



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2020 Winter Meeting Summary

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

2020 Winter Meeting
Arlington, VA
February 4 – 6, 2020

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2020)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Board Approves Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Herring Management Board approved Draft Addendum III to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes options to better manage the Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) sub-annual catch limit (ACL) under low quota scenarios. This action responds to the challenges encountered in managing the reduced sub-ACL based on the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which highlighted declining trends in recruitment and spawning stock biomass.

Currently, the Board can allocate the sub-ACL throughout the fishing season using bi-monthly, trimester, or seasonal quota periods to meet the needs of the fishery. For the 2019 fishing season, the Board implemented a bimonthly quota period approach to maximize use of the reduced sub-ACL when demand for bait is high. Due to the low quota, the 2019 fishery experienced frequent closures to avoid an overage. The 2020 sub-ACL (3,344 mt) is lower than in 2019, creating further challenges in distributing the quota throughout the fishing season. The Draft Addendum considers additional tools to provide the Board more flexibility in specifying the allocation under low quota scenarios and meet the needs of the herring fishery moving forward.

Additionally, the Draft Addendum considers expanding landing provisions across different permit categories within the days out program. The Board utilizes days out of the fishery and weekly landing limits to adjust the rate of Area 1A catch. The Draft Addendum includes options that apply weekly landing limits to all vessel categories landing herring in Area 1A throughout the entire fishing season.

Interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input by February 12, 2020. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM on March 25, 2020 and should be forward to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum III). It is anticipated some states will conduct public hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of which will be released via a press release once they are finalized.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR20-03

Motions

Move to approve Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum III for public comment as amended today.

Motion made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion passes (8 in favor, 1 opposed).

Move to approve the following Atlantic herring specifications for 2020 as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council contingent on the final rule being published by NOAA Fisheries:

Annual Catch Limit (ACL) = 11,571 mt

Domestic Annual Harvest = 11,571 mt

Border Transfer = 100 mt

Area 1A Sub-ACL = 3,344 mt

Area 1B Sub-ACL = 498 mt

Area 2 Sub-ACL = 3,217 mt

Area 3 Sub-ACL = 4,513 mt

Fixed Gear Set-Aside= 30 mt

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consensus. (Roll Call: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, NEFMC, NMFS.)

Motion to elect Cheri Patterson as Vice Chair of the Atlantic Herring Management Board.

Motion made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consensus.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to review and consider implementation plans and conservation equivalency (CE) proposals for Addendum VI. The Addendum aims to address overfishing and reduce fishing mortality (F) to the F target by 2020. Any states and jurisdictions submitting for CE were required to demonstrate that the proposed measures achieve at least an 18% reduction in total removals at the state-level (i.e., recreational and commercial fisheries combined). The Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) reviewed all proposed measures based on the technical merit of the analyses used to calculate the expected reductions in total removals and to ensure the proposals met state-specific target reductions. The TC also developed a list of uncertainties and caveats that should be considered.

A number of states submitted multiple CE proposals which resulted in a wide range of measures being considered, and raised questions about consistency, equitability, and accountability if CE measures didn't meet their respective targets. Furthermore, the Board quickly recognized that the effects of combined CE measures had the potential to fall short of the 18% reduction needed to achieve F target in 2020. These realizations led to focused discussion on a few proposals that relied heavily on assumptions regarding angler behavior, and proposals that would achieve a lower percent reduction at the state-level under CE measures than under the Addendum VI measure.

After lengthy deliberations, and while acknowledging the need for CE to address unique state and regional differences, the Board pared down the number of measures being considered and approved implementation plans and CE proposals on a state-by-state basis (see list of motions below).

During deliberation, the Board discussed the need to revisit the CE provision in the next management document, which will be considered at the Spring Meeting, and the need for unique accountability measures for this predominantly recreational fishery. The Board will also consider accountability measures with Addendum VI at the Spring Meeting.

Lastly, the Board required states to submit implementation plans for recreational circle hook provisions by August 15th. The Plan Review Team will review circle hook provisions for Board consideration at Annual Meeting.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move that state implementation of the Addendum VI conservation equivalency proposals approved today be contingent upon a Technical Committee analysis documenting that the combined effect of the states' selected measures is at least a projected 18% reduction from 2017 total removals. Failure to achieve a projected 18% reduction shall result in mandatory implementation of the Addendum VI management measures.

States will advise ASMFC of their selected conservation equivalency measures by March 6. The Board will be advised of the results of the Technical Committee's analysis by March 13. The implementation deadline for fishery regulations remains April 1.

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. White.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to approve the conservation equivalency plans and implementation plans as approved by the Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion fails (4 in favor, 12 opposed). (Roll Call: In favor – NJ, DE, MD, PRFC; Opposed – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA, DC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS)

Main Motion

Move that state implementation of the Addendum VI conservation equivalency proposals approved today be contingent upon a Technical Committee analysis documenting that the combined effect of the states' selected measures is at least a projected 18% reduction from 2017 total removals. Failure to achieve a projected 18% reduction shall result in mandatory implementation of the Addendum VI management measures.

States will advise ASMFC of their selected conservation equivalency measures by March 6. The Board will be advised of the results of the Technical Committee's analysis by March 13. The implementation deadline for fishery regulations remains April 1.

