

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2012



ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

*Healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species  
or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015*







# 2012 Annual Report

of the

## ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

To the Congress of the United States and to the  
Governors and Legislators of the Fifteen Compacting States



Presented in compliance with the terms of the Compact and the state-enabling acts creating such Commission and Public Law 539 -77th Congress assenting thereto (Chapter 283, Second Session, 77th Congress; 56 Stat. 267) approved May 4, 1942, as amended by Public Law 721, 81st Congress, approved August 19, 1950

Robert E. Beal, Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Arlington, VA 22201

Tina L. Berger, Editor  
February 2013

# Acronyms

## COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

<b>AAE</b>	Annual Awards of Excellence	<b>NEFMC</b>	New England Fishery Management Council
<b>ACCSP</b>	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program	<b>NEFSC</b>	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
<b>ACFHP</b>	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	<b>NFHAP</b>	National Fish Habitat Action Plan
<b>ACFCMA</b>	Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act	<b>NFWF</b>	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
<b>ACLs</b>	Annual catch limits	<b>NMFS</b>	National Marine Fisheries Service; also known as NOAA Fisheries
<b>ARM</b>	Adaptive Resource Management	<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>ASMFC</b>	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (also referred to as the Commission)	<b>PRT</b>	Plan Review Team
<b>BRDs</b>	Bycatch reduction devices	<b>SAFMC</b>	South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
<b>CPUE</b>	Catch-per-unit-effort	<b>SAW/SARC</b>	Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop and Stock Assessment Review Committee, respectively
<b>DPS</b>	Distinct population segments	<b>SCA</b>	Statistical Catch at Age
<b>ESA</b>	Endangered Species Act	<b>SCS</b>	Small Coastal Shark Complex
<b>F</b>	Fishing mortality	<b>SEAMAP</b>	Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program
<b>FMP</b>	Fishery Management Plan	<b>SEDAR</b>	SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review Process
<b>GARM</b>	Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting	<b>SEFSC</b>	Southeast Fisheries Science Center
<b>GBK</b>	Georges Bank	<b>SFMPs</b>	Sustainable Fishery Management Plans
<b>GOM</b>	Gulf of Maine	<b>SNE</b>	Southern New England
<b>ISFMP</b>	Interstate Fisheries Management Program	<b>SNE/MA</b>	Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic
<b>IJF</b>	Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act	<b>SPR</b>	Spawning potential ratio
<b>ITC</b>	Interstate Tagging Committee	<b>SRT</b>	Status Review Team
<b>LCMA</b>	Lobster Conservation Management Area	<b>SSB</b>	Spawning stock biomass
<b>LCS</b>	Large Coastal Shark Complex	<b>SSC</b>	Scientific and Statistical Committee
<b>MAFMC</b>	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	<b>TAC</b>	Total allowable catch
<b>MSP</b>	Maximum spawning potential	<b>TAL</b>	Total allowable landings
<b>MSTC</b>	Multispecies Technical Committee	<b>USFWS</b>	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>MSVPA-X</b>	Extended Multispecies Virtual Population Analysis	<b>VPA</b>	Virtual population analysis
<b>MSY</b>	Maximum sustainable yield		
<b>MT</b>	Metric tons		
<b>NEAMAP</b>	Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program		

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# Principles

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### MISSION

To promote cooperative management of fisheries – marine, shell and diadromous – of the Atlantic coast of the United States by the protection and enhancement of such fisheries, and by the avoidance of physical waste of the fisheries from any cause

### VISION

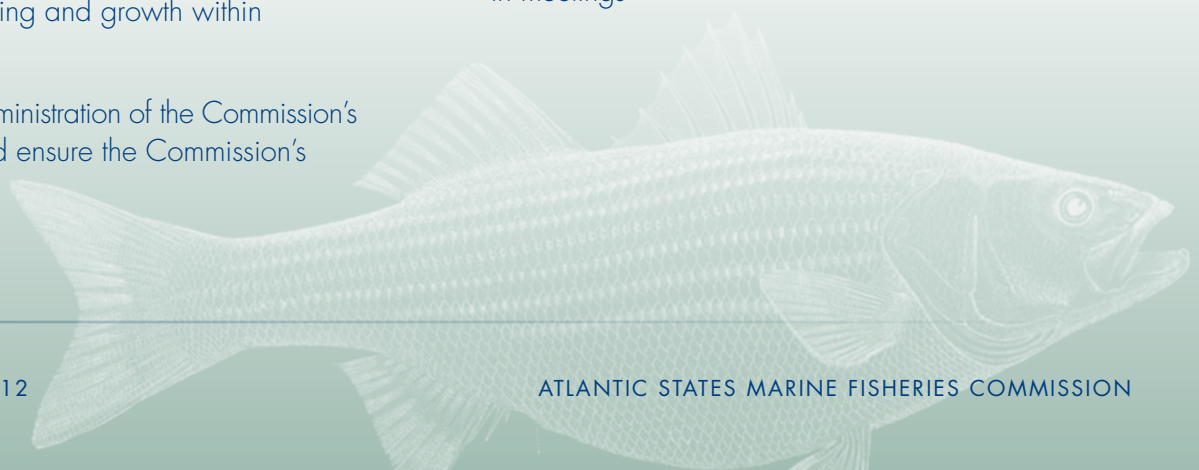
Healthy, self-sustaining fish populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

### GOALS

- 1 Rebuild and restore depleted Atlantic coastal fisheries, and maintain and fairly allocate recovered fisheries through cooperative regulatory planning
- 2 Strengthen cooperative research, data collection capabilities, and the scientific basis for stock assessments and fisheries management actions
- 3 Improve stakeholder compliance with Commission fishery management plans
- 4 Protect, restore, and enhance fish habitat and ecosystem health through partnerships, policy development, and education
- 5 Strengthen congressional, stakeholder, and public support for the Commission's Mission, Vision, and actions
- 6 Represent member states' collective interests at regional and national levels
- 7 Strengthen human resource management and enhance learning and growth within the Commission
- 8 Provide efficient administration of the Commission's business affairs and ensure the Commission's financial stability

### COMMISSIONER VALUES

- Effective stewardship of the Atlantic coast's marine resources
- Work cooperatively with honesty and integrity
- Transparency and accountability in all Commission actions
- Courage to make difficult decisions
- Forging a vision for the future
- Support decisions of the Commission
- Ensure the long-term financial stability of the Commission
- Respect for everyone involved in the Commission process
- Dedication to growth and learning
- Freedom and flexibility to solve problems creatively
- Commitment to preparation for and participation in meetings



# Commissioners

## COMMISSIONERS



### MAINE

Patrick C. Keliher  
Sen. Brian Langley  
Stephen R. Train

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David G. Simpson  
Rep. Craig A. Miner  
Dr. Lance L. Stewart

### DELAWARE

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Sen. Robert L. Venables, Jr.  
Roy W. Miller

### SOUTH CAROLINA

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Dr. Malcolm Rhodes

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Sen. David H. Watters  
G. Ritchie White

### NEW YORK

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Sen. Owen H. Johnson  
Patrick H. Augustine

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Sen. Richard F. Colburn  
William J. Goldsborough

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Rep. Jon G. Burns  
John Duren

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Rep. Sarah K. Peake  
William A. Adler

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Asm. Nelson T. Albano  
Thomas P. Fote

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Sen. Richard H. Stuart  
Catherine W. Davenport

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Sen. Thad Altman  
William R. Orndorf

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Rep. Peter F. Martin  
William A. McElroy

### PENNSYLVANIA

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Rep. Michael Vereb  
Loren W. Lustig

### NORTH CAROLINA

Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III  
Sen. Stan White  
Willard W. Cole, Jr.

# Preface

## PREFACE

The Commission was formed 70 years ago by the 15 Atlantic coast states to assist in managing and conserving their shared coastal fishery resources. With the recognition that fish do not adhere to political boundaries, the states formed an Interstate Compact, which was approved by the U.S. Congress in 1942. The states have found that their mutual interest in sustaining healthy coastal fishery resources is best promoted by working together cooperatively, in collaboration with the federal government. With this approach, the states uphold their collective fisheries management responsibilities in a cost-effective, timely, and responsive fashion.

The Commission's current budget is \$7.6 million. The base funding (\$603,421) comes from the member states' appropriations, which are determined by the value of commercial fishing landings and saltwater recreational trips within each state. The bulk of the Commission's funding comes from a combination of state and federal grants, the largest being a line-item in the NOAA Fisheries budget appropriated to implement the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA)

of 1993. The Commission also receives funds from NOAA Fisheries to carry out the mandates of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-659). The accompanying graph illustrates the benefits that states receive from ACFCMA and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IJF).

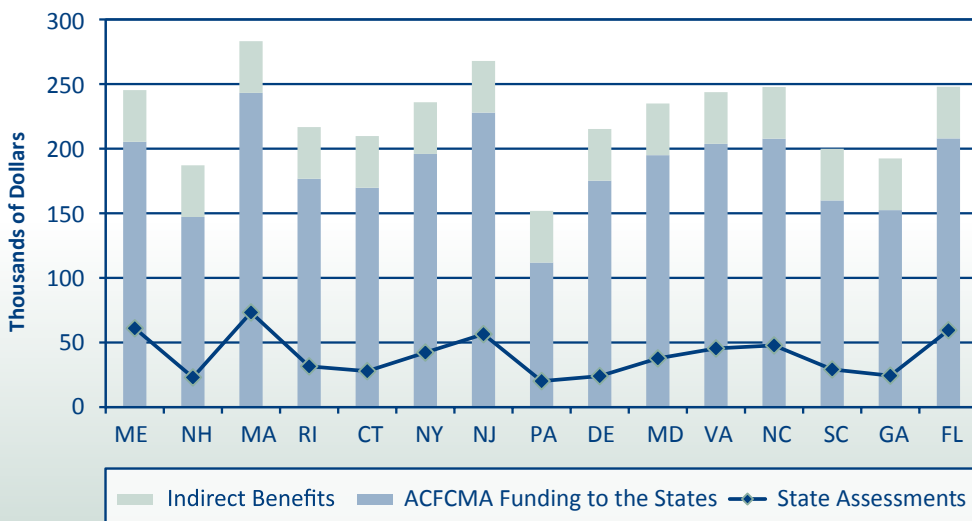
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) also provides grant funding to the Commission through its Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program (Wallop/Breaux). Also, since 1999 the Commission has overseen the administration of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, a state and federal partnership for Atlantic coastal fisheries data collection and management. Funding for this program is provided by ACFCMA.

The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell, and diadromous species. The 15 member states of the Commission are (from north to south): Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North

Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Each state is represented on the Commission by three Commissioners: the director of the state's marine fisheries management agency, a state legislator, and an individual appointed by the state's governor to represent fishery interests. These Commissioners participate in deliberations in the Commission's main policy arenas: interstate fisheries management, fisheries science, habitat conservation, and law enforcement. Through these activities, the states collectively ensure the sound conservation and management of Atlantic coastal fishery resources and the resulting benefits that accrue to their fishing and non-fishing public.

### 2012 Return on State Assessments to the Commission

Source: FY13 ASMFC Assessments and FY12 ACFCMA Allocations



\*Indirect Benefits include travel and per diem for 6 people from each state to participate in Commission meetings. Please note that this figure does not include the collective benefits derived from the work of the FMP Coordinators and Science Staff.





## REPORT TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

### *Robert E. Beal, Executive Director*

On behalf of the Commission, I am pleased to present the 2012 Annual Report of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries

Commission. This report not only fulfills our obligation to inform Congress on the use of federal funds provided to the Commission, but it also provides our stakeholders with a summary of activities and progress in carrying out our cooperative stewardship responsibilities. Commission-managed marine resources generate billions of dollars in economic activity annually and provide tens of thousands of jobs within our coastal communities.

In addition to detailing the Commission's 2012 activities, this report includes figures displaying the historical trends in stock status for each species managed by the Commission. These figures reflect our Commissioners' commitment to accountability and transparency in all they do to manage and rebuild stocks under their care.

Our Commissioners sincerely appreciate the strong cooperation and support we continue to receive from members of Congress as well as the governors and legislators of our member states. Our Commissioners recognize that our history of accomplishments over these many years would not have been possible without their trust and confidence. In order to build on this success, our Commission partnered with the Gulf States and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions to address issues of mutual interest. This three Commission alliance unites the coastal states to speak with one strong voice.

Of the many Commission accomplishments in 2012, I feel it is important to highlight one. At the end of the year, the Commission made final decisions on an 18-month, high profile, politically and emotionally charged process to rewrite the Atlantic menhaden management program. Each state brought its concerns to the table while also listening to the concerns and needs of its sister states. They thoughtfully and respectfully deliberated the options before them and ultimately made a decision that balanced menhaden's ecosystem functions with its human use needs. If you were part of this process, you witnessed the Commission at its best.

The menhaden decision reaffirmed that the Commission is an effective, transparent, inclusive, and efficient process for managing Atlantic coastal migratory resources. The Commissioners are

committed to finding long-term, durable solutions that are best for all rather than best for a single state or region. The menhaden outcome restored confidence in the Commission process and renewed the dedication to the premise that the states can accomplish much more working collectively than individually. This dedication will be needed as the Commission faces a number of significant obstacles and challenges ahead including: uncertain fiscal resources, competing ocean uses, predator/prey interactions, and habitat threats. During the next year, I look forward to capitalizing on the Commissioners' passion and dedication, the power of state cooperation, and the partnerships with our federal colleagues to address these challenges.

I am excited and humbled to have been given the incredible opportunity to be the Commission's Executive Director. I need to underscore some of the many aspects that make this job enjoyable. I am impressed daily by the dedication, enthusiasm, and professionalism of the staff that is committed to the success of the Commission. We have creative and inspired Commissioners that are devoted to leaving healthy and abundant marine fisheries for the next generation to enjoy. Also, the Commission is fortunate to have the strong support of our federal partners. The fiscal, staff, and technical support provided by NOAA Fisheries and USFWS to our Commission and states is a vital part of our interstate fisheries management program and science activities. As we all work to respond to the reduced fiscal resources, these partnerships will be more important than ever.

Over the next few years, we will need to work cooperatively at the state, interstate, and federal level to reinforce the social and economic returns that come from investing in marine fisheries management and science. The overall investment is relatively modest; however, the returns are impressive.

Our previous management successes have demonstrated the economic benefits and jobs that can result from abundant and healthy coastal fisheries. That lesson reinforces the relevance and importance of the Commission's Vision today and in the years to come. Readers can track our activities and progress by visiting [www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org).

Thank you all for your commitment to the Commission and the successful management of marine resources along the Atlantic coast.

# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Paul J. Diodati



In 2012, the Commission held its 71st Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where we had the opportunity to gather for an evening at the National Constitution Center to learn more about our founding fathers and celebrate their efforts to form a “more perfect Union” of the states through the creation of the U.S. Constitution. In coming together, the states recognized the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; that they could achieve more collectively than they could individually.

It is this very principle that brought the Atlantic coast states together in the early 1940s to form the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission through an Interstate Compact. The Compact, ratified by the states and approved by the U.S. Congress in 1942, acknowledged the necessity of the states joining forces to manage their shared, migratory fishery resources and affirmed the states commitment to create a unified front in promoting and protecting Atlantic coastal fishery resources. The proof of concept was further validated in 1947 and 1949 when states from the Pacific and Gulf coasts entered into their own Interstate Compacts to promote and protect the coastal fisheries along their respective seaboard. One of my priorities for 2013 will be to strengthen our relationship with our sister Commissions, forming an even greater collective of the coastal states to address issues of mutual concern and seek long-term support for our fisheries management, monitoring, and science activities.

Another one of my priorities for 2013 will be to reinforce the role of Commissioners in providing direction and guidance on policies, priorities, and strategic planning. Our third, five-year Strategic Plan will end in 2013. Our 2015 deadline for restoring Atlantic fisheries is not far behind. We have important decisions to make in the coming year and it will take our collective wisdom and expertise to ensure that these decisions are in the best interest of Atlantic coast fishery resources and the stakeholders who rely on their sustainable management. As your chairman, I commit to doing everything in my power to ensure that you all are fully vested in our strategic planning process, as well as all other aspects of the Commission. You are the Commission and what we do as an organization reflects upon each and every one of us. It is time for us to reenergize our ownership of the Commission and chart a clear and steady course for restoring Atlantic fisheries over the next five years.

Over the next year, there are several items on the legislative front that we will need to closely track, including reauthorization of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, Anadromous Fish Conservation Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act. All have a tremendous impact on the states fisheries programs, with the latter greatly influencing Commission/federal alignment in carrying out our shared stewardship responsibilities. Now, more than ever, the states and our federal partners need to maintain and strengthen our partnerships, providing for efficient and effective fisheries management across all agencies. No one state or federal agency has the resources or authority to do it alone. This notion is never more relevant than today with dwindling state and federal budgets and ever increasing fishery resource challenges and needs.

We will also need to address issues related to the listing of Atlantic sturgeon and the potential listings of river herring and American eel under the Endangered Species Act. The states have a huge investment in these species and we firmly believe that management authority should remain at the state level. All of these species spend the majority of their lives in state waters and depend on estuarine and riverine habitat for their survival. Listing has the potential to erode the progress that has been made and jeopardize the states’ ability to effectively monitor and assess stock condition. It is incumbent upon us to work closely with our federal partners to ensure that important state monitoring programs be maintained so that we can continue to assess stock health, identify threats, and implement effective rebuilding programs.

While we have a lot on our plate in the coming year, I remain optimistic in our abilities, and that of our new Executive Director Bob Beal, to chart a new course for the Commission and the states for the next five years, build upon our partnerships with our sister Commissions and the federal government, and champion a legislative agenda that supports the states’ stewardship responsibilities and sovereign rights. I call upon you all to join me in guaranteeing the Commission continues to be a fiscally sound, efficient steward of our valuable Atlantic coastal fishery resources.



## STOCK STATUS OVERVIEW

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission continues to monitor and revise the interjurisdictional management programs for 25 species groups, making progress toward its vision of “healthy, self-sustaining fish populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015.”

In 2012, the Commission strengthened rebuilding programs for several species, including Southern New England (SNE) American lobster, Atlantic menhaden, northern shrimp, and tautog. The Commission also initiated a new Fishery Management Plan for Black Drum, which will be considered for final approval in 2013, and updated management programs for eleven of its species (via amendments or addenda) in response to emerging stock assessment information and changes in the fisheries. However, there is still substantial work ahead to fully rebuild valuable Atlantic coastal fishery resources such as American eel, American shad, river herring, winter flounder, and weakfish.

The Commission maintains its role as an honest broker and forum for the Atlantic coastal states to come together and discuss the biological, socioeconomic, and environmental issues central to developing management programs for each species. The task of managing finite marine resources continues to grow more complex with the consideration of predator/prey interactions, habitat, and water quality, in addition to the more traditional considerations of stock maintenance, rebuilding, and the allocation of fisheries resources.

The following section provides a summary of the status of species managed by the Commission and highlights management activities that occurred throughout 2012. For this summary, “overfishing” is defined as removing fish from the population at a rate that exceeds the target established in the fishery management plan (FMP), while the “overfished” determination is based on whether or not a stock biomass falls below the threshold established in the FMP. The term “depleted” reflects low levels of abundance though it is unclear whether fishing mortality is the primary cause for reduced stock size.

Some other terms used throughout this report are “benchmark stock assessment,” “peer-reviewed stock assessment,” and “stock assessment update.” A benchmark stock assessment is a full analysis and review of the stock condition, focusing on the consideration of new data sources and newer or improved assessment models. This assessment is generally conducted every three to five years and undergoes a formal peer review by a panel of independent fisheries scientists who evaluate whether the data and methods used to produce the assessment are scientifically sound and appropriate for management use (peer-reviewed stock assessment). A stock assessment update incorporates data from the most recent years into the peer-reviewed assessment model to determine current stock status (abundance and overfishing level).

# Status

## QUICK GUIDE TO ASMFC STOCK STATUS

STATUS/ TRENDS	SPECIES	OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING	REBUILDING STATUS & SCHEDULE	
?	American Eel	Depleted	Unknown	Board is considering management response to 2012 benchmark assessment	
✓	American Lobster	Gulf of Maine (GOM)	N	N	GOM and GBK stocks rebuilt
✓		Georges Bank (GBK)	N	N	Board approved 10% reduction in exploitation on SNE stock as 1st phase in rebuilding program.
↓		Southern New England (SNE)	Y	N	Board approved trap reductions in Areas 2 & 3 pending NOAA Fisheries rulemaking.
↓	American Shad	Depleted	Unknown	Amendment 3 establishes 2013 moratorium unless sustainability can be documented	
✓	Atlantic Croaker	Unknown	N	Overfished status unknown; however, biomass has been increasing and age structure has been expanding since late 1980s	
✓	Atlantic Herring	N	N	Rebuilt	
?	Atlantic Menhaden	Unknown*	Y	*Technical Committee to evaluate stock status with regards to newly adopted biomass reference point in early 2013; Amendment 2 implements ~25% reduction from 2011 levels, beginning in 2013	
✓	Atlantic Striped Bass	N	N	Rebuilt since 1995; benchmark assessment scheduled for 2013	
?	Atlantic Sturgeon	Y	N	40+ year moratorium; to be rebuilt by ~2038; listed in 2012 under the ESA	
?	Black Drum	Unknown	Unknown	Benchmark assessment scheduled for 2015; FMP approval anticipated for spring 2013	
✓	Black Sea Bass	N	N	Rebuilt	
✓	Bluefish	N	N	Biomass above threshold but below target	
✓/↓	Coastal Sharks	Varies by species & species complex			

✓ = REBUILT    ↑ = REBUILDING    ↔ = STABLE/UNCHANGED    ↓ = DEPLETED    ? = UNKNOWN

# QUICK GUIDE TO ASMFC STOCK STATUS

STATUS/ TRENDS	SPECIES		OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING	REBUILDING STATUS & SCHEDULE
?	Horseshoe Crab		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule; 2010 assessment found New England and NY stocks to have declined, while DE Bay and Southeast stocks have increased over their respective time series
↓	Northern Shrimp		Y	Y	Board approved use of and implemented TAC and quota monitoring program; benchmark assessment scheduled for 2013
↔	Red Drum		Unknown	N	SPR above target and threshold SPRs
			Unknown	N	SPR above threshold SPR
↓	River Herring		Depleted	Unknown	Amendment 2 establishes 2012 moratorium unless sustainability can be documented
√	Scup		N	N	Rebuilt
√	Spanish Mackerel		N	N	Continuing to rebuild until stock biomass > B <sub>MSY</sub>
√	Spiny Dogfish		N	N	Rebuilt
?	Spot		Unknown	Unknown	Omnibus Amendment establishes stock status triggers until coastwide assessment can be conducted
?	Spotted Seatrout		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule
√	Summer Flounder		N	N	Rebuilt
↓	Tautog		Y	Y	Fishing mortality target reduced to 0.15 to initiate stock rebuilding
↓	Weakfish		Depleted	N	6-year rebuilding period if SSB < threshold level; Board approved further harvest restrictions based on 2009 benchmark assessment
?	Winter Flounder	Gulf of Maine	Unknown	N	Overfished status unknown since assessment model was not accepted by peer review
↓		Southern New England/ Mid-Atlantic	Y	N	Current biomass at 16% of SSB target

√ = REBUILT   ↑ = REBUILDING   ↔ = STABLE/UNCHANGED   ↓ = DEPLETED   ? = UNKNOWN

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## AMERICAN EEL

In 2012, the Commission approved for management use the American eel benchmark stock assessment. The assessment found that the American eel population is at or near historically low levels due to a combination of past fishing pressure, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease. The assessment review panel urged the Board to examine alternative reference points to provide more protection to the spawning stock biomass (SSB).

