



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Upcoming Meetings

page 2

From the Executive Director's Desk

Draft Strategic Plan:
Charting the Course for
the Next 5 Years
page 3

Species Profile

Atlantic Striped Bass
page 4

Awards

Captain David H. Hart
Melissa Laser Fish Habitat
Conservation
Annual Awards of Excellence
page 6

Fishery Management Plan Actions

American Eel
American Lobster
Summer Flounder, Scup,
Black Sea Bass and Bluefish
Spiny Dogfish & Coastal
Sharks
Horseshoe Crab
page 8

NOAA Releases 2012 Fisheries of the US

page 11

Employee of the Quarter Named

page 11

ASMFC Launches Redesigned Website

page 14

Proposed Federal Actions

Atlantic Sturgeon
Red Knot
page 15

Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III Elected ASMFC Chair



In October at the Commission's 72nd Annual Meeting in St. Simons Island, Georgia, member states acknowledged the accomplishments of outgoing Chair Paul J. Diodati of Massachusetts and elected Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III of North Carolina as the new Chair of the Commission.

In assuming the chairmanship, Dr. Daniel spoke enthusiastically about his new position, "I am honored to be elected and look forward to working with my colleagues from the 15 Atlantic coast states, federal marine fishery management agencies, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and the District of Columbia to ensure the continued conservation and management of Atlantic coast marine fishery resources."

"Through the selection of a new Executive Director and 5-Year Strategic Plan, Paul has positioned the Commission for continued success long after his tenure as Chair is through," stated Dr. Daniel. "Paul spearheaded the charge to reinforce the role of Commissioners in providing direction and guidance on policies, priorities, and strategic planning. Under his leadership, the Commission initiated rebuilding programs for Southern New England lobster, American eel, and tautog, and implemented new management programs for Atlantic menhaden, black drum, and a suite of south Atlantic species. He also led the Commission through the successful completion of two benchmark stock assessments for American eel and Atlantic striped bass."

"Paul further strengthened our relationship with our sister Interstate Commissions, forming an even greater collective of the coastal states to address issues of mutual concern. He's reenergized the Commission's legislative agenda and strengthened our financial footing and long-term federal support through improved relationships with members of Congress and by positioning the Commission as respected source of information to Congress and the Administration. Paul has also helped to improve coordination and information sharing between the states and our federal partners, particularly on potential Endangered Species Act listings."

As an ASMFC Commissioner since 2007, Dr. Daniel has been an invaluable asset and highly respected among his peers. He has chaired numerous species management boards. Most notably he chaired the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Board, where he guided Commissioners through the development, approval, and implementation of a new management regime for Atlantic menhaden, one which recognizes the ecological role of Atlantic menhaden as an important prey/forage species.

continued, see DR. LOUIS DANIEL page 12

Upcoming Meetings

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as the deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III (NC)
Chair

Douglas E. Grout (NH)
Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield
Science Director

Toni Kerns
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December 2-6

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington, NC.

December 2 (6 PM)

ASMFC Draft Strategic Plan State Public Input Meeting, RI Marine Fisheries Council, URI Narragansett Bay Campus – Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI.

December 3 (4 PM)

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section and Advisory Panel, Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring Street, Portland, ME.

December 3 (7 PM)

ASMFC Draft Strategic Plan State Public Input Meeting, NH Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries, Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road Portsmouth, NH.

December 5 (1 - 3 PM)

ASMFC Sturgeon Technical Committee Conference Call; dial 888.394.8197 (passcode 499811) to join call.

December 9 (1 - 3 PM)

ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee Conference Call; dial 888.394.8197 (passcode 815277) to join call.

December 10 & 11

ASMFC Biological Ecological Reference Points Workgroup, The Hotel at Arundel Preserve, 7795 Arundel Mills Boulevard, Hanover, MD.

December 10-12

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Westin Annapolis, 100 Westgate Circle, Annapolis, MD.

December 16-18

New England Fishery Management Council, DoubleTree Hotel, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA.

January 9 (4 PM)

ASMFC Draft Strategic Plan State Public Input Meeting, NJ Marine Fisheries Council, Galloway Township Public Library, 306 E. Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway, NJ.

January 13 (begins at 8:30 AM) -16 (ends at 3 PM)

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Data Workshop, Florida Marine Research Institute (Conference Rooms 3A & 3B), 100 8th Ave SE, St. Petersburg, FL.

January 28-30

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth, NH.

February 4-6

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA.

February 11-13

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree by Hilton New Bern/ Riverfront, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, NC.



ASMFC 2014-2018 Draft Strategic Plan: Charting the Course for the Next Five Years

Throughout 2013, ASMFC Commissioners worked tirelessly drafting a new Strategic Plan to guide the Commission through another five years. The 2014 – 2018 Draft Strategic Plan reflects the Commissioners' commitment to successful management of Atlantic coast fisheries and outlines their collective vision for the future of the Commission.

The Draft Strategic Plan, which is out for public comment, builds upon its predecessors with an emphasis on the Commission's four main program areas – fisheries management, fisheries science, habitat conservation and law enforcement. It recognizes the outside forces impacting sustainable management of Atlantic coastal fisheries, including increased pressure on resources, scrutiny of the science supporting management decisions, an unpredictable federal legislature, shrinking state and federal budgets, demand for ecosystem based management, shifting population distributions due to environmental changes, and increased federal protections on species inhabiting our coastal waters. Commissioners accept these challenges and recognize the work of the Commission is now more important than ever.

The Draft Strategic Plan proposes an updated vision of "Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries" to guide the Commission over the next five years. The vision is put into action through seven proposed goals and their corresponding strategies. To advance the seven goals contained in the Draft Strategic Plan, the Commission will pursue specific objectives, targets, and milestones set out every year in its annual action plan. Following are brief descriptions of the seven over arching goals.

1. The Commission acknowledges its responsibility for sound management of shared coastal fishery through its commitment to **rebuild, maintain, fairly allocate, and promote Atlantic coastal fisheries**. Commissioners will advance the long-term benefits of conservation, while balancing the socioeconomic interests of coastal communities.
2. Sustainable management of fisheries requires accurate and timely scientific advice. Over the next five years, the Commission will **pursue sound, actionable science through a technically rigorous, independently peer-reviewed stock assessment process**, and improved data collection.
3. Fisheries managers, law enforcement personnel, and stakeholders have a shared responsibility to **promote compliance with fisheries management measures**. In the next five years, the Commission and its partners will actively promote compliance with fishery management plans to ensure sustainable use of Atlantic coast fisheries.
4. Faced with rapidly changing ecosystems and habitat loss, the Commission, through its Habitat Program, will

protect and enhance fish habitat and ecosystem health through partnerships and education at the local, state, regional and federal levels.

