

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 Seeks Input on New Strategic Plan Public Meeting Scheduled for August 26 in Arlington, VA**

The Commission has scheduled an Information Meeting to gather public input on its 2004-2008 Strategic Plan. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 26, 2003, from 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM at the DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

With its current Strategic Plan ending in 2003, the Commission has begun working on a plan for the next five years. Although based on the existing plan, the new plan is also intended to reflect the current environment of fisheries management and address future priorities. It is a chance for the Commission's state members to review where they have been and what they have accomplished, and identify where they want to be in five years.

"A critical component of this process will be the active participation and input of Commission partners, stakeholders and constituents," stated ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea. "This meeting is one of several opportunities for people to voice their concerns regarding fisheries conservation and management, and share their ideas on how Commission priorities can be refocused to more effectively achieve our Vision. We in-

te all who can attend to help us identify workable, effective ways of realizing healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015."

At the meeting, the public will be presented an overview of the current Strategic Plan (1998 – 2003), its milestones and accomplishments, and the results of the June 2003 Strategic Planning Workshop. The rest of the meeting will be devoted to soliciting public input. Interested parties will be encouraged to share issues and concerns with the Commission's current Strategic Plan and offer recommendations for improvement.

Those unable to attend the meeting will also have an opportunity for input upon the release of the first draft, scheduled for mid-September. The draft will be available on the ASMFC website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) or can be obtained by contacting the Commission office at (202)289-6400. In the meantime, interested parties can access the Source Document to the June 2003 Strategic Planning Workshop at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org). This document outlines the activities and discussions of the workshop participants, including identified challenges and opportunities in Atlantic coastal fisheries conservation and management. Comments received up until mid-October will be used in the development of the final draft, slated for Commission approval in December.

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Photo courtesy of Laura C. Leach

**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, 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

**8/25 - 28:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, Doubletree Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia (see agenda on pages 7 & 8).

**9/3 & 4:**

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee, Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina; 919/828-0811.

**9/8 & 9:**

ACCSP Advisory Committee, Boston, Massachusetts.

**9/15 - 19:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Pawley's Island, South Carolina.

**9/16 - 18:**

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

**9/23 - 25:**

ACCSP Operations Committee, location to be determined.

**10/6 - 9:**

Southeast Data Assessment Review, Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

**10/7 - 9:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Ramada Inn/Outer Banks Resort & Conference Center, 1701 Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina.

**10/15 - 17 (8:30 AM- 5:00 PM each day):**

ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center, Virginia Tech Campus, Blacksburg, Virginia; (540)231-5490.

**10/20 - 24:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Holiday Inn Providence Downtown, 21 Atwells Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island.

**11/4-6**

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

**12/1 - 5:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

Public comment is a key part of the Commission's fishery management process. We receive stakeholder input through our Advisory Panels, at public hearings, in letters, and by email. It is an invaluable tool, providing our Commissioners greater insight into the needs and desires of their constituencies, and aiding them in making decisions that is in the highest good for both the fishery resource and its users. Commissioners strive to make the best use of the information provided to them. This information takes many forms – scientific, technical, socioeconomic, and political. Commissioners have an obligation to access these diverse inputs and act in the best interest of the resource and their constituency at large.

Yet, there are times when our management boards and individual Commissioners have been criticized for their decisions. This is especially true when Commissioners take action differing from that recommended by the majority of those writing or speaking on the issue. This raises the question, how do Commissioners weigh public input? And, on the flip side, what makes for effective public input? Here are my thoughts on these issues.

Consider when a management board takes action counter to the prevailing public comment. Some feel a Commissioner's role is to count comments or signatures and vote accordingly for those interests. This thinking concludes that to do otherwise means some small group has exercised an improper, and according to some, illegal influence over our Commissioners. In fact, Commissioners have a broader role. Their first obligation is to carry out their trust responsibility for proper stewardship of the public resources under their care. If individual letter writers see liberal bag limits as beneficial to them, but the collective result is overfishing, then Commission action might not (and probably should not) comport with the public's advice. Should we jeopardize the resource to accommodate the majority of those who comment?

