



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Volume 17, Issue 3
April 2008

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

ASMFC Spring Meeting May 5 - 8, 2008

**Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town
901 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia
(703) 683-6000**

Final Schedule

The final agenda is subject to change. 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, May 5, 2008

9:00 AM - Noon American Lobster Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *B. Culhane*
- Public Comment
- Review and Consider Draft Addendum XII, *T. Kerns* –FINAL ACTION
 - Lobster History-based Trap Allocation Transfer Programs
 - Review Comment Received from Public, Advisory Panel, and Law Enforcement Committee
- Review and Consider Approval of Draft Addendum XIII, *T. Kerns* – FINAL ACTION
 - Formalizing LCMA Outer Cape Cod Effort Control Plan Promulgated by Massachusetts
 - Review Public Comment
- Consider Massachusetts Conservation Equivalency Proposal, *T. Kerns* – FINAL ACTION
 - Technical Committee Review of Massachusetts Proposal for V-notching in Massachusetts State Waters of LCMA 1
- Consider Revision to LCMA 6 Conservation Equivalency Program
 - Technical Committee Review of LCMA 6 V-notching Program Adjustments
- Stock Assessment Update, *K. McKown*
- Advisory Panel Report, *B. Baines*

1:15 - 2:45 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *M. Gibson*
- Public Comment
- Advisory Panel Report, *K. Place*
- Technical Committee Report: Updated Biological Reference Points
- Review Potential Management Action Issues, *N. Meserve*
 - Discussion to Consider Initiation of an Addendum - ACTION

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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 a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous 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

George D. Lapointe (ME), Chair
Robert H. Boyles, Jr., (SC), Vice-Chair

John V. O'Shea, Executive Director
Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration
Patrick M. Marchman, Science Director

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Upcoming Meetings

4/14 - 18:

ASMFC Advanced Stock Assessment Workshop: An Introduction to Linear Models, Hotel Providence, 311 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

4/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Providence Biltmore, Providence, Rhode Island.

5/5 - 8:

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333 (see final agenda on pages 1, 7, 8 & 9).

6/3 - 5:

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

6/10 - 12:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel, Two Miss America Way, Atlantic City, New Jersey; 609-344-3535.

6/23 - 27:

ASMFC Technical Meeting Week, location to be determined.

8/12 - 14:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Renaissance Philadelphia Hotel Airport, 500 Stevens Drive, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 610-521-5900.

8/17 - 21:

AFS 138th Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Canada.

8/18 - 21:

ASMFC Summer Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333.

9/8 - 12:

ASMFC Technical Meeting Week, location to be determined.

10/7 - 9:

New England Fishery Management Council, Hilton Hotel, Mystic, Connecticut.

10/14 - 16:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Ramada Inn, 1701 South Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina; 252-441-2151.

10/19 - 23:

ASMFC 66th Annual Meeting, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Things I Have Learned by Watching Our Commissioners

Last month we released the Commission's Annual Report, a publication I hope our constituents will find interesting and usable. The Report reflects our Commissioners' commitment to accountability through transparency. From the Commission perspective, stakeholders again have enjoyed the benefits of healthy stocks such as striped bass, bluefish, and Spanish mackerel. Rebuilding efforts continue for stocks like summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup. In addition, we have expanded our efforts to strengthen our stock assessment expertise, and leveraged our fiscal resources to initiate a standardized nearshore trawl survey and collect badly needed data for key species such as lobster, menhaden, and red drum.

These are just a few examples of what our Commissioners have enabled all of us to accomplish through their leadership and hard work. I continue to be impressed with their talents, wisdom, and commitment. Commissioners seem to instinctively know what it takes to be effective. Here are some of the things I have learned by watching them.

Commissioners provide direction to the organization and staff. Commissioners not only have the important duty of setting organizational objectives, but they also have a keen sense of where the organization needs to go. They have the ability to maintain a long-term view and balance immediate issues while focusing on the future. Our Strategic Plan exemplifies the important visionary traits held by Commissioners. With the Strategic Plan in place, the Commissioners recognize the need to monitor progress and actively participate in the construction and review of the Commission's Action Plan. Commissioners know that if they do not give direction, no one else will.