Assessment results indicate the American eel stock has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern. Based on these findings, the stock is considered depleted. No overfishing determination can be made at this time. However, the American Eel Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee caution that although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions (with the possible exception of the glass eel fishery), current levels of fishing effort may still be too high given the additional stressors affecting the stock such as habitat loss, passage mortality, and disease. Fishing on all life stages of eels, particularly young-of-the-year and in-river silver eels migrating to the spawning grounds, could be particularly detrimental to the stock, especially if other sources of mortality (e.g., turbine mortality, changing oceanographic conditions) cannot be readily controlled.

In response to these findings, the American Eel Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum III with the goal of reducing mortality and increasing the conservation of American eel across all life stages. The Draft Addendum, to be released for public comment in 2013, contains a range of options, including possible moratoria on glass eel (elver) fishery, reductions in glass and yellow eel catch and effort, seasonal closures, and future monitoring requirements.

Currently, the commercial fishery is regulated by a six inch minimum size, with the exception of Maine and South Carolina glass eel fisheries. The recreational

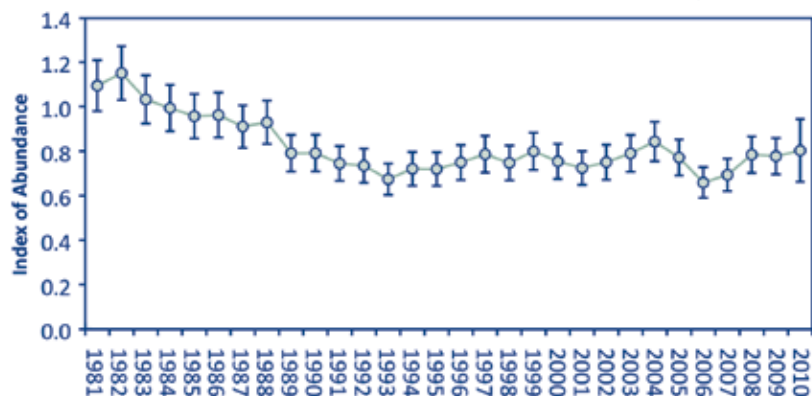
fishery is regulated by a 50 fish per day creel limit. States and jurisdictions are required to annually report on commercial harvest and monitor juvenile abundance. For the last several years, landings have remained at low levels, with commercial fisheries harvesting an estimated 1.2 million pounds in 2011, valued at \$9.1 million pounds.



American eels being processed for export. Photo © ASMFC.

### Index of Abundance for Yellow-phase American Eels along the Atlantic Coast

Source: ASMFC American Eel Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2012



### American Eel Commercial Landings

Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1999); Addendum I (2006); Addendum II (2008)

Concurrent to the Commission process, USFWS is undertaking a status review of American eel. The review stems from a 2010 petition to list American eel under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Commission has requested its assessment results be considered by USFWS as part of its review. It is anticipated that USFWS, in collaboration with NOAA Fisheries, will make a proposed determination on whether listing is warranted in 2013.

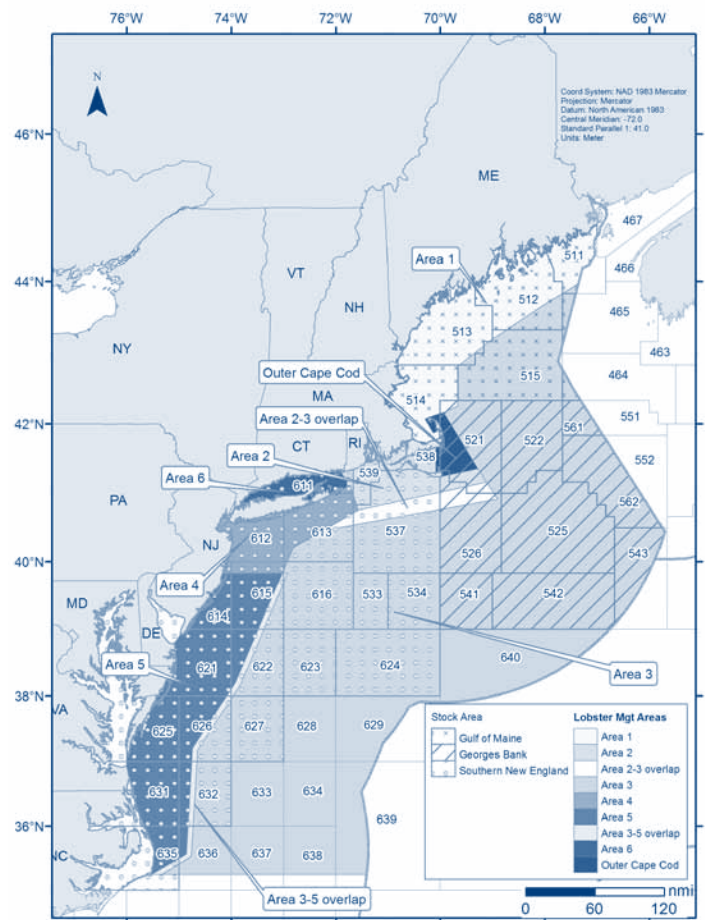
## AMERICAN LOBSTER

With an ex-vessel value of \$423 million in 2011, American lobster continues to be one of the most valuable commercial fisheries along the Atlantic coast. The lobster fishery has undergone incredible expansion in effort and landings since the late 1940s and early 1950s, when landings varied around 25 million pounds. Over the past 18 years, coastwide landings have increased substantially, rising from 57 million pounds in 1993 to a peak of 126 million pounds in 2011. Maine and Massachusetts accounted for 94% of the 2011 landings, or 83% and 11% respectively.

Despite these overall increases, Southern New England (SNE) landings have been declining over the past several years. The 2009 assessment and subsequent Technical Committee review of available science found the SNE stock to be in poor condition with continued low abundance and poor recruitment. Environmental changes in concert with fishing mortality have been identified as principal causes of lower recruitment levels and poor stock condition.

In 2012, in response to the status of the SNE stock, the American Lobster Management Board adopted a consolidation program for lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs) 2 and 3 to address latent effort (unfished traps) by reducing the overall number of traps allocated by 50% for LCMA 2 and 25% for LCMA 3. It is estimated that latent effort is 40% and 30% in LCMAs 2 and 3, respectively. Implementation of the Addendum's measures is contingent upon NOAA Fisheries' implementation of transferability and trap reduction rules for federal waters. Also in response to the SNE stock condition, LCMAs 2, 4, and 5 have implemented mandatory v-notching programs as part of their LCMA's requirements under Addendum XVII to achieve a 10% reduction in exploitation. Additional management measures will be implemented as part of the Addendum's requirements in 2013 for LCMAs 3, 4, 5 and 6 (see Figure 1 for a map of the LCMAs). The Board also initiated Draft Addendum XIX, which proposes to consolidate the LCMA 3 transfer tax so that

**Figure 1. Map of American Lobster Stock Assessment and Management Areas**



any transfer of traps, for full business or partial sale, would be assessed a 10% tax. The Board will finalize the Draft Addendum in 2013.

The 2009 peer-reviewed benchmark stock assessment indicates record high stock abundance and recruitment (number of lobsters entering the fishery) throughout most of the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Georges Bank (GBK), and continued low abundance and persistently low recruitment in SNE. According to the American Lobster Technical Committee, it is this low recruitment, caused by a combination of environmental factors and continued fishing mortality, which is preventing the SNE stock from rebuilding.

The management program's current biological reference points (exploitation and abundance targets and thresholds) for the three stock assessment areas (GOM, GBK, SNE) were established through Addendum XVI. These include a four-tiered approach

# Species

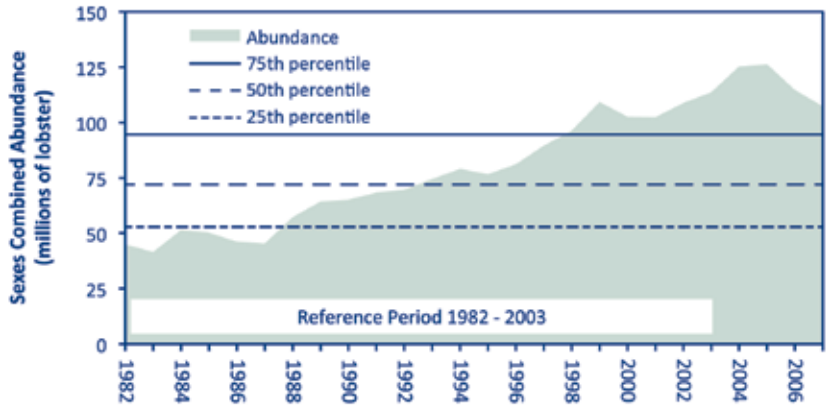
## SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

to evaluate abundance in the GOM and GBK (Figures 2 and 3), a four-tiered approach to evaluate exploitation for all three stock units, and a three-tiered approach to evaluate abundance for SNE (Figure 4). The Board set the SNE abundance reference points at a lower target level than the GOM and GBK stocks because it believes that environmental and ecosystem changes have reduced the ability of the SNE stock to rebuild to historical levels. Based on these reference points, GOM and GBK abundance is in favorable condition with abundance above the 75% percentile (Figures 2 and 3). Exploitation in the GOM is moderate and is at an acceptable level for GBK. The SNE abundance estimate is below the 25th percentile (Figure 4), requiring Board action to rebuild the stock.

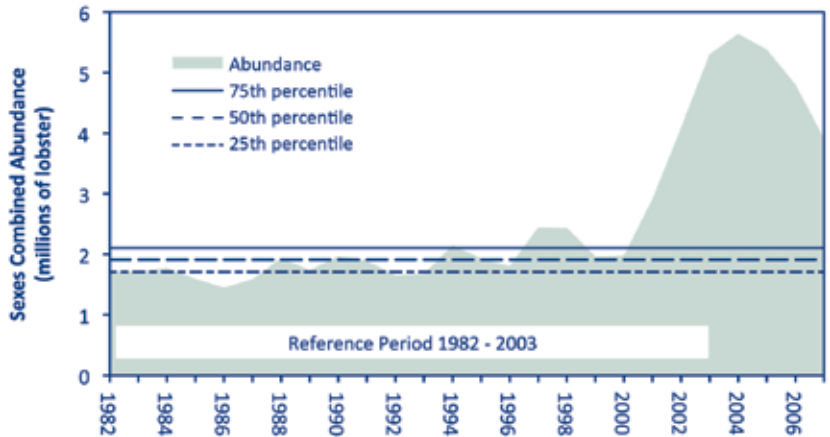
Despite current high levels of abundance and recruitment in GOM and GBK, the 2009 review panel recommended “that managers be particularly vigilant of recruitment patterns in these stocks and stand ready to impose substantial restrictions should recruitment decline.” The panel cautioned that productivity has been much lower in the past. For example, GOM landings, which account for nearly 87% of the coastwide fishery since 2002, fluctuated around 20 million pounds without trend from 1930 to 1990, possibly due to low recruitment and production. Those levels are substantially lower than 72.8 million pounds, which was the average annual landings from 2000 to 2007. The current levels of fishing effort and harvest will not be sustainable if the stock returns to lower recruitment and production levels. This was of particular concern to the panel because fishermen harvest approximately 50% of the available (i.e., legal-sized) lobster in the ocean. Biological information indicates that only 30% of the available lobster should be removed in order to maintain a healthy fishable population over the long-term.

The next benchmark assessment is scheduled to be completed for Board consideration in 2014.

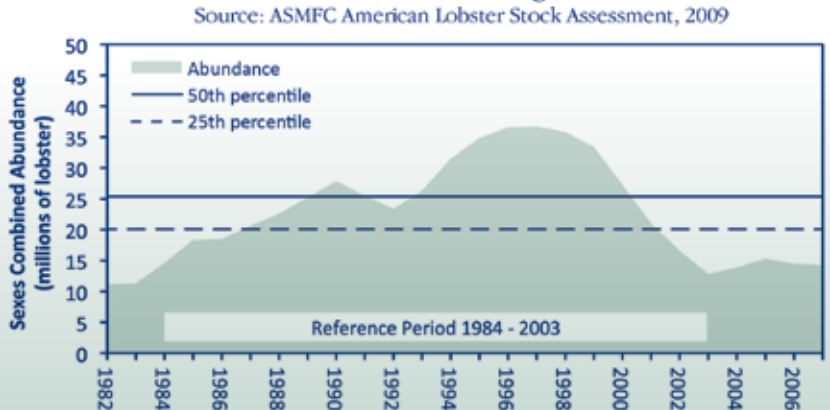
**Figure 2. Estimated Abundance of American Lobster in the Gulf of Maine**  
Source: ASMFC American Lobster Stock Assessment, 2009



**Figure 3. Estimated Abundance of American Lobster in Georges Bank**  
Source: ASMFC American Lobster Stock Assessment, 2009



**Figure 4. Estimated Abundance of American Lobster in Southern New England**  
Source: ASMFC American Lobster Stock Assessment, 2009



Timeline of Management Actions: Amendment 3 (1997); Addendum I (1999); Addendum II (2001); Addendum III (2002); Addenda IV & V (2004); Addenda VI & VII (2005); Addenda VIII & IX (2006); Addenda X & XI (2007); Addendum XIII (2008); Addenda XII, XIV & XV (2009); Addendum XVI (2010); Addendum XVII (2011); Addendum XVIII (2012)





Atlantic croaker. Photo © Jay Fleming.

## ATLANTIC CROAKER

The results of the 2010 Atlantic croaker benchmark stock assessment indicate the resource is not experiencing overfishing. Although model estimates of SSB were too uncertain to be used to precisely determine overfished stock status, biomass has been increasing and the age structure of the population has been expanding since the late 1980s. The 2010 Atlantic croaker assessment considered the population to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast. The previous stock assessment divided the stock into Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions and assessed only the Mid-Atlantic region.

A major source of uncertainty in the assessment is the magnitude of Atlantic croaker bycatch in South Atlantic shrimp trawls. Most croaker caught in this fishery are less than one year old, too small to be marketed, and thus are discarded. Croaker is one of the largest components of the shrimp trawl catch; some studies found that shrimp trawls caught more croaker than shrimp. There are no continuous monitoring programs to account for these discards. In some years, the best available estimates of discards are as large as or larger than reported landings.

In 2012, the Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee reviewed the management program's established triggers to determine whether management action or a new assessment was warranted. The Technical Committee recommended, and the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board concurred, that no action was required. However, the Board tasked the Technical

Committee with developing an assessment and management trigger package in order to better inform management decisions between assessment years; this package will be presented to the Board in 2013.

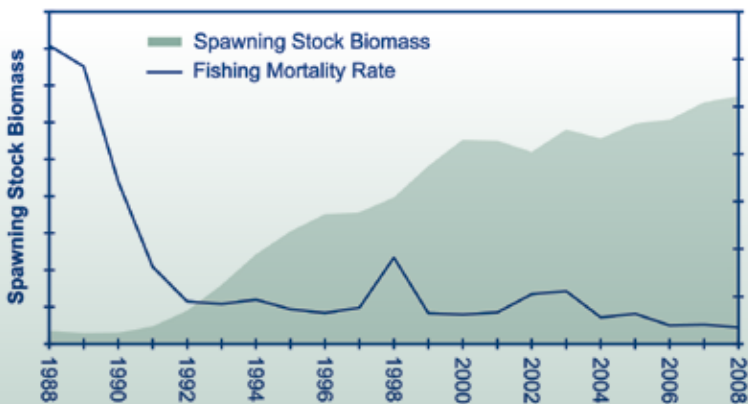
Total 2011 landings from New Jersey to Florida are estimated at 14.8 million pounds, a 64% decline since the peak of 41.2 million pounds in 2001. The commercial and recreational fisheries harvested approximately 81% and 19% of total landings, respectively, with the majority of landings occurring in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Atlantic coast commercial landings exhibit a cyclical pattern, with low landings in the 1960s to early 1970s and the 1980s to early 1990s, and high landings in the mid- to late 1970s and the mid-1990s to present. Commercial landings increased from a low of 3.7 million pounds in 1991 to 30.1 million pounds in 2001; however, landings have declined consistently since 2003 to 11.9 million pounds in 2011. Within the management unit, the majority of 2011 commercial landings came from Virginia (46%) and North Carolina (43%). Maryland had the next highest level with 6% of the coastwide landings.

From 1981-2011, recreational landings from New Jersey through Florida have varied between 1.3 million pounds and 11.1 million pounds. Landings generally increased until 2001 before exhibiting a declining trend through 2011. The 2011 landings are estimated at 2.7 million pounds, continuing the decline from 2010. The percentage of recreational releases has increased over the time series.

### Trends in Atlantic Croaker Spawning Stock Biomass & Fishing Mortality Rate

Source: ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Report, 2010



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1987); Amendment 1 (2005); Addendum 1 (2011)

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## ATLANTIC HERRING

Atlantic herring is a valuable species economically and ecologically. Economically, total domestic harvest was valued at \$24.6 million in 2011. Ecologically, herring serves as an important prey species for marine mammals, seabirds, and other fish. While commercial fisheries have existed in the Northwest Atlantic since the 1500s, an aggressive foreign fishery developed on GBK in the early 1960s, with landings peaking at one billion pounds in 1968. This excessive harvest, in addition to the stock's natural fluctuations, led to a collapse of the offshore herring stock. Stringent cooperative management throughout the 1990s by the Commission (in state waters) and the New England Fishery Management Council (in federal waters) resulted in a fully rebuilt stock that has been stable for the past decade. U.S. landings averaged just below 190 million pounds from 2000-2011, and were approximately 174 million pounds in 2011. The majority of Atlantic herring landings are taken from the GOM, but fisheries also occur in GBK and areas south and west of Cape Cod.

The 2012 benchmark stock assessment indicates Atlantic herring is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. The new assessment increased natural mortality by 50% during 1996-2011 to match the observed predation of herring by other species and corrected the retrospective pattern found in previous assessment models. SSB was estimated to be over 1.14 billion pounds, above the target SSB of 346 million pounds. Although the stock complex is assessed as a whole, catch limits are allocated among areas based on estimates of stock composition and relative biomass.

In 2012, the Atlantic Herring Section approved Addendum V to Amendment 2 to the Atlantic Herring FMP. The Addendum refines current spawning regulations by clarifying when spawning closures are triggered (based on the percentage of stage III – V spawning herring that are greater than or equal to 23 cm) and increasing the number of samples states are required collect from 50 to 100. The Addendum



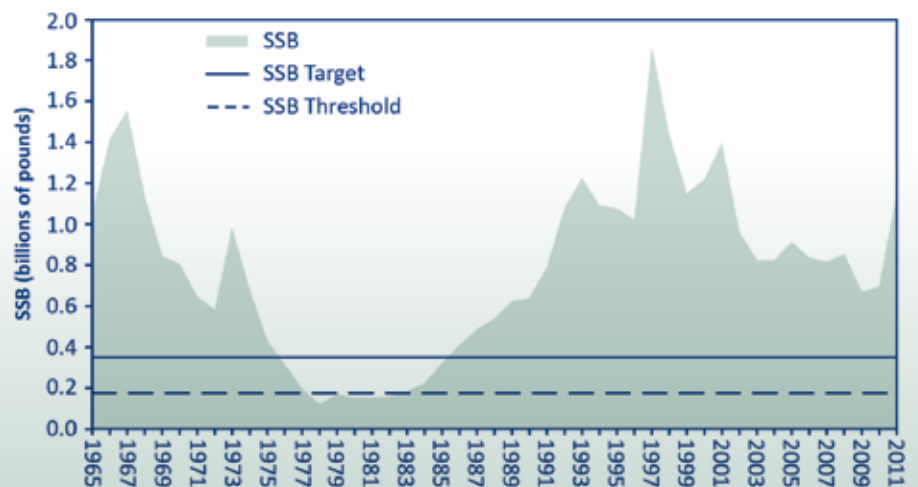
A commercial fisherman fishing for Atlantic herring using a weir. Photo © Commercial Fisheries News.

replaces all spawning regulations in previous management documents to provide a single, clear document for states to use when complying with Commission spawning regulations.

The Section implemented a seasonal allocation for the available quota for Area 1A (inshore GOM), with 72.8% of the quota (42.6 million pounds) available from June 1 – September 30 and 27.2% (15.9 million pounds) available from October 1 – December 31 for the 2012 fishery. Each season will close when 95% of that period's quota has been harvested and underages from the June to September period will be rolled into the October

### Atlantic Herring Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1993); Amendment 1 (1999); Amendment 2 (2006); Addendum I (2009); Addendum II (2010); Addendum III (August 2012)

to December period. The states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts continued to modify days-out of the fishery during the season to prolong the fishery in Area 1A, making herring available during peak demand. In November 2012, the Area 1A fishery was closed when 95% of the total allowable catch (TAC) was harvested.