Motion to Table

Move to table the motion.

Motion made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion carries without objection.

Revisit Tabled Motion

Move that state implementation of the Addendum VI conservation equivalency proposals approved today be contingent upon a Technical Committee analysis documenting that the combined effect of the states' selected measures is at least a projected 18% reduction from 2017 total removals. Failure to achieve a projected 18% reduction shall result in mandatory implementation of the Addendum VI management measures.

States will advise ASMFC of their selected conservation equivalency measures by March 6. The Board will be advised of the results of the Technical Committee's analysis by March 13. The implementation deadline for fishery regulations remains April 1.

Motion to Substitute

Motion to substitute to approve the Addendum VI recreational measures for the coast and the Chesapeake bay/producer areas (Hudson and Delaware estuaries) conservation equivalency measures as perfected today.

Motion made by Mr. Miller and second by Mr. Keliher. Motion split.

Motion to Split

Move to split the question to take up the coastal measures separately from the Chesapeake Bay and producer area measures.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Geer. Motion adopted by unanimous consensus.

Motion to postpone indefinitely all previous motions

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Sen. Miramant. Motion approved by Board consent.

At this point in the meeting, the Board proceeded to consider implementation plans and conservation equivalency proposals on a state-by-state basis:

The Board approved state implementation plans and conservation equivalency proposals for ME, NH, MA, CT, PA, DE, DC, PRFC, VA, and NC by unanimous consent.

Motion to approve the Rhode Island conservation equivalency proposals.

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Nowalsky. Motion carries (9 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Motion to approve New York's NY-1, NYD-1, NYH-1 options under recreational measures, and NY-D2 under commercial measures.

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion carries (11 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve New Jersey's R3 and R6 options under recreational measures and the suite of commercial options.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion fails (3 in favor, 8 opposed, 3 abstentions, 1 null).

Move to approve New Jersey's option R3 and the suite of commercial options.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion carries (10 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to reconsider the RI vote.

Motion made by Sen. Miramant and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion fails for lack of two-thirds majority (6 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions). (Roll Call: in Favor – ME, NH, MA, CT, NY, PA; Opposed – RI, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Abstentions – NMFS, USFWS.)

Move to approve Maryland's MD-1, MD-2d, MD-3a, MD-4a options for recreational and commercial fisheries in the ocean and Chesapeake Bay.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carries (10 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve a slot limit for New Jersey to develop one conservation equivalency option that would achieve at least an 18% reduction with a maximum slot size limit of no more than 40", pending Technical Committee approval.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries (9 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve as part of New York State's conservation equivalency option to have an opt-in slot limit for the for-hire fishery 30"-40", monitored by license, pending Technical Committee approval.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion fails (5 in favor, 5 opposed, 4 abstentions, 1 null).

Motion to approve the RI-CT-NY regional proposal Option B.

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion fails (5 in favor, 6 opposed, 4 abstentions).

Move that states submit implementation plans for circle hook requirements by August 15, 2020 and Board approval at 2020 Annual Meeting.

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion carries.

Move to task the Plan Review Team to review state reductions in the Fishery Management Plan Review of the 2020 fishing year. If a state is below their predicted target reduction, the Board may direct a state to modify measures for the next fishing year to achieve the target reduction.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Postponed to Spring Meeting.

Motion to postpone to the Spring Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion carries (10 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions).

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Coastal Sharks Management Board met to receive a presentation on the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II listing for Atlantic shortfin mako. CITES is a global treaty that aims to ensure international trade of plants and animals do not threaten their survival in the wild. Species protected under CITES are listed in one of three appendices. In 2019 shortfin mako was listed under CITES Appendix II, which includes species that, although not currently threatened with extinction, may become so without trade controls. Effective Nov 26, 2019, a CITES export permit is required to export shortfin mako out of the U.S. as part of international trade; a CITES import permit is not required. No CITES permits are needed for domestic trade. CITES export permits can be obtained by application from USFWS, are valid for 6 months, and are renewable. The new permit requirements will be in place unless shortfin mako is removed from Appendix II. The next opportunity to adjust which species are listed under Appendix II will be at the CITES Conference of the Parties in 2022.

The Board also received an update on 2019 the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Meeting specific to shortfin mako. The ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics

(SCRS) provided updated projections to include two generations (2070) as opposed to the generation (2040) in the original 2018 benchmark assessment. This information was considered by the member countries and based on the results, there was agreement to extend the current management measures for an additional year while a comprehensive rebuilding program is developed. New measures could be considered and made at the 2020 ICCAT Meeting.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

No motions made.

BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Bluefish Management Board met to consider approval of conservation equivalency (CE) proposals submitted by New Jersey and Georgia proposing alternative measures for the 2020 recreational bluefish fishery. The Commission’s CE Policy allows states to submit proposals for alternative measures in state waters that achieve the same reduction in recreational landings that would have been achieved under the coastwide regulations approved by the Board in December 2019. The coastwide regulations include a 5-fish bag limit for the for-hire sector and a 3-fish bag limit for shore-based anglers and private fishermen.