Commissioners must also think about the interests of the broad public, including those who do not communicate on every issue. For example, we seldom hear from children about fishery management plans, and they don't come to public hearings or Commission meetings. However, there is a societal expectation that Commissioners will look after their interests by ensuring there are healthy stocks of fish for them, as the next generation, to enjoy. We also know, for a large segment of the public, access to public fisheries resources means going to a store to buy fish, because they don't have the time, means, or access to catch fish on their own. While

some states have decided it is best to reserve certain species for sport fish use only, others have not. So until there is a coastwide policy to assign a species game fish only status, it is reasonable for Commissioners to consider the needs of both the fish-eating and fish-catching public.

Commissioners, like all public officials, also need to evaluate the accuracy of the public's comment and advice. In some cases the public might take a position based on incorrect information or assumptions. They may believe this information with all good intentions, but if key premises are faulty and projected outcomes unlikely or impossible, the advice should be weighed accordingly. During the Striped Bass Amendment 6 process many people spoke against opening the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to striped bass fishing based on the incorrect assumption it would lead to higher commercial landings. In fact, such landings are controlled through specific quotas, and would not be increased by opening the EEZ.

This leads us to the second question posed in this article. What makes for effective public comment? First and foremost, an informed advocate is a powerful advocate. Information on the Commission's processes and activities are widely available through our website or by contacting our office. If there is something you don't understand, call and talk to someone, be they ASMFC staff, your state Commissioners or state technical staff. Consider approaching the issue or process with an open mind. (You have probably heard the notion that it is easier to understand when you are listening rather than talking.)

Lastly, when providing public comment, either written or oral, keep in mind the following points. Be organized. Identify your main points and speak concisely. Be clear about what you like and don't like. Offer options if you are against something. And, be respectful and constructive. Many times, one well thought-out and reasoned argument can outweigh 100s of uninformed, emotionally driven postcards or letters.

Please keep those cards and letters coming. Your views are an important contribution to our public process. Public comment frequently moves Commissioners in a general direction away from their initial positions. Keep in mind there are often good reasons why Commissioners' action might not reflect exactly what you wanted. They take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to doing what they perceive as the right thing. Hopefully, that is something we can all agree on.



## Species Profile: Atlantic Herring

### New ASMFC & NEFMC Amendments to Increase Protection of Inshore Stock

#### Introduction

In addition to Atlantic herring being an important forage species for many fish, marine mammal and seabird species, it is 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).

#### 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).

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.

***Clupea harengus***

**Family: Clupidae**

**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.**

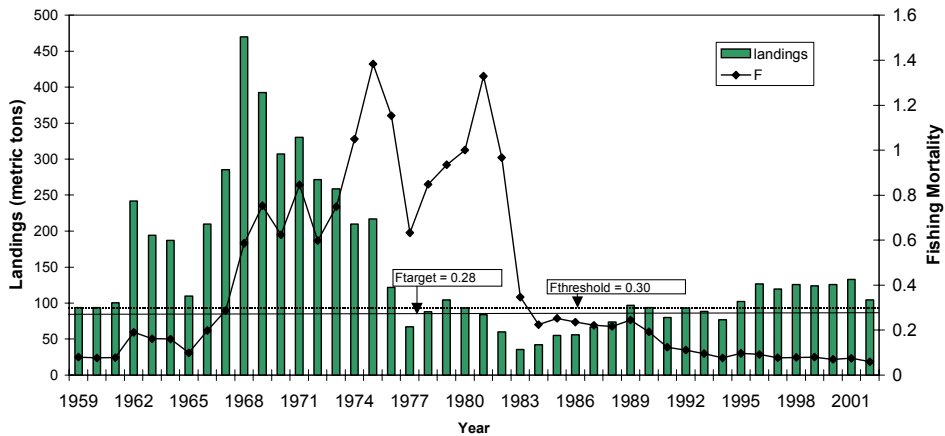
**Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing is not occurring**

