ASMFC Commissioner Survey Results

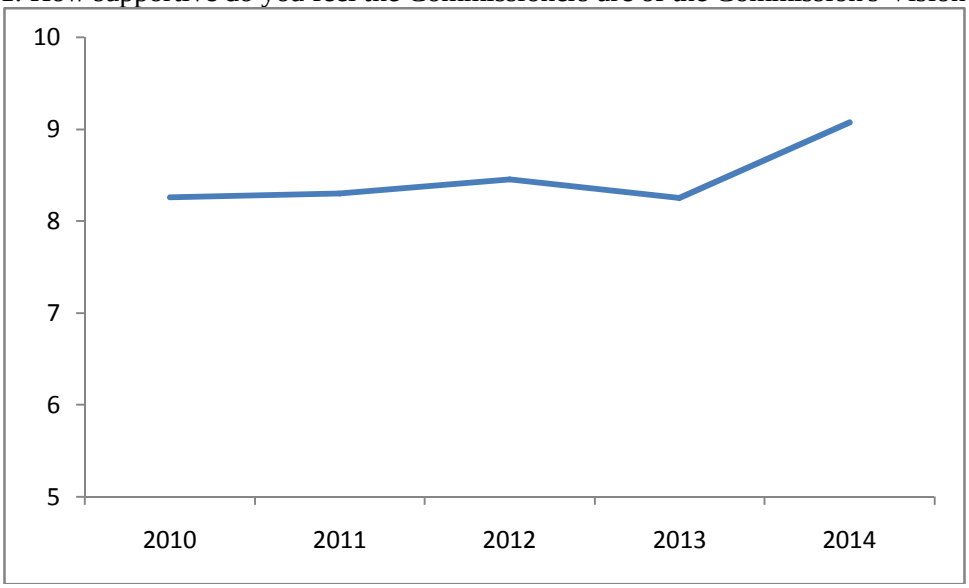
January 29, 2014

The following is a summary of the ASMFC Commissioner Survey results which represent the responses of 27 Commissioners. For each question, the average score by year is presented. The responses ranged from 1 through 10. The higher the average, the more positive the response from the Commissioners.

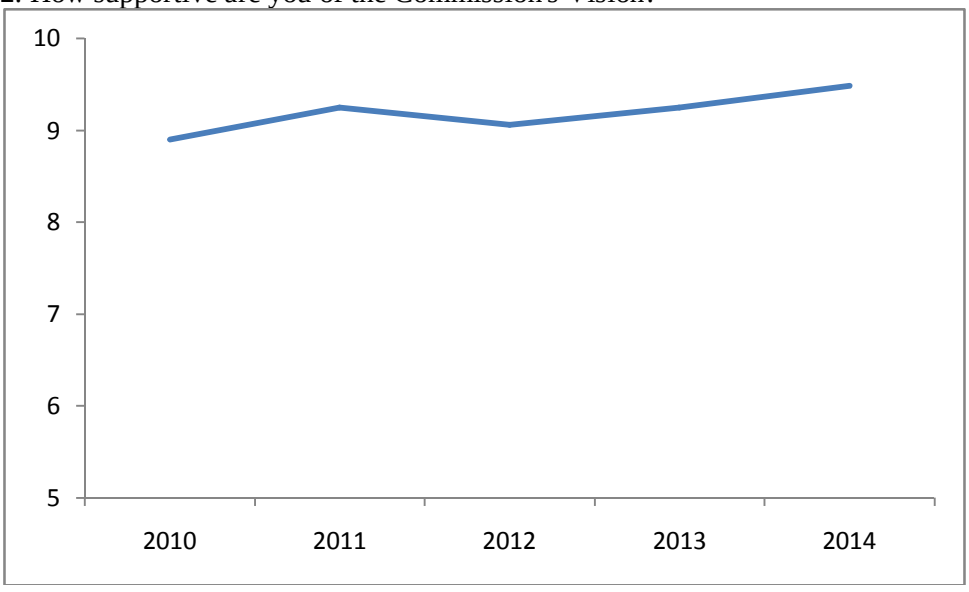
The data is presented in graph form to allow for comparison between years. The 2010 results were based on a response ranging from 1 through 5, so the value was doubled for comparison to future responses.

Overall Vision and Goals of the Commission

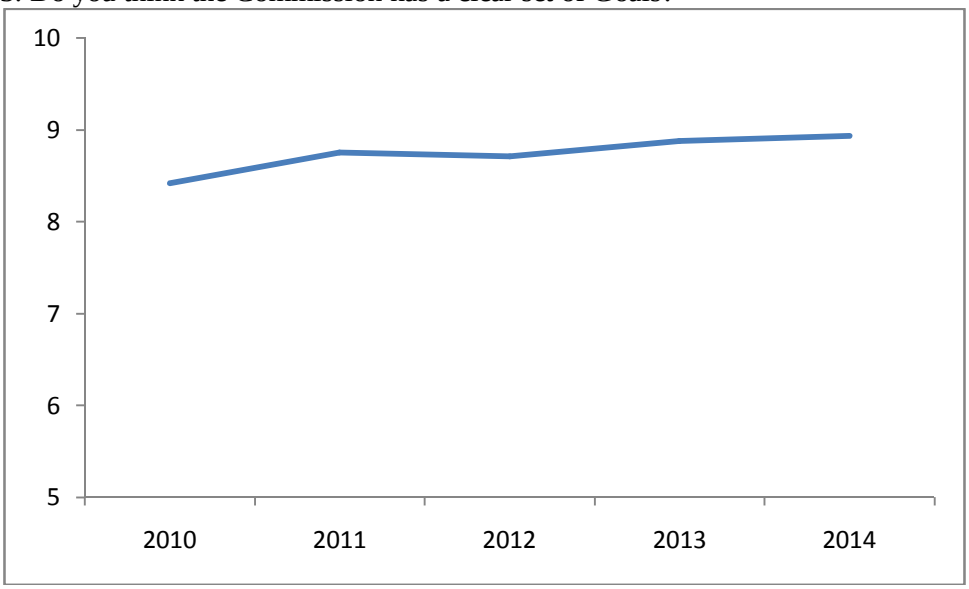
1. How supportive do you feel the Commissioners are of the Commission's Vision?