Staff presented Technical Committee and Law Enforcement Committee recommendations to the Board on the technical merit and enforcement considerations of state proposals. The Board approved Georgia’s proposal, which includes a bag limit of 15 fish, a minimum size of 12 inches, and a seasonal closure which begins March 1 and ends on April 30, 2020 (Table 1). The Board approved New Jersey’s proposed options 1, 2, and a modified 3rd option presented in Table 1 below. Concerns regarding bluefish’s overfished status precluded the Board from accepting all options included in New Jersey’s proposal. Following the Board’s decision, New Jersey’s Marine Fisheries Council will select one of the three board approved options for implementation no later than April 1, 2020.

The Board also elected Joseph Cimino, New Jersey’s Administrative Commissioner, as the Bluefish Board Vice-Chair.

2020 Recreational Bluefish Fishery Regulations for Georgia and New Jersey

Option	Size Limit	Bag Limit	Mode	Season
Georgia				
	12” min	15	All modes	Closure March 1 – April 30
New Jersey				
1	-	3	Private/shore	Open All Season
	-	5	For-hire	
2	-	3	All modes	Open All Season
3	-	6	All modes	Closure September 1 – October 31

For more information, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dleaning@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to prohibit the use of conservation equivalency for recreational bluefish management for 2020 with the exception of states that are accountable for less than 1% of the total coastwide harvest.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to allow conservation equivalency for states that are accountable for less than 1% of the total coastwide harvest and to approve New Jersey's options 1, 2, and a modified 3 with a 6 fish bag limit.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion passes (11 in favor, 5 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to allow conservation equivalency for states that are accountable for less than 1% of the total coastwide harvest and to approve New Jersey's options 1, 2, and a modified 3 with a 6 fish bag limit.

Motion passes by unanimous consent. (Roll call: In favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS)

Move to elect Joe Cimino as Vice Chair of the Bluefish Board

Motion made by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 5, 2020)

Press Release

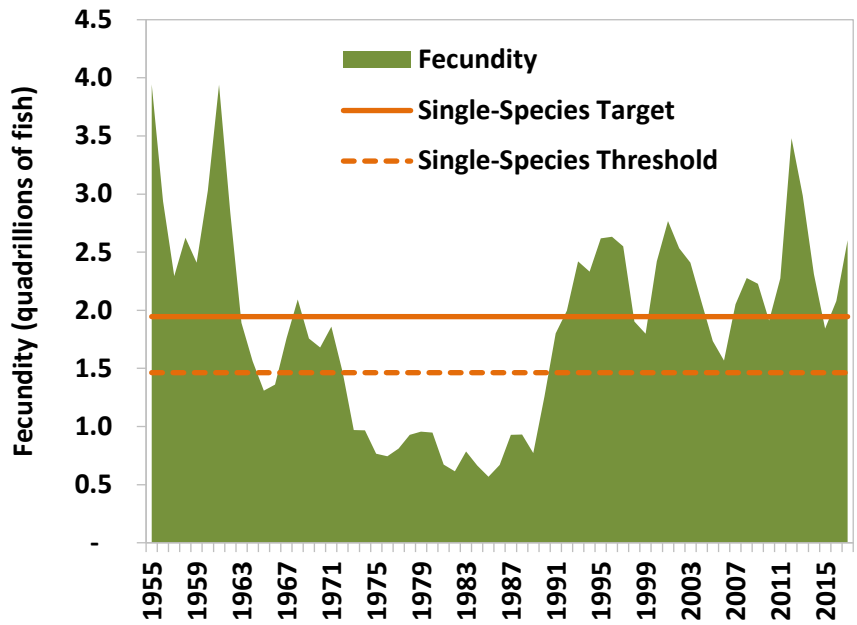
ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Prepares to Move Forward with Menhaden Ecological Reference Points

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board accepted the results of the Single-Species and Ecological Reference Points (ERPs) Assessments and Peer Review Reports for management use. The single-species assessment indicates the stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing relative to the single-species reference points established in Amendment 3. However, the ERP assessment indicates that the fishing mortality reference points for menhaden should be lower to account for menhaden's role as a forage fish. In order to consider moving forward with the use of ERPs for management, the Board tasked the ERP Workgroup with producing several scenarios to explore how different fishing mortality assumptions for the other predator and prey species in the ERP model (i.e., bluefish, weakfish, spiny dogfish, and Atlantic herring) might affect the menhaden ERP fishing mortality target and threshold. The Board will review these analyses and take up the issue of formally adopting ERPs in May at the Commission's Spring Meeting.