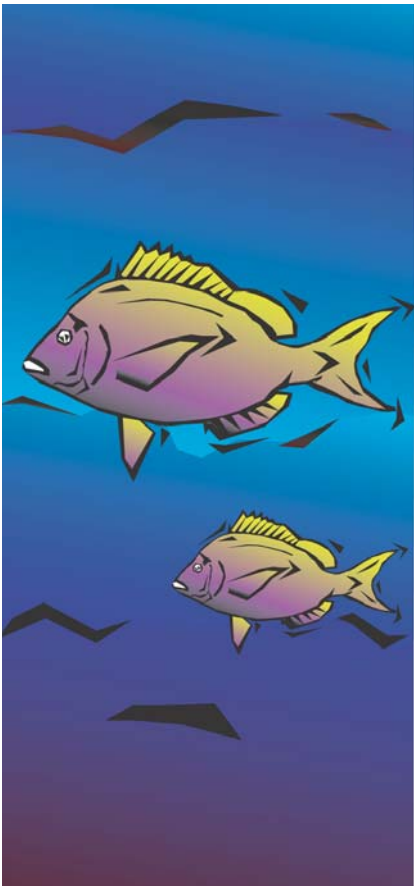
Commissioners obtain results. Commissioners recognize their unique ability to drive results through their votes. They study the issues and come prepared to meetings. While they are exposed to a wide range of advice from technical committees, plan development teams, advisory panels, and the public, Commissioners ultimately make the final decision. All too often, the right decisions are unpopular, especially when it means short-term restrictions on harvests. A good example of this occurred in the 1980s when Commissioners imposed the harvesting moratorium on Atlantic striped bass. In more recent years, Commissioners have restricted bluefish harvest and curtailed north-

ern shrimp seasons to rebuild both species. Today, bluefish biomass is nearly at its target, and northern shrimp biomass is almost four times its threshold, clearly demonstrating the benefits of these once unpopular decisions.

Commissioners exercise wise use of Commission resources. Commissioners recognize fiscal and human resources available for fisheries management are limited and need to be used wisely. Commissioners understand the importance of providing clear guidance to their technical advisors, and in turn listening carefully to their advice. They are mindful of the workload they impose on staff, constantly deploying staff analytical skills on the most critical problems with an end goal of taking meaningful management action. Commissioners also share the unique responsibility of ensuring adequate fiscal resources to support Commission activities. They recognize the importance of long-term planning to link emerging management issues with budget procurement strategy. They leverage their unique political and persuasive skills to obtain needed fiscal resources.

Commissioners support the Commission governance structure. Commissioners are keenly aware of their collective strength. Our membership of 15 states is inherently diverse, so differences in individual interests and priorities are to be expected. The Commission process provides for a complete presentation of available information and allows the opportunity for stakeholders (at public hearings) and Commissioners (during board meetings) to be heard. Issues are carefully deliberated and, at times, vigorously debated. If general consensus is not possible, tough decisions are made by vote. Regardless of individual viewpoints, Commissioners recognize their collective obligation to respect majority decisions. Thus, they demonstrate the ability to maintain a macro-level perspective on any decision by focusing on the benefits that accrue to their states through healthier fisheries resources. It is easy to take these qualities for granted because they appear to come so naturally to our Commissioners.

Make no mistake, it takes hard work to be an effective leader, and courage to make the right decisions. It has been said that we select leaders in order to have someone to blame. Our Commissioners have volunteered for that role, and we are all better off because of that. So next time you see them make a tough call, consider thanking them for looking out for our long-term interests. Hopefully that is something we could all agree with.