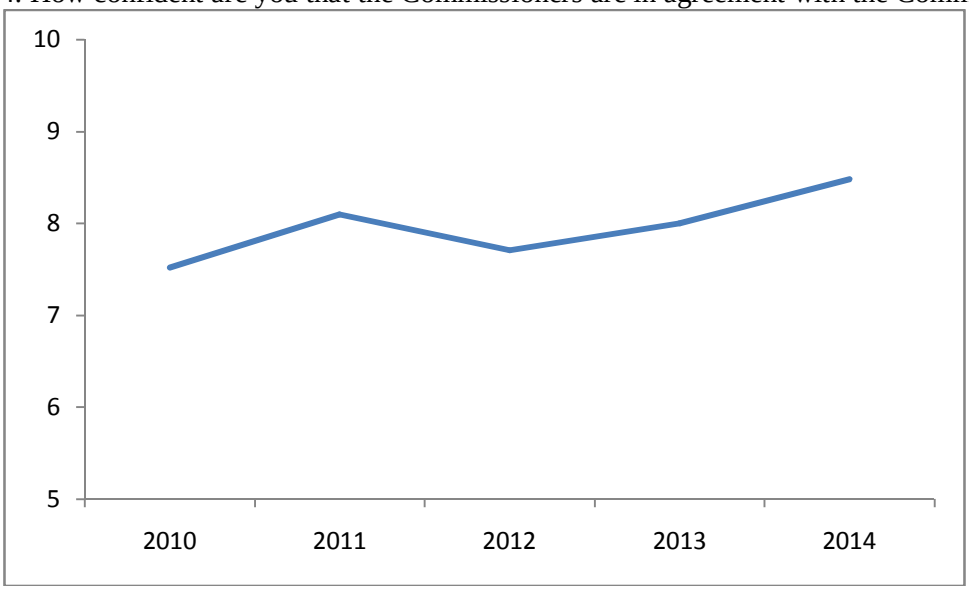
2. How supportive are you of the Commission's Vision?



