



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Upcoming Meetings**  
page 2

**From the Executive Director's Desk**  
*ASMFC Backs Recovering America's Wildlife Act*  
page 3

**Species Profile**  
*Bluefish*  
page 4

**Fishery Management Actions**  
*Specifications Set for Mid-Atlantic Species*  
page 6

*NY's Black Sea Bass Baseline Commercial Quota Increased to 8%*  
page 7

**80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda**  
page 8

**The Latest from ACCSP**  
*Funding from the Modern Fish Act Increases MRIP APAIS Assignments*  
page 10

**Comings & Goings**  
page 11

**Science Highlight**  
*Do Circle Hooks Reduce Release Mortality in Striped Bass?*  
page 12

**Proposed Management Actions**  
*American Lobster Atlantic Menhaden*  
page 14

**ASMFC Releases Update to Artificial Reef Profiles Publication**  
page 15

**On the Legislative Front**  
page 16

## **States Achieve Required Coastwide Reductions in Atlantic Striped Bass Total Removals Development of Draft Amendment 7 Continues; Board Initiates Addendum to Amendment 6**

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board's review of the performance of the 2020 fishery yielded positive news, with the states achieving Addendum VI's goal of reducing total removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels. In fact, the states realized an estimated 28% reduction in total removals coastwide in numbers of fish from 2017 levels. Total removals include commercial harvest, commercial dead discards, recreational harvest, and recreational release mortality. Addendum VI was initiated in response to the 2018 benchmark assessment and aims to reduce total removals in order to end overfishing and reduce fishing mortality to the target level in 2020. The next stock assessment update for striped bass, scheduled to occur in 2022, will provide an update on the status of stock relative to the biological reference points.



Photo (c) Ken Neill

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted data collection for the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) dockside sampling program, but MRIP was able to fill those data gaps using information from 2018 and 2019. While this does increase the uncertainty around the estimates of total recreational catch, there is still high confidence in those estimates and the estimates of the realized reductions.

After considering 2020 fishery performance, the Board provided guidance on a number of topics related to the development of Draft Amendment 7 (e.g., recreational release mortality, conservation equivalency, management triggers). Amendment 7 was initiated in August 2020 to update the management program to reflect current fishery needs and priorities as the status and understanding of the resource and fishery has changed considerably since implementation of Amendment 6 in 2003. The Amendment is intended to build upon Addendum VI's action to end overfishing and initiate rebuilding. The Plan Development Team will continue to develop options for the Draft Amendment based on the guidance received from the Board.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS, continued on page 15

## 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

Patrick C. Keliher (ME), *Chair*  
A.G. "Spud" Woodward (GA), *Vice-Chair*

Robert E. Beal,  
*Executive Director*

Patrick A. Campfield,  
*Science Director*

Toni Kerns,  
*ISFMP Director*

Laura C. Leach,  
*Director of Finance & Administration*

Geoff White,  
*ACCSP Director*

Tina L. Berger, *Editor*  
*Director of Communications*  
tberger@asmfc.org

703.842.0740 Phone  
703.842.0741 Fax  
www.asmfc.org  
info@asmfc.org

#### **August 30 (4 - 5:30 PM)**

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Kick Off Webinar; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/scenario-planning-webinar-1> for more information

#### **September 1 (6 - 7:30 PM)**

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Kick Off Webinar; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/scenario-planning-webinar-2> for more information

#### **September 2 (10 - 11:30 AM)**

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Kick Off Webinar; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/scenario-planning-webinar-3> for more information

#### **September 2 (10 AM - Noon)**

Atlantic Striped Bass Plan Development Team; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2021/Atlantic-Striped-Bass-Plan-Development-Team/1772> for more information

#### **September 13 - 17**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town & Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC; visit <https://safmc.net/september-2021-council-meeting-details/> for more information

#### **September 22 (10 AM - Noon)**

Management and Science Committee Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2021/Management-and-Science-Committee/1777> for more information

#### **September 28 - 30**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel 1620, Plymouth, MA; visit <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/september-2021-council-meeting> for more information

#### **October 4 - 7**

Red Drum Simulation Assessment Workshop; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/10/2021/Red-Drum-Simulation-Assessment-Workshop-/1743> for more information

#### **October 5 (begins at 9 AM) - 7 (ends at Noon)**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Yotel Hotel, 570 10th Avenue, New York, NY; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2021/october-2021-council-meeting> for more information

#### **October 18 - 21**

ASMFC 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Ocean Place Resort and Spa, 1 Ocean Blvd, Long Branch, NJ; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/10/2021/ASMFC-80th-Annual-Meeting/1640> for more information

#### **December 6 - 10**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Beaufort Hotel, 2440 Lennoxville Road, Beaufort, NC; visit <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/> for more information

#### **December 7 - 9**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel Viking, Newport, RI; visit <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/december-2021-council-meeting> for more information

#### **December 13 - 16**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Westin Annapolis, 100 Westgate Circle, Annapolis, MD; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2021/december-2021-council-meeting> for more information



### ASMFC Backs Recovering America's Wildlife Act

For decades, state wildlife conservation and management have been supported by sportswomen and sportsmen through state license sales and federal user fee programs such as the Dingell-Johnson Act and the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would supplement citizen conservation contributions by providing state fish and wildlife agencies, tribes and territories with \$1.3 billion annually to manage at-risk species.

This summer, the Commission officially endorsed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. In the U.S. House of Representatives, the legislation was introduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE). In the U.S. Senate, it was introduced by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Roy Blunt (R-MO). The House Natural Resources' Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee held a hearing on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act on July 29, 2021.

Nationally and on the Atlantic coast, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act can provide dedicated funding for states to implement congressionally-mandated State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) and execute large-scale conservation projects that benefit both game and non-game species. SWAPs assess the health of fish and wildlife populations in each state and propose actions to conserve wildlife and habitat before they reach the point where drastic protection measures are needed. Congress required each state to create a SWAP in 2005 and to update them in 2015. SWAPs must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are science-based with robust public input.

Management and harvest bottlenecks stemming from Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings on the Atlantic coast have resulted in costly foregone commercial harvest and recreational activity. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act offers an effective means of addressing marine species in need of proactive conservation before a listing under the ESA is warranted. As a result, restrictive commercial and recreational management

measures can be avoided. Species managed by the Commission that are directly or indirectly impacted by the ESA are American lobster and Jonah crab (via right whales), American eel, horseshoe crab (via red knots), and Atlantic sturgeon. In addition, there are other Commission managed species and associated habitats that are in need of conservation so that populations and valuable fisheries can be

restored. For example, fish passage needs to be provided and enhanced on many rivers for American shad and river herring, and American eel. Coastal marshes and living reef systems need to be restored to provide flood protection, nursery habitat for fish, and to improve water quality. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would also help states mitigate the

impacts of changing environmental conditions.

Given the states' increasing responsibilities and ever dwindling budgets, Restoring America's Wildlife Act offers the opportunity to truly protect and conserve the marine and wildlife resources under their stewardship.



