ASMFC
FISHERIES focus
Volume 20, Issue 5
August 2011
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA
Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

ASMFC Voices Support for the Marine Recreational Information Program

The Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board affirmed its strong support for the direction, pace, and goal of NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). This support is a direct result of consistent and frequent updates on the program's progress as well as a comprehensive presentation on MRIP's current status and next steps given by MRIP staff at the Commission's Summer Meeting. It is also a reflection of the active participation of the Commission, other interstate commissions, and the coastal states at all levels of MRIP development, including committees and technical working groups.


Photo Credit: Gary Moore, FWC

"MRIP and the data it will provide are essential to the Commission's interstate fisheries management program given the breadth and importance of recreational fisheries managed by the Commission and the 15 Atlantic coastal states," stated Robert H. Boyles, Jr., ASMFC Chair. "The Board applauds the enormous effort NOAA has devoted to improving marine recreational fisheries statistics and appreciates the frank and constructive dialogue NOAA has fostered with the Commission, the states, and the recreational fishing community. The states are committed to continuing to work with NOAA as we transition to using the new survey methodology and catch estimates."

The Board transmitted its support of the program and its efforts to minimize bias in survey methodology, improve precision of catch estimates, and enhance spatial/temporal coverage of survey data in a letter to NOAA Fisheries Service.

MRIP was developed to address the recommendations of the National Research Council following its review of the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey and other recreational surveys as well as stakeholder concerns about the reliability and credibility of recreational fishing catch and effort estimates. Its goal is to provide accurate, timely, and statistically sound estimates that fisheries managers, stock assessors, and marine scientists need to ensure the sustainability of fisheries resources. The program has made significant advancements over the last several years, including re-estimating catch and effort data from 2004 to present using new estimation methodology (to be released in 2011) and launching the new sampling methodology beginning in 2012. For more information on MRIP, please visit www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov.

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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 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.

Upcoming Meetings

9/13 (6 PM):
Northern Shrimp Public Hearing on Draft Amendment 2, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, Casco Bay Ferry Terminal Conference Room, 56 Commercial Street, Portland, ME.

9/13 (6 PM):
Northern Shrimp Public Hearing on Draft Amendment 2, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Annisquam River Station, 30 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester, MA.

9/14 (7 PM):
Northern Shrimp Public Hearing on Draft Amendment 2, New Hampshire Fish and Game, Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, NH.

9/15 (6 PM):
Northern Shrimp Public Hearing on Draft Amendment 2, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, Rockland High School, 400 Broadway, Rockland, ME.

9/19 (6 PM):
Northern Shrimp Public Hearing on Draft Amendment 2, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, Ellsworth City Hall Auditorium, 1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME.

9/19 - 22:
Black Sea Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment Data and Assessment Workshop, NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA.

9/22 (9 AM - 3 PM):
Joint Meeting of the ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee & MAFMC Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee, Admiral Fell Inn, 888 South Broadway, Baltimore, MD.

9/26 - 30:
ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Providence Biltmore, 11 Dorrance Street, Providence, RI (see details below).

9/26 (1 - 5 PM) & 27 (8 AM - Noon):
Tautog Technical Committee

9/27 (1 - 5 PM) & 28 (9 AM - 5 PM):
MSVPA Joint Subcommittee

9/27 (1 - 5 PM):
Winter Flounder Technical Committee

9/28 (1 - 5 PM) & 29 (8 AM - Noon):
Shad & River Herring Technical Committee

9/29 (1 - 5 PM) & 30 (8 AM - Noon):
Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee

9/29 (9 AM - 5 PM):
Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee

New Chief -- Proven and Tested

NOAA's selection of Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Buckson to lead its Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is good news for fishermen and fisheries management. No stranger to the Commission, he has had a long history of contributions to our Law Enforcement Committee (LEC). LTC Buckson most recently served as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Deputy Director of Law Enforcement, an organization of more than 700 officers and employees. He has 29 years of experience in natural resource conservation law enforcement in a state with the nation's second longest coastline.

NOAA has taken significant steps in the past year to improve its law enforcement program in response to the findings and recommendations of the Inspector General, called in by Dr. Lubchenco to review the program. Effective implementation of these changes will require the abilities of a skilled administrator as well as a person adept at building strong partnerships. LTC Buckson has a career track record and reputation for being able to do both. He started his career with Florida Marine Patrol, eventually moving up to direct the state's marine law enforcement operations.