"On behalf of the Menhaden Board, I commend the ERP Workgroup and the dozens of state, federal, academic, and ASMFC scientists for their countless hours of dedication to this formidable task," stated Board Chair Nichola Meserve. "The Board has long recognized the importance of Atlantic menhaden as a

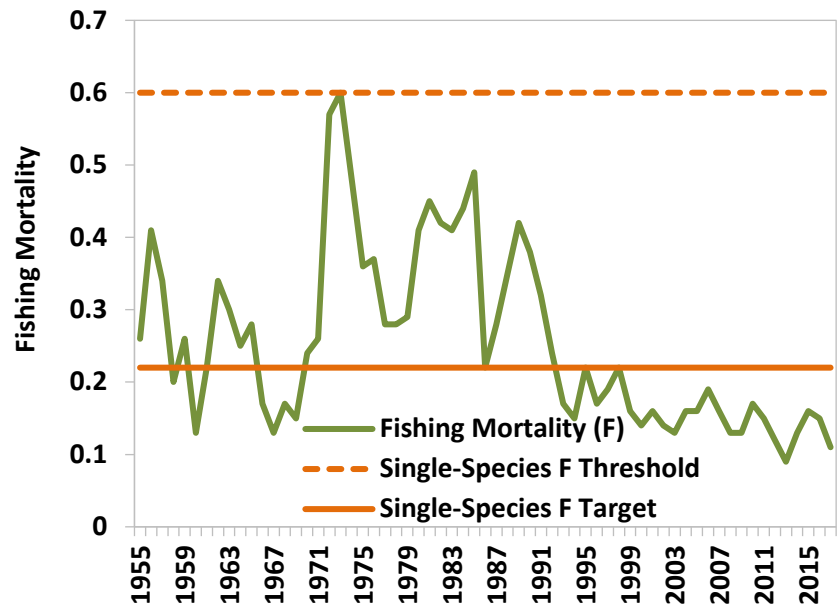
forage fish for a variety of predators as reflected in its setting of conservative harvest limits for menhaden and its emphasis on the development of ERPs as one of its highest priorities for managing the species. The ERP assessment is an impressive body of work and a huge step towards fully realized ecosystem-based fishery management. Although there is still much more work to be done, the ERP assessment provides managers with a critical tool in setting harvest targets for menhaden in an ecosystem-context.”

Atlantic Menhaden Fecundity



Under the traditional single-species reference points, Atlantic menhaden are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Population fecundity, a measure of reproductive capacity (i.e., number of mature eggs in the population), has been above the single-species threshold since 1991 and above the single-species target in 20 of the 27 years since then, including 2017. Fishing mortality (F) has remained below the single-species overfishing threshold (0.6) since the mid-1970s, and below the single-species overfishing target (0.22) since the mid-1990s. Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.11 in 2017. Although the ERP assessment

Atlantic Menhaden Fishing Mortality (ages 2-4)



indicates that the F reference points should be lower than the single-species reference points, it also showed that the conservative total allowable catch set for the 2018 to 2020 fishing seasons is consistent with the ERP F target in the example management scenario presented to the Board.

The ERP assessment, which was endorsed by an independent panel of fisheries scientists in November, uses the Northwest Atlantic Coastal Shelf Model of Intermediate Complexity for Ecosystems (NWACS-MICE) to develop Atlantic menhaden ERPs. The model was chosen from a suite of potential options because it was the only model that could explore both the impacts of predators on menhaden biomass and the effects of menhaden harvest on predator populations, and be updated in a timeframe that is informative for management. NWACS-MICE is an intermediate complexity ecosystem model that focuses

on four key predator species (striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, and spiny dogfish) and three key prey species (Atlantic menhaden, Atlantic herring, and bay anchovy). These species were chosen because diet data indicate they are top predators of Atlantic menhaden or are key alternate prey species for those predators, and datasets were available to describe their population dynamics.

The ERP assessment recommends a combination of the single-species model (Beaufort Assessment Model) and the NWACS-MICE model as a tool to evaluate trade-offs between menhaden harvest and predator biomass in a quantitative and transparent way. An important conclusion from the ERP assessment is that the final ERP definitions and values, including the appropriate harvest level for menhaden, depend on the management objectives for the ecosystem (i.e., management objectives for both Atlantic menhaden and its predators). The Board will continue to discuss management objectives and use of ERPs at the Commission's Spring Meeting in May.

Copies of the Assessment and Peer Review Reports can be found on the Commission's website on the Atlantic menhaden webpage, <http://www.asmfc.org/species/atlantic-menhaden>, under stock status. A more detailed overview of the stock assessments is available at http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5e3c4663AtlanticMenhadenAssessmentsOverview_Feb2020.pdf. The overview aims to aid media and interested stakeholders in better understanding the assessment results. For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR20-04

Motions

Move to accept the Atlantic menhaden single species, ecological reference points, and peer review reports for management use.

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Main Motion

Move to adopt:

- 1. An Atlantic Menhaden ecological reference point F target equal to the maximum F on Atlantic menhaden that maintains Atlantic striped bass at its biomass target when striped bass is fished at its F target and all other ERP species as defined in the NWACS-MICE model are fished at their status quo F rates.**
- 2. An Atlantic Menhaden ecological reference point F threshold equal to the maximum F on Atlantic menhaden that maintains Atlantic striped bass at its biomass threshold when striped bass is fished at its F target and other ERP species as defined in the NWACS-MICE model are fished at their status quo F rates.**

Motion made by Dr. Colden and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion postponed.

Motion to Postpone

Move to postpone until after completion of the following task: task the Ecological Reference Points Workgroup with the following analysis to better understand the parameters and outputs of the example ERP. The Work Group is asked to present this analysis at the May ASMFC meeting.