**Recovering America's Wildlife Act offers an effective means of addressing marine species in need of proactive management before a listing under the ESA is warranted.**

# Species Profile: Bluefish

## ASMFC & MAFMC Move Forward on Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment

### Introduction

Bluefish are one of the most popular sport fish along the Atlantic coast. A highly mobile species, they are renowned for their predatory instinct, razor sharp teeth, and aggressive behavior. In the late 1970s, anglers petitioned the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to develop a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for bluefish to address concerns over population declines. The Bluefish FMP, passed in 1989, was the first management plan developed jointly by an interstate commission and regional fishery management council.

Roughly a decade later, concern about the continued decline in bluefish abundance once again necessitated joint management action. By this time, a coastwide collaborative research group had begun studying the dynamics of the coastal bluefish population to aid in management. Amendment 1 (1998) marked the start of a long-term plan to restore bluefish through progressive harvest restrictions. In 2009, stock biomass exceeded its target level, and the stock was declared rebuilt a year earlier than planned.

Stock status has changed once again following the 2019 operational stock assessment, which revealed the stock is overfished. The Council and the Commission have again sprung into action to cooperatively develop a plan that will rebuild the stock within seven years. The Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment outlines the details of the rebuilding plan along with recommended changes to the FMP goals and objectives, new allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors, new commercial allocations to the states, revisions to the sector quota transfer process, and an updated mechanism for accounting for management uncertainty.

### Life History

Bluefish are a migratory, pelagic species found throughout the world in most temperate coastal regions, except the eastern Pacific. Evidence from tagging studies suggests that bluefish form three distinct seasonal migratory groups. The first travels north to New England in the spring and summer as water temperatures rise and move south in autumn and winter to the South Atlantic Bight. A second group make the same north/south seasonal migration, but the migration is contained within the Mid-Atlantic Bight. The third group has an inshore-offshore migration along Florida's Atlantic coast. Interestingly, migration patterns appear to be size-related because bluefish generally school by size, with schools covering up to tens of square miles.

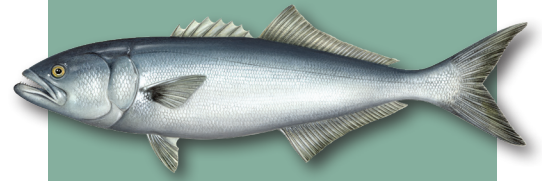
Bluefish are fast growers and opportunistic predators, feeding voraciously on almost any prey they can capture. Over 70 species of fish have been found in their stomach contents, including butterfish, mackerel, and lobster. Razor sharp teeth and a shearing jaw movement allow bluefish to ingest large parts, which increases the maximum prey size bluefish can catch. Bluefish live up to 12 years and may exceed 39 inches and 31 pounds.

Bluefish reach sexual maturity at age two and spawn offshore from Massachusetts through Florida. Discrete groups spawn at different times and are referred to by the season in which they spawn: the spring-spawned cohort and the summer-spawned cohort. (A cohort is defined as a group of fish spawned during a given period, usually within a year; also known as a year-class or age-class.) Research has also identified a fall-spawned cohort, demonstrating an expanded and prolonged spawning season. The cohorts mix extensively on the fishing grounds and probably comprise a single genetic stock.

### Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Bluefish are predominantly a recreational fishery, with recreational landings accounting for approximately 87% of total harvest in recent years. As bluefish migrate seasonally along the Atlantic coast, anglers from Maine to Florida target these voracious predators near

## Species Snapshot



**Bluefish**  
*Pomatomus saltatrix*

### Management Unit

Maine through Florida

### Common Names

snapper, baby blues, choppers, elf, tailors

### Interesting Facts

- Widely distributed around the world in tropical and subtropical waters
- Voracious predators, known to be cannibalistic
- Fish exhibit a feeding behavior known as the bluefish blitz, where large schools of big fish attack bait fish at the surface, churning the water like a washing machine.
- As in all extremely active fish predators, the digestive enzymes in bluefish are powerful and their meat can spoil quickly, so they need to be cooked soon after capture.

### Largest and Oldest Recorded

- 31 lbs, 12 oz., 12 years old

### Age/Length at Maturity

- 2 years/14.9-20.1 inches

### Age/Length at Recruitment

- 1 year/9.3-11.1 inches

### Stock Status

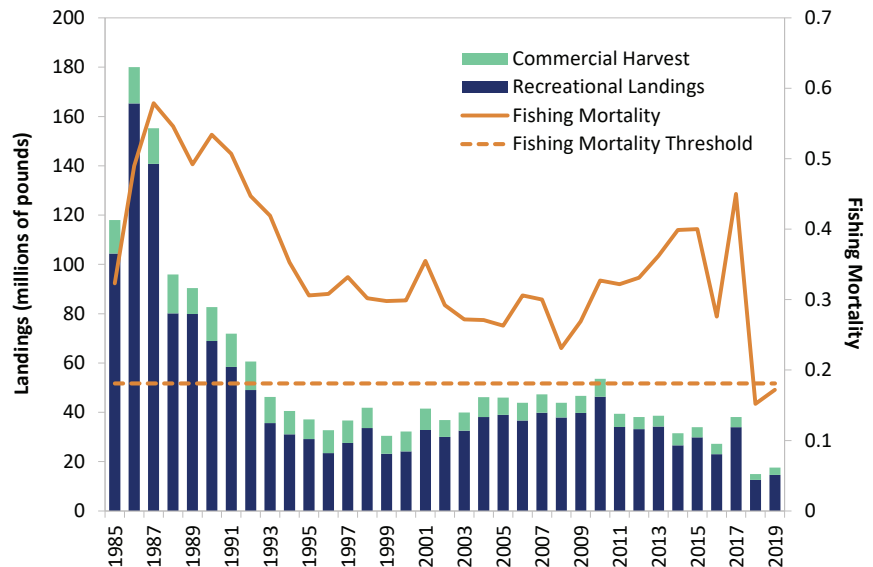
- Overfished but not experiencing overfishing

inlets, shoals, and rips, where they come to feed on large schools of bait. The species' aggressive feeding behavior and the fight it puts up on the line make it a very popular sportfish. Recreational harvest peaked at 151 million pounds in 1986, but quickly declined in the 80s and 90s to its current ten year average recreational harvest of 26 million pounds. Recreational harvest in 2018-2020 are the lowest three years in the time series, a result of low availability and a reduced bag limit. Instead of landing bluefish for consumption, many anglers target bluefish for sport. Catching and releasing bluefish also contributes to fishing mortality because an estimated 15% of released bluefish don't survive. As a result, recreational dead discards comprise on average 22% of total recreational removals within the last ten years.