As Deputy Director, he coordinated with federal, state, and local enforcement agencies, interacted with state attorneys and county judges, and built relationships with stakeholders. For five years, he led the statewide Resource Protection Unit, directing the efforts of plain clothes officers targeting violations across Florida's large and diverse natural resource environment. LTC Buckson has acquired knowledge and professional contacts outside of his state through his 16 years of service representing his agency to our Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission as well as the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.

Besides Chairing the Commission's LEC, LTC Buckson received our 2004 Annual Award in Excellence in Law Enforcement. The award recognized his career contributions to fisheries conservation and his strong advocacy for consistency in fisheries enforcement approaches among state and federal agencies. In addition, he has received various other awards at the state and national level, recognizing his leadership and achievements in natural resources law enforcement.

As OLE Chief, LTC Buckson will lead a force of about 170 special agents and uniformed enforcement officers nationwide collectively tasked with enforcing federal fisheries regulations. With forces spread this thin, their effectiveness depends on the strength of the partnerships they can build with the regulated community as well as state police, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

LTC Buckson's proven ability to reach out to both commercial and recreational fishermen will help strengthen NOAA's efforts to promote compliance with the regulations. The vast majority of fishermen, especially commercial fishermen, want to see an enforcement force that both protects the resource and ensures a level playing field for participants. They recognize that when cheaters are free to operate, it is the honest fishermen who are penalized. Having law enforcement officers who are willing to help conscientious fishermen comply with the myriad of complex regulations, while effectively targeting the small percentage of law breakers, can go a long way in building trust and confidence. LTC Buckson has done that throughout his career.

In addition, he brings to the job a strong background in building effective partnerships. From his many years of experience in state, interstate, and inter-agency enforcement operations and coordination, he knows firsthand what it takes to earn trust and commitment from other agencies. Through joint enforcement agreements with the states, NOAA OLE provides fiscal resources and federal deputization to state marine patrols in return for state enforcement of federal fisheries laws on the water and particularly on the docks. LTC Buckson's experience and perspective as one of those long-time state partners will enable him to build on this successful program.

LTC Buckson's appointment is good news for fishermen for another important reason. Besides being a career law enforcement professional, he understands natural resource law enforcement and the importance of working with stakeholders to promote compliance. Through his work with the two interstate commissions, he has gained contacts and knowledge of fisheries from Texas to Maine. Most telling, all who have worked with him have praised him as both a people person and a dedicated law enforcement professional; someone who is fair but firm.

For these reasons, the Commission was quick to join the Gulf and Pacific States Commissions in praising NOAA's choice for its new Chief. Hopefully, fair, consistent, and effective fisheries law enforcement is something we can all support.

Northern Shrimp
Pandalus borealis

Interesting Facts:
*** Shrimp begin life as males and metamorphose into females in the 3rd year.**
*** Most shrimp do not live past 5 years of age.**
*** Northern shrimp are a source of alkaline phosphatase, an enzyme used in molecular biology.**
***The species' carapace is a source of chitosan, a versatile chemical used in a variety of applications, including treatment of bleeding wounds, filtering wine, or improving the soil in organic farming.**

Age/Length at Maturity:
*** 2.5 years for males**
*** 3.5 years for females**

Amendment 1 Biological Reference Points:
*** F target & threshold = 0.22 and 0.6, respectively**
*** Biomass threshold & limit = 19.8 million lbs and 13.2 million lbs, respectively.**

Stock Status: Not overfished but experiencing overfishing

Species Profile: Northern Shrimp
Draft Amendment Seeks to Provide Greater Management Flexibility

Introduction

Northern shrimp, *Pandalus borealis*, support a small but important fishery in the Gulf of Maine with annual landings valued at an average of six million dollars a year. In the early 2000s, there was concern for the status of the stock and the ability of the resource to sustain high harvest levels. This resulted in severe harvest reductions in the 2001 through 2005 fishing seasons, which, in turn, contracted harvest and processing capacity and closed some markets for northern shrimp.

These harvest restrictions have allowed the resource to rebound with biomass at levels not seen since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Markets are now opening back up to take advantage of the high biomass of product available. However, harvest rates in both the 2010 and 2011 fishing seasons were far greater than anticipated, resulting in shortened seasons and an overharvest of the total allowable catch (TAC). Additionally, the number of participants in the northern shrimp fishery has increased because of limited entry programs in other Northeast fisheries. Draft Amendment 2, which is currently out for public comment, provides a suite of management options, such as catch controls and TAC allocations by space and time, to maximize the benefits of this valuable resource in a sustainable way.