5. Stakeholder and public acceptance of Commission decisions are critical to our ultimate success, and these groups must have a clear understanding of our mission, vision, and decision-making processes. To that end, the Commission has renewed its commitment to **strengthen stakeholder and public support for our actions**, through expanded outreach about our programs, decision-making processes, and management successes and challenges.
6. Although states are positioned to achieve many of the national goals for marine fisheries through cooperative efforts, state fisheries interests are often underrepresented at the federal level. Therefore, the Draft Strategic Plan calls for the **advancement of Commission and member states' priorities through a proactive legislative policy agenda**. In the next five years, the Commission will work proactively with Congress in all phases of policy formulation.
7. **Ensuring the fiscal stability and efficient administration of the Commission's resources** is paramount to continued success of the Commission and its member states in meeting their stewardship responsibilities of sustainable fisheries management. In addition to careful fiscal management, the development of annual action plans, attracting and maintaining talented staff, and expanding the knowledge base of staff, Commissioners and technical advisors will enable the Commission to efficiently respond to increasingly complex fisheries management issues.

Making the "correct" decision in fisheries management is not always obvious or easy. To that end, the Draft Strategic Plan enumerates eight values to guide Commissioners when faced with difficult and complex choices. These values ensure Commission actions support our overall mission and vision by emphasizing resource conservation, economic success, transparency in our actions, use of sound science, honesty, integrity, and fairness in everything we do.

I encourage you to submit your input on the Draft Strategic Plan, which is currently available for public comment at www.asmf.org on the homepage under Quick Links. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM EST on January 10, 2014 at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Strategic Plan). Member states will also be conducting public input meetings, some of which will be held in conjunction with previously scheduled state advisory meetings. Contact your respective state agency or check the Commission's website calendar at <http://www.asmf.org/calendar/> for more information.

Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass

Assessment Finds Resource Not Overfished or Experiencing Overfishing: Board Initiates Addenda to Adopt New Reference Points & Consider Management Measures to Address Declines to Spawning Stock Biomass

Introduction

Ardent anglers will brave the cold in the coming months heading to the oceanic waters off of the Chesapeake Bay where Atlantic striped bass have been known to spend their winters in recent years. These fish that tend to aggregate in large schools are part of the migratory stock that provides so many great recreational opportunities along the Coast. Soon enough spring will be here and the stripers will be on the move again making a spawning migration from the ocean to freshwater rivers. Atlantic striped bass are not the only species that has this unique life history as it shares coastal rivers with shad, river herring, and sturgeon every spring.

Although the 2013 stock assessment indicates Atlantic striped bass are not overfished and are not experiencing overfishing, female spawning stock biomass (SSB) has continued to decline since 2004. As a result, the Commission has initiated a draft addendum to consider management options to reduce fishing mortality for the 2015 fishing year. Additionally, the Commission continues to address existing and emerging challenges such as illegal harvest, disease, species interactions, and the possible contraction in the species' northern range.

Life History

On the Atlantic coast, Atlantic striped bass range from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the St. John's River in Florida. The migratory stock under Commission management ranges from Maine through North Carolina. Atlantic striped bass can live up to 30 years. The majority of their adult life occurs in estuaries or the ocean, where striped bass tend to aggregate by size. Mature males and females ascend freshwater rivers to spawn in the spring months, releasing millions of eggs into the ecosystem. The fertilized eggs flow downstream eventually hatching into larvae, which begin feeding on zooplankton. The larvae mature into juveniles and remain in coastal sounds and estuaries for two to four years before joining the coastal migratory population in the Atlantic Ocean.

In the ocean, fish tend to move north during the summer and south during the winter, but these migrations can be influenced by their age, sex, degree of maturity, and the river in which they were born. Important wintering grounds for the mixed stocks are located

from offshore from New Jersey to North Carolina. In general, Chesapeake Bay spawning areas produce the majority of coastal migratory striped bass.



Atlantic striped bass tagged and ready for release as part of the 2013 Hook and Line Tagging Survey. Photo by Tom Crews, USFWS

Species Snapshot

Atlantic Striped Bass *Morone saxatilis*

Management Unit:
Maine - North Carolina

Interesting Facts:

- Striped bass tagged in Chesapeake Bay have been recaptured as far away as the Bay of Fundy.
- Striped bass don't have eyelids; when the sun comes up they retreat to deeper water to avoid bright light.
- Females grow larger than males; fish larger than 15 lbs are most likely female, with the potential to produce a million eggs/10 lbs of body weight.
- US striped bass regulations date to pre-Colonial times, when striped bass were prohibited from being used as fertilizer (c. 1640).
- In 1669, the 1st public school in North America (MA) was financed with taxes imposed on striped bass harvest.

Largest Recorded: New world record was caught in CT (2011), weighing 81.88 lbs. Historic records confirm a 125 lb female caught off on NC in 1891.

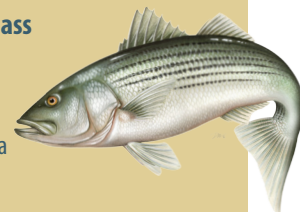
Age at Maturity

Females - 50% mature at age 6 (25-26");
100% at age 9 (32")
Males - 100% mature at age 3 (18")

Age at Recruitment into Fishery

Chesapeake Bay Fishery = age 4 (18")
Coastal Fishery = age 8 (28")

Stock Status: Not overfished or experiencing overfishing



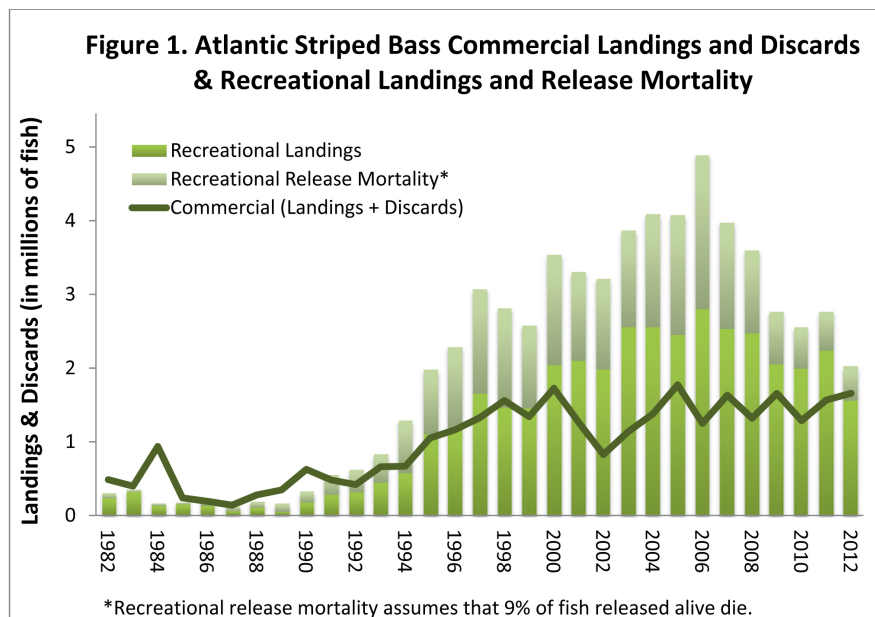
Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Atlantic striped bass have supported one of the most important fisheries on the Atlantic coast for centuries. Currently, commercial fisheries operate in eight Atlantic coastal jurisdictions, while recreational fisheries operate in 14. Commercial fishermen harvest Atlantic striped bass with a variety of gears including gillnets, pound nets, haul seines, trawls, and hook and line, while recreational

