



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

At its Spring Meeting, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Mr. Dan McKiernan, Dr. Larry Jacobson and Colonel Kyle Overturf with its Annual Awards of Excellence (AAE) for their outstanding contributions to science and law enforcement along the Atlantic coast.

"The Atlantic coast has no shortage of skilled and dedicated fisheries policy, science and law enforcement professionals. However, Dan, Larry and Kyle represent the cream of the crop" said ASMFC Chair Jim Gilmore of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. "The Commission's 2018 Annual Awards of Excellence reflect a diversity of accomplishments from management to science to law enforcement. It is an honor to present the 2018 AAE to three exceptional individuals for their contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries."



From left: ASMFC Chair Jim Gilmore, AAE Recipients Dan McKiernan and Colonel Kyle Overturf, and ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal

Management & Policy Contributions

Mr. Dan McKiernan, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Dan McKiernan has been a vital contributor to the Commission's management and policy programs for over three decades. Throughout his career, he has worked tirelessly to meet the needs of Massachusetts' fishermen while ensuring the health of the fisheries resources on which they depend. At the management board level, Mr. McKiernan approaches problem solving in a pragmatic, collaborative way. His recipe for success has been one part engagement and one part persuasion, bringing his colleagues together during board meetings or over a friendly meal to make his case for Massachusetts' position while finding effective solutions to difficult interstate fisheries management problems.

Mr. McKiernan's efforts on the development and adoption of Amendment 1 to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan illustrate his dedication to the collaborative process. Working closely with neighboring Rhode Island officials, he helped to develop uniform rules throughout the region. He was also a staunch

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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

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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

June 12 - 14

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME

June 19 - 20

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, ASMFC Offices, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA

June 26 (10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

ASMFC and MAFMC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel, Hilton Garden Inn, BWI Airport, 1516 Aero Drive, Linthicum, MD

July 23 - 26

SEAMAP Annual Meeting, Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront, 333 1st Street South, St. Petersburg, FL

August 7 - 9

ASMFC Summer Meeting, Westin, 1800 South Eads Street, Arlington, VA

August 14 - 18

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, 3001 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, VA

August 19 - 23

148th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society: Communicating the Science of Fisheries Conservation to Diverse Audiences, Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, NJ

September 17 - 21

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town and Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC

September 25 - 27

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel 1620, Plymouth, MA

October 2 - 4

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Congress Hall, 200 Congress Place, Cape May, NJ

October 21 - 25

ASMFC 77th Annual Meeting, The Roosevelt Hotel, 45 East 45th Street and Madison Avenue, New York City, NY

December 3 - 7

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Garden Inn/Outer Banks, 5353 N. Virginia Dare Trail, Kitty Hawk, NC

December 4 - 6

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel Viking, Newport, RI

December 11 - 13

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



Black Sea Bass: Seeking Solutions through Compromise

I don't know whether you had a chance to listen to Commissioners discuss recreational black sea bass management during our Spring Meeting at the beginning of May. If you did, you had the chance to witness the states coming together to handle a difficult and controversial management issue through compromise for the benefit of the states, their recreational fisheries, and the resource. This is what the Commission is designed to do.

Black sea bass is a tricky species to manage with lots of moving parts. From a policy perspective, the species is managed jointly by the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. As such, the states strive to implement recreational measures to achieve but not exceed the annual recreational harvest limit (RHL). The Council's Scientific and

Statistical Committee recommends the allowable biological catch, which constrains the RHL based on the latest stock status information. Magnuson-Stevens requirements for annual catch limits and accountability measures, combined with uncertainty surrounding recreational estimates, create even greater difficulties at the state level, with states having to adjust recreational measures on an annual basis.

Black sea bass biology and life history

characteristics present additional challenges. Although the species was declared rebuilt in 2009, black sea bass' unique characteristics contribute to uncertainty about the size of the stock. Black sea bass are protogynous hermaphrodites, which mean they start life as females and when they reach 9-13 inches (2 - 5 years of age) they change sex to become males. Because of this trait, the response of this species to fishing pressure is difficult to account for. More profoundly, as water temperatures have warmed along the coast, the distribution and abundance of this species has begun to shift northward. This means northern states are catching more black sea bass

even under restrictive management measures simply because there are more fish.

Yet our current management program and the distribution of fish to the states is based on traditional fishing patterns that do not reflect recent changes in the stock's distribution and availability. This last point and the potential reduction in recreational harvest for the states in Southern New England motivated the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York to appeal a recent decision by the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) regarding 2018 recreational management measures approved in response to Addendum XXX. However, before the appeal was actually brought before the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board, the Northern Region states offered a potential management program for the 2018 black sea bass recreational fishery to replace the allocations specified in Addendum XXX. The revised management program, which was approved by the Board, was the result of extensive work and deliberations among the Northern Region states, who came up with a compromise to meet the needs of the Northern Region without impacting the remaining states, while constraining the harvest to the 2018 RHL of 3.66 million pounds.

Further, in response to the appeal, the Board initiated new management action for the 2019 black sea bass recreational fishery and tasked the Plan Development Team to develop a white paper to consider the impacts of changes in black sea bass abundance and distribution on the management of commercial and recreational fisheries.

While the path getting to the compromise was not an easy one, it not only affirmed why the Commission has been so successful for three-quarters of a century, but also highlighted the importance of the processes we have developed to ensure that states have an opportunity to challenge management decisions and seek solutions through compromise and debate. Our deliberations in May provided a fix for the 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery; however, there is still much work to be done and many discussions to be had about how we best address shifting resource abundance, distribution, and productivity due to warming waters. There are as many states who hope for a new management regime that reflects changing resource availability as there are those who feel strongly about allocating the resource based on historical landings. Perhaps the solution lies somewhere in the middle. I look forward to working with our Commissioners to help find that middle ground, where we account for historical harvest while acknowledging the new realities brought about by changes in our marine environment.

The revised management program, which was approved by the Board, was the result of extensive work and deliberations among the Northern Region states who worked closely to come up with a compromise...

