



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Spring Meeting

April 30 - May 3, 2018

The Westin
1800 S. Eads Street
Arlington, VA

Preliminary Agenda

The agenda is subject to change. Bulleted items represent the anticipated major issues to be discussed or acted upon at the meeting. The final agenda will include additional items and may revise the bulleted items provided below. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.

Please note: Commission leadership is reviewing an appeal submitted regarding the Black Sea Bass Addendum XXX decision. Depending on the outcome of this review, a Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board meeting may be added to the agenda on Thursday, May 3.

MONDAY, APRIL 30

10 a.m. – Noon & 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board Jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- Consider Approval of Summer Flounder Draft Amendment for Public Comment
- Review Alternatives for Black Sea Bass Framework/Addendum on Recreational Issues
- Review Black Sea Bass February Recreational Fishery Harvest

3:15 – 4:45 p.m. Bluefish Management Board Jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- Review and Consider Approval of Public Information Document/Scoping Document for Allocation Amendment

TUESDAY, MAY 1

9 – 11 a.m. Coastal Sharks Management Board

- Review Results of North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Stock Assessment
 - Discuss Potential Management Response
- Review Results of Sandbar Shark Stock Assessment
- Update on Endangered Species Act Listing Status for Oceanic Whitetip Shark
- Review and Consider 2016 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

continued, see SPRING MEETING PRELIMINARY AGENDA on page 6

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 North Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N • Arlington, Virginia 22201 • www.asmfmc.org

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

James J. Gilmore, Jr. (NY)
Chair

Patrick C. Kelihier (ME)
Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield
Science Director

Toni Kerns
ISFMP Director

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April 2 (2 - 4:30 PM)

Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee and Ecological Reference Point Workgroup Webinar; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/> for more details

April 10 - 12

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Montauk Yacht Club, 32 Star Island Road, Montauk, NY

April 10 - 12

Northern Shrimp Assessment Workshop, Westin Portland Harborview, 157 High Street, Portland, ME

April 17 (3 - 4:30 PM)

Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/> for more details

April 17 - 19

New England Fishery Management Council, Hilton, Mystic, CT

April 20 (10 AM - Noon)

American Lobster Electronic Reporting Subcommittee Webinar; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/> for more details

April 23 (begins at 9 AM) - 25 (ends at 5 PM)

Atlantic Menhaden Data Workshop, Hyatt Centric Arlington, 1325 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA

April 25 (begins at 9 AM) - 27 (ends at 5 PM)

Ecological Reference Point Workgroup Data Workshop, ASMFC Offices, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA

April 25 (10 AM - Noon)

Atlantic Herring Days Out Meeting, location to be determined

April 30 - May 3

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Westin Crystal City, 1800 South Eads Street, Arlington, VA

May 8 (begins at 1 PM) - 10 (ends at 1 PM)

Horseshoe Crab Assessment Workshop, ASMFC Offices, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA

May 14 (begins at 1 PM) - 17

American Lobster Data Workshop, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography, 218 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI

May 15 (begins at 9 AM) - 17 (ends at 5 PM)

Atlantic Striped Bass Modeling Workshop, Renaissance Providence-Downtown, Providence, RI

May 17 - 18

Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Habitat Partnership Steering Committee, Savannah, GA

June 5 - 7

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree by Hilton, 237 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

June 11 - 15

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton, 801 Seabreeze Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale FL



Adapting Fisheries Management to Changes in Species Abundance and Distribution Resulting from Climate Change

One only needs to look at the poor condition of northern shrimp in the Gulf of Maine or Southern New England American lobster to know that climate change is not on the horizon – it's here and it's already impacting Atlantic fisheries. As average temperatures rise, mobile marine species are migrating offshore or poleward into cooler, more habitable waters. Distribution and productivity changes are now resulting in ecological and economic disruptions – such as separating predator from prey, or fishing communities from the species their livelihood relies on. In the face of climatic shifts, change is likely to be the only constant. To address this change, fishery managers will need to adapt management from preserving historical abundances to sustaining ecological functions. As conditions change, current conservation goals and management objectives may no longer serve the resource or its users. Successful adaptation depends

not only upon modifying management strategies, but also reevaluating and revising, as necessary, the underlying conservation goals and objectives of fishery management plans.

Over a year ago, the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) recognized the need for a suite of tools management boards may use to address the effects of warming water temperatures on Commission-managed resources, and established a

Climate Change Work Group to undertake this task. Composed of members of the Policy Board (a mix of administrators, state legislators, Governor Appointees and federal representatives), the Management and Science Committee, and the Assessment Science Committee, the Work Group was tasked with developing science, policy, and management strategies to assist the Commission with adapting its management to climate-induced changes in species abundance and distribution. In February, the Work Group presented its recommendations to the Policy Board for approval. Outlined in the document, "Adapting Fisheries Management to Changes in Species

Abundance and Distribution Resulting from Climate Change," are five main recommendations: (1) a stepwise approach for working through climate-related fishery management issues; (2) management options for stocks at persistently low biomass; (3) management options for stocks with changing spatial distributions; (4) the possible inclusion of a climate change terms of reference for stock assessments; and (5) the creation of a list of climate change data available for inclusion in analyses. For recommendations 2 and 3, the Work Group listed options that could be considered when evidence suggests a changing environment could be impacting species' biomass levels or distributions. However, none of the options have been analyzed based on their pros and cons, and there are options included that may not be consistent with current federal law or the fisheries management goals identified in the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter. Thus, the guidance provided in the document is intended to provide a starting point for managers as they discuss management options. Further, the document is meant to be dynamic, evolving as new information or data become available.