Commercial fishermen target bluefish using a variety of gears including trawls, gillnets, haul seines, and pound nets. Commercial landings decreased from 16.5 million pounds in 1981 to 7.1 million pounds in 1999. Since a state-specific quota system was implemented in 2000, commercial landings have averaged around 5.8 million pounds annually. 2020 marked a commercial landings time series low of 2.4 million pounds as a result of the reduced quota set in response to the overfished stock status. North Carolina, Rhode Island, and New York's commercial fisheries landed the most bluefish in 2020.

### Bluefish Commercial and Recreational Landings

Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2021

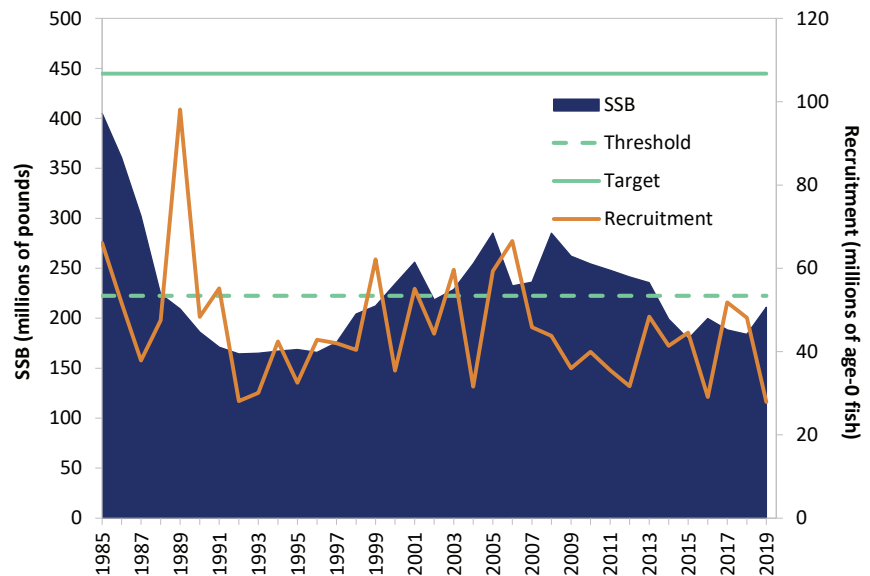


### Stock Status

Based on the 2021 management track stock assessment conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, bluefish are overfished, but were not experiencing overfishing in 2019. The assessment incorporated data through 2019 instead of 2020 due to data challenges as a result of COVID-19 closures. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) in 2019 was estimated to be 211 million pounds, which is 95% of the SSB threshold of 222 million pounds. This represents a slight improvement from the previous assessment that indicated SSB was at 92% of the threshold in 2018. Fishing mortality in 2019 was estimated to be 0.172, below the the fishing mortality threshold of 0.181). Although fishing mortality was below the its threshold in 2018 and 2019, fishing mortality exceeded the updated threshold every year from 1985 to 2017, meaning overfishing occurred throughout the majority of the time series. The largest recruitment event occurred in 1989 with 98 million fish, and recruitment was lowest in 2016 at 29 million fish. Recruitment over the last 10 years has varied around the time series average of 46 million fish. A research track stock assessment is scheduled for November 2022.

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

Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2021



### Atlantic Coastal Management

In August, the Commission approved the Rebuilding and Allocation Amendment 2 to the Interstate FMP for Bluefish. Since NOAA Fisheries is expected to provide final approval of the Amendment later this year, the 2022-2023 specifications package was based on the rebuilding plan, updated allocations, and management processes outlined in the Amendment.

continued, see BLUEFISH on page 16

# Fishery Management Actions

## ASMFC & MAFMC Set Specifications for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish

The Commission's Management Boards for Bluefish and Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass met jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to adopt 2022-2023 specifications for all four species. The Boards and Council reviewed the results of the June 2021 management track stock assessments for the four species, which incorporated fishery catch and fishery-independent survey data through 2019. They also considered recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Monitoring Committees and Advisory Panels, as well as comments from members of the public regarding the specifications for each species.

The table below summarizes commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits (RHL) for all four species (2021 values are provided for comparison purposes). No changes were made to the commercial management measures for any of the species. The Commission's actions are final and apply to state waters (0-3 miles from shore); the Council will forward its recommendations for federal waters (3 – 200 miles from shore) to the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Administrator for final approval.

**2022-2023 Commercial Quotas and Recreational Harvest Limits for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish (2021 values are provided for comparison purposes)**

	Commercial Quota millions of pounds			Recreational Harvest Limit millions of pounds		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
<b>Summer Flounder</b>	12.49	15.53	15.53	8.32	10.36	10.36
<b>Scup</b>	20.50	20.38	17.87	6.07	6.08	5.41
<b>Black Sea Bass</b>	6.09	6.47	5.71	6.34	6.74	5.95
<b>Bluefish</b>	2.77	3.54	4.29	8.34	13.89	22.14

Note: Commercial quotas shown in the table may change slightly since they do not include any deductions for past overages.

### Summer Flounder

The 2021 summer flounder management track stock assessment concluded the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2019. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be about 86% of the biomass target. The 2018 year class was above average at an estimated 61 million

fish, the largest estimate of recruitment since 2009, while the 2019 year class is below average at 49 million fish. Based on the SSC's recommendation, the Board and Council approved an acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 33.12 million pounds for 2022 and 2023. After accounting for expected discards, the ABC results in a commercial quota of 15.53 million pounds and an RHL of 10.36 million pounds. These landing limits represent a 24% increase in the commercial quota and a 25% increase in the RHL from 2021 levels.

### Scup

The 2021 scup management track stock assessment concluded the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2019. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be about 2 times the biomass target. The assessment indicated the stock experienced very high recruitment in 2015 and below-average recruitment during 2016-2019. Based on the SSC's recommendation, the Board and Council approved an ABC of 32.11 million pounds for 2022 and 29.67 million pounds for 2023. After accounting for expected discards, the ABCs result in a commercial quota of 20.38 million pounds and an RHL of 6.08 million pounds in 2022, and a commercial quota of 17.87 million pounds and an RHL of 5.41 million pounds in 2023. Compared to 2021

landings limits, the new limits represent a slight decrease in the commercial quota and a minor increase in the RHL in 2022. The Board and Council discussed an industry proposal to increase or eliminate the commercial possession limit during the winter I quota period and decrease the minimum size from 9 inches to 8 inches

in total length. After reviewing the Monitoring Committee recommendation and input from the Advisory Panel, the Board and Council determined that changes to current commercial measures were not warranted at this time.

### Black Sea Bass

The 2021 black sea bass management track stock assessment concluded the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2019. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be about 2.1 times the target level in 2019 and the fishing mortality rate was 15% below the threshold level that defines an overfished condition. Based on the SSC's recommendation, the Board and Council approved an ABC of 18.86 million pounds for 2022, which, after accounting for expected discards, results in a commercial quota of 6.47 million pounds and an RHL of 6.74 million pounds. These landings limits represent a 6% increase compared to the 2021 landing limits. The 2023 ABC was set at 16.66 million pounds, resulting in a 2023 commercial quota of 5.71 million pounds and an RHL of 5.95 million pounds.