Life History

Northern shrimp are located in the cold waters of the Northern Hemisphere. The species is found in Canadian waters and in the northern-most waters of the U.S. On the U.S. Atlantic coast, it primarily inhabits waters off of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Northern shrimp are hermaphroditic, maturing first as males at roughly 2 ½ years of age and then transforming to females at about 3 ½ years. Female shrimp may live up to five years old and attain a size of up to three to four inches in length. Differences in size at age by area and season can be ascribed to temperature effects, with more rapid growth rates at higher temperatures. Differences in size at age from year to year, and in size at sex transition, have been attributed to both environmental and stock density effects.

Spawning takes place in offshore waters during the late summer. By early fall, most adult females extrude their eggs onto the abdomen. Egg-bearing females move inshore in late autumn and winter, where the eggs hatch. Northern shrimp are an important link in marine food chains, preying on both plankton and benthic invertebrates and, in turn, being consumed

Photo: Cinamon Moffet, University of Maine

by many important fish species, such as cod, redfish, and silver and white hake.

Commercial Fishery

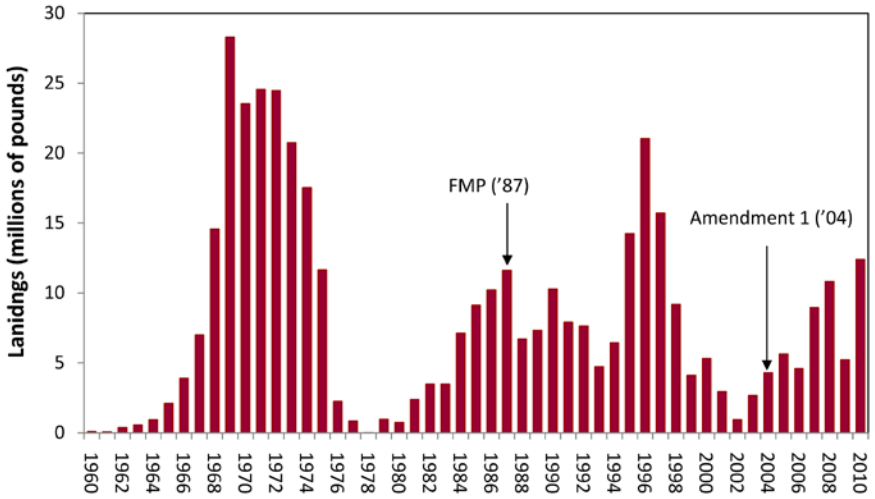
Northern shrimp provide a small but valuable fishery to the New England states, with an estimated ex-vessel value of $6.4 million in 2010. The fishery is seasonal in nature, peaking in late winter when egg-bearing females move into inshore waters and ending in the spring under regulatory closure.

The commercial fishery began in earnest in the late 1950s/early 1960s and experienced an incredible expansion in landings, peaking in 1969 at 28.3 million pounds (Figure 1). Over the next eight years, landings dropped precipitously to a low of less than 85,000 pounds in 1977. The fishery was closed in 1978 due to a stock collapse and slowly reopened in 1979 at very low levels of harvest. The early 1980s showed a modest increase in landings and over the next ten years landings ranged from 4.7 to 11.6 million pounds. Landings increased to 20 million pounds in 1996 and then declined to low levels throughout the early 2000s. Concern about the status of the stock and the ability of the resource to sustain high harvest levels, led to severe harvest reductions in the 2001 to 2005 fishing seasons, with landings ranging from just under a million pounds (2002) to 5.6 million pounds (2005). Landings increased once again to 10.8 million pounds in 2008. Preliminary landings for 2010 are 12.4 million pounds, more than double the landings observed in 2009.

Given the recent growth in the fishery, early season closures occurred in the 2010 and 2011 fishing seasons because landing rates were far greater than anticipated. Furthermore, untimely reporting resulted in short notice of the season closures and an overharvest of the TAC by 14% in 2010 and 48% in 2011.

Currently, the shrimp fleet is comprised of lobster vessels in the 30-46' range that re-rig for shrimping, small to mid-sized stern trawlers in the 40-56' range, and larger trawlers primarily in the 56-79' range. The shrimp trap fishery has grown in recent years accounting for 15% of Maine's landings during 2001 to 2009. However, otter trawl remains the primary gear employed and is typically chain or roller rigged, depending on area and bottom fished. There has been a trend in recent years towards the use of heavier, larger roller and/or rockhopper gear. These innovations, in concert with substantial improvements in electronic equipment, have allowed for much more accurate positioning and towing in formerly unfishable grounds, thus greatly increasing the fishing power of the Gulf of Maine fleet.

