



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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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 15 – 18, 2005
Radisson Hotel Old Town
Alexandria, Virginia

Preliminary Agenda

Please note: Preliminary agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated below. A detailed final agenda will be available on the ASMFC website (www.asmfc.org) two weeks prior to the meeting.

Monday, August 15, 2005

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

Tuesday, August 16, 2005

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM Weakfish Management Board

Noon – 4:00 PM American Lobster Workshop

Noon – 6:00 PM Habitat Committee

4:15 PM – 6:15 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

7:30 AM – 9:30 AM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM Winter Flounder Management Board

9:45 AM – 11:45 AM American Eel Management Board

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

4:15 PM – 6:15 PM American Lobster Management Board

Thursday, August 18, 2005

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Shad and River Herring Management Board

9:15 AM – 11:15 AM Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board

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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Upcoming Meetings

7/14 (9:00 AM - 5:00 PM):

ASMFC Protected Species Committee, Hotel Providence, 311 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

7/14 (7:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Meeting on Draft Addendum XVII to the Summer Flounder FMP, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Classroom 1, Crystal Coast Civic Center, 3505 Arendell Street, Moorehead City, North Carolina.

7/18 (6:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Meeting on Draft Addendum II to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Mighty 8th Air Force Museum, 175 Bourne Avenue, Pooler, Georgia.

7/28 (9:30 AM - 4:30 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel, location to be determined.

8/8 - 10:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Society Hill Hotel, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

8/15 - 18:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, Alexandria, Virginia (see agenda on pages 1 and 12).

9/13 - 15:

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Express, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

9/19 - 23:

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

9/26 - 30:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

10/4 - 6:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Southampton Inn, 91 Hill Street, Southampton, New York.

10/31 - 11/3:

ASMFC 64th Annual Meeting, Marriott Seaview Resort & Spa, 401 S. New York Road, Galloway, New Jersey.

11/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton 4 Points, Hyannis, Massachusetts.

“The Nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value.”

~ Theodore Roosevelt

One of the great strengths of successful organizations is their ability to unite their members and constituents through a set of common values and goals. If everyone agrees and believes in where they are going they stand a much better chance of getting there. Our Commissioners have formally committed to a set of values and goals for our Commission, reflecting the core values of our member states. These values are reflective of the fact that each state carries a fundamental responsibility to safeguard the public trust of the fisheries and wildlife resources under its jurisdiction.

Resource managers face many challenges in carrying out that responsibility. Fish populations are part of ecosystems that cross state and federal political boundaries. Thus, no state by itself can effectively protect its natural resources without the cooperation of its sister states and the federal government to optimize the health and value of marine resources. Atlantic striped bass, which spawn in the Chesapeake Bay, forage during the summer in New England waters and spend the winter off the coast of North Carolina, is a great example of this.

Our member states' recognition of the need for cooperative fisheries resource management led to the creation of our Commission. Ours is the only interstate fisheries commission with the authority to prepare and adopt fishery management plans with mandatory compliance provisions. Moreover, the Commission recognizes the importance of conservation to rebuild stocks and sustainable harvest of healthy stocks. These concepts are strongly reflected in the states' values embedded in the Commission's mission and vision. Those values include:

- Conservation is the states' highest priority
- Stewardship is needed to maintain recovery
- All citizens own the marine resources
- State sovereignty is respected, each has its own laws and policies
- Representative decision making is used
- Programs/actions reflect logic and transparency

- Flexibility is provided within basic conservation parameters
- Accountability of actions
- Success

The following basic tenets outline how the states and the Commission will pursue our vision of restoring Atlantic stocks. They include:

Promoting Fisheries Governance – Commission members will advocate decisions focusing on long-term benefits of conservation, and maintain focus on policy issues directly related to attaining the vision and goals of the Commission.

Managing for Success – The states are committed to proactive management of fishery resources under their jurisdiction, avoiding the historical pattern of taking action only after some type of failure.

Seeking Ecological Sustainability Over the Long-term – Habitat issues, protected species interactions and ecosystem concerns will be integrated with other elements of fisheries management.

Respond to the Needs of Member States – The Commission's service strategy is to ensure that the policy agenda and work priorities are responsive to the needs of the member states' stakeholders. Federal agencies work with the Commission as partners to carry out this strategy.

Our states through our Commissioners have committed to these goals and values, including the cooperative philosophy by which they work towards restoring Atlantic fish stocks. So the next time you hear of an action or a decision by our Commissioners that you disagree with, think for a moment about whose interests are being looked after.

We frequently hear from those who make their living and derive their entertainment from the resources under Commission stewardship. The fish have no voice and future generations who expect to enjoy these resources in healthy abundance have yet to be heard. Teddy Roosevelt, one of our greatest conservationist presidents, charged us with looking out for the fish in the interest of the next generation. Hopefully this is something we can all agree to.



