



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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## ***ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Adopts Ecological Reference Points***

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved the use of ecological reference points (ERPs) in the management of Atlantic menhaden. By adopting ERPs, the Board will be accounting for the species' role as an important forage fish. The 2020 Atlantic menhaden benchmark assessments, which were endorsed by an independent panel of fisheries scientists, used the Northwest Atlantic Coastal Shelf Model of Intermediate Complexity for Ecosystems (NWACS-MICE) in combination with the single-species model (Beaufort Assessment Model or BAM) to develop Atlantic menhaden ERPs by evaluating trade-offs between menhaden harvest and predator biomass.

"The Board took another important step in managing Atlantic menhaden in a broader ecosystem context," stated Board Chair Spud Woodward of Georgia. "It's the culmination of more than a decade of effort by state, federal, and academic scientists to develop ERPs that reflect menhaden's role as a key food source for several fish species. These ERPs are not a silver bullet to resolve all our fisheries management issues, and the models on which they are based will continue to evolve. However, the use of ERPs for menhaden management will enhance the success of predator management by providing a more abundant forage base for rebuilding predator fish populations. It is important for us to keep those rebuilding efforts on track through the use of proven management tools such as controls on fishing mortality."



*Atlantic Menhaden. Photo © Brian Gratwicke*

In February and May, the Board tasked the ERP Work Group with additional analyses to explore the ERPs sensitivity to a range of ecosystem scenarios (different assumptions about fishing mortality for other key predator and prey species) and Atlantic herring biomass. These analyses suggested the original scenario (ERP target and threshold outlined below) most closely approximates short-term conditions for the ecosystem. As a result, the ERP Work Group recommended using the original scenario ERPs presented in the assessment report.

*ERPs, continued on page 14*

## 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,  
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#### **September 14 - 25**

American Fisheries Society 150th Annual Meeting; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/afs-150th-annual-meeting/1560> for more information

#### **September 22 (9 AM – Noon)**

Joint Meeting of the MAFMC Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel and the MAFMC and ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2020/eop-sfsbsb-ap-meeting-sept22> for more information

#### **September 23 (5 – 7 PM)**

Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/atlantic-stripped-bass-advisory-panel-webinar/1597> for more information

#### **September 23 (10 AM - Noon)**

Atlantic Croaker and Spot Technical Committee Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/atlantic-croaker-and-spot-technical-committee/1618> for more information

#### **September 25 (9 – 10 AM)**

Joint Atlantic Menhaden TC and ERP Work Group Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/joint-atlantic-menhaden-tc-and-erp-work-group-call/1611> for more information

#### **September 28 (1 - 3 PM)**

Bluefish Technical Committee Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/bluefish-technical-committee-call/1614> for more information

#### **September 29 (1:30 - 4 PM)**

Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/atlantic-stripped-bass-technical-committee-webinar/1596> for more information

#### **September 29 - October 1**

New England Fishery Management Council Webinar; visit <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/september-2020-council-meeting> for more information

#### **September 30 (9:30 AM - Noon)**

Atlantic Striped Bass Plan Development Team Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/9/2020/atlantic-stripped-bass-plan-development-team-webinar/1593> for more information

#### **October 5 (1:30 - 4 PM)**

Atlantic Striped Bass Plan Development Team Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/10/2020/atlantic-stripped-bass-plan-development-team-webinar/1594> for more information

#### **October 6 - 8**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Webinar; visit <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/october-2020-council-meeting> for more information

#### **October 19- 22**

ASMFC 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Webinar; visit <http://www.asmfc.org/home/2020-annual-meeting> for more information.



### Summer Meeting Wrap-Up

As summer draws to a close, I think about what an unusual summer it has been with all of us dealing with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you all are healthy and staying safe, and have found ways to balance work and family life during these challenging times.

State and federal agency personnel have largely been telecommuting, with some state personnel beginning to return to their offices. Our Administrative Commissioners and their staff in the state marine fishery agencies have been working closely with NOAA Fisheries to finalize their spend plans to aid in the distribution of CARES Act relief to their fishing constituents. A handful of states have approved plans, while the remaining state spend plans are in the final stages of review and approval (links to approved plans can be found on the ASMFC website at <http://www.asmfc.org/home/cares-act-resources>). As spend plans are approved, the Commission will work with the states to distribute CARES Act assistance to members of the fishing industry and for-hire businesses as quickly as possible.

In August, the Commission conducted its Summer Meeting virtually and, while the webinar format has its share of challenges, Commissioners and our federal partners accomplished quite a lot of business over the four day meeting. This issue of *Fisheries Focus* highlights many of those accomplishments; some of which I will briefly note here. Perhaps one of the most significant actions was the Atlantic Menhaden Board's approval of using ecological reference points in the management of Atlantic menhaden. This step was a long time coming, with state and federal scientists working for over a decade to bring this action to fruition. And, while it is an important first step in ecosystem-based fisheries management, there is still a lot of work ahead.

At the Summer Meeting, Commissioners also reviewed the results of the 2020 American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report. This is a considerable body of work that substantially advances our understanding of the challenges facing American shad stocks along the Atlantic coast. The assessment highlights that American shad remain depleted on a coastwide basis with a myriad of factors impacting its recovery. The Report has given the Shad and River Herring Board a lot to consider regarding next steps in management to improve population resiliency. Given the

stock-specific nature of shad management, the Board has tasked the Technical Committee with identifying potential paths forward to improve shad stocks along the coast.

At our Summer Meeting and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) August meeting, both the Commission and the Council continued to make progress on a rebuilding amendment for bluefish, changes to black sea bass state-by-state commercial allocations, and recreational reform for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass.

Lastly, the Atlantic Striped Bass Board initiated a new plan amendment. It's been 17 years since the Board has considered major revisions to the striped bass management program. Amendment 7 will consider a wide range of issues facing the

fishery and the resource as we seek to rebuild the stock under Addendum VI's management measures. In October, the Board will consider approving for public comment a Public Information Document (PID) for the Draft Amendment. As the first step in the development of Amendment 7, the PID will provide stakeholders with an opportunity to provide input on changes observed in the fishery/resource and potential management measures that should be considered by the Board.

Usually, this time of year we are in the final stages of preparing for our Annual Meeting, which is hosted by one of our 15 member states. It is a special meeting, where our Commissioners and federal partners come together to not only conduct

important fisheries management business, but also celebrate our collective and, in the case of the Captain David H. Hart Award recipient, individual contributions to the sustainable and cooperative management of Atlantic coastal fisheries. This year, the Annual Meeting was scheduled to be held in New Jersey, but continuing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and prohibitions on large gatherings resulted in us making the difficult choice of postponing the in-person meeting until next year and shifting to a virtual meeting this year. Notably, this is the first time since 1942 that the Commission will not meet in-person for an Annual Meeting.

It is my hope, and that of our New Jersey Commissioners and proxies, that we will be able to come together once again next year to enjoy the hospitality of the host state, share in our mutual successes, and work together to rebuild and sustainably manage the stocks under our care.

**...one of the most significant actions was the Atlantic Menhaden Board's approval of using ecological reference points in the management of Atlantic menhaden.**

# Species Profile: American Shad

## Benchmark Assessment Finds American Shad Remain Depleted on a Coastwide Basis

### Introduction

Each spring, as water temperatures slowly warm, fishermen and nature-lovers know what's moving into the rivers. Following the scent of the water, American shad hone in on streams where they were born. These small fish travel up to 2,000 miles from their oceanic feeding grounds to their freshwater spawning grounds. As they enter freshwater and swim upstream, they are a favorite target for recreational fishermen, as shad are known to put up a good fight. Many communities hold festivals to celebrate the arrival of shad in the spring. As a forage fish, shad are an important seasonal prey for larger predators, including birds and other wildlife. However, declines in many shad stocks prompted the Commission to adopt Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan in 2010 with the goal of rebuilding and ensuring the sustainability of shad populations.

Ten years later, the 2020 benchmark stock assessment for American shad finds that coastwide populations are still depleted based on the decline in landings. Further analysis revealed that American shad have not responded consistently to the management changes initiated in previous years.