### Bluefish

The 2021 bluefish management track assessment concluded spawning stock biomass was still overfished but overfishing was not occurring in 2019. Based on the SSC's recommendation, the Bluefish Board and Council adopted an ABC of 25.26 million pounds and 30.62 million pounds for 2022 and 2023, respectively. The 2022 ABC results in a commercial quota of 3.54 million pounds and an RHL of 13.89 million pounds, and represents a 28% increase in the commercial quota and a 67% increase in the RHL from 2021 levels. The 2023 ABC results in a commercial quota of 4.29 million pounds and an RHL of 22.14 million pounds. Historically, a portion of the total allowable landings above the expected recreational harvest have been transferred from the recreational fishery to the commercial fishery. However, because the stock is currently overfished and the recreational and commercial sectors are both anticipated to fully harvest their limits, the Bluefish Board and Council did not authorize any quota transfers.

For more information on the Commission’s actions pertaining to summer flounder, scup, and bluefish, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at [dleaning@asmfc.org](mailto:dleaning@asmfc.org) and contact Savannah Lewis at [slewis@asmfc.org](mailto:slewis@asmfc.org) for more information pertaining to the Commission’s actions on black sea bass.

## New York’s Black Sea Bass Baseline Commercial Quota Increased to 8% under Addendum XXXIII

The Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved a 1% increase in New York’s black sea bass commercial allocation, bringing New York’s baseline share of the coastwide quota to 8%. This action modifies the state commercial quota allocations that had been previously approved through Addendum XXXIII to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. The final 2022 state-by-state commercial shares can be found in the below table.

Addendum XXXIII, approved in February 2021, addressed significant changes in the distribution of black sea bass that have occurred since the original allocations were implemented in 2003, while also accounting for the states’ historical harvest of black sea bass. Among other things, the Addendum changed Connecticut’s baseline allocation from 1% to 3% of the coastwide quota to address its disproportionately low allocation compared to the increased availability of black sea bass in state waters of Long Island Sound (LIS). The remaining state shares (with the exception of Maine and New Hampshire) were allocated using their adjusted historical allocations (to account for the Connecticut change) as well as a portion based on the most recent regional biomass distribution information from the stock assessment.

In March, New York appealed the allocation changes approved by the Board in February. The Commission’s appeal process provides states/jurisdictions the opportunity to appeal management decisions if a state/jurisdiction finds a Board decision has not been consistent with language of an FMP, resulted in unforeseen



Brailing of black sea bass from a commercial weir. Photo (c) MA DMF

circumstances or impacts, did not follow established processes, or was based on flawed technical information. Through its appeal, New York argued that its baseline quota should increase similarly to that of Connecticut as it too had experienced a significant disparity between allocation and the abundance/availability of black sea bass in LIS, which is shared by New York and Connecticut.

In May, the ISFMP Policy Board (Policy Board) considered the appeal and found it was justified based on New York’s arguments. This included data showing New York’s historical allocation was based largely on its ocean fishery. Since 2010, there has been an exponential increase of black sea bass in LIS. This increased availability has resulted in an expansion of New York’s commercial black sea bass landings from LIS from 24% (2004-2008) to 51% (2015-2019) of the state’s total landings.

The Policy Board remanded Section 3.1.1 of Addendum XXXIII (which only addresses baseline allocations) back to the Board for corrective action to address impacts to New York’s baseline allocation in a manner comparable to the consideration given to Connecticut. The Policy Board’s action specified the Board must increase New York’s baseline allocation by up to 2%, while maintaining Connecticut’s baseline allocation of 3%. No other aspects of these allocations, and no other alternatives in the associated Addendum, may be revised by the Board.

Based on the Policy Board’s directive, the Board considered a number of motions with various increases in New York’s baseline quota and ultimately approved a 1% increase. As a joint partner in the management of black sea bass, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council also approved the same changes to New York’s commercial quota share. The Council will forward its revised recommendations, which include adding the state-by-state shares to the federal FMP, to NOAA Fisheries for final approval.

### Revised State Shares of Black Sea Bass Commercial Quota

State	Addendum XXXIII Approved Baseline Allocations	New Baseline Allocations	Difference for New Baseline	Resulting 2022 Allocation*
ME	0.25%	0.25%	0.00%	0.40%
NH	0.25%	0.25%	0.00%	0.40%
MA	12.77%	12.62%	-0.15%	15.44%
RI	10.81%	10.68%	-0.13%	13.06%
CT	3.00%	3.00%	0.00%	3.67%
NY	7.00%	8.00%	1.00%	9.79%
NJ - N	9.83%	9.71%	-0.12%	19.81%
NJ - S	9.83%	9.71%	-0.12%	
DE	5.00%	5.00%	0.00%	4.09%
MD	10.81%	10.68%	-0.13%	8.73%
VA	19.65%	19.42%	-0.23%	15.88%
NC	10.81%	10.68%	-0.13%	8.73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

\*These allocations represent the baseline quota plus the regional biomass distribution based on the results of the 2021 Operational Stock Assessment. These allocations will be updated if future assessments indicate a change to the biomass distribution.

# ASMFC 80th Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda



**October 18-21**  
**Ocean Place Resort & Spa**

## 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.*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 18**

**8:30 – 11:30 AM American Lobster Management Board**

- Review Annual Data Update of American Lobster Abundance Indices
- Consider Draft Addendum XXVII: *Increasing Resiliency of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Stock* for Public Comment
- Consider Draft Addendum XXIX: *Electronic Vessel Tracking Devices in the Federal American Lobster and Jonah Crab Fisheries* for Public Comment
- Consider Next Steps for Development of a Management Strategy Evaluation of the American Lobster Fisheries
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Reviews and State Compliance for American Lobster and Jonah Crab for the 2020 Fishing Year

**10 AM – 5 PM Habitat Committee**

**12:45 – 1:15 PM Atlantic Herring Management Board**

- Consider Seasonal Allocations for the 2022 Area 1A Fishery
- Update on ASMFC/NEFMC Coordination Discussions

**1:30 – 4 PM Tautog Management Board**

- Review 2021 Tautog Stock Assessment Update
- Review Risk & Uncertainty Decision Tool for Tautog
- Update on Commercial Tagging Program Implementation, if necessary

**4:15 – 5:15 PM Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team Update**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19**

**9 – 10:30 AM Shad and River Herring Management Board**

- Consider American Shad Habitat Plans/Updates
- Consider Technical Committee Report on Methods for Evaluating Mixed-stock Bycatch



- Progress Report on Prioritizing Systems for Shad Recovery and Developing an Inventory of Available Data to Support Development of fish Passage Criteria
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Reviews and State Compliance for Shad and River Herring for the 2020 Fishing Year