Species Profile: Atlantic Sturgeon

Benchmark Assessment Indicates Signs of a Slow Recovery Though Challenges Towards Sustainability Remain

Introduction

For almost 30 years, the 15 Atlantic coastal states have worked together to effectively manage Atlantic sturgeon throughout its range from Maine to Florida. Recognizing both the importance of this ancient species and the dire status of the population, the states implemented a 40-year coastwide moratorium on harvest through Amendment I to the Atlantic Sturgeon FMP in 1998 with the goal of restoring the population of this once thriving fishery. Since then, the states have invested considerable resources to research the species' biology and life history. Despite the strong conservation efforts taken, Atlantic sturgeon was added to the Endangered Species List in February 2012. A coastwide benchmark stock assessment completed by the Commission in the fall of 2017 concluded that the population remains depleted at the coastwide and distinct population segment (DPS) levels relative to historic abundance, although the population appears to be recovering slowly since implementation of the 1998 moratorium.

Life History

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) are ancient fish, dating back to at least the late Cretaceous Period (66-100 million years ago). Historically, they have been found along the entire Atlantic coast from Labrador, Canada to St. Johns River, Florida. Atlantic sturgeon were once present in about 38 rivers along the U.S. Atlantic coast, 35 of which contained spawning populations. Today, Atlantic sturgeon can be found in 32 of those rivers, 20 of which have spawning populations. Atlantic sturgeon are anadromous fish, living their adult lives in the ocean and migrating into coastal estuaries and rivers to spawn once every two to five years. There are five DPSs of Atlantic sturgeon: Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina, and South Atlantic.

Atlantic sturgeon are one of the largest and longest-lived anadromous fish in North America, although individual's growth rates and maturity schedules vary widely along the coast. Typically, populations in the southern part of the species range mature faster and grow larger than those in the northern part of the range. Females reach sexual maturity between the ages of seven and 30, and males between the ages of five and 24. The number of eggs a female produces increases with age and size, which means older and larger females are more valuable to the population because they produce more eggs (up to eight millions eggs per spawning event) than younger, smaller females (estimated 400,000 eggs per spawning event). Most juveniles remain in freshwater rivers for one to six years before migrating out to the ocean. As mature adults, they return to their natal streams to spawn.

Species Snapshot



Atlantic Sturgeon
Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus

Management Unit: Maine to Florida

Interesting Facts

- The species name 'oxyrinchus' means sharp snout.
- Sturgeon were a key food source for U.S. settlers along the Atlantic coast.
- In the late 1800s, fishing for sturgeon eggs (to sell as caviar) attracted so many people, the trend was referred to as the "Black Gold Rush."
- Atlantic sturgeon are river-specific, returning to their natal rivers to spawn.
- Rather than having true scales, Atlantic sturgeon have five rows of bony plates known as scutes.
- When sturgeon wash up on beaches, many people mistake them for dinosaurs or sea monsters. In fact, sturgeon were around throughout the Cretaceous Period when dinosaurs roamed the earth.
- Young sturgeon are known to travel widely at sea, along the whole East Coast and as far north as Iceland.

Maximum Size: 14 feet, 811 pounds, Canada

Oldest Recorded: 60 years old, captured from the St. Lawrence River

Stock Status: Depleted and not experiencing overfishing

Photo (c) NYSDEC



Sturgeon don't have teeth. Instead, they suck up prey using their downward projecting vacuum-like mouth. As juveniles, Atlantic sturgeon feed on flies, worms, shrimp, and small mollusks and crustaceans. As adults, they are opportunistic feeders and prey mainly on mollusks, snails, worms, shrimp and benthic fish. Very little is known about their natural predators.

Commercial Fishery

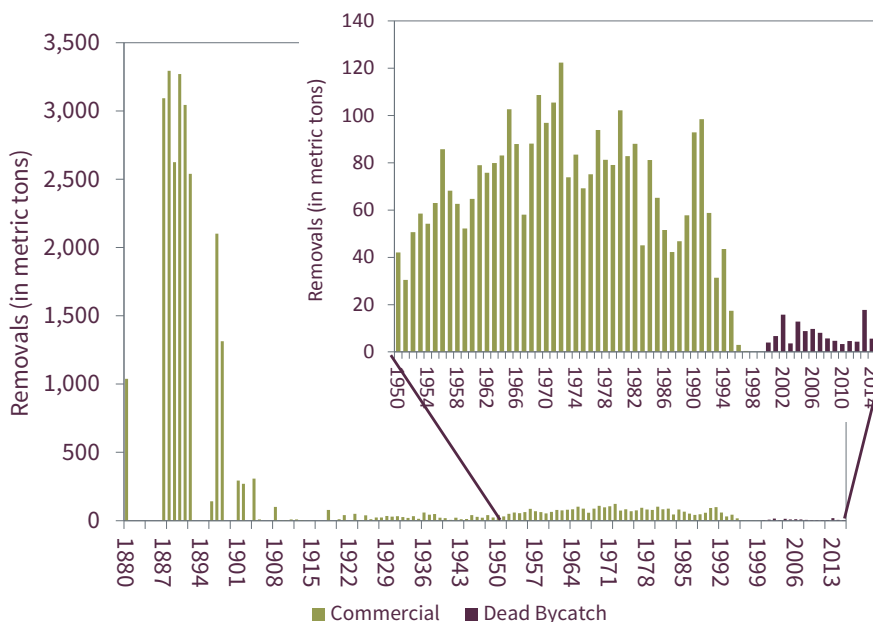
Atlantic sturgeon have been taken for food by humans in North America for at least 3,000-4,000 years, and have supported commercial fisheries of varying magnitude since colonial times. There are reports from Maine and Massachusetts from as early as the 1600s that cite sturgeon as an important fishery in those states. Atlantic sturgeon eggs were valued as high-quality caviar both in the U.S. and in Europe, attracting a large number of fishers and placing a huge strain on the population. Other parts of the sturgeon were used for a variety of products. Sturgeon skin was made into leather for clothes and bookbinding. The swim bladder was used to make a gelatin that served as a clarifying agent in jellies, wine, beer, and glue, and was also fashioned into windows for carriages.

