakeholders of ASMFC?
5. Did the individual(s) demonstrate efficient use of time and fiscal resources when conducting the activity described in the nomination?
6. Did the individual(s) exhibit innovation, ingenuity, and creativity when conducting the activity described in the nomination?
7. Did the individual(s) work outside of their routine duties and responsibilities when conducting the activity described in the nomination?
8. Did the individual(s) foster collaboration with others when conducting the activity described in the nomination?
9. Did the individual(s) fundamentally change an approach or method used in the interstate fishery management process?

OTHER: It is preferred that the award recipients remain confidential until the presentations at the meetings. However, the nominator(s) will be notified and can be asked to provide assistance in getting the recipients to the meeting at which they would be presented the award.

Nominees not selected for an award will be considerable eligible for the same award the following year. Nominees not selected during this second year of eligibility must be re-nominated to be considered for an award during future deliberations of the Awards Committee.

Being a Legislative or Governor's Appointee Commissioner (or proxy for)

Unofficial Primer

“The Commission was formed in 1942 by the 15 member states for the purpose of protecting and managing fisheries within the states’ jurisdiction. The states recognized that they could accomplish more through cooperation than through their individual efforts.”

The following information is compiled and presented to the new LGAs (Legislative and Governors’ Appointees) as a supplement to the more formal information provided by the Commission upon your appointment as a Commissioner. It is in no way intended to be all encompassing, but merely information that you may find useful in your early days as a Commissioner.

First let us offer you congratulations on your appointment. Roy Miller, Governors’ Appointees chair and Dennis Abbott, Legislative chair represent you on the Commission’s Administrative Oversight Committee and Executive Committee. We also can serve as your conduit to the Executive Committee for any matters that you might wish to have brought forth.

We have many years of experience as Commissioners and surely don’t have all the answers, but we can offer our assistance whenever appropriate and at least point you in the right direction.

Recent discussions at the Executive Committee have raised questions about whether we as a group are providing ample guidance to new Commissioners and we were tasked with attempting to provide new folks with information that they might find helpful.

It has been decided that the LGAs will meet once during both the February and August meetings over lunch to have general discussions and introduce new Commissioners to the group. This format allows for everyone to develop a comfort level with each other, as well as an understanding of where they come from, both professionally and personally. Also we would consider meeting with any new Commissioners for a more informal meeting over dinner during the meeting week as you may desire.

Getting Started

1. Meet your state's other two commissioners. You'll be a team and need to develop a working relationship.
2. Try to attend all the meetings. It's virtually impossible to keep up-to-date if you don't. In the case of legislators, it's best to have an ongoing proxy who attends regularly. Just filling a space at the table is not necessarily helpful unless you are sending someone in your stead who is a veteran of ASMFC meetings.
3. Commission staff are very helpful and provide whatever assistance you may require before, during and after meetings.
4. Seating at the table during meetings is always the same. That enables you to get to know the delegates seated near you. This will prove helpful in negotiating settlements to thorny management issues. Many important compromises and agreements are reached prior to formal voting through informal communication between Commissioners of other states during breaks, short recesses, and even caucuses.
5. Having an iPad, laptop or similar device at your disposal is helpful as all meeting information is posted on the Commission website. Need a tutorial? Ask us or staff.
6. Meetings start on time but often don't end on time because of issues and extended discussions. Be patient and understand that it's a democratic process.
7. Meetings are conducted generally in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order. That's why we occasionally have training sessions as board members change. We are not slaves to Roberts Rules, however, and we will deviate on occasion as the need arises. Roberts Rules help give our meetings structure.
8. All management board meetings follow the same format. Presentations are given by appropriate folks, discussion and questions from board members, comments from the public as necessary and usually a vote. There will be only limited opportunity for direct public input at the Board meetings during designated points in the agenda of each species board. Before final actions are taken on a species at any ASMFC meeting, the public will have been given ample opportunity to provide input either through written comment or at ASMFC led-hearings conducted at each state that requested a hearing on a proposed management action. Board members at each hearing are recognized for questions or comments by the chair by raising a hand and being noted so by the chair.
9. Commissioners only participate in management boards that their state has an expressed interest in. For example, Maine has interest in American lobster while Florida doesn't.
10. Each state has one vote on management boards. So as an individual you represent 1/3 of a vote. Each state caucuses before each vote, although the sentiment of each state usually is very apparent and sometimes doesn't require discussion among the state's three Commissioners. If there are only two of you representing your state at a meeting, a null vote is an acceptable result if you two can't agree on an issue during the caucus. If the management action will have no impact on your state, you can abstain when asked to vote. Other states may welcome your vote, however, even if the issue may not have a big impact on your state resources. Keep in mind that Commission meetings are transcribed and broadcast live via Webinar, so keep your comments as brief as possible and on-subject.

11. It's important to understand your purpose as a Commissioner and who and what you are representing: the fisheries resources, the users of the resources, your constituents, and the common good of all the states as expressed in the first paragraph of this Primer, probably in that order. Sometimes a vote will go counter to your wishes or the wishes of your constituents. That is all part of the democratic process. There is an official ASMFC appeal process if your state feels sufficiently aggrieved by a Board decision.
12. Remember that all outcomes often don't please everyone at the table. It's good to disagree, but not be disagreeable. (we are good at that)
13. There is no dress code but proper meeting attire is expected with business or business casual the preferred choice of most.
14. Coffee, tea, soda, and water are usually available during the meetings and members are free to come and go during meetings as required.
15. Since LGAs and proxies are volunteers, there is no reimbursement provided for time away from work. Your meeting travel and meal expenses will be reimbursed by ASMFC using federal per-diems as modified following ASMFC guidelines.
16. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and learn who can help you.
17. Any further questions contact Roy Miller (FISHMASTER70@COMCAST.NET or 302.645.7103) and Dennis Abbott (SWAMPER199@GMAIL.COM or 603.659.3175).
18. Finally, remember that our Executive Director Bob Beal (RBEAL@ASMFC.ORG) or 703.842.0740 is available to answer questions and offer assistance in the performance of your duties. Good Luck!