Why Change Biological Reference Points?

The biological reference points for Atlantic striped bass used in the previous assessment and by the Commission for management use are based on fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield (FMSY = 0.34) and an SSB proxy which is equivalent to the 1995 SSB level. The SSB target was calculated as 125% of the 1995 SSB, and the fishing mortality target was defined as an exploitation rate of 24% or $F=0.3$.

For the 2013 assessment, the basis for deriving the SSB target and threshold remain the same, but the values have been updated. However, the method of estimating the fishing mortality reference points was changed so that the fishing mortality reference points are calculated to be consistent with the SSB reference points. In prior years, fishing mortality reference points were calculated independently of SSB reference points and led to inconsistencies. This new method resulted in a fishing mortality target of 0.180, corresponding to the SSB target of 159 million pounds (72,032 mt), and a fishing mortality threshold of 0.219, corresponding to the SSB threshold of 127 million pounds (57,626 mt).



fishermen use hook and line almost exclusively. Commercial landings peaked at almost 15 million pounds in 1973 before declining below two million pounds by 1983 (Figure 1).

During the mid-to-late 1980s, a number of states closed their Atlantic striped bass fisheries in order to initiate stock rebuilding. The commercial fishery grew slowly under a partial reopening of state waters in the early 1990s, with coastwide landings rising from about 800,000 pounds in 1990 to two million pounds in 1994. Under Amendment 5, striped bass harvest grew from 3.8 million pounds in 1995 to 6.3 million pounds in 2002. Since the passage of Amendment 6 in 2003, commercial harvest has been managed through a quota system and landings have averaged just over seven million pounds annually. Commercial landings in 2012 (6.51 million pounds) were dominated by Chesapeake Bay fisheries, which made up approximately 64% of the total commercial landings.

Between 1982 and 1989, recreational anglers landed an annual average of 1.4 million pounds due to a combination of low stock abundance and strict regulations. Under Amendment 4, recreational landings grew from 2.2 million pounds in 1990 to 6.8 million pounds in 1994. With the declaration of restored status, landings increased from 12.5 million pounds in 1995 to a record 29.2 million pounds in 2006. Since 2006, recreational landings have declined annually, with 19 million pounds landed in 2012 (Figure 1). Of those coastwide recreational landings, New York landed the largest percent in number of fish (27.5%), followed by Massachusetts (24.5%), Maryland (17%), New Jersey (10%), and Virginia (8.7%). The remaining states each landed less than 5% of the 2012 recreational landings by number of fish. Anglers continue to release the vast majority (72-90%) of striped bass they catch. The number of released fish peaked in 2006 at 23.3 million fish. Total numbers of releases have declined since then, with 5.2 million fish released in 2012.

Stock Status

The 2013 Atlantic striped bass benchmark assessment indicates the resource is not overfished or experiencing overfishing relative to the proposed new reference points. Although the stock is not overfished, female SSB has continued to decline since 2004 and is estimated at 128 million pounds just above the SSB threshold of 127 million pounds, and below the SSB target of 159 million pounds (Figure 2). Additionally, total fishing mortality is estimated at 0.20, a value that is between the proposed new fishing mortality threshold (0.219) and fishing mortality target (0.18) (Figure 3).

Atlantic striped bass experienced a period of strong recruitment (number of age-1 fish entering the population) from 1993-2003, followed by a period of lower recruitment from 2004-2009 (although not as low as the early 1980s, when the stock was overfished).

continued, see ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS page 13

At its 72nd Annual Meeting, the Commission and the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership had the privilege of presenting awards to several deserving individuals who have directly contributed to the conservation and management of Atlantic coastal fishery resources and habitat.

ASMFC Captain David H. Hart Award

G. Ritchie White, long-time ASMFC Commissioner from New Hampshire and fisheries advocate, was presented the Commission's highest annual award -- the Captain David H. Hart Award -- in recognition of his efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries management.

Mr. White contributed firsthand to the recovery of striped bass and the steady increase of recreational and commercial fishing opportunities as a member of the ASMFC Striped Bass Advisory Panel in the 1990s. In 2000, Mr. White was selected by Governor Jeanne Shaheen to officially join the Commission as his state's Governor's

Appointee. During his fourteen years as an ASMFC Commissioner, he has actively participated in the Commission's fisheries management process, serving on a number of species management boards, sections and committees, and took on his first leadership role as Chair of the Northern Shrimp Section in 2006 and as past chair of the Governors Appointees. Mr. White now serves as the Chair of the Winter Flounder Board, and remains an influential member in numerous other areas of the Commission.

Mr. White is a staunch advocate for science-based management, consistently striving to put the resource first while balancing the needs of commercial and recreational anglers and coastal com-

munities. His steadfast commitment can further be illustrated with his many contributions to fisheries and wildlife management that extend far beyond his work with the Commission. Mr. White serves on the Board of Directors of Ducks Unlimited and the American Bluefin Tuna Association, and was a founding member



Hart Award Recipient G. Ritchie White (center) flanked by his fellow New Hampshire colleagues Douglas E. Grout (left) and Dennis Abbott (right)

of the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire, where he has been an active member of the Board of Directors since its inception. Recently, Mr. White has taken on the job of Coordinator for New Hampshire's Revolving Loan Fund, providing low interest loans for the New Hampshire fishing industry. He was also a founding member of Rescue Great Bay where he promoted the importance of clean water for estuarine habitats and its value to coastal communities that rely on healthy marine resources for economic success.

As Commissioner, Mr. White has fostered an open approach to fisheries management and ownership of the Commission actions, holding the Commission to the

highest standards of transparency and accountability in all that it does. His actions and demeanor truly embody the spirit and character of the Captain David H. Hart Award.