Figure 1. Northern Shrimp Landings
Source: ASMFC Northern Shrimp Technical Committee, 2010



Stock Status

Updated in 2010, the northern shrimp stock assessment indicates that the stock is not overfished, but is experiencing overfishing (Figure 2). Exploitable biomass declined from approximately 27.7 million pounds in 1996 to a time series low of nine million pounds in 2001. In 2007, biomass rose to a high of 50.7 million pounds and subsequently declined to 40.5 million pounds in 2010.

In the northern shrimp fishery, landings are dominated by the availability and abundance of four and five year old northern shrimp. The emergence of a strong year class will tend to support productive fisheries four to five years down the road. The 2007 to 2009 year classes have shown

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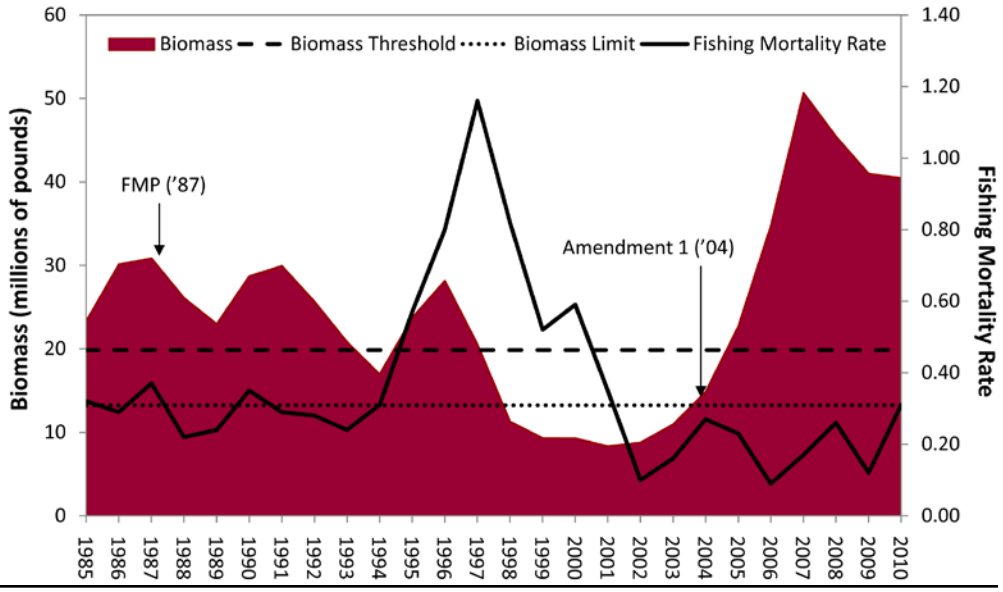
Figure 2. Northern Shrimp Total Stock Biomass & Fishing Mortality Rate
Source: ASMFC Northern Shrimp Technical Committee, 2010



Northern Shrimp Profile (continued from page 5)

above average strength when compared to past survey years, and should provide favorable conditions for the 2012 to 2014 fishing seasons.

Atlantic Coastal Management

In 1973, following the collapse of the stock in the early 1970s, Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts formed the Commission's Northern Shrimp Section to initiate interstate management of the resource. This program represents the longest running interstate fisheries management program on the U.S. Atlantic coast. The Commission adopted the first Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp in 1986. Under this plan, the fishery was managed through the establishment of fishing seasons, set each fall. This plan was replaced by Amendment 1 in 2004. Amendment 1 formally established biological reference points for the first time. These include a fishing mortality target and threshold of 0.22 and 0.6, respectively, and a biomass threshold and limit of 19.8 million pounds and 13.2 million pounds, respectively.

Since the adoption of Amendment 1, knowledge of the northern shrimp biology, population dynamics, and fishery has improved. Early season closures and an overharvest of the TAC in recent seasons have created challenges for both managers and stakeholders. Given that these issues may jeopardize the future of the fishery and shrimp resource, Draft Amendment 2 is designed to address immediate concerns to implement timelier reporting and provide greater management flexibility to ensure that the TAC is not overharvested. Specific options include a timely and comprehensive reporting system, trip limits, trap limits, days out, area management, seasonal quotas, and harvest set asides. The Draft Amendment also proposes a clarification of fishing mortality reference points.

Upon completion of Amendment 2, the Section will initiate consideration of a limited entry program through the adaptive management addendum process detailed in Draft Amendment 2. The Public Information Document (PID) for this amendment initially notified the public of the Section's intent to consider development of a limited entry program. Based on public comment received on the PID and the Section's concern regarding continuing effort increases in this fishery, the Section established a control date of June 7, 2011. The intention of the control date is to notify potential new entrants to the fishery that there is a strong possibility they will be treated differently from participants in the fishery prior to the control date. As noted in the PID, the Section may use historic landings and/or participation criteria for current and past participants as the limited entry system is established.