Concerns raised by the Commission and stakeholders regarding river herring (alewife and blueback herring) bycatch in the Atlantic herring fishery prompted the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) to include catch/bycatch monitoring requirements and measures to reduce interactions with river herring stocks in Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring FMP. The proposed measures include monitoring requirements, avoidance and protection areas, trigger based approaches, and catch caps. In 2012, Amendment 5 was submitted to NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval.

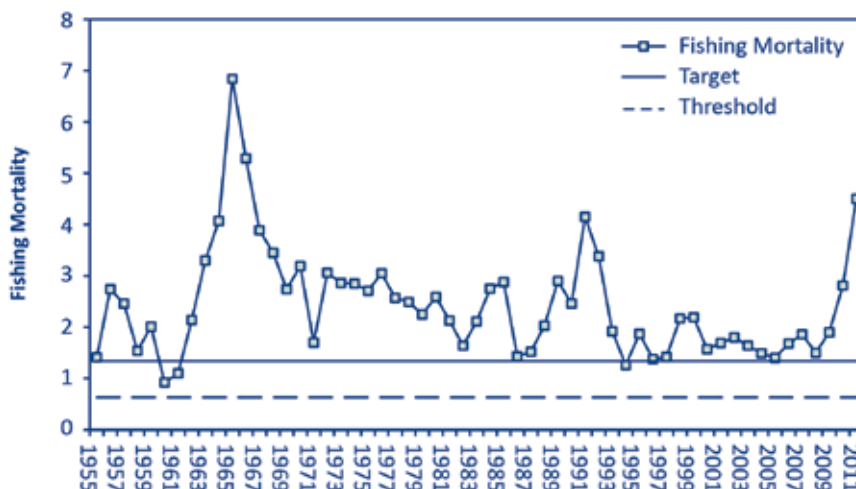
## ATLANTIC MENHADEN

Both the 2010 benchmark stock assessment and the 2012 stock assessment update for Atlantic menhaden indicate the species is experiencing overfishing. In response to this finding and fisheries managers' desire to more fully address the ecosystem services provided by Atlantic menhaden, the Commission approved Amendment 2 to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP in 2012. The Amendment establishes a 170,800 mt (376.6 million pound) TAC beginning in 2013 and continuing until completion of, and Board action on, the next benchmark stock assessment, scheduled for 2014. The TAC represents a 20% reduction from the average of landings from 2009-2011 and an approximately 25% reduction from 2011 levels.

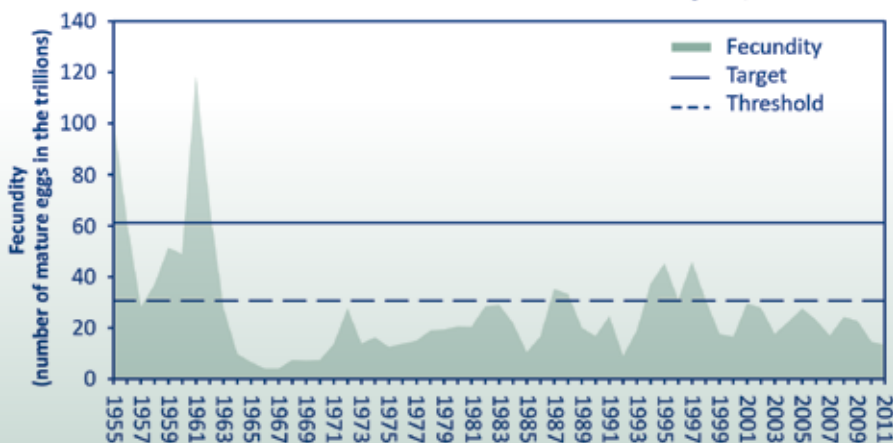
The Amendment also establishes a new biological reference point for biomass based on maximum spawning potential (MSP), with the goal of increasing abundance, SSB, and menhaden availability as a forage species. This new reference point uses the same metric (i.e., MSP) that is used to define overfishing. The Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee will meet in early 2013 to evaluate stock condition (i.e., overfished status) with regards to the new biomass reference point. The next benchmark stock assessment is planned for 2014.

Amendment 2 allocates the TAC on a state-by-state basis based on landings history of the fishery from 2009-2011; allocation will be revisited three years after implementation. Further, it reduces the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery harvest cap by 20% (this is an adjustment of the cap which was in place since 2006). States will be required to close their fisheries when the state-specific portion of the TAC has been reached; any overages must be paid back the following year. Prior to Amendment 2, the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery harvests had been managed by an annual cap of 109,020 mt (240.2 million pounds), a number derived from the average of harvests from 2001-2005. This cap was in place from 2006-2012, and was never exceeded during its implementation.

**Atlantic Menhaden Fishing Mortality (Full F)**  
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, 2012



**Atlantic Menhaden Fecundity**  
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1981); FMP Revision (1991); Amendment 1 (2001); Addendum I (2004); Addendum II (2005); Addendum III (2006); Addendum IV (2009); Addendum V (2011); Amendment 2 (2012)



# Species HIGHLIGHTS



Young anglers with a striped bass caught aboard the Queen Mary. Photo © Captain John Brackett.

The Atlantic menhaden commercial fishery has two major components, a reduction sector that harvests fish for animal feed and fish oil, and a bait sector that supplies bait to other commercially important fisheries (e.g., American lobster, blue crab). Total commercial landings averaged 463 million pounds from 2007-2011 with approximately 80% harvested by the reduction fishery and 20% harvested for bait purposes.

Recreational landings of Atlantic menhaden are poorly monitored, with landings estimated to be less than 1% of the total landings of the species. During the last decade (2001-2011), recreational catch averaged an estimated 660,000 pounds per year.

The Board also continues to place a high priority on advancing the development of ecosystem reference points using a multispecies modeling approach. Ecosystem reference points are expected to address the forage needs of menhaden's predator species, including striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish. This work is anticipated to take a few years because of the time needed to develop comprehensive ecological modeling techniques.

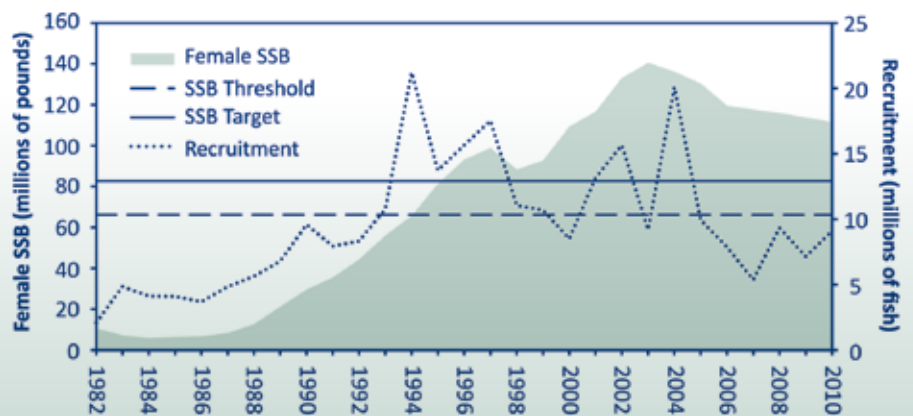
## ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS

In 2012, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved Addendum III to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP with the goal of preventing commercial quota overages and the illegal harvest of striped bass. Both activities undermine the sustainability of striped bass populations as well as reduce the economic opportunities of commercial and recreational fishermen who legally participate in the fishery. The Addendum establishes a mandatory commercial tagging program for all states and jurisdictions with commercial striped bass fisheries and recommends increasing penalties for illegally harvested fish. The tagging program includes requirements for timely catch reporting, increased accounting of unused tags, improved standardization of tag type, and the use of biological metrics for determining state/jurisdiction tag quantity.

All states and jurisdictions, with the exception of Massachusetts and North Carolina, are required to implement Addendum III's measures by the opening of their respective 2013 commercial fishing seasons. North Carolina was granted an extension due to the timing of its season (North Carolina's fishery opens December 1st), while Massachusetts lacks an established commercial tagging program and needs additional time to develop its program. Both states will be required to implement their programs by January 1, 2014.

The 2011 stock assessment update indicates the resource remains in good condition with female SSB estimated at 109% of the SSB target and 137% of the SSB threshold. The estimated fishing mortality rate in 2010 was 0.23, below both the target (0.30) and threshold (0.34). Maryland and Virginia reported poor recruitment in 2012, with the Maryland index recorded as the lowest on record. In contrast, the 2011 young-of-the-year indices were above average for both states and was the highest on record in Virginia. Striped bass are assessed as a single

**Atlantic Striped Female Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) and Recruitment**  
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update, 2011



Timeline of Management Actions: Amendments 1 & 2 (1984); Amendment 3 (1985); Amendment 4 (1990); Amendment 5 (1995); Amendment 6 (2003); Addendum I (2007); Addendum II (2010); Addendum III (2012)

stock complex although there are at least three distinct stocks contributing to the coastal migratory group: Hudson River, Delaware River, and Chesapeake Bay and tributaries. The striped bass stock complex is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Total harvest in 2011 is estimated at 3.2 million fish or 32.2 million pounds, a 4% decrease by weight and a 9.5% increase by number from 2010. Recreational anglers harvested 2.12 million fish or 26.3 million pounds in 2011. The proportion of catch that is released declined to 71% in 2011, the lowest since 1983. Anglers are either keeping more of the fish they catch in recent years and/or are catching fewer sub-legal fish. Commercial fishermen harvested 1.05 million fish or 6.8 million pounds, with the Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission) dominating the 2011 commercial landings.

## ATLANTIC STURGEON

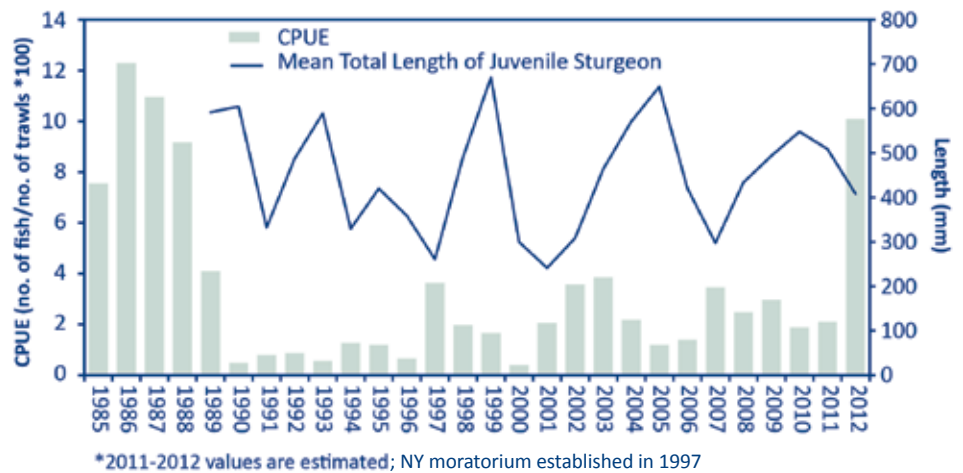
Since 1988, the 15 Atlantic coast states through the Commission have sought to effectively manage Atlantic sturgeon throughout its range. With the approval of Amendment I in 1998, which implemented a 40-year coastwide moratorium on harvest, states committed to protecting this ancient species. Additionally, states have invested considerable resources to increase understanding of sturgeon biology and life history. Despite these efforts, in February 2012, NOAA Fisheries announced the addition of Atlantic sturgeon to the Endangered Species List. In response, the Commission initiated a coastwide stock assessment to evaluate stock status, stock delineation, and bycatch; the findings of which should be available by late 2014.

Very little is known about the Atlantic sturgeon's stock status. Reliable data are difficult to obtain because many river systems have few fish, and rivers with more fish are often not easily sampled.

Several states have been conducting long-term monitoring of Atlantic sturgeon. Data from two of these efforts are provided in the accompanying graphs, which depict catch per unit effort (CPUE) for fishery-independent surveys conducted by North Carolina and New York. Both surveys have experienced significant fluctuations in recent years. However, in 2012, North Carolina's CPUE was the second highest value in the past ten years. Further, the spike of juveniles seen in New York's survey in 2012 is believed to be a direct result of the New York's moratorium in 1997 and the concomitant increase of spawning fish in the Hudson River.

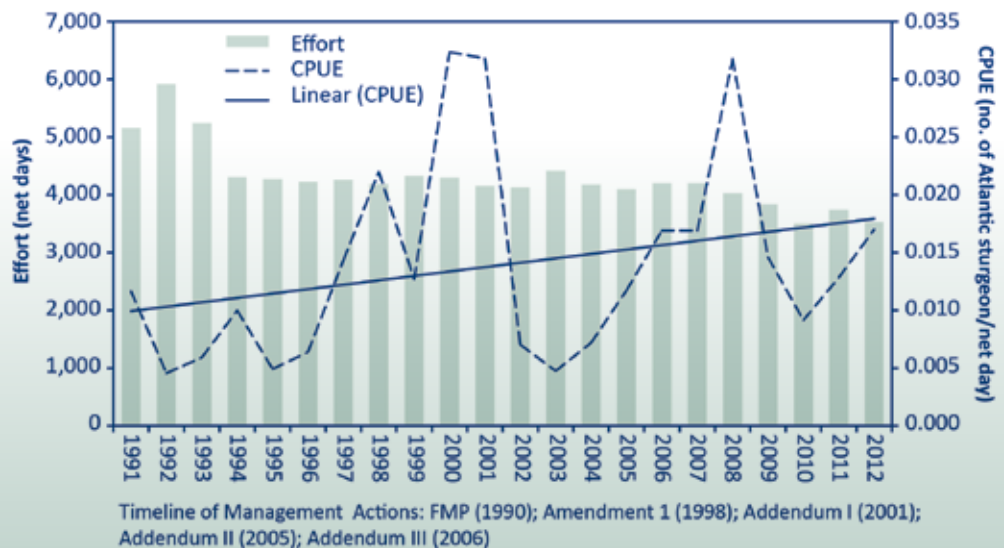
### Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) of Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon in the Hudson River

Source: New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation Survey Data  
Collected by Normandeau Associates, Inc., 2012



### Fishery-independent Catch Rates of Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon in Albemarle Sound

Source: North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, 2012



# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## BLACK DRUM

In 2011, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board initiated development of a Black Drum FMP. While the states of New Jersey to Florida have implemented harvest regulations for black drum, the Board considered the following factors when it initiated the FMP: (1) the lack of consistent coastwide regulations, (2) the unknown condition of the resource, and (3) concerns about the impacts of directed fisheries on both immature and breeding black drum.

Significant progress was made on development of the FMP throughout 2012, with the Board approving the Draft FMP for public comment in late 2012. States will be conducting hearings on the Draft FMP in early 2013, with plan approval scheduled for spring 2013.

Given the lack of a coastwide assessment, the Commission initiated a benchmark stock assessment and peer review in 2012 for completion in 2015. The only available stock status information on black drum comes from two regional stock assessments. A 1995 Florida assessment suggested its black drum stocks could sustain the level of fishing that occurred in the early 1990s, while a 2001 regional Chesapeake Bay assessment suggested fishing mortality (F) was below  $F_{MSY}$ , the fishing level that would sustain the stock at its maximum yield. There are no targeted surveys for black drum and current surveys do not sufficiently intersect with the vast ages and sizes of the



Biologist aboard the NEAMAP SNE/MA Nearshore Trawl Survey removing otoliths from 2 black drum to be used to determine the age of the fish. Photo © NEAMAP.

population. Most landings are restricted to younger and smaller fish with some large adults. A few surveys do encounter and sample adult fish across the wide range of potential ages, but these surveys do not indicate any major trends in the status of the population, which may be due to low or inconsistent intercepts of black drum. Due to these data limitations, data poor assessment techniques will be considered for the upcoming benchmark stock assessment.

The black drum fishery is predominantly recreational, with anglers landing about four times the fish (by weight) than the commercial fishery in 2011. Recreational harvest has increased along the Atlantic coast in the last decade. Since 2009, harvest has been down from the time series peak of 1.6 million pounds in 2008. Recreational harvest in 2011 was estimated at 889,000 pounds.

Although New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida have experienced increases in recreational harvest, the majority of the recent coastwide increase comes from North Carolina. Increased harvest in South Carolina also occurred until harvest restrictions were enacted in 2007. Florida and North Carolina fisheries comprise the majority of black drum harvested recreationally along the Atlantic coast.

Historically, commercial landings averaged approximately 368,000 pounds in the 1950s and 60s and then declined to an average of approximately 211,000 pounds in the 1970s and 80s. The commercial fishery landed approximately 181,000 pounds of black drum

### Black Drum Recreational and Commercial Landings

Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2012





Commercial fisherman hauling black sea bass from a weir. Photo © Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

in 2011. Since 2000, the majority of commercial landings have come from North Carolina and Virginia, while a smaller portion is landed in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Florida. In recent years, gillnets and pound nets have been the primary gear used.

## BLACK SEA BASS

An important recreational and commercial species in the Mid-Atlantic region, black sea bass are jointly managed by the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC). This program, which focuses on the stock north of Cape Hatteras, has been in place since 1996. It includes quotas to restrict the commercial fishery, and possession limits, seasons, and minimum sizes to control recreational landings.

In 2012, the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board approved state-by-state shares for the 2012 black sea bass recreational season in order to mitigate potential disproportionate impacts to individual states that coastwide measures may cause. The 2011 regulations resulted in a harvest of 1.15 million pounds, approximately 0.3 million pounds below the 2011 target. State regulations were liberalized by approximately 32% in 2012 to stay within the 2012 target of 1.32 million pounds.

Based on the stock projections completed in 2012, the black sea bass stock is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. The projections indicate the stock is at approximately 102% of its biomass target. Based on the advice of MAFMC's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), both the Commission and MAFMC adopted a 1.78 million pound commercial quota and a 1.85 million pound recreational harvest limit for the 2013 fishery. The Commission took a precautionary approach in setting the black sea bass quotas due to concerns regarding scientific uncertainty in the assessment model. An integrated stock assessment and peer review will be completed in 2013.

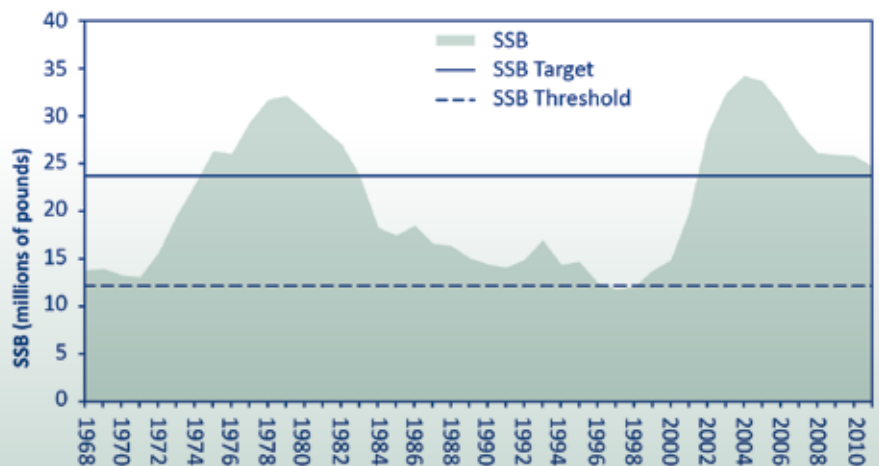
The commercial fishery is allocated 49% of the available quota. The principle gears used in the fishery are pots, otter trawl, and handline. After peaking at 22 million pounds in 1952, commercial landings markedly decreased in the 1960s and have since ranged from 1.3-4.4 million pounds. From 1988-1997, landings averaged 2.86 million pounds.

In 1998, a quota system was incorporated into the management program and state-by-state shares were introduced in 2003. Since 1998, landings have ranged from 2.86-3.53 million pounds. Landings in 2011 were estimated at 1.684 million pounds, with commercial discards estimated at approximately 0.3 million pounds.

The recreational fishery is allocated 51% of the available quota. After peaking in 1985 at 12.35 million pounds, recreational harvest averaged 3.75 million pounds annually from 1988-1997. Recreational harvest limits were put in place in 1998 and harvest has ranged from 1.1-4.4 million pounds from 1998-2009. Recreational harvest in 2011 was estimated at 1.146 million pounds; an additional 0.47 million pounds were estimated to have been discarded.

### Black Sea Bass Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: NEFSC Black Sea Bass Projections, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1996); Amendment 10 (1997); Amendment 11 (1998); Amendment 12 (1999); Amendment 13 (2003); Addenda II & III (2004); Addendum XVI (2005); Addendum XIX (2007); Addendum XX (2009); Addendum XXI (2011)

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## BLUEFISH

Declared rebuilt in 2009, bluefish is an example of the success that can be achieved through joint state/federal management of a coastwide species. Since 1998, the Commission and MAFMC have jointly managed bluefish through state-specific quotas for the commercial fishery and a maximum possession limit to constrain the recreational fishery.

In 2012, the Bluefish Management Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Bluefish FMP, establishing a coastwide biological sampling program to improve the quantity and quality of information used in future bluefish stock assessments. The sampling program was developed by the Bluefish Technical Committee in response to a 2005 peer review recommendation that ageing practices be standardized and sampling expanded.

The bluefish stock assessment was updated in 2012 to incorporate 2011 landings and survey indices. This update indicates the stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The assessment update projected a 2011 total biomass of 293 million pounds, approximately 90% of its target and about a 3% decline from 2010. Fishing mortality is estimated to be 0.11, below both the fishing mortality threshold (0.19) and target (0.15). The Commission and MAFMC approved a 9.08 million pound commercial quota and a 14.07 recreational harvest limit for the 2013 fishery. These levels represent a decrease from 2012 levels due in part to poor year classes observed in the stock assessment.