For the past several decades, marine fisheries management strategies have remained nearly static, focused on single species management. Although surveys and assessment models are advancing rapidly, adopting new management strategies that address productivity and distribution changes presents a formidable challenge. Mindsets and behaviors will need to shift at all levels of the management process – managers, scientists and stakeholders. Our experiences in exploring multispecies management and ecological reference points have taught us that fundamental changes in fisheries management strategies not only take a significant investment of resources, time, and energy, but the willingness among managers and stakeholders to make that shift. Moving away from traditional management to more contemporary approaches will be challenging, and will need to be done deliberately and incrementally to preserve what trust exists between state and federal managers and stakeholders. The Work Group's recommendations are an important step towards proactively addressing changes in marine species distributions and abundances due to environmental drivers.

As we consider sacrifices we may make together for a brighter tomorrow, may the words of wise and eminent Mainer Stephen King remind us all of what is at stake: "Resistance to change is proportional to how much the future might be altered by any given act."

For more details on the options provided in the document, go to http://www.asafc.org/files/pub/ClimateChangeWorkGroupGuidanceDocument_Feb2018.pdf.

Successful adaptation depends not only on adjusting management strategies, but also reevaluating and revising, as necessary, the underlying conservation goals and objectives of fishery management plans.

Species Profile: Cobia

Cooperative Efforts Seek to Improve Management of Stock

Introduction

Avidly pursued by recreational anglers as ready biters and fierce fighters, cobia support recreational fisheries throughout the South Atlantic and into the Mid-Atlantic region. A fast growing, moderately lived species, they occur most abundantly from Chesapeake Bay through the Gulf of Mexico, preferring to stay close to structure to feed and find shelter from predation. While the 2013 stock assessment indicated overfishing was not occurring and the stock was not overfished, spawning stock biomass has experienced a general decline since 2002. A benchmark stock assessment is scheduled for 2019 through the SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process.

Landings are driven by the recreational fishery, with the commercial fishery primarily being a bycatch fishery. The Commission approved the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia in October 2017. The FMP was initiated due to recent overages of the federal annual catch limit (ACL) for AMG cobia, which disrupted fishing opportunities and jeopardized the health of the stock. The Commission FMP introduces state-specific allocations of a coastwide recreational harvest and maintains the commercial regulations set under the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) FMP.

Life History

Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) are distributed worldwide in tropical and warm temperature waters. They occur along the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to Argentina, and are most abundant in U.S. waters from Chesapeake Bay south through the Gulf of Mexico.

Male cobia typically reach sexual maturity by 2 years (generally 2 feet long), while females are sexually mature by 2-3 years (generally 3 feet long). Females grow to be larger than males, and may reach 6 feet and weigh up to 100 pounds. An extended spawning season occurs from late June to mid-August along the Southeastern U.S., and from late summer to early fall in the Gulf of Mexico. Cobia are broadcast spawners; a single female may spawn many times each season. Cobia make seasonal migrations, wintering in the south and moving north for the summer months. They are drawn to structure to feed and find shelter from predation. Juveniles and adults are often found around live bottom, wrecks, and buoys, as well as flotsam and seaweed mats. Their diet consists primarily of fish and crustaceans.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Enthusiastically pursued by recreational anglers, cobia support an important recreational fishery throughout the South Atlantic and into the Mid-Atlantic region. Primary methods include bottom fishing with natural bait as well as sight-casting, which has gained popularity in recent years. The annual recreational harvest of AMG cobia, found along the US Atlantic coast from New York to Georgia, has varied erratically with little trend since 2005, ranging from 328,000 to 1.7 million pounds. Landings have increased within the past two years. In 2015 and 2016, recreational anglers landed approximately 1.7 million and 1.3 million pounds of cobia, respectively. These are the two highest values in the time series, which extends back to 1981. These harvests resulted in significant overages of the federal ACL and federal fishery closures in 2016 and 2017.

The commercial fishery is on a much smaller scale, but has increased from 2011 to 2016. Primarily a bycatch fishery, it is has been associated with the snapper/grouper hook and line fishery and troll fisheries for many South Atlantic species, although more directed fisheries have recently developed in some areas. Commercial restrictions are consistent throughout the range, with a 2 fish per person possession limit, 6 fish vessel limit, and a 33" fork length minimum size limit. The two greatest commercial harvests in the time series, which extends back to 1950, occurred in 2015 (83,000 pounds) and 2016 (84,000 pounds).

Stock Status

Two cobia stocks are recognized off the U.S. Atlantic coast; AMG cobia and Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group (Gulf cobia), occurring throughout the Gulf of Mexico and extending to Florida's east coast. The SAFMC manages the Atlantic stock, and is allotted a small portion

Species Snapshot



Cobia

Rachycentron canadum

Common Names: black kingfish, black salmon, ling, lemonfish, crabbeater, prodigal son, black bonito, sergeantfish, yew, cubby

Management Unit: New York to Georgia

Family: Rachycentridae

The name originates from the Greek words 'rhachis' (spine) and 'kentron' (sting), and was inspired by the dorsal spines that make up the first dorsal fin.