AFCHP Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award

Mr. William Goldsborough of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation was presented the 2013 Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award by the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee for his exemplary work in furthering the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes.

Mr. Goldsborough was one of the earliest members of the Commission's Habitat Committee and its longest serving chair, having served in that position for 10 years. Under his leadership and participation, the Committee developed habitat sections for many of the Commission's interstate fishery management plans and released numerous publications -- all of which have elevated understanding of habitat and its critical link to supporting abundant fisheries. He was also a founding member of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee, a partnership of state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental groups whose mission is to conserve habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes.

Throughout his career, Mr. Goldsborough has been a tireless advocate for the protection and restoration of fisheries habitat. In the Chesapeake Bay region, he has worked to restore American oyster habitat and has advanced the

importance of habitat as a critical common ground among all fishermen. Coastwide, he has promoted ecosystem-based fishery management. Mr. Goldsborough's deep commitment to conservation and use of sound science as the basis for resource management fully embody Dr. Melissa Laser's own dedicated approach towards fish habitat conservation.



From left: ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal, Wilson Laney, William Goldsborough and ACFHP Steering Committee Chair Chris Powell

The award was established in memory of Dr. Melissa Laser, who was a biologist with the Maine Department of Marine Resources, where she worked tirelessly to protect, improve and restore aquatic ecosystems in Maine and along the entire Atlantic coast.

ASMFC Annual Awards of Excellence

Dr. Alexi Sharov and Jim Gartland were presented with the Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence for their outstanding contributions to the field of fisheries science.

"Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve our fisheries," said ASMFC Executive Director, Robert E. Beal. Both recipients have demonstrated exemplary leadership and expertise as they work to support programs that promote healthy, self-sustaining fisheries populations.

For over 15 years, Dr. Alexei Sharov has helped to advance the field of fisheries science through his work on state, regional, and coastwide fisheries stock assessments and research survey designs. As lead investigator, Dr. Sharov worked vigorously to further the body of scientific knowledge on Atlantic menhaden on the 2006-

2009 project to examine the utility of LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to estimate menhaden abundance in the Chesapeake Bay. He also made significant contributions to coastwide benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic striped bass and Atlantic menhaden. Regionally, Dr. Sharov has been an active participant on the New England Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee for over five years. He has also played an important role in blue crab management since 1990, lending his expertise on blue crab stock assessments and leading in the design of the bay-wide winter dredge survey which is now the principal tool for blue crab management throughout the Chesapeake.

Mr. Jim Gartland has devoted his career to improving the quality and quantity of data that forms the basis of fisheries

management decisions. Since 2001, he has served as Program Manager for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's Multispecies Fisheries Research Program. The core of that Program includes two large-scale fisheries-independent trawl surveys, CHESMMAP and NEAMAP, and an accompanying laboratory program, with Mr. Gartland overseeing all aspects of both surveys and the post-cruise laboratory processing of samples. To illustrate the scope of work that Mr. Gartland oversees, in 2009, approximately 700 trawl tows were conducted in Chesapeake Bay and along the Atlantic coast; approximately 10,000 pairs of otoliths were collected (the majority of which have been processed); and the contents of roughly 9,500 fish stomachs were analyzed. Further, he led CHESMMAP's collection of tissue samples from Atlantic striped bass has helped to monitor the prevalence of mycobacteriosis. This effort resulted in a published manuscript documenting mycobacteriosis-associated mortality in striped bass – the first documented case of mortality caused by a chronic disease in a wild finfish population.

Dr. Sharov and Mr. Gartland are both remarkable scientists whose energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to excellence are an inspiration to their fellow scientists and fishery managers that depend on the outcomes of their efforts.



From left: ASMFC Outgoing Chair Paul Diodati, Dr. Alexei Sharov, Jim Gartland, ASMFC Awards Committee Chair Jack Travelstead, and ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal

American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XXII & Releases Draft Addendum XXIII for Public Comment

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XXII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster and Draft Addendum XXIII for public comment. Addendum XXII implements Single Ownership and Aggregate Ownership Caps in Lobster Conservation Management Area 3 (LCMA 3, federal waters). These measures are intended to enhance the ability of lobster business owners to plan for their future fishing operations as trap reductions are initiated. Draft Addendum XXIII contains information on habitat needs for American lobster and does not include any proposed management changes.

Under Addendum XVIII, approved in 2012, permitted LCMA 3 lobster fishermen or companies will have their trap allocations reduced by 5% per year for five years. The Single Ownership Cap allows LCMA 3 permit holders to purchase lobster traps above the trap cap of 2,000 traps. Any traps purchased above the trap cap may not be fished until approved by the permit holder's regulating agency once the trap reductions commence. This will allow permit holders to maintain a profitable business over the course of the trap reductions while reducing latent effort (i.e. unfished traps) in the fishery. The Aggregate Ownership Cap limits permitted LCMA 3 lobster fishermen or companies from owning more traps than five times the Single Ownership Cap, unless the permit holder had the ability to purchase a higher amount prior to NOAA Fisheries publishing a present day control date. Similar management caps were approved for LCMA 2 in August 2013. Since LCMA 3 is solely in federal waters, the Addendum recommends that NOAA Fisheries promulgate these measures through the federal rule making process, Addendum XXII is the third in a series of addenda that respond to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster resource by scaling the capacity of the SNE fishery to the size the SNE resource. Since the scope of the SNE resource encompasses all or part of five of the seven LCMAs established by Amendment 3, additional addenda will be developed to address effort reductions in the remaining LCMAs (4, 5, and 6).

Draft Addendum XXIII was developed at the recommendation of the Commission's Habitat Committee. It proposes updating Amendment 3's habitat section to include information on the habitat requirements and tolerances of American lobster by life stage. The Board will consider final approval of the Addendum at the Commission's Winter Meeting in February.



Photo by ASMFC

Addendum XXII and Draft Addendum XXIII will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum XXIII. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM EST on December 20, 2013 and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at ktaylor@asmfc.org (Subject line: American Lobster). For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.



American Eel Board Postpones Action on Draft Addendum IV: Maine Commits to Develop Plan with Industry to Control Glass Eel Harvest

The Commission's American Eel Management Board postponed action on Draft Addendum IV until the 2014 Spring Meeting so that it can continue to develop options for implementation during the 2015 fishing season. In the interim, Maine will meet with stakeholders in the glass eel fishery and develop a plan to reduce harvest of glass eels by 25-40% from the 2013 harvest for the 2014 fishing season. Landings in 2013 totaled 18,253 pounds and were valued at nearly \$33 million.