**FMP Rebuilding Goals:**  
 $B_{\text{threshold}} = 1/4 B_{\text{MSY}} = 250,000$  metric tons  
 $B_{\text{target}} = 1.1$  million metric tons

**Age at Maturity: age 3 (9.1 inches in length)**

**Age at Recruitment into Fishery: age 2 (7.9 inches in length)**

**Fishing Mortality and Landings for Atlantic Herring (1959 - 2002)**  
Source: NOAA Fisheries IVR System



**Stock Status**

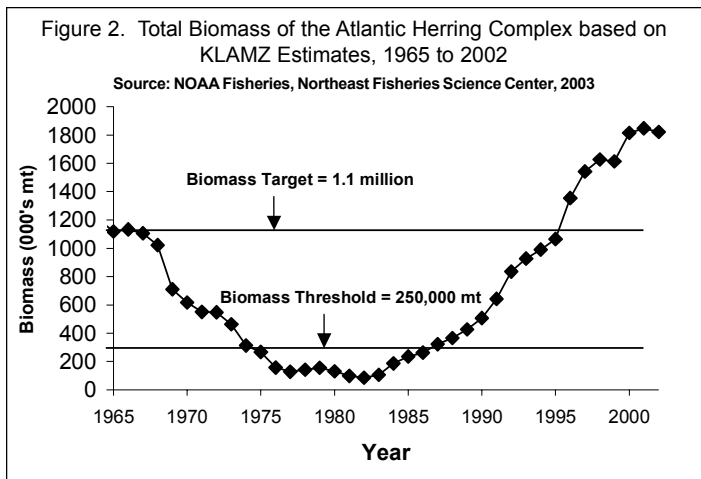
In February 2003, two stock assessments for the Atlantic herring complex were presented at the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) meeting in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. The TRAC provides a forum for U.S and Canadian scientists to jointly peer review the results and interpretations of 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 (Figure 2), the TRAC could not reach consensus on the most appropriate model to assess this transboundary resource. 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 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 2005.

**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 6).

As part of the annual specification process, the Section determines the allocation of the IWP quota. The sale of U.S. caught herring to foreign vessels anchored in state waters is called Internal Waters Processing (IWP) and began in 1985. At its most recent meeting, the Section determined it would not allocate the 2004 IWP quota because of competition with U.S. markets and the increasing capacity of domestic shoreside plants to process herring caught in U.S. waters.



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 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 times of the year where herring is typically in peak demand.

*continued on page 6*

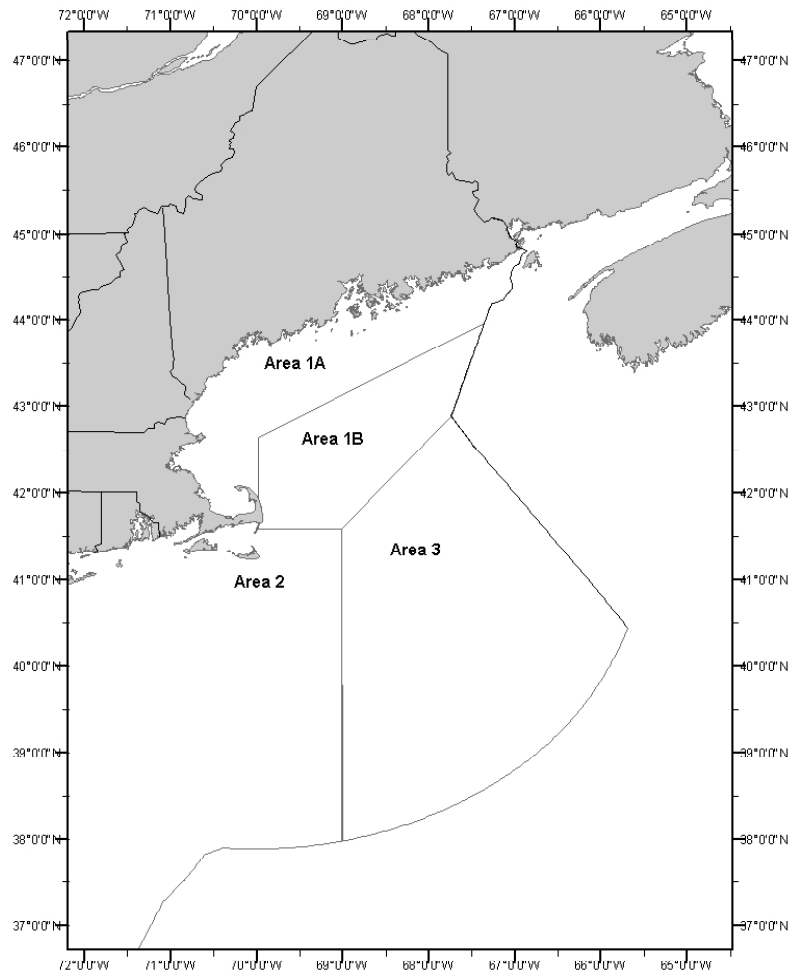
## Atlantic Herring Species Profile (continued from page 5)

