



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Upcoming Meetings
page 2

From the Executive Director's Desk
The Ongoing Challenges of Allocation
page 3

Species Profile
Atlantic Menhaden
page 4

2019 Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda
page 6

Comings & Goings
page 9

Habitat Happenings
page 10

ACCSP Update
New Technologies for Recreational Data Collection
page 12

Employees of the Quarter
page 14

ASMFC American Lobster Board Initiates Draft Addendum to Consider Reducing Vertical Lines in the Water

In February, the Commission's American Lobster Management Board initiated Draft Addendum XXVIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum considers reducing the number of vertical lines in the water in response to concerns about the North Atlantic right whale population and the potential impacts of whale conservation measures on the conduct of the lobster fishery.

"With this proposed action, the Board is entering uncertain waters," stated Maine Commissioner Pat Keliher. "However, as the lead management authority for American lobster, we have a responsibility to ensure the viability of the lobster fishery. Through the active engagement of the states and the lobster industry in our management process, we believe the Board is best suited to navigate the growing challenges facing the lobster fishery."

A key focus of the Board meeting was the intersection of lobster management and the conservation of protected resources. While the Commission is primarily a forum for the Atlantic coast states to cooperatively manage fish and shellfish species, the Board noted several factors associated with North Atlantic right whale conservation which could substantially impact the economic and cultural future of the lobster fishing industry. These include future recommendations of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team and the anticipated Biological Opinion being developed under the Endangered Species Act. Given the high economic value of the lobster fishery and its social significance to coastal communities, the Board agreed it is important to ensure the implementation of measures to conserve North Atlantic right whales takes place in a way that maintains the sustainability and culture of the lobster fishery.

Draft Addendum XXVIII will propose options to reduce vertical lines from zero to 40%, to be achieved by trap limits, gear configuration changes, seasonal closures, and/or the acceleration of currently planned trap reductions. The Board noted reductions will consider ongoing state and federal management actions, including trap reductions and trap caps, which have already reduced vertical lines. By initiating this action, states can continue to cooperatively participate in the management of this species during ongoing discussions on the conservation of North Atlantic right whales. In addition, those who are most familiar with the intricacies of the lobster fishery, including industry, can provide input on future regulations.

A first draft of the addendum will be presented to the Board in May. If approved, it will be released for public comment and state hearings over the summer, with Board consideration of final action in the fall.

Upcoming Meetings

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as the deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

James J. Gilmore, Jr. (NY), *Chair*
Patrick C. Keliher (ME), *Vice-Chair*

Robert E. Beal,
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield,
Science Director

Michael Cahall,
ACCSP Director

Toni Kerns,
ISFMP Director

Laura C. Leach,
Director of Finance & Administration

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

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

April 1 (begins at 9 AM) - 3 (ends at Noon)

Ecological Reference Point Assessment Workshop 1, ASMFC, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA

April 2 (1 - 3 PM)

Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/4/2019/summer-flounder-scup-and-black-sea-bass-advisory-panel-conf-call/1371> for more details

April 3 (9 AM - Noon)

Atlantic Herring Days Out Meeting, Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress Street, Portland, ME

April 3 (begins at 1 PM) - 5 (ends at 3:30 PM)

Atlantic Menhaden Assessment Workshop 1, ASMFC, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA

April 9 (9:30 AM - 12:30 PM)

Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee Webinar; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/4/2019/striped-bass-technical-committee/1359> for more details

April 9 (1:30 - 3:30 PM)

Summer Flounder Technical Committee Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/4/2019/summer-flounder-technical-committee-conf-call/1375> for more details

April 9 - 11

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Icona Golden Inn, 7849 Dune Drive, Avalon, NJ

April 16 - 18

New England Fishery Management Council, Hilton Hotel, Mystic, CT

April 29 - May 2

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Westin, 1800 South Eads Street, Arlington, VA (see preliminary agenda on page 6)

June 4 - 6

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Yotel Hotel, 570 West 10th Avenue, New York, NY

June 10 - 14

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hutchinson Island Marriott, 555 NE Ocean Boulevard, Stuart, FL

June 11 - 13

New England Fishery Management Council, Doubletree by Hilton, So. Portland, ME

August 6 - 8

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

August 12 - 15

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Courtyard Philadelphia Downtown, 21 N. Juniper St., Philadelphia, PA



The Ongoing Challenges of Allocation

As our Commissioners prepare to approve the Commission's next 5-year Strategic Plan at our Spring Meeting in May, I am struck by not only how far we have come since the first ASMFC Strategic Plan in 1999 but also by how much we still have to accomplish over the next 5 years. Certainly many of the issues the Commission and the states faced 20 years ago are different from those of today but one common thread over the years has been the issue of resource allocation, among the states and between various user groups. Regardless of whether you have an abundant resource or one that is rebuilding, dividing up the resource among the states and user groups is never an easy undertaking because ultimately there is not enough fish available to give everyone what they want, need, or feel they deserve. Invariably allocation, or even worse re-allocation, results in stakeholders that feel they are "winners" or "losers".