Atlantic Herring
Clupea harengus

Common Names: sea herring, sardine, herring

Species Range: Virginia to Labrador

Fish Fact: Atlantic herring are sometimes confused with river herring. Sea herring spend their entire life at sea, while river herring migrate annually to freshwater to spawn.

Age/Length at Maturity: Age 3/9.1 inches

Age/Length at Recruitment: Age 2/7.9 inches

Stock Status: Not overfished & overfishing is not occurring

Current FMP Rebuilding Goals:

$B_{\text{threshold}} = 1/4 B_{\text{MSY}} = 250,000$ mt

$B_{\text{target}} = 1.1$ million mt

Species Profile: Atlantic Herring

New ASMFC & NEFMC Amendments to Increase Protection of Inshore Stock

Introduction

Atlantic herring is not only an important forage species for many fish, marine mammal and seabird species, but is also a highly valued commercial fishery for both domestic and foreign fishing fleets. Nationally, the herring fishery supplies bait for commercial lobster, blue crab, and tuna fisheries in New England, and provides product as a canned fish (i.e., sardines). Overseas, frozen and salted herring are a valued commodity. Today, herring are regulated through complementary management processes between the Commission and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council). Both organizations are developing new amendments to address a number of issues, including possible limits on fishing effort on the inshore stock of herring (Gulf of Maine) and potential change to the biological reference points for the inshore stock.

Life History

Atlantic herring are oceanic plankton-feeding fish that occur in large schools, inhabiting coastal and continental shelf waters from Virginia to Labrador. Juveniles (called sardines) undergo seasonal inshore-offshore migrations and are abundant in shallow, inshore waters during the warmer months of the year. Adults (age three and older) migrate south from summer/fall spawning grounds in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank to overwinter in southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic.

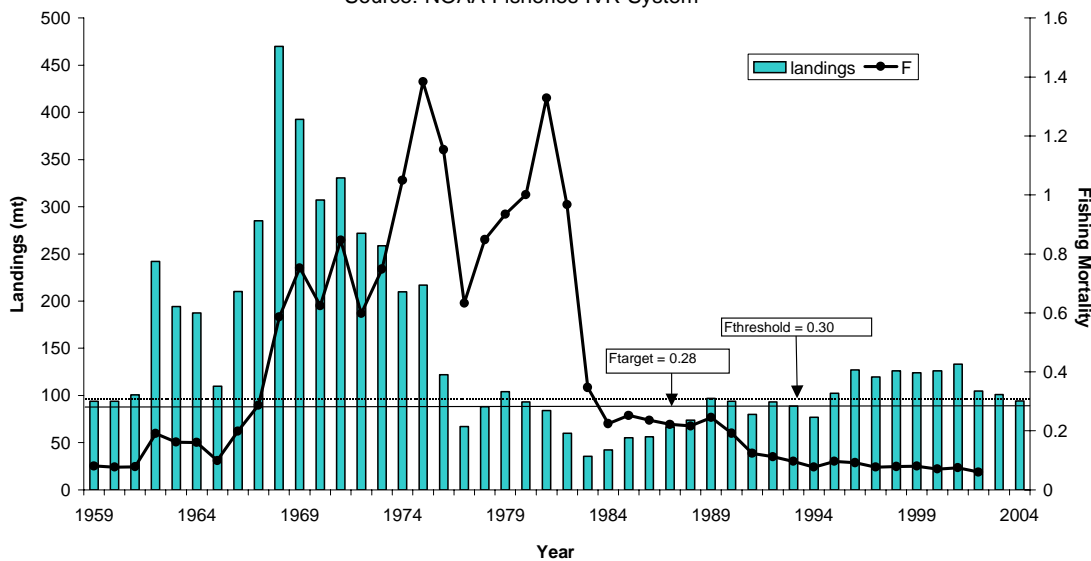
Herring spawn as early as August in Nova Scotia and eastern Maine, and during October and November in the southern Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals. Spawning habitat consists of rock, gravel, or sand bottoms, ranging in depth from 50 to 150 feet. Females produce 30,000 to 200,000 eggs each. Schools can produce so many eggs the ocean bottom is covered in a dense carpet of eggs several centimeters thick. Eggs hatch in 10 to 12 days depending on water temperature. Hatchlings are about 1/4 inch long. Surviving larvae transform into juveniles, about 1 1/2 inches long, in the spring. The fish grow to three to five inches in the fall, 10 inches by the fourth year, and may eventually grow to about 15 inches (1 1/2 pounds) at age 15 to 18 years.

Commercial Fisheries

The herring fishery in New England developed in the late 19th century, spurred by the development of the canning industry. The lobster fishery developed about the same time, creating a market for herring as bait. Landings averaged 60,000 metric tons throughout the late 1890s and early 1900s, and again in the late 1940s and 1950s. An aggressive foreign fishery developed on Georges Bank in the early 1960s, with landings peaking at 470,000 metric tons in 1968. This excessive harvest led to a collapse of the herring stock offshore. Today, landings average 100,000 metric tons, the majority being taken from the Gulf of Maine (see Figure 1 on opposite page).