The fishery was once considered second in value only to lobster. In 1888, the U.S. Fish Commission reported that there were 7.3 million pounds of sturgeon caught on the U.S. Atlantic coast. Landings declined significantly from 1950 through the mid-1990s to between 100,000 and 250,000 pounds, annually. In 1998, the Commission implemented a coastwide moratorium on the harvest of wild Atlantic sturgeon stocks, although many states had already closed their fisheries.

Status of the Stock

In 1998, a benchmark stock assessment conducted by the Commission concluded that Atlantic sturgeon populations throughout the species' range were either extirpated or

Coastwide Atlantic Sturgeon Commercial Landings and Dead Bycatch, 1880–2014
 Inserted graph provides same information but for a more recent timeframe, 1950–2014.
 Source: ASMFC Atlantic Sturgeon Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2017



at historically low abundances. In 2013, in response to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing, the Board initiated the development of a coastwide benchmark stock assessment to evaluate stock status, stock delineation, and bycatch. The Board approved the 2017 Atlantic Sturgeon Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use in October 2017.

The assessment results indicate that at the coastwide and DPS level, Atlantic sturgeon are depleted relative to historical levels (Table 1). The 'depleted' status was used instead of 'overfished' because many factors, not just directed historical fishing, contributed to the low abundance of Atlantic sturgeon. For example, bycatch, habitat loss and ship strikes also contribute to population status. However, there are signs that populations have started a slow recovery from 1998 levels. On a coastwide scale, it is highly likely that abundance is higher than it was in 1998. At

the DPS level, the Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, and Carolina DPSs are most likely to have increased, while the Chesapeake Bay DPS only has a 36% chance of having increased. The abundance status of the South Atlantic DPS is unknown because the assessment was unable to develop a usable index of relative abundance from that region.

Despite the moratorium on commercial fishing, Atlantic sturgeon still experience mortality coastwide from several sources.

Table 1. Atlantic Sturgeon Coastwide and DPS-level Stock Status Based on Mortality Estimates (Z) and Biomass/Abundance Status Relative to Historic Levels and the Last Year of Available Indices Data Relative to the Start of the Coastwide Moratorium

Population	Mortality Status	Biomass/Abundance Status	
	Probability that Z > Z _{50%EPR} 80%	Relative to Historical Levels	Average probability of terminal year of indices > 1998* value
Coastwide	7%	Depleted	95%
Gulf of Maine	74%	Depleted	51%
New York Bight	31%	Depleted	75%
Chesapeake Bay	30%	Depleted	36%
Carolina	75%	Depleted	67%
South Atlantic	40%	Depleted	Unknown (no suitable indices)

*For indices that started after 1998, the first year of the index was used as the reference value.

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Fishery Management Actions

Atlantic Menhaden

In early May, the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board initiated a noncompliance finding in response to the Commonwealth of Virginia's failure to fully implement the mandatory provisions of Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Specifically, the Commonwealth has not established the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap of 51,000 mt. Rather than forwarding that finding to the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program, the Board postponed action on the noncompliance finding until the Commission's Summer Meeting in August 2018. In the interim, the Board has requested the Commission send a letter to the Commonwealth of Virginia stating its intent to consider the noncompliance finding in August if the Commonwealth has not implemented Amendment 3's Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap. Staff will monitor the fishery and inform the Board if harvest is approaching 51,000 mt in the Bay.

There are several reasons why the Board postponed action. The Commonwealth's General Assembly, which oversees Atlantic menhaden management in Virginia, is still in session and has an opportunity to implement the 51,000 mt Bay cap. The reduction fishery is just beginning for the year and is highly unlikely to exceed the Bay cap prior to August given the performance of the fishery for the past five years (i.e., the reduction fishery in the Chesapeake Bay has been significantly below 51,000 mt over that time period).

Upon notification by the Commission of a noncompliance finding, the Secretary of Commerce has 30 days to review the recommendation and determine appropriate action, which may include a federal moratorium on fishing for Atlantic menhaden in Virginia's state waters.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Black Drum

On May 3rd, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved

Addendum I to the Black Drum Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Addendum allows Maryland to reopen its black drum commercial fishery in the Chesapeake Bay with a daily vessel limit of up to 10 fish and a 28-inch minimum size.

In the late 1990s, Maryland closed its Bay commercial black drum fishery in order to conduct a tagging and migration study. The fishery was not reopened after the study. In 2013, the Black Drum FMP extended this closure by requiring states to maintain management measures in place at the time of the FMP's approval.

In approving Addendum I, the Board considered the status of the resource, which is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, and the estimated relatively small size of the reopened commercial fishery. When the fishery was open in the 1970s under more liberal management than that in Addendum I, it was a small scale fishery with an average annual harvest of 11,475 pounds. Over the next year, Maryland will develop a management program for the commercial fishery for implementation by April 1, 2019.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org (under Black Drum). For more information, please contact Dr. Mike Schmidtke, FMP Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Black Sea Bass

Upon the direction of the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board, the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved revised 2018 recreational measures for the Northern Region states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York (see accompanying table). Further, the Board initiated new management action for the 2019 black sea bass recreational fishery and tasked the Plan Development Team to develop a white paper to consider the impacts of changes in black sea bass abundance and distribution to the management of commercial and recreational fisheries.

This action is taken in response to a Northern Region state appeal of the approved 2018 recreational measures under

continued, see FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS on page 8

Black Sea Bass State-by-State Recreational Management Measures for 2018

State	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	Open Season
ME	13"	10 fish	May 19–Sep 21; Oct 18–Dec 31
NH	13"	10 fish	Jan 1–Dec 31
MA	15"	5 fish	May 19–Sep 12
RI	15"	3 fish	Jun 24–Aug 31
		7 fish	Sep 1–Dec 31
CT, Private/Shore	15"	5 fish	May 19–Dec 31
CT, Authorized Party/Charter	15"	5 fish	May 19–Aug 31
		7 fish	Sep 1–Dec 31
NY*	15"	3 fish	Jun 23–Aug 31
		7 fish	Sep 1–Dec 31
NJ	12.5"	10 fish	May 15–Jun 22
	12.5"	2 fish	Jul 1–Aug 31
	12.5"	10 fish	Oct 8–Oct 31
	13"	15 fish	Nov 1–Dec 31
DE, MD, VA, & NC (North of Cape Hatteras)	12.5"	15 fish	May 15–Dec 31

* NY is in the process of promulgating its measures, which should be finalized in June.