- 1. Using the existing example ERP framework, modify the assumptions on the other species such that they are fished at their F-target as opposed to F2017. Reproduce figures 144-148.**
- 2. Using the existing example ERP framework, modify the assumptions on the other species such that they are fished at their F-threshold, as opposed to F2017. Reproduce figures 144-148.**

- Using the existing example ERP framework, modify the assumptions on the other species such that bluefish and herring are fished at their F-target while spiny dogfish and weakfish are fished at their F-2017. Reproduce figures 144-148.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carries unanimously

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 5, 2020)

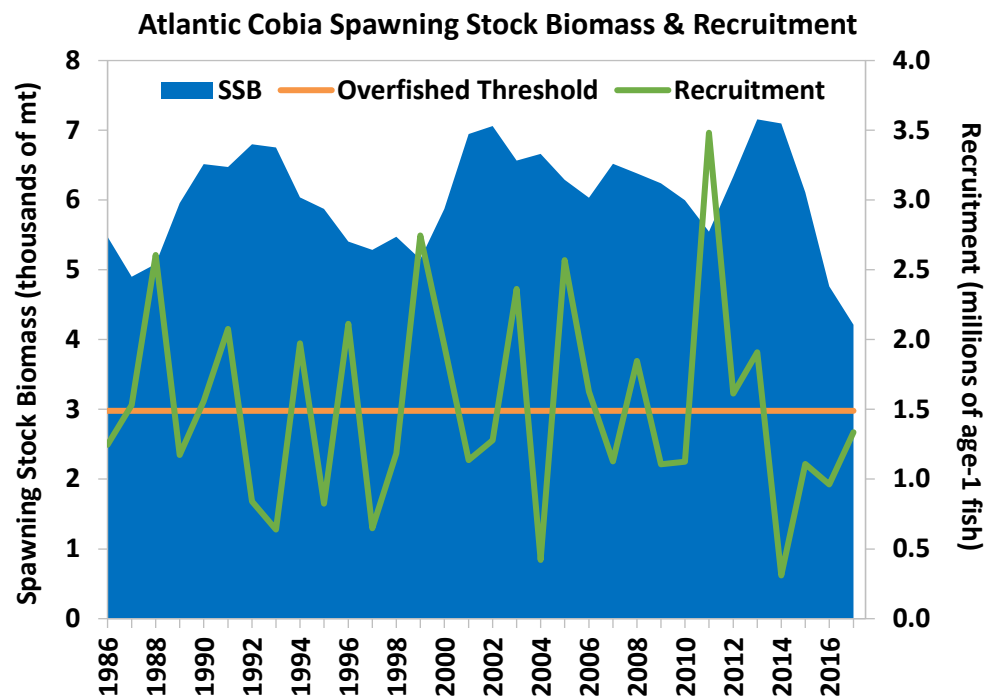
Press Releases

Atlantic Cobia Benchmark Stock Assessment Finds Resource Not Overfished Nor Experiencing Overfishing

South Atlantic Board Sets Harvest Specifications & Initiates Addendum

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board accepted the Atlantic Cobia Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, including new reference points, for management use. The assessment, which was conducted through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process, evaluated the Atlantic stock of cobia, which extends from the Georgia/Florida border north. Assessment results indicate the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been above the overfished threshold throughout the timeframe (1986-2017), indicating the coastwide stock is not overfished. SSB has shown several large increases following years of high recruitment, the most recent following the 2011 recruitment peak, with the largest SSB in the time series occurring in 2013. These peaks in SSB have been followed by declines when recruitment moves back towards its average.

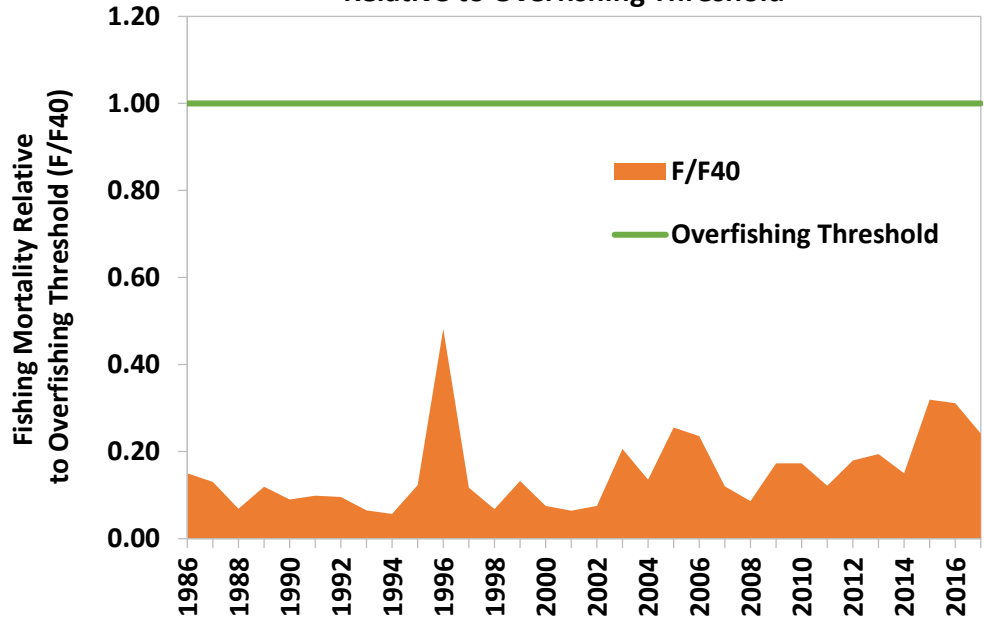


While SSB has undergone a steep decline since the 2013 peak, SSB remains above the overfished threshold.

