

**ASMFC American Shad & River Herring
Advisory Panel Conference Call
July 29, 2010**

Attendance

AP Members

Michael Blanchard
Alison Bowden
Joe Fletcher
Pam Lyons Gromen

William Richkus
Byron Young
George Loring
Kate Taylor, ASMFC

TC Representative

Larry Miller

Advisory Panel Call Overview

The Advisory Panel convened via conference call on July 29th to review and provide feedback on two documents: 1) MAFMC Amendment 14 Management Options; and 2) Increasing Coordination between Councils and Commission. Kate Taylor recapped the AP's previous recommendations on ocean bycatch (developed during Amendment 2 and Amendment 3) and then provided the AP with an overview of the alternative sets contained in the current draft of Mid-Atlantic Council's Amendment 14 Discussion Document.

Advisory Panel Comments:

MAFMC Amendment 14 Management Options

The AP believes that the current suite of alternative sets is sufficient to address Amendment 14 goals. The AP noted that a diversity of options is important for the public comment period, which is currently scheduled for December 2011.

- **Monitoring Alternative Sets (Alternative Sets 1 through 5)**
 - Priority should be given to Vessel Reporting (Alternative Set 1), At-Sea Observation Optimization (Alternative Set 3), 3rd Party and Other Monitoring Measures (Alternative Set 4), and At-Sea Observer Coverage Requirements (Alternative Set 5). A combination of these alternatives will likely produce the most effective monitoring program and all should remain in the document for further analysis.
 - Dealer Reporting (Alternative Set 2) provides the least benefit for achieving the monitoring goal. Timely VTR reporting (weekly at minimum) is a more effective measure and should be prioritized.
- **Bycatch Reduction Alternative Sets (Alternative Sets 6 through 8)**
 - The AP strongly supports the development of options for Mortality Caps in the Squid & Mackerel Fisheries (Alternative Set 6) and Restrictions in Areas of High Shad & River Herring Catch (Alternative Set 7).
 - Alternative Set 8 (Mesh Requirements) is the least developed. Because mackerel and squid fisheries are "small mesh," this option may greatly impact the catch of targeted species while having only marginal benefits for river herring and shad.
- **Complementary Federal Management through "Stocks-in-a-fishery" Designation (Alternative Set 9)**
 - The AP feels strongly that Alternative Set 9 should remain in Amendment 14 for further analysis and public comment.
 - In comparing status quo vs. federal management, the AP believes that complementary federal management could afford protections to shad and river herring that are not

provided under the current management program, such as a federal waters bycatch limit, federal stock assessment resources, and essential fish habitat (EFH) designation.

- Alternative approaches for satisfying the annual catch limit (ACL) and accountability measure (AM) requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act should be explored and included within the Alternative Set 9 options.
- The roles of the ASMFC, the Mid-Atlantic Council and the New England Council need to be clarified as this alternative set is developed. The AP reiterated the importance of both Councils and the Commission working cooperatively to effectively address ocean bycatch.

- **General Comments Related to Amendment 14**

- Opportunity should be provided for the input of ASMFC staff, the Shad & River Herring TC and the River Herring Stock Assessment Sub-Committee in Amendment 14 analyses, as appropriate. For example, the Stock Assessment Subcommittee's input may be valuable when developing bycatch cap options.
- Catch classified by at-sea observers as "unknown herring" or "unknown fish" is a significant problem impacting the accurate quantification of shad and river herring bycatch. The Mid-Atlantic Council has begun to investigate this in Amendment 14 analyses to-date and should continue to do so.
- While portside monitoring program options have been dropped from Amendments 5 and 14, the AP believes that portside sampling programs provide important information on shad and river herring bycatch, especially for high-volume fisheries where catch may be difficult to sort at sea. Programs in place in Maine and Massachusetts that are funded through the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program should continue to be supported.

Increasing Coordination between Councils and Commission

- The AP is encouraged by the Mid-Atlantic Council's efforts to take a proactive approach to improve coordination with the Commission outside of the important work that is progressing under Amendment 14.
- The AP believes joint meetings or cross-representation at meetings would be of great benefit in improving the understanding of issues impacting shad and river herring as well as those impacting squid, mackerel and butterfish fisheries. When planning for joint meeting the AP requests the Board consider ways to increase communication between the Management Board and the Squid, Mackerel and Butterfish Committee and its advisors.
- Joint meetings of the Mid-Atlantic Council's SSC and the Shad & River Herring TC could improve scientific analyses and review of stock assessments as the information pertains to federal management actions (such as bycatch caps).
- Webinars are a cost-effective communication tool and should be utilized. AP members noted the value of the information-sharing meeting and webinar hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Council last October. Webinars can also be recorded so that they can be accessed by managers and the public at a later date.