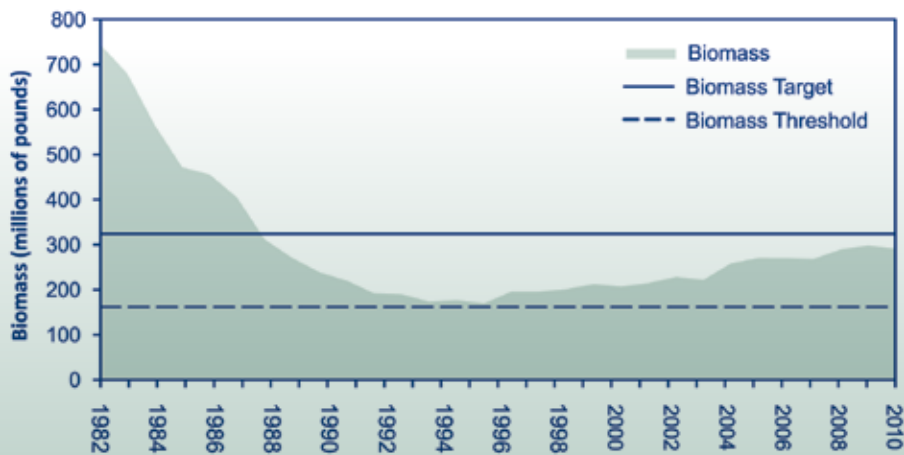


Father and sons with a bluefish. Photo © John McMurray, [www.nyflyfishing.com](http://www.nyflyfishing.com).

Recreational landings have been increasing since a low of 8.3 million pounds in 1999. From 2000-2010, recreational landings averaged 15.5 million pounds annually. In 2011, recreational anglers landed a total of 18.7 million pounds of bluefish, a 20% decrease from 2010. Landings from the commercial bluefish fishery have been consistently lower than the recreational catch. Commercial landings decreased from 16.5 million pounds in 1981 to 7.3 million pounds in 1999. The commercial fishery has been regulated by a quota since implementation of Amendment 1 in 2000, and has since averaged around seven million pounds annually. Three-quarters of the harvest occur in New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

### Estimated Bluefish Biomass

Source: NEFSC Bluefish Stock Assessment Update, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1989); Amendment 1 (1998); Addendum I (2012)

## COASTAL SHARKS

The Atlantic Coastal Sharks FMP addresses the management of 40 shark species, including smooth dogfish, and establishes a suite of management measures for recreational and commercial shark fisheries in state waters (zero to three miles from shore). The FMP, approved in 2008 and fully implemented by the states in 2010, was developed to complement federal shark management and ensure consistency between state and federal management measures.

In 2012, the Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board increased the large coastal shark (LCS) commercial possession limit to 36 fish for the 2013 fishery based on the successful





South Carolina biologist, Bryan Frazier, with a tiger shark captured as part of the state's Adult Red Drum and Coastal Sharks Survey. Photo © Bryan Frazier, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

distribution of the quota in 2012. This quota is consistent with the federal specifications. The Board also initiated a Draft Addendum to consider smooth dogfish state shares in response to a proposed federal smooth dogfish commercial quota, but postponed approving the document for public comment until the proposed federal quota is published. It is anticipated that NOAA Fisheries will implement a smooth dogfish quota sometime in 2013.

Passage of the Shark Conservation Act of 2010 instituted additional measures to protect shark species from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities, as well as allowed for the continued regulated harvest of smooth dogfish within U.S. waters. In response to this Act, the Board has been working with the Humane Society to address issues identified in current regulations and drafted legislation in order to protect the domestic shark fishery while addressing illegal shark finning.

Stock status is assessed by species complex for most coastal shark species and by species group for species with enough data for an individual assessment. The accompanying table outlines the stock status of each species or species group.

There is no assessment for smooth dogfish on the Atlantic coast. The first coastwide assessment and peer review is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Commercial landings of Atlantic LCS species in 2011 were approximately 1.49 million pounds (dry weight), a slight decrease from 2010. Commercial landings of small coastal shark species in 2011 were approximately 584,000 pounds (dry weight), an increase of approximately 225,000 pounds from 2010. Total U.S. landings of Atlantic pelagic species of sharks were 3.5 million pounds (wet weight) in 2011. This is approximately a threefold increase in landings from 2010, when landings totaled 1.2 million pounds (wet weight). The 2011 landings of pelagic species comprise 5.1% of total international landings of pelagic species.

### Stock Status of Atlantic Coastal Shark Species and Species Groups

SPECIES OR COMPLEX NAME	STOCK STATUS		REFERENCES/COMMENTS
	OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING	
Porbeagle	Approaching	Y	Porbeagle Stock Assessment, ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2009)
Dusky	Y	Y	SEDAR 21 (2011); designated a prohibited species
Large Coastal Sharks	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 11 (2006); difficult to assess as a species complex due to various life history characteristics/lack of available data
Blacktip	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 11 (2006)
Sandbar	Y	N	SEDAR 21 (2011)
Atlantic Sharpnose	N	N	SEDAR 13 (2007); next benchmark assessment scheduled for 2013
Blacknose	Y	Y	SEDAR 21 (2011)
Bonnethead	N	N	SEDAR 13 (2007); next benchmark assessment scheduled for 2014
Finetooth	N	N	SEDAR 13 (2007)
Smooth Dogfish	Unknown	Unknown	No assessment; benchmark assessment scheduled for 2014

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

Recreational landings of shark species in 2011 were similar to other years. Approximately 182,900 fish were harvested during the 2011 fishing season, compared to 178,200 fish in the 2010 season, and 188,500 fish in the 2009 fishing season. The small coastal shark group had the most landings, comprising approximately 60% of the harvest in 2011. LCS complex came next with approximately 33% of the harvest, and pelagic species comprised 3% of the total harvest. Approximately 4% of the total recreational harvest was unclassified and not attributed to any species group.

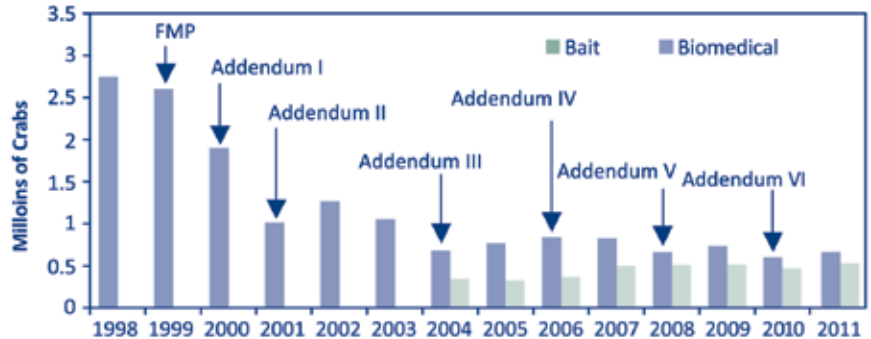
## HORSESHOE CRAB

Horseshoe crabs play a vital ecological role in the migration of shorebirds along the entire Atlantic seaboard, as well as providing bait for commercial American eel and conch fisheries along the coast. Additionally, their unique blood is used by the biomedical industry to produce *Limulus Amoebocyte Lysate*, an important tool in the detection of contaminants in patients, drugs, and medical supplies.

In 2012, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum VII to the Horseshoe Crab FMP. The Addendum implements the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, which incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized horseshoe crab harvest levels for the Delaware Bay area. The Addendum allocates the ARM harvest output among the four states (New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) that harvest horseshoe crabs from the Delaware Bay population. The allocation is based upon multiple decision options, including the proportion of horseshoe crabs harvested that originate from Delaware Bay and allowance for additional male harvest by Virginia and Maryland to compensate for protecting female horseshoe crabs when the ARM harvest output includes a moratorium on female crabs. This provision is intended to help meet bait demands and mitigate the economic impact of a moratorium on female horseshoe crabs.

Endorsed by peer review in 2009, the ARM Framework was developed by the Commission, USFWS, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the relationship between horseshoe

**Coastwide Horseshoe Crab Bait Landings & Biomedical Harvest**  
Source: ASMFC State Reports, 2012



**Note the following details regarding biomedical harvest numbers:**

- Harvest numbers include all horseshoe crabs brought to bleeding facilities, including those that were harvested as bait and counted against state quotas.
- Most of the biomedical crabs harvested are returned to the water after bleeding; a 15% mortality rate is estimated for all bled crabs.

crab eggs and shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region. The Board employed its use for the first time in 2012, setting a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2013 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the quota was further subdivided among the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Since 2008, New Jersey has had a moratorium on horseshoe crab harvest.

In 2012, \$35,000 in contributions from commercial bait processors and the biomedical industry helped to partially fund the 2012 Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. Interested parties from both groups provided enough funds when combined with a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to fully fund the survey in 2011. Conducted since 2002, it is the only survey designed to sample the horseshoe crab population in coastal waters. Its data are a critical component of the coastwide stock assessment and ARM Framework. The 2012 survey was not as extensive in scope as previous years due to a significant decrease in funding. The Commission will continue to seek additional funding options to allow the survey to be conducted in 2013 and beyond.

The most recent peer reviewed benchmark assessment, completed in 2009, indicates horseshoe crab abundance has increased in the Southeast and Delaware Bay Regions (New Jersey through coastal Virginia), and decreased in New York and New England. In the Delaware Bay Region, increasing trends were most evident



Commercial fishermen harvesting northern shrimp. Photo © ASMFC.

for juveniles, followed by adult males. An increase in adult females is also beginning to be observed in the Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. These patterns are indicative of population recovery, given that horseshoe crab females take longer to mature than males. In contrast, declining abundance was evident in New York and New England. Declines in the New England population were also apparent in the 2004 assessment; however, declines in New York represent a downturn from the 2004 assessment.

Reported coastwide bait landings in 2011 remained well below the coastwide quota. Bait landings increased 7.6% from the previous year, due to increased landings in Massachusetts, Delaware, New York, and North Carolina.

## NORTHERN SHRIMP

In 2012, there was significant activity surrounding the management of northern shrimp, which is jointly regulated by Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts through the Commission's Northern Shrimp Section. In late 2011, the Section set the 2012 fishery specifications at 4.875 million pounds, with the trawl fishery beginning on January 2 and the trap fishery starting on February 2. On February 17, 2012, the Section closed the fishery having projected that landings had exceeded the quota.

The Commission approved Addendum I to Amendment 2 to the Northern Shrimp FMP. The Addendum includes provisions to set an annual TAC that may range between the fishing mortality target and threshold values, inclusive; allocate 87% of the TAC to the trawl fishery and 13% to the trap fishery; and close each fishery when a certain percentage of the TAC is projected to be reached. The percentage, ranging between 80 and 95%, will be established by the Section during the annual specification process. The Addendum also provides flexibility to transfer unused TAC between gear types; set aside a portion of the TAC for research purposes; and allow for the optional use of a size sorting grate system (compound grate or double Nordmore) to minimize the retention of small shrimp.

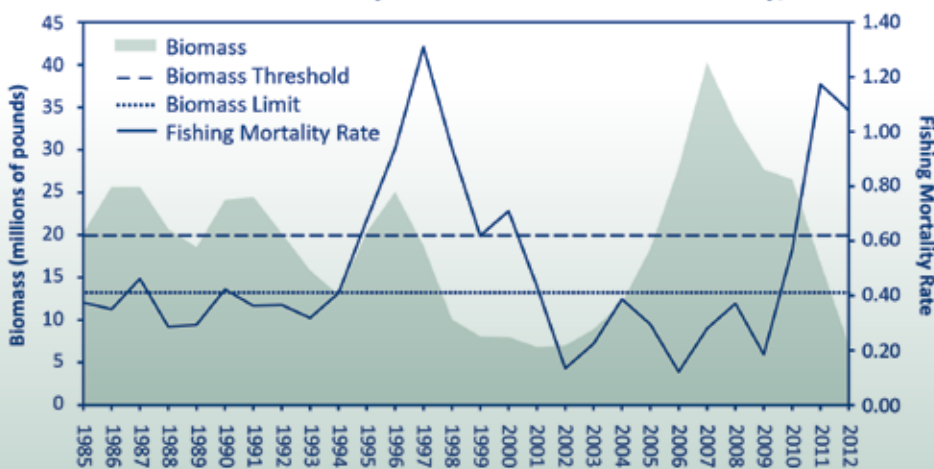
The Section received the results of the 2012 stock assessment update, which indicates the northern shrimp stock is overfished and is experiencing overfishing. The 2012 fishing mortality was estimated at 1.08, above

the fishing mortality target, threshold, and limit. Biomass was estimated at 3.3 million pounds, significantly below both the biomass threshold of 19.8 million pounds and biomass limit of 13.2 million pounds.

Additionally, all abundance surveys are exhibiting a downward trend. Since 2007, the biomass index from the shrimp survey has steadily declined and is currently at its lowest level. Modeled biomass shows a similar declining trend and has also reached its lowest level, and poor recruitment (the number of shrimp surviving to age 1.5) was seen in 2011 and 2012. Northern shrimp recruitment is related to both spawning biomass and ocean temperatures, with higher spawning biomass and colder temperatures producing stronger recruitment. Ocean temperatures in the western GOM shrimp habitat have been increasing in recent years and have reached or approached unprecedented highs in the past three years. This suggests an increasingly

### Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Total Stock Biomass and Fishing Mortality Rate

Source: ASMFC Assessment Report for the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1986); Amendment 1 (2004); Amendment 2 (2011); Addendum I (2012)



# Species

## SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

inhospitable environment for northern shrimp and indicates the critical need for protecting spawning biomass. Unfortunately, all stock status indicators for northern shrimp suggest the fishery will face low quotas over the next few years.

Based on these findings and its responsibility to lower fishing mortality, the Section approved a TAC of 1.38 million pounds for the 2013 fishing season, a 72% decrease from the 2012 fishery. The TAC is further subdivided into a research set aside of 11,995 pounds, a trawl fishery TAC of 1.19 million pounds, and a trap fishery TAC of 177,591 pounds. Each fishery will close when 85% of its TAC is projected to be reached and a 4-day advance notice will be issued prior to the closure of each fishery.

Valued at \$5.1 million in 2012, northern shrimp continues to provide a small but valuable coastal fishery for GOM fishermen. Landings declined after the mid-1990s, from a high of 21 million pounds in 1996 to a low of 934,000 pounds in 2002, the result of low shrimp abundance and reductions in fishing effort. Since then, landings have increased to 14.1 million pounds in 2011. The preliminary landings for 2012 are 5.3 million pounds, a 62% reduction in landings from 2011.

The Section plans to continue development of a limited entry program in 2013 to match the size of the fishery to the size of the northern shrimp resource.

### RED DRUM

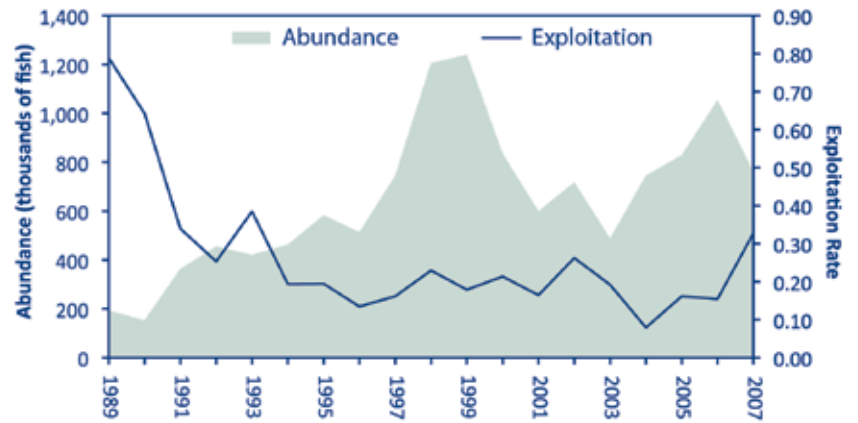
Attempts to regulate the Atlantic coast red drum fishery date back to the first Annual Meeting of the Commission in 1942 when a Delaware Commissioner urged that red drum either be made a sport fish or be protected by adequate size limits and daily catch limits. Further, the Commissioner urged its use as fertilizer be prohibited. While this request and later management recommendations were unsuccessful in preventing the over-exploitation of red drum, the 2009 stock assessment indicates management has made significant strides in improving the population's condition since 1990. Throughout the 1990s, the stability of the stock was uncertain, with an exploitation level that was

jeopardizing future recruitment. Through the implementation of more stringent regulations in the 1990s and 2000s, the stock is now no longer subject to overfishing and sufficient numbers of young fish are surviving to become breeding adults.

Data limitations resulting from species' life history characteristics and management program present unique challenges to scientists as they try to assess the status of the stock. Relatively little is known about the adult (spawning) population (ages four and older), as these fish are primarily found in offshore waters where fishing for red drum is prohibited under federal law. As such,

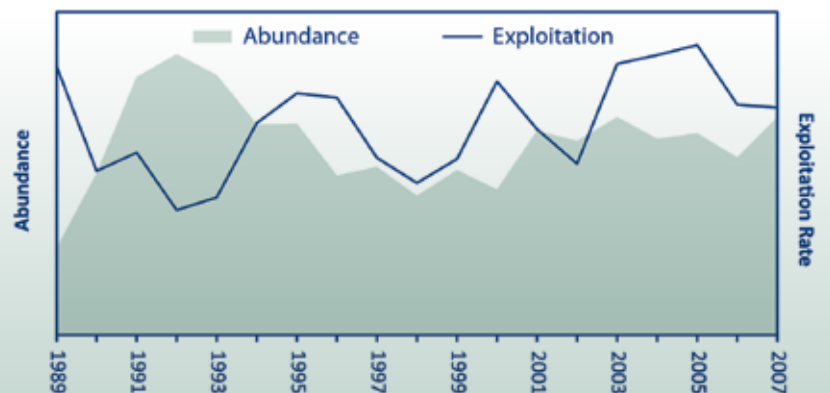
**Estimates of Abundance and Exploitation for the Northern Stock Component of Red Drum, Ages 1-3**

Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009



**Trends in Abundance and Exploitation for the Southern Stock Component of Red Drum, Ages 1-3**

Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1984); Amendment 1 (1991); Amendment 2 (2002)



Recreational angler with a red drum. Photo © Captain Walter Bateman, [www.carolinaguide.com](http://www.carolinaguide.com)

there is little fishery-dependent information and limited fishery-independent data on the larger, reproductive fish. Existing data are largely for the juvenile component of the resource (ages one to three) found in inshore waters. Fishery-dependent data are constrained by the fisheries slot limit, which ranges anywhere from 15-27 inches (again limiting the amount of information about larger fish) and fishery-independent data are supplied by few, relatively recent state inshore surveys.

The impact of these limitations is a stock assessment that adequately describes abundance and exploitation rates for the pre-adult component of the population (ages one to three), particularly for the northern region, but provides no reliable information on the adult component. The stock assessment model was considered to be informative only about the relative, not absolute, trends in age one to three abundance and exploitation for the southern region. Therefore, only general conclusions about trends in stock status could be provided for the southern region.

In the northern region (New Jersey to North Carolina), abundance of age one to three red drum increased from 1990-2000, after which it widely fluctuated. The initial increase in abundance of these age groups can be explained by the reduction in exploitation rates in the early part of the time series with relative stability since then. Fishing pressure appears to be stable, and there is a high probability that the stock is not subject to overfishing.

In the southern region (South Carolina to Florida), the relative trend in abundance of age one to three fish increased during 1989-1992, declined during 1992-1998,

and has fluctuated thereafter. As with the northern stock, the initial increase in abundance of these age groups can be explained by the reduction in exploitation rates in the early part of the time series. There has been a slight increase in exploitation rates since 1990.

Recreational harvest peaked in 1984 at 2.6 million pounds. Since 1988, the number has fluctuated without trend between 800,000 and 2.1 million pounds. The 2011 recreational landings of 1.5 million pounds represent a 22% decrease in landings from 2010. Since 1990, recreational landings have averaged approximately 88% of total landings of red drum. In 2011, this number spiked up to 94%.

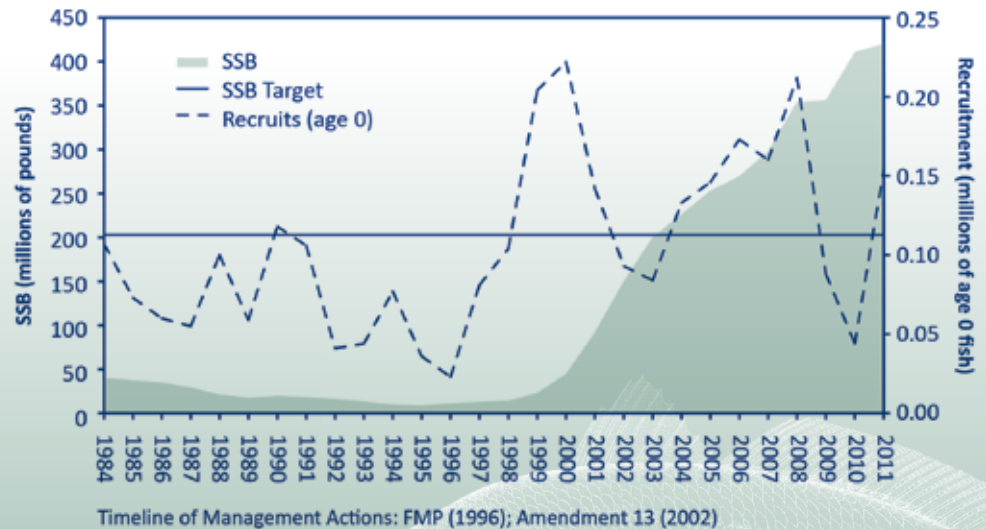
The commercial fishery for red drum was more prevalent in the 1980s but has declined since then. Landings have averaged approximately 180,000 pounds per year since 1990. North Carolina was responsible for landing 97% of the commercial harvest in 2011. No management action was taken in 2012.

## SCUP

Through successful joint management by the Commission and MAFMC, scup are considered rebuilt and not experiencing overfishing. The 2012 scup stock assessment updated estimates SSB at 420 million pounds, 207% of its target. As a result, both the Commission and MAFMC set the commercial quota at 23.53 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit at 7.55 million pounds for the 2013 fishery.

### Scup Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) and Recruitment

Source: NEFSC Stock Assessment Update, 2012



# Species HIGHLIGHTS



Young angler with a scup.  
Photo © Steve Witthuhn.

Fishery managers and stakeholders continue to be concerned about allocation of the resource between the commercial and recreational sectors as well as the allocation split among the three commercial periods (Winter I, Summer, and Winter II). Specifically, there is concern that current allocation schemes may not reflect the current needs of the fishing sectors. Both the Commission and the MAFMC initiated an amendment to the Scup FMP to consider revisions to seasonal and sector allocations. Proposed measures include options to modify the

commercial/recreational allocation, currently set at 78%/22%, and options to move a portion of the Winter I & II Period allocations to the Summer Period (currently at 38.95% of the quota). The Commission and Council proposed an upper limit for the amount of allocation distributed to the recreational sector at 40%. For the seasonal allocation, both groups proposed a maximum percentage of allocation distributed to the Summer Period at 50%. These measures are being considered to maximize the overall benefits of the available total allowable catch.