This assessment used re-calibrated recreational catch data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Landings of Atlantic cobia have generally increased since the 1980s, primarily driven by the recreational fishery, which accounts for about 96% of the total landings. Fishing mortality showed some increase in the most recent years, but did not approach the overfishing threshold, indicating the coastwide stock has not undergone overfishing during the assessment timeframe.

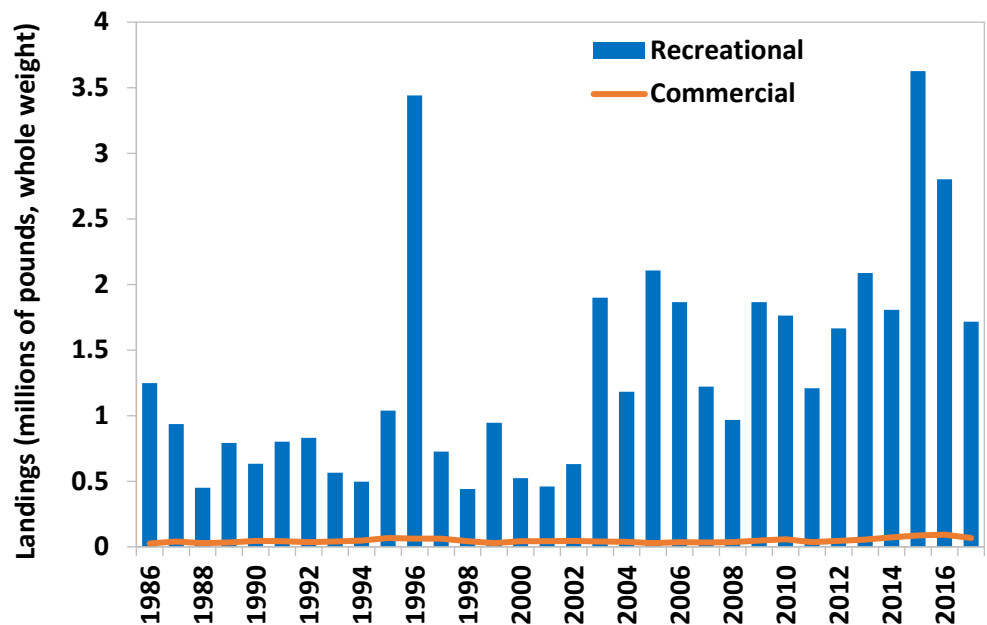
Several projections of the population under different harvest scenarios were conducted, describing predicted trends in biomass and the probability of the stock becoming overfished through 2024. The TC recommended harvest quota levels to the Board based on projections that maintained a low probability of the stock becoming overfished and did not result in consistent declines in SSB. Based on the assessment results and harvest projections, the Board approved an annual total harvest quota of 80,112 fish for the 2020-2022 fishing seasons. The Board maintained current recreational measures for 2020 while the states consider potential regulatory changes for future years.

Atlantic Cobia Fishing Mortality Relative to Overfishing Threshold



The Board also discussed recreational/commercial allocation as established by Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia, which currently allocates 92% of the total quota to the recreational fishery and 8% to the commercial fishery. These percentages were originally based on historical harvest from each sector within a period of reference years, prior to the re-calibration of MRIP estimates. With the re-calibration of the recreational data, the percentages of harvest in the reference period changed, resulting in the current commercial allocation percentage being higher than its percentage of total harvest during the reference period. In response to this, the Board initiated an addendum to reevaluate allocation. The Board also noted potential regulatory inconsistencies among *de minimis* states and determined the *de minimis* measures should be reconsidered through the addendum.

Atlantic Cobia Recreational and Commercial Landings



The SEDAR 58 Report is available at

http://www.asmf.org/uploads/file/5e3d99a3SEDAR58_AtlCobiaAssessment_PeerReviewReport.pdf

. An overview will be available on the Commission’s website, www.asmf.org, on the Cobia page under Stock Assessment Reports. For more information, please contact Dr. Mike Schmidtke, FMP Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org.

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PR20-06

ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Atlantic Croaker and Spot Addenda

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved Addendum III to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Croaker and Addendum III to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate FMPs for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout. These Addenda adjust management of Atlantic croaker and spot through their respective Traffic Light Approaches (TLA).

Through the annual analysis of the TLA, which assigns a color (red, yellow, or green) to characterize relative levels of indicators that reflect the condition of the fish population (abundance characteristic) or fishery (harvest characteristic). If the amount of red, indicating low abundance or low harvest, in both characteristics exceeds threshold levels (30% and 60%) for too many years, management action is triggered. In 2018, the Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee and Spot Plan Review Team recommended updates to their respective TLAs that would incorporate additional fishery-independent indices, age information, use of regional characteristics, and changes to the management-triggering mechanism.

