



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Volume 15, Issue 6
August 2006

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 Summer Meeting

August 14 - 17, 2006
Doubletree Hotel Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
(703) 416-4100

Final Agenda

Please note that there have been several revisions made to the agenda. The Shad & River Herring Board meeting, originally scheduled for August 15, has been cancelled. A Horseshoe Crab Management Board meeting has been added, with the Board scheduled to meet on August 15 from 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM. Additionally, meeting times for Monday and Tuesday have been slightly modified from the preliminary agenda. The agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of meetings. Interested parties should anticipate meetings starting earlier or later than indicated herein. If you intend to bring any meeting materials for use by a board or committee not included in the Commission's Summer Meeting Briefing Materials/CD-ROM, please bring 50 copies.

Monday, August 14, 2006

Noon – 3:30 PM American Lobster Management Board

- Public Comment
- Elect Vice-Chair
- Addendum VIII Clarification
 - Implementation Date for Trip Level Survey
- Review Draft Amendment 5 PID for Public Comment –ACTION
- Rebuilding Process for SNE Stock
- Connecticut V-Notching Proposal
 - Technical Committee Review of Proposal
 - Law Enforcement Committee Review of Proposal

3:45 PM – 6:15 PM Atlantic Herring Section

- Public Comment
- 2005 Compliance Reports and FMP Review – ACTION
- Update on 2006 TRAC Assessment and Specifications Process
- Review of Draft Technical Addendum – ACTION

Tuesday, August 15, 2006

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board

- Public Comment

continued on page 6

Inside This Issue

Species Profile: Spanish Mackerel **Page 4**

ASMFC Comings & Goings **Page 7**

ACCSP Considers Preliminary Proposals for 2007 **Page 8**

September Technical Meeting Week Schedule **Page 10**

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

Preston P. Pate, Jr. (NC), Chair
George D. Lapointe (ME), Vice-Chair

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

Tina L. Berger, Editor
tberger@asmfc.org

(202)289-6400 Phone • (202)289-6051 Fax
www.asmfc.org

Upcoming Meetings

8/14 - 17:

ASMFC Meeting Week, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia; 703/416-4100 (see final agenda on pages 1, 6 & 7).

8/28 - 9/1:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Holiday Inn Brownstone, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina (see page 10 for the meeting schedule).

9/10 - 14:

American Fisheries Society 135th Annual Meeting, Lake Placid, New York.

9/18 - 22:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town & Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, South Carolina; 800-334-6660.

9/26 - 28:

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn, Peabody, Massachusetts.

10/10 - 12:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Garden Inn, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

10/22 - 26:

ASMFC 65th Annual Meeting, Sheraton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

11/14 - 16:

New England Fishery Management Council, Tavern on Harbor, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

12/4 - 8:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel, 2717 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina; 800-624-8875.

12/9 - 13:

Forging the National Imperative: Third National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration, Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana.

12/12 - 14:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Skyline Hotel 725 10th Avenue, New York, New York; 212-586-3400.

As most readers know, the Commission was founded in 1942 by the 15 Atlantic coastal states to protect and promote Atlantic coastal fisheries through cooperative management and conservation. Inherent in this mission is the commitment to be accountable for the resources under our stewardship.

The Commission provides this transparency to both the public and Congress through formal and informal means. In addition to our press releases and Annual Report, we periodically appear before Congress to apprise them of the status of our stocks. Recently, the Commission participated in a hearing before the House Fisheries Subcommittee to review the health, management, and future of Atlantic striped bass.

Partnerships for Conservation Work!

Over the past two decades, the recovery of striped bass has been spectacular, a testament to effective and responsive resource management. Today, the total abundance of striped bass has reached an historic high, with a current spawning stock biomass of 55 million pounds. In addition to this high abundance, the age structure has expanded, further strengthening the reproductive capacity of the stock. Striped bass now support the largest recreational fishery under Commission oversight, as well as a commercial fishery that generates an annual dockside value of more than 12 million dollars.