Species Profile: Scup

Management Update of Popular Bottom Fish

Introduction

For decades scup have been highly sought after by commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishermen throughout southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic, largely due to its fine flavor and its avaricious pursuit of baited hooks. Commonly found from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras, scup is one of four species jointly managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Both groups are working to rebuild this popular overfished species through a combination of recreational and commercial minimum size limits, recreational creel limits, commercial trip limits, and state quotas,

Life History

Scup are a migratory, schooling species found on the continental shelf of the Northwest Atlantic, commonly inhabiting waters from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The abundance of scup in a specific area is frequently influenced by water temperature. Scup prefer temperatures greater than 45 degrees F and are most frequently encountered in water temperatures from 55 to 77 degrees F.

Scup overwinter in offshore waters from southern New Jersey to Cape Hatteras. When water temperatures begin to rise in spring and summer, scup migrate to more northern and inshore waters to spawn. Spawning areas include locations from southern New England to Long Island, New York. Large fish arrive to the spawning grounds first, followed by successive waves of smaller individuals, suggesting that scup school by size. Larval scup are pelagic and are found in coastal waters during warmer months. Juvenile scup use a variety of coastal habitats and can dominate the overall fish population in large estuarine areas during the summer months. Fifty percent of scup are recruited to the fishery at age two (~6.1"); and one hundred percent are recruited to the fishery at age three (~8.3").

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Scup support commercial fisheries from Massachusetts to North Carolina. From 1974 to 1986, commercial landings fluctuated between 15.4 and 22 million pounds without trend. By 2000, in response to low stock abundance and stringent quota management, landings dropped to 2.7 million pounds, an all-time low for the time series (1930-2007) (Figure 1). Since then, landings have been slowly increasing, with an

Scup *Stenotomus chrysops*

Common Name: Porgy

Interesting Fish Facts:

- Scup are thought to spawn in the morning unlike most fish that spawn at night.

- Scup's laterally flattened body is about two times as long as it is wide.

- Scup feed frantically and fight energetically when hooked.

Largest Recorded: 6 lbs., 3 oz., Fenwick Shoals, MD

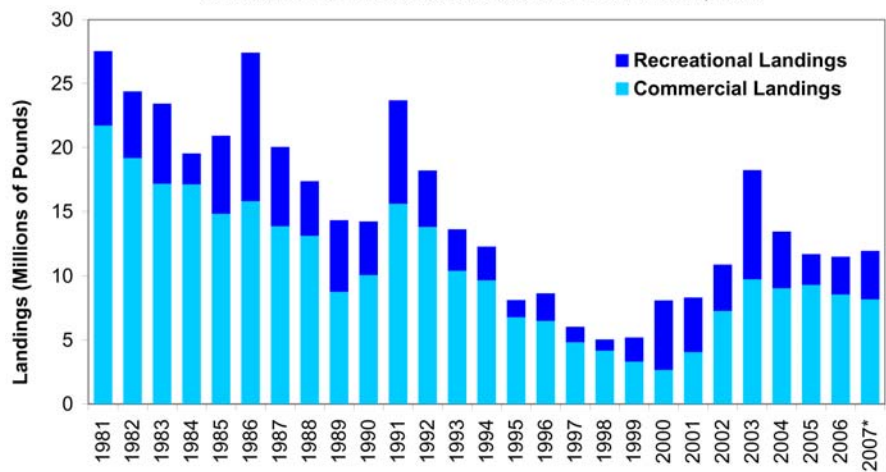
Age at Recruitment:

- 50% recruited to the fishery at age 2 (6.1")
- 100% recruited into fishery at age 3 (~8.3")

FMP Rebuilding Goals: Biomass Threshold = 2.77 kg/tow

Stock Status: Overfished and overfishing status unknown

Figure 1. Commercial and Recreational Scup Landings
Source: NMFS Fisheries Statistics & Economics Division, 2008