Many of the Commission FMPs divvy up the harvestable resource through various types of allocation schemes, with the resource distributed by state, region, season, or gear type. Most of these allocation schemes are based on historical participation or landings and have not been modified despite changes in resource abundance and distribution or shifting user demands. However, there are a growing number of species, such as Atlantic cobia, black sea bass, and summer flounder, whose changing species ranges and distributions are driving

fisheries managers to begin the difficult task of revisiting long-standing allocation decisions.

Why are these decisions so challenging you may ask? Well, as I stated earlier, there is the notion of winners and losers. In states with significant allocations, substantial investments have been made in fishing communities and infrastructure, from marinas and working water fronts to processing plants and bait and tackle shops. Commercial fishermen and the for-hire industry base their business

plans (and recreational anglers their fishing trips) on how much of the resource they expect to have access to each year. No one wants to give up what they perceive as their share of the resource and no state wants to explain to its stakeholders why it voted in favor of another state getting a greater share. Nor is this issue limited to state waters fisheries. The Commission jointly manages a number of species with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, where the scope and extend of today's fisheries are vastly different than they were 20 to 30 years ago when the first fishery management plans and their associated allocation schemes were established. An additional complication is the recent changes in the Marine Recreational Information Program that have changed our estimation of the overall impact of recreational fishing on a number of fisheries and, in some cases, changing the balance of resource use among recreational and commercial fisheries.

Regardless of how difficult or divisive discussions on resource allocation may be, I firmly believe it's in the best interest of our states and their stakeholders to have fishery managers lead those discussions. Because if we don't, there are external drivers that will force our hands. For example, New York has filed suit against NOAA Fisheries concerning the state's share of the summer flounder resource. Another driver is proposed federal legislation called the SHIFT Act, short for Supporting Healthy Interstate Fisheries in Transition, which would require the Commission to consider shifting trends in fish abundance and distribution, and any potential adverse economic impact when establishing or revising quota allocations between any state or other management unit.

In either case, litigation or Congressional intervention in fisheries management decision making is not the preferred route. What is needed is a willingness among the states and our federal management partners to seek innovative ways to consider species reallocation so that collectively all states feel their needs are met. This will require the commitment to cooperatively work through the issues, seeking outcomes that balance the traditional needs of the states and their stakeholders with the ever changing realities of shifting resource abundance and availability.

Species Profile: Atlantic Menhaden

Ongoing Benchmark Stock Assessments to Inform Stock Health and Guide Ecosystem-Based Management Goals

Introduction

Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) are small, oily, schooling fish of historical, economic, and ecological importance. Historically, menhaden supported large-scale commercial reduction fisheries, bringing considerable growth to Atlantic coastal communities. Today, the reduction fishery is a fraction of what it once was, with one processing plant and several vessels operating on the Atlantic coast. The reduction fishery is so named because menhaden are processed (or reduced) into other products, such as agricultural fertilizer, fishmeal and fish oil, as well as livestock and aquaculture feeds. Additionally, menhaden are becoming increasingly valuable for use as bait in many important fisheries, including American lobster, blue crab, and striped bass.

Ecologically, the species plays an important role in marine ecosystems as a forage fish (prey) for many fish, sea birds, and marine mammals. The Commission is continuing work on two menhaden-specific benchmark stock assessments, a single-species assessment and an ecosystem-based assessment, both of which will be used to evaluate stock health and guide management in an ecological context.

Life History

Atlantic menhaden occupy estuaries and coastal waters from northern Florida to Nova Scotia and are believed to consist of a single population. Adult and juvenile menhaden form large schools near the surface, primarily in estuaries and nearshore ocean waters from early spring through early winter. By summer, menhaden schools stratify by size and age along the coast, with older and larger menhaden migrating farther north. During fall-early winter, menhaden of all sizes and ages migrate south around the North Carolina capes to spawn.

Sexual maturity begins as early as age one to just before age three, with major spawning areas from the Carolinas to New Jersey. The majority of spawning occurs primarily offshore (20-30 miles) during winter. Buoyant eggs hatch at sea, and larvae are carried into estuarine nursery areas by ocean currents. Juveniles spend most of their first year in estuaries, migrating to the ocean in late fall.

Menhaden are very efficient filter feeders. Water is pushed through specialized gill rakers that are formed into a basket to allow them to capture plankton. Menhaden are an important component of the food chain, providing a link between primary production and higher organisms by consuming plankton and providing forage for species such as striped bass, bluefish, and weakfish, to name just a few.

Commercial Fisheries

The Atlantic menhaden commercial fishery consists of a reduction fishery and a bait fishery. The reduction fishery first began in New England during the early 1800s and spread south after the Civil War. The reduction fishery grew with the advent of the purse seine after the Civil War in the mid-1800s. Purse seine landings reached a high point in 1956 when landings peaked at 712,100 metric tons (mt). At that time, over 20 menhaden reduction factories ranged from northern Florida to southern Maine. In the 1960s, the Atlantic menhaden stock contracted geographically, and many of the fish factories north of the Chesapeake Bay closed because of a scarcity of fish. Reduction landings dropped to a low of 161,000 mt in 1969. In the 1970s and 1980s, the menhaden population began to expand primarily due to a series of above average year classes entering the fishery. By the mid-1970s, adult menhaden were again abundant in the northern half of their range and, as a result, reduction factories in New England and Canada began processing