### Life History

American shad are a migratory anadromous fish that spend most of their life in the Atlantic Ocean but return to coastal rivers and tributaries in the spring to spawn. Adults are highly migratory along the coast with primary summer feeding grounds located in the Bay of Fundy and three primary offshore wintering grounds located off the Scotian Shelf/Bay of Fundy, in the Middle Atlantic Bight (Maryland to North Carolina), and off the Florida coast.

Spawning adults are capable of migrating hundreds of miles upstream where impediments do not block movement; however, in most river systems, they do not spawn as far upstream as they did historically. Males or "buck shad" return first, followed by females or "roe shad." They spawn usually at night or during overcast days. In the southern range (Cape Hatteras south), females release as many as 700,000 eggs during the spawning season, but both males and females normally die after spawning. In the northern range (Cape Hatteras north), females typically release 300,000 eggs or less during the spawning season; however, most shad will return again to spawn in the following years, with some shad living up to ten years.

The young leave their natal (home) river within the first year and will spend the next few years at sea, schooling in large numbers with shad from other regions and feeding on plankton and other small fish or crustaceans. Upon reaching maturity – at about age four – they will return to their natal streams to spawn.

### Importance

American shad play an important ecological role in freshwater, estuarine, and marine environments during its anadromous life cycle. Once in the ocean, American shad are preyed upon by many species including sharks, tunas, king mackerel, seals, and porpoises. They are also a seasonally important prey species for a number of fish, birds, and wildlife species, with the adult spawning American shad arriving in the early spring when other prey may be scarce and the nesting/breeding season is just beginning for many wildlife predators. During earlier periods of high abundance, American shad played a significant role in ecosystem nutrient and energy cycling. For example, in South Atlantic coastal river systems, many shad die shortly after spawning and provide beneficial marine-derived

## Species Snapshot



### American Shad

*Alosa sapidissima*

### Management Unit

Maine to Florida

### General Characteristics

- Adults average 20 inches in length and 4 pounds in weight.
- Range from Newfoundland to Northern Florida.
- Opportunistic predator, feeding primarily on plankton.
- Females are larger than males.

### Interesting Facts

- George Washington was an avid and exceptional shad fisherman.
- The Latin name translates to "most savory."
- The State of Connecticut designated American shad as its state fish in 2003.

### Stock Status

- There are 104 discrete American shad stocks along the East Coast.
- Many stocks remain severely depressed compared to historic levels.

### Habitat Threats

- Main stem dams in New England states impede fish passage
- Contaminant issues with natural gas in Mid-Atlantic states
- Dredging in Southeast may impact shad habitat, but it is unclear to what extent
- Climate change impacts
- Data on competition and predation by invasive species
- Assessment of toxic and thermal discharges in watersheds

nutrients to the freshwater systems.

American shad played an important cultural role to Native Americans and early colonists. Today, many communities still recognize their importance, holding festivals to celebrate the arrival of American shad spawning runs in the spring. These festivals include activities such as fishing for shad, shad bakes or “planking,” along with a variety of other activities like running events, arts and crafts shows, music, and others to foster community relations, attract tourists, and benefit the local economy. A listing of shad and river herring festivals can be found in Amendment 3 on the Commission’s website.

### Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Since the early 1800s, American shad have supported major commercial fisheries along the Atlantic coast and were one of the most valuable food fish of the U.S. Atlantic coast before World War II. The estimated East Coast catch in 1896 was 50 million pounds, but by the 1950s landings had declined to approximately 10 million pounds. Fisheries included in-river fisheries targeting river-specific stocks and ocean fisheries targeting mixed stocks of schooling shad. In-river landings began decreasing and ocean harvest landings began increasing during the 1970s, with coastwide landings of approximately two million pounds annually. By 1996, ocean harvest comprised 67% of the coastwide landings. The ocean-intercept fishery was closed in 2005. Since the last assessment in 2007, coastwide commercial harvests have plummeted to an average of 493 thousand pounds between 2007-2018. This is one hundred-fold lower than commercial harvests from the late 19th century. As of January 1, 2013, only states with a sustainable fishery management plan in place may have directed commercial fisheries for American shad (see ‘Atlantic Coastal Management’ section).

Data on American shad recreational fisheries are very limited. Historically, large recreational shad fisheries were known to occur on the Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Santee-Cooper, Savannah, and St. Johns Rivers. The actual harvest (i.e. catch and removal)



When the fish slow down and in themselves declare the end of the [spawning] season, you can stand on a rock in the river and watch them go by. These are the ghost days. The fish, always in single file as they climb into faster water and advance the migration, are gray and spectral. But they keep going. If you throw a proper cast and let it swing down current an occasional shad will hit. They may be tired but they’re not defeated.

JOHN MCPHEE, THE FOUNDING FISH



American shad stocks are river-specific; that is, each major tributary along the Atlantic coast appears to have its own spawning stock. Similar to the results of the 2007 assessment, the 2020 benchmark stock assessment found coastwide populations to be depleted. The abundance status relative to historic levels for most systems is unknown, but was determined to be depleted in the Potomac and Hudson, and not depleted for the Albemarle Sound. The assessment also evaluated current habitat accessibility, and found that 40% of historic American shad habitat is currently blocked by dams and other barriers. Recovery of American shad stocks will have to address habitat loss in addition to a combination of other factors that have contributed to shad declines, including overfishing, predation by non-native species,

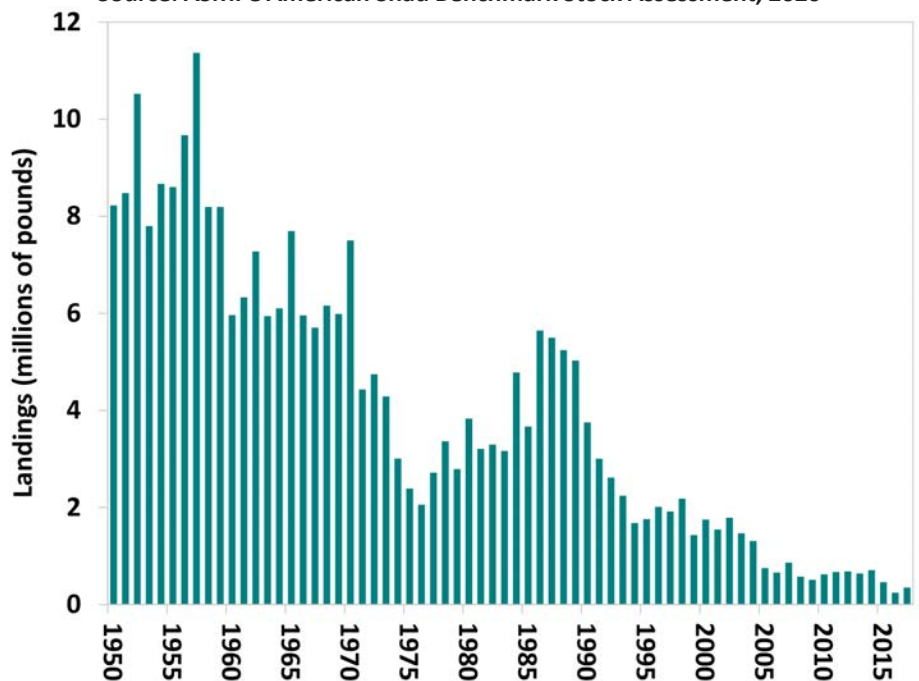
may amount to only a small fraction of total catch as a result of catch-and-release angling practices. Recreational catch-and-release anglers are encouraged to use a barbless hook and to keep shad in the water when removing the hook to avoid stress to the fish.

### Stock Status

The 2020 benchmark stock assessment identified 104 separate tributaries or potential individual stocks.