However, we must not let the accomplishments of today blind us to the lessons of the past. Twenty-five years ago the striped bass stock collapsed due to decades of overfishing and habitat degradation. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of our member states and federal partners, as well as the sacrifices of both recreational and commercial fishermen, the stock was rebuilt by 1997.

New Challenges Ahead

Despite these successes, there are concerns. Within the Chesapeake Bay some fish appear to be infected with ulcerative dermatitis syndrome, which causes lesions on the body. It is not clear what role water quality or the stress induced by catch and release fisheries might play in this illness.

Mycobacteriosis is another bacterial infection. First found in the Chesapeake Bay in 1997, it causes skin lesions, stunted growth, and scar tissue in organs. It has been reported that up to 60% of the striped bass in the Bay may be infected with mycobacteriosis. The mortality rate from "myco" on the Bay fish is not known. If it is causing high mortality such an effect would be evident in our stock assessments. So far, our technical advisors

have not seen a significant rise in natural mortality. Fortunately, Maryland and Virginia have confirmed that striped bass are safe to eat. In addition, their scientists continue to study this issue and monitor the situation. Interestingly, these infections do not seem to be present in fish caught in the ocean.

Success Requires Maintenance

In order to protect the progress made in recovery, the Commission developed Amendment 6 to the Striped Bass Management Plan. As approved in 2003, Amendment 6 establishes biological reference points appropriate for a rebuilt stock, requires states to monitor the health and harvest of fish, and provides a suite of triggers requiring rapid management response to increases in fishing mortality or decreases in biomass. Commercial fisheries are controlled through a system of hard quotas established by the Commission. The recreational harvest is managed by a target mortality rate, which has allowed expansion throughout most of the rebuilding period. Our management strategy recognizes the importance and wisdom of continuing a modest investment in monitoring the harvest and abundance of this healthy stock in order to avoid the far more costly actions needed to rebuild a collapsed fishery.

Looking Towards the Future

Regarding future management actions, several ideas have been suggested. Proposals to implement federal regulations prohibiting the commercial harvest of striped bass in state waters raises concern from the Commission's perspective. Such action would infringe on the sovereign rights of the states to manage the natural resources within their jurisdictions.

Through the Amendment 6 process, the Commission recommended that the Secretary open the EEZ to fishing, after hearing from our technical advisors that no scientific reason exists to continue the moratorium. In addition, opening the EEZ could benefit the stock by converting discards into landings, thus reducing fishing mortality. During public hearings on the EEZ issue, many expressed concerns that commercial harvest would increase if the EEZ were opened. In actuality, commercial harvest is controlled by our states through hard quotas and would not increase.

Looking to the future, the sacrifice and controls used to rebuild striped bass can serve as an example of the action needed to restore other stocks. The benefits of fully restored stocks should be obvious to all and something we should all agree to work towards.



Spanish Mackerel
Scombermorus maculatus

Also Known As: Spotted Cybium, Bay Mackerel, Spotted Mackerel

Interesting Fish Facts:

- Fish can grow up to 15" in length in their 1st year and have been reported to achieve a maximum length of 3'.
- Fish form large schools which travel great distances over a short period of time.

Largest Recorded: 13 pounds, Ocracoke Inlet, NC, 1987

Age/Length at Maturity: 2 years/13.8 - 14.8"

Age at Recruitment: 0-2 years due to rapid growth rate in 1st year (12" in length)

Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing not occurring

Species Profile: Spanish Mackerel

South Atlantic Species Thrives Under Joint Management Efforts

Introduction

Spanish mackerel, *Scombermorus maculatus*, is managed cooperatively by the Commission and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The species supports thriving recreational and commercial fisheries in the South Atlantic waters and is gaining importance in the Mid-Atlantic. It is also valued by anglers as bait in big game fishing. Since adoption of the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in 1990, states from New York to Florida have implemented bag and size limits, commercial trip limits, and/or provisions for seasonal closures to complement the Council's measures in federal waters (three - 200 miles offshore). These actions have resulted in stock rebuilding, with the species currently not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Life History