Interesting Facts

- Cobia is the only species in the family Rachycentridae.
- They are a close relative of remoras, suckerfish known for attaching to large marine mammals, sharks, and ships using a suction disk on top of their heads.
- They migrate seasonally, wintering in the Gulf of Mexico and moving up the coast as far as Massachusetts in the summer.
- Cobia feed primarily on crabs, squid, and fish, but will also follow large animals (sharks, turtles, manta rays) to scavenge what they leave behind.
- They are one of the best candidates for warm, open-water marine fish aquaculture due to their fast growth rate and the high quality of their flesh.

Maximum Size: 6.5 feet, 172 pounds

Life Span: 14 years old

Stock Status: Not overfished nor experiencing overfishing



Photo (c) Aaron Game

of the Gulf stock's ACL to manage the Gulf cobia which extend along the Atlantic coast of Florida. Genetic studies continue to explore appropriate stock boundaries, and an upcoming 2018 Stock Identification Workshop may result in modifications to these boundaries.

The 2013 SEDAR stock assessment indicated overfishing was not occurring and neither stock was overfished. ACLs were established as a precautionary measure to prevent the stocks from reaching an overfished status. Despite the stock status, the last assessment showed a general decline in spawning stock biomass since 2002. Since the assessment, recreational harvests have continued to be highly variable and exceeded the ACL (620,000 pounds) in 2015 and 2016. Future overages could lead to the stock becoming overfished. The stock status is expected to be updated by the upcoming SEDAR stock assessment in 2019.

Atlantic Coastal Management

In 2017, the Commission approved the Interstate FMP for AMG Cobia. Complementing many aspects of the SAFMC's cobia regulations for federal waters extending from Georgia through New York, the FMP was initiated in response to recent overages of the federal ACL for AMG cobia. Managing the recreational ACL on a coastwide basis has resulted in federal closures and significant overages in 2015 and 2016, disrupting fishing opportunities and jeopardizing the health of the stock.

Under the Interstate FMP, the recreational fishery is managed with a one fish bag limit and a minimum size limit of 36" fork length (FL) or total length equivalent. Vessel limits will be determined once individual states set their seasonal restrictions, but may not exceed six fish per vessel. State-specific allocations of a coastwide

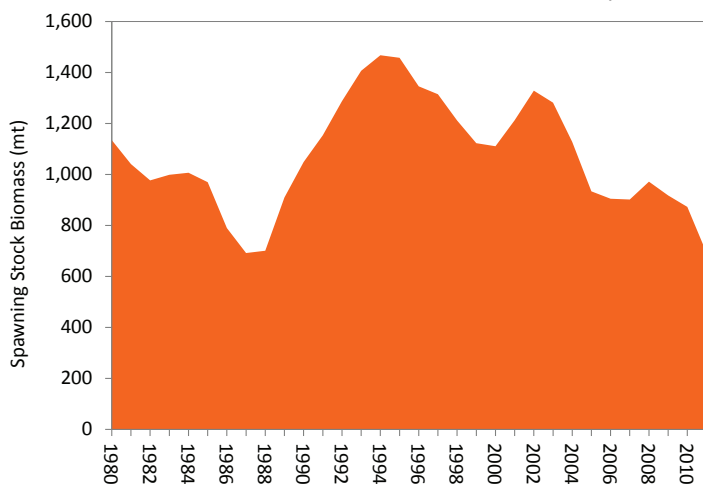
recreational harvest limit that is equivalent to the federal AMG cobia recreational ACL of 620,000 pounds result in the following state-specific soft targets:

- Georgia - 58,311 pounds
- South Carolina - 74,885 pounds
- North Carolina - 236,316 pounds
- Virginia - 244,292 pounds

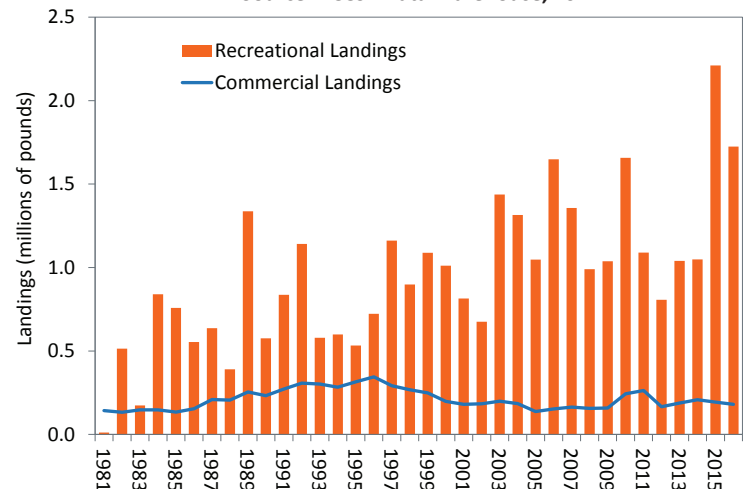
Recreational harvest of state-specific allocations will be evaluated over a three-year time period. If states exceed their soft harvest targets, states will be required to adjust management measures to achieve the soft harvest target in the subsequent three-year period.

The commercial fishery will maintain the current management measures as implemented through the SAFMC FMP and continue to be managed with a 33" FL minimum size limit and two fish limit per person, with a six fish maximum vessel limit. The federal ACL of 50,000 pounds is allocated to the entire commercial fishery from Georgia through New York. The commercial AMG cobia fishery will close once the ACL is projected to be reached. The FMP provides the opportunity for states to declare *de minimis* status for their recreational fishery if landings constitute less than 1% of the recreational AMG cobia harvest. For more information, please contact Mike Schmidtke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org.