### American Shad Commercial Landings

Source: ASMFC American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2020



continued, see AMERICAN SHAD on page 13

# Fishery Management Actions

## Atlantic Herring

In August, the Atlantic Herring Management Board reviewed the 2020 Management Track Assessment, which was completed and peer-reviewed in June. The assessment is an update from the 2018 benchmark, and indicates the stock is overfished while overfishing is not occurring. While the traditional modeling framework (ASAP) is unchanged, the new assessment used different methods to produce biological reference points (BRPs) and short-term projections. The BRPs were estimated using only the selectivity from the U.S. mobile fleet because the proportion of catch from the fixed gear fleet has increased significantly in recent years. The fixed gear fleet, which is predominantly Canadian catch and not managed by catch quotas, harvests a higher proportion of younger fish than the U.S. mobile gear fishery, which influences the overall selectivity pattern and BRPs calculated using the method from the previous assessment. However, short-term projections include harvest from all gear types and regions so that projected probabilities and stock status are informed by all stock removals. The assessment also indicates recruitment estimates are highly variable but have remained at low levels from 2013-2019, which introduces an additional source of uncertainty in short-term projections.

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to review the 2020 assessment results in September. The Council will set fishery specifications for 2021-2023 based on overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch recommendations provided by its Scientific and Statistical Committee. Accordingly, the Board is expected to consider specifications for the 2021-2023 seasons once a final rule has been published by NOAA Fisheries.

The Board also received an update on 2020 Area 1A fishery performance. The quota for Season 1 (June-September) in Area 1A is 2,152 metric tons, or 72.8% of the sub-annual catch limit (ACL) after adjusting for the research and fixed gear set asides, and the fact that the Area 1A fishery closes at 92% of the sub-ACL. Effort controls for Season 1 were established in May and the fishery opened July 19 in Maine, and July 20 in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The Area 1A fishery moved to zero (0) landing days on August 23 when the fishery was projected to harvest 92% of the Season 1 allocation. Vessels participating in other fisheries may not possess more than 2,000 pounds

of Atlantic herring per trip per day harvested from Area 1A. The states of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire will reconvene in mid-September to set days out measures for Season 2 (October-December).

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

## Atlantic Striped Bass

In August, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board initiated the development of an Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. As the first step in the development of a new amendment, the Public Information Document (PID) will focus on the following management topics: (1) fishery goals and objectives; (2) stock rebuilding/timeframe; (3) management triggers; (4) biological reference points; (5) regional management (recreational measures, coastal and producer areas, regional reference points); (6) recreational discard mortality; (7) conservation equivalency; (8) recreational accountability; and (9) coastal commercial quota allocation. The purpose of the PID is to solicit stakeholder input on prioritizing the importance of each topic for continued development and inclusion in the Draft Amendment.

“Now that Addendum VI measures are in place and stock rebuilding has been initiated, the Board can focus on addressing a number of issues that have been at the forefront of striped bass management for a long time,” stated Board Chair David Borden of Rhode Island.

Between the Spring and Summer Meetings, a Work Group of Board members met to discuss significant issues facing striped bass management. The Board agreed that all of the issues

discussed by the Work Group are extremely important and complex, and deserve significant thought and consideration. Furthermore, the prioritization of issues to be addressed by the Amendment should be guided by stakeholder input.

“Given it’s been 17 years since the Board last considered a new plan amendment to the striped bass management program, the Board intends to be very thoughtful and deliberative as it proceeds with the development of this Amendment,” stated Mr. Borden. “It’s important that

*continued, see FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS on page 15*



Photo © Al Ristori

# Proposed Management Actions

Throughout September and October the Commission will be accepting public comment on two management documents: Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum I and Black Sea Bass Draft Addendum XXIII. Information on the specifics of the proposed management measures, the public hearing webinar schedules and how to participate in the hearings, as well as submitting public comment are below. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings will be conducted via webinar, with some hearings state-specific and others regionally-focused. You are encouraged to participate in the hearing for your state or region; however, all hearings are open to all individuals. Please note that in order to comment during the hearings you will need to use GoToWebinar. If you call in without using GoToWebinar, you will be in listen only mode and will not be able to provide input. Webinar registration links and call-in information are provided below for each document.

## Atlantic Cobia

The South Atlantic States/Federal Fisheries Management Board has approved for public comment Draft Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia. The Commission and its member states from Maryland to Georgia will be conducting a series of public hearings to gather public input on Draft Addendum I (see below table).

The Draft Addendum was initiated in response to the 2020 quota, which is based on the results of the 2020 Atlantic cobia benchmark stock assessment. The benchmark assessment incorporated new recreational catch estimates, which were about two times higher than those previously used. The Draft Addendum considers options to change the allocation between commercial and recreational sectors, taking into consideration the change in recreational

estimates. Currently 92% of the total quota is allocated to the recreational fishery, and 8% is allocated to the commercial fishery under Amendment 1.

The Draft Addendum proposes strategies that could reduce commercial percent allocations, without reducing the commercial quota below its 2019 level (50,000 pounds). Options for lower commercial allocations were proposed because of a large increase in the 2020-2022 total quota, which resulted in a larger commercial quota (as 8% of the total). The higher overall quota is due, in part, to the increase in recreational catch estimates that resulted from the 2018 calibration of recreational data to the new, mail-based Fishing Effort Survey conducted by the Marine Recreational Information Program. The updated recreational data were incorporated into the 2020 assessment, which estimated a greater abundance of fish than the previous assessment and provided the basis for the 2020-2022 total quota.

The Draft Addendum additionally proposes changes to the calculation of the commercial trigger (determines whether an in-season coastwide commercial closure occurs) and *de minimis* measures (applied to states with relatively small commercial or recreational harvest). The current trigger calculation method is dependent on recent harvests meeting the current or upcoming quota. Proposed changes to the commercial trigger would allow this trigger to be calculated based on harvests in the most recent 5 years, regardless of the size of the harvests relative to a quota. Proposed changes to *de minimis* measures include consideration of a cap on the amount of the commercial quota that can be set

*continued, see PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS on page 9*

State Agency	Public Hearing Webinar Date & Time	Webinar URL & Call-in Information	Hearing Contacts
VMRC	Tuesday, September 22 6 - 8 PM	Webinar link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6006408131526490128">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6006408131526490128</a> Call in listen only*: 877.309.2074; access code: 200.660.341	<a href="#">Somers Smott</a> at 757.247.2004
Regional Hearing 1: DE DNREC, MD DNR & PRFC	Thursday, September 24 6 - 8 PM	Webinar link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2974481728190309389">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2974481728190309389</a> Call in listen only*: 877.309.2074; access code: 795.844.922	DE: <a href="#">John Clark</a> at 302.739.9108
			MD: <a href="#">Lynn Fegley</a> at 443.223.9279
			PRFC: <a href="#">Marty Gary</a> at 804.456.6935
Regional Hearing 2: SC DNR & GA DNR	Tuesday, September 29 6 - 8 PM	Webinar link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4934600898236685324">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4934600898236685324</a> Call in listen only*: 877.309.2071; access code: 172.588.707	SC: <a href="#">Mel Bell</a> at 843.953.9007
			GA: <a href="#">Doug Haymans</a> at 912.264.7218
NC DMF	Thursday, October 1 6 - 8 PM	Webinar link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6597157037434050572">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6597157037434050572</a> Call in listen only*: 877.309.2071; access code: 453.635.352	<a href="#">Chris Batsavage</a> at 252.241.2995

\* Please note: Those joining by phone only, will be limited to listening to the presentation but will not be able to provide input during the hearing. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, US mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

# ASMFC 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

October 19-22, 2020

## 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. The final agenda and meeting materials will be posted to <http://www.asmf.org/home/2020-annual-meeting> October 7.*

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

#### 9:00 –10:00 a.m. Atlantic Herring Management Board

- Set 2021 Fishery Specifications
- Update on New England Fishery Management Council and Commission Coordination Discussions

#### 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Break

#### 11:00 a.m. – Noon Winter Flounder Management Board

- Review 2020 Assessment Updates for Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder Stocks

#### Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

#### 1:15 – 4:15 p.m. American Lobster Management Board

- Consider 2020 American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Report on Data Collection Requirements for 2021
- Report on Electronic Tracking Pilot Program
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Reviews and State Compliance
  - o American Lobster 2019 Fishing Year
  - o Jonah Crab 2018 and 2019 Fishing Years

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

#### 9:00 a.m. – Noon Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Update on Fecundity Estimates Associated with the New Ecological Reference Points
- Set 2021-2022 Fishery Specifications

#### Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

#### 1:15 – 4:15 p.m. South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Consider Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum I for Final Approval
- Review Atlantic Croaker and Spot Traffic Light Analyses
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for 2019 Fishing Year for Red Drum

### 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 use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

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

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

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

1. Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of the webinar (September 28<sup>th</sup>) will be included in the briefing materials.