Herring are caught commercially using trawls, purse seines, weirs and stop seines. The weir, a fixed net used in shallow water with strong currents, was the predominant gear until the 1940s. From the 1940s to the early 1960s, weirs and stop seines were the gears of choice, after which time purse seines began to predominate the fishery. Today, U.S. fishermen almost exclusively use purse seines and mid-water trawls to catch herring. Current uses of herring are canned sardines, steaks and kippers, and bait in the blue crab, lobster and tuna fisheries. In addition, some are processed as frozen or salted fish by foreign ships that purchase herring from U.S. fishermen and shore-based domestic plants. Since 1996, the ex-vessel value of commercial herring landings has averaged about \$11 million/year.

Figure 1. Fishing Mortality and Landings for Atlantic Herring Complex
Source: NOAA Fisheries IVR System

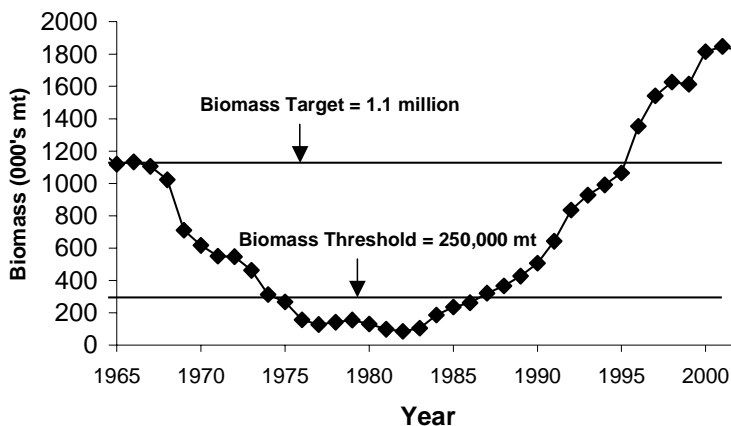


Stock Status

In February 2003, two stock assessments for the Atlantic herring complex were presented at the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) meeting in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. The TRAC provides a forum for U.S. and Canadian scientists to jointly peer review the results and interpretations of conclusions from new and revised assessment methodologies for the Atlantic herring complex. The TRAC reviewed two approaches to assess the stock status, a virtual populations analysis (used in previous herring assessments) and a forward projection model, called KLAMZ. The two models produced different estimates of current stock biomass, in part because of disparate model assumptions, uncertainties in input data sets, and weightings given to the data sets. While it was determined that the stock complex is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring (see Figure 2), the TRAC could not reach consensus on the most appropriate model to assess this transboundary resource.

Figure 2. Total Biomass of the Atlantic Herring Complex based on KLAMZ Estimates, 1965 to 2002

Source: NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2003



In attempt to gain some resolution on the discrepancies, the New England Council referred the issue to its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for guidance on how to proceed with the development of the federal amendment. The SSC determined the current estimate of maximum sustainable yield in both the Commission and Council Herring FMPs (317,000 mt) to be too high and is unlikely to be sustainable given historical landings and stock status data. The Committee advised the Council to exercise caution when setting the annual total allowable catch (TAC), specifically giving consideration to the risk to individual stock components when setting area-specific TACs. The SSC's advice will be used in the development of the Commission's Amendment 2 and the Council's Amendment 1 for Atlantic herring. The SSC provided some guidance on resolving the discrepancies between the assessments prior to the next peer review, scheduled for 2006.

Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

Atlantic herring are managed by the Commission's Atlantic Herring Section in state waters and by the Council in federal waters. In 1999, the Council adopted a new management plan for herring in federal waters. The Commission's adoption of Amendment I to the Interstate Plan was a vital step towards creating a complementary and comprehensive herring management program in both state and federal waters. The Section and Council work closely to establish the annual TACs in four management areas and subareas (see Figure 3 on page 7).

As part of the annual specification process, the Section determines the biological reference points for appropriate management of the inshore herring stock, including a definition of overfishing. The term "overfishing" or "overfished" means a level or rate of fishing mortality that jeopardizes the capacity of a fishery to produce MSY on a continuing basis. Absent a statement that defines an appropriate level of fishing mortality, it is problematic to determine whether a fishery is overfished and a rebuilding effort is neces-

Economic Impact Models and Fisheries Management

At its Spring Meeting, the Commission's Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) sponsored a workshop on the use of regional economic impact models in fisheries management. This workshop was part of an ongoing series of workshops intended to increase Commissioner and public understanding of fisheries science and management issues. Past workshops have focused on stock assessment principles and methods, multispecies assessments, and socioeconomic issues.