Commercial landings peaked in 1960 at 48.5 million pounds. In recent years, landings have fluctuated from 15.6 million pounds in 1991 to a time series low of 2.7 million pounds in 2000. In 2011, landings increased to 15 million pounds (compared to 10.7 in 2010). For the past several years, Rhode Island and New Jersey have harvested the largest share of the commercial landings. Recreational landings declined steadily from 11.6 million pounds

in 1986 to 0.9 million pounds in 1998, the lowest value in the time series. In 2011, recreational landings were 3.6 million pounds (compared to 5.7 in 2011).

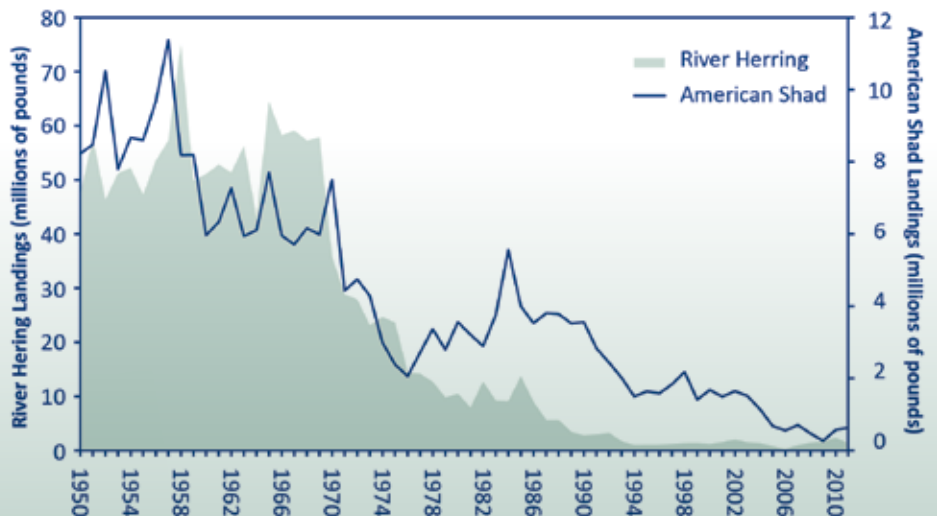
## SHAD & RIVER HERRING

With the recent adoption and pending implementation of Amendments 2 and 3 to the Shad and River Herring FMP, the Commission has made significant progress in improving the conservation and management of shad and river herring stocks coastwide. Both Amendments require states and jurisdictions to close their shad and river herring fisheries unless they develop and implement sustainable fishery management plans (SFMPs). The Amendments define a sustainable fishery as “a commercial and/or recreational fishery that will not diminish the potential future stock reproduction and recruitment.” Plans must clearly demonstrate that the state’s or jurisdiction’s shad and river herring fisheries meet this new definition of sustainability through the development of sustainability targets which must be achieved and maintained.

The Commission also continues to collaborate with NEFMC and MAFMC to address the bycatch of these species in federal fisheries. NEFMC and MAFMC have approved Amendment 5 (Atlantic Herring) and Amendment 14 (Squid, Butterfish and Mackerel), respectively. Both Amendments

### American Shad and River Herring Commercial Landings

Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1985); Amendment 1 (1999); Amendment 2 - River Herring (2009); Amendment 3 - American Shad (2010)



South Carolina Commissioner Robert Boyles, Jr. with an American shad. Photo © ASMFC.

have been forwarded to NOAA Fisheries for final approval and include management options that will increase bycatch monitoring and reduction strategies. Additionally, MAFMC is currently developing Amendment 15 which proposes adding shad and river herring as a “stock in the fishery” to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish FMP or, alternatively, the creation of a new federal FMP for alosines.

## AMERICAN SHAD

Under Amendment 3, any state or jurisdiction without an approved SFMP is required to close its commercial and recreational American shad fisheries, with the exception of catch and release fisheries, by January 1, 2013. The Board has approved plans for the Delaware River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative (representing New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania), Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. The remaining states and jurisdictions will close their commercial and recreational fisheries in 2013, with the exception of catch and release fisheries.

The latest benchmark stock assessment, conducted in 2007, indicates American shad stocks are currently at all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering. It identified the primary causes for the continued stock declines as a combination of excessive total mortality; habitat loss and degradation; and migration and habitat access impediments. Although improvement has been seen in a few stocks, many remain severely depressed compared to historic levels.

To improve data collection, Amendment 3 also implements additional required fishery-independent and -dependent monitoring for some states or jurisdictions. This includes monitoring of juvenile and adult American shad stocks; hatchery production; and commercial, recreational, and bycatch fisheries. Additionally, the Amendment increases coordination of monitoring activities for river systems under shared jurisdictions, as well as between freshwater and marine agencies.

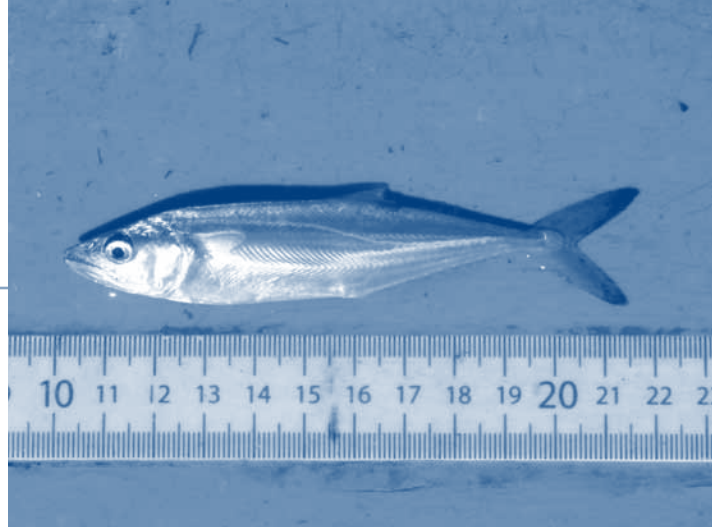
## RIVER HERRING

Amendment 2 prohibited commercial and recreational river herring fisheries in state waters as of January 1, 2012, unless a state or jurisdiction develops and receives approval for a SFMP. The Board has approved SFMPs for Maine, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The remaining states and jurisdictions closed their commercial and recreational fisheries in 2012.

Status of Select Alewife and Blueback Herring Stocks along the Atlantic Coast		
Source: ASMFC River Herring Benchmark Assessment, 2012		
STATE	RIVER	STATUS RELATIVE TO HISTORIC LEVELS/ RECENT TRENDS
ME	Damariscotta	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Stable <sup>A</sup>
	Union	Increasing <sup>A</sup> , Stable <sup>A</sup>
NH	Cochecho	Unknown <sup>A,B</sup> , Stable <sup>A,B</sup>
	Exeter	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Increasing <sup>A</sup>
	Lamprey	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
	Oyster	Depleted <sup>B</sup> , Stable <sup>B</sup>
	Taylor	Depleted <sup>B</sup> , Decreasing <sup>B</sup>
	Winnicut	Depleted <sup>A,B</sup> , Unknown <sup>A,B</sup>
MA	Mattapoissett	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
	Monument	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
	Parker	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
	Stony Brook	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
RI	Buckeye	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Unknown <sup>A</sup>
	Gilbert	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Decreasing <sup>A</sup>
	Nonquit	Depleted <sup>A</sup> , Decreasing <sup>A</sup>
CT	Connecticut	Depleted <sup>B</sup> , Decreasing <sup>B</sup>
NY	Hudson	Depleted <sup>A,B</sup> , Stable <sup>A,B</sup>
MD, DE	Nanticoke	Depleted <sup>A,B</sup> , Decreasing <sup>A,B</sup>
VA, MD, DC	Potomac	Depleted <sup>A,B</sup> , Unknown <sup>A,B</sup>
NC	Chowan	Depleted <sup>A,B</sup> , Stable <sup>A,B</sup>
SC	Santee-Cooper	Depleted <sup>B</sup> , Increasing <sup>B</sup>

Status relative to historic levels is pre-1970. Recent trends reflect the last ten years of data. A = alewife only; B = blueback herring only; A,B = alewife and blueback herring

# Species HIGHLIGHTS



Juvenile Spanish mackerel captured as part of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) Delaware River Seine Survey. Photo © NJ DEP.

In 2012, the Commission approved for management use the river herring benchmark stock assessment. Of the 52 stocks of alewife and blueback herring for which data were available for use in the assessment, 23 were depleted relative to historic levels, one stock was increasing, and the status of 28 stocks could not be determined because the time-series of available data was too short (see table on page 29). Estimates of abundance and fishing mortality could not be developed because of the lack of adequate data. The “depleted” determination was used instead of “overfished” and “overfishing” because of the many factors that have contributed to the declining abundance of river herring, which include not just directed and incidental fishing, but also habitat loss, predation, and climate changes.

In 2011, the National Resources Defense Council petitioned NOAA Fisheries to list river herring on the endangered species list throughout all or part of the species range. NOAA Fisheries has concluded that, given the information contained in the petition, listing may be warranted. As a next step, it will be conducting a full status review based on available scientific information. The findings of the Commission’s 2012 peer-reviewed stock assessment have been provided to NOAA Fisheries for consideration in the status review. The proposed rule on the listing is expected to be published in 2013.

## SPANISH MACKEREL

Spanish mackerel are managed cooperatively by the Commission and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). The species supports thriving recreational and commercial fisheries in the South Atlantic and is gaining importance in the Mid-Atlantic. It is also valued by anglers as bait in big game fishing. Since adoption of the FMP in 1990, states from New York through Florida have implemented bag and size limits or provisions for seasonal closures to complement federal management measures.

In 2012, states from New York to Florida implemented the measures contained in the Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Amendment updates all three plans with requirements of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

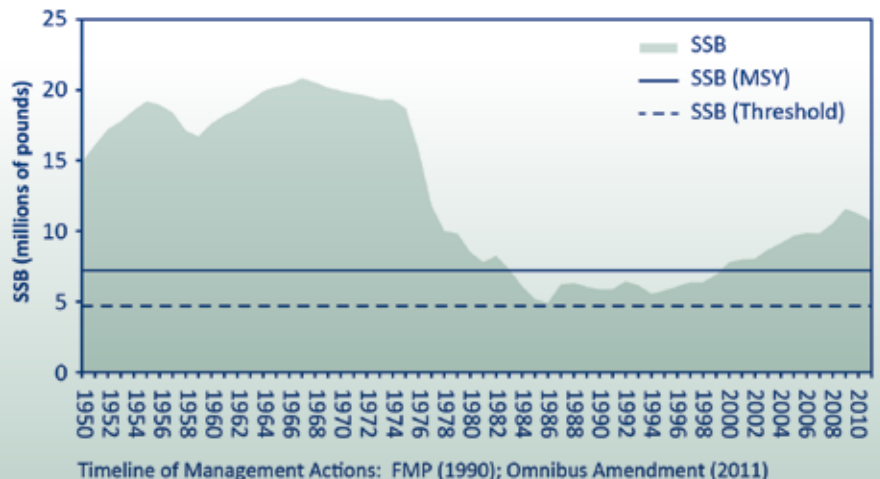
Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) and the Commission’s Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter (ISFMP Charter). Specific to Spanish mackerel, the Amendment includes commercial and recreational management measures, adaptive management measures, and a process for Board review and action in response to changes in the federal regulations. It allows for complementary management throughout the range of the species. The Omnibus Amendment includes provisions that are consistent with the SAFMC’s recently approved Amendment 18.

A stock assessment was conducted by the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review Process (SEDAR) in 2012. The assessment indicated Spanish mackerel are not overfished or experiencing overfishing. These findings were determined to be robust given the provided data and appropriate for management use.

Total 2011 landings were 5.8 million pounds, with commercial and recreational fisheries harvesting approximately 75% and 25% of the resource, respectively. These values represent an increase

### Spanish Mackerel Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review, 2012





in significance of the commercial sector. From 1981-2010, the commercial sector accounted for approximately 70% of the total landings. Coastwide commercial landings have been consistently below four million pounds since 1995, with the exception of 2010 when commercial landings increased to 4.5 million pounds. 2011 landings are estimated at 4.3 million pounds. Almost 80% of the landings occur in Florida, with the remaining amount harvested in North Carolina. The primary commercial gear are cast nets (39%), gillnets (30%), and hook and line (25%).

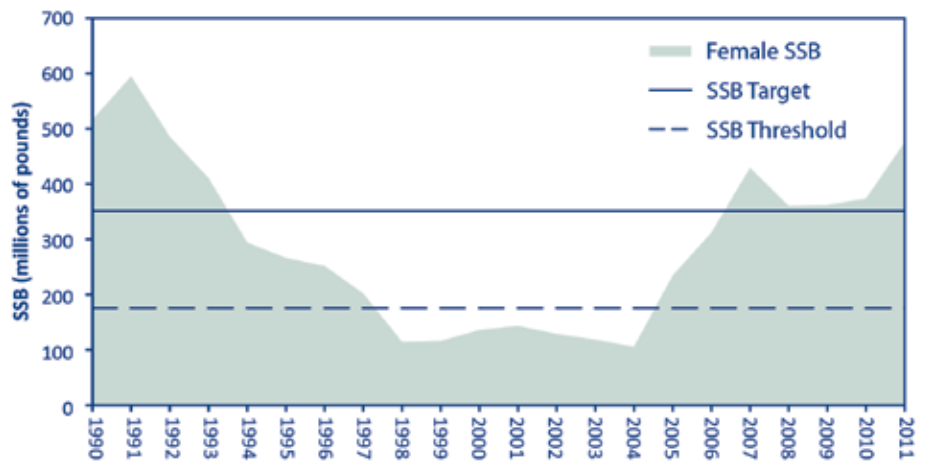
Recreational anglers harvested 1.5 million pounds of Spanish mackerel in 2011, a 13% decrease from 2010. The number of recreationally-harvested fish appears to show a cyclical trend, with low harvests in the early to mid-1980s and mid- to late 1990s, interspersed with higher harvests. Florida and North Carolina continue to account for the majority of recreational landings in both number and weight (on average, 86% by number since 1981).

## SPINY DOGFISH

In 2000, the Commission and MAFMC initiated complementary management programs for spiny dogfish. After eight years of stringent state and federal quotas, the management program resulted in spiny dogfish being declared rebuilt in 2008. The

### Spiny Dogfish Female Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: Update on the Status of Spiny Dogfish in 2012 and Initial Evaluation of Harvest at the Fmsy Proxy



Timeline of Management Actions: Emergency Action (2000); FMP (2003); Addendum I (2005); Addendum II (2008); Addendum III (2011); Addendum IV (2012)

2012 stock assessment update indicates the resource continues to be in good condition, with spiny dogfish not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Female SSB was estimated at 474.97 million pounds in 2012, and has exceeded the target (351.23 million pounds) for the past five years. Fishing mortality is estimated to be 0.114 in 2011, well below the plan's threshold (0.2439).

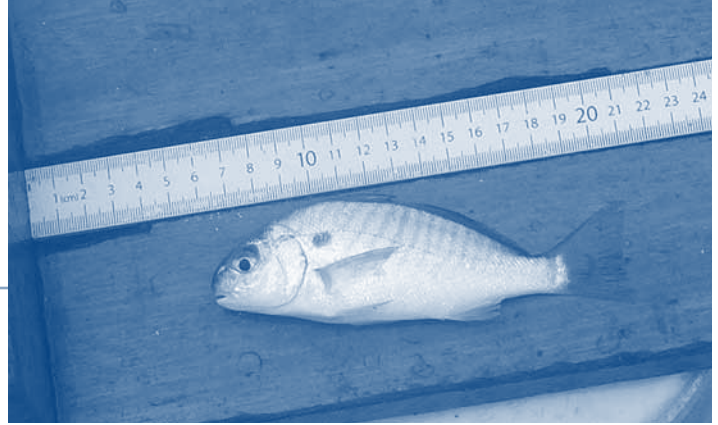
Discards have remained relatively stable, around 11 million pounds over the past decade, and are expected to remain near that level in the future. Canadian landings have also decreased significantly in recent years (249,000 pounds in 2009; 13,230 pounds in 2010; 273,000 pounds in 2011). It is anticipated the Canadian dogfish harvest will not increase in the near future given the lack of demand for the product and the subsequent closure of Canadian spiny dogfish processors.

Given the current stock status, the Spiny Dogfish Management Board approved a 35.6 million pound quota for the 2012/2013 fishing season (May 1 to April 30), with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds per day for the northern region states (Maine through Connecticut) and state-specific trip limits for the southern region states (New York to North Carolina). The 2012/2013 quota represents a 78% increase from the 2011/2011 quota of 20 million pounds. For the fishing seasons from 2013-2015, the Board approved a 40



Spiny dogfish captured as part of the SEAMAP Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise. Photo © ASMFC.

# Species HIGHLIGHTS



Juvenile spot captured as part of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) Delaware River Seine Survey. Photo © NJ DEP.

million pound quota with a maximum possession limit of 4,000 pounds per day for the northern region states and state-specific trip limits for the southern states.

The Board also approved Addendum IV to the Spiny Dogfish FMP in 2012. The Addendum maintains the maximum 5% quota rollover per year provision, as long as the stock biomass is above the target. Additionally, the Addendum updates the Commission's overfishing definition and overfishing threshold to be consistent with the federal plan, further aiding complementary management of this species.

## SPOT

Spot support recreational and commercial fisheries in the Mid- and South Atlantic, with total landings in 2011 estimated at about 7.3 million pounds (71% harvested by the commercial sector and 29% by the recreational fishery). The species also functions as an important forage species in the region.

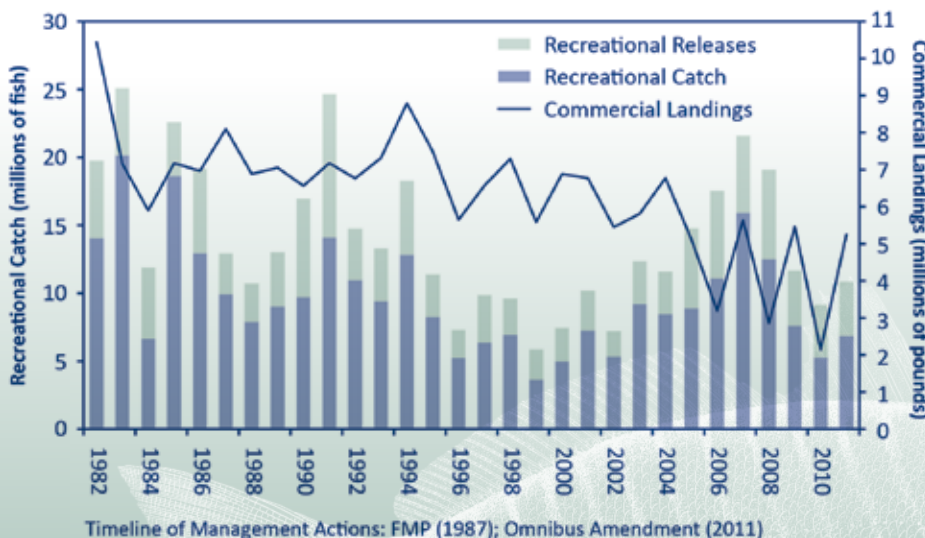
In 2012, states from New Jersey to Florida implemented the measures contained in the Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Amendment updates all three plans with requirements of ACFCMA and the Commission's ISFMP Charter. Specific to spot, the Amendment includes a management trigger, comprised of fishery-dependent and -independent data sets, to inform the Board on the current

status of the stock until a full coastwide stock assessment can be completed. High levels of spot bycatch continue to present a challenge for managers, in terms of both yearly management and overall assessment of the stock health. Coupled with adaptive management measures, the Omnibus Amendment provides options to efficiently implement management measures should the Board determine that such measures are needed in the future.

In its first review of the newly adopted triggers, the Technical Committee found that the triggers did not trip but were extremely close. The Board agreed to closely monitor stock status stock for an additional year to determine whether the pattern remains before initiating management action.

No coastwide assessment has been performed for spot; however, spot are a target or component of several state surveys using trawls, gillnets, or seine nets. Abundance indices have been highly variable throughout the survey time series, although many indices, including some from Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina showed increases in 2011.

**Spot Recreational Catch & Commercial Landings**  
Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2012



Commercial harvest in 2011 was estimated at 5.3 million pounds, with the majority taken in gillnets. This is an increase of over 50% from landings in 2010, although the reason for this increase is unknown. Small spot are also a major component of the bycatch in haul seine and pound net fisheries in Chesapeake Bay and North Carolina, as well as a significant part of the bycatch of the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery.

For the past three decades, recreational harvest along the Atlantic coast has varied between 1.7 and 6.9 million pounds. There was an increasing trend in the recreational harvest from the low of 3.6 million pounds in 1999 to a high of 5.5 million pounds in 2007; however, harvest declined in 2011 to 2.1 million pounds.



Mate aboard the Miss Montauk with a summer flounder. Photo © Open Boat Miss Montauk.

## SPOTTED SEATROUT

Spotted seatrout support recreational fisheries throughout the Southeast, with 1.1 million pounds harvested in 2011. In Florida alone, where the fish is highly accessible, spotted seatrout is often the most sought-after and exploited gamefish. The commercial fishery is just a fraction of the recreational catch, harvesting about 165,500 pounds in 2011.

In 2012, states from Maryland to Florida implemented the measures contained in the Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Amendment updates all three plans with requirements of ACFCMA and the Commission's ISFMP Charter. Specific to spotted seatrout, the Amendment includes recommended measures to protect the spawning stock, as well as a required coastwide minimum size of 12 inches.

These measures are essential as increased coastal development presents management challenges to this localized species whose life cycle depends on the same coastal areas that are highly populated by humans. Coupled with adaptive management measures, the Omnibus Amendment provides a mechanism to efficiently implement management measures should the Board determine that such measures are needed in the future. Currently, there is no coastwide stock assessment for the species and local assessments vary by state.