New England states will be conducting hearings on the Draft Amendment in mid-September (see page 2 for the details of those hearings). Copies of the Draft Amendment can be obtained via the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on October 3, 2011 and should be forwarded to Michael Waine, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Northern Shrimp Amendment 2).

Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum V Approved for Public Comment: *Addendum Seeks to Increase Spawning Stock Biomass*

At its Summer Meeting, the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved Draft Addendum V to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes establishing a new interim fishing mortality threshold and target (based on maximum spawning potential or MSP) with the goal of increasing abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species.

The Draft Addendum will also initiate the scoping process (comparable to that of a Public Information Document) on the suite of management tools that could be used to implement the new fishing mortality threshold and target levels. As in a PID, it will contain preliminary discussions of biological, environmental, social, and economic information, fishery issues, and potential management options for action through an addendum.

The MSP approach, as recommended by the 2009 peer review panel, identifies the fishing mortality rate necessary to maintain a given level of stock fecundity (number of mature ova) relative to the potential maximum stock fecundity under unfished conditions. The Draft Addendum presents two options for the new interim fishing mortality threshold (status quo based on an MSP of 8% and an MSP of 15%) and four options for the interim fishing mortality target (status quo and F based on MSPs of 20, 30 and 40%). For illustration purposes, a 15% MSP would equate to a fishing mortality rate threshold required to maintain approximately 15% of virgin stock fecundity. The current MSP level is 8%.

Based on the revised 2009 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment, menhaden was not overfished but had experienced overfishing in 2008. Given the current overfishing definition, which sets the fishing mortality rate (F) target at 0.96 and the F threshold at 2.2, this is the first time overfishing has occurred since 1998. Over the time series, overfishing had occurred in 32 of the last 54 years. F in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 2.28.

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American Lobster Draft Addendum XVII Approved for Public Comment

Photo: NOAA Ocean Technology Foundation

At its Summer Meeting, the Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum XVII for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum presents a suite of management options to reduce fishing exploitation on the Southern New England stock of American lobster by 10% starting in July 2013. The proposed 10% reduction would come from changes in the minimum size limit, maximum size limit, and/or closed seasons. Proposals would be developed for each affected Lobster Conservation Management Area (2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) to meet the 10% reduction as outlined in the Draft Addendum.

In taking this proposed action, the Board indicated that the 10% reduction in exploitation is the first step in responding to Technical Committee advice for significant exploitation reductions over the long-term to initiate Southern New England stock rebuilding.

The Southern New England lobster stock is at low levels of abundance and experiencing persistent low recruitment caused by a combination of environmental factors and continued fishing mortality. It is this low recruitment that is preventing the Southern New England stock from rebuilding. Under the assumptions of poor recruitment and very high natural mortality, the Technical Committee is not certain that the stock would recover to the target level under a total fishery moratorium.

States will be conducting hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of those hearings will be released when they become available. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on October 14, 2011 and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at tkerns@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum XVII).

The Board will meet in November at the Commission's Annual Meeting to review public comment and consider final action on the Addendum.

Bluefish Draft Addendum I Approved for Public Comment: *Addendum Seeks to Improve Data used in Stock Assessments*

The Commission's Bluefish Management Board has approved Draft Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Bluefish for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum proposes a coastwide sampling program to improve the quantity and quality of information used in future bluefish stock assessments.

The last peer-reviewed stock assessment, conducted in 2005, supported the finding that the bluefish stock was rebuilt and not experiencing overfishing. However, the peer review panel expressed concern regarding the level of uncertainty in the assessment, particularly with regards to bluefish ageing data. It noted discrepancies in ageing protocols (e.g. the use of scales versus otoliths), gaps in the age-length keys from a lack of samples, and samples being geographically limited to Virginia and North Carolina. Age information is an important component of stock assessments because it is the basis for determining growth rates, the lifespan of a species, and size-at-age to evaluate stock structure. The panel recommended that ageing practices be standardized and sampling expanded to overcome these deficiencies in the assessment.

In May 2011, the Commission's Bluefish Technical Committee conducted a workshop to review current bluefish ageing data, establish consistent ageing techniques, and explore opportunities to make ageing efforts more cost-effective. A primary workshop recommendation was the establishment of a coastwide sampling program for bluefish. This recommendation provides the basis for Draft Addendum I.