3. Do you think the Commission has a clear set of Goals?

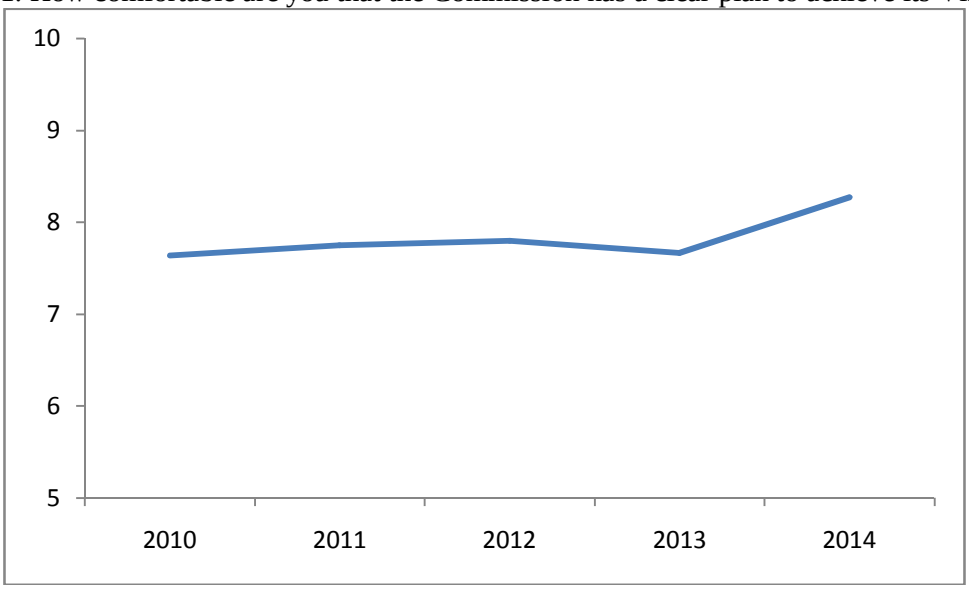


4. How confident are you that the Commissioners are in agreement with the Commission's Goals?

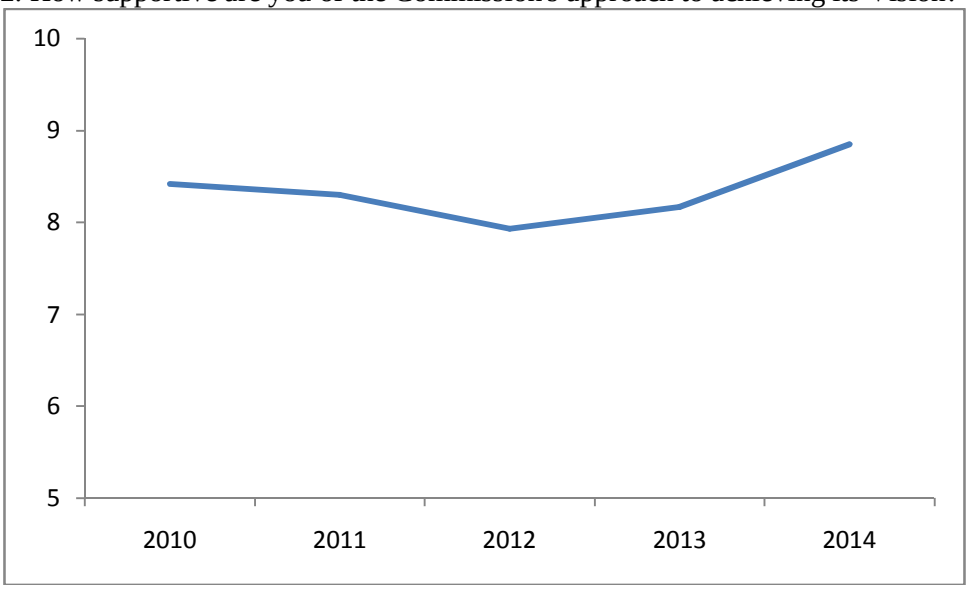


Commission's Plans to Carry Out the Vision

1. How comfortable are you that the Commission has a clear plan to achieve its Vision?

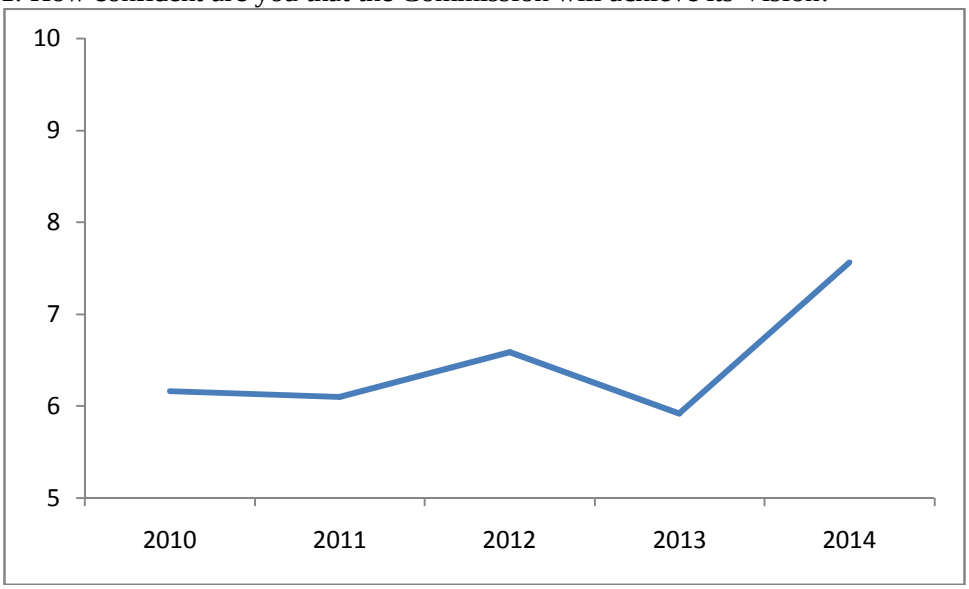


2. How supportive are you of the Commission's approach to achieving its Vision?

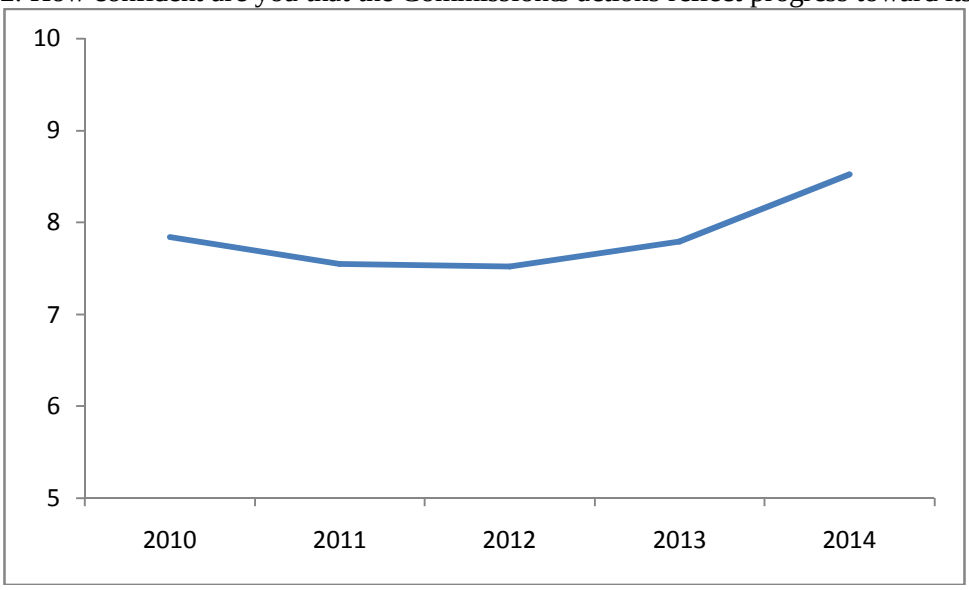


Commission's Execution and Results

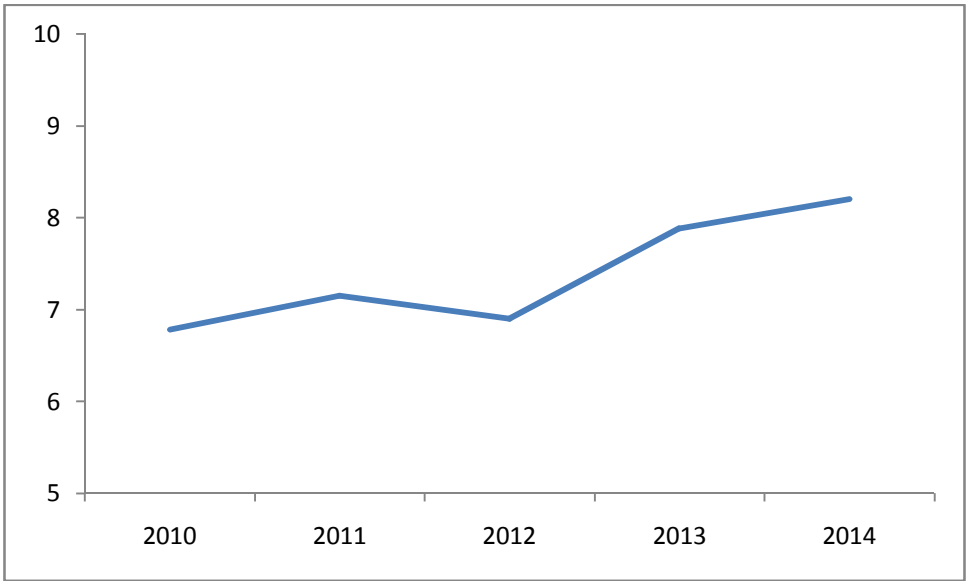
1. How confident are you that the Commission will achieve its Vision?



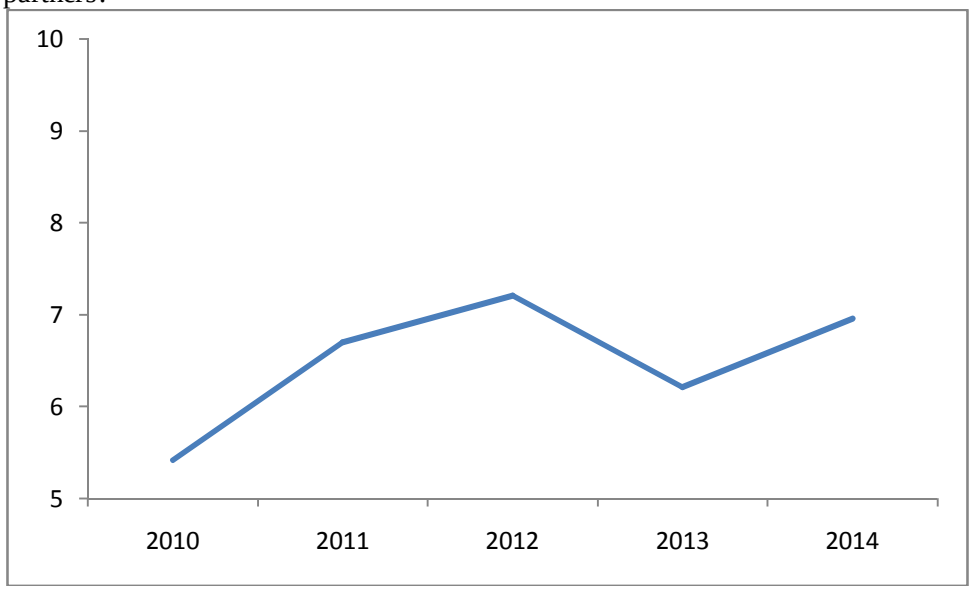
2. How confident are you that the Commissionôs actions reflect progress toward its Vision?