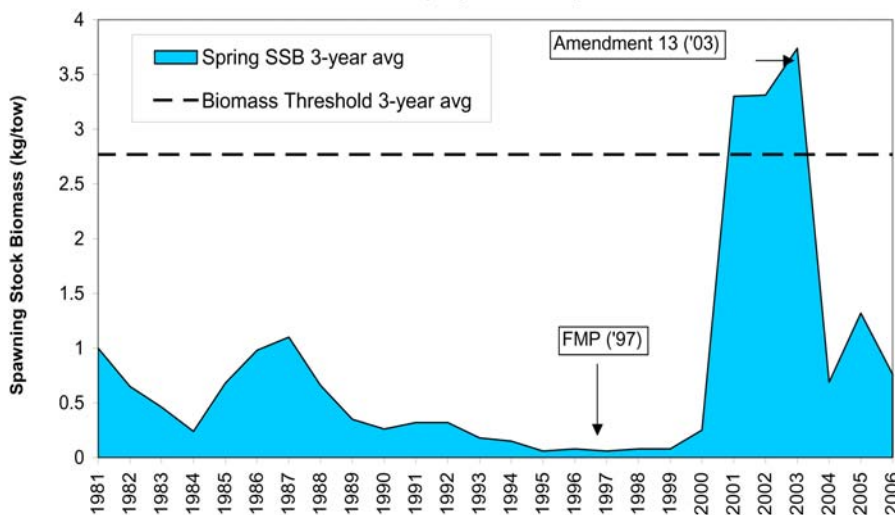


*2007 landing estimates are preliminary and subject to change upon final review

estimated 8.2 million pounds landed in 2007. The primary commercial fishing gear is the otter trawl, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the total catch. About one-third of the commercial landings occur in state waters, the largest share of which are landed in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

The recreational fishery for scup is significant, with anglers accounting for 17 - 67 percent of total annual catches from 1985 to 2001. Angler landings have fluctuated since 1998. Data shows increases through 2001, a decrease in 2002, and a substantial increase in 2003. Since 2004, landings have ranged from 2.4 to 4.4 million pounds. Preliminary data estimates that 3.8 million pounds were landed in 2007. The majority of recreational landings come from state waters, with anglers in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut catching the greatest proportion (87 percent).

Figure 2. Scup 3-Year Average of Spawning Stock Biomass
Source: NMFS NEFSC Spring Trawl Survey, 1981- 2006



Stock Status

The most recent assessment on scup was completed in June 2002. That assessment indicated that scup are no longer overfished but “stock status with respect to overfishing cannot currently be evaluated.” The Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) also concluded that although “the relative exploitation rates have declined in recent years, the absolute value of fishing mortality cannot be determined.” The primary concerns identified by the assessment were excessive scup discards.

Insufficient data for the scup fishery has prevented a more recent successful peer review for scup. The federal spring survey is used as the indicator for stock abundance, with

the survey’s three-year average used to determine stock status. If the three-year average is below 2.77 kg/tow, the stock is overfished. Both state and federal surveys indicated an increase in stock abundance since the mid- to late 1990s. Biomass estimates are based on a three-year average (2005-2007), and the estimate for 2006 was 0.76 kg/tow (Figure 2). This is below the biomass threshold value of 2.77 kg/tow. Therefore, the stock is considered overfished.

Year class strength is evident in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center’s autumn trawl survey results. The survey indicates that strong year classes were produced from 1999 to 2002. The SARC also noted the predominance of the 2000-year class in several of the state surveys. The most recent information indicates a strong year class was produced in 2006.

Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

Scup is jointly managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). In an effort to coordinate management actions in both state and federal waters, the Commission and the Council established a joint management program for scup in 1995. This program is currently managed under Amendment 14 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, and several subsequent addenda. The plan contains a suite of reference points to evaluate whether the stock is overfished or overfishing is occurring. The management program divides a total annual quota between the recreational fishery (22 percent) and the commercial fishery (78 percent).