A fast swimming fish, known to gather in large schools and travel great distances, Spanish mackerel can be found throughout the coastal waters of the eastern U.S. and the Gulf of Mexico. Their migratory and schooling nature often frustrate anglers, as large congregations of fish can be found in an area one day and gone the next. Spanish mackerel prefer open water but are sometimes found over deep grass beds and reefs, as well as in shallow estuaries. They live for five to eight years. Females spawn by age two, releasing between half a million and 1.5 million eggs. Larvae grow quickly, reaching lengths of 12 to 15 inches in a year. Older fish may weigh several pounds. Along the Atlantic coast, Spanish mackerel range from the Florida Keys to New York, and occasionally as far north as New England. These fish winter off Florida, moving northward to North Carolina in early April and to New York in June. Later in the year, as waters cool, Spanish mackerel return to warm Florida waters.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Extensive commercial fisheries for Spanish mackerel in the Mid-Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay began as far back as the 1880s. However, from 1950 to the mid-1990s the waters off Florida have been the major commercial fishing area, with gillnets being the principle commercial gear. In July 1995, Florida instituted a statewide net ban, which affected the commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel and changed the characteristics of the fishery, shifting the bulk of the commercial harvest into federal waters (three - 200 miles from shore).

Atlantic coast commercial landings have generally fluctuated between two and eight million pounds since 1950, peaking at 10 and 11 million pounds from the mid-70s to 1980. Recent calendar year landings have ranged between two and four million pounds (see Figure 1), with ex-vessel values of 1.5 to 2.5 million dollars. Prosecuted predominately in state waters from Virginia to Florida, the majority of the commercial fishery occurs in Florida (offshore waters) and North Carolina. In 2004, less than one percent of the total commercial landings occurred north of Virginia (see Figure 2).



Photo courtesy of Captain Darren Rickwood

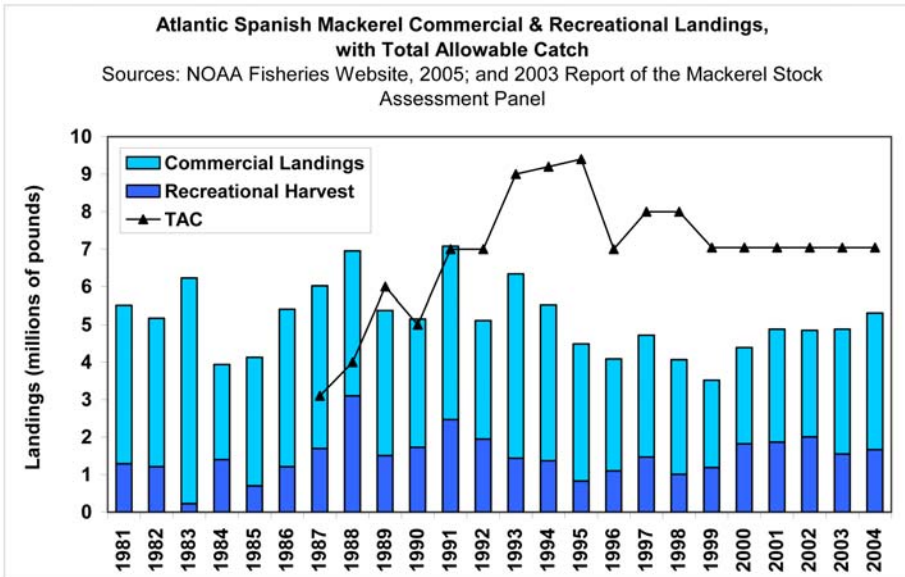
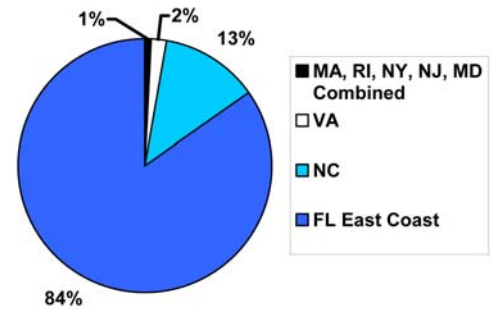