Draft Addendum IV was initiated in response to 2012 American Eel Benchmark Stock Assessment. The assessment found that American eel populations are depleted coastwide and recommended to reduce mortality across all life stages. Draft Addendum IV proposes management changes to the commercial glass, yellow, and silver eel fisheries. The Board approved Addendum III in August 2013 which implemented a 9 inch minimum size for the commercial and recreational yellow eel fishery, gear restrictions for the commercial yellow eel fishery, restrictions to the commercial silver eel fishery, and a decrease to the recreational creel limit. Combined both addenda intend to reduce fishing mortality and improve the health of the resource.

For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

ASMFC & Mid-Atlantic Council Approve Specifications for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Bluefish

The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have established commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish for the 2014 fishing season and beyond. The Commission's actions are final, while the Council will forward its recommendations to NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval. The table below summarizes quotas and limits (2013 values are provided for comparison purposes). Please note that specifications for years beyond 2014 may be adjusted based on changes in the fishery or new scientific information.

(68.8 million pounds), with the stock still considered to be rebuilt. The Commission approved and the Council recommended specifications for 2014 and 2015 in response to industry's request for increased stability in management measures from year to year.

Last year, both the Commission and Council approved multi-year specifications extending through 2015 for the scup fishery; those quotas have not changed. The 2014 commercial quota is 21.95 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit is 7.03 million pounds. This represents a decrease of 1.58 and 0.52 million pounds, respec-

Species	Year	Commercial Quota (millions of pounds)	Commercial Minimum Fish Size (TL)	Commercial Mesh Size	Recreational Harvest Limit (millions of pounds)
Summer Flounder	2013	11.44	14"	5.5"	7.63
	2014	10.51	14"	5.5"	7.01
	2015	10.74	14"	5.5"	7.16
Scup	2013	23.53	9"	5"	7.55
	2014	21.95	9"	5"	7.03
	2015	20.60	9"	5"	6.60
Black Sea Bass	2013	2.17	11"	4.5"	2.26
	2014	2.17	11"	4.5"	2.26
	2015	2.17	11"	4.5"	2.26
Bluefish	2013	8.67	---	---	14.07
	2014	7.49	---	---	13.59

*Values for years 2014 and beyond include the maximum 3% Research Set Aside deductions. Prior to the start of the new fishing year, the above commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits may increase if the full RSA quota is not utilized.

For summer flounder, the Commission approved and Council recommended a commercial quota of 10.51 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit of 7.01 million pounds for the 2014 fishing year, a decrease from 2013 levels. The reduction responds to the findings of the 2013 benchmark stock assessment and peer review which increased the spawning stock biomass (SSB) target level (now 137.6 million pounds) and estimated a decrease in spawning stock biomass (112.9 million pounds in 2012). While SSB has dropped below the new target it is well above the new SSB threshold

tively, compared to 2013 levels due to a slight decrease in SSB. Additionally, the Commission approved and the Council recommended an increase in the scup possession limit for the 2014 Winter II commercial season (November 1 – December 31) from 2,000 to 12,000 pounds. The rollover provision from the Winter I fishery still remains intact.

For black sea bass, the Commission approved and Council recommended a commercial quota of 2.17 million pounds and 2.26 million pounds for the recreational fishery in 2014 and 2015.

continued, see MID-ATLANTIC SPECS, page 12

Draft Addendum Initiated to Address 2014 Summer Flounder & Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Draft Addendum will propose alternate management approaches for the 2014 recreational summer flounder fishery to achieve more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast. It will include options that allow for the averaging of harvest estimates, mandatory regions, and the sharing of unused quota.

Draft Addendum XXV is initiated to respond to the unintended consequence of using conservation equivalency (e.g., state-specific recreational management measures) to stay within the annually established coastwide recreational harvest limit for summer flounder. Although the shift away from coastwide management to state conservation equivalency addressed the interests of some states, it created difficulties for other states as overages occurred due largely to state shares and limits not reflecting local abundance of summer flounder and its availability to recreational fishermen. State targets were based solely upon the 1998 estimate of harvest from the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey.

The FMP did not provide the flexibility to adjust state harvest targets or the management strategy except through the addendum process. This has resulted in ever increasing size limits, reduced bag limits, and shorter seasons for most of the states while the stock was at a

continued, see DRAFT ADDENDUM, page 12

Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Board Revises Dogfish Quotas

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board increased its spiny dogfish quotas for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 fishing seasons (May 1 – April 30) in response to increases in spawning stock biomass. The 2014/2015 quota is now set at 49.37 million pounds (previously 41.784 million pounds) and the 2015/1016 quota is set at 50.612 million pounds (previously 41.578 million pounds), with a maximum possession limit of 4,000 pounds per day for the northern region states (Maine through Connecticut). Quotas for the northern region and southern states (New York through North Carolina) are provided in the table below. Any overages from the previous fishing seasons will be paid back by the region or state in the following season, as has been done in the past. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Manage-

ment Council (MAFMC) forwarded the same recommendation to the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Administrator for final action. The New England Fishery Management Council has not specified when it will consider the new quotas.

The Board's action responds to the findings of the 2013 Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Update on the Status of Spiny Dogfish, which estimates spiny dogfish are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 465.99 million pounds in 2013 and has exceeded the target (351.23 million pounds) for the past six years. Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.15 in 2012, well below the plan's threshold (0.2439). The recommen-



Photo by MA DMF

dation from the MAFMC Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) took into account the projected record low recruitment from 1997 to 2003; the recommended quotas are not expected to cause SSB to decline below the biomass threshold.

Discards have remained relatively stable around 11 million pounds over the past decade and are expected to remain near that level in the future fishing seasons. Canadian and foreign landings have also decreased significantly in recent years. 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.

Additionally, based on the recommendation of its Coastal Sharks

continued, see SPINY DOGFISH, page 12

ASMFC Regional/state quotas and possession limits for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 fishing seasons (in pounds). Quotas will be adjusted for any over/under harvests in the previous fishing season.

	Northern Region (ME - CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	4,000	To be specified by individual southern region states					
% Allocation	58.00%	2.71%	7.64%	0.90%	5.92%	10.80%	14.04%
2014/2015	28,634,600	1,336,446	3,773,843	442,355	2,922,704	5,329,492	6,929,573
2015/2016	29,354,960	1,370,067	3,868,781	453,484	2,996,230	5,463,565	7,103,900

Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2014 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin

The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2014 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the accompanying quotas were set for the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin.