ASMFC Habitat Committee Revisits 20-Year Policy on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

In honor of the 20-year anniversary of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission) Policy on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV), the Commission's Habitat Committee conducted a thorough review of the policy, re-evaluating its recommendations and importance. Upon review, it was determined that the policy is still relevant and, arguably, more important now than ever. SAV continues to be vital to many Commission-managed fish species, and is afforded different degrees of protection up and down the coast.

SAV comprise some of the most productive ecosystems in the world. According to the Blue Carbon Initiative, SAV covers 43.7 – 148 million acres worldwide. This is only 0.2% of the ocean floor, yet SAV binds approximately 10% of carbon (as sediments) each year. In fact, they're twice as effective at storing carbon as terrestrial forests by acre. SAV roots also stabilize sediments and absorb excess nutrients. Their stabilizing properties reduce shoreline erosion, benefiting not only estuarine communities, but coastal property owners. SAV also improves water quality and provides food and habitat for many species, especially juveniles. Overall, SAV contributes to healthy fisheries and ecosystems. Unfortunately, SAV is one of the most rapidly declining habitats around the world, with up to a 7% loss in area annually due to human activities.

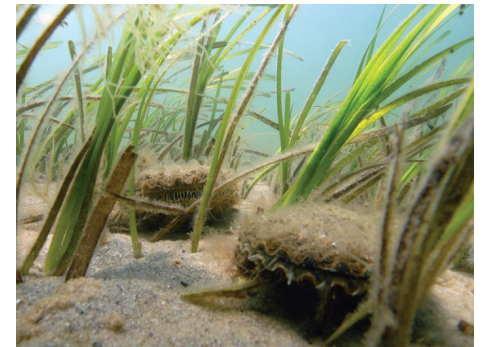
In 1997, the Commission's Habitat Committee developed a policy to communicate the need for conservation of coastal SAV resources, and to highlight state and Commission-based activities for implementation of a coastal SAV conservation and enhancement program. The Commission encouraged implementation of this policy by state, federal, local, and cooperative programs that influence and regulate fish habitat and activities impacting fish habitat, specifically SAV.

In updating the policy, the Habitat Committee left the goals largely unchanged from the 1997 version. The primary goal is to preserve, conserve, and restore SAV where possible, in order to achieve a net gain in distribution and abundance along the Atlantic coast and in tidal tributaries, and to prevent any further losses of SAV in individual states by encouraging the following:

1. Protect existing SAV beds from further losses due to degradation of water quality, physical destruction to the plants, or disruption to the local benthic environment;
2. Continue to promote state or regional water and habitat quality objectives that will result in restoration of SAV through natural re-vegetation;
3. Continue to promote, develop, attain, and update, as needed, state SAV restoration goals in terms of acreage, abundance, and species diversity, considering historical distribution records and estimates of potential habitat; and
4. Continue to promote SAV protection at local, state and federal levels and when unavoidable impacts to SAV occur from permitted coastal alterations or other unintended actions, agencies should implement compensatory mitigation for the functional and temporal impacts.

There are six key components to achieving the goal of this policy: (1) assessment of historical, current and potential distribution and abundance of SAV; (2) protection of existing SAV; (3) SAV restoration and enhancement; (4) public education and involvement; (5) research; and (6) implementation. The background information, policies and recommended actions have been updated based on emerging issues and new information released over the past 20 years. A summary of SAV initiatives conducted by the Commission's state and federal partners is also included in this updated policy. The policy can be found here – http://www.asmfc.org/files/Habitat/HMS15_SAV_PolicyUpdate.pdf.

For more information on SAV, visit the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/habitat/hot-topics> or contact Dr. Lisa Havel, Habitat Committee Coordinator, at lhavel@asmfc.org.



Photos from top to bottom: Winter flounder in eel grass © Chris Pickerel, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Peconic bay scallops (*Argopecten irradians*) inhabiting transplanted eelgrass © Kimberly Manzo, Cornell Cooperative Extension; and Lady crab (*Ovalipes ocellatus*) in eelgrass © Kimberly Manzo, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Federal Funding for 2019 Advances in U.S. House of Representatives

On May 17th, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations approved its Fiscal Year 2019 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations Bill on a vote of 32-19. The bill funds the Department of Commerce, NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Similar to last year, President Trump identified a number of fisheries conservation and research programs for elimination. These include Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act grants, Sea Grant, Coastal Zone Management grants, and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Additionally, the President is seeking to eliminate Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) funding in Fiscal Year 2019. JEAs provide federal funding to state law enforcement agencies to enforce federal regulations. The House Appropriations Committee has rejected all of these proposals put forward by President Trump.

The Committee Report accompanying the CJS Appropriations bill contains instructions for two ASMFC-managed species. NOAA is

explicitly instructed to continue the Mid-Atlantic horseshoe crab trawl survey in 2019 and review the federal moratorium on Atlantic striped bass. Other topics addressed in the Committee Report include the Marine Recreational Information Program, Fishery Information Networks, lionfish, SEAMAP, and the oyster restoration program in the Chesapeake Bay. The bill text and Committee Report can be read in their entirety by visiting <https://appropriations.house.gov/>.

The Senate Committee on Appropriations is expected to consider and approve its Fiscal Year 2019 CJS Appropriations bill during the week of June 11th. Members of both the upper and lower Chamber intend to send as many of the 12 annual spending bills as possible to the President before the August recess. Fiscal Year 2019 begins on October 1, 2018.