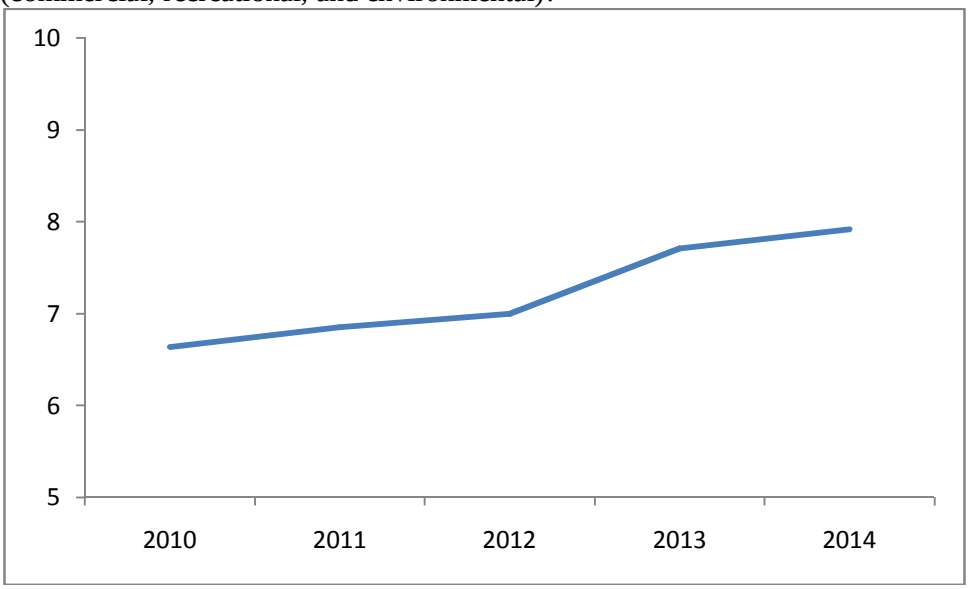
3. How satisfied are you with the cooperation between Commissioners to achieve the Commission's Vision?



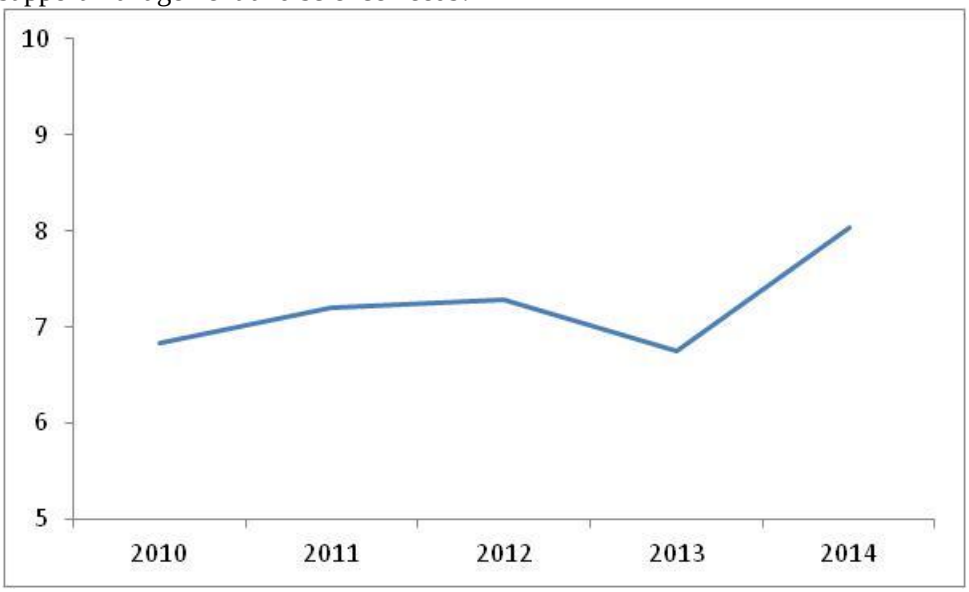
4. How satisfied are you that the Commission has an appropriate level of cooperation with federal partners?



5. How satisfied are you with the Commission's working relationship with our constituent partners (commercial, recreational, and environmental)?

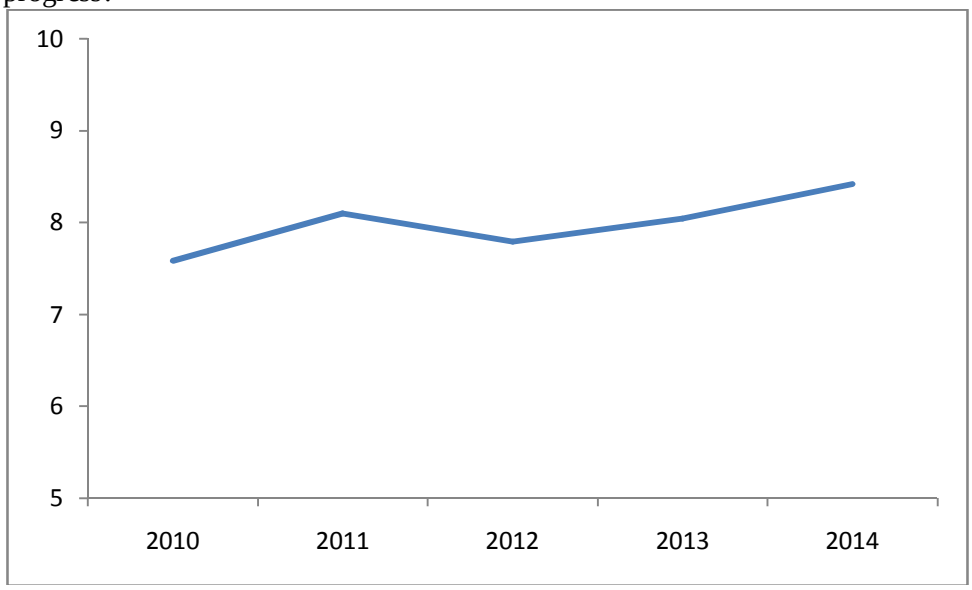


6. How satisfied are you with the Commission's effort and success in securing adequate fiscal resources to support management and science needs?