Species Snapshot



Atlantic Menhaden

Brevoortia tyrannus

Common Names: menhaden, bunker, mossbunker, pogy, fatback, bugmouth, skipjack

Species Range: Atlantic coast of North America from Nova Scotia to northern Florida

Family: Clupeidae (includes herring, sardine, and shad species)

Interesting Facts:

- The modern record for the largest menhaden landed occurred in Reedville, VA in 1996, measuring in at 19.4" and weighing 3.4 lbs.
- Pre-colonial Native Americans called menhaden 'munhawhatteaug,' which means fertilizer.
- A large crustacean parasite is commonly found in the mouth of Atlantic menhaden; hence its common name "bugmouth."
- Adults can filter 6-7 gallons of water/minute.
- Ethel Hall, now retired from the NMFS Beaufort Lab, aged Atlantic menhaden for over 40 years using a 1967 Eberbach projector.

Stock Status:

Not overfished nor experiencing overfishing



Photo (c) NC DMF

menhaden again. Reduction landings rose to around 300,000-400,000 mt during that time; however, by 1989, all shoreside reduction plants in New England had closed, mainly because of odor abatement regulations.

During the 1990s, the Atlantic menhaden stock contracted again, largely due to a series of poor to average year classes. Over the next decade, several reduction plants consolidated or closed, resulting in a significant reduction in fleet size and fishing capacity. By 2005, there was only one remaining reduction plant in operation on the Atlantic coast processing menhaden into fishmeal and fish oil. The plant is located in Reedville, Virginia and is still in operation today.

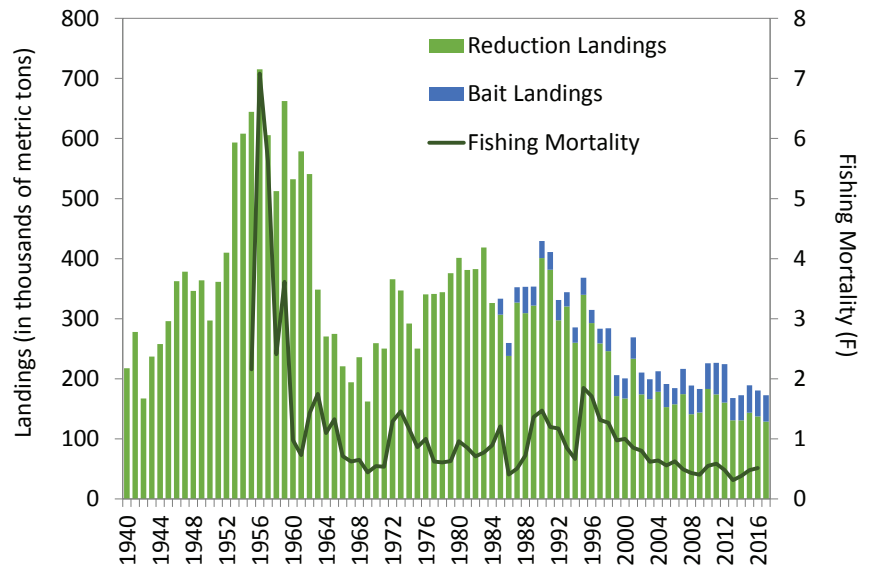
Although annual reduction landings have been decreasing since about 1990, they are an order of magnitude larger than those of the bait sector. From 1985-2000, the reduction fishery accounted for 90% of total landings (bait and reduction combined). From 2001-2012, that proportion decreased to 80% of total landings. From 2013-2017, under the provisions of Amendment 2 (e.g., a total allowable catch and quota system), annual reduction landings have averaged 134,374 mt or 76% of total landings. In 2017, reduction landings were estimated at 128,926 mt, which is a 6.2% decrease from the previous season.

The coastwide bait fishery supplies fishermen with bait for popular commercial (e.g., American lobster and blue crab) and sport fish (e.g., striped bass and bluefish) fisheries, and has grown with the expansion of many fisheries that utilize menhaden as bait. Landings for bait peaked in 2012 at 63,680 mt and then dipped slightly under the provisions of Amendment 2. In 2017, bait landings were estimated at 43,825 mt, which is 4.7% above the average landings during 2013-2016 (41,877 mt).

The bait fishery has increased in relative importance from New England to North Carolina. This is evident in the increasing percent of total menhaden landings that are attributed to the bait fishery. The percent of total landings that were landed for bait rose from 13% in 2001 to 28% in 2012. In 2017, bait harvest composed approximately 25% of the total menhaden harvest. The majority of bait landings have come from New Jersey and Virginia, followed by Maryland, Massachusetts, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