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.

This July, the Section agreed to initiate the development of Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The amendment will be done in coordination with the Council's Amendment 1. Some of the issues identified for the Public Information Document are monitoring and controlling effort and capacity in the fishery, inshore spawning areas and closures, research set asides, IWPs, fixed gear fisheries, coordination with mackerel management, and the role of herring as forage. The Public Information Document will be released for public comment in January 2004. The amendment approval is slated to occur in late 2004, with implementation at the start of the 2005 fishing year.

For more information, please contact Megan Gamble, Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <[mgamble@asmfc.org](mailto:mgamble@asmfc.org)>.

Figure 3. Current Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Areas



### An Overview of Federal & Interstate Atlantic Herring Management

<b>1972</b>	Herring managed through International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF)
<b>1976</b>	US withdraws from ICNAF with passage of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976
<b>1976 – 78</b>	NMFS promulgates Preliminary Management Plan to regulate foreign fishing in US waters
<b>1978</b>	NEFMC implements Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
<b>1982</b>	FMP withdrawn; herring placed on prohibited species list, eliminating directed fisheries for herring by foreign fleets within the US EEZ and requiring any herring bycatch be discarded
<b>1983</b>	ASMFC adopts Interstate FMP for Atlantic Herring; ME, NH, MA & RI implement series of spawning closures
<b>1994</b>	ASMFC adopts new FMP to address the growth of the herring resource and interest in Internal Water Processing (IWP) operations
<b>1999</b>	ASMFC adopts Amendment 1 to the Herring FMP to complement federal FMP
<b>2003</b>	ASMFC and NEFMC develop new amendments to address to limited entry and other issues

# ASMFC August 2003 Meeting Week

August 25 - 28, 2003

**Doubletree Crystal City  
300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia**

## Final Agenda

(Note: The schedule is subject to change up until the time meetings are held.)

### Monday, August 25, 2003

9:00 AM - Noon Winter Flounder Advisory Panel

- Review public comment on Public Information Document and make recommendations to Board for items to include in Draft Amendment 1

10:00 PM - 5:00 PM Habitat Committee

- Living Shorelines discussion
- Artificial Reef Materials Guidelines
- Habitat Strategic Planning
- National Academy of Sciences Briefing on Nonnative Oysters in the Chesapeake Bay
- Updates on joint activities with the Management & Science Committee
- Updates on Shellfish Bed Habitat, FMP habitat sections, and committee membership

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Winter Flounder Management Board

- Review public comment and Advisory Panel recommendations on the Public Information Document
- Provide direction to PDT on Draft Amendment 1

3:00 PM - 5:30 PM Summer Flounder, Scup & Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Review/discuss Technical Committee work on summer flounder conservation equivalency review
- Discuss and consider approval of Addendum VIII
- Discuss and consider approval of Addendum X for public comment
  - April 15 start date for summer scup quota period
  - Scup commercial quota rollover from winter I to winter II