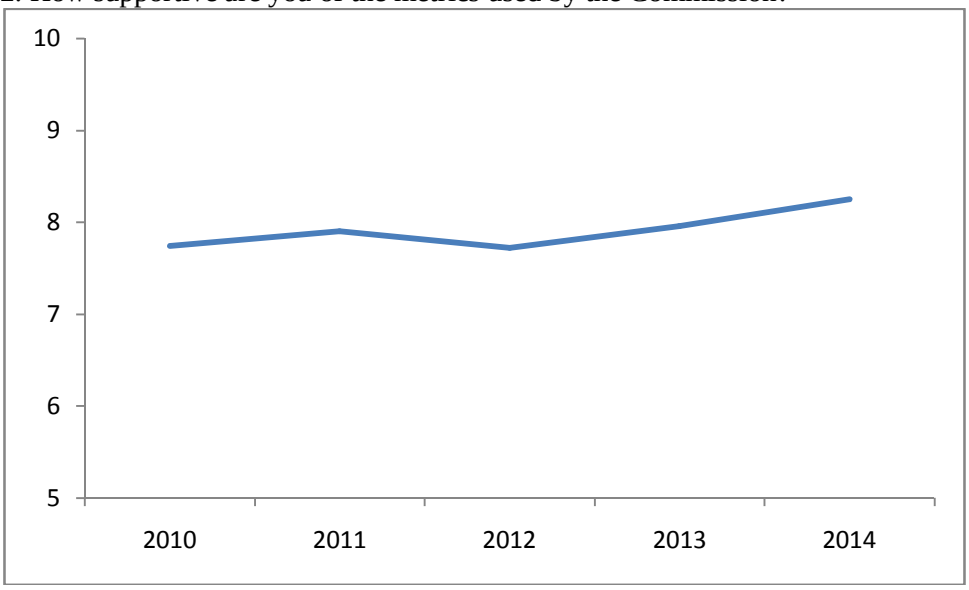


Measuring the Commission's Progress and Results

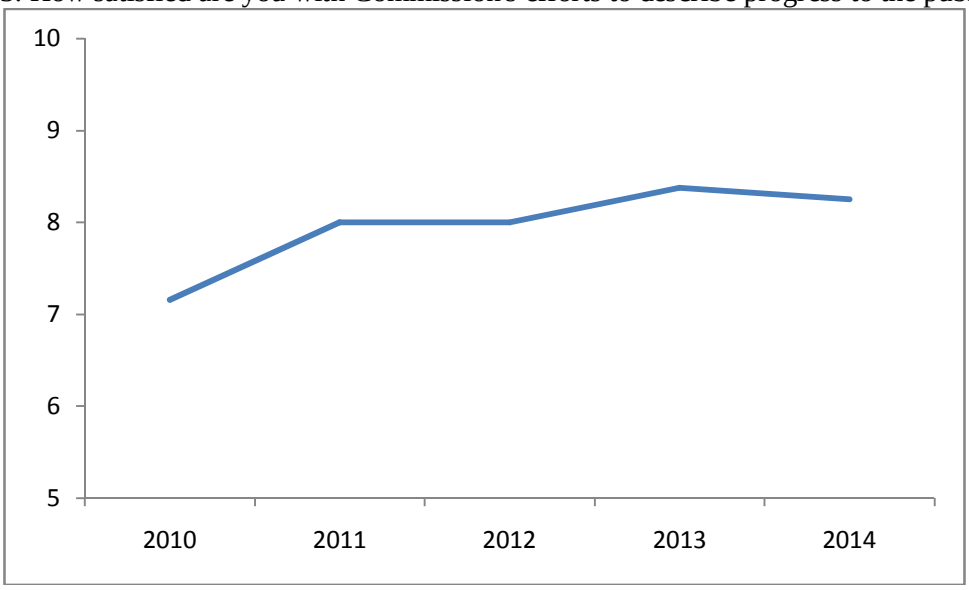
1. One of the metrics the Commission uses to measure progress is tracking the number of stocks that have been rebuilt over time. How comfortable are you that the Commission uses clear metrics to measure progress?



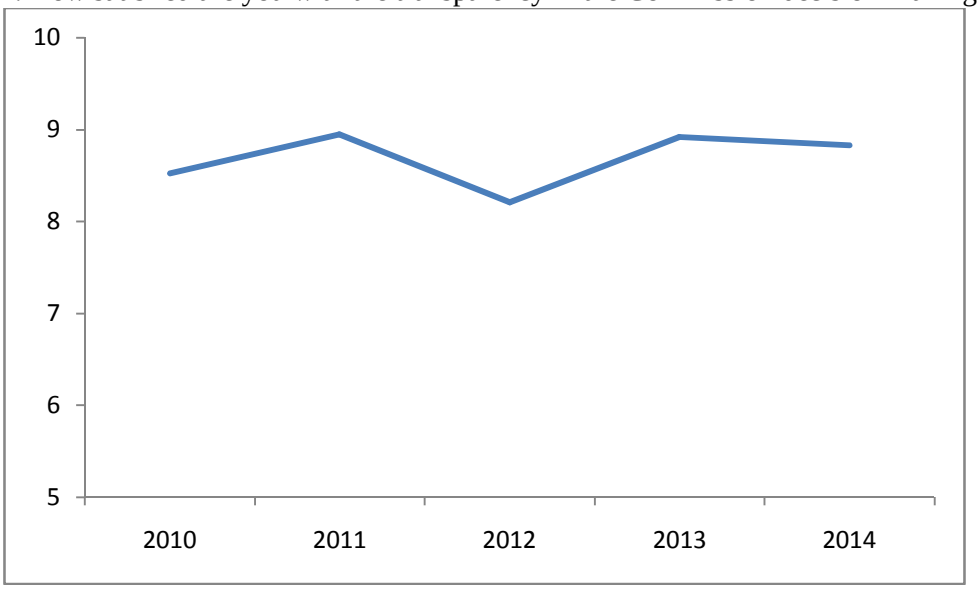
2. How supportive are you of the metrics used by the Commission?