**10 AM – 5 PM Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) Steering Committee**

**10:45 AM – 12:15 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council**

- Consider FY22 Funding Proposals

**Noon – 5 PM Law Enforcement Committee**

**1:30 – 5:30 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**

- Consider Draft Addendum I: *Modifications to Commercial Allocations, Episodic Event Set Aside Program, and Incidental Catch & Small-scale Fisheries Provision* for Public Comment
- Provide Guidance to the Technical Committee and Ecological Reference Points Work Group on Priorities for Completing Next Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Update on Atlantic Menhaden 2021 Mortality Events

**6:30 – 8:30 PM Dinner**

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20

**8 – 10 AM Executive Committee**

- Review and Consider Approval of FY21 Audit

**8 AM – Noon Law Enforcement Committee (continued)**

**9 AM – 4 PM ACFHP Steering Committee (continued)**

**10:15 – 10:45 AM Coastal Sharks Management Board**

- Set Specifications for 2022 Fishing Year
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2020 Fishing Year
- Elect Vice-Chair

**11 AM – Noon Business Session**

- Consider 2022 Draft Action Plan
- Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

**Noon – 1:30 PM Captain David H. Hart Award Luncheon**

**1:30 – 5:30 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**

- Consider Draft Amendment 7 for Public Comment
- Consider Draft Addendum VII: *Voluntary Transfer of Commercial Striped Bass Quota between States with Commercial Quota* for Public Comment

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

**8:30 – 10 AM Horseshoe Crab Management Board**

- Set 2022 Fishery Specifications
- Review Horseshoe Crab and Red Knot Abundance Estimates and 2020 Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Model Results

*continued, see PRELIMINARY AGENDA on page 13*

## Public Comment Guidelines

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 ask members of the public to raise their hands to let the chair know they would like to speak. Depending upon the number of commenters, the board chair will decide 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 the webinar (September 27) will be included in the briefing materials.

2. Comments received by 5 PM on Tuesday, October 5 will be included in the supplemental materials.

3. Comments received by 10:00 a.m. on Friday, October 15 will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting.

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.

## Funding from the Modern Fish Act Increases MRIP APAIS Assignments

Congress, via the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act (i.e., Modern Fish Act or MFA of 2019), awarded the Department of Commerce \$3 million per year. These funds are intended to improve fisheries data collection in order to make better management decisions and will continue through at least 2024. NOAA Fisheries divides this annual total into three pieces for each of the regional Fisheries Information Networks (FINs). The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), which is the Atlantic coast FIN, was allocated \$900,000 and tasked with the distribution of these funds. ACCSP and the states from Maine to Georgia have partnered with NOAA Fisheries Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) to conduct MRIP field surveys since 2016.

The ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, composed of state and federal representatives, directed Modern Fish Act funds to improve the precision, or proportional standard error (PSE), of recreational estimates produced by MRIP. The lower an estimate's PSE, the more likely it is to represent actual recreational harvest. Lower PSEs can ideally be achieved by increasing the overall MRIP sample size.

Total recreational harvest is estimated through the combination of two effort surveys along with a survey of catch: the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). The APAIS uses highly trained staff to interview recreational anglers about their discarded and kept fish during a predetermined assignment interval at public fishing locations.

The Recreational Technical Committee analyzed historic PSEs of federally and state managed species to focus the increased APAIS funding to add sampling assignments more likely to encounter anglers fishing further from shore on private/rental and charter boats. The ACCSP worked with state partners to allocate individual proportions of the total coastal increase to APAIS assignments. Overall, the Modern Fish Act funded almost 2,100 new APAIS assignments, or nearly 30% more than were funded in 2020.

For more information, please contact Alex DiJohnson, ACCSP Recreational Team Lead, at [alex.dijohnson@accsp.org](mailto:alex.dijohnson@accsp.org).

### INCREASE IN APAIS ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE MODERN FISH ACT (MFA)



#### NUMBER OF APAIS SITE ASSIGNMENTS (ALL SITEGROUPS)

Pre-MFA (2020): 7,314

Post-MFA (2021-forward): 9,400

Average % increase: 28.5%

#### NUMBER OF APAIS SITE ASSIGNMENTS (SHORE)

Pre-MFA (2020): 1,815

Post-MFA (2021-forward): 2,157

Average % increase: 18.8%



#### NUMBER OF APAIS SITE ASSIGNMENTS (CHARTER)

Pre-MFA (2020): 1,518

Post-MFA (2021-forward): 2,348

Average % increase: 54.7%

#### NUMBER OF APAIS SITE ASSIGNMENTS (PRIVATE/RENTAL)

Pre-MFA (2020): 3,981

Post-MFA (2021-forward): 4,895

Average % increase: 23.0%



*Increase in APAIS assignments as a result of additional funding from the Modern Fish Act (MFA)*



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](http://www.accsp.org).

## STAFF

ACCSP will be experiencing some staffing changes over the coming months. The Commission and ACCSP are proud of the growth of these individuals as they step up within the organization or move on to opportunities elsewhere. We will miss those that will be leaving and thank them for their effort and dedication to program success during their time with us. ACCSP is committed, as always, to meeting the needs of our partners and will continue to do our best to provide timely responses.



### MIKE RINALDI

In July, Mike Rinaldi was promoted to ACCSP Data Team Lead. Mike started with ACCSP in 2017 working on quality assurance/quality control for the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Access Point Angler Intercept Survey. During that time, Mike broadened his knowledge and demonstrated leadership on several key initiatives. These include representing ACCSP at SEDAR meetings and on work groups on technology integration for fishery-dependent data, electronic monitoring standards, and aquaculture. On the technical side, Mike has been the ACCSP spatial data expert and improved the processes behind the application and approval of confidential access. In recognition of his accomplishments, Mike was awarded the ASMFC Employee of the Quarter in 2019. In his new position, Mike will be responsible for supervising the ACCSP Data Team (which staffs the Biological Review Panel, and the Bycatch Prioritization, Commercial Technical, and Standard Codes Committees) and coordinating internal and external projects with Program Partners.



### NICO MWAI

ACCSP Senior Software Developer Nico Mwai has accepted a position as an Oracle developer that will begin in September. For nearly 10 years, Nico contributed innovative solutions to ACCSP data collection applications, including application programming interface support for mobile applications and improved user authentication. Nico played an integral role in ACCSP software development and support through his collaborative work with ACCSP partners and contractors while improving tools for help desk user support. We wish Nico great success in all his future endeavors.