2. Comments received by 5 PM on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> will be included in the supplemental materials.

3. Comments received by 10:00 a.m. on Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

*continued, see ANNUAL MEETING PRELIMINARY AGENDA, continued on page 14*



aside to account for harvest in commercial *de minimis* states as well as increasing the alternative recreational minimum size limit, which can be adopted by recreational *de minimis* states that choose not to adopt the measures of a neighboring or nearest non-*de minimis* state.

### Webinar Instructions

You can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software ([click here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at [info@asmfc.org](mailto:info@asmfc.org) (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to use the computer voice over internet (VoIP) so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. Those joining by phone only, will be limited to listening to the presentation but will not be able to provide input during the hearing. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, US mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

The Commission will also post a recording of the hearing presentation on the Commission's YouTube page so that stakeholders may watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process. This recording will be available mid-September.

Draft Addendum I is available at [http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/CobiaDraftAddI\\_PublicComment\\_September2020.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/CobiaDraftAddI_PublicComment_September2020.pdf) or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. Recreational anglers, members of the commercial fishing industry, and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum I either by participating in the hearing webinars or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM (EST)**

on **October 6, 2020** and should be sent to Savannah Lewis, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Cobia Draft Addendum I).

### Black Sea Bass

The Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have scheduled a series of public hearings to gather public input on the Commission's Draft Addendum XXXIII and the Council's Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment. The Commission initiated the Draft Addendum in October 2019 to consider adjusting the commercial black sea bass allocations based on current distribution and abundance of the stock. In December 2019, the Council initiated an amendment, which will consider including the allocations in the Council fishery management plan (FMP), modifying the state-specific allocations, and other changes to federal regulations.

### Overview of Proposed Action

Draft Addendum XXXIII proposes alternative approaches for allocating the coastwide black sea bass commercial quota among the states. The following options are proposed: A) status quo; B) increasing Connecticut's allocation to 5%; C) dynamic allocations partially based on regional stock distribution and partially on historic allocations; D) a trigger-based approach where only coastwide quota above a certain level would be distributed according to a different allocation scheme; E) another trigger-based approach where quota above the trigger would first be used to increase Connecticut and New York's allocations to 5% and 9%, respectively; and F) distributing a percentage of coastwide quota using initial allocations and the remaining proportion differently. A variety of sub-options are included to set the scale and pace of the allocation changes. Several options incorporate information on regional stock biomass; therefore, options are also proposed to define regions.

The Draft Addendum and Council Amendment also propose options to

consider changes to federal regulations and Council management of state allocations. These options address whether the state allocations should be added to the Council's FMP or remain only in the Commission's FMP, whether changes should be made to the regulations regarding paybacks of state quota overages if added to the Council's FMP, and whether to modify regulations regarding federal in-season closures.

### Hearing Schedule

The Commission and Council have scheduled seven public hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addendum and Council Amendment. Members of the commercial fishing industry and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input either by participating in the public hearing webinars or providing written comment (see table on page 17.)

### Webinar Instructions

You can access GoToWebinar through your computer, tablet, or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software ([click here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance. GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at [info@asmfc.org](mailto:info@asmfc.org) (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to use the computer voice over internet (VoIP) so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

To register for a public hearing please click here: [Public Hearing Registration](#)

As part of the registration process, you must select the date and time of

### American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment Q & A

#### Q: What Data Were Used?

**A:** This assessment used both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data from resource agency monitoring programs. Both types of data are limited, with only relatively short-term fishery-independent indices available for use and fishery-dependent data hindered by data gaps and a lack of river-specific information. This assessment also used habitat availability data for the first time.

#### Fishery-Dependent Data

American shad are caught in a number of different fisheries, both as a target species and as bycatch. The assessment included commercial landings data by river, where available, and in aggregate from all rivers and estuaries along the coast and the ocean. Commercial landings in Canadian waters were also included in the assessment based on research that indicates U.S. stocks migrate to these waters and are vulnerable to Canadian marine fisheries. Data from fishery observers were used to estimate bycatch in estuarine and ocean fisheries. This bycatch occurs primarily in bottom trawl and gill net fisheries targeting other species and may be retained or discarded.

Fishery resource agencies collect biological and effort data from some fisheries, which are used to characterize the age structure (catch-at-age) and catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE). Age structure can be analyzed to estimate mortality and CPUE can be analyzed to track changes in abundance over time.

Recreational fishing for American shad occurs in some rivers, but data from these fisheries are limited and the impact is largely unknown. NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program, which tracks coastal recreational catch and effort, rarely encounters anglers fishing for American shad and, as a result, its estimates of recreational catch and effort are highly uncertain and were not used in the assessment.

#### Fishery-Independent Data

Fishery resource agencies along the coast conduct surveys that provide indices of

abundance and biological data to track changes in relative abundance through time and characterize population attributes such as age structure and average size. In-river surveys encounter young of year (YOY) fish moving to estuarine and marine environments in the fall and adults returning to rivers to spawn in the spring. Due to a lack of genetic data, fish captured by these marine surveys cannot be traced back to their river-specific stocks; this prevents a complete understanding of trends in abundance, or biological attributes of river-specific American shad stocks from marine surveys. Fish counts and biological sampling of American shad passing dams are also used as indices of abundance and to characterize population attributes. Fishery-independent data sets represent a relatively short time series and do not provide information on the historical productivity of stocks, making it difficult to determine abundance status from these data sets alone. Shad biologists from along the coast also provided data on historical spawning habitat area and dams, which were used to determine currently unobstructed spawning habitat.

#### Q: What Models Were Used?

**A:** The assessment evaluated Atlantic coastal stocks on an individual river system basis when data were available and also as a coastwide metapopulation with data sets that could not be attributed to system-specific stocks. Twenty three system-specific stocks had data available for assessment. Due to data limitations, regional metapopulations were defined to share life history data (growth and natural mortality rates) among system-specific stocks within each regional metapopulation. The northern iteroparous metapopulation included stocks north of the Hudson River to the U.S.-Canadian border, the semelparous metapopulation included stocks north of the Cape Fear River to the Hudson River. As an anadromous metapopulation, ideally American shad should be assessed and managed by individual river systems. However, the majority of the life history of shad is spent in the marine environment



Tagged shad. NY Species Stock Survey. Photo © NYSDEC Hudson River Fisheries Unit

where factors influencing survival likely have impacts upon multiple river stocks when they mix during marine migrations. This complex life history complicates assessment as it is difficult to separate in-river factors from marine factors governing population dynamics. Also complicating the assessment is the variability in data quantity and quality among rivers along the coast.

A combination of assessment approaches was used to assess the status of American shad stocks due to the variation in data availability across individual systems. The year 2005 was selected as a reference point for abundance trend analyses based on a coastwide management change (i.e., closure of the ocean-intercept fishery) to assess response in abundance to this change. An autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) analysis of abundance indices was used to compare current abundance to reference abundance levels in 2005. Mann-Kendall trend analysis was used to detect trends in each abundance index since 2005 and to detect trends in mean length and mean length-at-age over time.