Photo courtesy of Ennid Berger

### Tuesday, August 26, 2003

8:00 AM - Noon Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

- Recommendations on state conduct of the MRFSS Intercept Survey
- Consider/approve 2004-2007 Implementation Plan
- Update on RFP status
- Recommendations on overhead
- Letter on NOAA grants delay

10:00 AM - Noon Joint Meeting of the Advisory Panel Oversight Committee & Advisory Committee

- Review Advisory Panel and Public Input Objectives of Current Plan and Provide Recommendations for Inclusion in 2004 – 2008 Strategic Plan

*continued on page 8*

# **ASMFC August 2003 Meeting Week Final Agenda (continued from page 7)**

## Tuesday, August 26, 2003 (continued)

- 10:00 AM - Noon                      **Joint Meeting of the Advisory Panel Oversight Committee & Advisory Committee (cont'd)**
- Review New Outreach Goal and Strategies and Provide Recommendations for Inclusion in 2004-2008 Strategic Plan
  - Identify next steps and future meeting dates

- 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM                      **Horseshoe Crab Management Board**
- PRT Report on Draft Addendum III
  - Discuss and consider approval of Addendum III for public comment

- 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM                      **South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board**
- Review and consider approval of Maryland and North Carolina proposals for red drum
  - Updates on SEAMAP, Atlantic croaker assessment and Spanish mackerel assessment

- 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM                      **Public Information Meeting on ASMFC Strategic Plan (2004 - 2008)**

## Wednesday, August 27, 2003

- 8:00 AM - Noon                              **Strategic Planning**  
Facilitated by Mike Fraidenburg, Dynamic Solutions Group, LLC

- Noon - 2:00 PM                              **Administrative Oversight Committee**

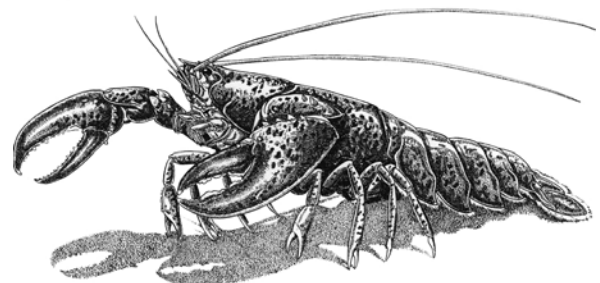
- 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM                              **Presentation by David S. Duncan, Senior Vice President -- Investments; Ferris, Baker Watts**

- 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM                              **ISFMP Policy Board**
- Discuss staff review of the "Feasibility of 'Rewards' for Measures that are More Restrictive than ASMFC Standards"
  - Discuss summary of comparison of Striped Bass Amendments 5 & 6
  - Habitat Committee Report
  - NMFS Report on Status of Consideration of Opening the EEZ to Striped Bass Harvest and an Update of Coastal Shark Management Activities
  - Review of noncompliance recommendations (if necessary)

- 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM                              **Business Session**
- Review and consider approval of new Amendments and FMPs (if necessary)

## Thursday, August 28, 2003

- 8:00 AM - Noon                              **American Lobster Management Board**
- Massachusetts Outer Cape Cod Conservation Equivalency Proposal
  - Plan Review Team Report (FMP Review)
  - Draft Addendum IV (vent selectivity, most restrictive rule trap allocation, Area 3 management measures, Area 2 management measures)
  - Stock assessment options
  - Gauge sizes among various LCMA's
  - Most restrictive rule -- timing
  - Lobster database update





## Geoffrey G. White Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

For over five years, Geoff White has been a vital member of the Commission's research and statistics program. Now, he has the honor of being the Commission's Employee of the Quarter (July - September 2003). In selecting Geoff, the Directors noted that he has consistently added value to the Commission through his initiative and hard work. Geoff's work has resulted in an efficiently run SEAMAP program, the development and use of multispecies assessments, and the establishment of a lobster stock assessment database.