These Addenda change the management-triggering mechanisms to enact coastwide management if the amounts of red for both the harvest and abundance characteristics within a region (Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic) exceed threshold levels for 3 of the 4 most recent years for Atlantic croaker and 2 of the 3 most recent years for spot. The Addenda also define commercial and recreational management responses to triggers at each threshold level (see table below). Finally, the Addenda define the processes for evaluating the fisheries while triggered measures are in place and determining when triggered measures may be removed.

Management Triggers & Reponses for Atlantic Croaker & Spot

Species	Recreational		Commercial	
	30% Threshold	60% Threshold	30% Threshold	60% Threshold
Atlantic Croaker	Bag Limit: up to 50 fish for non- <i>de minimis</i> states	Bag Limit: up to 40 fish for all states	Measures to achieve 1% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for non- <i>de minimis</i> states with no regulations	Measures to achieve 5% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for all states
Spot	Bag Limit: up to 50 fish for non- <i>de minimis</i> states	Bag Limit: up to 40 fish for all states	Measures to achieve 1% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for non- <i>de minimis</i> states with no regulations	Measures to achieve 10% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for all states

Note: Regulations will not go into effect unless management is triggered by the TLA Analysis.

Both Addenda were approved for immediate implementation by the states of New Jersey through Florida. The next TLA analyses will be presented to the Board at the Commission's 2020 Summer Meeting.

The Addenda will be available on the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org (on the Atlantic Croaker and Spot webpages) by mid-February. For more information, please contact Dr. Mike Schmidtke, FMP Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR20-05

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board met to review and consider acceptance of the Atlantic Cobia Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review (see above press release), take final action on Draft Addenda for Atlantic Croaker and Spot (see above press release), consider initiating changes to the Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and discuss a roadmap for the next red drum stock assessment.

The Board discussed initiating management action to align state and federal management of Spanish mackerel. A federal commercial closure in 2019 prompted state, Commission, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) staff to compare Spanish mackerel management through the Commission's Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plans (FMP) for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout (Omnibus Amendment) with that of the SAFMC's FMP for Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region (CMP FMP). Differences between these plans exist in terms of recreational season definition, allowable gears, commercial management zones, recreational accountability measures, and commercial trip limits. The Board was presented with a summary of the differences between the FMPs. The Board noted the next stock assessment is scheduled for completion in 2022. This assessment will incorporate re-calibrated recreational catch estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), which will likely impact harvest quotas and other management measures. The Board decided action on the current differences between the FMPs can be postponed until after the stock assessment.

The Board also reviewed a proposal from the Red Drum Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) concerning the next red drum stock assessment. Previous assessments have had difficulty modeling red drum due to limited data on fish larger than the current slot limit, which can disproportionately contribute reproductively to the stock. It was recommended population simulation models be developed that would simulate the full red drum population, then test a variety of assessment modeling techniques to determine which would be most useful with a peer review in 2022. The SAS noted this project will require a substantial work and modeling expertise and would change the timeline for delivery of the next red drum assessment. The Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review of red drum, currently scheduled for 2022, would be postponed until 2024. The Board agreed with the SAS's proposal, tasked the SAS with conducting the simulation project, and recommended that the Interstate Fishery Management Program Policy Board adjust the stock assessment schedule accordingly.

For more information, please contact Dr. Michael Schmidtke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Atlantic Cobia

Move to accept the SEDAR 58 Atlantic Cobia Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Reports and the recommended F40-based biological reference points for management use.

Motion made by Dr. Rhodes and seconded by Ms. Fegley. Motion carries unanimously.

Main Motion

Move to recommend a 2.4 million pound annual quota for cobia for 2020-2022 with status quo recreational measures in 2020.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion tabled.

Motion to Table

Move to table motion until after red drum items.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Dr. Rhodes.

Main Motion as Modified

Move to recommend an 80,112 fish annual quota for cobia for 2020-2022 with status quo recreational measures in 2020.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries unanimously. (Roll call: In favor – NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS)

Move to initiate an addendum to reevaluate the recreational and commercial allocations for cobia and reconsider *de minimis* measures.

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion passes unanimously.

Atlantic Croaker Addendum III

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 1, for Atlantic Croaker Addendum III.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 2, for Atlantic Croaker Addendum III.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, sub-option B1, under Issue 3, for Atlantic Croaker Addendum III.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded Mr. Estes. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 4, for Atlantic Croaker Addendum III.

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Spot Addendum III

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 1, for Spot Addendum III.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Batsavage. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 2, for Spot Addendum III.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, sub-option B2, under Issue 3, for Spot Addendum III.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Option B, under Issue 4, for Spot Addendum III.

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion passes approved unanimously.

Move to approve Addendum III to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plans for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout, and Addendum III to Amendment 1 to the croaker Fishery Management Plan as modified today with an immediate implementation date.