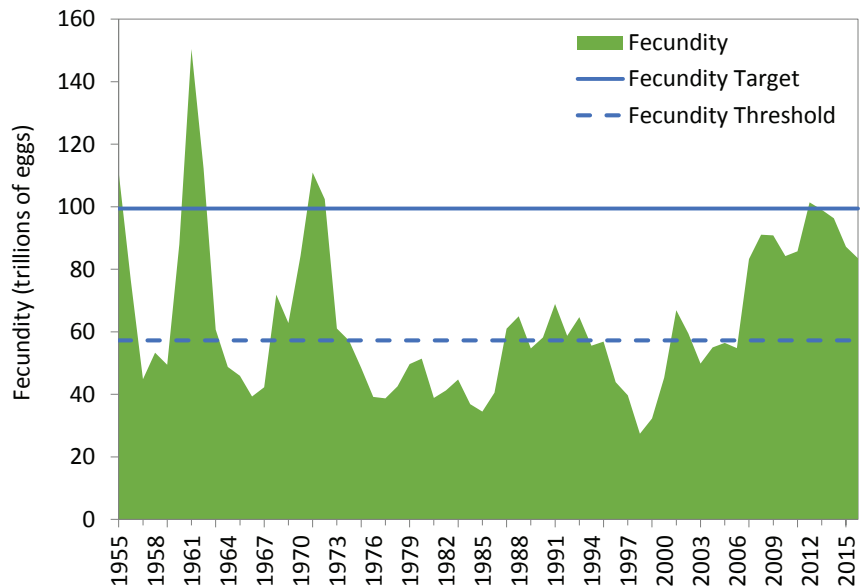
Atlantic Menhaden Bait & Reduction Landings and Fishing Mortality (Ages 2-4)

Source: ASMFC State Compliance Reports and NOAA Fisheries, 2018



Atlantic Menhaden Fecundity

Source: ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, 2017



Stock Status

The 2017 stock assessment update indicates that Atlantic menhaden are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Stock status was evaluated against the 2015 benchmark assessment's reference points, which used historical performance of the population during the 1960-2012 time frame. Fishing mortality

continued, see ATLANTIC MENHADEN on page 8

2019 Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda

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 a meeting week will be included in the briefing materials.

2. Comments received by 5 PM on Tuesday, April 23rd will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.

3. Following the April 23rd deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

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

ASMFC Spring Meeting

April 29 - May 3

The Westin

1800 South Eads Street

Arlington, VA

Preliminary Agenda

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

MONDAY, APRIL 29

1:00 – 5:00 p.m. American Lobster Management Board

- Update on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team Spring Meeting and Recommendations to NOAA Fisheries
- Consider Draft Addendum XXVIII for Public Comment
- Report from the Bait Working Group
- Update from Delaware and New York Regarding Implementation of Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan Measures

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

8:30 - 10:00 a.m. Atlantic Herring Management Board

- Consider Addendum II for Final Approval
- Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports
- Update on 2020-2021 Fishery Specifications

10:15 a.m. - Noon Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Consider Acceptance of 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Reports for Management Use
- Consider Management Response to the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment
 - o Review Technical Committee Report on Reductions Needed to Achieve Fishing Mortality Reference Points
- Consider Forwarding a Letter to NOAA Fisheries Opposing Proposed Measures to Lift the Ban on Recreational Striped Bass Fishing in the Federal Block Island Sound Transit Zone

12:30 - 5:00 p.m. Law Enforcement Committee

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

- Presentation and Discussion on Police-Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative and Use of NARCAN/NALAXONE
- Review 2019 Action Plan and 2019-2023 ASMFC Strategic Plan
- Review and Discuss Outcomes from the MAFMC Enforcement Workshop
- Federal and State Agency Reports
- Review and Discuss Progress of the Offshore Enforcement Vessel Working Group

- Review Ongoing Enforcement Issues (Closed Session)
- Discuss Usefulness of Criteria/Metrics in Evaluating Enforcement Effectiveness

1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (continued)

2:45 - 3:15 p.m. Coastal Sharks Management Board

- Review Highly Migratory Species North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Amendment 11 and Consider a Management Response
- Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Coordinating Council

- Program/Committee Updates
- Review and Consider Approval of 2020 Request for Proposals
- Discuss Committee Restructure

5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

8:00 - 10:30 a.m. Executive Committee

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

- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee
 - Presentation of the FY20 Budget
- Review Draft Standard Operating Procedures and Policies for Management Board Work Groups
- Future Annual Meetings Update
- Executive Director Performance Review (Closed Session)

8:00 a.m. - Noon Law Enforcement Committee (continued)

10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Review Plan Development Team Analysis of Black Sea Bass Commercial Management Strategies to Address Fishery Shifts
- Consider Approval of Advisory Panel Nomination

1:15 - 2:30 p.m. Business Session

- Consider Approval of the Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019-2023 Strategic Plan

2:45 - 5:15 p.m. Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Review and Consider Acceptance of 2019 Horseshoe Crab Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Reports for Management Use
- Consider Potential Management Response to the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Consider Approval of Advisory Panel Nomination

THURSDAY, MAY 2

8:00 - 9:45 a.m. Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board

- Reports from the Executive Committee, Law Enforcement Committee, and Artificial Reef Committee
- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (If Necessary)

9:45 - 10:00 a.m. Business Session (continued)

- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (If Necessary)

10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Consider Approval of Cobia Draft Amendment 1 for Public Comment
- Consider Potential Management Action for Spot and Atlantic Croaker

rates have remained below the overfishing threshold (1.85) since the 1960s, and hovered around the overfishing target (0.8) through the 1990s. In 2003, fishing mortality dropped below the target and was estimated to be 0.51 in 2016 (the terminal year in the assessment update). Generally, fishing mortality has fluctuated around the target level throughout the history of the fishery.