Dr. Eric Thunberg from the Social Sciences Branch of the National Marine Fisheries Service's Northeast Fisheries Science Center presented various regional economic impact models and economic concepts, such as "economic impact" and "economic value," exploring their potential uses and implications in the fisheries management decision-making process. The goal of *regional economic impact models* is to predict the effect a change in fisheries management will have on the local or regional economy. Input-Output (IO) models, a commonly used type of regional economic impact model, capture interindustry transactions between businesses and final consumers as shown in the illustration below.

Economic impact models predict the effect a fisheries management change will have on the economy by calculating the gain or loss of income various sectors of the economy may experience as the result of a change in fisheries management. *Economic impact* is measured in terms of expenditures (i.e., the larger the expense, the larger

use economic impact models to rank multiple policy alternatives by determining which will contribute the most to the economy (greatest impact) and which sectors of the economy may be most affected. Dr. Thunberg explains that when it comes to allocating fishery resources across user groups, economic impact models have a serious downfall, as illustrated by the following hypothetical example.

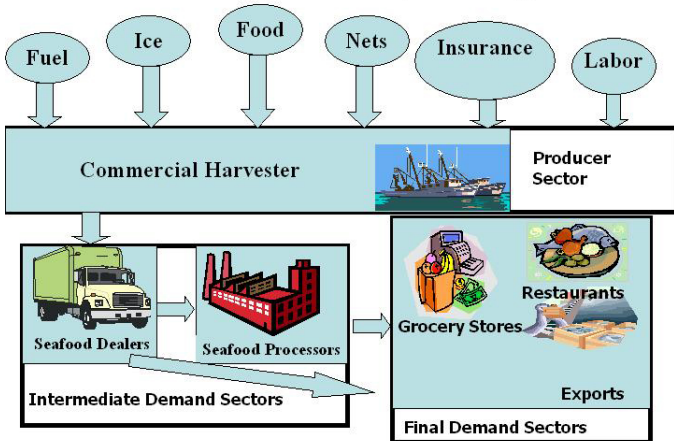
A large firm (Firm A) operating at a loss has a greater economic impact, but less economic value, than a small firm (Firm B) operating at a profit. *Economic value* is defined by two components. From the consumer-side, economic value is the difference between the price actually paid for a good or service and what the consumer would have been willing and able to pay. From the producer-side, economic value is the difference between the cost of producing a good or service and the price actually charged.

<p>Firm A \$200 million in sales \$210 million in operating cost \$10 million <u>loss</u> Firm A has higher <i>economic impact</i></p>	<p>Firm B \$125 million in sales \$100 million in operating cost \$25 million in <u>profit</u> But, Firm B generates more <i>economic value</i></p>
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In the above example, an economic impact model would indicate that it would hurt the economy less to shut down Firm B rather than Firm A, even if the reverse is true. Indeed, Firm A would actually become more important to the economy simply by increasing expenses, because this would give the firm a greater impact on the economy. For this reason, allocation decisions in fisheries management should not be made based on economic impact models.

While no economic model is perfect, regional impact models can be very useful because they predict the distributive effects a given policy change will have on each sector of a regional economy. It is important to note, however, that while regional impact models may be quite detailed, they cannot capture every detail about a region's economic structure. Further, most economic impact models do not capture the myriad adjustments that may take place upon implementation of a fishery action. As such, economic impact models are often the "best guess" of short-term impacts that economic analysis can provide. Dr. Thunberg explains that if these models are used to allocate fishing quotas to different user groups, they will tend to reward economic inefficiency. The Commission must keep this in mind as it strives to promote economic efficiency in light of biological, ecological, and social objectives in the management of Atlantic fisheries.

Basic Input-Output Logic

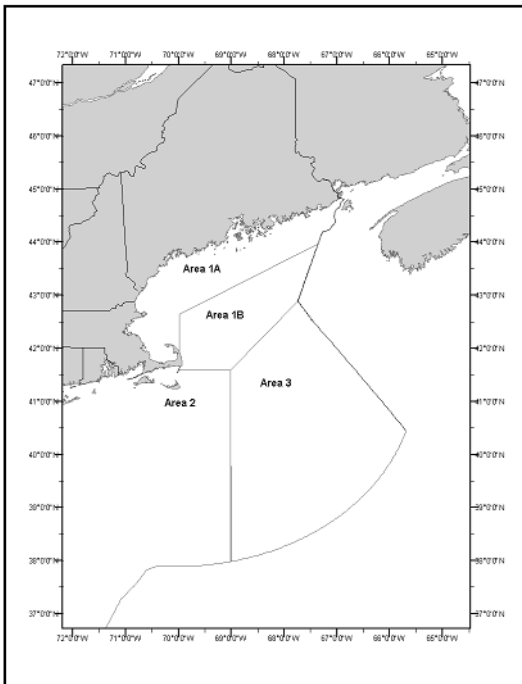


Graphic courtesy of Scott Steinback, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service

the impact regardless of social and environmental costs/benefits), and tends to reward technologies and industries that consume the most resources. Natural resources managers then

Species Profile: Atlantic Herring (continued from page 5)

Figure 3. Current Management Areas for the Atlantic Herring Fishery



sary. The 2005 specifications for state and federal waters fisheries are shown below in Figure 4.