Figure 2. 2004 Commercial Landings by State

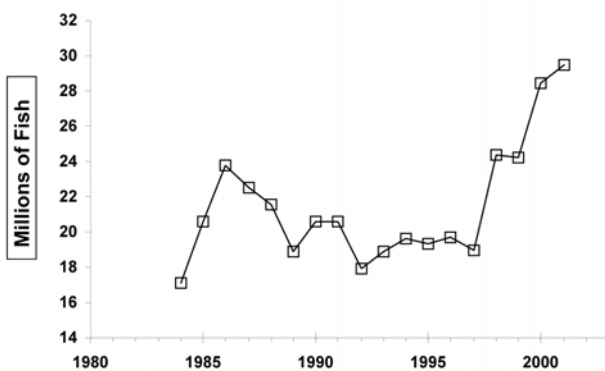


Spanish mackerel support extensive recreational fisheries in many states, though the primary fishing grounds are in the South and Mid-Atlantic regions. In 2004, recreational anglers harvested approximately 1.7 million pounds coastwide. North Carolina and Florida continue to account for the majority of recreational landings in both number and weight.

Stock Status

Stock assessments are conducted by the joint Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP) of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. The latest full assessment, conducted in 2003 and including data through the 2001/2002 fishing years, determined that Atlantic Spanish mackerel are not overfished and overfishing did not occur in 2002/2003. Stock abundance has increased steadily since 1995, reaching a high of 24 million fish in 1999 (see Figure 3). Stock biomass has more than doubled since 1995.

Figure 3. Estimated Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Abundance
Source: 2003 Report of the Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel



Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

Overfishing on Spanish mackerel prompted state and federal management efforts in the mid-1980s. In 1983, the

Council developed a fishery management plan for federal waters. A complementary interstate plan was adopted for state waters in 1990. The major components of the current management program include a minimum size limit of 12 inches fork length, a recreational bag limit of 15 fish per person per day, closure of state fisheries when the annual commercial quota has been met, and a 3,500-pound commercial trip limit. States may also implement more restrictive regulations if they so choose.

Spanish mackerel are managed based on information from and recommendations from the MSAP. Adjustments are made to the total allowable catch (TAC) through bag, size, and trip limits. State/federal management is coordinated through the Commission's South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board. Currently, the TAC is 7.04 million pounds per year, allocated on a 55:45 basis between the commercial fishery (3.87 million pounds) and the recreational fishery (3.17 million pounds). However, in June 2006, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted to change this quota to 6.7 million pounds. The Council is in the process of developing a regulatory amendment on the new TAC, with a public hearing and comment period scheduled for mid-September. Amendment completion and submission to the Southeast Regional Administrator is planned for mid-October.

In the late 1990s, states also began to implement effort controls. Starting in July 1999, North Carolina capped the number of commercial licenses and instituted strict income-related eligibility requirements for new licenses. Maryland capped its commercial licenses at the existing number for a five-year period starting in 1997. Virginia delayed entry for two-years into its gillnet fishery. New York has a restrictive period for commercial licensing of nonresidents and income-related eligibility requirements associated with certain fisheries. These actions, combined with traditional management measures, have contributed to stock rebuilding. The challenge will be to maintain these gains in coming years. For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or nmeserve@asmfc.org.