## SUMMER FLOUNDER

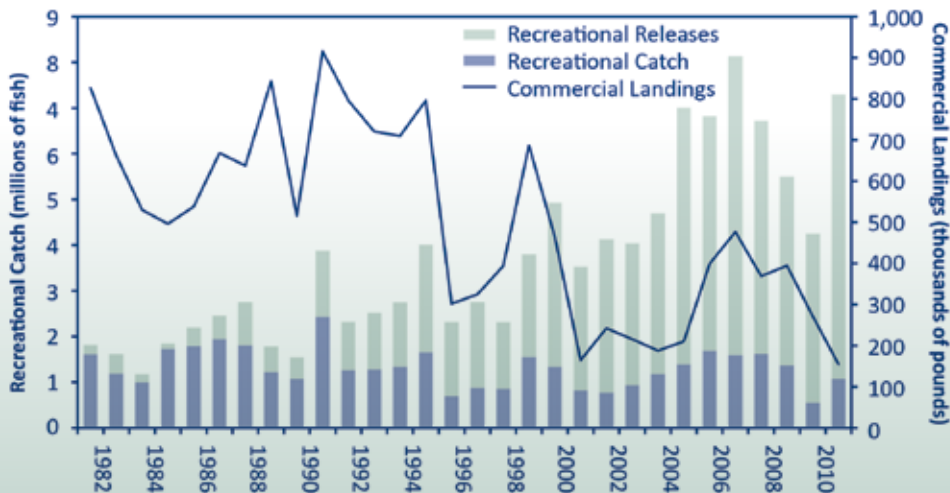
A highly valued fish species by both recreational and commercial fishermen, summer flounder have been jointly managed by the Commission and MAFMC for more than two decades. The population is now fully rebuilt in response to the joint management program.

In 2012, the summer flounder stock assessment was updated. SSB is estimated to be 125.7 million pounds, slightly below the SSB target of 132.4 million pounds. The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Based on the 2012 stock estimates, the Commission and MAFMC established a commercial quota of 11.44 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 7.63 million pounds for the 2013 fishing season.

During the late 1980s, commercial landings declined dramatically, reaching a low of 9.3 million pounds in 1990. Landings showed an increasing trend through 1995, but have varied without trend through 2010. For the past three years, commercial landings have been above 10 million pounds, with 2011 landings at 16.56 million pounds. Otter trawl is the principle commercial gear. After reaching a low of 3.2 million pounds in

### Spotted Seatrout Recreational Catch & Commercial Landings

Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2012

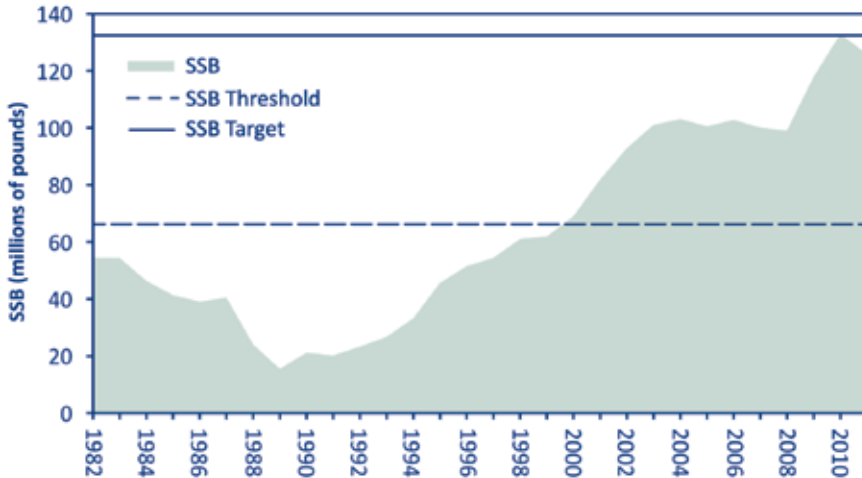


Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1985); Amendment 1 (1991); Omnibus Amendment (2011)

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## Summer Flounder Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: NEFSC Stock Assessment Summary, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1988); Amendment 1 (1991); Amendments 2-5 (1993); Amendment 6 (1994); Amendment 7 (1995); Amendments 8 & 9 (1996); Amendment 10 (1997); Amendment 11 (1998); Amendment 12 (1999); Amendment 13 (2003)

1989, recreational landings increased to 11.9 million pounds in 1997 and 16.5 million pounds in 2000. Since 2009, landings have been approximately 5 million pounds with 5.83 million pounds landed in 2011.

## TAUTOG

A revised stock assessment update in 2012 indicated that tautog continues to be overfished and subject to overfishing. The revised update also corrected errors in catch-at-age input values used in the 2011 assessment. This led the Commission to adjust the exploitation reduction, as required in Addendum VI, to 39% in order to achieve the fishing mortality target of 0.15. The states of Massachusetts to Virginia implemented measures to achieve the 39% reduction in 2012.

According to the 2012 revised stock assessment update, SSB remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 23.5 million pounds, 39% of the target SSB (59 million pounds). The three-year average fishing mortality (2007-2009) was estimated at 0.31, well above the plan's fishing mortality target of 0.15.

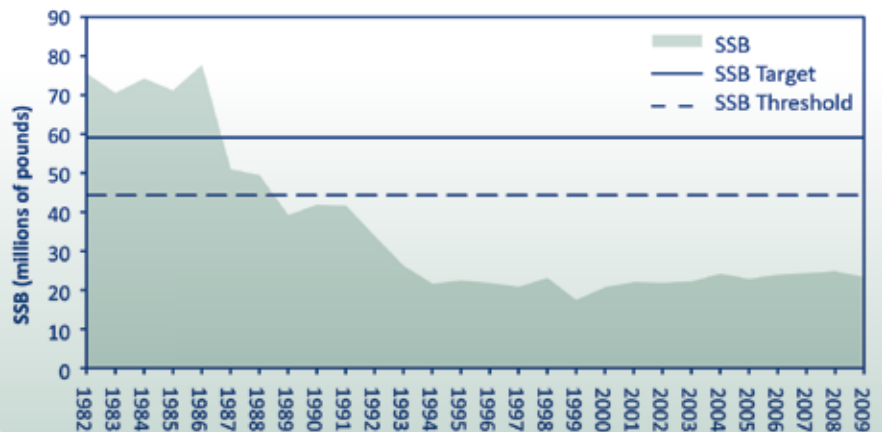
Historically, recreational harvest has accounted for about 90% of the coastwide harvest, although commercial landings in some states have comprised up to 40% of their total landings in recent years due to a demand for the live fish market. Most landings occur in state waters between Cape Cod and Chesapeake Bay in the spring and fall months. Some Mid-Atlantic fishermen pursue tautog year-round and there is an active fishery off the Coast of Virginia in winter.

Over the past three decades, recreational harvest has ranged from a time series high of 16.9 million pounds in 1986 to a low of 1.5 million pounds in 1998. From 2000-2011, recreational harvest averaged 3.4 million pounds, but declined to near the all-time low of 1.5 million pounds in 2011. New York anglers accounted for 30% of the recreational harvest in 2011, followed by New Jersey (26%), Virginia (12%), and Delaware (10%).

Commercial landings have ranged from a high of 1.2 million pounds in 1987 to a low of approximately 208,800 pounds in 1999. Landings have averaged about 295,300 pounds since 2000, with 2011 landings estimated at 259,200 pounds.

## Tautog Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

ASMFC Tautog Stock Assessment Update, 2012



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1996); Addendum I (1997); Addendum II (1999); Addendum III (2002); Addenda IV & V (2007); Addendum VI (2011)



ASMFC FMP Coordinator Mike Waine with a juvenile weakfish captured as part of the SEAMAP Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise. Photo © ASMFC.

More than 50% of the 2011 commercial harvest was landed in New York and Massachusetts. Rod and reel are the predominant commercial gear, although floating fish traps, fish pots, and otter trawl harvest are also used.

To improve stock assessment efforts for this data-poor species, the Commission conducted an ageing workshop in May 2012. It concluded that operculum (gill plate) should remain the standard biological sample for ageing tautog, but both operculum and otolith (ear bone) produced similarly precise age readings. This would allow states to pool their biological samples for regional age-length keys. In 2012, the Commission began preparing for the next benchmark stock assessment, scheduled for peer review in 2014.

## WEAKFISH

The most recent peer-reviewed benchmark stock assessment, completed in 2009, confirmed weakfish stocks are at an all time low and current fishery removals are unsustainable under existing stock conditions. The peer review panel agreed with the stock assessment's conclusions that weakfish abundance has declined markedly, total mortality is high, non-fishing mortality has recently increased, and the stock is currently in a depleted state. In 2009, in response to the depleted state of the weakfish stock, the Weakfish Management Board approved Addendum IV to Amendment 4 to the Weakfish FMP, significantly reducing the commercial and recreational harvest of weakfish.

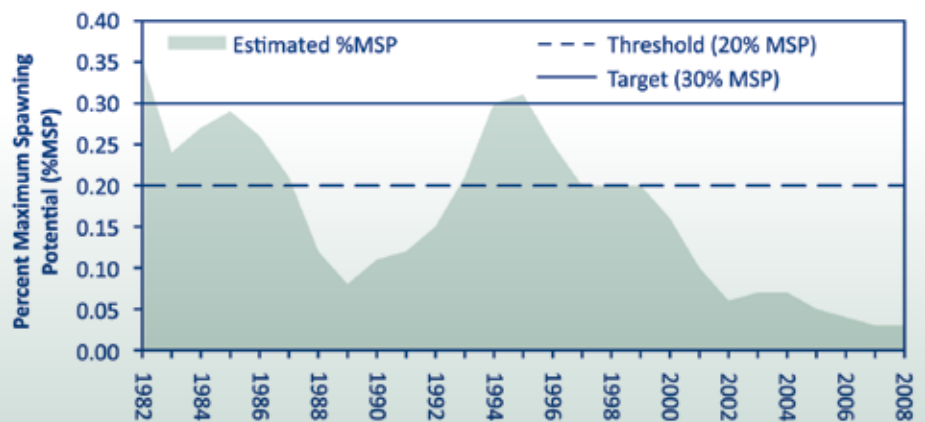
SSB was estimated at 2.9 million pounds in 2008 (compared to 30.8 million pounds in 1996). Recent total fishery landings are estimated at 268,200 pounds in 2010 and 159,900 pounds in 2011, the lowest on record since 1982. While the decline in the stock primarily results from a change in the natural mortality of weakfish in recent years, it is further exacerbated by continued removals by commercial and recreational fisheries. Natural mortality has risen substantially since 1995, with factors such as predation, competition, and changes in the environment having a stronger influence on recent weakfish stock dynamics than fishing mortality.

Given current high natural mortality levels, stock projections indicate that the stock is unlikely to recover rapidly. The spawning potential is estimated to be at 3% of unfished levels, well below the target level of 30% established in Addendum IV. In order to rebuild the stock, total mortality will need to be reduced, although this is unlikely to occur until natural mortality decreases to previous levels.

Juvenile abundance surveys suggest that young-of-the-year weakfish continues to be in a productive pattern, although there is concern because these strong young-of-the-year indices do not translate into high adult biomass. No management action was taken in 2012.

### Weakfish Maximum Spawning Potential

Source: ASMFC Weakfish Technical Committee, 2009



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1985); Amendment 1 (1991); Amendment 2 (1995); Amendment 3 (1996); Amendment 4 (2002); Addendum I (2005); Addenda II & III (2007); Addendum IV (2009)

# Species HIGHLIGHTS

## WINTER FLOUNDER

Winter flounder are managed by the Commission in state waters and NEFMC in federal waters. A benchmark assessment, completed in 2011, found that overfishing was not occurring on the GOM winter flounder stock, while its overfished status could not be determined.

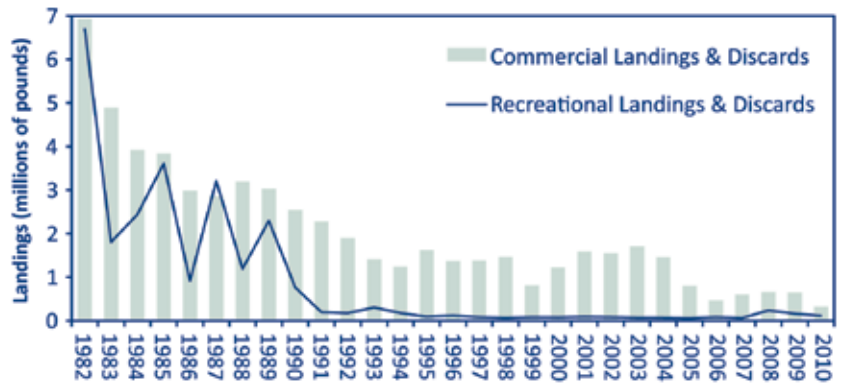
The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock is overfished but not subject to overfishing. The 2010 SSB estimate of 15.6 million pounds was below both the target (96 million pounds) and threshold (48 million pounds). Fishing mortality on the SNE/MA stock was estimated to be 0.051, well below the fishing mortality threshold of 0.29.

In 2012, in response to the finding that overfishing was no longer occurring on the GOM winter flounder stock, NOAA Fisheries took emergency action to provide more fishing opportunities in New England by doubling the commercial catch limit for GOM winter flounder harvested in state waters. The Commission responded by approving Addendum II to Amendment 1 of the Winter Flounder FMP to reflect the new stock status and federal regulations. Addendum II raised the catch limit for non-federally permitted commercial vessels to 500 pounds per trip in GOM, and the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island were given the option of expanding their recreational seasons to open year-round.

The Commission initiated Draft Addendum III in 2012, which proposes to change commercial trip limits and recreational measures through an annual specification process. It also proposes triggers to reduce trip limits when a percentage of the state water harvest, to be determined by NOAA Fisheries, has been reached. Draft Addendum III will be reviewed and considered for final approval in 2013.

### Winter Flounder Gulf of Maine Landings and Discards

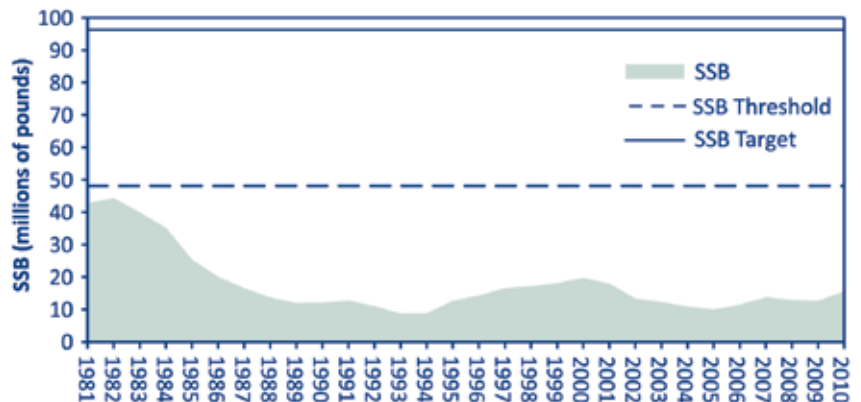
Source: NMFS 52nd Northeast Regional Assessment Workshop, 2011



Note: The 52nd Northeast Regional Workshop did not accept the analytical assessment model used to evaluate the status of the Gulf of Maine stock of winter flounder; therefore, landings are being provided as a proxy for stock status.

### Winter Flounder SNE/MA Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

Source: NMFS 52nd Northeast Regional Assessment Workshop, 2011



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP & Addendum I (1992); Addendum II (1998); Amendment 1 (2005); Addendum (2009); Addendum II (2012)

The winter flounder commercial fishery was once highly productive, with coastwide landings peaking at 40.3 million pounds in 1981. Since then, landings have steadily declined. Total commercial catch (GOM and SNE/MA combined) was 3.5 million pounds in 2010 and 4.7 million pounds in 2011. Similarly, the recreational fishery peaked in 1982 by weight, at 16.4 million pounds, and declined to just under 200,000 pounds in 2010.

# FISHERIES SCIENCE TO SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

## FISHERY-INDEPENDENT DATA COLLECTION

Fishery-independent monitoring provides insight into the status of fish stocks without the biases inherent to commercial and recreational catch information. The Commission's Fisheries Science Program coordinates two primary Atlantic coast fishery-independent data collection programs – the South Atlantic component of the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) and the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP).

## SEAMAP

SEAMAP is a cooperative program among state and federal agencies and universities to facilitate the collection, management, and dissemination of fishery-independent data in the Southeastern U.S. and Caribbean. Since 1982, SEAMAP has sponsored long-term standardized surveys that have become the backbone of fisheries and habitat management for its three regions – the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. In 2012, SEAMAP-South Atlantic surveys continued to collect data on the abundance and distribution of a variety of important commercial and recreational species (e.g., red drum, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic striped bass) from North Carolina to Florida.

In 2012, SEAMAP-South Atlantic continued development of a web-based application to integrate and share information among the several fishery-independent surveys under the SEAMAP umbrella and the fishery managers that use SEAMAP data. The compilation of datasets will be useful in the management of several commercially and recreationally important fish species that migrate between states. From these data, fisheries scientists and managers can determine year-to-year abundance trends, set fishing regulations, and evaluate management strategies.

Additionally, SEAMAP-South Atlantic continued to support the Southeast Regional Taxonomic Center, maintaining support for the processing and archiving of biological samples collected by SEAMAP surveys.

## NEAMAP

NEAMAP is a cooperative state/federal fishery-independent research and data collection program established in 1998 for the coastal waters from Maine to North Carolina. The program was developed to respond to the lack of adequate survey coverage and coordination in the coastal waters of the Mid-Atlantic Bight. Its primary tool to fill that gap in coverage has been the NEAMAP SNE/MA Nearshore Trawl Survey, which was piloted in 2006 and has completed five full years of surveys in the spring and fall of each year. The survey samples inshore waters from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, northward to Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. Survey data can be used to complement results from the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Trawl Survey, which samples in deeper, offshore waters of the Mid-Atlantic and New England. The NEAMAP program also includes the Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey, as well as the Massachusetts Inshore Trawl Survey.

In 2012, research scientists from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science completed spring and fall trawl surveys, working aboard the F/V Darana R, a commercial fishing vessel owned and operated by Captain James Ruhle. Each survey in 2012 conducted tows at 150 locations in depths ranging from three to 25 fathoms. Over six million individual fish and invertebrates, representing over 175 different species, were collected during the eleven full-scale surveys conducted through the fall of 2012. Individual length measurements were recorded for more than 620,000 animals and laboratory processing is proceeding on the 36,000 stomach samples and 49,000 ageing structures (ear bones, vertebrae, spines) collected in the field. The catch and sample data are used by scientists and managers to describe trends in fish stock abundance and health.

The 2012 NEAMAP SNE/MA Nearshore Trawl Survey not only extends the time series of fish and invertebrate abundance estimates, but also provides important fish age data for Atlantic striped bass, summer flounder, black sea bass, and other Commission managed species. These data are vital to improving our ability to track year



Biologist aboard the NEAMAP SNE/MA Nearshore Trawl Survey sorting fish for sampling. Photo © NEAMAP.

classes and understand changes in population age structure. With additional years of sampling, the SNE/MA Nearshore Trawl Survey will become an increasingly valuable source of fishery-independent data, alongside the Maine-New Hampshire and Massachusetts Surveys, to support and improve stock assessments. The majority of funds needed to complete NEAMAP Nearshore Surveys in the spring and fall of 2013 have been obtained; however, there is no long-term funding source for these surveys.

### RESEARCH INITIATIVES

The Commission continued several fisheries research initiatives in 2012 that were supported and funded by Congress as high priority issues for the Atlantic coastal states and their stakeholders. Information gathered from research activities provides the scientific basis for Commission stock assessments and is fundamental to informing fisheries managers about the health of fish and shellfish populations.

#### Northern Shrimp

The 29th Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey was conducted in 2012 by the NEFSC in cooperation with the Commission's Northern Shrimp Technical Committee. A total of 84 stations were sampled, with information on shrimp numbers, sizes, gender, and maturity collected to provide data for annual stock assessments and related analyses. The survey is a valuable tool for consistently evaluating the stock's condition. Results show that shrimp abundances have been at or below average levels in the last several years. A notable decline in shrimp sizes across life stages and genders was detected in the 2012 survey.

In 2012, the Commission's Northern Shrimp Technical Committee conducted a workshop with the goal of improving stakeholders' understanding of the science behind the northern shrimp management. The Workshop included a general overview of northern shrimp life history, the Commission's stock assessment process (including an exploration of both the data and models used), the specification setting process, and plans for the upcoming benchmark stock assessment scheduled for 2013.

#### Red Drum

The Commission identified red drum as a priority species in need of research because the status of the adult portion of the population is not well known. With federally-dedicated research funds, state



*Northern shrimp being measured and sexed as part of the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey. Photo © ASMFC.*

scientists from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia conduct bottom longline surveys to provide a fishery-independent index of adult red drum abundance. Many red drum encountered in the survey are tagged to provide information on survival rates, migratory behavior, and stock identification. Information is also collected on the presence of hatchery-origin fish in the offshore adult population, as well as sex ratios, maturity, and age structure of the population. All of the information is critical for evaluating the status of the red drum population, especially the adult portion, and developing a successful red drum management program.

#### Fish Ageing

Fish age and growth information are key components of stock assessments that improve our understanding of species' population dynamics. With age samples being collected, processed, and read by scientists at several institutions every year, it is important to ensure all ageing labs follow consistent protocols.

In 2012, the Commission facilitated consistency and information sharing on fish ageing through the development of standardized ageing protocols, the exchange of fish ageing samples among different laboratories, and a fish ageing workshop. The Commission, in collaboration with state, federal, and academic experts, continued developing a manual of standardized fish ageing protocols for Commission managed species. The Commission also organized exchanges of ageing samples for



Atlantic striped bass, summer flounder, black sea bass, and tautog to promote consistency between laboratories. In September 2012, the Commission conducted a workshop to develop and promote best practices for determining the age of sampled tautog, with the results from the workshop incorporated into the next tautog coastwide stock assessment. A river herring ageing exchange and/or workshop is being planned for 2013.

## Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey

The Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey, conducted by Virginia Tech University's Horseshoe Crab Research Center since 2002, is the only fishery-independent survey designed to sample the horseshoe crab population in coastal waters. Its data are a critical component of the Commission's coastwide stock assessment and the newly adopted ARM framework. The ARM framework incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized horseshoe crab harvest levels for the Delaware Bay area. The Horseshoe Crab Management Board formally adopted the ARM framework for management use through Addendum VII to the Horseshoe Crab FMP in 2012.