States will be conducting hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of those hearings will be released when they become available. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft

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ASMFC Approves Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout and Spanish Mackerel

At its Summer Meeting, the Commission approved the Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Amendment updates all three plans with requirements under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (1993) and the Interstate Fishery Management Program Charter (1995). All three species represent a large draw for commercial and recreational fishermen in the Mid- and South Atlantic regions with a combined coastwide commercial catch of 12.6 million pounds and a recreational harvest of 14.3 million fish.

The updates to the plans include commercial and recreational management measures and recommendations, adaptive management options, *de minimis* thresholds and exemptions, and monitoring recommendations. The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board adopted these management measures and options after considering public input and technical input from the Plan Development Team. The Omnibus Amendment will be implemented July 1, 2012.

Spanish mackerel is jointly managed by both the Commission and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). Due to data limitations, the most recent stock assessment was not successful in establishing specific values for reference points. The original interstate fishery management plan (FMP) included a process to review and maintain consistency with federal management, which is essential to maintaining good conservation measures. Over the years, however, both federal and state regulations have changed, while the interstate FMP has remained unchanged. To address this consistency issue, the Omnibus Amendment includes both adaptive management measures as well as a process for Board review and action in response to changes in the federal regulations, which will allow for greater uniformity across the jurisdictions. Currently, the federal FMP has a proposed Amendment 18, which is scheduled for a final vote by the SAFMC at its August meeting. The proposed Amendment 18 changes are included in the current Omnibus Amendment.

The original Spot and the Spotted Seatrout FMPs included no requirements for either management or monitoring. The Omnibus Amendment includes a management trigger for spot, which will help the Board in monitoring the status of the stock until a full coastwide stock assessment can be completed. High levels of spot bycatch present a challenge for managers, in terms of both yearly management and overall assessment of the stock health. For spotted seatrout, the Omnibus Amendment includes recommended measures to protect the spawning stock as well as a required coastwide minimum size. These measures will be essential as increased coastal development presents management challenges to this localized species. Coupled with adaptive management measures, the Omnibus Amendment will provide options for both species to efficiently implement management measures should the Board determine that such measures are needed in the future.

The Omnibus Amendment is available on the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, FMP Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

ACCSP Hosts Data Warehouse Webinars

This summer, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) hosted training webinars on use of its Data Warehouse. The Data Warehouse harmonizes data received from all program partners into one integrated set of codes for variables such as species, gear, and fishing area, and gives users the ability to query and retrieve Atlantic coast commercial and recreational fisheries data dating back to 1950. The webinars presented an overview on how to effectively use the Data Warehouse to investigate new and evolving research questions as well as demonstrate how the resource has been used by state and federal fisheries agencies, universities, non-profits, and industry.

More importantly, participants were able to speak to staff and gain knowledge on the caveats of the interface of the Data Warehouse. Over 50 people joined the webinars. Following the session, participants expressed overall confidence in the data provided by ACCSP as well as their ability to access the data. If you missed the webinars, ACCSP will be posting the information from both the beginner and advanced training sessions to its website this fall. Lastly, ACCSP presented an updated user manual for the Data Warehouse which is available http://www.accsp.org/documents/ACCSP_DataWarehouse_UserMan_072811.pdf.

For more information on ACCSP, please visit www.accsp.org or call 703.842.0780.

Science Highlight: *ACFHP Supports Habitat Conservation in SC & ME*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has announced National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) projects approved to receive USFWS-NFHAP FY2011 funding. The following two project proposals submitted to the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) were approved to receive funding.

Shoreline & Spartina Marsh Stabilization along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, SC

This project will rehabilitate tidal marsh areas experiencing degradation from boat traffic along the Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), by constructing natural breakwaters using oyster reefs. The objectives of the project include engaging community volunteers in shoreline habitat restoration; constructing approximately 0.06 acres of oyster habitat to protect 100 meters of shoreline; and, over time, creating approximately 0.15 acres of adjacent tidal marsh. The expected results of the project include increased fish habitat (oyster reef, tidal salt marsh), stabilized shoreline, improved water quality, and increased public awareness through hands-on stewardship opportunities and associated outreach.

ACE Basin NERR Project Location

The project was identified as a priority by ACFHP.

In South Carolina, shorelines adjacent to the AIWW are subject to severe erosion due to heavy boat traffic and artificial channelization, which disrupts natural shoreline processes. This erosion destroys or threatens oyster reef and salt marsh habitats. Previous work has demonstrated that bagged oyster shells provide a stable substrate for oyster recruitment and create self-sustaining reefs which stabilize the shoreline, promote sediment accretion, and foster salt marsh expansion.