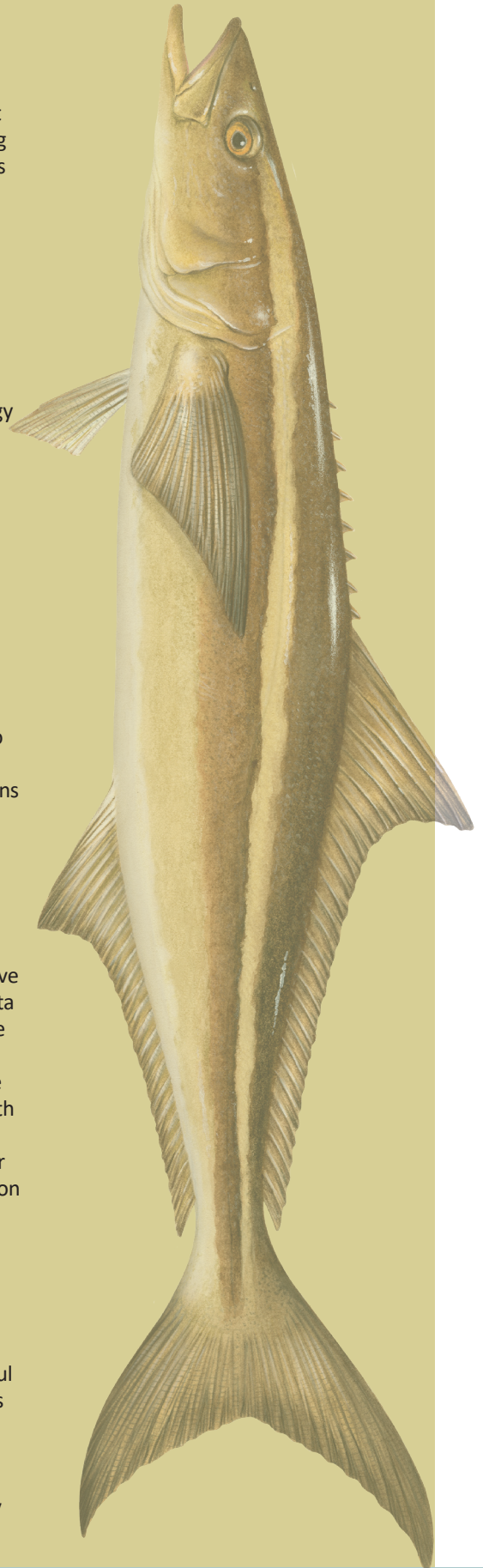
### LINDSEY AUBART

ACCSP Data Coordinator Lindsey Aubart will become ASMFC's Cooperative Projects Coordinator in mid-September. While she has been with the Data Team for only a year, Lindsey has made a true impact in a short time. She quickly acquired the necessary programming skills to accompany her biological knowledge and partner collaboration skills. Lindsey guided the biological module through the important first year, including working with others on the Data Team to move data from the old database structures to the new, and with partners to adapt to the new transfer format. In her new position, Lindsey will be overseeing cooperative projects between the Commission (and its member states) and NOAA Fisheries. While she will be missed on the Data Team, we are excited that she will be taking on this challenge and wish her success in the new position.



### SARAH HYLTON

ACCSP Recreational Data Coordinator Sarah Hylton will be leaving ACCSP in mid-October. In her 16 months in the position, Sarah brought a cheerful and determined nature to the cooperative state conduct of MRIP surveys along the Atlantic coast. She was integral to the transition to state conduct of the For-hire Telephone Survey by leading the development of the interviewing application. Sarah also contributed to improvements to trainings, procedures and user manuals, and data presentation. We wish Sarah the very best in all her future endeavors.



### Do Circle Hooks Reduce Release Mortality in Striped Bass?

Ninety percent of all recreationally caught striped bass are released alive. In 2020 alone, anglers released 31 million Atlantic migratory striped bass. However, releasing a fish alive doesn't guarantee that it will survive: the Commission's stock assessment estimates that 9% of those fish will die from the stress of being caught and released. Managers and stakeholders alike want to find ways to reduce this release mortality. One option is using circle hooks, which have been shown to have a lower release mortality rate than traditional J-hooks for many species, including striped bass.



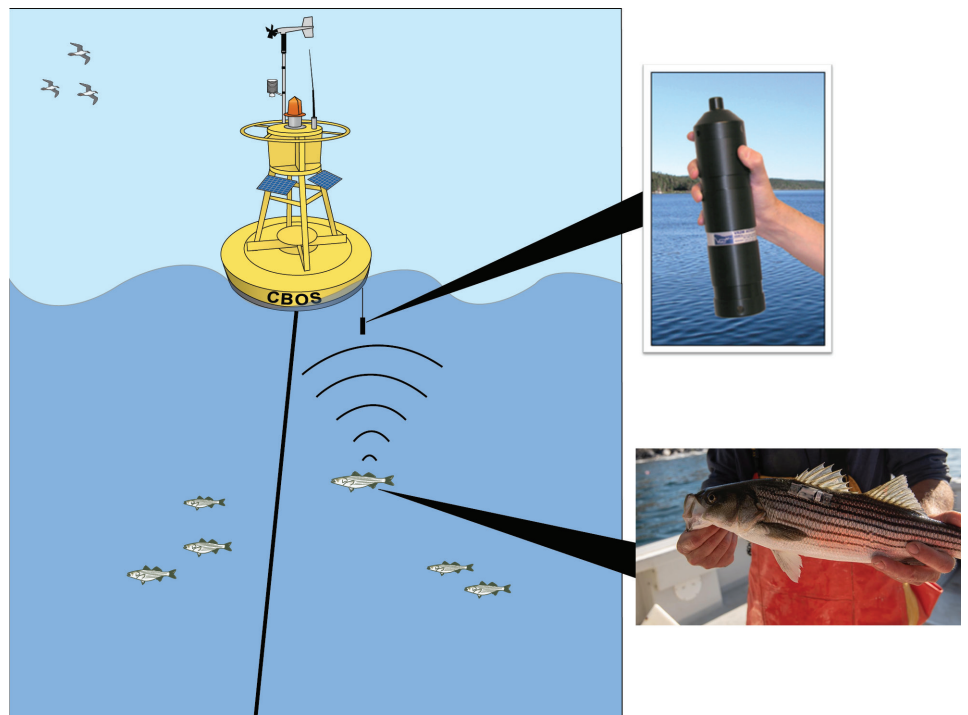
A close-up of a striped bass caught with a circle hook. Photo (c) Ken Neill

However, the work on circle hooks and striped bass has been limited. The studies are often conducted in freshwater, where release mortality rates are higher to begin with, and mortality is assessed by keeping the fish in a net pen or pond after they are captured. Researchers from Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF), including Bill Hoffman, Micah Dean, Ben Gahagan, and Mike Armstrong, have set out to conduct a new study of release mortality in striped bass using the most up-to-date technique of acoustic tagging.

Acoustic tags are small electronic tags that can be attached or implanted in a fish. For this study, the tags record information on the fish's activity level (tail beat frequency). When the fish swims past a receiver that scientists have placed in the ocean, the tag reports the information it has recorded, including the location of the fish, whether it was active and moving around after release, or if it died and sank to the bottom. Unlike keeping the fish in a protected environment like a net pen or a pond, this approach is more realistic, allowing the fish to behave normally in its natural environment.