In 2012, \$35,000 in contributions from commercial bait processors and the biomedical industry helped to partially fund the 2012 Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. Interested parties from both groups provided enough funds when combined with a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to fully fund the survey in 2011. The 2012 survey was not as extensive in scope as previous years due to a significant decrease in funding. The Commission will continue to seek additional funding options to allow the survey to be conducted in 2013 and beyond.

## Recreational Fishing Release Mortality

Populations of several fish species managed by the Commission are subject to high levels of recreational catch and release. The release mortality rates, or degree to which fish survive following release, is an important factor included in stock assessments to determine how many fish are lost to release mortality every year. In 2012, the Commission, in collaboration with NOAA Fisheries, hosted a South Atlantic regional workshop on release mortality to gather the latest scientific study results on release mortality and identify best fish handling practices to minimize mortality from catch and release fish. Regional workshop participants include scientists, managers, and fishermen. Workshop reports, presentations, and additional results can be found at [www.fishsmart.org](http://www.fishsmart.org). A similar workshop for the Mid-Atlantic/New England regions is planned for March 2013.



From left: North Carolina biologist Charlton Godwin and ASMFC Acting ISFMP Director Toni Kerns with a striped bass captured as part of the Striped Bass Hook And Line Tagging Survey. Photo © ASMFC.

## COOPERATIVE TAGGING

Tag and recapture data are valuable inputs to the stock assessments of several species managed by the Commission, including Atlantic striped bass, red drum, sturgeon, weakfish, spiny dogfish, and coastal sharks. The Interstate Tagging Committee (ITC) was created in 1999 to improve the quality and utility of fish tagging data through the development and promotion of protocols for effective tagging programs. ITC maintains a Cooperative Tagging Website and Registry that provides information on coastwide tagging programs. Anglers can search a database by fish species, tag type, and tag color in order to identify recovered tags. Recent ITC activities include development of online tagging videos to guide anglers on proper tagging techniques. The Cooperative Tagging Website can be found at [www.fishtag.info](http://www.fishtag.info).

Since the early 1980s, the Commission has been a partner to a Cooperative Winter Tagging program led by USFWS. The program organizes annual field tagging of Atlantic striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, spiny dogfish, and other species aggregating each winter in nearshore waters off Virginia and North Carolina. In 2012, only six striped bass were caught, tagged, and released by scientists and captains aboard a charter vessel. Funds were not available for a trawling vessel that historically has caught and tagged on average over 1,000 striped bass each winter. Information from recaptured fish with tags provides scientists with data to better understand fish survival and growth, habitat preferences, seasonal movements and migrations, and stock boundaries.

## MULTISPECIES MODELS & ASSESSMENTS

The Commission recognizes the importance of ecological interactions, such as predator-prey relationships, in understanding the population dynamics of fishery resources.

The Fisheries Science Program coordinates the Multispecies Technical Committee (MSTC), a group of state, federal, and university scientists tasked with evaluating relationships among species via a multispecies modeling framework known as the extended Multispecies Virtual Population Analysis (MSVPA-X). MSTC periodically performs updates to the model, evaluates the status of research recommendations from the 2005 model peer review, and works with the Commission's Assessment Science Committee to consider and evaluate alternative stock assessment models that incorporate ecosystem factors. The MSVPA-X model was updated again in early 2012 with the most recent years of data in order to include its results in the 2012 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment update.

Annual mortality-at-age estimates from the MSVPA-X are generated and used in the Atlantic menhaden assessment model to account for changes in predation rates over time. In addition, a multispecies subcommittee began work on several alternative multispecies models that may be used to develop ecological reference points for Atlantic menhaden.

### STOCK ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW

The Commission's species management boards rely on the scientific and technical information provided by independent peer reviews of stock assessments to evaluate stock status and develop fisheries regulations using the best available science. In 2012, four benchmark stock assessments were evaluated through peer review processes. The river herring and American eel assessment reviews were conducted through the Commission's external review process, and the Atlantic herring review was completed through the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC). The Spanish mackerel stock assessment was evaluated through the SEDAR process. Information on the outcome of 2012 stock assessment peer reviews can be found in the species highlights section of this report.

### STOCK ASSESSMENT TRAINING

The Commission organizes stock assessment training courses to provide instruction to fisheries professionals on the most progressive fisheries analysis methods available for use in stock assessments. Courses are provided each year to meet

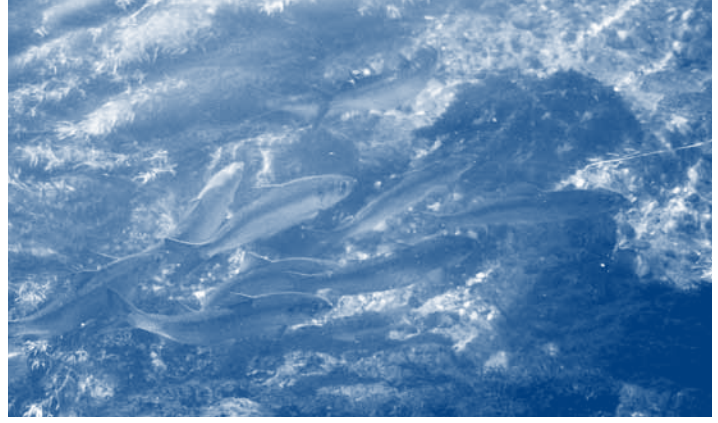


State biologists attend an ASMFC Stock Assessment Training Workshop. Photo © ASMFC.

the specific training needs identified as critical to supporting coastwide assessments, and to provide managers with a better understanding of assessment outcomes. In 2012, an advanced training course entitled "Data Poor Methods for Stock Assessment" was held to enhance state scientists' knowledge of approaches to modeling fish populations with limited available data. One intermediate level stock assessment workshop was held in 2012, the "Mock Assessment Workshop – Part 2". The courses are designed to provide state scientists with hands-on experience in developing stock assessments, using fishery-independent and -dependent data in a variety of analytical methods and models.

### HABITAT PROTECTION, RESTORATION & ENHANCEMENT

The Commission recognizes that protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish habitats are essential to promoting the sustainability of fisheries along the Atlantic coast. The Habitat Program is responsible for gathering technical information and developing guidance on the important role fish habitat plays in achieving the Commission's vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." The Program successfully performed this role through several activities in 2012. The Habitat Program released the latest installment of the Habitat Management Series, *Offshore Wind in My Backyard?* With the accelerating development of offshore wind power, the Habitat Committee developed a concise report to outline the broad considerations that should be made when providing comment on



*Alewives among submerged aquatic vegetation off the south shore of Long Island, New York. Photo © Jake Kritzer, Environmental Defense Fund.*

proposed offshore wind projects. This report focuses on habitat issues that are broadly applicable along the Atlantic seaboard for the siting, construction, and monitoring of offshore wind facilities. The environmental issues associated with developing a wind facility are outlined and recommendations are offered on how to offset identified impacts. This report is available on the Commission's website, [www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org), and will continue to be updated as new sources of information become available.

The Habitat Program also released the *2012 Annual Issue of Habitat Hotline Atlantic*, including a special focus on offshore wind projects, an announcement of the forthcoming issue of the Habitat Management Series on Harbor Deepening and related state activities, an excerpt from an article published in *Nature*, "Coastal Eutrophication as a Driver of Salt March Loss," an overview on ocean data portals and the Northeast Connectivity Project, 2012 highlights from state habitat-related initiatives, and updates from the Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership and NOAA Fisheries.

With the goal of providing the most up-to-date information on the habitat needs and ecosystem functions of Commission managed species, the Habitat Program also continues to update the habitat sections of the Commission's fishery management plans. In 2012, the Commission adopted a new habitat section for Atlantic sturgeon through Addendum IV to Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Sturgeon FMP. Significant progress was also made on the development of a new red drum habitat section, which is scheduled for approval in 2013.

## Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Beginning in 2006, the Commission contributed to the establishment and growth of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), an assembly of state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental groups whose mission is to conserve habitat for Atlantic coast diadromous, estuarine-dependent, and coastal fish species. ACFHP addresses habitat threats with a broad and coordinated approach, leveraging resources from many agencies, organizations, and corporations to make a difference for fish habitat. ACFHP operates under the purview of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP).

The USFWS announced that three habitat restoration project proposals submitted to ACFHP were approved to receive FY2012 funding. The first of these projects, led by the James River Association, is aimed at promoting the population of Atlantic sturgeon and other anadromous fish of the Chesapeake Bay through the restoration of spawning and nursery habitat in the James River. The second

project, led by the Marine Resources Council of East Florida, seeks to restore over 10 acres of coastal habitat wetlands in the Indian River Lagoon. The third project, led by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and located in Buzzards Bay, will focus on restoring eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) by replacing traditional moorings with helical anchors and flexible chain, dubbed 'conservation moorings', that minimize impacts to the seafloor by preventing chain drag. More information on these and other funded projects can be found at [www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/fundedprojects/](http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/fundedprojects/).

Earlier in 2012, ACFHP endorsed three other project proposals. The first, led jointly by The Nature Conservancy and the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, is to develop a spatially explicit estimate of small and large barriers in the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and use them to conduct an assessment of aquatic connectivity. The second project involves a cooperative effort among six partners in Florida to cap approximately 30,000 cubic yards of muck sediments at the main source of sedimentation in the Lake Worth Lagoon and enhance/restore approximately 20 acres of ACFHP Subregional Priority Habitats, including seagrass and mangrove wetlands. The third project led by Sea Research Foundation, Inc. focuses on the education and outreach components of a proposed Alewife Outreach, Research, and Education project in Connecticut. For more information on these projects and how to seek ACFHP endorsement please visit [www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/endorsedprojects/](http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/endorsedprojects/).

In the fall of 2012, the ACFHP Steering Committee approved its 2012-2013 Implementation Plan, which is a subset of the 2012-2016 ACFHP Conservation Strategic Plan. The Plan contains objectives, strategic actions, and related tasks that can be accomplished over the course of a two year period. The achievement of each task is lead by an individual(s) within the Partnership with the help of a team of additional partners. To view the five-year Strategic Plan or the two-year Implementation Plan, please visit [www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/planningresources/publications/](http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/planningresources/publications/).

# Awards

## AWARDS

*During 2012, the Commission had the privilege of presenting awards to several deserving individuals who have directly contributed to furthering the Commission's vision of healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015.*

### **CAPTAIN DAVID H. HART AWARD**

The Commission presented George Lapointe, long-time ASMFC Commissioner a former Maine Commissioner of Marine Resources, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission's 71st Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

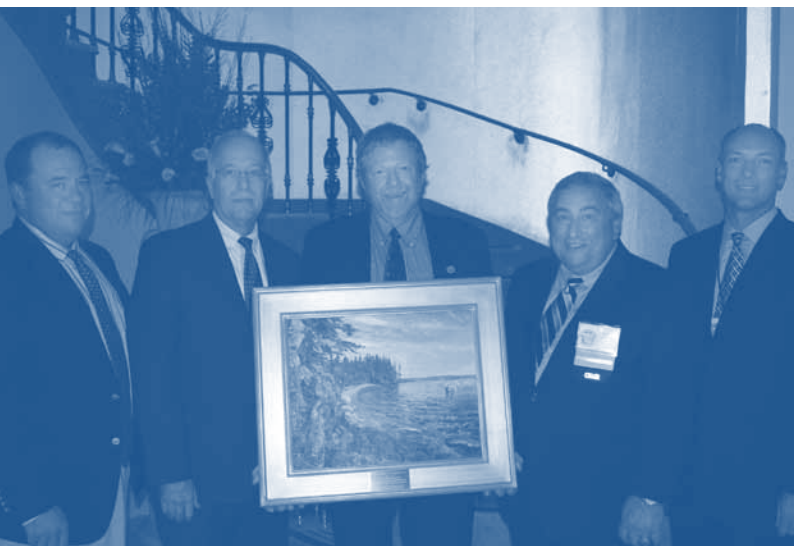
"George Lapointe is without a doubt a true embodiment of Captain Dave. For more than 30 years he has provided consistent fisheries management leadership at the state, interstate, and federal levels; all the while passionately supporting the Commission and its vision of stock rebuilding and sustainable resource management," stated Jack Travelstead, Chair of ASMFC's Award Committee. "He possesses the unique ability to temper the most heated debate with humor and a common sense approach transforming conflict into workable solutions."

Serving as both an employee at the Commission and as a Commissioner from Maine, Mr. Lapointe has shown an unwavering commitment and dedication to the success of marine fisheries management. In his first Commission position as Council Liaison, he fostered knowledge between the Commission and the Regional Councils. In 1994, Mr. Lapointe returned to the Commission as the ISFMP Director where he served for nearly four years. During that time, he was instrumental in the development of the ISFMP Charter and worked with state members, federal partners, and a broad constituency to promote efficiency, and foster outreach and public participation in the Commission's fisheries management process.

In 1998, Mr. Lapointe was appointed as the Commissioner of Maine Department of Marine Resources, where he served as Commissioner for 12 years, directing a critical marine resource agency at one of its most difficult times with a conscience for all those involved. He was so well respected for his understanding of fisheries management and his commitment to his state's fishing industries, he served at the pleasure of two governors and was supported by a very active and challenging constituency.

Mr. Lapointe was elected Commission Vice-Chair in 2004 and Chair in 2006, serving three years as Chair. Under his guidance, the Commission embarked on an extensive strategic planning effort, culminating in the development of the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. The Plan formalized, for the first time, Commissioner values in pursuit of the Commission's vision and mission, and reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to transparency and accountability in its decision making process.

Mr. Lapointe recognizes his success in natural resource management is due to the accumulated knowledge and experience of those he has had the honor of serving with. When veteran Commissioners with over 100 combined years



From left: ASMFC Vice-Chair Louis Daniel, ASMFC Awards Committee Chair Jack Travelstead, Hart Award Recipient George Lapointe, ASMFC Chair Paul Diodati, and ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal.

of service retired, he personally oversaw a critical transition in Commission leadership, readying the next generation to take up the charge of pursuing the states' collective mission of sustainable resource management. He also guided states' efforts to conserve and rebuild diadromous species, completing the long-awaited American shad benchmark stock assessment and the development and adoption of a new amendment for river herring.

Throughout his career, Mr. Lapointe has strived to be fully informed of the issues (from all perspectives – science, management and user groups) and share that knowledge with next generation of fisheries managers and scientists. He truly embodies the spirit and character of the Captain David H. Hart Award. The Commission instituted the Award in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The award is named for one of the Commission's longest serving members who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

## ANNUAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Mr. Dennis F. Abbott, Mr. G. Ritchie White, Mr. William T. Windley, Jr., and Major Harold Knudsen were presented the Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence for their contributions to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. Mr. Abbott received his award in the legislative category, while Mr. White, Mr. Windley, and Major Knudsen received awards in management and policy; scientific, technical, and advisory; and law enforcement categories, respectively.

### Legislative: Mr. Dennis F. Abbott

For nearly 15 years, Mr. Abbott has supported fisheries conservation and management activities along the Atlantic coast as both an ASMFC Commissioner and a New Hampshire state legislator. As a Commissioner, Mr. Abbott has served on numerous ASMFC committees and taken on leadership roles, such as Chair of the Atlantic Herring Section and Co-chair of the Legislators and Governor Appointees (LGAs). When he was first appointed, he championed the increased role of the LGAs on the Commission's species management boards, helping to establish the current fisheries management decision-making process. He has also worked tirelessly to ensure that interested stakeholders have a voice in the Commission's management process through its advisory panels.



From left: ASMFC Vice-Chair Louis Daniel with AAE Recipients William Windley, Major Harold Knudsen, Dennis Abbott and G. Ritchie White.

As a state legislator, member, and later Chair of New Hampshire's House Fish, Game, and Marine Resources Committee, Mr. Abbott sponsored a \$1 fee on all fishing licenses, providing dedicated funds to improve fish habitat such as dam removals and stream restoration projects. He championed the state's saltwater license legislation to improve recreational catch data and provide additional funding for the state's natural resource management. He also sponsored legislation providing state expedited rulemaking to facilitate timely implementation of Commission management actions.

### Management & Policy: Mr. G. Ritchie White

A lifelong sportsman and saltwater angler, Mr. White has been actively involved in fisheries management at the state and interstate level for nearly 20 years. He began his involvement with the Commission as an Atlantic Striped Bass Advisor, where he witnessed firsthand the recovery of striped bass and the slow but steady increase of recreational and commercial fishing opportunities. He gained a profound appreciation for the successes that could be achieved when the states and federal government joined forces to rebuild striped bass stocks. His belief that this success could be applied to other species along the Atlantic coast led him to be an important advocate for passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act in 1993.

As New Hampshire's Governor Appointee to the Commission for the past 12 years, Mr. White has actively participated in the Commission's fisheries management process, serving on a number of species management boards, sections and

# Awards

## AWARDS

committees, as well as chairing the Northern Shrimp Section. In addition, he regularly meets with members of New Hampshire's commercial and recreational industries, and his state's congressional delegation on fisheries-related issues.

Mr. White is a longtime appointee to New Hampshire's Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries and spent four years as Coastal Commissioner for the Fish and Game Commission. He is also a founding member of the New Hampshire Coastal Conservation Association, where he has served on the Board of Directors since its inception. A persistent and staunch advocate for science-based management, Mr. White has consistently strived to put the resource first while trying to balance the needs of the various users of marine resources.

### Scientific, Technical, & Advisory:

#### Mr. William T. Windley, Jr.

Mr. Windley has served on the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden, Atlantic Croaker, and South Atlantic Species Advisory Panels for more than 10 years. He assumed chairmanship of Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel in 2002 and the South Atlantic Advisory Panel in 2008, consistently representing the viewpoints and concerns of those panels to their respective species management boards in a fair and even-handed manner. Over the course of his chairmanship, Mr. Windley has participated in stock assessments for Atlantic menhaden, Atlantic croaker, and red drum; new managements programs for Atlantic menhaden and several South Atlantic species; and the initiation of a new fishery management plan for black drum.

Mr. Windley is a long-serving member and four-term president of the Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association, a member of the Maryland Coastal Conservation Association, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the National Advisory Board of the Recreational Fishing Alliance, as well as Maryland Department of Natural Resource's Aquatic Resources Committee and Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission.

A strong proponent of science-based management and managing the resource for the greater good, Mr. Windley has long advocated that managers base their decisions on science rather than political pressure. He has firmly held that if resources are managed properly, then recreational and commercial fisheries will not only coexist but thrive.

### Law Enforcement: Major Harold Knudsen

A veteran officer of the North Carolina Marine Patrol, Major Knudsen has dedicated his 29-year career to serving the citizens of North Carolina and protecting their fisheries resources. His dedication is steeped in a lifelong appreciation for the vast beauty of the outdoors and the importance North Carolina's nearshore waters and resources to its coastal communities. Major Knudsen supervises all Marine Patrol field operations for the state, which cover 2.7 million acres of ocean and coastal waters and 4,000 miles of shoreline in 21 counties.

Major Knudsen is widely respected for working effectively across the state's marine law enforcement districts to enforce North Carolina's marine fisheries regulations. His skill and dedication is evidenced by a recent complex case that detected significant underreporting of red drum by three North Carolina seafood dealers. The case resulted in the issuing of 32 charges against the seafood dealers, including possession and sale of illegal red drum and failure to complete North Carolina trip ticket.



# Staff

## COMMISSION STAFF

### ROBERT E. BEAL

Executive Director

### LAURA C. LEACH

Director of Finance and  
Administration

### Kristina A. Ballard

Accounting Manager

### Tina L. Berger

Public Affairs Specialist

### Cecilia Butler

Human Resources  
Administrator

### Lisa Hartman

Staff Assistant



### Stefanie Miles

Membership Assistant

### Cynthia Robertson

Meetings Assistant

### TONI KERNS

Acting Director, Interstate  
Fisheries Management  
Program

### Danielle Chesky

Fishery Management Plan  
Coordinator

### Marin Hawk

Fishery Management Plan  
Coordinator

### Kate Taylor

Fishery Management Plan  
Coordinator

### Michael Waine

Fishery Management Plan  
Coordinator

### Melissa Yuen

Fishery Management Plan  
Coordinator

### PATRICK CAMPFIELD

Science Director

### Katie Drew, Ph.D.

Stock Assessment Scientist

### Emily Greene

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat  
Partnership Coordinator

### Jeff J. Kipp

Stock Assessment Scientist

### Genevieve M. Nesslage, Ph.D.

Senior Stock Assessment  
Scientist

### Melissa Paine

Scientific Committee  
Coordinator

# Financial

## FINANCIAL REPORTS



CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

### Independent Auditors' Report

To the Executive Committee  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Arlington, Virginia

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission as of June 30, 2012 and 2011, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Commission's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission as of June 30, 2012 and 2011, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated October 9, 2012 on our consideration of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and important for assessing the results of our audit.

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements taken as a whole. The accompanying schedule of contributions requested and received is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. The accompanying schedules of expenditures of federal awards is presented for purposes of additional analysis as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations* and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jones &amp; McIntyre, PLLC".