Each fall the Commission and Council meet to set recreational management measures for the following year; these measures usually include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits, and



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Species Profile: Scup (continued from page 5)

fishing seasons. Starting in 2002, the Commission's management program was modified to include a state-by-state conservation equivalency system for the recreational fishery, which allowed individual states to develop measures that would fit the unique characteristics of the state fishery. Since 2004 Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York have formed a northern region when setting their recreational regulations. This regional approach creates consistency between the states where fishermen from different states are often fishing alongside each other in the same waters.

The commercial quota is divided into three quota periods, Winter I (January - April), Summer (May - October) and Winter II (November - December). A coastwide quota regulates the winter periods, while state-by-state quotas regu-

late the summer period. Specific management measures for the commercial fishery include minimum size limits, minimum mesh requirements for trawls, a moratorium on entry into the fishery, and closed seasons.

In May of 2007, the Board adopted Amendment 14. The plan specified that a biomass rebuilding plan would not be set until it is demonstrated that the long-term data time series collected via the research vessel R/V Albatross is comparable and could be used with the data collected by the new research vessel R/V Bigelow. The R/V Albatross, which was used to collect data for the spring survey values for many years, was retired in 2007. The R/V Bigelow will be used to collect the data in the future. It is hoped that the high tech and advanced research capabilities of the R/V Bigelow will allow for improvement in data col-



Photo courtesy of John Chisolm, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

lection. The rebuilding plan and timeline for the scup stock remains undefined at this time. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Withdraws New Jersey Tautog Noncompliance Finding

Commission Chair George D. Lapointe has notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior that the Commission has withdrawn its noncompliance finding for the State of New Jersey with regards to its tautog management program. New Jersey notified the Commission on March 25, 2008 that it has implemented management measures that achieve a 25.6 percent reduction in exploitation as required by Addenda IV and V of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog. The measures, which include recreational bag limits, and season closures for both the recreational and commercial fisheries, are consistent with those previously reviewed and approved by the Commission's Tautog Technical Committee and Management Board.

"We are delighted that New Jersey, a major participant in the tautog fishery, has committed to joining our states in

taking the necessary steps to rebuild this valuable species," states ASMFC Chair George D. Lapointe. "With stock biomass at a third of its historical average, it is critical that all the states and stakeholders dependent on this fishery share in the burden of restoring this important resource."

On February 7, 2008, pursuant to the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993, the Commission notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior that the State of New Jersey was out of compliance with the provisions of the Addenda IV and V to the Tautog Plan. Specifically, New Jersey had not implemented Addenda IV and V's mandatory harvest reductions, which require the state to implement a management program that will achieve a 25.6 percent reduction in exploitation by January 1, 2008. The reduction is necessary

to initiate rebuilding of the overfished tautog stock and to maintain effective cooperative management of the resource.

On March 11, 2008, the Secretary of Commerce concurred with the Commission's determination of non-compliance and notified the state that the federal government would impose a moratorium on fishing for, possession of, and landing of tautog in New Jersey state waters on April 1, 2008. The Commission submitted its letters to the Secretaries on March 26. On March 31, NOAA announced that it had withdrawn its action to close the New Jersey tautog fishery.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202) 289-6400.

ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

3:00 - 4:30 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *J. Travelstead*
- Public Comment
- Draft Amendment 15 Discussion, *T. Kerns*
 - Update on Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Process
- Review Implementation of State Recreational Measures, *T. Kerns*

4:45 - 6:15 PM Shad and River Herring Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *P. Diodati*
- Public Comment
- Discussion and Approval of the Draft Public Information Document for Amendment 3 (American Shad) for Public Comment, *E. Robbins* – ACTION

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

8:00 - 9:30 AM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Boyles*
- Public Comment
- SEAMAP Report, *M. Paine* - ACTION
- South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel Report, *N. Meserve, B. Windley*
- Spot Plan Review Team Report, *N. Meserve, J. Grist*
- Southern Kingfish Technical Committee Report, *P. Campfield*
 - Discussion to Consider Possible Initiation of a Stock Assessment - ACTION
- Red Drum Stock Enhancement Subcommittee Report, *N. Meserve*