The project is located within the ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) along the AIWW, between Rock Creek and Ashepoo River, and drains into St. Helena Sound. The project will expand a successful demonstration site that was constructed from 2007 to 2009 with state revenue funds.

The habitat at the project site is tidal fine sediment, Spartina marsh, and oyster reefs. Oyster reefs should promote expansion of Spartina by trapping sediment and providing a breakwater to disperse energy from boat wakes. Oyster reefs provide habitat for numerous species including Atlantic croaker, Atlantic menhaden, black sea bass, red drum, spot, spotted seatrout, summer and winter flounder, and weakfish. Both oysters and salt marsh improve water quality through filtration and play important roles in nutrient cycling.

Recycled oyster shells (~1,300 bushels) will be bagged and deployed along the AIWW in the Ace Basin NERR by volunteers in conjunction with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' (SCDNR) community-based oyster restoration program (SCORE). USFWS funds will be used to pay for a portion of SCDNR employee salaries and use of SCDNR vessels including the educational vessel ***DISCOVERY***, which will be used to transport volunteers, and the SCDNR Shellfish Management section's push boat and barge which will transport shell, fuel, and supplies, including oyster shell and mesh for shell bags. The Coastal Conservation Association is also a partner to the project.

Perched culvert on Shoreys Brook

Project text and photo provided by SCDNR.

Restoring Diadromous Fish Passage and Habitat to Shoreys Brook, ME

This project, located in South Berwick, ME, will restore approximately 800 feet of habitat for diadromous fish species and enhance approximately 4.3 miles of habitat in Shoreys Brook. The Great Works Regional Land Trust plans to completely remove a partially-breached dam, coordinate with the Maine Department of

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Melissa Paine Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

For almost five years, Melissa Paine has promoted the Commission's Vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015" through her critical support to the Commission's key scientific committees, two fishery-independent data collection programs, and stock assessment review processes. Her efforts have ensured that scientific advisors are fully engaged in the Commission process; essential fishery data is collected, disseminated and used; and stock assessment schedules are well balanced and timely. In recognition of these accomplishments, Melissa was named Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2011. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

As Scientific Committee Coordinator, Melissa provides lead staff support to the Commission's Assessment Science Committee, Management and Science Committee (MSC), Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, and Multispecies Technical Committee, as well as the committees associated with both the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program-South Atlantic (SEAMAP) and the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program. Over the last year, she has worked with members of the three SEAMAP regional programs to develop SEAMAP's Five-Year Management Plan, taking a lead role in compiling and editing the plan. This plan provides a comprehensive overview of the program, and its management policies, procedures, and priorities. It further specifies goals and objectives to be accomplished over the next five years. Melissa also worked closely with the members of the MSC to develop a proposal for a multi-state fishery observer program in the Mid-Atlantic. Thanks to her efforts, the program has received funding for implementation in 2011.

Melissa is a true team player who approaches her tasks with a cheerful and professional attitude that motivates coworkers and committee members alike. She has a Master's in Marine Science from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and a Bachelor of Science from the University of California at San Diego. As Employee of the Quarter, she received a $500 cash award, a small gift, and a letter of appreciation to be placed in her personnel record. In addition, her name is on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Melissa!

Science Highlight (continued from page 9)

Transportation to replace a failing perched culvert with an open-arch culvert, and restore the streambed to its approximate original condition. This project was also identified as a priority by the ACFHP.

The dam is located at head-of-tide on Shoreys Brook, approximately 1,500 feet upstream from its confluence with the Salmon Falls River. The culvert is located upstream of the dam. Shoreys Brook is a small, second-order stream surrounded by upland forest. The multi-habitat property, through which the brook runs, is managed to promote wildlife and biodiversity and the greater watershed includes upland forest, forested wetland, and open marsh. The dam and the failing culvert have together rendered Shoreys Brook impassable to diadromous fish species. Additionally, significant erosion has a negative impact on Shoreys Brook and the Salmon Falls River, and the eroded stream bank presents a significant public safety hazard. Dam removal and culvert replacement should allow resumption of normal in-stream flows that, over time and assisted by stream restoration efforts, will provide access to suitable diadromous fish habitat. The project should also eliminate the ongoing source of sedimentation discharging into the Salmon Falls River, eliminate the potential for Shoreys Brook to create a new channel due to erosion, and eliminate a significant public safety hazard.

The project should support lower gradient river tributaries, unvegetated coastal bottom habitat, and several diadromous fish species, potentially including river herring (alewife and blueback), rainbow smelt, sea-run brook trout, American eel, and Atlantic sturgeon.