Summer Meeting Final Agenda (continued from page 1)

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board (continued)

- Summary of Public Hearings and Public Comment on Coastal Sharks PID
- Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel Meeting Report
- Coastal Sharks Technical Committee Meeting Report
- Update on 2006 LCS Assessment
- 2005 Spiny Dogfish Compliance Reports and FMP Review – ACTION
- Update on 2006 Spiny Dogfish Assessment (SARC 43)

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Tautog Management Board

- Public Comment
- Report on Updated VPA Model and Technical Committee Recommendations
- Decision on Next Steps in Tautog Management – ACTION
- 2005 Compliance Reports and FMP Review – ACTION



4:15 PM – 5:15 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review Addendum IV Implementation Plans – ACTION

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Public Comment
- SEAMAP Activities – ACTION
 - Report from SEAMAP Annual Meeting
 - Approval of SEAMAP Budget Priorities
 - Approval of the 2006 Operations Plan
 - Approval of the 2006-2010 Management Plan
- Update on Red Drum Transfer of Authority
- Update from Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Public Comment
- PRT Report on Implementation of Addendum II
- Discussion of Implementation of Addendum II – POSSIBLE ACTION
- Update on Menhaden Stock Assessment

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board

- Proposal to Modify North Carolina Aquaculture Proposal – POSSIBLE ACTION

2:15 PM – 4:30 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review Draft Addendum I for Public Comment – ACTION
 - Addendum I Overview
- Technical Committee Update
 - Report on Board Tasks to the Technical Committee
 - Report from June 21, 2006 Technical Committee Meeting
 - Future Planning for 2007 Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Review FMP Review and Compliance Report – ACTION

continued on page 7

Thursday, August 17, 2006

8:00 AM – 10:45 AM

Weakfish Management Board

- Public Comment
- Technical Committee Report
- Review Draft Addendum II Mortality Reduction Options
- Discussion of Addendum II Options – **POSSIBLE ACTION**
- Certification of Shrimp Bycatch Reduction Devices Consistent with SAFMC – **POSSIBLE ACTION**

11:00 AM – 2:30 PM

ISFMP Policy Board (Buffet lunch will be provided for Commissioners and Proxies.)

- Public Comment
- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)
- Discuss Response to Retrospective Bias in Stock Assessment Advice
- Review ASMFC Position on Recreational Data Collection
- Consider the Formation of Multispecies Technical Committee
- Discuss “Script” to Improve Meeting Efficiency and Consistency
- Review Charge to Ad Hoc Committee on Allocation
- Updates on Habitat Committee Response to National Fish Habitat Initiative and Non-Native Oyster Activities

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Business Session

- Public Comment
- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of FMPs or Amendments (if necessary)

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners

Assemblyman Douglas H. Fisher -- In July, Assemblyman Douglas Fisher joined the Commission as New Jersey’s Legislative Commissioner. Active in the New Jersey legislature since 2002, Assemblyman Fisher currently serves as Assistant Majority Whip in the General Assembly, and chairs both the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Commission. Please join us in welcoming Assemblyman Fisher to the Commission.

Staff

Joe Grist -- In July, Joe Grist accepted a position with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) as a Fishery Management Senior Manager. In this position, Joe will handle a broad spectrum of organizational and administrative functions for the fisheries program. These include oversight of VMRC’s fisheries data input and retrieval programs, participation in the development of the state’s fisheries management plans and fisheries regulations, and management of the department’s expenditures. While only with the Commission for 14 months, Joe provided valuable stock assessment expertise and support to the ISFMP staff and species technical committees. He provided oversight to the Commission’s external peer review for weakfish, and assisted in the preparation of shad stock assessment for peer review.

He also worked to promote enhanced understanding of stock assessment principles and methodologies by state and federal fishery scientists through basic and advanced stock assessment training workshops. While he will be missed, staff is looking forward to working with him in his new position with the VMRC. Congratulations, Joe.



Nichola Meserve -- In early July, Nichola Meserve joined the Commission staff as its newest Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, taking over coordination responsibilities for striped bass, weakfish, and several South Atlantic species. Nichola has a Master’s in Environmental Management from Duke University and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Hamilton College in New York. Last summer, she worked as a cooperative research intern at the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen’s Association in Chatham, Massachusetts. While there she worked to increase stakeholder participation in

continued on page 9

ACCSP Considers Preliminary Proposals for 2007



The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has received preliminary proposals for projects to be initiated or continued in 2007 from nine state and federal partners and two ACCSP committees.