Cobia Spawning Stock Biomass
Source: SouthEast Data Assessment and Review , 2013



Cobia Commercial & Recreational Landings
Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2017



9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Law Enforcement Committee

(A portion of this meeting may be a closed session for Committee members only)

- Review and Comment on Ropeless Fishing Technologies
- Review of 2018 Action Plan Items
- ASMFC Species Management Issues
- State and Federal Agency Reports

11:15 a.m. – Noon Shad & River Herring Management Board

- Consider Approval of Shad and River Herring Sustainable Fishery Management Plans
 - Technical Committee Report
 - Massachusetts (Merrimack River)
- Report on the Funded Research Proposal on Blueback Herring
- Review and Consider 2018 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

Noon – 1:15 p.m. Legislators and Governors' Appointees Luncheon

- Introductions
- General Comments/Discussion
- Discuss Non-compliance

1:15 – 2:45 p.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Provide Guidance to Stock Assessment Subcommittee Regarding Biological Reference Point Development for the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment

3 – 3:45 p.m. Atlantic Herring Section

- Discuss Potential Impact of River Herring/Shad Caps and Mackerel Fishery Possession Limits on Atlantic Herring Fishery
- Review Technical Committee Report on Scaling Up of Spawning Fish Samples Involving Less than One Hundred Fish

4 – 5 p.m. Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Coordinating Council

- ACCSP Status Report
 - Program Status and Committee Updates
- Review and Consider Approval of FY19 Request for Proposals Package
- Accountability Standards

6 – 8 p.m. Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

8:30 – 10:30 a.m. Executive Committee

(A portion of this meeting may be a closed session for Committee members and Commissioners only)

- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee
 - Presentation of FY19 Budget
- Discuss Appeals Process
- Discuss Conservation Equivalency Process
- Discuss Commissioner Conflict of Interest
- Future Annual Meetings Updates
- CLOSED SESSION: Executive Director Performance Review

10:45 a.m. – Noon Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Review and Consider Approval of Terms of Reference for the 2019 Atlantic Menhaden-Specific and Ecosystem-Based Benchmark Stock Assessments and Peer Reviews

Public Comment Guidelines

In order to ensure a fair opportunity for public input, the ISFMP Policy Board has established the following guidelines for use at management board meetings:

For issues that are not on the agenda, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

For topics that are on the agenda, but have not gone out for public comment, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

1. Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of a meeting week will be included in the briefing materials.

2. Comments received by **5 PM on Tuesday, April 24, 2018** will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.

3. Following the April 24th deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, it will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

- Review and Consider Approval of Stock Assessment Subcommittee Membership
- Review and Consider 2018 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports
 - Review Final 2018 Commercial Quotas

12:45 – 1:30 p.m. Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board

- Review and Consider 2018 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

1:45 – 3:45 p.m. American Lobster Management Board

- Review Lobster Conservation Management Teams' Proposals to Reduce Latent Effort
- Law Enforcement Committee Report on Enforceability of Ropeless Fishing
- Plan Development Team Update on Development and Timeline of American Lobster Draft Addendum XXVII

4 – 4:45 p.m. Winter Flounder Management Board

- Review and Consider Rhode Island's Conservation Equivalency Proposal
 - Technical Committee Report

THURSDAY, MAY 3

8 – 10 a.m. Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board

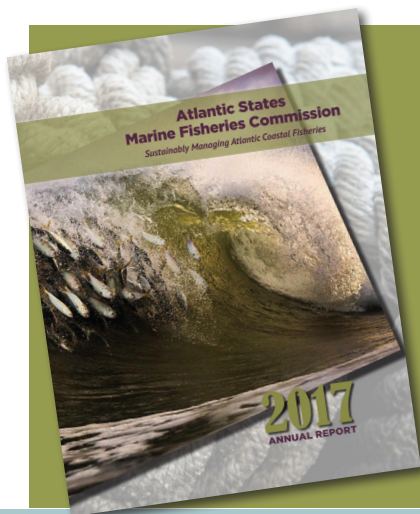
- Law Enforcement and Artificial Reef Committee Reports
- Horseshoe Crab
 - Update on 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Timeline
 - Consider Approval of Non-traditional Stakeholder Nominations

10 – 10:15 a.m. Business Session

- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (If Necessary)

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Review Public Comment on Draft Addendum I to the Black Drum Fishery Management Plan
 - Consider Draft Addendum I to the Fishery Management Plan for Final Approval
- Consider Management Action Based on Technical Committee/Plan Review Team Recommended Updates to the Annual Traffic Light Analyses for Atlantic Croaker and Spot
- Updates on SEDAR 58 Cobia Stock Identification Workshop and Board Tasking of Cobia Technical Committee from February 2018 Meeting
- Discuss Request to the Secretary of Commerce to Implement Cobia Regulations in Federal Waters in the Absence of a Federal Fishery Management Plan
- Elect Vice-Chair



2017 ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The Commission has released its 2017 Annual Report, which provides an overview of significant management actions and associated science activities the Commission and its member states took in 2017 to maintain and restore the abundance of Commission-managed species. The report is available on our website at, www.asmfc.org, under Quick Links, or directly at <http://www.asmfc.org/files/pub/2017AnnualReport.pdf>. Limited printed copies are available; to request a copy, contact info@asmfc.org.

