



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

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## ACCSP Addresses Its Long-term Goals

This is an exciting period in the development and implementation of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). Program partners are actively implementing commercial catch/effort data collection programs, making appropriate changes/additions to their data management systems to handle the storage and processing of ACCSP-quality data, and taking regulatory or legislative actions as appropriate to allow for the implementation of the ACCSP in their jurisdictions. Several partners are working to establish commercial trip reporting and the associated data feeds into the ACCSP data management system. The for-hire and social/economic pilot studies are underway, to ascertain the best methodologies to collect these types of data. Perhaps the most important activity, however, is the on-going communication and coordination of state and federal partners when planning their ACCSP activities to insure non-duplication of effort or additional burden to the industry. Overall, program partners are fully engaged in the implementation of ACCSP.

While details are very important, the big picture is sometimes overlooked. As the program expands and as partners com-

mit resources and personnel to planning and implementation efforts, it seems appropriate to look back at the goals of the ACCSP, the program structure, and the decision-making processes used to attain the goals.

### What is the ACCSP?

The ACCSP was 'officially' created in November 1995. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding formalized the intent of the 23 partner agencies to begin development and implementation. There are four overall goals of the ACCSP:

1. To create and manage a coordinated, cost effective, and non-duplicative Atlantic coast fisheries data collection program;
2. To develop a unified data collection system that includes recreational and commercial information, to provide the best scientific data on the fisheries to the general public, the industry, assessment biologists, and fisheries managers;
3. To establish and maintain an integrated, coastwide fisheries data management system to house standardized information on marine, estuarine, anadromous, and catadromous fisheries; and
4. To utilize the existing regional fisheries statistics initiatives to develop a national fisheries information system.

Separately, these are aggressive goals. In total, the effort required to develop, implement, and maintain the structure

to achieve them is enormous. However, the need to expend the effort and resources is crucial and all program partners are all committed to the program and making it the best it can be.

### Who is the ACCSP?

The program is comprised of 23 partner agencies, including the 15 Atlantic coastal states, the three East Coast fishery management councils, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the District of Columbia, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). ASMFC serves as the administrative body for the ACCSP, providing staff supervision/personnel, accounting, and meeting planning services.

The ACCSP Committees provide the infrastructure for the decision-making process. Since the inception of the program, decisions have been consensus-based (no voting occurs, except by the Coordinating Council). The Coordinating Council is comprised of policy-level representatives from the 23 signatory agencies, and is the final authority for all program standards and policies. Daily operations of the ACCSP are the responsibility of the Operations Committee, comprised of one member each from the ASMFC, NMFS, USFWS, the regional fishery management councils (one member between the three East Coast Councils), and one state representative from each of three regions (North-



*continued on page 6*

**T**he 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, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**1/24 (7:00 PM):**

ASMFC American Lobster Public Hearing on Draft Addendum II, New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, A-Wing Lecture Hall, Stockton College, Pomona, New Jersey. For more information, please contact Bruce Freeman at (609) 292-2083.

**1/25 - 28:**

Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association Annual Weekend and Lobster Trade Show, Sea Crest Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center, 350 Quaker Road, North Falmouth, Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Peggy Dupont at (781) 545-6984.

**1/26 & 27:**

2001 Long Island Fishermen's Forum, Suffolk County Community College, Eastern Campus, 121 Speonk-Riverhead Road, Riverhead, New York.

**1/27 (2:00 PM):**

ASMFC American Lobster Public Hearing on Draft Addendum II, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Sea Crest Oceanfront Resort and Conference Center, 350 Quaker Road, North Falmouth, Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Jim Fair at (617) 727-0394, ext. 363.

**1/29 - 2/1:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, Quality Hotel and Conference Center, 1200 North Courthouse Road, Arlington, Virginia; (703) 524-4000 (see pages 4 & 6 for preliminary agenda) .

**2/6 & 7:**

ASMFC Regulatory Discards Workshop, Baltimore Maryland.