To establish total mortality ( $Z$ ) biological reference points (BRPs), the assessment used a modified Thompson-Bell spawning biomass per recruit (SBPR) model. The threshold for total mortality was set at  $Z_{40\%}$ , which is the total mortality that produces 40% of the spawning biomass that would be produced under natural mortality levels ( $M$ ). The assessment used total mortality estimators (i.e., catch curves) to estimate annual total mortality of spawning adults. Recent mortality (averages during 2015-2017) was compared to  $Z_{40\%}$  thresholds to assess

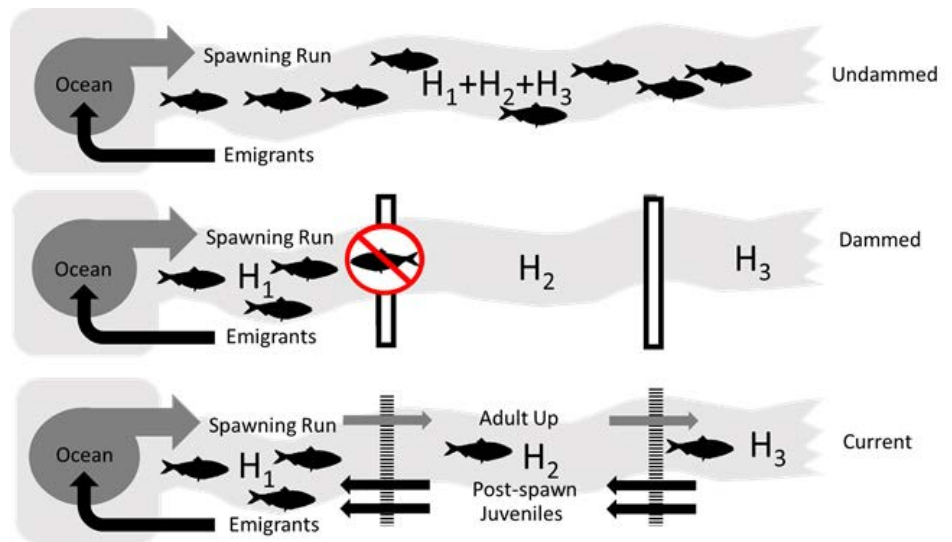
*continued, see SCIENCE HIGHLIGHT on page 11*

whether the total mortality of stocks is sustainable.

The assessment also used several population models to assess the status of individual stocks depending on data availability. Delay-difference models used total catch data and indices of abundance to track changes in biomass and exploitation rates. The exploitation rate that results in maximum sustainable yield (UMSY) was compared to recent exploitation rates to assess whether exploitation is sustainable. Statistical catch-at-age models used catch-at-age data and indices of abundance to track the decline in abundance of each year class in the population due to mortality. Recent mortality was then compared to Z40% thresholds as was done with total mortality estimators. Finally, a population simulation model that linked shad life history characteristics to spawning habitat availability was used to estimate spawner potential. The analysis compared spawner potential under three scenarios: (1) historic, undammed spawning habitat, (2) spawning habitat with no fish passage at dams, and (3) spawning habitat with an optimistic estimate of “current” fish passage at barriers (see accompanying figure).

### Q: What is the Status of the Stock?

**A:** Adult mortality for the coastwide metapopulation is unknown, but was determined to be unsustainable for some system-specific stocks, indicating the continued need for management action to reduce adult mortality. Specifically, adult mortality was determined to be unsustainable for three stocks (Connecticut, Delaware, and Potomac) and sustainable for five stocks (Hudson, Rappahannock, York, Albemarle Sound, and Neuse). Though adult mortality was determined to be sustainable for some system-specific stocks, it is important to note that maintaining sustainable adult mortality will not result in favorable abundance status if juvenile mortality is unsustainable. Unfortunately, data are not being collected in any system to determine juvenile mortality status and, without these determinations, a significant uncertainty remains in assessment advice for the management of American shad.



The habitat assessment and simulation model to estimate spawner potential under 3 different scenarios (from top to bottom): (1) historic, undammed spawning habitat, (2) spawning habitat with no fish passage at dams, and (3) spawning habitat with an optimistic estimate of “current” fish passage at barriers. Image © Mike Bailey.

Abundance status is unknown for most systems due to data limitations, so trends in YOY and adult abundance are provided for information on abundance changes since the 2005 closure of the ocean-intercept fishery (see Table on next page). For YOY indices, two systems experienced increasing trends while one system experienced a decreasing trend since 2005. All other systems experienced either no trend (eight systems), conflicting trends among indices (one system), or had no data (11 systems). For adult indices, four systems experienced increasing trends while no systems experienced decreasing trends since 2005. All other systems experienced either no trend (11 systems), conflicting trends among indices (seven systems), or had no data (one system). Trend analyses also indicate a continued lack of consistent increasing trends in coastwide metapopulation abundance since 2005. Abundance status was determined to be depleted for one system (Hudson) and not depleted for one system (Albemarle Sound). Despite the finding that the Albemarle Sound abundance status is not depleted, the coastwide metapopulation abundance was determined to be depleted based on the decline in coastwide landings since the 1950s by more than an order of magnitude and the lack of consistent increasing trends in abundance indices since the decline in landings.

There may still not have been enough time for coastwide abundance to respond to the 2005 closure of the ocean intercept fishery, given various factors impeding rebuilding among systems. In fact, the assessment finds that shad rebuilding is limited by restricted access to spawning habitat. Current barriers partly or completely block 40% of historic shad spawning habitat (including Canada), which may equate to a loss of more than a third of spawning adults. Optimistic fish passage rates only provide a modest increase (4%) in spawner potential relative to no fish passage.

The decline of American shad is not unique; declines of many other diadromous species have been observed in the North Atlantic basin. Multiple factors are likely responsible for shad decline such as overfishing, inadequate fish passage at dams, predation, pollution, water withdrawals, channelization of rivers, changing ocean conditions, and climate change. It is not possible to separate out impacts of each factor with available data to evaluate their relative contributions to abundance decline. Thus, the recovery of American shad will need to address multiple factors including improved monitoring (see below), anthropogenic (human-caused) habitat alterations, predation by non-native predators, and exploitation by fisheries.

continued, see SCIENCE HIGHLIGHT on page 12

Summary of American Shad Stock & Habitat Conditions				
System	Historic Riverine Habitat Currently Unobstructed	Abundance Trends (2005-2017)	Adult Status*	
			Total Mortality Rate	Abundance
Merrymeeting Bay	50.02%	YOY: No trend Adults: No data	Unknown	Unknown
Merrimack	17.83%	YOY: No data Adults: Increasing trend	Unknown	Unknown
Pawcatuck	19.21%	YOY: No data Adults: Increasing trend	Unknown	Unknown
Connecticut	45.19%	YOY: No trend Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 1 no trend)	Unsustainable	Unknown
Hudson	89.24%	YOY: No trend Adults: No trend	Sustainable	Depleted
Delaware	72.05%	YOY: No trends (2 indices) Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 1 no trend)	Unsustainable	Unknown
Nanticoke	100%	YOY: Declining trend Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Unknown	Unknown
Susquehanna & Upper Chesapeake	4.38%	YOY: No trend Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Unknown	Unknown
Patuxent	100%	YOY: No data Adults: No trend	Unknown	Unknown
Potomac	90.02%	YOY: No trend Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Unsustainable	Unknown
Rappahannock	95.98%	YOY: Increasing trend Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Sustainable	Unknown
York	87.42%	YOY: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 2 no trends) Adults: No trend	Sustainable	Unknown
James	72.77%	YOY: No trend Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Unknown	Unknown
Albemarle Sound	58.92%	YOY: Increasing trend Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (2 no trends, 1 increasing)	Sustainable	Not overfished
Tar-Pamlico	75.68%	YOY: No data Adults: No trend	Unknown	Unknown
Neuse	90.05%	YOY: No data Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 1 no trend)	Sustainable	Unknown
Cape Fear	46.59%	YOY: No data Adults: Increasing trends (2 indices)	Unknown	Unknown
Winyah Bay	73.13%	YOY: No data Adults: Conflicting trends (1 increasing, 2 no trend)	Unknown	Unknown
Santee-Cooper	20.95%	YOY: No data Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 2 no trend)	Unknown	Unknown
ACE Basin	82.28%	YOY: No data Adults: No trend	Unknown	Unknown
Savannah	59.19%	YOY: No data Adults: No trends (2 indices)	Unknown	Unknown
Altamaha	82.24%	YOY: No data Adults: Conflicting trends between indices (1 increasing, 1 no trend)	Unknown	Unknown
St Johns	90.04%	YOY: No trend Adults: Increasing trend	Unknown	Unknown
Coastwide	55.42%	YOY: NA Adult: Conflicting trends between indices	Unknown	Depleted

\* The status determinations identified in the table for total mortality and abundance are for adults only. System-specific data on juvenile American shad as they transition from young-of-the-year (YOY) to mature spawning adults are unavailable, which can impact overall status determinations.