Comings and Goings

COMMISSIONERS

STEVEN BOWMAN

With his appointment as Commissioner of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), Steven Bowman returns to the ASMFC as Virginia's Administrative Commissioner. Mr. Bowman served as both VMRC and ASMFC Commissioner from 2006 to 2012. Prior to that, he worked as a VMRC conservation law enforcement officer and was an important contributor to the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee. After a six-year stint as Chief of Police for the Smithfield Police Department, he has returned to the realm of Atlantic coast fisheries management. Welcome back, Mr. Bowman!



STEPHEN MURPHEY

In January, in his new position as Director of North Carolina's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), Stephen Murphey became the state's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Mr. Murphey has over 30 years of experience in fishery and shellfish habitat enhancement programs, shellfish growing area surveys, shellfish processing inspection, and program administration. He began his career with the DMF in 1987 as a biologist. In 2010 he was promoted to Section Chief for Habitat and Enhancement. As Section Chief, Mr. Murphey was responsible for managing and coordinating large-scale marine and estuarine habitat restoration, management, and enhancement programs including shellfish aquaculture and oyster enhancement, and management of the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan. Welcome aboard, Mr. Murphey!



continued, see COMINGS & GOINGS on page 8

American Lobster Board Approves Addenda XXVI/III to the American Lobster/Jonah Crab FMPs

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board (Board) approved American Lobster Addendum XXVI/Jonah Crab Addendum III (Addenda) to the American Lobster and Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). The Addenda improve the spatial resolution of harvester data collection, expand the required harvester reporting data elements, establish a timeline for increased harvester reporting in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, and prioritize the development of electronic harvester reporting. In addition, the Addenda include recommendations for improved reporting and biological sampling in federal waters.

The Addenda respond to two concerns: (1) the current requirements for harvester reporting are insufficient to respond to external management actions; and (2) while the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries continue to expand offshore, most of the biological sampling occurs inshore or nearshore. In particular, the Board expressed concern the spatial resolution of harvester data is too coarse to respond to finer-scale management issues. As a result, the Addenda improve the spatial resolution of data by requiring fishermen to report via 10 minute squares, which further divide the existing statistical areas. In addition, the addenda establish a one year pilot program to explore electronic tracking devices in the fishery which would address the special resolution and enforcement concerns. The addenda require additional data elements in harvester reports, including number of traps per trawl and number of buoy lines in order to collect information on gear configurations. Finally, the Addenda establish a deadline that, within five years, states are required to implement 100% harvester reporting, with the prioritization of electronic harvester reporting development during that time. In the interim, jurisdictions not at 100% harvester reporting should redistribute the current effort associated with harvester reporting to focus on active, as opposed to latent, permit holders.

The Addenda also improve the biological sampling requirements by establishing a baseline of ten sampling trips per year in the American lobster/Jonah crab fishery and encourage states with more than 10% of coastwide landings in either the American lobster or Jonah crab fisheries to conduct additional sampling trips.

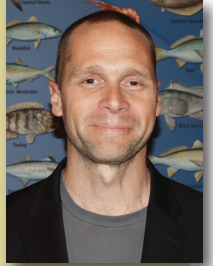
Finally, the Addenda provide three recommendations for actions in federal waters. Specifically, a harvester reporting requirement be established for federal lobster permits in order to collect information from the growing offshore fishery; a fixed-gear VTR form be created to improve data collection in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries; and a biological sampling program be established in federal waters in order to address current data gaps in the assessment. These recommendations will be forwarded to NOAA Fisheries.

The Addenda can be obtained at http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5a9438ccAmLobsterAddXXVI_JonahCrabAddIII_Feb2018.pdf. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

COMINGS & GOINGS *continued from page 7*

JASON MCNAMEE

No stranger to the Commission, Jason McNamee has served on, chaired, and played a critical role on a number of ASMFC species technical committees throughout his career. Now Chief of Rhode Island's Marine Resources Section, Mr. McNamee oversees the administration of the Department of Environmental Management's marine fisheries science and management programs and staff, including its technical projects, scientific research, and outreach activities. In this role, he also serves as the state's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. With a Bachelor's of Science in Zoology, a Master's of Science in Biological Oceanography and a soon to be Ph.D. in Oceanography, Mr. McNamee has a wealth of experience and outstanding qualifications to bring to the table as he works closely with his fellow Commissioners, federal partners, industry representatives, organizations and other stakeholders to develop interstate regional plans for the conservation and management of marine fisheries resources. Welcome aboard, Mr. McNamee!



STAFF

RACHEL COLLINS

In February, with her acceptance of a new position with Specialists on Call, the Commission bid farewell to Rachel Collins. Since September 2015, Ms. Collins served as Human Resources Manager, assisting in the implementation of ASMFC's HR policies and procedures. In her two and a half years with ASMFC, Ms. Collins assisted with the hiring and orientation of APAIS seasonal staff, updated ASMFC's employee handbook with current laws and regulations, and streamlined and improved accounting of employee timesheets and benefits through ADP software. We wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!



ELIZABETH WYATT

In February, ACCSP said farewell to its Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Wyatt, as she accepted a program coordinator position in her home state of Michigan. Ms. Wyatt first joined the ACCSP staff as a Program Assistant back in May of 2014. Her role expanded to that of Program Coordinator in March 2016. During her time at ACCSP, Elizabeth was instrumental in coordinating ACCSP's annual funding process, organizing its Integrated Reporting Workshop, and ensuring program operations ran smoothly. She was a great boost to office morale, organizing socials and hosting a weekly trivia game. Elizabeth's affable nature, sense of humor, and levelheadedness will be greatly missed. We wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!