**2/6 - 8:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Hotel, 700 King Street, Wilmington, Delaware; (302) 655-0400.

**2/13:**

Tentative: Joint Meeting of the ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section and the NEFMC Herring Committee, Danvers, Massachusetts.

**2/21 - 23:**

ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee, Hampton Inn Central, 1331 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, Florida.

**3/1 - 3:**

Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockport, Maine.

**3/5 - 9:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Jekyll Island Club Hotel, 371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, Georgia; (800)535-9547.

Well, it is that “taking stock” time of the year. We all do it with our investments, our taxes, our families. Let us not talk about “resolutions,” but rather evaluations and expectations. How did we do last year, what are we looking forward to this year, and what revisions or realignments do we need to make?

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission started off (or ended, if you prefer) the millennium with a bang in 2000. It was almost enough to take your breath away! In the Interstate Fisheries Management Program, the states continued to aggressively move forward with fishery management plans (FMPs) and amendments. Consider some of the highlights. The Striped Bass Board continued to struggle with questions of how to manage a recovered fishery for the long-term. Other fisheries where recovery is notable, including weakfish and summer flounder (and increasingly, it appears, scup and black sea bass as well) present the same types of issues – where we have been managing to reduce overfishing, we must shortly be able to manage on the basis of conservation success, and maintaining the good results that management actions have led to. Horseshoe crab presented a unique set of circumstances, where the ecosystem implications of fishery management were at least as important, if not more so, than the conservation of the fishery resource itself. Lobster evolved this year into the most complex fishery management activity the Commission has undertaken, with its system of area management, implementation of the trap tag program, moving on toward fishing mortality rate reductions — all on top of completing a new assessment of the resource. The states moved forward with the first year of implementation of the new FMP for Atlantic herring. The draft FMP amendment for menhaden was finally taken to public hearing, and initial steps were taken for the new FMP for spiny dogfish. And, there were management actions initiated and completed for other species, as well as monitoring the implementation of all of the Commission’s fishery management plans.

In its science and research activities, the Commission initiated a series of technical workshops designed to increase the ability of Commissioners to deal with the scientific concepts that support fisheries management decisions. The NEAMAP Board was organized and began planning for cooperative, fishery-indepen-

dent research. SEAMAP made it through a difficult year of funding cuts. The lobster assessment peer review process was organized and completed. The Commission continued to provide the administrative home for our cooperative fisheries statistics program as it continued to grow and took the first steps in implementation, including a more aggressive and complete outreach to fishermen.

The Commission’s continued to provide an opportunity for fisheries law enforcement agencies to coordinate their activities. Their focus on the enforceability of FMPs will be an issue for Commissioners in the new year. And, the Commission continued to implement its strategy for protecting submerged aquatic vegetation, and continuing its habitat outreach activities.

The Commission’s government relations efforts resulted in increased federal funding for Atlantic fisheries statistics and for increased support for state marine fishery conservation activities. Unfortunately, 2000 did not bring the enactment of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). The Commission’s overall fiscal situation continued to improve, and we strengthened our outreach efforts and internal administration. Most significantly, Y2K saw the full implementation of the Commission’s strategic planning process, and greater involvement of Commissioners in setting the agenda for the Commission’s activities.

So in all, 2000 was a great year for the Commission, that provided a solid basis for addressing the challenges of the new year. We have plenty on our plates for 2001, from fisheries management, to better science, to support of the ACCSP, to improved law enforcement and habitat coordination, to new legislative challenges (Magnuson Act, appropriations, CARA, revitalizing the state-federal partnership), and to improved administration. The opportunities are just as breathtaking as were the accomplishments of the year past.

Oh what the heck, why not make a resolution? Let us resolve to proceed through 2001 with grace and mutual respect; to recognize and promote our common interest; to witness to our mutual interdependence; and to commit to each other’s success.

# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

**January 29 - February 1, 2001  
Quality Hotel and Conference Center  
1200 North Courthouse Road  
Arlington, Virginia  
703-524-4000**

## **Preliminary Schedule**

\*Dates and times are subject to change up to the times meetings are held

### Monday, January 29, 2001

11:00 AM - Noon

#### **Winter Flounder Management Board**

- Elect Chair and Vice-Chair
- Stock Status Reports
- Planning for Gulf of Maine Stock Peer Review
- Long range planning schedule

1:30 PM – 5:00 PM

#### **Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board**

- Discuss summer 2001 scup management
- Discuss 2001 black sea bass management
- Discuss development of summer flounder, scup and black sea bass addendum

### Tuesday, January 30, 2001

8:00 AM – 10:30 AM

#### **Striped Bass Management Board**

- Review and approve 2001 state management proposals

10:30 AM - Noon

#### **American Eel Management Board**

- Discuss state compliance
- Approve FMP Review
- Update on Sexing and Aging Workshop

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

#### **Horseshoe Crab Management Board**

- Review draft Addendum II

2:30 PM – 6:00 PM

#### **Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**

- Review public meeting comments
- Select management measures to be included in Amendment 1
- Review/approve Amendment 1
- Discuss long range planning

### Wednesday, January 31, 2001

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

#### **Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council**

- Discuss ACCSP status report
- Approve second round of RFP funding recommendations
- Update on the 2001 Operations Plan and the "Big Picture"

10:00 AM - Noon

#### **Commissioner Stock Assessment Training Session -- "Yield Per Recruit and Spawning Stock Biomass Per Recruit Models, and Resulting Reference Points"**

*continued on page 6*

## **Commission to Convene Panel of Experts to Evaluate Power Plant Assessment Methods**

The Commission will be convening a panel of experts to review methods to determine the cumulative coastwide impacts of power plant impingement and entrainment on managed fish stocks and determine the appropriate analytical method(s) to assess power plant mortality. The panel will further examine the prospects for determining the coastwide impacts of power plant mortality on fishery resources, using American shad and winter flounder as the first case studies. The panel will be composed of state, federal, university and industry representatives and will meet sometime in February 2001. The panel will examine methods to evaluate direct impacts on managed fish stocks, indirect impacts on forage fish stocks, and total impacts from all causes. The panel will also evaluate the availability of current data for American shad and winter flounder to determine the potential of developing a coastwide assessment for these species.

For more information, please contact Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research and Statistics, at (202) 289-6400 or <lcline@asmfc.org>.

## **Commission Modifying Stock Assessment Peer Review Process**

In 1998, the Commission adopted a formal process for reviewing Commission stock assessments. An assessment is triggered for peer review if a new fishery management plan or amendment is being developed or a major change has occurred in the stock assessment model. The process also includes a provision for an external peer review for all Commission assessments every five years to ensure that the data and assessment methods are kept current. Since adoption of this process, the Commission has coordinated external peer reviews for several species, including Atlantic menhaden, American lobster, horseshoe crab, American shad, and Atlantic sturgeon. Typically, several Commission and joint Commission-Council assessments are reviewed by the Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SAW/SARC) process each year.

The Commission has recently initiated a review of its stock assessment peer review process in order to clarify and improve the process. The Commission's Management and Science Committee has developed an issues paper to initiate broader discussion among relevant Commission committees, including management boards, technical committees, stock assessment committees, and advisory panels. Issues being

addressed include clarification of the purpose of a peer review, development of a reasonable timeline for conducting peer reviews, and clarification of appropriate expectations of a peer review. Input will be solicited over the next six months in order to provide a broader viewpoint on these issues. The Management and Science Committee and ISFMP Policy Board will readdress this issue at the Commission's Spring Meeting, scheduled for April 23 - 26, 2001. It is anticipated that modification of this process will be finalized in fall 2001.

Copies of the issues paper will be sent to all relevant committees by January 15, 2001. If you do not receive a copy please contact Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400 or <vjones@asmfc.org>.

## **Habitat Manager's Database Now Available!**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is pleased to announce that the Habitat Managers Database compiled by Dianne Stephan, Karen Greene, and Robin Peuser is now available.