October 9, 2012



**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

<b>ASSETS</b>		
	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>		
Cash	\$ 501,593	\$ 138,112
Investments	536,447	535,486
Grants receivable	180,419	661,723
Accounts receivable	56,684	31,121
Prepaid expenses	40,360	41,494
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>\$ 1,315,503</u>	<u>\$ 1,407,936</u>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, AT COST:</b>		
Office furniture and equipment	\$ 476,835	\$ 464,466
Office condominium	4,122,947	4,122,947
<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 4,599,782</u>	<u>\$ 4,587,413</u>
Less, Accumulated depreciation	(380,057)	(239,849)
<b>Property and Equipment, Net</b>	<u>\$ 4,219,725</u>	<u>\$ 4,347,564</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>\$ 5,535,228</u>	<u>\$ 5,755,500</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES:</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 98,825	\$ 252,012
Accrued salaries and vacation	425,509	457,848
Deferred revenue	-	75,594
Contract advances	110,739	40,523
Current maturities of long term debt	212,053	208,963
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>\$ 847,126</u>	<u>\$ 1,034,940</u>
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES:</b>		
Long term debt	\$ 1,891,672	\$ 2,103,725
Obligation under interest rate swap	116,390	148,354
<b>Total Other Liabilities</b>	<u>\$ 2,008,062</u>	<u>\$ 2,252,079</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITES</b>	<u>\$ 2,855,188</u>	<u>\$ 3,287,019</u>
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>	<u>2,680,040</u>	<u>2,468,481</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<u>\$ 5,535,228</u>	<u>\$ 5,755,500</u>

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012**

	Total	ASMFC	Outside Contracts			
			Wallop/ Breaux	Other	ACCSP	ACFCMA
<b>REVENUE:</b>						
Contract reimbursements	\$ 5,331,008	\$ -	\$ 244,165	\$ 1,571,285	\$ 1,594,376	\$ 1,921,182
Contributions from member states	574,882	574,882	-	-	-	-
Annual meeting fees	18,560	18,560	-	-	-	-
Investment income (loss)	961	961	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,925,211</b>	<b>\$ 594,203</b>	<b>\$ 244,165</b>	<b>\$ 1,571,285</b>	<b>\$ 1,594,376</b>	<b>\$ 1,921,182</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
Salaries	\$ 2,680,772	\$ 762,494	\$ 112,019	\$ 442,433	\$ 808,254	\$ 555,572
Travel	917,429	8,790	28,946	204,286	77,243	598,164
Subcontracts	684,791	90,407	-	534,328	-	60,056
Fringe benefits	663,651	179,563	30,556	121,556	182,277	149,699
Professional services	26,579	16,085	-	-	-	10,494
Office maintenance	79,859	79,859	-	-	-	-
Equipment maintenance	174,600	87,730	-	-	86,870	-
Depreciation	163,024	163,024	-	-	-	-
Office	54,701	45,462	-	818	8,421	-
Printing	26,044	22,438	-	2,538	1,068	-
Meetings	69,629	69,429	-	-	200	-
Postage	18,249	18,249	-	-	-	-
Interest and taxes	113,786	113,786	-	-	-	-
Other	18,398	17,155	-	219	1,024	-
Dues and subscriptions	4,895	4,895	-	-	-	-
Telephone	11,160	11,160	-	-	-	-
Equipment leases	23,923	23,923	-	-	-	-
Insurance	14,126	14,126	-	-	-	-
Indirect cost allocation	-	(1,283,676)	48,834	280,427	414,438	539,977
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,745,616</b>	<b>\$ 444,899</b>	<b>\$ 220,355</b>	<b>\$ 1,586,605</b>	<b>\$ 1,579,795</b>	<b>\$ 1,913,962</b>
<b>OPERATING NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 179,595</b>	<b>\$ 149,304</b>	<b>\$ 23,810</b>	<b>\$ (15,320)</b>	<b>\$ 14,581</b>	<b>\$ 7,220</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME ( EXPENSE):</b>						
Interest rate swap obligation adjustment	31,964					
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 211,559</b>					
<b>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>2,468,481</b>					
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 2,680,040</b>					

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011**

	Total	ASMFC	Outside Contracts			
			Wallop/ Breaux	Other	ACCSP	ACFCMA
<b>REVENUE:</b>						
Contract reimbursements	\$ 5,221,725	\$ -	\$ 192,212	\$ 1,224,936	\$ 1,610,214	\$ 2,194,363
Contributions from member states	547,308	547,308	-	-	-	-
Annual meeting fees	17,610	17,610	-	-	-	-
Investment income (loss)	106,112	106,112	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,892,755</b>	<b>\$ 671,030</b>	<b>\$ 192,212</b>	<b>\$ 1,224,936</b>	<b>\$ 1,610,214</b>	<b>\$ 2,194,363</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
Salaries	\$ 2,568,262	\$ 718,276	\$ 94,820	\$ 333,956	\$ 854,211	\$ 566,999
Travel	664,922	57,174	25,261	116,300	33,321	432,866
Subcontracts	1,008,532	15,000	-	480,431	-	533,101
Fringe benefits	646,459	166,154	26,528	98,889	207,066	147,822
Professional services	87,169	66,896	-	-	-	20,273
Rent	118,226	118,226	-	-	-	-
Office maintenance	69,378	69,378	-	-	-	-
Equipment maintenance	92,649	16,399	2,410	-	72,016	1,824
Depreciation	102,344	102,344	-	-	-	-
Office	55,828	48,981	-	137	6,710	-
Printing	17,347	17,302	-	-	-	45
Meetings	6,414	6,189	-	-	225	-
Postage	17,813	17,813	-	-	-	-
Interest and taxes	82,644	82,644	-	-	-	-
Other	45,006	38,992	-	-	6,014	-
Dues and subscriptions	5,263	5,263	-	-	-	-
Telephone	12,561	12,561	-	-	-	-
Equipment leases	42,517	42,517	-	-	-	-
Insurance	28,322	28,322	-	-	-	-
Indirect cost allocation	-	(1,173,377)	38,443	222,982	417,187	494,765
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,671,656</b>	<b>\$ 457,054</b>	<b>\$ 187,462</b>	<b>\$ 1,232,695</b>	<b>\$ 1,596,750</b>	<b>\$ 2,197,695</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 221,099</b>	<b>\$ 213,976</b>	<b>\$ 4,750</b>	<b>\$ (7,759)</b>	<b>\$ 13,464</b>	<b>\$ (3,332)</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME ( EXPENSE):</b>						
Interest rate swap obligation adjustment	(148,354)					
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 72,745</b>					
<b>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR (AS RESTATED)</b>	<b>2,395,736</b>					
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 2,468,481</b>					

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS**

**FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Cash received from members and contracts	\$ 6,356,053	\$ 5,456,729
Annual meeting fees	18,560	17,610
Investment income received	927	4,677
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(5,697,382)	(5,229,521)
Interest paid	<u>(71,024)</u>	<u>(61,485)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>\$ 607,134</u>	<u>\$ 188,010</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Purchase of property and equipment	\$ (36,763)	\$ (1,427,894)
Sale of equipment	3,000	-
Investments, net	<u>(927)</u>	<u>1,435,069</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>\$ (34,690)</u>	<u>\$ 7,175</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Payments on long term debt	<u>\$ (208,963)</u>	<u>\$ (513,190)</u>
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH</b>	<b>\$ 363,481</b>	<b>\$ (318,005)</b>
<b>CASH, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<u>138,112</u>	<u>456,117</u>
<b>CASH, END OF YEAR</b>	<u><u>\$ 501,593</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 138,112</u></u>
Reconciliation of change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities (Note 7)		
Supplemental Disclosures:		
Condominium suite purchase financed	\$ -	\$ 2,700,000
Equipment financed by capital lease	\$ -	\$ 125,878

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

**Note 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**Organization:**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (the Commission) (a nonprofit organization) was established in 1942 to represent the interests and needs of the marine fisheries of its member states (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida). Since the Commission is an instrumentality wholly owned by member states, it is exempt from income tax; therefore, an internal revenue code exemption is not required. The purpose of the Commission, as set forth by Congress in Article I of the Commission's Compact, is "to promote the better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the Atlantic seaboard by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries."

**Basis of Accounting:**

The Commission prepares its financial statements on the accrual basis of accounting. Consequently, revenue is recognized when earned and expenses when incurred.

Monies received under grants are accounted for separately. Revenue is recognized when funds are expended for the purposes specified in the grant. The Commission funds any excess of expense over revenue incurred in the performance of a grant project.

The accompanying statements of activities reflect expenses summarized on a functional basis. Expenses that can be identified with a specific program or support service are allocated directly according to their natural expenditure classification. Fringe benefits and administrative costs of the Commission have been prorated among the programs by various statistical bases.

**Financial Statement Presentation:**

Under FASB ASC 958, the Commission is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets and permanently restricted net assets. The Commission has only unrestricted net assets.

**Cash:**

Cash consists of deposits in checking and money market accounts. The Commission's demand deposits with financial institutions at times exceed federally insured limits. The Commission has not experienced any losses in such accounts, and management believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risks.

**Bad Debts:**

The Commission recognizes bad debts when, in the opinion of management, an account becomes uncollectible.

**Investments:**

Investments are recorded at fair value.

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011

Note 1. **Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Concluded)**

**Property and Equipment:**

Depreciation of property and equipment has been provided for using the straight-line method over useful lives of five years for computer equipment and ten years for other furniture and equipment. The Commission capitalizes equipment purchases with a unit cost exceeding \$500. The office condominium suite is being depreciated over 40 years.

**Indirect Cost Allocation:**

Indirect costs are allocated to contracts based on the Commission's indirect cost allocation rate or the indirect cost allocation allowed by the contract.

**Estimates:**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**Reclassifications:**

Certain 2011 amounts have been reclassified for comparison with the 2012 presentation.

Note 2. **Investments**

At June 30, 2012 and 2011, investments consisted of the following:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Cash and money market funds	\$ 326,810	\$ 326,721
Equities and mutual funds	<u>209,637</u>	<u>208,765</u>
<b>Total Investments</b>	<u>\$ 536,447</u>	<u>\$ 535,486</u>

Unrealized and realized gains (losses) included in investment income on the Statement of Activities totaled \$34 and \$101,435 for the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011, respectively.

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

**Note 2. Investments (Concluded)**

FASB ASC 820 establishes a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs used to measure fair value into three broad categories: levels 1, 2 and 3. The fair value hierarchy gives the highest priority to quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (level 1) and lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3). In some cases, the inputs used to measure fair value might fall into different levels of the fair value hierarchy. When this happens, the level in the fair value hierarchy that the assets or liability falls under is based on the lowest input level that is significant to the fair value measurement in its entirety. The fair value of the investments noted in the above table is based on quoted prices in active markets (level 1 inputs).

**Note 3. Notes Payable and Derivative Transactions**

At June 30, long-term debt consists of the following:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Note payable, BB&T, secured by headquarters office condominium suite, payable in monthly installments of \$15,000 plus interest at 68% of the one month LIBOR rate plus 1.7875%, due August 2020.	\$ 2,010,647	\$ 2,190,647
Capital leases, payable in monthly installments of \$3,365 including interest ranging from 8.89% to 10.88% due November 2013 – September 2015	<u>93,078</u>	<u>122,041</u>
Subtotal	\$ 2,103,725	\$ 2,312,688
Less, Current portion	<u>( 212,053)</u>	<u>(208,963)</u>
Total Long-Term Debt	<u>\$ 1,891,672</u>	<u>\$ 2,103,725</u>

Maturities on long-term debt for the years ending June 30 are as follows:

2013	\$ 212,053
2014	208,205
2015	205,896
2016	186,924
2017	180,000
2018 and thereafter	<u>1,110,647</u>
Total	<u>\$ 2,103,725</u>

In August 2010 the Commission purchased an office condominium suite in Arlington, Virginia and moved its headquarters there in October 2010. The Industrial Development Authority of Arlington County, Virginia (the Authority) provided financing of \$2,700,000 through the sale of revenue bonds under the Industrial Development and Revenue Bond Act, Chapter 49, Title 15.2, Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended. The Authority assigned the related promissory note to Branch Banking and Trust Company (BB&T).

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

**Note 3. Notes Payable and Derivative Transactions (Concluded)**

The Commission makes limited use of derivative instruments for the purpose of managing interest rate risks. The Commission has entered into two interest rate swap agreements to reduce the impact of changes in interest rates on its office condominium suite mortgage note. At June 30, 2012 one of the Commission's interest rate swap agreements had a notional amount of \$818,500 and requires a fixed rate of interest of 3.45%. At June 30, 2012 the second interest rate swap agreement had a notional amount of \$692,000 and requires a fixed rate of interest of 4.14%. Under both agreements the Commission is to receive a variable rate of interest (the one-month LIBOR rate plus 1.7875%) on the notional amount of indebtedness. The Commission pays or receives any difference in interest on a monthly basis. This amount is charged or credited to interest expense in the statement of activities. The interest rate swap agreements expire in August 2020. The Commission is exposed to credit loss in the event of nonperformance by the other party to the interest rate swap agreement. However the Commission does not anticipate nonperformance by the counterparty.

The carrying amount of the swap has been adjusted to its estimated fair value as of June 30, 2012. The liability is classified as noncurrent since the Commission does not intend to settle it during its next fiscal year.

**Note 4. Obligations Under Capital Leases**

The assets and related obligations for capital leases are recorded at amounts equal to the present value of future minimum lease payments using incremental borrowing rates at the inception of the leases. The assets are amortized over the life of the lease or asset, as appropriate, by the straight-line method. Interest expense is accrued on the basis of the outstanding obligations under capital leases.

The Commission had two capital leases for office equipment and support at June 30, 2012. The gross amount of assets recorded under these capital leases totaled \$125,878. Accumulated depreciation on these assets totaled \$33,882. Minimum future lease payments under capital leases are as follows for the years ending June 30,

	<u>Total</u>	
2013	\$	40,386
2014		33,277
2015		28,200
2016		<u>7,050</u>
	\$	108,913
Less, executory costs: Interest		<u>( 15,835)</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$	<u><u>93,078</u></u>



**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

**Note 5. Lease Commitments**

The Commission leases office equipment under a noncancelable operating lease. Minimum lease payments are as follows for the years ending June 30:

2013	\$ 7,872
2014	<u>5,904</u>
	<u>\$ 13,776</u>

**Note 6. Retirement Plans**

The Commission sponsors a defined contribution pension plan which covers all employees. The Commission contributes 7% of eligible wages to the plan. The Commission also matches employee contributions up to 3% of eligible wages under an eligible Section 457 plan. Pension expense for the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011 was \$241,914 and \$240,891, respectively.

**Note 7. Reconciliation of Change in Net Assets to Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities**

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Change in Net Assets	\$ 211,559	\$ 72,745
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	163,024	102,344
(Gain) Loss on equipment disposition	( 1,422)	17,777
Unrealized and realized (gain) loss on investments	( 34)	( 101,435)
Obligation under interest rate swap	( 31,964)	148,354
(Increase) decrease in assets:		
Grants receivable	481,304	( 360,696)
Accounts receivable	( 25,563)	39,524
Prepaid expenses	1,134	45,140
Security deposits	---	20,941
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:		
Accounts payable	( 153,187)	156,184
Accrued salaries and vacation	( 32,339)	38,264
Deferred revenue	( 75,594)	28,173
Contract advances	<u>70,216</u>	<u>( 19,305)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>\$ 607,134</u>	<u>\$ 188,010</u>



**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONCLUDED)**

**JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

**Note 8. Concentrations**

The Commission received 71% and 71% of its revenue from the Atlantic Coastal Act Program for the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011, respectively.

**Note 9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The Commission invests in various investment securities, which are exposed to risks such as interest rate, market and credit risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term, and such changes could have a material effect on the amounts reported in the financial statements.

**Note 10. Prior Period Adjustment**

Net assets at June 30, 2010 have been restated to reflect the estimated liability for compensatory sick leave. It is the Commission's policy to compensate employees upon termination for 50% of their unused sick leave (up to a maximum payment of 240 hours). At June 30, 2010 accrued salaries was increased by \$170,000 and net assets were decreased by \$170,000.

**Note 11. Subsequent Events**

Management has evaluated subsequent events through October 9, 2012 and has concluded no significant subsequent events meet the criteria of professional accounting standards to be recognized or not recognized, but disclosed, in the financial statements.

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS REQUESTED AND RECEIVED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012**

	<u>Requested</u> 2011-2012	<u>Received</u> 7/1/11 - 6/30/12
Member States:		
Connecticut	\$ 26,599	\$ 26,599
Delaware	22,862	22,862
Florida	57,410	57,410
Georgia	22,966	40,602
Maine	69,804	69,804
Maryland	35,125	35,125
Massachusetts	58,145	58,145
New Hampshire	22,091	22,091
New Jersey	53,182	53,182
New York	40,471	---
North Carolina	45,396	45,396
Pennsylvania	19,166	19,166
Rhode Island	30,893	30,893
South Carolina	27,659	27,659
Virginia	<u>42,913</u>	<u>42,913</u>
Totals	<u>\$ 574,682</u>	<u>\$ 551,847</u>

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**SCHEDULES OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS**  
**FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011**

<u>Federal Grantor/ Program Description</u>	<u>Federal CFDA Number</u>	<u>Federal Expenditures</u>	
		<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Department of Commerce:			
Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act	11.407	\$ 287,981	\$ 246,289
Atlantic Coastal Act (ACFCMA)	11.474	1,921,182	2,194,363
Atlantic Coastal Act (ACCSP)	11.474	1,594,376	1,610,214
Atlantic Coastal Act (Fisheries Support)	11.474	688,591	404,908
Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program	11.435	<u>64,132</u>	<u>140,871</u>
Total Department of Commerce		<u>\$ 4,556,262</u>	<u>\$ 4,596,645</u>
Department of the Interior:			
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	15.628	\$ 112,488	\$ 101,307
Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act	15.605	<u>244,165</u>	<u>192,212</u>
Total Department of the Interior		<u>\$ 356,653</u>	<u>\$ 293,519</u>
Total Expenditures of Federal Awards		<u>\$ 4,912,915</u>	<u>\$ 4,890,164</u>



CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Report on Internal Control Over Financial  
Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on  
an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in  
Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*

Executive Committee  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Arlington, Virginia

We have audited the financial statements of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission as of and for the year ended June 30, 2012, and have issued our report thereon dated October 9, 2012. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

Management of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting. In planning and performing our audit, we considered Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control over financial reporting.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Our consideration of the internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be deficiencies, significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above.

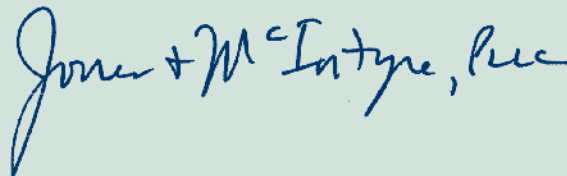
### Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

We noted certain other matters that we reported to the management of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in a separate letter dated October 9, 2012.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of Management, the Commissioners, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, and federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

October 9, 2012

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jones + McIntyre, LLC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable to Each Major Program and on Internal Control Over Compliance in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133

Executive Committee  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Arlington, Virginia

Compliance

We have audited Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the *OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on each of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2012. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditors' results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs. Compliance with the requirements of laws, regulations, contracts and grants applicable to each of its major federal programs is the responsibility of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's compliance based on our audit.

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and OMB Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*. Those standards and OMB Circular A-133 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether noncompliance with the types of compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on a major federal program occurred. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence about Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's compliance with those requirements and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion. Our audit does not provide a legal determination on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's compliance with those requirements.

In our opinion, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2012.

### Internal Control Over Compliance

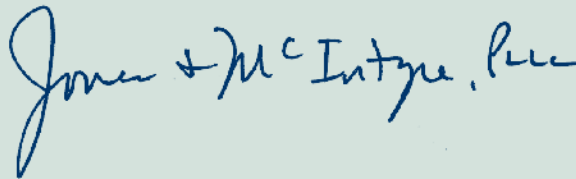
The management of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, regulations, contracts and grants applicable to federal programs. In planning and performing our audit, we considered Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's internal control over compliance with the requirements that could have a direct and material effect on a major federal program to determine the auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on compliance and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-133, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's internal control over compliance.

A deficiency in internal control over compliance exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect and correct noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. A material weakness in internal control over compliance is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis.

Our consideration of the internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be deficiencies, significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of Management, the Commissioners, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, and federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

October 9, 2012





**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012**

1. The auditors' report expresses an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.
2. No significant deficiencies relating to the audit of the financial statements of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission are reported in the report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with government auditing standards.
3. No instances of noncompliance material to the financial statements of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission were disclosed during the audit.
4. No significant deficiencies relating to the audit of the major federal award programs are reported in the report on compliance with requirements applicable to each major program and on compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-133.
5. The auditors' report on compliance for the major Federal award programs for Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission expresses an unqualified opinion on all major federal programs.
6. There were no audit findings relative to the major federal award programs for Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.
7. Major programs tested included:
  - Department of Commerce:
  - Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act 15.605
  - Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act 11.407
  - Atlantic Coastal Act 11.474 ACFCMA
8. The threshold for distinguishing Types A and B programs was \$300,000.
9. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was determined to be a low-risk auditee.

# Acknowledgements

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*We would like to thank the people and agencies identified throughout this report and below for the use of their photographs and illustrations.*

### FRONT COVER AND TITLE PAGE INSETS FROM LEFT:

Marina in Philadelphia

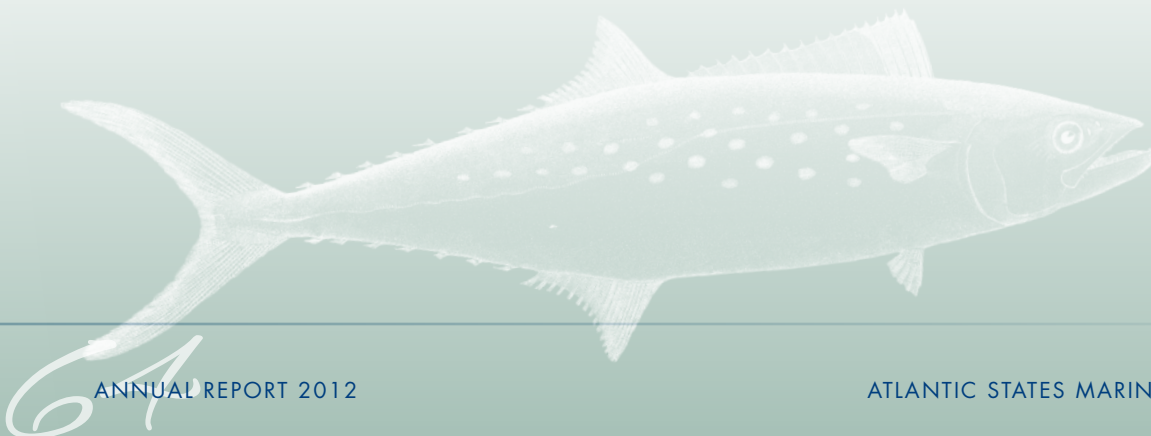
Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA

Liberty Bell by Tony the Misfit at <http://flickr.com/photos/22714323@N06/2432720887>

### HISTORICAL FISH ILLUSTRATIONS:

Inside Front & Back Covers and Throughout Report (with the exception of the horseshoe crab image on page 24) courtesy of NOAA's Historic Fisheries Collection

Horseshoe crab illustration courtesy of Dr. Carl N. Shuster, Jr.







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