The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. It was developed in recognition of the relationship between horseshoe crab eggs and shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region. The optimized harvest level will be reevaluated annually, allowing for management to adapt to the changes in the population levels of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds as a result of the regulations. For more information, please contact Marin Hawk, FMP Coordinator, at mhawk@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

	Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	Total Quota
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia*	34,615	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

NOAA Releases 2012 Report Card on US Fisheries

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is proud to collaborate with NOAA Fisheries for the release of the *2012 Fisheries of the United States (FUS)*. The document is a report of the domestic commercial and recreational fisheries data for 2012 and includes landings from U.S. territorial seas, the exclusive economic zone, and the high seas.

According to the report, “Dutch Harbor, Alaska and New Bedford, Massachusetts remain the top commercial fishing ports” and “Approximately 9.4 million saltwater recreational anglers took over 70 million trips and caught nearly 380 million fish, 63 percent of which were released.”

As the principal source of landings data for the Atlantic coast, ACCSP has worked with program partners to provide landings from Maine to Virginia to NOAA Fisheries Service for FUS since 2007. For the recently released publication of 2012 data, ACCSP added North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to the list of states for which they provided landings to NOAA Fisheries. The data submitted to NOAA Fisheries were obtained from program partners in the spring of 2013 as preliminary and the final data are currently being updated. By working with partners to develop the FUS datasets, ACCSP is able to populate the Data Warehouse at a finer resolution.

The Data Warehouse is an on-line database populated with fisheries-dependent data supplied by the program partners. For more information about the Data Warehouse please visit <http://www.accsp.org/dataware.htm>. For more information about the data load schedule, please visit <http://www.accsp.org/dataloadprocess.html>.

For more details on FUS, please visit <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/As>

Top 10 Species Landed by Value on the Atlantic Coast in 2012

Species	Live Pounds	Value
SCALLOP, SEA Total	56,807,170	\$558,148,418
LOBSTER, AMERICAN Total	149,531,271	\$429,230,499
CRAB, BLUE Total	126,878,741	\$138,085,521
EEL, AMERICAN Total	1,066,840	\$40,132,924
SHRIMP, NORTHERN WHITE Total	13,898,334	\$37,441,908
QUAHOG, NORTHERN Total	5,265,497	\$34,758,488
MENHADENS Total	408,830,167	\$33,043,800
SQUID, LONGFIN INSHORE Total	28,058,156	\$31,135,975
OYSTER, EASTERN Total	3,228,487	\$30,469,486
SURFLAM, ATLANTIC Total	39,024,428	\$28,610,195

These statistics were downloaded in November of 2013. However, data may have been updated. Please visit the Data Warehouse (<http://www.accsp.org/dataware.htm>) for the most up-to-date set of statistics.

Ed Martino Receives ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

Dr. Ed Martino, Data Coordinator with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), is a man of many talents, effortlessly supporting the data needs of ACCSP users and the information technology needs of the Commission as a whole. In a little over 16 months, Ed has worked on a wide range of projects, including the migration of the Commission’s email from Lotus Notes to Exchange, the changeover of backup power at the joint ASMFC/ACCSP data center, the launch and support of the Commission’s new website, and the migration and maintenance of the Commission’s new meetings and membership database. For this and much more, Ed was named Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2013. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.



Ed’s work truly epitomizes the values of this award. An excellent team player, he is responsive, supportive, and willingly takes on tasks even if they sometimes fall outside his comfort zone because he knows they need to be addressed. He is genuinely curious and interested in acquiring new skills and can quickly put those new skills into action to affect positive change. Often working in stressful situations under tight timelines, Ed is always upbeat, approaching challenges with a positive can-do attitude and producing work products of the highest quality. Ed recognizes that many times the work of ACCSP and Commission staffs extend beyond the typical 9 – 5 work hours and, more times than not, he is available and willing to help with an IT issue late at night or during the weekend.

Ed is an exceptional employee who gracefully balances a strong work ethic and skill set with an easy going and approachable manner. He has made a positive impact on the overall work environment and the ability of the ACCSP and the Commission to achieve their missions. Ed has a Ph.D. in Fisheries from the University of Maryland and a Masters in Oceanography from Rutgers University in New Jersey. As Employee of the Quarter Award, Ed received a \$500 cash award, a small gift, a letter of appreciation placed in his personnel folder, and his name engraved on the plaque displayed in the Commission’s lobby. Congratulations, Ed!

Fishery Management Plan Actions

MID-ATLANTIC SPECS, continued from page 6



Photo by ASMFC

This is a continuation of the specifications set for the 2013 quota due to little change in the scientific information for black sea bass.

Finally for the bluefish fishery, the Commission approved and the Council recommended a commercial quota of 7.49 million pounds and 13.59 million pounds for 2014. These levels represent a decrease from 2013 to account for scientific uncertainty regarding age-length key data and retrospective bias, which underestimates recruitment. These issues will be evaluated in the upcoming benchmark stock assessment. The Commission also approved the Fishery Management Plan Review for the 2012 fishing year and the Terms of Reference for the 2014 Bluefish Benchmark Stock Assessment.

For all four species, the approved and recommended actions are consistent with the recommendations of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee regarding acceptable biological catch, which is the level of total removals that cannot be exceeded based on the best available scientific information. The Commission and Council maintained the 2013 commercial management measures for all four species, with the exception of the scup commercial Winter II trip limit and approved a Research Set-Aside (RSA) quota of up to three percent for each fishery.

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

DRAFT ADDENDUM, continued from page 6

low level and recovering. The impact of these restrictive measures seemed to affect New York the most, where the size limit reached 21 inches by 2009, which also saw a very short season including mid-season closure. In 2012, with a fully recovered stock, New York's minimum size (19.5 inches) was at least one inch higher than any other state, one and a half inches higher than its Long Island Sound bordering state, Connecticut and two inches greater than its ocean / New York Harbor bordering state, New Jersey.

The Draft Addendum will also propose the continuation of ad hoc approaches to regional measures in the black sea bass recreational fishery. Addendum XXIII allowed for a combination of regional and state-by-state measures for the 2013 fishing year. Addendum XXIII expires at the end of 2013. Due to the wide geographic range of this species, the application of a coastwide minimum size, possession limit, and season restrictions may not affect every area involved in the fishery the same way. States were concerned the coastwide regulations disproportionately impact states within the management unit; therefore, the Board approved Addenda XXI-XXIV which allowed for regional and state-by-state measures in 2011-2013 for state waters only. The initiation of Draft Addendum XXV is intended to provide continued management flexibility to mitigate potential disproportionate impacts on the states that can result from coastwide measures.

Draft Addendum XXV will be presented to the Board for its consideration and approval for public comment at its joint December meeting with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in Annapolis, Maryland. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

SPINY DOGFISH, continued from page 6

Technical Committee, the Board approved a 36 fish possession limit for sharks in the large coastal sharks (LCS) species group (silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great

hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead sharks) for 2014. The Board's action complements the proposed federal shark specifications.