The biological reference point used to determine the fecundity target is defined as the mature egg production one would expect when the population is being fished at the threshold fishing mortality rate. Population fecundity, a measure of reproductive capacity, has been well above the threshold (57,295 billion eggs) and at or near the target (99,467 billion eggs) in recent years. In 2016, fecundity was estimated to be 83,486 billion eggs, still well above the threshold but below the target.

Atlantic Coastal Management

The Atlantic menhaden commercial fishery has been managed via a total allowable catch (TAC) and a quota system since the implementation of Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in 2013. The annual TAC was set at 170,800 mt (representing a 20% reduction from average landings between 2009 and 2011) for both the 2013 and 2014 seasons. Since then, the TAC increased to 187,866 mt for the 2015 and 2016 seasons, 200,000 mt for the 2017 season, and 216,000 mt for the 2018 and 2019 fishing seasons with the expectation that the setting of the TAC for subsequent years will be guided by menhaden-specific ERPs.

Atlantic menhaden are currently managed under Amendment 3 to the FMP. Approved by the Board in November



Photo credits: Creative Commons Via Pixabay (top); RI DEM, Marine Fisheries (center); Frank Marengi, MD DNR (bottom)

2017, the Amendment maintains the management program's current single-species biological reference points until the review and adoption of menhaden-specific ecological reference points (ERPs) as part of the 2019 benchmark stock assessment process. In doing so, the Board placed the development of menhaden-specific ERPs as its highest priority.

Amendment 3 also changes fishery allocations in order to strike an improved balance between gear types and jurisdictions. The amendment allocates a baseline quota of 0.5% to each jurisdiction, and then allocates the rest of the TAC based on historic landings between 2009 and 2011. This measure provides fishing opportunities to states that previously had little quota while still recognizing historic landings in the fishery. The Board also agreed to maintain the quota transfer process, prohibit the rollover of unused quota, maintain the 6,000 lb trip limit for non-directed and small-scale gears following the closure of a directed fishery, and set aside 1% of the TAC for episodic events in the states of New York through Maine.

Finally, the Amendment reduces the Chesapeake Bay cap, which was first implemented in 2006 to limit the amount of reduction harvest within the Bay, to 51,000 mt from 87,216 mt. This recognizes the importance of the Chesapeake Bay as nursery grounds for many species by capping reduction landings from the Bay to current levels.

In February 2019, the Board postponed indefinitely action to find the Commonwealth of Virginia out of compliance with the provisions of Amendment 3, specifically the Commonwealth's failure to implement the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap of 51,000 mt. This action is contingent upon the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery not exceeding the cap. If the cap is exceeded, the Board can reconsider the issue of compliance.

In making its decision, the Board took into account the fact that reduction fishery harvest within the Chesapeake Bay has been below the cap level since 2012, including 2018 harvest. During its deliberations, the Board commended Virginia Commissioners on their efforts to monitor landings and work with the Commonwealth's General Assembly to seek full implementation of the provisions of Amendment 3.

While the Bay cap was established as a precautionary measure given the importance of menhaden as a prey species, additional information stemming from the development of ERPs may be informative to the Bay cap issue. Accordingly, the Board will consider action to modify the Bay cap after it completes action on ERPs, anticipated for 2020.

Next Steps

The Commission continues to work on two Atlantic menhaden benchmark stock assessments: a single-species benchmark assessment and the highly anticipated ecosystem-based benchmark assessment that aims to develop menhaden-specific ecological reference points. Both assessments will be used to evaluate the health of the stock and inform the management of the species in an ecological context. The Stock Assessment Subcommittee is leading the single-species assessment and is exploring single-species modeling approaches, while the ERP Workgroup continues to explore modeling approaches that estimate the abundance of menhaden and account for the species' role as a forage fish. Both benchmark assessments will be peer-reviewed at the end of 2019.

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

Comings & Goings

COMMISSIONERS



DR. JUSTIN DAVIS

Early this year, Dr. Justin Davis, Assistant Director of the Fisheries Division of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), became Connecticut's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. In his position as Assistant Director, Dr. Davis oversees the state's Marine Fisheries Program. Dr. Davis has worked for CT DEEP since 2007 and holds a B.S. in Marine and Freshwater Biology from the University of New Hampshire, an M.S. in Natural Resource Management, and a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Connecticut. Welcome aboard Dr. Davis!



SENATOR BRIAN LANGLEY

Having not sought re-election due to term limits, Senator Brian Langley stepped down as Maine's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Senator Langley was a Commissioner from 2011-2013 and 2015-2019, participating on numerous species management boards and sections over that time. We are grateful for Senator Langley's involvement and wish him great success in all his future endeavors.



SENATOR DAVID MIRAMANT

In March, Senator David Miramant, who represents coastal Knox County, was named Maine's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Attending high school in a suburb of Boston during the Vietnam War, Senator Miramant was first introduced to the values about our society, environment and natural resources that still motivate him today. After attending the University of Maine at Farmington, Senator Miramant began a long career in aviation. As an airline pilot and captain, he learned to bring a crew together to accomplish complicated tasks. Those leadership skills would later serve him in the Legislature. During that time, he also connected with diverse groups of people all over the world, only to learn how similar we all are. He spent a lot of time listening to a broad range of perspectives.