MA DMF scientists tagged 176 striped bass last summer in Massachusetts waters. The tags were spread over three size categories of fish: undersize fish (less than 28 inches), legal fish in the slot (28-35 inches), and fish larger than the slot (35 inches or greater). This project is interested in other factors that can affect release mortality, not just hook type, so the researchers recorded information on water temperature, the skill level of the angler that caught the fish, the fight time, handling time, and the time it took to release the fish. Researchers also recorded the size of the fish, where it was hooked, and its condition when it was released (i.e., how healthy it looked and whether it was bleeding or injured).

The fish were caught and released in Salem Sound just off the coast of Massachusetts where an array of receivers has been set up to detect acoustically tagged fish. Researchers found that some fish stayed in the area almost the whole summer, while others only stayed in the array for a few minutes before moving on. Fortunately, the tags can be detected by receivers set out by other scientists, and there are other receiver arrays up and down the coast that the tagged fish may swim through.



When a tagged fish (lower right) swims by an acoustic receiver (upper right), information on the fish's activity level and location are transmitted to the receiver. That information can be retrieved by the researchers to determine if the fish has moved from its release location and, therefore, survived after being released. Fish tagged in Massachusetts can be detected in arrays managed by other researchers up and down the coast, including in Chesapeake Bay.

continued, see SCIENCE HIGHLIGHT on page 13

**8:30 – 10 AM Horseshoe Crab Management Board (continued)**

- Progress Update on Revision to the ARM Framework
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2020 Fishing Year

**10:15 – 11:15 AM Spiny Dogfish Management Board**

- Consider Analysis on Trip Limit and Market Price
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2020 Fishing Year
- Update on Research Track Assessment

**11:30 AM – 12:15 PM American Eel Management Board**

- Consider Extending Maine's Glass Eel Quota for 2022-2024
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2020 Fishing Year
- Progress Update on Benchmark Stock Assessment

**12:45 – 4:30 PM Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board**

- Discuss Policy on *De Minimis* Programs within Fishery Management Plans
- Consider Changes to the Appeals Process
- Consider Changes to the Conservation Equivalency Process
- Consider Draft Addendum/Framework on Harvest Control Rule for Bluefish, Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass for Public Comment (This agenda item will be discussed with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.)
- Committee Reports
  - Executive Committee
  - Law Enforcement Committee
  - Habitat Committee
  - ACFHP Steering Committee
- Review Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)

**4:30 – 4:45 PM Business Session (continued)**

- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)

*SCIENCE HIGHLIGHT continued from page 12*

Of the 176 fish tagged last summer, 14 were confirmed dead based on the tag data: their tags showed their tail beats flat-lined and they stopped moving. For some fish, this happened almost immediately after they were released; other fish were active for several days before they died.

In addition, 23 fish are currently missing, with unknown status, because their tags have not been detected by the array. This could be because they survived and swam out of the array, or because they died and sank in an area that doesn't have array coverage. The researchers are trying to track them down by looking for them in data from arrays in other locations on the Atlantic coast and by taking a mobile receiver out to search for the tag in the array dead zones.

This results in a back-of-the-envelope mortality rate of 8%-16% (depending on what is assumed about the fate of the missing and unknown fish). This is very similar to the rate used in the stock assessment (9%) and consistent with other studies on

striped bass release mortality rates, but researchers want to tag more fish before they are confident in these results. It's too early to determine whether circle hooks have a lower mortality rate.

This summer, researchers are on the water tagging more striped bass to increase the sample size of this study. In the long-term, the MA DMF team plans to collaborate with state scientists in Long Island Sound and Chesapeake Bay to look at release mortality rates in other regions, as well as for other seasons and other hook types including artificial lures. The Commission is following this research closely to make sure the best available science is used in the assessment and management of striped bass.

For more information on this project, and other MA DMF research, visit their website at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-marine-fisheries> or YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/massmarinefisheries>.

# Proposed Management Actions

## American Lobster

In August, the American Lobster Management Board initiated Draft Addendum XXIX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum considers implementing electronic tracking requirements for federally-permitted vessels in the American lobster and Jonah crab fishery, with the goal of collecting high resolution spatial and temporal effort data.

“In my opinion, this is the single most important thing the American Lobster Board can do to ensure the viability of the American lobster fishery,” stated Board Chair Dan McKiernan from Massachusetts. “Through the proposed action, the Board seeks to significantly improve our understanding of stock status, identify areas where lobster fishing effort might present a risk to endangered North Atlantic right whales, and provide important information to help reduce spatial conflicts with other ocean uses, such as wind energy development and aquaculture.”

A number of challenges facing the fishery (e.g., rising water temperatures, protected species interactions, reduced recruitment) present a critical need for the collection of enhanced spatial and temporal data via electronic tracking devices in the offshore fishery. The stock assessment models that estimate exploitation and abundance

for American lobster could be greatly improved with these data, as they would provide size composition data at a finer resolution than what is currently available. Additionally, the models used to assess the location of vertical lines in the fishery and their associated risk to endangered right whales could be substantially improved with vessel tracking data, which could impact federal risk reduction requirements for the fishery. Better understanding the footprint of the U.S. lobster fishery will also be vital to ocean planning efforts to minimize spatial conflicts with other ocean uses such as aquaculture, marine protected areas, and offshore energy development, as well as provide fishery managers tools to help maintain industry fishing grounds. Furthermore, vessel tracking could improve the efficiency and efficacy of offshore law enforcement efforts.

Draft Addendum XXIX will propose specifications for tracking devices to ensure the collected data meet both management and assessment needs. These specifications include data reporting rates, preferred technologies, and minimum standards for tracking devices. Implementation timelines, as well as budgetary and staff resource needs will be further discussed as the Draft Addendum is developed. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

## Atlantic Menhaden

In August, the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board initiated an addendum to Amendment 3 to consider changes to commercial allocations, the episodic event set aside (EESA) program, and the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provision. This action responds to the recommendations of a Board work group charged with evaluating provisions of the current management program and providing strategies to refine those provisions.

Amendment 3 (2017) established commercial fishery allocations, allocating a baseline quota of 0.5% to each jurisdiction with the rest of the total allowable catch (TAC) allocated based on historic landings between 2009 and 2011. The work group report outlined landings have shifted in recent years, with some states landing significantly more quota (through transfers and other FMP provisions) than they are allocated due to changes in abundance of menhaden and availability of other bait fish. The Board action aims to align state quotas with recent landings and availability while maintaining access to the resource for all states, reduce dependence on quota transfers, and minimize regulatory discards.

The addendum will also propose changes to the EESA and incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provisions. Both provisions have been impacted by recent trends in landings, most notably in New England where states rely on the EESA to keep their

commercial fishery open while working to secure quota transfers. The increasing abundance of menhaden in New England has also led to a rise of landings under the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provision once commercial quotas have been met. The Board is interested in exploring options to promote accountability such as capping the total amount of landings under this category or

*continued, see PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS on page 15*



Photo (c) Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association

## ASMFC Releases Update to Profiles of State Artificial Reef Programs and Projects

In July, the Commission released *Update to ASMFC'S Profiles of State Artificial Reef Programs and Projects*. This document provides a summary for each state's artificial reef program and features highlights that have occurred since the release of the first edition of this publication in 1988. Since then, many Atlantic states have expanded their programs; deployed a variety of artificial reefs using best management practices for construction, materials, and siting; and have monitored sites for use – both by fishers and divers, as well as by marine life.