Finally, the Board approved Addendum III to the Coastal Sharks Interstate Fishery Management Plan, which changes the plan's coastal shark species groupings for hammerhead and blacknose sharks and establishes a new commercial quota and recreational size limit for hammerhead sharks. These modifications were made to ensure consistency across the state and federal plans. Addendum III will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. For more information, please contact Marin Hawk, FMP Coordinator, at mhawk@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

DR. LOUIS DANIEL, continued from page 1

He also served as Chair and Vice Chair of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. He won the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Distinguished Service Award and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Outstanding Service Award.

Dr. Louis Daniel received a B.A. in Biology from Wake Forest University, a M.S. in Marine Science from the College of Charleston, and a Ph.D. in Marine Science from the College of William and Mary, School of Marine Science, Virginia Institute of Marine Science. He has worked for the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries in various capacities since 1995. Dr. Daniel currently oversees management of North Carolina's marine fisheries, coordinating the development of long-term management strategies for the state's most economically significant fisheries. Prior to joining the Division, Daniel worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Commission also elected Douglas E. Grout from New Hampshire as its Vice-Chair.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS, continued from page 6

The 2011 year-class was strong (i.e., abundant), but early observations from several states' juvenile indices indicate the 2012 year class was very weak (i.e., low abundance).

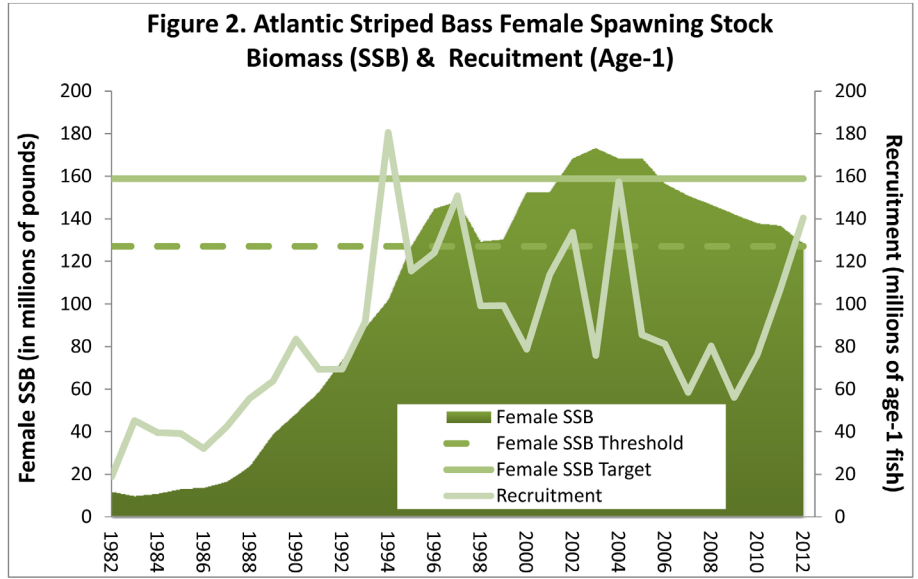
Projections of female SSB and fishing mortality suggest if the current fishing mortality rate (0.20) is maintained during 2013-2017, the probability of the stock being overfished (SSB less than the SSB threshold) is high and increases until 2015-2016, but declines thereafter. This trend is driven by the lack of strong year classes currently in the fishery, and the emergence of the strong 2011 year class that matures into the spawning stock in three to four years. Despite recent declines in SSB, the stock is still well above the SSB during the moratorium that was in place in the mid-1980s.

Atlantic Coastal Management

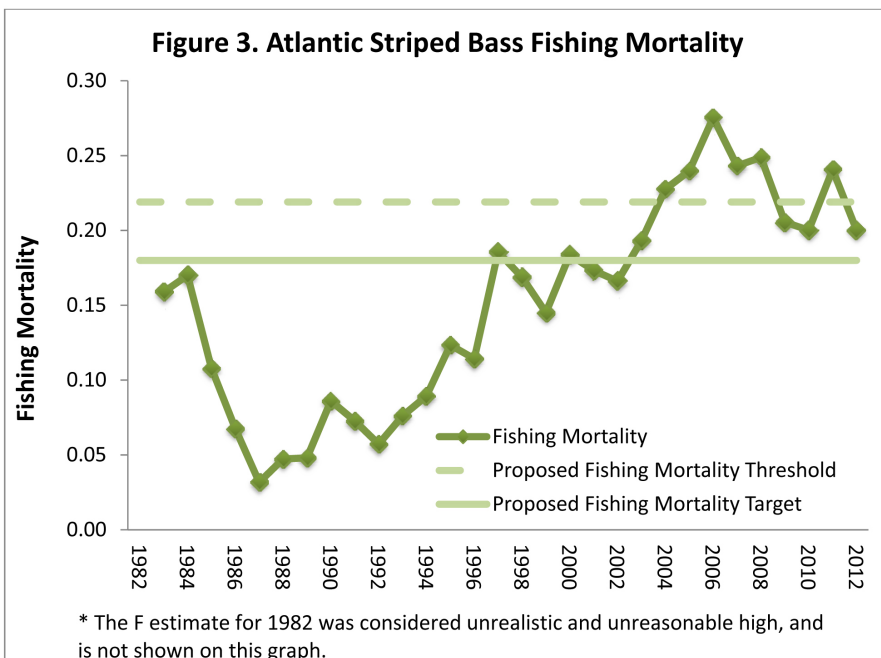
Before approval of the Atlantic Striped Bass

Interstate Fishery Management in 1981, states independently promulgated regulations to constrain the fishing mortality on the Atlantic coast striped bass population. However, it was not until passage of the 1984 Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, the precursor to the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, that the Atlantic coastal states gained the necessary tools to cooperatively and more effectively conserve and manage striped bass stocks. Through a stringent management program begun in 1985, the population began to rebuild, such that in 1995 the Commission declared Atlantic coastal striped bass stocks fully recovered.

Since Amendment 4, the foundation of the striped bass management program has been to maintain harvest below a target fishing mortality rate. Amendment 6, approved in 2003, modified the fishing mortality targets and thresholds, and also introduced a new set of biological reference points based on female SSB. On a regular basis, SSB and fishing mortality are estimated and compared to target and threshold levels. These reference points, as well as new management triggers, have enabled the Management Board to be more responsive to changes in the stock.



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



* The F estimate for 1982 was considered unrealistic and unreasonable high, and is not shown on this graph.