Many different federal and state agencies are involved in habitat protection along the Atlantic coast, each with a different focus and expertise. Cooperation and coordination between resource managers is essential in order to promote and facilitate interagency cooperation. This guide gives brief descriptions of all these agencies and contact information as well. Resource managers are encouraged to use this guide to identify other agencies or personnel for coordination on activities that may adversely impact important fish habitat.

Along with federal government habitat program descriptions, this guide consists of three sections for each state along the Atlantic Coast. The first briefly summarizes duties of the habitat resource agencies or other agencies that could impact fish habitat within each state. The second section is the database of habitat managers, which lists contact information for the agencies identified in the summary sections, and representatives of applicable government agencies for each state. The third section lists environmental organizations within each state. Finally, an appendix includes maps that identify the coastal designations used in the document.

The Database is available in several formats including hard copy, computer CD, and will soon be available on the ASMFC website under "Habitat Program." If you would like a CD or hard copy of the database, please contact Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400 or <vjones@asmfc.org>. For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or <cselberg@asmfc.org>.

## **ACCSP Addresses Its Long-term Goals (continued from page 1)**

east, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic). To foster development of a national fishery information system, representatives from the NMFS regional offices and the Fisheries Information Network (FIN - Gulf States), serve as liaisons to the Operations Committee.

At present, there are three full-time ACCSP staff members. A Program Manager (administrative/data collection), the Information Systems Program Manager (data management system), and an Administrative Assistant, who all serve to facilitate the development and implementation of the ACCSP, both program-wide and within each of the partner agencies. Realizing the necessity of outreach to the success of the program, the Coordinating Council recently approved hiring a dedicated Outreach Coordinator. Also, two additional data management staff will be hired to handle the anticipated load of partner data feeds and the opening the ACCSP data management system to the general public.

Technical Committees serve to develop and recommend the technical parameters of the program. Members are appointed by their respective Coordinating Council members and are comprised of state, federal, and academic personnel. Present committees include Commercial, Recreational, Biological, Outreach, and Discard/Protected Species Interaction. Several of the full committees have formed *ad hoc* workgroups or subcommittees to work on specific issues. As noted above representatives from the Gulf FIN program are members of several ACCSP technical committees to assure coordination and the development of a national fisheries information system.

An Industry Advisory Committee provides input on every aspect of the ACCSP. This committee is comprised of one commercial and one recreational representative from each of the partner states and includes seafood dealers, for-hire vessel operators, and commercial and recreational fishermen.

The program takes advantage of the expertise from two ASMFC committees. The Law Enforcement Committee, which provides advice on the enforcement aspects of the program. The Committee on Economics and Social Sciences provides input and advice on matters related to collection and management of social and economic data.

All of these committees meet regularly during the year and all committee meetings are open to the public. Routinely, the technical committees are tasked with development of recommendations on protocols and processes. Their recommendations are forwarded to the Operations Committee, and most are addressed by the Industry Advisory Committee. The Operations Committee reviews all information and makes formal recommendations to the Coordinating Council for approval.

For more information on the ACCSP in general, or any facet in particular, please contact Joe Moran, ACCSP Program Manager, at (202) 289-6400, or by email at <jmoran@asmfc.org>. Mike Cahall, ACCSP Information Systems Program Manager, should be contacted for questions on the data management system (same phone as above, or by email at <mcahall@asmfc.org>).

## **Upcoming ACCSP Meetings**

### **2/6 - 8:**

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Holiday Inn Downtown, 1155 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 737-1200.

### **2/13 & 14:**

ACCSP Discard Prioritization Panel, Holiday Inn Downtown, 1155 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 737-1200.

### **2/15:**

ACCSP Biological Review Panel, Holiday Inn Downtown, 1155 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 737-1200.