Cooperative Research Seeks to Fill In Data Gaps to Support Fisheries Science and Management Efforts

Fisheries management is a data hungry endeavor. Whether it be recreational catch, commercial landings, fishing effort, or data on fish biology and life history, data feeds stock assessment processes and fisheries management decisions. Unfortunately, data collection is costly, labor intensive, and is becoming increasingly more challenging as state and federal fisheries science and management budgets and personnel have decreased in recent years.

The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF), a non-profit, private foundation established by commercial fishermen to conduct collaborative fisheries research and educational projects, seeks to provide more complete and consistent data to support fisheries science and management in a cost-efficient and scientifically reliable way.

CFRF's work allows for the incorporation of fisherman-collected data into science and management measures. The cooperative research approach is especially useful for fisheries with significant temporal and spatial data gaps that would otherwise go unsampled (e.g., offshore areas).

CFRF is currently leading several projects, three of which are highlighted below.

Black Sea Bass Research Fleet

Black sea bass is a popular fishery throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England. Over the past few years, the distribution of black sea bass has begun to expand its range into more northern waters, largely in response to warming waters, leading to increased abundance throughout Southern New England. The species is also a protogynous hermaphrodite, meaning individuals change from female to male. These two factors – the species changing distribution and unique life history – make gathering comprehensive information about the population for use in future stock assessments and management plans particularly challenging and important.

The Black Sea Bass Research Fleet is a partnership between CFRF and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

(RI DEM) to collect and communicate black sea bass biological data in a cost-effective way using modern electronic technology and fishermen's time on the water. The goal is to develop a model approach for fishery-dependent data collection that involves the commercial and recreational fishing industries. The fleet consists of nine Rhode Island commercial and recreational fishermen, using several different gear types, to collect biological and fishery data on black sea bass during routine fishing practices throughout the year. Data collected include gear type and effort, sampling depth, percentage of catch retained and discarded, as well as fish length and sex. Data are transmitted to CFRF through a mobile tablet application, and then to RI DEM and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, allowing for timely transfer of the data for

scientific and management use. The fishermen participating in the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet have sampled over 8,000 black sea bass since December 2016 and will continue through April 2019.

For more information on the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet, please contact Tom Heimann at theimann@cfrfoundation.org.

Supporting Management of Jonah Crab and American Lobster Fisheries in the Northeast

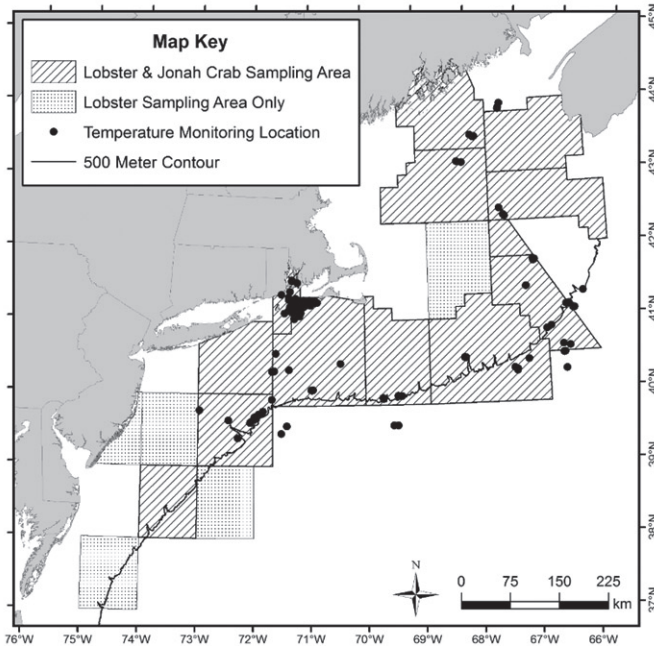
The Jonah Crab and Lobster Research Fleet works to implement a cost-effective method to collect critically

needed biological data for two commercially important species. The American lobster fishery is one of the most valuable fisheries in New England, but significant data gaps exist in the southern part of its range and offshore waters. While the adult lobster population in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank is at historic highs, the Southern New England population is depleted, a status most likely driven by overfishing and changing environmental conditions, such as increased water temperatures in the area. Jonah crab is a rapidly expanding fishery whose popularity is partially driven by the decrease in availability of Southern New England lobster. An Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Jonah crab was approved in 2015. Information is needed to support the species' first stock assessment and evaluate the status of the stock.



Brian Thibeault collecting Jonah crab data aboard the FV Ashley Ann.
Photo (c) CFRF.

continued, see SCIENCE HIGHLIGHT on page 10



Map of the areas sampled by the CFRF Lobster and Jonah Crab Research Fleet from June 1, 2013 to July 1, 2017, including bottom water temperature monitoring locations (black circles). Image (c) CFRF

The Jonah Crab and American Lobster Research Fleet collects data on the two species, which are caught in similar gear types, in order to better inform their stock assessments and management decisions.