H.R. 5248/S. 2764 – the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act

The Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act replaces controversial legislation to ban the sale of all shark fins in the U.S. H.R. 5248 and S. 2764 require the Secretary of Commerce to establish a certification program for importing shark products into the U.S. To gain certification, a nation must enact and enforce shark conservation and management programs comparable to those of the U.S., and explicitly prohibit shark finning. The Secretary may grant partial certifications for individual shark species. Certifications must be renewed every three years. Finally, the bill requires the Secretary of Commerce to include rays and skates in the Seafood Traceability Program for imported fish.

The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans convened a legislative hearing for H.R. 5428 on April 17th; and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation advanced S. 2764 out of committee on May 22nd. For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, at dtompkins@asmfc.org.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in \$ thousands)					
	2016 Enacted	2017 Enacted	2018 Enacted	2019 Trump	2019 House
Fisheries Science and Management					
Fisheries and Ecosystem Science Programs and Services	139,489	139,489	144,196	141,185	144,196
Fisheries Data Collections, Surveys and Assessments	163,271	164,000	164,749	156,558	165,249
Observers and Training	43,655	43,655	53,955	43,768	43,955
Fisheries Management Programs and Services	115,995	117,051	118,659	112,598	112,643
Aquaculture	6,300	9,300	15,000	9,327	15,000
Salmon Management Activities	31,500	33,500	35,500	31,524	37,000
Regional Councils and Fisheries Commissions	33,470	34,254	35,871	34,495	37,000
Interjurisdictional Fisheries Grants	3,000	3,004	3,004	0	3,500
Enforcement	69,000	69,000	69,073	51,495	70,000
Habitat Conservation and Restoration	61,408	52,524	53,384	47,919	54,000
Other					
National Sea Grant College Program	64,000	63,000	65,000	0	68,500
Marine Aquaculture Program	9,000	9,500	11,500	0	11,500
National Estuarine Research Reserve System	23,000	23,500	25,000	0	27,000

FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS continued from page 6

Addendum XXX. The appeal argued the Board's action under Addendum XXX incorrectly applied technical data and was inconsistent with the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. After reviewing the appeal, Commission Leadership agreed there was adequate justification to bring portions of the appeal forward to the ISFMP Policy Board.

During the ISFMP Policy Board's deliberations regarding consideration of the appeal, a potential management program for the 2018 black sea bass recreational fishery was presented to replace the allocations specified in Addendum XXX. The revised management program was developed to meet the needs of the Northern Region without impacting the remaining states, while still constraining harvest to the 2018 recreational harvest limit of 3.66 million pounds.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.



Photo © Steve Withuhn

AAE continued from page 1

advocate of a harvester tagging program to improve tracking of fish in commerce, thereby addressing a longstanding poaching problem in the fishery.

Having spent much of his career working on science and management of the lobster fishery, there are few who are more passionate and dedicated to this species. As Chair of the American Lobster Management Board, Mr. McKiernan skillfully led the Board through difficult deliberations regarding the findings of the 2015 benchmark assessment and the future management of the species. In response to the decline of the Southern New England stock, Mr. McKiernan was integral to right-sizing the industry in Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2 (inshore Southern New England) and 3 (offshore waters) to the abundance of the resource. This was accomplished through trap reductions over a six-year period.

Mr. McKiernan understands that on-the-water experience and talking to fishermen are critical components of any fisheries manager job. That is why he has spent considerable time on fishing vessels acquiring the hands-on knowledge and perspective necessary to understand and respect fishermen's views. Throughout his career, Mr. McKiernan has been a proponent of working with the fishing industry to understand their unique perspective, get advice about management issues, and engage them in cooperative fisheries research.

Science, Technical & Advisory Contributions

Dr. Larry Jacobson, formerly with NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Dr. Larry Jacobson has greatly advanced the scientific understanding of American lobster biology through his contributions on the Commission's American Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee. In 2004, Dr. Jacobson was one of the lead model developers for the Lobster Model Technical Review. He played an important role in shifting away from the historical Delury stock assessment model to the current statistical length-based approach developed by Dr. Yong Chen. Dr. Jacobson's extensive knowledge in population dynamics and statistics, combined with his model programming skills, were invaluable during this transition and the continued development of Dr. Chen's assessment model.

During the 2015 lobster assessment, Dr. Jacobson took over the assessment responsibilities for the Gulf of Maine stock. Under his leadership, the assessment model was substantially improved to incorporate spatial dynamics within a stock and show changes in climate and stock productivity. These improvements allowed for accurate modeling of the Southern New England stock decline, as well as the rapid increase in the combined Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank stocks. The 2015 lobster assessment could not have been completed in a timely fashion without Larry's skill and commitment.

Dr. Jacobson's willingness to step into a leadership role when needed, his commitment to seeking out and using the best scientific methods available, and his dedication to sharing his knowledge of lobster biology and stock dynamics with his colleagues are several reasons why American lobster is one of our best understood marine species.

Law Enforcement Contributions

Colonel Kyle Overturf, Connecticut Environmental Police

Colonel Kyle Overturf exemplifies the lifelong commitment and spirit of public service that is common among his natural resource enforcement peers. Growing up hunting and fishing, Colonel Overturf learned the "game warden" lifestyle firsthand from his father, who served 25 years with Connecticut's Environmental Police.

Colonel Overturf began his law enforcement career in 1986, serving as a Conservation Enforcement Officer in the Central Marine Sector for the State Environmental Police. Progressing through his career, Colonel Overturf was promoted to Sergeant, then to

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Comings and Goings

COMMISSIONERS



PETER AARRESTAD

In April, Peter Aarrestad, Director of the Fisheries Division for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), became Connecticut's

Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Peter has worked for CT DEEP in fisheries programs since 1987. He was Director of the Inland Fisheries Program for many years and recently became Director of the Fisheries Division, which has included both marine and inland programs since 2017. Welcome, Peter!



MARK ALEXANDER

On April 1st, with his retirement from CT DEEP, Mark Alexander stepped down as Connecticut's Administrative Commissioner. Mark served as Commissioner since 2017 and as

Connecticut's administrative proxy since 2008. For many years prior to 2008, Mark participated on the Commission's Management and Science Committee, and was both a member and Chair of ACCSP's Coordinating Council. Mark was also a longstanding member of the New England Fishery Management Council. We wish Mark a long, healthy, and happy retirement.