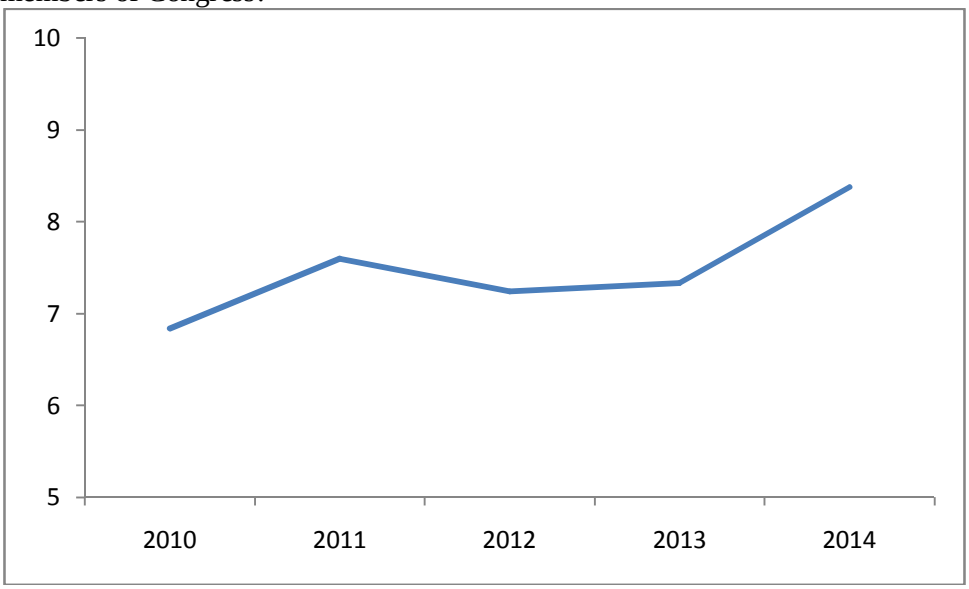
3. How satisfied are you with Commission's efforts to describe progress to the public and stakeholders?



4. How satisfied are you with the transparency in the Commission decision-making process?

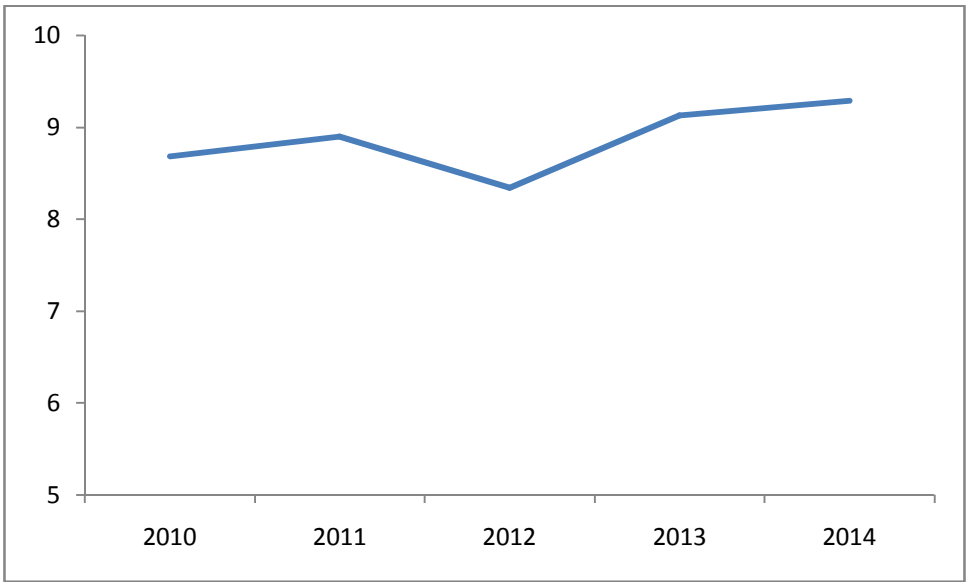


5. How satisfied are you with the Commission's efforts to describe progress to state legislators and members of Congress?

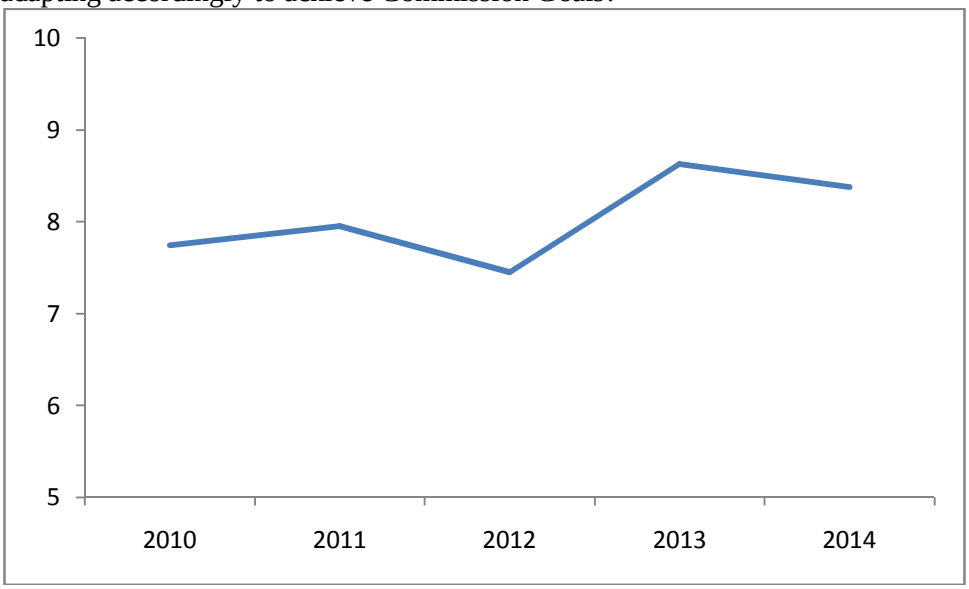


Measuring the Availability and Utilization of Commission Resources

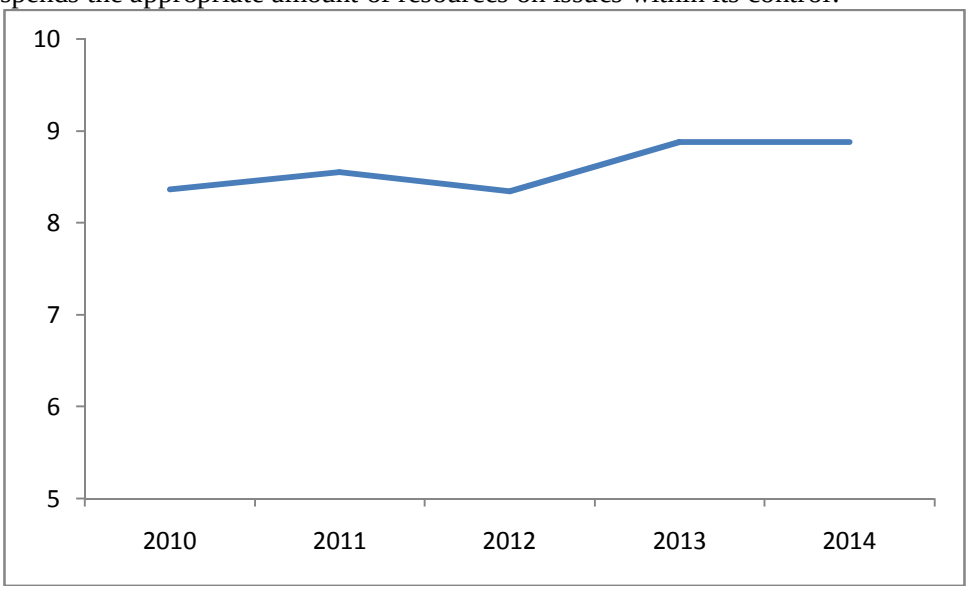
1. How satisfied are you that the Commission efficiently and effectively utilizes available fiscal and human resources?