While he no longer works in the major airlines, Miramant continues to fly, as the owner and operator of Spirit Soaring Glider Rides. In addition to his work in the air, Senator Miramant also has been a small-business owner and boat captain.

Senator Miramant was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 2006, and the Maine Senate in 2014. In these positions, he was able to use the leadership skills he had developed throughout his life. Senator Miramant lives in Camden with his wife, Dee, with whom he has two adult children, Ashley and Josh. Welcome aboard, Senator Miramant!



REPRESENTATIVE CHAD NIMMER

Rep. Chad Nimmer stepped down as Georgia's Legislative Commissioner having not sought re-election to the Georgia House of Representatives. Rep. Nimmer served as ASMFC Commissioner since 2016 and was represented by ongoing proxy Pat Geer for the majority of his tenure. We are grateful for Rep. Nimmer's involvement and wish him great success in all his future endeavors.

COMINGS AND GOINGS, continued on page 14

Habitat Happenings

In late 2018, the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) and the Commission's Habitat Program completed a number of major outreach projects. This article highlights three of those projects: the revamped ACFHP website, a new living shorelines factsheet, and the 2018 issue of *Habitat Hotline Atlantic*.

ACFHP Launches New Website

In December, ACFHP, a partnership of federal, tribal, state, local, and other entities dedicated to enhancing, preserving and protecting diadromous, estuarine and coastal fish habitats, launched its revised website at www.atlanticfishhabitat.org. Bold and visually appealing, the new site seeks to be a resource to partners, as well as those who are working on fish habitat conservation or simply want to become more informed about habitat issues. The website highlights how ACFHP works to make the connection – from the headwaters to the continental shelf, between fish and people, and among stakeholders.

The website has improved functionality and is mobile and tablet-friendly. The 'About Us' section contains information on our mission and vision, the ACFHP region, our team, guidance documents, and the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The website also includes pages on each of ACFHP's priority habitats: submerged aquatic vegetation, shellfish beds, riverine bottom, coral and live/hard bottom, and tidal vegetation. These pages highlight the importance of each habitat to fish and the greater ecosystem, the threats facing each habitat, as well as our conservation work in each habitat.

An exciting feature of the new website is the Species-Habitat Matrix Tool, which evaluates the relative importance of 26 coastal, estuarine, and freshwater habitats to 131 selected fish and invertebrate species. Specifically, the Matrix quantifies the importance of different habitats as shelter, nursery, feeding, or spawning areas for each species during the egg/larval, juvenile/young of year, adult, and spawning adult life stages. The new website tool is a database that allows users to search by species and/or life stage, and populates in real-time. Users can download their results, or the entire database, as a CSV file for further analysis. The tool is intended to provide useful information for people and organizations to make better informed, quantifiable decisions about habitat conservation for Atlantic marine species.

The website's on-the-ground project map identifies ACFHP-funded and endorsed projects along the

coast, with links to each of the projects. Project pages feature an overview of each project, photos, and links to outreach materials and press on the project. The website also includes links to ACFHP and partner outreach materials, as well as ACFHP science and data products.

The 'Get Involved' section of the website provides information on upcoming meetings, funding opportunities, project endorsement, the Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award, and the various ways to donate to ACFHP and the National Fish Habitat Partnership. You can also sign up for the newsletter and find information on how to join the Partnership. We invite you to explore the new website at www.atlanticfishhabitat.org.

New Living Shoreline Factsheet

The Commission recently approved an update to the 2010 Habitat Management Series document, "Living Shorelines: Impacts of Erosion Control Strategies on Coastal Habitats," that highlights the growing body of literature and lessons learned since the original publication. The factsheet and additional information feature selected case studies, websites, and references in support of the application of best practices moving forward. Both can be accessed on the Commission's website at <http://www.asmf.org/habitat/hot-topics>.

A living shoreline (LSL) is a protected, stabilized coastal edge made of natural materials such as plants, sand, or rock. Unlike a concrete seawall or other hard structure, which impede the growth of plants and animals, LSLs grow over time. LSLs are adopted with increasing frequency to address coastal shoreline erosion issues along both public and private shoreline properties. They are mostly used along bays, sounds, and in other estuarine settings, as beach and inlet systems experience energy



Living shorelines in Punta Rassa, FL. Photo © www.floridalivingshorelines.com

levels higher than those for which natural materials can successfully be used. LSLs integrate habitats across the shoreline landscape by promoting the land-water continuum, provide enhanced habitat for fish and wildlife, naturally adapt to changing sea levels in the face of climate change, and enhance the natural beauty of adjacent properties.

As sea level rise continues, armoring shorelines against wave energy and erosion will continue to be important to those living along coastal waters. Using LSLs to accomplish this will ensure connections remain established between the uplands and estuaries to maintain or even improve the health of the important fish habitats they sustain.