Artificial reefs have been used for centuries to enhance fishery resources and fishing opportunities by creating habitat for fish and invertebrate species through the use of man-made materials. They also provide underwater structures for SCUBA divers and facilitate reef-related research. Artificial reefs are typically constructed from dense materials, such as decommissioned ships and barges; concrete and steel demolition debris; and dredge rock. When properly constructed and strategically sited, artificial reefs can enhance fish habitat and total biomass, increase access to quality fishing grounds that benefit coastal economies,



and provide managers with another option for the conservation and management of fishery resources.

The publication identifies more than 335 permitted artificial reefs spanning 11 Atlantic coast states. It also provides a brief history of each program; highlights specific projects; provides details on state funding; and includes maps of reef locations. Over the past 30 years, artificial reef programs have implemented new technologies to designate sites, mapped existing materials, and evaluated established reef habitats. There are many examples of state programs collaborating with universities to study reef impacts, as well as examples of partnerships across state agencies, with the federal government, and with NGOs and private companies to secure reefing materials.

Update to ASMFC'S Profiles of State Artificial Reef Programs and Projects is available at [http://www.asmfc.org/files/Habitat/ArtificialReefs/ASMFC\\_Profiles\\_StateArtificial-ReefPrograms\\_Projects\\_July2021.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/Habitat/ArtificialReefs/ASMFC_Profiles_StateArtificial-ReefPrograms_Projects_July2021.pdf).

For more information on artificial reefs, visit the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/habitat/artificial-reefs> or contact Dr. Lisa Havel, Habitat Committee Coordinator, at [lhavel@asmfc.org](mailto:lhavel@asmfc.org).

*PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, continued from page 14*

to count these landings against the TAC. Management alternatives for the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries will also consider changes to the current eligibility of gear types under the provision. In addition to these topics, the Board indicated the management document should maintain flexibility to respond to management needs in the future.

The Board will consider the Draft Addendum at the Annual Meeting in October and provide feedback, if needed, to further develop the document.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

*ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS, continued from page 1*

Concurrent with the development of Draft Amendment 7, the Board initiated an addendum to Amendment 6 to consider allowing the voluntary transfer of commercial striped bass quota between states/jurisdictions that have commercial quota. This action is in response to a request from the State of Delaware to reconsider Delaware's current commercial quota allocation.

Based on progress made on Draft Amendment 7 and Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6, the Board's next opportunity to meet and consider possible approval of both documents for public comment will be in October during the Commission's Annual Meeting.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [efranke@asmfc.org](mailto:efranke@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

## On the Legislative Front: U.S. Senate Approves Infrastructure Bill, Habitat, and Sportfish Provisions

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Senate approved a bipartisan infrastructure bill, H.R.3684 – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, by a vote of 69-30. H.R. 3684 provides \$944 billion in total spending over five years (\$550 billion in new spending) for road, bridge, rail, transit, port, airport, electric grid, water system, and broadband projects. The legislation also includes several authorizing bills as well as supplemental appropriations for new and existing programs.

A host of habitat provisions, as described below, will receive significant funding. H.R. 3684 would also reauthorize the Sportfish Restoration Trust Fund through 2026. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act now awaits action on the south wing of the Capitol, where the U.S. House of Representatives has a September 27 deadline to vote on H.R. 3684.

### Commerce Department – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- \$1 billion for the “National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program”
- \$492 million for National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund grants
- \$491 million for restoring marine, estuarine, coastal, or Great Lakes ecosystem habitat, and protecting ecological features that protect coastal communities from flooding or coastal storms
- \$200 million for marine debris assessment, prevention, mitigation, and removal

- \$207 million for habitat restoration projects through the Coastal Zone Management Act
- \$77 million for habitat restoration projects through the National Estuarine Research Reserve System
- \$20 million for consultations and permitting related to the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Essential Fish Habitat
- \$400 million for fish passage restoration and in-stream barrier removal

### Interior Department – Fish and Wildlife Service

- \$26 million for the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act
- \$200 million for fish and wildlife passage restoration and in-stream barrier removal

### Interior Department – Environmental Protection Agency

- \$1,717 million for Geographic Programs
  - \$238 million for the Chesapeake Bay
  - \$106 million for Long Island Sound
  - \$16 million for South Florida
  - \$15 million for Southern New England estuaries
- \$132 million for National Estuary Program grants

### Interior Department – State and Tribal Assistance Grants

- \$275 million for grants under the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act

### Agriculture Department

- \$10 million for the removal of non-hydropower federal dams

For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, at [dtompkins@asmfc.org](mailto:dtompkins@asmfc.org).

BLUEFISH, continued from page 5

The Amendment establishes a 7-year rebuilding plan to be achieved through a constant fishing mortality approach. The intent of this approach is to gradually increase the acceptable biological catch over time to allow ample time for the stock to rebuild. Ideally, this gradual approach will provide stability for the recreational and commercial fisheries. Rebuilding progress will be analyzed through management track stock assessments every two years.

The Amendment allocates 86% of the resource to the recreational fishery and 13% to the commercial fishery. The Amendment also revises state-by-state commercial allocations to better reflect the current distribution of the stock and the needs of the states’ commercial fisheries. The Amendment allocates a baseline quota of 0.1% to each state, and then allocates the rest of the commercial quota based on landings data from 2009 to 2018 (see accompanying table). Recognizing that several states will be losing quota during a time when the coastwide commercial quota is already at an historic low, the Amendment phases-in the allocation changes over 7 years in order to reduce short-term economic impacts to the affected commercial fishing industries. State allocations will be reviewed by the Commission and Council within 5 years.

For more information, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [dleaning@asmfc.org](mailto:dleaning@asmfc.org).

Revised State Allocation Percentages of the Bluefish Commercial Quota

State	Previous Allocations Under Amendment 1	Revised Allocations to be Phased in Over 7 Years
Maine	0.67%	0.11%
New Hampshire	0.41%	0.22%
Massachusetts	6.72%	10.12%
Rhode Island	6.81%	9.61%
Connecticut	1.27%	1.09%
New York	10.39%	19.76%
New Jersey	14.82%	13.85%
Delaware	1.88%	0.49%
Maryland	3.00%	1.92%
Virginia	11.88%	5.87%
North Carolina	32.06%	32.03%
South Carolina	0.04%	0.10%
Georgia	0.01%	0.10%
Florida	10.06%	4.78%

Percentages based on 2009-2018 landings data with a minimum default allocation of 0.1%. Previous allocations are provided for comparison purposes.