2. How comfortable are you with the Commission's performance in reacting to new information and adapting accordingly to achieve Commission Goals?



3. The Commission has a limited scope of authority. How comfortable are you that the Commission spends the appropriate amount of resources on issues within its control?



Discussion Questions

What is the single most significant problem the Commission could and should solve?

- Developing realistic goals and objectives that are reflective of factors (e.g., natural) that are beyond the Commission's control.
- Continue to work through Congress to secure adequate fiscal support for the interstate fishery management process.
- End over fishing promptly.
- Access and Q/A-Q?C of the arm of ASMFC (ACCSP) is a very substantial problem because the data are the fundamental element of all the ASMFC plans.
- Lack of constituent buy-in to what the Commission is doing and how they reach their decisions. Not all of this is in the Commission's control - some is at the federal level which impacts Commission species. If those that are impacted by the Commission's decisions don't believe or support what is being done - then many management practices put into place will fail because the constituency will ignore those new practices.
- Simply must find more stable resources to realize our goals.
- Getting the proper science and social impacts.
- Sustaining fisheries.
- Multi-species management.
- Decline of forage species.
- Making more timely and responsive management decisions that reflect the Commission's vision.
- Equity in allocation of resources managed under federal authority. ASMFC is better equipped to adjust management in response to sometimes rapidly changing environmental conditions.
- Lack of public confidence in stock assessments and management actions that are based on questionable science and conclusions.
- Ending over fishing on all the resources the Commission manages.
- Depends on the day, my opinion changes.
- What is considered a problem is inherently different depending on the role each commissioner holds. A stakeholder from industry might see communicating with small interests that have less organization as a problem that could be addressed.
- Depleted or overfished species.
- Anticipate changes to procedures that will be necessary to respond to climate/habitat changes. There will need to be a way to incorporate projected changes in stocks, habitats, etc., in assessments and setting various levels. Ocean acidity is likely to be an enormous issue for ASMFC stocks in the future.
- Address species listed as overfished-unknown by declaring they are or not and taking necessary action to correct status.
- Providing a high level of confidence in the research and monitoring for successful stock assessments giving the continued reduction in funding
- The total recovery of menhaden to a truly significant level of abundancy (throughout the entire range) would be a major problem solved and result in significant ecological improvement for the entire ecosystem. It would also result in major public support and political endorsement.
- Stakeholder access to meetings where final decisions are made.

- Allocation schemes and parity amongst states.

2. What is the single most important change the Commission could make to improve results?
   - More aggressive pursuit of meaningful and effective reform of the recreational catch and effort data collection program.
   - The Commission must be willing to prioritize the use of finite fiscal and human resources to focus on those stocks that are most in need of management.
   - Act on tough issues instead of kicking the can down the road.
   - Establish more stock assessment scientists housed under ASMFC. I have thought this way since 1993. State personnel should provide data and information and review assessment results in the technical committee process, but the track record for state personnel being intimately involved with the assessments is fraught with bias.
   - Continue to move to an adaptive management approach to help ensure appropriate action - positive and negative - can occur as stock conditions change. The FMP's need to be more flexible to allow for these changes to occur.
   - Get Congress and the Administration to recognize the uniqueness of the Commission within the NOAA budget.
   - Not sure.
   - A solid strategic plan, with well-defined goals and clear objectives.
   - Narrow the scope to achieve success on a manageable level of station
   - Ecosystem based management.
   - Before making major policy decisions ask if the pending decision reflects the Commission's vision.
   - Make a clear distinction between who manages state waters vs federal waters. ASMFC has allowed the MAFMC too much control of state water fisheries.
   - Creating better opportunities for "qualified" stakeholder input in the TC-related processes, including stock assessments and PDT's. This would enhance public perceptions and cut down on second-guessing.
   - Modify FMP's to adapt to changing resource distributions and abundance.
   - Make adequate data collection a mandatory element of all FMP.
   - Results are in the eye of the beholder. From a stakeholder perspective the Commission could consider economic impacts more.
   - More attention to re-building or restoring depleted or overfished species, even if it results in disruptions of existing fisheries.
   - More resources, staff, to conduct assessments.
   - It's already been changed since Bob Beal has taken the reins....we are heading in the right direction.
   - Suggest that more than one meeting a year be scheduled outside of Alexandria so that more people impacted by our decisions have an opportunity to attend the meetings.
   - Impart more flexibility.

3. What is the single biggest obstacle to the Commission's success?
   - Imprecise recreational catch and effort data; inconsistencies among states in helping to collect that data. 2. Scientific uncertainty, particularly with regard to black sea bass.

- The diminishing capability of member state natural resource agencies to support interstate fishery management.
- Global warming.
- Public perception, in that many stake holders think they are not included in decisions and that decisions (mandates) are not based on realistic fisheries performance, as they view performance. Especially, there remains a strong perception in the public that too many decisions have a political or regional bias.
- Funding, improved & increased data collection programs and increased science/stock assessment staff.
- Lack of resources.
- The federal NMFS obstacle and giving in to political pressure
- Buy-in from all interests.
- Too many species for the amount of money we have to control.
- Political bickering between states.
- Political influence of stakeholders.
- Two primary issues come to mind. Full delegation participation at the Board level has opened the door to conflict of interest concerns which the Commission is doing a good job of addressing. Second, is the subservient position ASMFC holds in "Joint" management plans with MAFMC. Simply it seems now that ASMFC is relied on to make management happen especially in recreational fisheries but MAFCM under the federal process aggressively holds onto the key control elements in setting ACLs, allocations, etc always careful to impose the least restrictions on federal waters fisheries either recreational or commercial. ASMFC has done well with STB and could do a better job with other species if it took a greater leading role.
- Its limited authority over major habitat issues.
- Having the fiscal resources necessary to effectively manage Atlantic coastal fisheries.
- Lack of the data needed to accurately assess the stock sizes of so many managed species.
- Politics and agendas. Getting complete stakeholder input. That's 2..sorry
- The Commission can only regulate fishing and has little to no ability to restore species that are not being overfished.
- Regional conflicts over shared management of certain species, as we have seen with Menhaden, Stripers, Lobsters, etc. This is not an obstacle that is "overcome," necessarily, because it is an essential part of the process, but we may need to think about ways to address such expected conflicts better.
- Appropriate and continued funding to meet the needs of the Commission.
- Lack of resources (and time) within the state agencies.
- The implications of the Endangered Species Act, and the resulting unfunded mandates from our Federal partners is a source of major frustration and annoyance. How sad that such a counterproductive wedge could be driven into the management plan. We need solidarity and cooperation, not arrogant dictates, from our federal partners.
- Adequate funding.
- NMFS.