2018 Issue of Habitat Hotline Atlantic

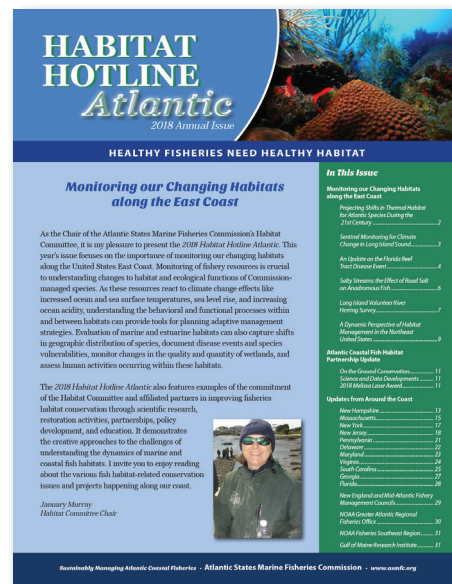
The 2018 issue of *Habitat Hotline Atlantic* focuses on the importance of monitoring changing habitats along the United States East Coast. Monitoring of fishery resources is crucial to understanding changes to habitat and ecological functions of Commission-managed species. As these resources react to increases in ocean and sea surface temperatures, sea level rise, and increasing ocean acidity, understanding the behavioral and functional processes within and between habitats can provide tools for planning adaptive management strategies.

Evaluation of marine and estuarine habitats can also capture shifts in geographic distribution of species, document disease events and species vulnerabilities, monitor changes in the quality and quantity of wetlands, and assess human activities occurring within these habitats.

Habitat Hotline Atlantic also features examples of the commitment of the Habitat Committee and affiliated partners in improving fisheries habitat conservation

through scientific research, restoration activities, partnerships, policy development, and education. It demonstrates creative approaches to the challenges of understanding the dynamics of marine and coastal fish habitats.

The issue is available at <http://tinyurl.com/y7wfrw6a>.



For more information on any of these projects, please contact Dr. Lisa Havel, ACFHP & Habitat Committee Coordinator, at havel@asmfc.org.

ACCSP Marks Deployment of New Technologies for Recreational Data Collection

This January, ACCSP deployed two new technologies for advancing state-conducted recreational data collection on the Atlantic coast. Both the tablet-based Dockside Interceptor application and the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing System (CATI) have been designed to streamline and automate survey components of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), making it feasible for states to take on a greater role in recreational fisheries data collection. The tools are the latest products of a collaborative effort among ACCSP, state, and federal partners to improve recreational data collection in order to provide timelier, more accurate data for fisheries management.

Dockside Interceptor

On January 1st, North Carolina field interviewers became the first to use the Dockside Interceptor application to conduct their Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) assignments. The application allows interviewers to record and transmit angler intercept data electronically via tablets, and features built-in logic to reduce the introduction of data errors. Electronic transmission of intercept data will eliminate time spent on shipping and scanning paper forms, reducing processing time by two to three weeks and providing state partners with additional time to review edits and perform final data checks before ACCSP submits the final data to NOAA at the end of each month.

In the first week since its release, the Dockside Interceptor application was used successfully by eight different interviewers to complete 21 site assignments in North Carolina. Having been submitted electronically, the data from these assignments are already available in the ACCSP database for review. Initial feedback has been positive.

The Dockside Interceptor application will be used by all Atlantic states to conduct their APAIS assignments on tablets once their sampling seasons begin.



FHTS CATI

On January 7th, North Carolina began using ACCSP's new CATI to conduct the For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS). At present, this survey, which collects data used to generate for-hire effort estimates, is only state-administered in North Carolina, Maine, and Georgia. The remaining Atlantic states rely on NOAA Fisheries to administer this survey.

Based on the successful transition to state conduct of the APAIS, state and federal representatives on the ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee voted back in June of 2018 to explore coastwide state conduct of the FHTS. To make this possible, ACCSP worked with state and federal partners to develop the CATI, a centralized tool for scheduling, conducting, and recording FHTS interviews.

Each week, the CATI presents state staff with a list of vessels selected for interview and contact details for the vessel captains. Using the information displayed, a state interviewer contacts a captain to initiate the interview. The system then leads the interviewer through a series of questions for the captain, and the interviewer records the responses directly into ACCSP's database. Additional functionalities of the current iteration include automatic generation of weekly notification letters and the creation of Vessel Directory update records during the call.

Georgia and Maine will both use the CATI to administer the FHTS in their respective jurisdictions this year once their sampling seasons begin.



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.

Employees of the Quarter: Dr. Katie Drew & Caitlin Starks

For the last quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, Commission staff had the opportunity to recognize Dr. Katie Drew and Caitlin Starks, respectively, for their notable contributions to the Commission's fisheries science and fisheries management programs.

DR. KATIE DREW

For nearly a decade, Dr. Katie Drew, as the Commission's Stock Assessment Team Leader, has played an important role in advancing the use and public understanding of fisheries science along the Atlantic coast. She has been the lead or contributing scientist on dozens of important stock assessments, and has assisted in the development and conduct of ASMFC stock assessment training workshops to improve stock assessment expertise at the state level.