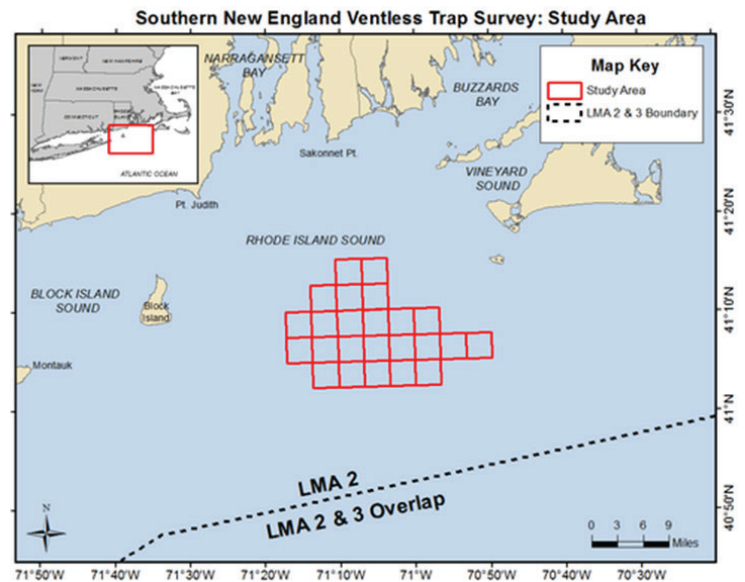
For the project, running since January 2013, 18 American lobster and Jonah crab fishing vessels use digital calipers and the 'On Deck Data' application (app) to collect biological and environmental data from their commercial and ventless traps. At the same time, fishermen also collect bottom water temperatures where they fish. The On Deck Data app was created by CFRF as a way for data to be easily deposited into Android tablets and transferred to a database for use. The project is especially useful in providing more complete temporal and spatial data for the species, as more traditional surveys that only sample within state waters and primarily during the summer months. The app records biological information, such as length, sex, shell disease, eggs, v-notch, shell hardness, and disposition. Each vessel samples at least 300 lobsters or 60 commercial traps each month, or 150 Jonah crabs or 60 commercial traps a month. For the past two years, over 2,300 male and female Jonah crabs have been collected from five geographical regions for Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries to analyze and better understand sexual maturity for both stocks. In 2018, the project started using Bluetooth caliper technology, hoping to pioneer its use in other fishery data collection projects. To date, the program has sampled 107,667 American lobsters and 47,400 Jonah crabs.

For more information on the Jonah Crab and American Lobster Research Fleet, please contact Aubrey Ellertson at aellertson@cfrfoundation.org.

Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey

This survey is a continuation of the 2014/2015 Southern New England Ventless Trap Survey and will run from March 2018 to February 2019. The survey focuses on American lobster and Jonah crab, assessing the seasonal distribution, movement, and habitat use by these species in the Cox's Ledge Wind Energy Area. The goal is to establish a pre-construction baseline for the populations to enable assessment and mitigation of the impacts of offshore wind energy development. Commercial lobstermen are collaborating with CFRF on the project, providing the vessel capacity and expert knowledge to guide the research. Twenty-four lease blocks were selected in the Rhode Island-Massachusetts Wind Energy Area and biological sampling is conducted within each lease block twice a month from May to November. The project is being implemented in conjunction with a lobster tagging program to determine seasonal movement patterns and habitat use by lobsters in the area. The combined results of the projects will be used to better inform decisions about which locations should be selected for wind turbines in order to limit development impacts on American lobster and Jonah crab.

For more information on the Ventless Trap Survey, please contact Michael Long at m-long@cfrfoundation.org. Additional information on CFRF and its projects can be found at <http://www.cfrfoundation.org/>.



Map of the areas to be sampled by the Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey from May 2018 - November 2018. Image (c) CFRF

-- This article was contributed by Jessica Kuesel, Fisheries Administrative Assistant

American Eel Draft Addendum V Approved for Public Comment

In February, the American Eel Management Board approved Draft Addendum V to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes alternative coastwide landings caps, management triggers, state-by-state allocations, and transfer provisions for the yellow eel commercial fishery; as well as alternatives to the current Maine glass eel commercial quota and the aquaculture provisions of the plan. The Board initiated Draft Addendum V in October 2017 in response to concerns over the management program as specified in Addendum IV.

Currently, the yellow eel fishery is managed to an annual coastwide landings cap of 907,671 pounds. The coastwide cap is evaluated against two management triggers: (1) the coastwide cap is exceeded by more than 10% in a given year; or

(2) the coastwide cap is exceeded for two consecutive years, regardless of the percent overage. If either of these triggers are tripped, state-by-state quotas will be implemented. 2016 landings exceeded the coastwide cap by less than ten percent. If landings in 2017 exceeded the coastwide cap by any amount, state-by-state quotas would be implemented. The Board expressed concern that the current management triggers do not account for annual fluctuations in landings and the immediate implementation of state-by-state quotas would pose significant administrative challenges. Draft Addendum V proposes alternatives to the coastwide cap, management triggers, state-by-state allocations and transfer provisions to address the Board's concerns.

Draft Addendum V proposes alternative quota levels for the Maine glass eel

fishery, increasing the quota above the 2015-2018 level of 9,688 pounds. The Draft Addendum also proposes changes to the aquaculture provisions of the plan. It includes an option that would allow contiguously bordered states to pool their 200 pound glass eel aquaculture allowance up to a maximum of 600 pounds.

It is anticipated the majority of states from Maine through Florida will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Addendum. A notice of the document's availability for public comment, as well as the public hearing schedule will be released late April/early May. The Board will meet in August at the Commission's Summer Meeting to review submitted comment and consider final action on the Addendum. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.



ACCSP Announces FY2018 Funding Awards

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has allocated nearly \$1.4 million to its state and federal partners for 11 new and ongoing projects to improve data collection and processing for Atlantic coastal fisheries in 2018. The table details the projects that will be awarded funding.

ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program focused on the design, implementation, and conduct of marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and the integration of those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit www.accsp.org.

PROGRAM PARTNER	PROJECT	AWARD (Rounded to nearest hundred)
Maine Department of Marine Resources	Managing Mandatory Dealer Reporting in Maine	\$193,500
	Portside Commercial Catch Sampling and Bycatch Sampling for Atlantic Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>), Atlantic Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>), and Atlantic Menhaden (<i>Brevoortia tyrannus</i>) Fisheries	\$26,000
Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife	Maintenance and Coordination of Fishery-Dependent Data Feeds to ACCSP from the State of Rhode Island	\$77,000
	Voice Recognition and HeadBoat Survey Mobile Application	\$48,300
	Advancing Fishery-Dependent Data Collection for Black Sea Bass (<i>Centropristis striata</i>) in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic Region Utilizing Modern Technology and a Fishing Vessel Research Fleet Approach	\$135,600
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife	Electronic Reporting and Biological Characterization of New Jersey Commercial Fisheries	\$164,400
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources	ACCSP Data Reporting from South Carolina's Commercial Fisheries	\$163,200
	VESL/SAFIS Integration Development	\$86,400
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Continuing Data Entry and Management of Commercial Fisheries Paper Trip Tickets in Georgia	\$116,900
NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center	Continued Processing and Ageing of Biological Samples Collected from U.S. South Atlantic Commercial and Recreational Fisheries	\$251,600
ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Increase At-sea Sampling Levels for the Recreational Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast	\$134,400

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in \$ thousands)

	2016 Enacted	2017 Enacted	2018 Trump	2018 House	2018 Senate	2018 Enacted	2019 Trump
National Marine Fisheries Service							
Marine Mammals, Turtles & Other Species	110,246	111,342	106,993	108,500	113,342	113,342	108,460
Species Recovery Grants	6,000	6,200	5,989	5,989	7,000	7,000	5,993
Atlantic Salmon	6,163	6,224	6,151	6,224	6,224	6,224	6,218
Pacific Salmon	60,000	62,000	59,887	63,000	62,000	63,000	60,944
Ecosystem Science Programs & Services	139,489	139,489	141,323	141,323	141,327	144,196	141,185
Data Collections, Surveys & Assessments	163,271	164,000	154,961	163,000	164,749	164,749	156,558
Observers and Training	43,655	43,655	43,572	43,655	43,655	53,955	43,768
Fisheries Management Programs & Services	115,995	117,051	111,153	117,000	117,051	118,659	112,598
Aquaculture	6,300	9,300	6,288	8,000	15,000	15,000	9,327
Salmon Management Activities	31,500	33,500	31,440	34,000	35,469	35,500	31,524
Regional Councils & Fisheries Commissions	33,470	34,254	33,407	34,000	35,871	35,871	34,495
Interjurisdictional Fisheries Grants	3,000	3,004	0	3,000	3,004	3,004	0
Enforcement	69,000	69,000	68,943	69,000	69,000	69,073	51,495
Habitat Conservation and Restoration	61,408	52,524	51,334	51,334	53,342	53,384	47,919
Selected Additional NOAA Accounts							
National Sea Grant College Program	64,000	63,000	0	63,000	65,000	65,000	0
Marine Aquaculture Program	9,000	9,500	0	7,000	11,500	11,500	0
Coastal Zone Management and Services	40,000	42,500	39,924	39,600	42,500	42,500	40,489
Coastal Zone Management Grants	26,000	85,000	0	45,000	85,000	75,000	0
Title IX Fund	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	-
Coral Reef Program	26,000	26,100	25,955	26,100	26,600	26,604	26,033
Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas	49,000	51,000	48,907	52,000	51,000	54,500	49,739
National Estuarine Research Reserve System	23,000	23,500	0	23,500	25,000	25,000	0

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization

On February 28, 2018, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation approved S. 1520, the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act. S. 1520 contains a number of provisions championed by the recreational fishing community, including use of alternative fishery management measures, requiring allocation reviews for some South Atlantic and Gulf fisheries, and changes to how fisheries data is collected.

On December 13, 2017, the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources approved its Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) reauthorization bill, H.R. 200 – the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act. During the mark-up, H.R. 200 was amended to include provisions of H.R. 2023/S. 1520 – the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act.

Federal Appropriations

On March 23, 2018, the President approved an omnibus appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2018. In addition to funding the federal government, the legislation contains instructions to the various federal agencies, including NOAA Fisheries. Two provisions have the potential to impact Atlantic coast striped bass management:

- The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is

completing a new stock assessment of Atlantic striped bass in 2018. After this assessment is complete, the Secretary of Commerce is directed to use this assessment to review the federal moratorium on Atlantic striped bass.

- NOAA Fisheries, in consultation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, is directed to consider lifting the ban on striped bass fishing in the Federal Block Island Transit Zone.

President Trump submitted his Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request to Congress on February 12, 2018. The Budget again proposes to eliminate Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act Grants, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and Sea Grant. For the second year, the President also proposes to use all available Saltonstall-Kennedy funding to offset NOAA Fisheries' appropriation for Data Collections, Surveys, and Assessments. Therefore, no Saltonstall-Kennedy grants would be available for Fiscal Year 2019. The federal government is currently operating under a stop-gap funding measure at Fiscal Year 2017 levels through March 23, 2018.

Funding levels for NOAA Fisheries and other selected accounts within NOAA can be viewed in the above chart. For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins at dtompkins@asmfc.org.