### Q: What Data and Research Are Needed to Improve Future Assessments?

A: Efforts to assess the status of American shad on the Atlantic coast are hampered

by a lack of data and the complex stock structure. Several high priority research needs were identified during the benchmark stock assessment to improve future stock assessments.

- Stock composition data (e.g., genetic samples, tagging studies) are essential to understand mixed-stock fishery impacts on American shad stocks.
- This assessment used scales to determine age despite these data generally being less reliable than age data from otoliths. Monitoring programs should use otoliths for age data going forward. Scales should be collected to analyze repeat spawn marks which are not made on otoliths. Rigorous protocols for ageing need to be used that include collection of supplementary data to evaluate aging error.
- All systems with fisheries should be monitored with comprehensive fishery-independent and fishery-dependent monitoring programs that collect data on relative abundance and biological attributes, fishery catch (including discards), effort, and biological attributes.
- Existing riverine surveys only encounter mature fish and marine surveys only encounter immature fish of unknown stock origin, making stock-specific maturity determination challenging. Maturity studies designed to accommodate this unique challenge posed by American shad reproductive behavior need to be conducted.
- More widespread research on fish passage at barriers is needed for adult upstream and downstream migration and YOY downstream migration.

Links to both the 2020 Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment & Peer Review Report and the Assessment Overview are below.

**Benchmark Assessment & Peer Review Report** – [http://www.asmf.org/uploads/file/5f43ca4eAmShad-BenchmarkStockAssessment\\_Peer-ReviewReport\\_2020\\_web.pdf](http://www.asmf.org/uploads/file/5f43ca4eAmShad-BenchmarkStockAssessment_Peer-ReviewReport_2020_web.pdf)

**Assessment Overview** - [http://www.asmf.org/uploadsfile/5f47c8dbAmShadAssessmentOverview\\_Aug2020.pdf](http://www.asmf.org/uploadsfile/5f47c8dbAmShadAssessmentOverview_Aug2020.pdf)

pollution, and climate change. For a more detailed overview of the benchmark assessment and peer review, see Science Highlight on pages 10 & 11 of this issue.

## Atlantic Coastal Management

In 2010, the Commission's Shad and River Herring Management Board approved Amendment 3. In an effort to support the recovery of depleted and declining stocks, Amendment 3 prohibits state water commercial and recreational fisheries beginning January 1, 2013 unless states/jurisdictions develop and implement sustainable fishery management plans (SFMPs). Amendment 3 defines a sustainable fishery as "a commercial and/or recreational fishery that will not diminish the potential future stock reproduction and recruitment." SFMPs must clearly demonstrate that the state's or jurisdiction's American shad fisheries meet this definition of sustainability through sustainability targets which must be monitored, achieved, and maintained. Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, the Delaware River Basin, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida all have approved SFMPs for American shad. All states and jurisdictions are allowed to maintain catch-and-release recreational fisheries.

The Commission also continues to collaborate with New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) to address bycatch of these species in federal Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel fisheries. The Councils set the annual catch cap for shad and river herring at 796,005 pounds for 2019. Under a new management action by the MAFMC (Framework 13), the catch cap in the Atlantic mackerel fishery is set to increase from the 2019 cap of 196,211



### SHAD CULTURE.

**The shad (*Alosa proaestabilis*) stands very high among, if not at the head of, the luxuries which our rivers afford. A seven-pound specimen, in the month of June, taken fresh from the Connecticut, and cooked by a housewife who has had her birth and education in that famous valley, leaves little to be desired in the way of epicurean delight. The fish from this stream stand so high in the market that the placard, "Connecticut River Shad," probably sells a great many more fish in all our large cities than come from that stream. As compared with the southern shad, they are unquestionably fatter and of finer flavor; but, as compared with the fish that come from other streams along the Connecticut and Rhode Island shores, there is not much ground for distinction. I have eaten quite as fine from the Quinebaug and the Pawcatuck, before the race became extinct in those rivers, as the best ever taken at Saybrook and Lyme.....**

By WM. CLIFT  
American Fisheries Society: Vol. 1, Issue 1  
(January 1872)

pounds to 284,396 pounds for 2020 and 2021.

In addition, Amendment 3 requires states and jurisdictions to submit a habitat plan regardless of whether any fishery would remain open. The habitat plans outline current and historical spawning and nursery habitat, threats to those habitats, and habitat restoration programs in each of the river systems. The purpose of the habitat plans is to provide a record of the major threats facing American shad to aid in future management efforts. The habitat plans provide a comprehensive picture of threats to American shad in each state and include collaboration with other state and federal agencies (e.g., state inland fish and wildlife agencies, water quality agencies, U.S Army Corps of Engineers).

The two largest threats identified in the habitat plans were barriers to migration and a lack of information on the consequences of climate change. A key benefit of the habitat plans is that system-specific threats to shad are now characterized along the Atlantic coast. The habitat plans are filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to ensure that shad habitat is considered when hydropower dams are licensed. They are also shared with inland fisheries divisions to support habitat monitoring and restoration efforts. The Board approved the majority of habitat plans for all states/jurisdictions in 2014; Florida's habitat plan was approved in 2017 and plans are being developed for the Hudson and Merrimack Rivers. It is anticipated that habitat plans will be updated every five years. To learn more about state habitat plans, go to the Shad & River Herring webpage at <http://www.asmf.org/species/shad-river-herring> (under Management Section).

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org).

ERPs, continued from page 1

Moving forward, the ERPs for Atlantic menhaden are:

ERP target: the maximum fishing mortality rate (F) on Atlantic menhaden that sustains Atlantic striped bass at their biomass target when striped bass are fished at their F target

ERP threshold: the maximum F on Atlantic menhaden that keeps Atlantic striped bass at their biomass threshold when striped bass are fished at their F target.

Atlantic striped bass was the focal species for the ERP definitions because it was the most sensitive predator fish species to Atlantic menhaden harvest in the model, so an ERP target and threshold that sustained striped bass would likely provide sufficient forage for other predators under current ecosystem conditions. For the development of the ERPs, all other focal species in the model (bluefish, weakfish, spiny dogfish, and Atlantic herring) were assumed to be fished at 2017 levels.

In addition to adopting ERPs, the Board discussed setting fishery specifications for 2021-2022. In 2017, the Board set the total allowable catch (TAC) at 216,000 metric tons for 2018-2019, and then maintained that TAC for 2020 with the expectation that it would be set in future years using ERPs. With the adoption of ERPs, the Board tasked the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee to run a projection analysis to provide a variety of TAC scenarios and their risk of exceeding the ERP F target to compare in setting specifications for 2021-2022. The Board will review the projection analysis at the Annual Meeting in October and then determine a TAC for 2021-2022. As stated in Amendment 3, if a TAC is not set at the Annual Meeting, the TAC from the previous year will be maintained.