Recently, herring and their role as forage have been a concern to many stake-

holders. The importance of herring to any given predator is the result of many factors, including availability, spatial and temporal overlap, selectivity and alternative prey items. Defining accurate biological reference points and overfishing levels will depend on developing a better understanding of the role herring plays as forage in the northwest Atlantic ecosystem.

The Commission's Amendment 1 also allows the Section to implement effort controls to prevent the early closure of a management area. Landing restrictions have been used in Area 1 (Gulf of Maine) for the past couple of years because the TAC has been harvested before the

peak market demand abates in the autumn. For the 2003 fishing year, the Section decided to implement a landing restriction on

where herring is typically in peak demand.

Atlantic herring schools are especially susceptible to fishing when they aggregate for spawning. This is also when herring are most valuable, as fat content is generally at its peak. Amendment 1 also defines specific measures to reduce the exploitation and disruption of herring spawning aggregations, while providing limited opportunity to harvest herring during this time of the year.

In July 2003, the Section agreed to initiate the development of Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The amend-

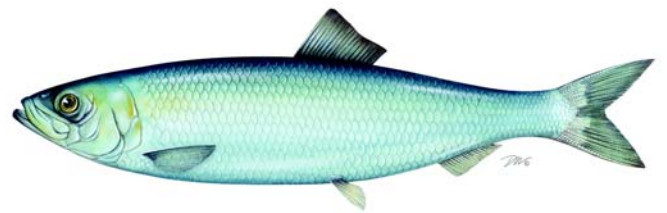


Figure 4. 2005 Specifications for State and Federal Waters Fisheries

	State Waters	Federal Waters*
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	220,000 mt	220,000 mt
Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	180,000 mt	150,000 mt
Area 1A	60,000 mt	60,000 mt
Area 1B	10,000 mt	10,000 mt
Area 2	50,000 mt	30,000 mt
Area 2 Reserve	0 mt	No reserve
Area 3	60,000 mt	50,000 mt
U.S. Optimal Yield (OY)	180,000 mt	150,000 mt
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	180,000 mt	150,000 mt
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	176,000 mt	146,000 mt
Border Transfer (BT)	4,000 mt	4,000 mt
Total Joint Venture Processing (JVPT)	0 mt	0 mt
Joint Venture Processing (JVP)	0 mt	0 mt
Internal Water Processing (IWP)	0 mt	0 mt
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0 mt	20,000 mt (Area 2 & 3 only)
Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing (TALFF)	0 mt	0 mt

*Federal specifications are effective May 31, 2005 - December 31, 2006.

Saturdays and Sundays to ensure there is no interruption in the supply of herring to the lobster bait market during the summer. Landing restrictions have been effective in prolonging the available TAC through the year

ment is being developed in coordination with the Council's Amendment 1. Some of the issues specifically addressed in the draft Amendment 2 document are biological reference points, controlling effort in the fishery, inshore spawning areas and restrictions, research set asides, IWPs, fixed gear fisheries, and the role of herring as forage. Draft Amendment 2 is slated to be released for public comment in late summer/early fall 2005, with public hearings scheduled for October. Final approval is scheduled for late 2005, with implementation of Amendment 2 anticipated at the start of the 2006 fishing year.

For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or rchristiansen@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Conducts Natural Mortality Workshop

Fisheries stock assessments are performed to determine if a stock is currently being harvested at a sustainable rate (is overfishing occurring?) and if the standing stock is healthy (is the stock overfished or not?). Fish populations are affected by the number of fish that survive from one year to the next, and these fish must run a gauntlet of obstacles from being caught in a fishery, which is termed fishing mortality, or dying due to a myriad of other causes (predation, disease, old age), which is termed natural mortality. Fishing mortality plus natural mortality equal the total mortality imposed on a fishery. For stocks without a fishery, natural mortality is the only factor responsible for population decline; however, the need for stock assessments and, thus, natural mortality rate estimates is primarily needed after stocks have been exposed to a fishery.

Understanding the interactions that cause fish stocks to increase (new recruitment to a fish stock, growth of individual fish over time) and decrease (fishing and natural mortality) is the heart of fishery stock assessments. Fishery scientists can typically obtain information that pertains directly to fishing mortality (total catch, fishing effort, etc.). Unfortunately, information on natural mortality is not as easy to obtain and requires additional information (life history studies, tagging studies, etc), as the natural mortality rate of a stock depends on the losses not readily observed.

The difficulty in estimating natural mortality is a source of uncertainty in stock assessments and the estimate of natural mortality can significantly affect the results of a stock assessment. Thus, estimating a natural mortality rate can be a contentious issue for stock assessment scientists. Concerns regarding the estimation of natural mortality rates have developed in the assessments of several Commission managed species. To begin to address these issues, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commis-

sion conducted a workshop this spring to provide a comprehensive overview of the methods and tools available to estimate natural mortality, to assess the impact natural mortality estimates in stock assessments, and to examine case studies of natural mortality estimation.