Since 1999, the ACCSP has provided funds to its state and federal partners for data collection projects needed for fishery management. Funding increased from \$1.5 million per year in 1999 to \$3.5 million per year in 2002 and 2003. Since then, funding has diminished due to federal rescissions and the recent implementation of recovery of administrative costs by NOAA grants in 2006. In 2006, the ACCSP was able to award \$3.42 million.

Partner requests for 2007 already exceed the ACCSP's 2006 budget, so the ACCSP's Operations Committee, Advisory Committee, and Coordinating Council may have to decline some quality proposals due to lack of funds before allocations are finalized later this year.

Eight state partners have requested funds for 2007. They include:

1. **Maine Department of Marine Resources:** (a) Implementation of a Mandatory Dealer Reporting System for Maine Commercial Landings According to ACCSP Standards (\$226,236); and (b) Portside Bycatch Sampling and Commercial Catch Sampling of the Atlantic Herring (*Clupea harengus*) and Atlantic Mackerel Fisheries (*Scomber scombrus*) – Year 2 (\$108,891).
2. **Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries:** Evaluation of Trip Level Reporting for Lobster Harvesters in Massachusetts (\$62,532).
3. **Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife:** Coordination and Development of Fisheries-Dependent Data Feeds to ACCSP from the State of Rhode Island (\$153,365).
4. **New York Department of Environmental Conservation and NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office:**

(a) Continuation and Expansion of the New York State Fishery-Dependent Data Collection and Biological Sampling (\$113,967); and (b) Development and Deployment of a Prototype Reporting Compliance and Quota Monitoring Toolbox (\$72,396).

5. **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:** Implementation of Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting, Biological Characterization and Continuance of the Standard Atlantic Information System Coordination for the State of New Jersey (\$254,957); and (b)¹ A Pilot Program to Develop a Vessel-Based Reporting System for a Small-Boat Fishery, the New Jersey Oyster Fishery (\$79,317).
6. **Maryland Department of Natural Resources:** Information Technology Support for Maryland Data Collection, Storage, and Transfer in Support of ACCSP Objectives (\$88,900).
7. **North Carolina Department of Marine Fisheries:** Conduct of Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) Random Digit Dialing, For-Hire Telephone Calls, and Dockside Sampling in North Carolina During Wave 1 (\$48,028); and (b) Estuarine Bycatch Assessment in North Carolina Commercial Fisheries (\$166,000).
8. **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources:** Continuation of Sampling for Hard Part/Aging from the Commercial Fishery for Snapper/Grouper Complex in South Carolina (\$36,798).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) submitted two proposals. They include: Travel Support for ACCSP Committees and Projects by the NMFS Northeast Region and Center (\$8,000); and Characterization of the Seasonal

¹ This proposal is submitted in partnership with Rutgers University.

Maturation and Growth Rates of a Sub-annual Squid Species, *Illex illecebrosus*, for Use in the *Illex* In-season Stock Assessment Model (\$72,872).

Two ACCSP committees submitted proposals. The Recreational Technical Committee submitted four: (1) Independent Evaluation of Headboat Sampling Benchmark Study by the For-Hire Subcommittee (\$22,000); (2) Reducing Catch and Effort Variances for Important Managed Recreational Fisheries on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Georgia) (\$305,776); (3) Increase Intercept Sampling Levels for the MRFSS For-hire Methodology of the Charterboat and Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Florida) (\$415,963); and (4) An Inventory of Tournament Activity Along the Atlantic Coast (\$65,924).

The Advisory Committee submitted one proposal, A Pilot Study To Develop A Real-Time Reporting System for Vessel Trip Reports Using A Vessel Monitoring System for Party Boats (\$80,783).

In addition, the Commission submitted a proposal for the ACCSP's administration, including staffing, meeting expenses, office space, and the operation of the ACCSP data warehouse and SAFIS, under the terms of the administrative support agreement between ACCSP and the Commission (\$1.6M).