CATHY DAVENPORT

On April 27th, the Commission was notified that Cathy Davenport would no longer be serving as the Commonwealth's Governor Appointee. Cathy served in that position for nearly two decades, representing

several governors and working with many VMRC Commissioners from Bill Pruitt to Steve Bowman. Over that time, she faithfully represented the interests of Virginia's commercial fishing industry. We are grateful for Cathy's longstanding commitment to the Commission and wish her the very best in all her future endeavors.

continued, see COMINGS & GOINGS on page 10

Eastern District Supervisor in Recreational Law Enforcement. He later went on to serve as Captain and Commander of the State's Western and Marine Districts. In recognition of his leadership and professionalism, Colonel Overturf was promoted to Colonel in 2010 and continues to lead the Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police as Director.

That leadership and professionalism has been reflected in Colonel Overturf's work throughout his career, where he has focused on the mentoring, instruction and professional development of fellow marine and conservation officers. Colonel Overturf has served as an instructor at the Connecticut Police Academy and currently serves as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Connecticut, where he teaches Conservation Law Enforcement. He has been a leader in resource conservation at regional and national levels, serving in the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, including as President of the Northeast Association of Chiefs. He supported the development of an enforcement group within the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and for many years has been a positive presence on the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee. Colonel Overturf served as Law Enforcement Committee Chair from 2011-2013.

Reflecting his concern for professional development and training in the field of marine and conservation enforcement, Colonel Overturf has been a staunch advocate and supporter of a nationwide Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy, administered through the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs and with support from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. He serves on the Academy Steering Team and was a member of the first graduating class in 2014. He actively encourages and supports future leaders through this program, carrying on a tradition of care and passion for protecting all our natural resources that was bestowed on him by his father.

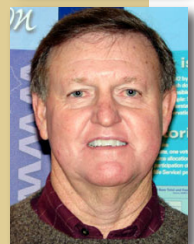
RACHEL DEAN

In March, Rachel Dean stepped down as Maryland's Governor Appointee to refocus her efforts on a number of fronts, including teaching English at Patuxent High School, operating Solomons Island Heritage Tours, and commercially fishing and co-owning Patuxent River Seafood. We are grateful for Rachel's contributions these past two years and wish her and her family the very best!



RUSSEL DIZE

No stranger to the Commission, having served as legislative proxy from 2002 to 2015, Russel Dize rejoins us as Maryland's Governor Appointee. He has a long history as a waterman, working the waters of Talbot County and the Chesapeake Bay since 1959. Now retired from commercial fishing, Russell owns and operates the charter boat *Riley Kat*. Welcome back, Russell!



STAFF

SARAH MURRAY

In late April, Sarah Murray joined the Commission staff as its new Fisheries Science Coordinator. As Coordinator, Sarah is the staff lead for a number of science committees, including the Assessment Science Committee, the Management & Science Committee, and the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences. She will also coordinate the activities of the South Atlantic component of the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program, the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program, the Ecological Reference Points Work Group and the Risk & Uncertainty Policy Work Group. Sarah will serve on the ACCSP Biological Review and Bycatch Prioritization Panels.



Sarah completed a dual master's degree from American University in Natural Resources and Sustainable Development and International Affairs. Her studies included an internship in Costa Rica sampling fisheries and conducting a survey on social capital in the fishing community. Before joining the Commission, Sarah conducted research on the Galician octopus fishery as a Fulbright Researcher in Spain. She also worked at the Seacoast Science Center in New Hampshire and the National Oceanographic Partnership Program in DC. Welcome, Sarah!

AMY PAQUETTE

In May, Amy Paquette began her summer internship helping with the data capture process for the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) along the Atlantic coast, primarily scanning and OCR verification.



Amy completed a B.S. in Coastal Studies from the University of Connecticut and a M.S. in Environmental Law and Policy with Vermont Law School. She has been helping CT DEEP as an APAIS interviewer and entering commercial fisheries logbooks. She has interests in both data management and supporting fisheries management and policy. Welcome, Amy!

MIKE RINALDI

After spending last summer with the APAIS team as a Seasonal Scan Technician, Mike Rinaldi has joined the ACCSP's Data Team as its new Fisheries Data Coordinator. In his new role, Mike works with ACCSP Partners and staff to provide support for data activities. He also provides quality control and monitoring for Partner data feeds and the ACCSP data management systems.



Mike holds two Bachelors degrees, one in Political Science and one in Marine Affairs, and a Master's degree in Marine Affairs, all from the University of Rhode Island. While studying for his Master's, Mike worked as an ArcGIS research and teaching assistant supporting marine spatial planning. He then went on to work in commercial aquaculture and as a Marine Specialist at TruWeather Solutions before joining ACCSP. Welcome, Mike!

States Seek Input on American Eel Draft Addendum V

Throughout May and into June, Atlantic coastal states from Maine through Florida are conducting hearings to gather public input on Draft Addendum V to the American Eel Fishery Management Plan. The Draft Addendum, released in May for public comment, considers a number of potential modifications to the current management program. These include changes to the coastwide cap, management triggers, state-by-state allocations, and quota transfer provisions for the yellow eel commercial fishery; as well as to the current Maine glass eel commercial quota and the aquaculture provisions of the plan.

Currently, the yellow eel fishery is managed to an annual coastwide landings cap (referred to as the coastwide cap) of 907,671 pounds and 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 in two consecutive years, regardless of the percent overage. If either of these triggers are met, state-by-state quotas are required to be implemented. 2016 landings exceeded the coastwide cap by less than 10%. If landings in 2017 exceed the coastwide cap, state-by-state quotas will need to be implemented. These current management provisions are concerning to some jurisdictions given uncertainty in the landings data.

If approved, changes to the current management program would be implemented for use in the 2019 fishing season. Since the four management issues related to the yellow eel fishery are linked (e.g., coastwide cap, management trigger, state-by-state allocations, quota transfers), the public is encouraged to specify their preferred alternatives for each issue.