In addition to the control rule, Amendment 6 phased in new regulations for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. In 2003, the coastal commercial quotas for striped bass were restored to the states' historical average landings during the 1972-1979 base period, a 43 percent increase from the 2002 coastal commercial quotas. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle-Roanoke fisheries, and states with approved conservation equivalency proposals. The Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle-Roanoke regulatory programs differ from the coastal migratory stock because these programs are predicated on a more conservative fishing mortality target than the coastal migratory

continued, see ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS, page 16

ASMFC Launches Redesigned Website

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announces the release of its redesigned website at www.asmfc.org. With a completely new look, improved navigation and functionality, and expanded content, the website provides our member states, fishermen and other stakeholders with the most up-to-date information on the Commission's fisheries science and management activities. Along with the redesigned website is an increased presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

"We are excited about our new site, which was designed with the end user in mind. There was a deliberate intention to add relevant and timely information to the homepage with the Quick Links and Calendar features, create streamlined menu options highlighting all of the Commission's programs, and construct a site that was user friendly, informative, and accessible to all our stakeholders," states Robert E. Beal, ASMFC Executive Director. "Through it, the Commission seeks to be transparent in our fisheries management process, facilitate an understanding of the science behind our management decisions, highlight the importance of healthy habitat to productive fisheries, and emphasize the need for dedicated and coordinated law enforcement efforts."

New website features include:

- Species-specific pages, with one-stop access to all species-related materials, such as fishery management plans, amendments and addenda, stock assessment reports, and meeting summaries and proceedings;
- Expanded pages on the Commission's fisheries science activities, including a Fisheries Science 101 page that presents basic fisheries science and stock assessment information in layman's terms, as well as links to stock assessment webinars, such as "Understanding the Science Behind Northern Shrimp Management;"
- Revised habitat pages including a subpage devoted to habitat hot topics that explores current and emerging habitat issues, such as alternative energy, harbor deepening, shellfish habitat and coastal alterations;
- A law enforcement page highlighting the activities of the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee and recognizing the notable accomplishments of state and federal conservation officers coastwide;
- New kids & teachers resources page containing links to ASMFC educational materials; and
- A searchable database of all ASMFC publications.



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Atlantic Sturgeon

In November, NOAA Fisheries announced its interim final regulations to conserve the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon. On February 6, 2012, NOAA Fisheries listed the Gulf of Maine DPS of Atlantic sturgeon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. When a species is listed as threatened under the act, NOAA Fisheries is required to issue protective regulations to conserve this species. Based on new information, some changes were made to the measures initially proposed so NOAA Fisheries is publishing this rule as an interim final rule and are soliciting additional public comment. The deadline for public comment is December 19, 2013.

The interim final regulations can be obtained online at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2013/11/interimrule.pdf>. Comments may be submitted, identified by RIN No. 0648–AY96, by any of the following methods:



Photo by ASMFC

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: To the attention of Lynn Lankshear at (978) 281–9394.
- Mail or hand-delivery: Submit written comments to the Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division, NMFS, Northeast Region, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Red Knot

At the end of September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced that it will be considering the listing of red knot as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. In its press release, the USFWS acknowledged the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's recent actions with regards to horseshoe crab management, particularly the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework and its positive impact on the red knot. The ARM Framework takes into account the abundance of horseshoe crabs and red knots in order to determine a sustainable harvest level for crabs which will provide adequate food for migratory shorebirds such as the red knot.

"The Commission is grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for acknowledging the states' efforts in sustainably managing horseshoe crabs to account for the forage needs of migratory shorebirds as well as the needs of commercial bait fishermen and the biomedical industry," states Robert E. Beal, ASMFC Executive Director. "The Service, along with the U.S. Geological Survey, played a major role in the development of the ARM Framework by partnering with the Atlantic states and providing necessary technical expertise to complete this innovative tool that recognizes the relationship between horseshoe crab eggs and shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region."

The Commission has been managing horseshoe crabs since 1998 with the adoption of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crabs. A primary goal of the FMP is to manage horseshoe crabs at sustainable



Photo by Gregory Breese, USFWS

levels to ensure adequate abundance of horseshoe crab eggs for use by migrating shorebirds. Addendum I, implemented in 2000, reduced harvest of horseshoe crabs by 25% from historical levels. In 2004, Addendum III further reduced harvest in and around the Delaware Bay to accommodate the findings of the USFWS Shorebird Advisory Panel. Since that time, horseshoe crab harvest has remained steady, well under the Commission's quotas. Addendum IV, implemented in 2006, further limited harvest to a male only fishery for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin.

USFWS will be accepting public comment on the proposed rule through November 29, 2013. It requests a variety of information on the knot, from population trends to genetics and distribution. The proposed rule can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/redknot/>. Comments may be submitted through the following methods:

- Federal Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting information on docket number FWS–R5–ES–2013–0097.
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R5–ES–2013–0097; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

As required by the Endangered Species Act, the USFWS plans to publish a separate proposed rule identifying critical habitat for the red knot before the end of 2013 and expects to make a final decision on both rules in 2014.

**Atlantic States Marine
Fisheries Commission**

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ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS, continued from page 13

stock. The independent fishing mortality target allows these jurisdictions to implement separate seasons, harvest caps, and size and bag limits as long as they remain under that target.

Addendum III (August 2012) outlined measures to address illegal harvest of striped bass. States and jurisdictions are required to implement a tagging program for all commercially harvested striped bass within state or jurisdictional waters. Addendum III was developed in response to the Interstate Watershed Task Force's multi-year, multi-jurisdictional investigation conducted within Chesapeake Bay. This investigation resulted in over \$1.6 million dollars in fines levied against 19 individuals and 3 corporations for more than one million pounds of illegal striped bass harvested estimated to be worth up to seven million dollars.



Photo by Steve Witthuhn

In response to the results of the 2013 benchmark assessment, the Board initiated the development of two draft addenda at its October 2013 meeting (Addenda IV and V). Draft Addendum IV will propose adoption of the new fishing mortality reference points recommended by the benchmark assessment. These include fishing mortality reference points for the coastal stock as described in the stock status Section, as well as stock-specific reference points for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle/Roanoke stocks. The second addendum, Draft Addendum V, will propose a range of commercial and recreational management measures for the coastal, Chesapeake Bay, and Albemarle/Roanoke stocks to reduce fishing mortality to at least the target with a proposed implementation date of January 2015.

The Board intends to consider approval of the first draft addendum for public comment in February 2014, at the Commission's Winter Meeting, and consider approval of the second draft addendum for public comment in May at the Commission's Spring Meeting. For more information, please contact Mike Waive, FMP Coordinator, at <mwaive@asmfc.org> or 703.842.0740.