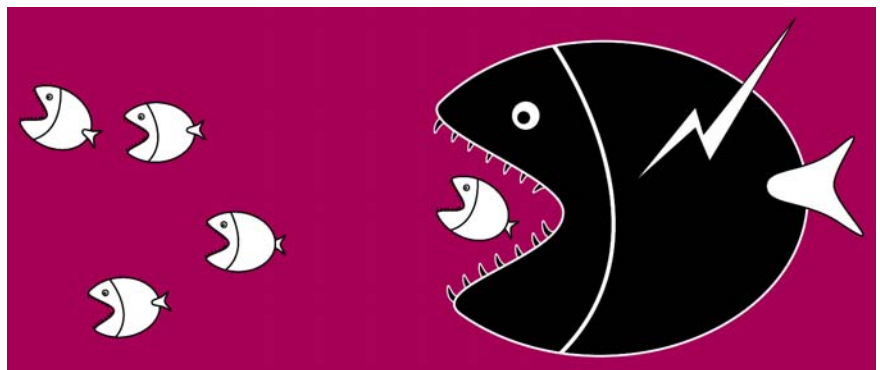
The workshop was held on March 31-April 1, 2005 in Baltimore, Maryland. The workshop had three sessions. The first session covered methods available for estimating natural mortality. Session presentations included "Strategies for Estimating Natural Mortality of Fishes" by Dr. Joseph Hightower (U.S. Geological Survey/North Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, "Predicting M from Life History: What You Can Do With What You Have, Especially When That Isn't Much" by David Hewitt (Ph.D. student with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)), "A Framework for Estimating Natural Mortality" by Dr. Robert Latour (VIMS), and "Looking at Tagging Models from a Stock Assessment Perspective: Estimating Natural Mortality and Selectivity" by Dr. John Hoenig (VIMS).

The second session reviewed analytical software that is available to investigate the effect of natural mortality estimates on stock assessments. Dr. Paul Rago (National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)) gave a presentation entitled "Natural Mortality: The Problems of Incomplete Lists, and Some Tools to Assess Their Consequences" and reviewed software programs that are available

from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's "Tool Box" for scientists to use to evaluate the impact of estimated values for M in stock assessments. Dr. John Hoenig described a software program that he has developed (AVOCADO) to estimate mortality rates from tagging studies.

The third session concluded the workshop with an examination of case studies presented by Dr. Erik Williams (NMFS) – "Estimation of Natural Mortality in the Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment," Dr. Desmond Kahn (DE) – "Estimation of Natural Mortality and its Impacts on the Estimation of Fishing Mortality in the Course of Stock Assessment Work," and Dr. Larry Jacobson (NMFS) – "Estimating M for Scallops, Herring and Maybe Lobster."

The Commission would like to thank members of the Natural Mortality Workshop Steering Committee (Steven Correia (MA), Kim McKown (NY), Michael Murphy (FL), and Doug Vaughan (NMFS)) for their assistance in planning and hosting the workshop. Staff is working with the Steering Committee and presenters to develop a CD-ROM of the proceedings that will contain the presentations, associated notes, and other documents and materials from the workshop. For more information, please contact Patrick Kilduff, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or pkilduff@asmfc.org.



On the Legislative Front

As set forth in the Bush Administration's U.S. Ocean Action Plan, the Administration recently proposed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) reauthorization bill and the National Offshore Aquaculture bill for congressional action. The MMPA of 1972 is the principal federal legislation on marine mammal species protection and conservation. The proposed legislation addresses marine mammal bycatch, the definition of marine mammal "harassment," and enforcement of the Act.

Offshore Aquaculture

The Administration has emphasized the U.S. seafood trade deficit (the U.S. imports over 70% of its seafood for consumption) as a key factor in the enhanced development of offshore aquaculture. On June 8, Senate Commerce Committee Co-Chairmen Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) introduced Senate Bill 1195, the National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2005. The legislation provides the regulatory framework for the development of U.S. offshore aquaculture and grants the Secretary of Commerce authority to issue permits for marine aquaculture operations in federal waters. Senator Stevens also introduced an amendment to allow coastal states the option of whether to have the provisions of the Act apply in the state's seaward portion of the EEZ. For further information on this issue, please visit NOAA's website www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/aquaculture.

Aquatic Invasive Species

The Administration's Ocean Plan also highlighted the need for prevention of the spread of aquatic invasive species. House Fisheries Subcommittee Chairman Wayne Gilchrest (R-Maryland) recently introduced House Bill 1591, the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2005, to amend the Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990. Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan) concurrently introduced Senate Bill 770 to reauthorize and amend the Act. The legislation requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to implement a national system of ecological surveys for rapid early detection and monitoring of invasive species, among other actions, to help prevent and control harmful aquatic non-indigenous plants and animals.

Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization

The legislative activity on the reauthorization and amendment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) has been ongoing on the Hill. On April 14, Dr. William Hogarth, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, provided testimony to the House Subcommittee on Fisheries on MSA reauthorization and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Dr. Hogarth stated, "The



NEPA analytical and regulatory framework provides important benefits to the Administration, the Regional Fishery Management Councils, the fishing industry, and the general public." NOAA has developed and implemented a Regulatory Streamlining Program to improve application of NEPA requirements to fisheries management actions. NOAA Fisheries recently proposed revisions to the guidelines for National Standard 1 of the MSA (Federal Register/Vol. 70, No. 119/June 22, 2005). The proposed rule addresses fishery rebuilding plans and targets and the definition of "overfishing," among other proposed changes. House Resources Committee Ranking Member Nick J. Rahall (D-West Virginia) introduced House Bill 1431 to amend the MSA. The legislation addresses the use of science in fisheries management, appointment and training of regional fishery management council members, training of new council members, cooperative research, data collection and gear modification programs. For more information, please contact Lena Kofas, Executive Assistant, at (202)289-6400 or lkofas@asmfc.org.

ISFMP Coordinator Responsibilities

Staff	FMP Coordination Responsibilities
Ruth Christiansen	Spiny dogfish and coastal sharks, Atlantic herring, Winter flounder
Toni Kerns	American lobster, Summer flounder
Lydia Munger	Atlantic striped bass, Shad and river herring, American eel, Tautog
Julie Nygard	Habitat, Bluefish, Scup, and Black sea bass
Brad Spear	Atlantic sturgeon, Weakfish, Horseshoe crab, Northern shrimp
Nancy Wallace	Atlantic menhaden, Red drum, Spanish mackerel, Atlantic croaker, Spot, Spotted sea trout



For-Hire Survey Begins its Third Year on the Atlantic Coast

ACCSP Partners Continue Outreach Efforts with For-hire Captains

In June 2005, the Atlantic For-hire Survey marked its second year operating coastwide, and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's (ACCSP) state and federal partners continue working to help the for-hire industry better understand how the survey works.

The For-hire Survey consists of:

1. Telephone sampling of for-hire vessels to collect information on angler trips,
2. In-person interviews with for-hire patrons at dockside access-points to collect information on catch,¹ and
3. Field validation to correct for reporting errors.

NOAA Fisheries Service, in cooperation with numerous state resource management agencies, hosted a series of workshops for for-hire captains and vessel owners to answer their questions on the For-hire Survey's structure and operations. Here are a few of the questions the captains had, and their answers.

Q: Why is there a For-hire Survey when all the same information is collected on the federal vessel trip report (VTR)?

A: While many headboats and charter boats hold federal permits, and their

¹ Catch interviews are ongoing since 1981, as part of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey, but the effort survey of captains and validation efforts began in June 2003 on the Atlantic coast.

captains submit trip-by-trip reports of their activity, there are thousands of boats that are not federally permitted. The VTR program was never designed to estimate coastwide effort or catch. In order to have meaningful estimates that accurately represent the whole coast, state and federal agencies need one method that covers everyone. The For-hire Survey is conducted in every state on the Atlantic coast and accounts for everything from large offshore headboats to small "six-packs" that fish near shore.

Q: I'm busy during peak season, and interviewers may not catch me on the phone. How else can I report?

A: There are several reporting options for busy captains.

1. **Phone:** You can initiate an interview at a convenient time by calling (800) 229-5220.
2. **Fax:** You can fax the completed For-Hire Survey Logsheet that you receive in the mail to (877) 694-8808. If you complete federal vessel trip reports, you can also fax those pages at the end of your reporting week to the same number.
3. **Web:** You can enter your data online at <http://forhire.fishingsurvey.com> using the personal identification number provided.

Q: Why don't interviewers ask what fish we caught?

A: The For-hire Survey gets information on catch in a separate survey. Catch is identified, weighed and measured when boats return to the dock.

At-sea samplers collect information on released catch by riding headboats as paying passengers. Because the catch and effort surveys are conducted separately, the captain may not be called for an effort interview on the same week that a catch survey is conducted for his or her boat. As long as there is adequate participation from anglers and captains, the estimates will be valid.

Q: Why do interviewers ask for "target species?"

A: Information on the species targeted during the trip is used for economic valuation studies of recreational and for-hire fishing.

Q: If I own multiple boats, how do the interviewers know not to record the information I give them for the wrong boat?