The Draft Addendum is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AmEelDraftAddendumV_PublicComment_April2018revised.pdf or on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org, under Public Input. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on June 15, 2018 and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum V).

Final action on the Addendum is scheduled to occur at the Commission's Summer Meeting. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

In the News: Maine's Elver Fishery Shuts Down, Charges Pending for Illegal Sales

On May 23rd, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (ME DMR) announced that it would be shutting down the elver fishery two weeks early, on May 24 at 6:00 a.m. The closure, done through emergency rulemaking, is being implemented because of illegal sales which jeopardize the department's ability to manage the fishery.

An investigation by the Maine Marine Patrol revealed that some Maine elver dealers were paying a cash amount that was substantially less than the per pound price for elvers that were harvested and accounted for through the state's swipe card system. The investigation is on-going and charges will be filed against dealers and harvesters who bought and sold elvers without using the state's swipe card system. The swipe card system records the weight and value of each sale, allowing the state to ensure that harvesting does not exceed individual and overall state quotas.

The state's overall quota is set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), and individual quotas that add up to the overall quota are established by the state.

The value and weight of the illegally harvested and sold elvers were not recorded with the swipe card system and not accounted for in the Department's quota management system. The swipe card system was established in 2014 to allow DMR to obtain accurate, timely information on the amount of elvers landed and sold in Maine, and has been key in the state's ability to comply with the overall quota requirement.

"This is a fishery that stood to net Maine license holders nearly \$24 million this year, and now because of the greed of some dealers and harvesters, I am obligated to cut that opportunity short," said ME DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher.

As of May 22nd, 9,090.629 pounds of the state's 9,688-pound quota had been sold legally, using the swipe card system.

"We believe that if the illegal sales had been recorded, the 2018 elver quota would have already been exceeded," said Commissioner Keliher. "For this reason, an immediate closure of the fishery, done through emergency rulemaking, is necessary to prevent depletion of the elver resource, caused by exceeding the 2018 elver fishing quota.

"The future of this lucrative fishery is now in question," said Commissioner Keliher. "We clearly have to consider additional measures to ensure that Maine can remain compliant with ASMFC, that we can continue to protect our state's valuable marine resources, and that we can hold accountable anyone who chooses to squander the opportunity those resources represent."

Under the regulation, licensed harvesters may not fish for or take elvers after 6:00 a.m. on May 24, but may possess and sell elvers until noon on May 24. Licensed dealers may purchase elvers until noon on May 24, and may possess legally purchased elvers until 6:00 a.m. on May 29.

While the stock assessment indicated that the mortality rate is sustainable on a coastwide basis, estimates of total mortality for each DPS are more uncertain due to low sample sizes. The Gulf of Maine and Carolina DPS are most likely to have mortality rates exceeding sustainable levels.

Efforts to assess the status of Atlantic sturgeon are still hampered by a lack of data. Atlantic sturgeon are not well monitored by existing fishery-independent data collection and bycatch observer programs, and landings information is nonexistent after 1998 due to implementation of the coastwide moratorium. Better information on population trends, especially at the DPS level, is a high priority. More work is needed to establish reliable indices of abundance for spawning populations and juveniles. The assessment recommended observer programs that monitor bycatch should be expanded to include more estuarine waters and to increase the number of trips and gears covered in order to improve estimates of bycatch. In addition, ship strikes may be a significant source of mortality for some DPSs, and more data are needed to quantify the numbers of Atlantic sturgeon killed by ship strikes each year. Tagging data provide important information on current mortality rates. It is critical to maintain and support current networks of acoustic receivers and acoustic tagging programs, and expand the programs in underrepresented DPSs to improve the estimates of total mortality.

Atlantic Coastal Management

Despite the genetic differences between Atlantic sturgeon in each of the five DPSs, the Commission manages the species as a single coastwide population. Atlantic sturgeon is managed through Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon



Atlantic sturgeon being measured as part of a Cooperative Federal/State/ Industry Atlantic Sturgeon Bycatch Reduction Survey. Photo © ASMFC.

(July 1998) and its subsequent addenda (Addendum I – IV). The primary measure of Amendment 1 is the implementation of a coastwide moratorium, prohibiting the take, harvest, possession, harassment and/or other actions that may cause the species harm. Exemptions to the moratorium on possession may be obtained for scientific research and educational display, and several facilities culture Atlantic sturgeon for research and potential stocking efforts.

Endangered Species Listing

NOAA Fisheries has investigated whether Atlantic sturgeon should be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) several times since the Commission instituted a moratorium on the species in 1998. The first three status reviews, in 1998, 2005, and 2007, all concluded that listing was not warranted. The 2007 review additionally identified the five DPSs recognized today. The last status review, initiated in 2009, declared the Gulf of Maine DPS threatened and the remaining four DPSs (New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina and South Atlantic) endangered (the ESA listing became effective in April 2012). The Status Review determined the most significant threats to the species are bycatch mortality, poor water quality, lack of adequate state and/or federal regulatory mechanisms,

and dredging activities. Additional stressors include habitat impediments and ship strikes. In December 2013, NOAA Fisheries published an Interim Final 4(d) Rule for the threatened Gulf of Maine DPS, which provides essentially the same protection as an endangered listing.

In August 2017, NOAA Fisheries designated critical habitat for Atlantic sturgeon. This is required for any species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, and indicates areas within the species' range that have physical or biological features necessary to the species' survival and recovery, or that may require additional

management considerations. 3,968 miles of coastal river habitat was included in the critical habitat designation. With this action, federal agencies funding or conducting activities that may affect the critical habitat are now required to consult NOAA Fisheries on how to best minimize impacts before starting those projects.

Next Steps for Management

Although the lack of historical data remains an issue, it is important to note there has been a tremendous amount of new information about Atlantic sturgeon collected in recent years, which helps stock assessment scientists and fisheries managers in their efforts to monitor stocks of Atlantic sturgeon and work towards its restoration. The Commission's Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board discussed the need to support management actions that have contributed to recovery seen to date (e.g., the moratorium, habitat restoration/protection, better bycatch monitoring) and continue to work on improving them (e.g., identifying bycatch and ship strike hotspots and ways to reduce those interactions).