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

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA, continued from page 8

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

### 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. Executive Committee

- Review and Consider Approval of FY20 Audit
- Discuss Pennsylvania's Participation on the Atlantic Menhaden Board
- Discuss Improvements to the Public Comment Process

### 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Break

### 10:30 – 11:15 a.m. Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Set 2021 Harvest Specifications
- Progress Report on Adaptive Resource Management Revisions
- Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2019 Fishing Year

### 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Spiny Dogfish Management Board

- Consider Revised FY2021 and FY2022 Specifications
- Elect Vice-Chair

### 12:15 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch Break

### 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Consider Draft Amendment 7 Public Information Document for Public Comment
- Review Technical Committee Report on Factors Limiting Recreational Release Mortality Estimates
- Consider Approval of State Implementation Plans for Addendum VI Mandatory Circle Hook Requirements

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

### 8:30 – 9:45 a.m. Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

- Consider Recommendations for FY2021 Submitted Proposals
- Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

### 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Business Session

- Review and Consider Approval of the 2021 Action Plan
- Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

### 11:15 a.m. – Noon Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board

- Update from Executive Committee
- Consider Dividing the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board
- Set Coastal Sharks Fishery Specifications for 2021
- Review Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)

### Noon – 1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

### 1:15 – 2:15 p.m. Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (continued)

### 2:15 – 2:30 p.m. Business Session (continued)

- Consider Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)

## ACCSP Releases SAFIS eTrips/Mobile V2

The Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) is a coastwide fisheries data collection system developed to meet the needs of scientists, managers, and industry. eTrips collect catch & effort data from commercial harvesters and for-hire captains. eTrips/Mobile is the mobile version of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics program's (ACCSP) eTrips application that allows captains to capture their catch and effort data while at sea, independent of a full-time internet connection.

In August, ACCSP released SAFIS eTRIPS/ mobile V2 with an addition of the switchboard. All captains will need to upgrade to the newest version of eTRIPS/ mobile V2 in order to access the new features. Please note that eTRIPS/mobile V1 will no longer be functional. See [here](#) for upgrading instructions. Need help upgrading to eTRIPS/mobile V2? Call our 24-hour helpdesk 1-800-984-0810.

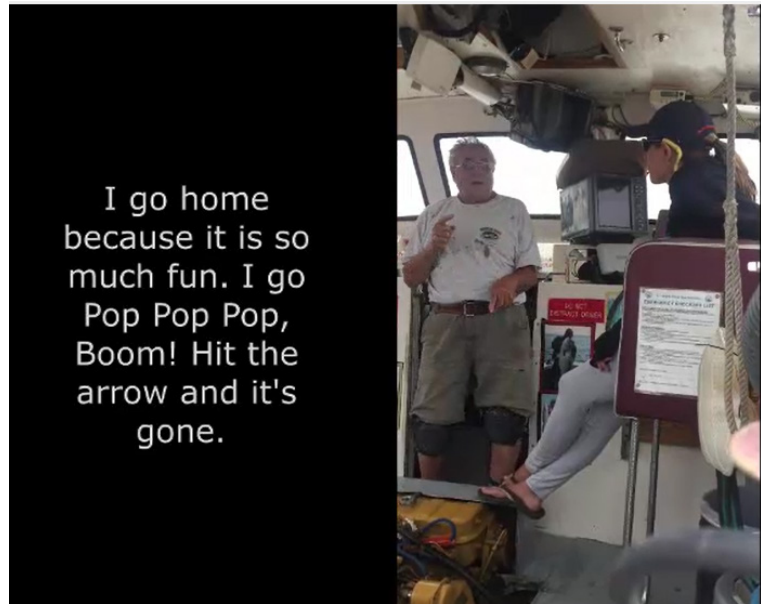
Captains will be able experience the benefits of electronic reporting on compatible platforms such as Android, Apple, and Windows 10 devices. SAFIS eTRIPS/ mobile V2 offers fast and streamlined data entry, and easy access to past reports. Captains will receive immediate confirmation of their submissions, which will minimize the potential for human error and provide greater data security.

### New Features

- Create and submit reports on your phone.
- Dynamic reports will only ask you the questions needed to meet your state and federal reporting requirements.
- Stay informed with messages from your state and federal reporting staff.
- Our 24-Hour Help Desk is always ready to answer any of your questions, with improved diagnostic tools.

In an interview with Francine Karp of Harborlights, Captain Billy Della Valle of Old Salt Charters shares his excitement for the new eTRIPS/ mobile V2: "I love it. Now I go home because it is so much fun. I go, 'Pop, Pop, Pop, Boom!' Hit the arrow and it's gone! ... All that stress and aggravation of writing out those slips ... Gone!"

For more information or to view more videos on eTRIPS 2 please visit: <https://www.accsp.org/what-we-do/safis/etrips-mobile-instructions/>



*FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS continued from page 6*

we provide the public with sufficient background information in order to solicit effective feedback from all stakeholders and ensure the Draft Amendment addresses the most pressing issues at this time."

During its deliberations, Board members discussed the importance of addressing discard mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries given discards significantly contribute to total fishing mortality. As a result, the Board tasked the Plan Development Team and Technical Committee to review factors limiting the accuracy of discard mortality estimates for stock assessment purposes, and to identify potential actions that could improve understanding or help reduce discard mortality in the fishery.

The Work Group Report, which can be found [here](#), will serve as the foundation of the Draft PID. The Board will review the first draft of the PID at the Commission's Annual Meeting in October. At that meeting, the Board will determine if the PID is ready to be sent out for public comment or if further modifications to the document are needed. Given current, and possibly future, meeting restrictions due to COVID-19, public hearings may be conducted via webinar.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

## Employee of the Quarter: Jeff Kipp and Caitlin Starks



For the second quarter of 2020, Commission staff had the opportunity to recognize Jeff Kipp and Caitlin Starks, respectively, for their notable contributions to the Commission's fisheries science and fisheries management programs. With contributions to both the new American shad stock assessment and the upcoming American lobster stock assessment, Jeff and Caitlin worked hand in hand to keep committees on task to deliver the best and latest science on the health and sustainability of those species for management board use.

### JEFF KIPP

In the eight years since he joined the Commission's Stock Assessment Team, Jeff has played an important role in advancing the use and public understanding of fisheries science along the Atlantic coast. Jeff served as a lead analyst on the recently released American shad benchmark stock assessment, helping to advance the science through new catch-at-age and habitat models. Highly respected by peer review panelists and Stock Assessment Subcommittee members alike, Jeff received praise as a talented scientist who is easy to work with. Jeff also served as a lead analyst on the soon to be released American lobster benchmark stock assessment. Jeff has again shown his analytical creativity in exploring new methods to characterize the effects of environmental changes on lobster stocks and integrate new maturity data into the assessment. In addition to his work on Commission stock

assessments, Jeff also represents the Commission well on external projects, notably his chairing of the recent peer review panel for North Carolina's state assessment of striped bass for which he demonstrated strong leadership abilities. With his unique combination of analytical skills, tireless dedication to his work, and strong rapport with the assessment community, Jeff works at the highest level to produce quality science documents to inform fisheries management decisions.



### CAITLIN STARKS

Wrapping up her third year with the Commission, FMP Coordinator Caitlin Starks continues to make noteworthy contributions to the fisheries management program. Caitlin's ability to collaborate with committee members and organize assignments has ensured the successful completion of both the American shad and American lobster benchmark stock assessments. Caitlin's close and effective working relationship with Jeff Kipp on these assessments epitomizes the successes that can be achieved through cross-departmental collaboration. Continuing to provide critical support to her other species committees, Caitlin kept the Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation Addendum moving forward and developed critical options for inclusion in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Amendment. With each project, her ability to stay on top of assignments, collaborate with committee members, and communicate complex issues and management options in a simple, straightforward way has elevated the quality of Commission management documents. Caitlin's inquisitiveness, attention to detail, and strong work ethic have served her well in her position and are clearly reflected in her work products. These traits, combined with her strong working relationships with Commissioners, committee members, and Commission and Mid-Atlantic Council staff, make her a valuable asset to the Commission and its fisheries management program.

As Employees of the Quarter (EOQ), Jeff and Caitlin received a cash award and a letter of appreciation to be placed in their personal record. In addition, their names are on the EOQ plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Jeff & Caitlin!