# ASMFC January Meeting Week Agenda (continued from page 4)



## Wednesday, January 31, 2001

- Noon – 4:00 PM     **Spiny Dogfish and Atlantic Coastal Shark Management Board**
- Review interim management options
  - Discuss continuation of Emergency Action or implementation of an alternative strategy
  - Discuss long range planning

- 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM     **Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board**
- Discuss public comment received on Addendum I
  - Discuss state compliance
  - Approve FMP Review

## Thursday, February 1, 2001

- 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM     **ISFMP Policy Board**
- Discuss the use of the \$250,000 increase in ACFCMA funds for fiscal year 2001
  - Review guidelines for resource managers on the enforceability of fisheries management measures
- 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM     **American Lobster Management Board**
- Discuss public comment received on Addendum II
  - Review Draft Public Information Document for Amendment 4

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## **ASMFC to Hold Workshop on Regulatory Discards**

Discards occur in virtually every prosecuted fishery and have been a growing concern for fishery managers and fishermen alike. As the number of species under fisheries management increases, the number of animals discarded due to regulatory restrictions - termed regulatory discards - is increasing. Minimizing the catch of these regulatory discards would substantially increase the quality of our commercial and recreational fisheries. To address this issue, a workshop sponsored by the Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will be held February 6 & 7, 2001. The primary purpose of the workshop is to discuss ways to reduce the amount of regulatory discards captured on the Atlantic coast by commercial and recreational fishing practices.

The goal of the workshop is to “Identify and discuss potential methods to reduce the amount of regulatory discards taken, and/or increase the utilization of the discards taken.” Through a series of presentations and break out groups, workshop participants will develop recommendations that can be implemented on the Atlantic coast to reduce the amount of regulatory discards. Discussions will focus on how to improve current methods to reduce discards, as well as identify entirely new methods to address the problem. The work-

shop recommendations will be compiled and published by summer 2001. For more information, please contact Jeffrey Brust, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 308 or <jbrust@asmfc.org>.

## **Don't Miss the January Stock Assessment Workshop!**

In January, during its meeting week, the Commission will continue its series of stock assessment workshops for Commissioners and other interested parties. Dr. Joseph DeAlteris will present a conceptual overview of yield-per-recruit (YPR) and spawning stock biomass per recruit (SSBPR) models, using examples from recent species stock assessments. The seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, January 31, 2001 from 10:00 AM to Noon. All interested parties are invited to attend.

For more information, please contact Jeffrey Brust, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 308 or <jbrust@asmfc.org>.

# **Draft Addenda III and IV to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP Available for Public Comment**

In early January, the Commission announced the availability of Draft Addenda III and IV to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public review and comment.

Addendum III addresses the 2001 recreational fishery specifications for summer flounder and scup. Specifically, the Addendum was developed in response to preliminary recreational fishery data that indicates that the 2000 landings have far exceeded the harvest limits for both fisheries. The Draft Addendum includes a series of options that are being considered by the Management Board to ensure that the 2001 recreational fisheries for summer flounder and scup are constrained to the established harvest limits. Each of the included options considers different approaches to interpreting the recreational fishery data to establish the required reductions for the 2001 summer flounder and scup fisheries.

Addendum IV addresses the annual process by which the management specifications are set for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass. Currently, the under the FMP, states are bound to implement the annual decision of the National Marine Fisheries Service with respect to the annual quotas,

commercial and recreational management measures. This Addendum proposes to implement a system for establishing annual specifications in these fisheries that rest authority on the states acting through the Commission's Management Board.

The Management Board will be meeting on January 29, 2000 to review public comment and decide what action to take, if any, under these addenda. The Board may defer a final decision on the addenda until after the documentation is prepared or further public comment obtained, subsequent to the January meeting. The final version of the addenda may be approved by vote by mail, email or teleconference.

Copies of the Draft Addenda can be obtained by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400, or via the Commission's website under the Public Input page at <http://www.asmfc.org>. Public comment on the Addenda will be accepted until January 25, 2001 and should be forwarded to Robert Beal, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at 1444 Eye Street, N.W., Sixth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005. For more information, please contact Robert Beal at (202) 289-6400.

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