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee

- Welcome/Call to Order, *J. Bridi*
- Roll Call of States
- Approve Minutes from October 29, 2007 Meeting - ACTION
- Review Outstanding Items from October 29, 2007 Meeting
- Review and Discuss Updates from Species Management Boards
- Review Shark Regulatory Proposals
 - Discussion of Conference Call and Recommendation Letter
- Consider Lobster Letter Request / Crab Pot Issue in Area 1
- Black Sea Bass Aquaculture
 - Discuss Virginia Enterprise (MATT) Request of Sale/Possession of Undersize Black Sea Bass
- Subcommittee Lunch Meeting
 - Discuss Possible Enhancements to the Law Enforcement Committee and Duties of Coordinator
- Discuss the 2008 Action Plan
- Other Business
 - Report from N.E. Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association
 - Report from Gulf States Marine Fisheries Association



9:45 - 11:15 AM American Eel Management Board

- Welcome / Call to Order, *A.C. Carpenter*
- Public Comment
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission
 - Presentation of Draft MOU, *E. Robbins*
 - Discussion and Approval of Draft MOU for Policy Board Review, *E. Robbins* – ACTION
- Discussion and Approval Draft Addendum II for Public Comment - ACTION
 - Technical Committee Comments, *J. Clark*
 - Advisory Panel Comments, *M. Feigenbaum*
 - Law Enforcement Committee Comments

continued on page 8

ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 7)

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Management and Science Committee

- Welcome/Introductions, *H. Speir*
- Public Comment
- Review Revisions for the Benchmark Stock Assessment Document including Recommendations from the Terms of Reference Subcommittee, *M. Paine & G. Nesslage*
- Discuss Creating an ASMFC High Priority List of Research Needs, *M. Paine*
- Discuss Forage Fish of Concern to Management along the Coast
- Discuss How to Evaluate Fishing Mortality of Juvenile Fish Not Accounted for in Current Assessments
- Discuss Aquaculture Concerns, *H. Mears*
- Discuss Commission Involvement with the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), *H. Mears*
- Report from Multispecies Technical Committee on Appropriate Uses of MSVPA-X and Status Update, *M. Cieri*
- Review Stock Assessment Peer Review Schedule 2008, *M. Paine*
- Updates from: (1) Assessment Science Committee, *M. Paine*; (2) Habitat Committee, *J. Thomas*; (3) Interstate Shellfish Transport Committee, *P. Marchman*; (4) Interstate Tagging Committee, *G. Nesslage*; (5) NEAMAP, *C. Bonzek*; (6) SEAMAP, *M. Paine*; (7) Fishing Gear Technology Workgroup, *P. Campfield*; (8) Otolith Collection Program, *P. Campfield*; and (9) Peer Review Report Card Project, *P. Campfield*
- Other Business/Adjourn

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM Bluefish Management Board

- Welcome / Call to Order
- Public Comment
- Annual Compliance Reports for Fishing Year 2006
 - Presentation of the 2007 Fishery Management Plan Review, *E. Robbins*
- 2008 Bluefish Commercial Quota
 - Presentation of Commission and NMFS Commercial Quota Discrepancy
 - Review and Discuss Commission 2008 Bluefish Commercial Quota
- Bluefish Commercial Quota Transfers
 - Presentation on the History of Interstate Commercial Quota Transfers, *E. Robbins*
 - Review and Discuss Bluefish Commercial Quota Transfer Policy
- Election of Vice-Chair - **ACTION**
- Other Business/Adjourn



1:45 - 5:15 PM Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *E. Smith*
- Public Comment
- Review Input on Final Draft FMP for Atlantic Coastal Sharks, *C. Vonderweidt*
 - Public Hearings, Written Comment, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, and Law Enforcement Committee
- Plan Development Team Summary and Review of Amendment 2 EIS, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Selection of Management Options for FMP – **FINAL ACTION**
- Spiny Dogfish Quota Management, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Other Business/Adjourn

