



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Atlantic Menhaden Management Board  
**From:** Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee  
**RE:** Quarterly Update on 2014 Benchmark Stock Assessment Progress  
**Date:** January 29, 2014

In preparation for the 2014 benchmark stock assessment, the Atlantic menhaden Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) have held four joint webinars and four in-person meetings to date. This fourth progress report memorandum contains a summary from the Data Workshop that occurred since the last progress report on October 10, 2013 (M13-091). The primary goal of this workshop was to identify data sources considered suitable for use by the SAS in preparation of the 2014 assessment. This workshop also included preliminary discussions about potential modeling approaches.

The SAS will continue to meet regularly via webinar throughout 2014 to ensure steady progress on data analysis and modeling tasks. Final decision-making with regard to data inclusion (from among those sources presented at the 2014 Data Workshop) and modeling approaches will be made at the 2014 Assessment Workshop. Consideration of any data analyses and alternative models submitted by the public will occur at the 2014 Assessment Workshop as well. Final review of the benchmark stock assessment by the TC will occur in the fall of 2014 following the June Assessment Workshop.

Below is a brief summary of topics discussed and progress made at each meeting since October 2013. A tentative timeline for the 2014 Atlantic menhaden workshops follows.

### **January 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in-person meeting summary:**

- Reviewed all available state and regional datasets (Maine to Florida) that collect information on Atlantic menhaden and evaluated each dataset for inclusion in the stock assessment and/or stock assessment model.
- Reviewed preliminary analyses of available data, including:
  - life history characteristics (e.g., estimates of trends in natural mortality-at-age, maturity-at-age, age/length composition of the fishery, etc.)
  - fishery dependent landings estimates and CPUE indices, and
  - juvenile and adult indices of abundance based on fishery independent surveys.
- Reviewed preliminary analyses of historical tagging data used to estimate natural mortality and movement rates and formulated plan for incorporating these estimates into new assessment model(s).
- Identified final list of data sources suitable for use by the SAS in the assessment (additional vetting may occur at the Assessment Workshop).
- Identified stock assessment modeling approaches and potential sensitivity analyses that would be conducted in preparation for the Assessment Workshop.
- Created a task list in preparation for the June 2014 Assessment Workshop.

### Tentative timeline for 2014 Atlantic menhaden benchmark stock assessment:

June 2014 – Assessment Workshop

December 2014 – Peer Review Workshop (SEDAR)

M14-006