A: Vessels are selected for the For-hire Survey, not people. Every eligible vessel has a unique numeric identifier that ensures an interviewer can only collect information for that vessel during a telephone interview. The interviewer confirms the name and/or an associated vessel number (state registration, coast guard number, etc) prior to starting the interview. Captains/owners are contacted by mail to notify them of the boat that is being sampled, the week they have been scheduled to report trip activity and the various ways to report. During the telephone interview, the captain is asked to report activity for the selected vessel only. If a captain doesn't receive notification prior to being con-

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NOAA Announces Intent to Prepare EIS on Right Whale Ship Strikes

The two most significant human-caused threats and sources of mortality to endangered right whales are entanglements in fishing gear and collisions with ships. Collisions with ships (referred to as ship strikes) account for more confirmed right whale mortalities than any other human-related activity. Ship strikes are responsible for over 50 percent of known human-related right whale mortalities and are considered one of the principal causes for the lack of recovery in this population. Right whales are located in, or adjacent to, several major shipping corridors on the eastern U.S. and south-eastern Canadian coasts.

In June, NOAA Fisheries Service announced its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the potential impacts of implementing NOAA's Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Strategy. This notice

describes the possible alternatives intended to reduce the likelihood and threat of mortalities caused by ship strikes. The goal of the Strategy is to reduce, to the extent practicable, the distributional overlap between ships and right whales. The Strategy allows for regional implementation and accommodates differences in oceanography, commercial ship traffic patterns, navigational concerns and right whale use.

NOAA Fisheries Service is proposing to implement the operational measures in the Strategy within each of three broad regions: (a) the Southeastern Atlantic coast, (b) the Mid-Atlantic coastal region, and (c) the Northeastern Atlantic coast. The implementation of operational measures, and the specific times and areas (with boundaries) in which the measures would be in effect, are expected to vary within and between each

region. However, each region would contain specific elements to reduce the threat of ship strikes to right whales. The measures would apply to non-sovereign vessels greater than 65 ft in length. The operational measures would not apply to vessels operated by Federal agencies or the military.

Public comments must be received no later than **5 PM EST on July 22, 2005**. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to: Shipstrike.comments@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following identifier: I.D. 060804F.

Additional information including the Environmental Assessment (EA) and an economic analysis is available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/shipstrike/>, or visit <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/shipstrike>

New Gear Modifications Proposed to Address Problem of Large Whale Entanglements

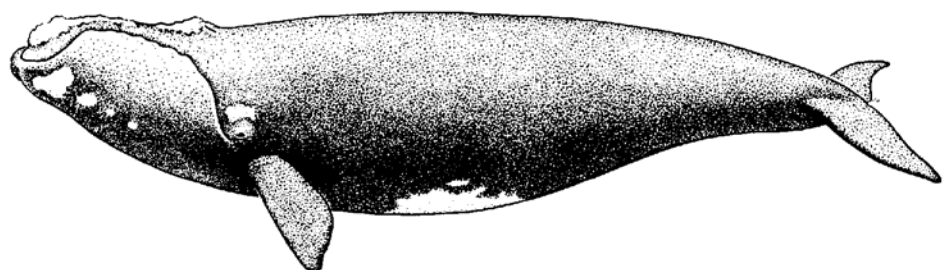
In response to the continued entanglement, serious injury and mortality of large whales, NOAA Fisheries Service is proposing revisions to commercial fishery regulations and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP). NOAA Fisheries Service reconvened the Take Reduction Team in 2003 to help evaluate modifications to the plan that would reduce the potential for large whale entanglements, and minimize impacts to the whales when entanglements do occur. A draft Environmental Impact Statement was published in February 2005.

NOAA Fisheries Service has identified Alternatives 3 and 6 in the draft Environmental Impact Statement as preferred alternatives. The proposed rule would apply the ALWTRP regulations

to a number of trap/pot fisheries (e.g. black sea bass, scup, conch/whelk, shrimp, red crab, hagfish, and Jonah crab), and expand the exempted areas and requirements for gear marking. Under the preferred alternatives, gear modifications would be required year-round in the Northeast and seasonally in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast. Unless otherwise noted, any new requirements would take effect six months after publication of the final rule.

Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by **5 PM EST on July 21, 2005**. Comments may be sent to: whalerule.comments@noaa.gov. Please include the RIN 0648-AS01 in the subject line of the message.

For more information, visit <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>, and look for a link to the Outreach Document on the right-hand side of the page.



For-Hire Survey Begins its Third Year on the Atlantic Coast (continued from page 10)

tacted for the survey, his or her vessel record may need to be updated. Captains can do this by calling the survey's toll-free number, (800) 229-5220.

Q: Why do interviewers ask about other trips the vessel may have taken that were not hired fishing trips?

A: If a vessel is away from its slip for whale watching or a private fishing trip, it needs to be documented so that the total number of for-hire trips is not adjusted inappropriately. You are not asked to report what you did, only the day that the boat was out. While it may seem intrusive to ask about the vessel's additional activities, it is important for validation. Validation improves the reliability of the survey through random spot-checking. Dockside samplers visit a sample of boat slips each week to see if vessels are out on for-hire trips. The results are compared to trip information reported by captains in the phone survey to adjust for any under- or over-reporting.

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

Return Service Requested

ASMFC Summer Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Buffet Lunch
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM	ISFMP Policy Board
4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Business Session