6:30 - 8:00 PM Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

Wednesday May 7, 2008

8:00 AM - Noon Strategic Planning Workshop

1:15 - 2:15 PM Strategic Planning Workshop (continued)

2:30 - 4:00 PM ISFMP Policy Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Habitat Committee Report
 - Approval of Habitat Program Operational Procedures Manual

- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities
- Management and Science Committee Report
- NEAMAP Update
- Assessment Science Committee Report
- Other Business/Recess

4:15 - 6:15 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Boyles*
- Public Comment
- Plan Review Team Report, *B. Spear* – **ACTION**
 - State Compliance
 - Fishery Management Plan Review
- Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel Report, *J. Cooper*
- USFWS Shorebird Technical Committee Report, *G. Breese*
- Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee Report, *M. Millard*
- Consider Approval of Draft Addendum V for Public Comment – **ACTION**



Thursday May 8, 2008

8:00 - 8:30 AM Executive Committee

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment, *G. Lapointe*
- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee, *R. Boyles*
 - Presentation of the FY09 Budget – **ACTION** (Budget will be available at the meeting)
 - Interim Review of 2008 Action Plan Accomplishments
- Future Annual Meetings Update, *L. Leach*
 - October 19 – 23, 2008 – Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
 - November 1 – 5, 2009 – Newport, Rhode Island
 - 2010 – South Carolina; 2011 – Massachusetts; and 2012 – Pennsylvania

8:45 - 10:15 AM ISFMP Policy Board (continued)

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)
- Update on Formation of Committee to Address State/Federal Alignment Issues
- Report on ASMFC Fish Passage Workshop
- Continue Discussion on ASMFC Involvement in Development of State Recreational Registry

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM ACCSP/ASMFC Session on Marine Recreational Information Program

1:00 - 1:30 PM Business Session

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Review of Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of FMPs or Amendments (if necessary)

1:45 - 4:45 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

- Welcome/Introductions
- Public Comment
- ACCSP Status Report
- Review and Approve Funding Decision Process
- Review Approve Bycatch and Biological Targets
- Approve FY08 Implementation Plan
- Discussion the Shift in Module Focus from Catch/Effort to Biological
- Discuss the Recreational Registry (should ACCSP host the Atlantic registry)
- Election of a New Chair and Vice-Chair
- Other Business/Adjourn

ACCSP Source of Data for Fisheries of the United States and Numerous Stock Assessments

ACCSP Prepares Partner Data for Fisheries of the U.S.

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is gathering data from its Northeast partners and preparing it for submission to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to use in the 2007 publication of Fisheries of the United States (FUS). FUS is a publication produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) each year to provide important fisheries information to industry and government for management purposes.

ACCSP is able to obtain most of the needed trip level data from dealer reports housed in its Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS), a real-time web-based reporting tool for commercial landings on the Atlantic coast. Partners from Maine to Virginia, as well as NMFS Northeast Regional Office, are sending supplemental data to ACCSP to fill gaps where data is reported through processes outside of dealer reports, and therefore not readily available using SAFIS. ACCSP is prepared to combine all the data for submission to NMFS on April 11, 2008.

The arrangement, which is different from years past because states usually handle their own data submission, is mutually beneficial to ACCSP and NMFS. NMFS does not have to spend vital staff time merging and combining data sets from different sources for ten Atlantic coast states, and ACCSP will have last year's data ready for use earlier than it has ever been able to make available in the past. Additionally, ACCSP clarification and documentation of the process benefits the state partners by providing them with new insight into how their data fits into the larger data set. They can feel confident that their data is being incorporated into coastwide landings appropriately.

It is expected that ACCSP will continue to provide FUS data on behalf of its northern partner states in years to come.

For more information on FUS, please visit <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/publications.html>.

ACCSP Integrated into Stock Assessment Process

Since ACCSP began participating in stock assessment data workshops last July, ACCSP has become increasingly useful to the Atlantic coast stock assessment processes. Most recently, ACCSP participated in the Southeast Data Assessment Review (SEDAR) of king mackerel, providing trip ticket data for South Carolina and Georgia. In May, ACCSP prepares to participate in the SEDAR for Spanish mackerel and vermilion snapper.