Throughout 2018, Katie, working closely with state and federal members of various species stock assessment subcommittees, was instrumental in the completion of a new peer review-endorsed benchmark stock assessment and stock assessment update for northern shrimp, and a peer-reviewed benchmark assessment for



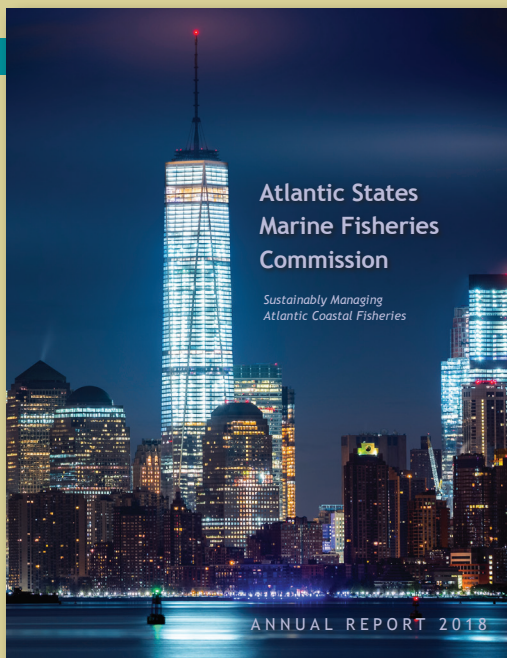
Atlantic striped bass. She also was an important contributor in developing and evaluating multispecies models for use in the ecological reference points benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic menhaden, currently scheduled for completion in 2020.

Katie consistently works at the highest level to produce quality science documents to inform fisheries management decisions. A great co-worker and team player, Katie is passionate about excelling and bringing out the best in all those that work with her.

CAITLIN STARKS

In the almost two years since she joined the Commission, Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator for black sea bass, bluefish, shad & river herring, and tautog, has made noteworthy contributions to the Commission's fisheries management program and in particular black sea bass management. In the short time she has worked on black sea bass, she has assisted in the completion of three plan addenda and taken a lead role in coordinating the activities of

continued, see EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER on page 14



ASMFC 2018 Annual Report Now Available

The Commission has released its 2018 Annual Report, which provides an overview of significant management actions and associated science activities the Commission and its member states took in 2018 to maintain and restore the abundance of Commission-managed species. This report reflects our Commissioners' commitment to accountability and transparency in all they do to manage and rebuild stocks under their care. We hope that you will find the information contained within this report useful and interesting.

This year's cover photo of the New York City (NYC) skyline with views of the One World Trade Center and the Statue of Liberty is in honor of our 77th Annual Meeting, which was held October 2018 in NYC. NYC also played an important role in the Commission's history, having served as its administrative home and frequent meeting location during the Commission's first two decades.

The report is available on the Commission website at www.asmfc.org, under Quick Links or directly at http://www.asmfc.org/files/pub/2018AnnualReport_web.pdf

two Board-level Working Groups on commercial allocation and recreational management. 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 is a strong team player and actively seeks out opportunities to work collaboratively with other staff and across departments. At the same time, she continues to provide critical support to her species committees. Despite setbacks, Caitlin has kept the tautog commercial tagging program moving forward through her tireless pursuit of a new tag and applicator when the previous applicator proved to be ineffective on the water. Caitlin also has been successfully coordinating the development of the American shad benchmark stock assessment with Jeff Kipp and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee, which includes a wide range of state (both marine and inland), federal, and academic biologists and stock assessment scientists.

Caitlin's inquisitiveness, meticulousness, 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), Katie 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, Katie & Caitlin!



DR. TIMOTHY SCHAEFFER

Dr. Tim Schaeffer, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), is now Pennsylvania's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC, replacing John Arway who served in that role since 2010.

Dr. Schaeffer previously served with PFBC as Director of Policy and Planning and recently as Deputy Secretary for the Office of Water Programs for the Department of Environmental Protection. Welcome aboard Dr. Schaeffer!

STAFF



SARAH RAINS

In December, Commission staff said goodbye to Sarah Rains, who has moved on to an exciting new position with the Department of Defense. For three years, Sarah served as Recreational Data Analyst on the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's Angler

Point Access Intercept Survey (APAIS) team, assisting with the management and processing of state APAIS data. Sarah was a great asset to the APAIS team and we wish her the very best in her new position.



MEGAN WARE

After nearly four years as FMP Coordinator, Megan Ware accepted the position of Director of External Affairs with the Maine Department of Marine Resources. In her time with the Commission, Megan skillfully coordinated a number of challenging marine

fisheries management issues. These included the development and implementation of the first Interstate FMP for Jonah crab as well as Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan. She also worked closely with the American Lobster Board to develop management responses to the 2015 benchmark stock assessment and, more recently, possible measures to reduce lobster gear/whale interactions. Fortunately for us, we anticipate that we will continue to work with Megan on a number of ASMFC issues. We wish Megan the very best in her new position.



ALI SCHWAAB

On March 29th, Commission staff bid farewell to Ali Schwaab, as she moves to New Zealand to pursue a new life with her fiancé. Ali worked for ACCSP for the past three years, first as Outreach Coordinator and most recently as Program Manager. Over that time, Ali was

responsible for a number of projects and issues, including website design and maintenance, annual report development and dissemination, committee coordination, and outreach to industry and media. We wish Ali the very best in her new adventure half way around the globe.