Motion made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Ms. Bolen. Motion passes unanimously. Roll call: In favor – NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS)

Move to elect Lynn Fegley as Vice Chair of the South Atlantic Board.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Haymans. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 6, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee met and discussed several issues including: 1) allocation of remaining plus-up funds; 2) Public input process; 3) Management Board changes to accommodate shifts in species distributions; 4) Use of Modes split in Recreational Fisheries Management and 5) future Commission Annual Meetings. The following action items resulted from the Committee's discussions:

- **Allocation of remaining plus-up funds** – Staff presented options for allocating the remaining plus-up funds and the Committee had a good discussion on potential projects. An interactive spreadsheet will be developed and utilized by the Executive Committee to rank the nine projects presented for funding. Allocation of the plus-up funds will be reconsidered at the Spring Executive Committee meeting.
- **Public input process** – Staff presented the details of Advisory Panel (AP) participation by species panels, and it was determined that there is generally poor attendance and participation across most APs. After some discussion it was recognized that the old way of getting public input is becoming less effective, due in large part to the use of social media and technology, and the Commission needs to update its public input process. The Management & Science Committee (MSC) has been tasked with recommending better ways to engage stakeholders and capture public input. This will be on the agenda for the Spring Executive Committee meeting.
- **Management Board changes to accommodate shifts in species distributions** – In light of species distribution shifts due to Climate Change, the question of when is a state obligated to participate in a species management board has been asked. A healthy discussion ensued, with a number of thought-provoking ideas offered. The Chair will task the MSC with recommending better ways to engage stakeholders and capture public input. This will be on the agenda for the Summer Executive Committee meeting.

- Modes split in Recreational Fisheries Management – Concern has been raised about the fairness of allowing differential access to for-hire and private angler fisheries. The recent bluefish decision to allow a larger possession limit for individuals on for-hire trips compared to private boat and shore anglers was used as an example of differential access. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of managing public resources and fairness is an important part of that charge. A work group was established to develop a policy on this issue and will report out to the Executive Committee at the Spring Meeting.
- Future Annual Meetings – The Commission’s next four Annual Meetings will be held in New Jersey (2020), North Carolina (2021), Maryland (2022) and Delaware (2023).

The Committee also discussed the membership of the Commission’s Legislative Committee; coordination of the whelk fishery along the Atlantic coast; Pennsylvania’s membership on the Atlantic Menhaden Board and MRIP invoice from the states.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

No motions made.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (FEBRUARY 6, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The ISFMP Policy Board met to consider a number of issues, including an update from the Executive Committee; review of the 2020 Commissioner survey results; process implications for the Ecological Reference Points (ERPs) Assessment; update on the progress of the shad and lobster benchmark stock assessments; and review of the definitions for stock status categories.

The Commission Chair Pat Keliher presented the Executive Committee Report (see Executive Committee meeting summary earlier in this document) to the Policy Board.

Deke Tompkins presented the results of the 2019 Commissioner survey, highlighting that there were no significant changes from the previous year regarding Commissioner satisfaction on the progress and actions of the Commission. Areas highlighted for improvement included cooperation between Commissioners, the Commission’s ability to manage rebuilt stocks, and progress to end overfishing.

Dr. Katie Drew provided a summary of the ERPs assessment presented at the Atlantic Menhaden Board meeting earlier in the week (see press release). There is no one answer for how to manage under ERPs. The ERP Assessment provides tools to evaluate trade-offs of different management objectives for various predator and prey populations and fisheries. The Policy Board discussed how management decisions could be made for ERPs and how those decisions could impact decisions of other management boards and vice versa. For example, if ERPs were adopted as presented but the Atlantic Striped Bass Board changed its single-species reference points, the ERP values would then change. A decision by one species board could impact the actions of another board, which raised the question of what body should

make ERP decisions or decisions impacting ERPs. In its discussions, the Policy Board discussed the need to minimize the complexity of decision-making as the Commission moves towards ecosystem-based fisheries management. The Policy Board recognized the Commission may need to develop a framework within the ISFMP for ecosystem management and will continue the discussion in May.

Jeff Kipp provided an update on two ongoing benchmark stock assessments. The American lobster stock assessment will be peer-reviewed in the summer of 2020. A reference point workshop was held in October 2019 and the last modeling workshop will be in February 2020. The American shad stock assessment will be peer-reviewed in the spring of 2020. The last modeling workshop was in November of 2019. The Policy Board discussed a change in the timing of the next red drum benchmark stock assessment as recommended by the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board. The Policy Board approved a two-stage assessment process, which includes two years of work devoted to simulation analysis with a peer review in 2022 and a subsequent two years of work devoted to a traditional benchmark stock assessment with a peer review in 2024.

In August 2019, the Policy Board reviewed the annual performance of the stocks, which provides the Board a review of the stock status, technical committee advice, and management board actions for Commission species. Based on its review, it suggested that the current stock categories were not broad enough for all of the Commission species. At its meeting this week, the Policy Board approved adding overfished and overfishing to the stock categories.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

No motions made.

BUSINESS SESSION (FEBRUARY 6, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Business Session (also known as the full Commission) met to receive an update on the Commonwealth of Virginia's efforts to come back into compliance with the Atlantic Menhaden FMP. The Business Session thanked the Secretary of Commerce for his support and concurrence with the Commission's non-compliance finding. The Virginia General Assembly is working toward approving legislation to bring the state back into compliance with the FMP. A bill has passed the House of Delegates and a similar bill will be considered by the Senate in the coming weeks. Upon written notification from Virginia that they are fully in compliance, the Commission Chair will submit a letter to the Secretary of Commerce to remove the potential moratorium.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Executive Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

No motions made.