## STAFF



In August, **LINDSEY AUBART** joined the Commission staff as part of the ACCSP Data Team, focusing on the new biological module. Lindsey has previously worked as a state fisheries biologist for the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources and North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. In those roles, she

became familiar with the Commission as a Technical Committee representative for American eel, Atlantic menhaden, horseshoe crab, shad and river herring, and weakfish. She and her family have just moved back to the U.S. from Wiesbaden, Germany, where her husband was stationed. Welcome aboard, Lindsey!

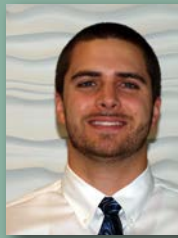


In August, **SAVANNAH LEWIS** joined the Commission staff as Fishery Management Plan Coordinator. Savannah will be working on species managed by the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board (Atlantic cobia, Atlantic croaker, black drum, red drum, Spanish mackerel, spot, spotted sea trout, and Spanish mackerel). Additionally, over the next few months, she will assume coordination

responsibilities for black sea bass.

Savannah has two masters degrees. The most recent is a Master of Science from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in 2018. During her time as a graduate student at VIMS, she

researched the genetic connectivity of Virginia striped bass stocks. She also received a Master of Science in Biology from Southeastern Louisiana University. She recently worked for Maryland Department of Natural Resources as the Assistant Permits Coordinator, where she worked on Maryland's commercial striped bass, yellow perch, black sea bass, summer flounder, horseshoe crab, snapping turtle, and finfish trotline fisheries. She also represented Maryland on ACCSP's Operations Committee. Welcome aboard, Savannah!



In August, **MIKE SCHMIDTKE**, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator since 2016, left the Commission to join the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council as a Fishery Scientist. As an FMP Coordinator, Mike did an exemplary job of coordinating the management of horseshoe crab, weakfish, and 8 South Atlantic species. Over his four years with the Commission, he prepared the

Interstate FMP and Amendment 1 for Atlantic cobia and assisted in stock assessments for Atlantic cobia, Atlantic croaker and spot, horseshoe crab, and weakfish. Mike's calm demeanor and level headedness served him, as well as the board and committees he worked closely with, well in juggling the management activities of 10 species. Mike also excelled at working with stakeholders, helping to explain and simplify complex issues and working to ensure that they felt a part of the management process. We wish Mike and his family the very best!

### PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, continued from page 9

the hearing you wish to attend (see Table below). To attend the webinar in listen only mode, you may dial this number: 562.247.8422; Access Code: 412-241-258. Please note that those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

### Learn More

Draft Addendum XXXIII is available at [http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/BSB\\_DraftAddendumXXXIII\\_PublicComment.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/BSB_DraftAddendumXXXIII_PublicComment.pdf) or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. A recording of the hearing presentation will be posted on the Commission's YouTube channel in late September. A subsequent press release will announce the availability of the recording.

### Submit Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled hearings, written comments will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on November 13, 2020** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201;

703.842.0741 (fax) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Black Sea Bass Addendum XXXIII). All comments will be made available to both the Commission and Council for consideration; duplicate comments do not need to be submitted to both bodies. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

State/Region	Public Hearing Webinar Date and Time	Hearing Officer(s)	Contact Information
Virginia	Thursday, 10/8/2020 6-8 pm	Alexa Kretsch	<a href="mailto:alexa.kretsch@mrc.virginia.gov">alexa.kretsch@mrc.virginia.gov</a> 757.247.2069
North Carolina	Tuesday, 10/13/2020 6-8 pm	Chris Batsavage	<a href="mailto:Chris.Batsavage@ncdenr.gov">Chris.Batsavage@ncdenr.gov</a> 252.241.2995
Delaware and Maryland	Wednesday, 10/14/2020 6-8 pm	DE: John Clark	<a href="mailto:John.Clark@delaware.gov">John.Clark@delaware.gov</a> 302.739.9914
		MD: Sonny Gwinn	<a href="mailto:sonnygwinn@verizon.net">sonnygwinn@verizon.net</a> 410.208.1149
Connecticut and New York	Thursday, 10/15/2020 6-8 pm	CT: Justin Davis	<a href="mailto:justin.davis@ct.gov">justin.davis@ct.gov</a> 860.434.6043
		NY: Maureen Davidson	<a href="mailto:maureen.davidson@dec.ny.gov">maureen.davidson@dec.ny.gov</a> 631.444.0483
New Jersey	Tuesday, 10/27/2020 6-8 pm	Joseph Cimino	<a href="mailto:Joseph.Cimino@dep.nj.gov">Joseph.Cimino@dep.nj.gov</a> 609.748.2063
Rhode Island	Wednesday, 10/28/2020 6-8 pm	Corinne Truesdale	<a href="mailto:Corinne.truesdale@dem.ri.gov">Corinne.truesdale@dem.ri.gov</a> 401.423.1939
Massachusetts	Thursday, 10/29/2020 6-8 pm	Nichola Meserve	<a href="mailto:nichola.meserve@mass.gov">nichola.meserve@mass.gov</a> 617.626.1531

With Mike Schmidtke's departure, there have been a number of shifts in species assigned to the FMP Coordinators. The table below provides current staff leads by species and department (management, science, ACCSP). In addition to the species that Savannah has assumed coordination responsibilities for, Caitlin Starks will take over coordination of horseshoe crab over the next few months once the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board has finalized Black Sea Bass Addendum XXXIII. Dustin Colson Leaning will temporarily assume coordination of weakfish management activities.

STAFF LEADS BY SPECIES			
Species	FMP Coordinator	Stock Assessment Scientist	ACCSP Data Lead
American Eel	Kirby Rootes-Murdy <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
American Lobster & Jonah Crab	Caitlin Starks <a href="mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org">cstarks@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Julie Defilippi Simpson <a href="mailto:julie.simpson@accsp.org">julie.simpson@accsp.org</a>
Atlantic Croaker	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Atlantic Herring	Max Appelman <a href="mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org">mappelman@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Joe Myers <a href="mailto:joseph.myers@accsp.org">joseph.myers@accsp.org</a>
Atlantic Menhaden	Kirby Rootes-Murdy <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a>	Julie Defilippi Simpson <a href="mailto:julie.simpson@accsp.org">julie.simpson@accsp.org</a>
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Atlantic Sturgeon	Max Appelman <a href="mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org">mappelman@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a> Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Joe Myers <a href="mailto:joseph.myers@accsp.org">joseph.myers@accsp.org</a>
Black Drum	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Black Sea Bass	Caitlin Starks <a href="mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org">cstarks@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Bluefish	Dustin Colson Leaning <a href="mailto:DLeaning@asmfc.org">DLeaning@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Joe Myers <a href="mailto:joseph.myers@accsp.org">joseph.myers@accsp.org</a>
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Horseshoe Crab	Caitlin Starks <a href="mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org">cstarks@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Northern Shrimp	Dustin Colson Leaning <a href="mailto:DLeaning@asmfc.org">DLeaning@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Red Drum	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Shad & River Herring	Caitlin Starks <a href="mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org">cstarks@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Spanish Mackerel	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Spiny Dogfish	Kirby Rootes-Murdy <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Kristen Anstead <a href="mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org">kanstead@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Spot	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Spotted Seatrout	Savannah Lewis <a href="mailto:slewis@asmfc.org">slewis@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Heather Konell <a href="mailto:heather.konell@accsp.org">heather.konell@accsp.org</a>
Summer Flounder & Scup	Dustin Colson Leaning <a href="mailto:DLeaning@asmfc.org">DLeaning@asmfc.org</a>	Jeff Kipp <a href="mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org">jkipp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Tautog	Kirby Rootes-Murdy <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Weakfish	Dustin Colson Leaning <a href="mailto:DLeaning@asmfc.org">DLeaning@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Rinaldi <a href="mailto:mike.rinaldi@accsp.org">mike.rinaldi@accsp.org</a>
Winter Flounder	Dustin Colson Leaning <a href="mailto:DLeaning@asmfc.org">DLeaning@asmfc.org</a>	Katie Drew <a href="mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org">kdrew@asmfc.org</a>	Joe Myers <a href="mailto:joseph.myers@accsp.org">joseph.myers@accsp.org</a>