Being able to provide helpful data to stock assessment scientists is critical to the success of ACCSP, as the program aims to be the premier source for marine fisheries statistics on the Atlantic coast. While ACCSP steadily works towards completing its data sets, the Program recognizes the worth of working with scientists early on. In this manner, ACCSP is able to learn in what form data should be supplied, and stock assessment scientists are beginning



to recognize ACCSP as a valuable contributor of data for their assessments.

ACCSP expects to participate in the data workshops for the weakfish assessment, to be conducted by Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee this June, and the SEDAR data workshops for the red drum set for February 2009.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate 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 Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

ACCSP Upcoming Meetings

4/22 - 24:

Commercial Technical and Information Systems Committees, Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

5/1:

Recreational Technical Committee, Annapolis, Maryland.

5/8:

Coordinating Council, Alexandria, Virginia.

Non-Traditional Stakeholders Sought for Participation in ASMFC Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel

The Commission's Shad and River Herring Management Board is in process of re-configuring its Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel. As part of that process, the Board is seeking nominations from nontraditional stakeholders (as opposed to traditional stakeholders such as recreational, for-hire and commercial fishing participants) to fill two seats on the panel. Examples of such stakeholders include, but are not limited to, environmental organizations, grassroots organizations, and individuals/groups with an interest in fisheries, fish passage, and habitat conservation.

The intent of this action is to broaden the scope of public input to the Shad and River Herring Management Board as it develops two amendments to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad and River Herring. One amendment is being developed in response to the findings of the 2007 benchmark stock assessment for American shad, indicating that American shad stocks are currently at all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering, and the other in response to concerns regarding the depressed status of river herring stocks. The Commission believes that input

from non-traditional stakeholders will strengthen its efforts in successfully managing shad and river herring species. Individuals interested in serving as advisors can obtain an advisory panel nomination form by contacting the Commission at (202)289-6400 or downloading the nomination form via the Commission's website at http://www.asmfc.org/ad_panel.htm. A completed nomination form must be submitted to the Commission by 5:00 PM on April 24, 2008.

The Commission's advisory panel process was established to address its increasing responsibilities under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. The Act mandates, among other considerations, that the Commission provide adequate public participation in its fishery management planning process, including at least four public hearings and procedures for submission of written comments to the Commission. In 2002 the Commission established the Advisory Panel Oversight Committee, comprised of a subset of



Photo courtesy of NOAA/Dept. of Commerce

legislative and governor-appointed Commissioners and Advisory Panel Chairs, to provide oversight to its advisory panel process. Advisory Panels have been developed for Atlantic herring, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, American lobster, black sea bass, bluefish, coastal sharks, horseshoe crab, northern shrimp, scup, shad & river herring, South Atlantic species (croaker, spot, spotted seatrout, Spanish mackerel, red drum), spiny dogfish, striped bass, summer flounder, tautog, weakfish, and winter flounder. For more information, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or tberger@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners:



Representative Eileen Naughton -- Representative Eileen Naughton has stepped down as Rhode Island's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC, a position she has held since 1999. Throughout her term, her proxies, Jerry Carvalho and Gil Pope, have consistently represented Representative Naughton and the interests of Rhode Island's fishing industries. We wish Representative Naughton the very best in all her future endeavors.

Senator V. Susan Sosnowski -- This March, Senator Susan Sosnowski joined the Commission as Rhode Island's new Legislative Commissioner. With a long-standing interest in and experience with environmental and land use issues, Senator Sosnowski currently Chairs the state's Environment and Agriculture Committee. She has also served on the state's Coastal Resources Management Council, Agricultural Council Advisory Committee, and the Governor's Advisory Council on the Environment. Married with four children, Senator Sosnowski resides in West Kingston. Welcome aboard, Senator Sosnowski!



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