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. For more information, please visit the ACCSP website at www.accsp.org

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 7)

the Northeast Consortium Cooperative Haddock Tagging program through the design and production of outreach materials, development of an innovative rewards program, and training of fishermen tagging technicians. Please join us in welcoming Nichola to the Commission.

Julie Nygard -- In July, Julie Nygard accepted a position with NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation as Special Assistant to the Director. In her new job, she will be supporting the director on internal and interagency coordination, and developing recommendations in response to emerging issues associated with NOAA and habitat management planning and procedures. While at the Commission, she coordinated fishery management programs for bluefish, black sea bass, and scup. Julie also provided staff support to the Habitat Program, publishing several issues of *Habitat Hotline Atlantic*, completing 12 species-specific habitat factsheets, and working with the Habitat Committee on several projects. We wish Julie the very best in her new job.



Melissa Paine -- In August, Melissa Paine joined the Commission staff as its new Scientific Committee Coordinator. Melissa will be coordinating the activities of the Southeast and Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Programs (SEAMAP and NEAMAP), the Management

and Science Committee, and the Stock Assessment Committee. Melissa has a Master's Degree in Marine Science from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and a Bachelor of Science from University of California at San Diego. Melissa's recently completed master's work involved the use of genetics to identify scumbroid (mackerel and tuna species) larvae and fillets. Please join us in welcoming Melissa to the Commission.

Nancy Wallace -- In July, Commission staff also bid farewell

Mark Your Calendars!

ASMFC 2007 Meeting Dates

January 29 - February 1, 2007
May 7 - 10, 2007
August 13 - 16, 2007

All meetings will be held at the Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

66th Annual Meeting
October 28 - November 1, 2007
Annapolis, Maryland

to Nancy Wallace as she took the position of Program Analyst with NOAA's Office of Management & Budget under the National Ocean Service. Her primary responsibility will be to provide staff support to the NOAA Ocean Council. Nancy's accomplishments during her three and a half years with the Commission were many. She oversaw the completion and adoption of peer-reviewed benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic menhaden and croaker. Both assessments have been used to chart the course for future management of these species. The croaker assessment in particular provided the scientific basis for Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Croaker Plan (2005). In addition to coordinating the management programs for menhaden, croaker and several other South Atlantic species, Nancy provided valuable staff support to the Commission's multispecies assessment efforts and several habitat projects. We wish Nancy the very best in her new job.

With the change in ISFMP staff, there has been a shift in FMP Coordinator responsibilities. The updated responsibilities are provided in the table below. Changes in staff responsibilities may be made in the future to reflect workload priorities. For more information, please contact Bob Beal, ISFMP Director, at (202)289-6400 or rbeal@asmfc.org.

FMP Coordinator	Staff Responsibilities
Ruth Christiansen	Atlantic herring, spiny dogfish & coastal sharks, tautog, winter flounder
Toni Kerns	American lobster, black sea bass, scup, summer flounder
Nichola Meserve	Atlantic croaker, Atlantic striped bass, red drum, Spanish mackerel, spot, spotted seatrout, weakfish
Braddock Spear	Atlantic menhaden, Atlantic sturgeon, horseshoe crab, northern shrimp
Vacant*	American eel, bluefish, shad and river herring

* Bob Beal, ISFMP Director, will handle the coordination responsibilities for these species until a new FMP Coordinator is hired.

**ASMFC Technical Committee
Meeting Week**

August 28 - September 1, 2006

**Holiday Inn Brownstone
1707 Hillsborough Street
Raleigh, North Carolina**

Red Drum Technical Committee

Monday, August 28 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee

Tuesday, August 29 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee

Tuesday, August 29 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Stock Assessment Committee

Wednesday, August 30 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

American Eel Stock Assessment Committee

Thursday, August 31 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Friday, September 1 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington D.C. 20005

Return Service Requested