4. Is the Commission using appropriate metrics to measure progress? If no, what metrics should be used?

- Yes and no. Ecosystem-based approaches seem to hold the most promise, but hard to envision an objective set of metrics that could be used to assess ecosystem-based "progress" or "success."
- The metrics are suitable given the tools available and practicable for management.
- Yes.
- Metrics change according to the status of stocks, and I do not think that can change, as it is a strong point.
- The metrics are appropriate but designating success strictly by whether or not a stock is rebuilt is somewhat short sighted. Stock improvements, habitat enhancements, increased public by-in, "sustainable" fisheries (i.e. the fishing industry) - are also metrics that could be used to show progress is being made even if the stock is not yet determined rebuilt.
- Yes.
- It's doing its best.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes, but we must spend more time looking at the bigger picture.
- Yes.
- Need to emphasize fishing mortality metrics over biomass given that under current low exploitation for most species our control over biomass is not what it used to be.
- Far too much reliance on fishery-dependent statistics. Catch modeling is a poor substitute for putting more nets in the water in support of fishery-independent surveys.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- For the most part. More emphasis is needed on multispecies management rather than single species.
- As noted above, how to use projected changes due to climate/habitat changes. And how to better integrate new science from ecology-based management practices.
- Yes.
- If a stock assessment is the determining factor to measure success, and these assessments are getting more complex, more data hungry, taking longer to complete, and sometimes do not pass peer review, then the answer is no. Simpler methods like the traffic light approach are easily conducted and understood by the general public. Reliable and consistent catch AND effort data need to be used to evaluate annual CPUE compared to 5-year, 10-year, 20-year, and long-term averages. Fishing demographics, environmental conditions, and species spatial and temporal distributions will vary from year to year. It's important that we don't judge the results of today against only those from a pre-set and possibly unachievable era 20 to 50 years ago.

5. Additional comments?
- We have the best Staff and excellent Leadership, we just need to secure the resources necessary to keep moving forward!
- No.
- ASMFC is a good place to manage important coastal fisheries. We should move toward complimentary management for species also under federal management. We are more

nimble being able to adjust quickly to changing conditions/needs and all states are equally represented under ASMFC.

- Thanks for the chance to provide this input.
- Considering the obstacles to efficient fisheries management faced by ASMFC, I think it is doing a pretty good job overall.
- Question #4*6 should be 2 questions. The commission effort to secure funding is adequate, but the results are lacking possibly due to outside forces beyond commission control
- Equitable allocation of restored fisheries (like striped bass and summer flounder) is a continuing challenge. Managing species in more of an ecosystem context is another challenge (multi-species management).
- I would request the following from ASMFC leadership: 1. Encourage use of complete words/phrases rather than acronyms. The latter can be very confusing, especially to those of us who are not PhD scientists. 2. Refrain from the use of the "cutoff" button when members of the public are expressing opinions. I highly value the feedback thus offered, and would be grateful to have some commissioner dialogue (questions, comments, etc.) in response to the input thus provided from these concerned citizens.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

January 28, 2014

To: ISFMP Policy Board

From: Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director

RE: Annual Performance of the Stock Definitions

Each August the Commission releases the Annual Performance of the Stocks Overview. The overview provides a gauge on how well stocks are performing in comparison to their reference points and the actions boards have taken in the past few years. Commission species are divided into 5 categories: Rebuilt, Rebuilding, Concern, Depleted, and Unknown. The Policy Board tasked staff to define these categories and some of the terms used throughout the document. Staff suggests the following language be added to the overview.

The majority of Commission's Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) specify a reference points for determining when a stock is subject to overfishing or overfished. The Commission uses stock assessments (an analysis of the abundance and of a stock composition) to evaluate the stock relative to its reference points. Benchmark stock assessments use the best information available, including catch data, scientific surveys, and biological and ecological studies, and then are peer reviewed by independent scientists before considering it for management use.

Fishery management seeks to optimize the yield of a fishery in the long term, resulting in a harvest that is economically valuable and biologically sustainable. Management plans set target levels of stock abundance to ensure that the population is large enough to produce an economically valuable harvest, and fishing mortality rate targets to ensure that fish are not removed faster than the population can replace them.

A rebuilt stocks biomass is equal to or above the biomass level established by the FMP to ensure population sustainability. In rebuilding stocks, the biomass is approaching the target level established by the FMP to ensure population sustainability.

A stock that is overfished has been reduced to a level of abundance that cannot produce high catches, and may not reproduce as fast as a population that is above its biomass threshold. Stocks can be reduced below their biomass threshold for reasons other than fishing, such as environmental changes, disease, or habitat loss; in that case the population is said to be depleted, rather than overfished. However, the population still cannot sustain economically optimal levels of catch.

A stock that is experiencing overfishing is having fish removed at a rate faster than the population can sustain in the long run, which will lead to declines in the population.

An unknown stock is one that has no accepted stock assessment to estimate the stock status. Stocks of concern are those stocks developing emerging issues prior to the completion of a stock assessment.

Depleted	Reflects low levels of abundance though it is unclear whether fishing mortality is the primary cause for reduced stock size
Overfished	Occurs when stock biomass falls below the threshold established by the FMP, significantly reducing the stock's reproductive capacity to replace fish removed through harvest.
Overfishing	Occurs when fish are removed from a population at a rate that exceeds the threshold established in the FMP. A stock that is experiencing overfishing is having fish removed at a rate faster than the population can sustain in the long run, which will lead to declines in the population.
Rebuilding	Stock biomass is approaching the target level established by the FMP to ensure population sustainability.
Rebuilt	Stock biomass is equal to or above the biomass level established by the FMP to ensure population sustainability.
Stable/ Unchanged	Stock biomass has been consistent in recent years.
Unknown	There is no accepted stock assessment to estimate the stock status.
Benchmark stock assessment	A full analysis and review of stock condition, focusing on the consideration of new data sources and newer or improved assessment models. This assessment is generally conducted every 3-5 years and undergoes a formal peer review by a panel of independent scientists who evaluate whether the data and the methods used to produce the assessment are scientifically sound and appropriate for management use.
Stock assessment update	Incorporates data from the most recent years into a peer-reviewed assessment model to determine current stock status (abundance and overfishing levels)