With the assistance of USFWS funds, Great Works Regional Land Trust will contract with vendor(s) to provide pre-project monitoring and inventories; design and engineering services (including permitting); dam removal; stream restoration; and post-project monitoring. Many additional partners (federal, state, private, and non-governmental organizations) will contribute to this project.

Project text and photo provided by Great Works Regional Land Trust.

Horseshoe Crab Happenings

NFWF Match Ensures Continuation 2011 Horseshoe Crab Survey

Full funding for the 2011 Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey has been secured through a matching donation from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). NFWF funds match the combined $100,000 contribution from Lonza Walkersville, Inc. and Charles River Laboratory, providing the full $200,000 needed for survey operations in 2011.

The survey, which has been administered by Virginia Tech since 2002, is the only survey designed to sample the horseshoe crab population in coastal waters. Its data are a critical component of the coastwide stock assessment and the new Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) framework, both of which were endorsed through an independent peer review in 2009. The ARM framework includes modeling that links management of horseshoe crab harvest to multispecies objectives, particularly red knot shorebird recovery. It was developed jointly by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region.

"We are thrilled that the 2011 survey can be conducted with the combined funds from NFWF and the biomedical industry," stated Thomas O'Connell, ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Chair and Maryland DNR Fisheries Service Director. "Without the initial commitments of the biomedical companies and the fishing industry, this opportunity could not have materialized. I hope that these commitments will spur other interested groups to pledge resources, as the 2012 survey is still in need of funding."

"Ensuring that there are adequate horseshoe crab resources to support rebuilding Delaware Bay shorebird populations depends upon good science and management, which this survey and the ARM framework support," said Dr. Anthony Chatwin, Director of Marine and Coastal Conservation at NFWF. "We are happy to help support the survey this year, particularly when all of us are being challenged by tight budgets."

Photo: Gregory Breese, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Additional donations have been pledged by Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., and members of the horseshoe crab and whelk industry including the Chesapeake Bay Packing, LLC, Bernie's Conchs, LLC, LaMonica Fine Foods, Southern Connection Seafood, Inc., Sea King Corp., Spot's Fish Company, and Delaware Valley Fish Company. These funds will provide seed money for the 2012 survey, the status of which will be based on the ability to secure full funding.

NFWF is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring the nation's native wildlife species and habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public and private conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs, facilitating matching funds throughout the process.

Addendum VII Initiated to Implement Adaptive Resource Management

At its Summer Meeting, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board voted to initiate Addendum VII to implement the Adaptive Resource Management framework. The framework, under development since 2007, will incorporate both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels when considering the optimized horseshoe crab harvest level for the Delaware Bay area. The ARM framework was developed by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region and was peer-reviewed in 2009.

The Draft Addendum will additionally address allocation of the ARM harvest output among the four states of New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland that harvest horseshoe crabs from the Delaware Bay population. The allocation is based upon multiple decision options, including the proportion of horseshoe crabs harvested that originate from Delaware Bay and a potential harvest cap for Virginia and Maryland to protect crabs that do not originate from Delaware Bay. The Board had received input on the allocation options from the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee and Horseshoe Crab and the Shorebird Advisory Panels. All options considered by the committee and panels will be included as options in the Draft Addendum. After review by the Board, the draft Addendum will be made available for public comment.

Biomedical Harvest Mortality

This August, the Board also approved formation of an ad-hoc working group, made up of technical committee members and biomedical representatives, to develop best management practices to minimize coastwide mortality from the practice of collecting horseshoe crab blood for worldwide biomedical uses. The Board recognizes the important health impacts of the biomedical industry as well as the regional differences that can exist among companies. The working group will report back to the Board on its findings.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201-2196

Return Service Requested

Atlantic Menhaden Draft Addendum V Approved for Public Comment **(continued from page 6)**

States will be conducting hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of those hearings will be released when they become available. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on November 2, 2011 and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at tkerns@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum V).

The Board will meet in November at the Commission's Annual Meeting to review public comment and consider final action on the Addendum. Having gathered scoping information on management tools to implement Addendum V, the Board will also consider moving forward on a subsequent addendum to establish associated management measures. The Board's intent is to finalize these management measures for implementation in 2013.

Bluefish Draft Addendum I Approved for Public Comment **(continued from page 7)**

Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on September 30, 2011 and should be forwarded to Michael Waine, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Bluefish Addendum I).

The Board will meet in November at the Commission's Annual Meeting to review public comment and consider final action on the Addendum. If approved, the biological monitoring program would be implemented for the 2012 fishing year.