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, FMP Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org.



FY19 Proposals Due June 11

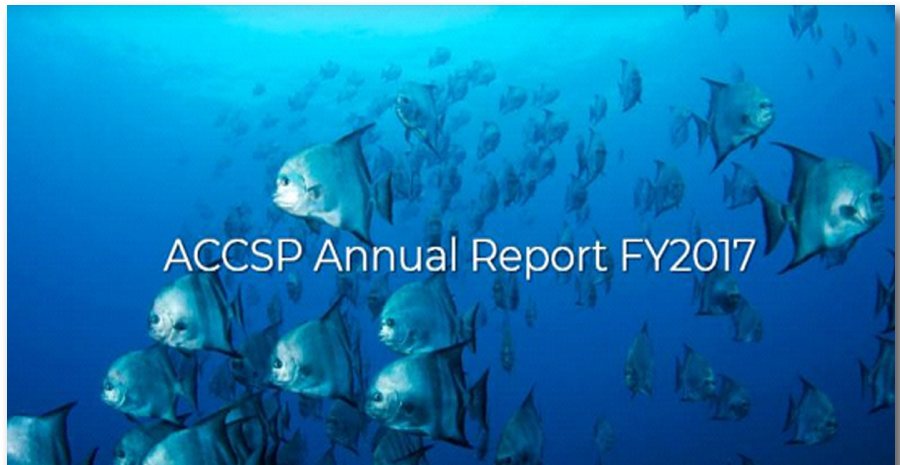
Over the past 19 years, Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) funds have supported more than 100 unique fisheries data collection and processing projects conducted by our state and federal partners and committees.

On May 7th, ACCSP issued its request for proposals to program partners and committees for FY19 funding. Project proposals are evaluated based on their potential to help meet ACCSP goals. These goals, listed in order of priority, are improvements in:

- 1a. Catch, effort, and landings data (including licensing, permit and vessel registration data);
- 1b. Biological data (equal to 1a.);
2. Releases, discards and protected species data
3. Economic and sociological data

Project activities that will be considered according to priority may include:

- Partner implementation of data collection programs
- Continuation of current Program funded partner programs
- Funding for personnel required to implement Program related projects/proposals



2017 ACCSP ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The ACCSP has released its 2017 Annual Report. Highlights include:

- More than 100 custom data requests fulfilled by the Data Team
- eTrips/Mobile used to help the for-hire industry move toward census reporting
- Redesign of SAFIS initiated
- 10% increase in APAIS intercepts over 2016
- SAFIS API created to support seafood traceability
- Priorities for improving Atlantic recreational data identified

This year, the report is provided in a digital, responsive format that can be accessed on your computer, tablet, or phone. A PDF version of the digital report will be made available at a later date.

- Data management system upgrades or establishment of partner data feeds to the Data Warehouse or Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System.

Projects in areas not specifically addressed may still be considered for funding if they help achieve Program goals. For further guidance, please see the supporting materials provided at <http://www.accsp.org/funding>.

Proposals should be submitted by June 11, 2018 to Mike Cahall, ACCSP Director, at mike.cahall@accsp.org and Ali Schwaab, Program Manager, at alexandra.schwaab@accsp.org.

Reminder: FY19 will be the final year of full funding for some maintenance projects. Maintenance projects that have been funded for four or more years will receive a funding cut of 33% in FY20.

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.

Deke Tompkins & Cecilia Butler Named Employees of the Quarter



Each quarter, the Commission honors an individual who has made notable contributions to the Commission's mission, vision, programs and activities. Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, and Cecilia Butler, Human Resources Coordinator, were named Employees of the Quarter for the first and second quarters of 2018, respectively.

Since joining the Commission staff in March 2013, Deke Tompkins has proven to be a valuable addition. His outstanding efforts to support the Commission's legislative activities have resulted in an increased and effective presence on Capitol Hill. Deke's prior experience as a legislative staffer has enabled the Commission to develop and foster relationships with many congressional offices and appropriations staff that are important to Atlantic states. In turn, these relationships have helped to build strong support for the work of the Commission and the states to sustainably manage Atlantic coast fisheries. For the past five years, Deke has worked closely with the Legislative and Governor-appointed Commissioners to ensure they have opportunities to engage with legislators on Capitol Hill, as well as maintain their important role in the Commission. Further, his relaxed attitude and willingness to work with others makes him a great member of the Commission staff. Always willing to pitch in on other projects, Deke is a constant contributor to newsletter articles, speeches, correspondence, and outreach materials, including oversight of the Commission's social media presence.

With the birth of his baby boy Peter "Striper" Tompkins in April, Deke moves into the new role of father, a role at which we know he will excel.

Cecilia Butler, a 15-year veteran of the Commission, first joined the staff as an Administrative Assistant, providing support to the ISFMP. In 2006, Cecilia was promoted to Human Resources (HR) Coordinator to address the needs of a growing staff under expanding Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Act responsibilities. In 2016, to address the increasing demand by the states to hire part-time seasonal employees to conduct the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey portion of the Marine Recreational Information Program, Cecilia was joined by an HR Specialist. With the HR Specialist's recent departure, Cecilia fully and gracefully assumed the responsibilities of two full-time employees without missing a beat. Over the past few months and throughout her entire tenure at the Commission, Cecilia has enthusiastically and untiringly contributed to the success of the Commission and the well-being of its staff. She is a great team player, seeking assistance from co-workers where responsibilities overlap. She shows great initiative, anticipating needs and acting without direction. Lastly, she consistently demonstrates her keen attention to detail, her commitment to completing work ahead of schedule, and her dedication, concern, and commitment to providing the best support to the staff.

Both Deke and Cecilia epitomize the qualities for which the Employee of the Quarter was established: teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, and positive attitude. As Employee of the Quarter, they both received a cash award and a letter of appreciation to be placed in their personal record. In addition, their names are on the Employee of the Quarter plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Deke and Cecilia!