The award is intended to recognize qualities and special contributions in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results. Geoff has exemplified these traits during his tenure at the Commission and, most recently, in his management of the research and statistics program while Dr. Kline was on maternity leave. Geoff maintained his workload during this stressful period, and accepted responsibility for all other activities being conducted under the program. He also agreed to assist in the drafting and development of the Commission's new strategic plan.

Geoff received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and a Master of Science from the College of William and Mary, Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Geoff's thesis focused on the reproductive biology of tautog in coastal waters of Virginia (see Fisheries

Bulletin, April 2003). Geoff was married in September 2001 to Kirsten, who is an second grade school teacher. Geoff's interests include bicycling, fishing, golf and sailing.

As an Employee of the Quarter, Geoff received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for his personnel record. In addition, Geoff's name will be engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby, alongside those of Edith Carr and Carrie Selberg. Congratulations, Geoff!



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## ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week Scheduled for October 20 - 24, 2002

The Commission has scheduled the second of two Technical Committee Meeting Weeks to be conducted in 2003. This meeting will be held on October 20 - 24, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Providence Downtown, 21 Atwells Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island.

This meeting, as well as the one conducted in April 2003, are part of a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of bringing together ASMFC technical support groups (i.e., technical committees and stock assessment committees) during two planned meeting weeks over the year, rather than scheduling individual committee meetings throughout the year. The concept

is based on the Commission's current meeting weeks, where Commissioners and Board members meet four times a year to conduct their business.

The Technical Committee Meeting Weeks are intended to reduce the number of travel days for members of the technical support groups, as well as reduce the travel costs for the Commission. Following the October meeting, Commission staff will evaluate the pros and cons of the concept and make a recommendation to the ISFMP Policy Board for future use.

The following groups are tentatively scheduled to meet in October.

- Stock Assessment Committee
- American Lobster Technical Committee
- Winter Flounder Technical Committee
- Weakfish Technical Committee
- Shad & River Herring Technical Committee
- Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee
- Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee

A detailed agenda will be available in August. For more information, please contact Robert Beal Director, ISFMP, at (202)289-6400 or <[rbeal@asmfc.org](mailto:rbeal@asmfc.org)>.



## Port Samplers to Benefit from a New ACCSP Tracking System

The purpose of the tracking system is to allow coastwide coordination of biological sampling. Federal and state port samplers can see what samples have been collected, compare them with the coastwide targets, and focus further sampling efforts accordingly.

As fishery data collection processes in the Atlantic states become increasingly web-based, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is responding by developing an integrated web-based sample tracking system for the port samplers along the Atlantic coast.

The ACCSP Biological Review Panel recommended that the Program develop a coastwide biological sampling target tracking system, and the Coordinating Council adopted its recommendation as an standard. The ACCSP Information Systems staff is now developing an integrated, web-based system to display biological sample targets and show records of samples as they are collected and entered.

For partners with existing in-house biological databases, the ACCSP system will integrate those data into the ACCSP's warehouse with data feeds, so duplicate data entry will not be required. For partners without such systems, the new system will provide the start of a complete biological data entry program with data access through the Business Objects interface.

The system being developed by the ACCSP staff will have two basic components (1) an online table of the annual sampling targets by state and species, and (2) a password-protected data entry system for state and federal personnel. In the initial version of the system, a port sampler or data entry clerk

could record the number of scales, otoliths, lengths, market category, and gear-type collected for a particular sample. Those data would then upload to the online table of targets, and subtract the collected sample from the total needed to reach the year's target.

After development and testing of the tracking component of the system, the ACCSP staff will develop an additional application to provide web-based data entry for more detailed biological sampling data, from data collection through the processing of the samples, and tie it back to the detailed trip data.

Beta testing of the tracking system should begin later this year with two or three partners who plan to use the system for data entry. For more information, visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org), or email [abbey.compton@accsp.org](mailto:abbey.compton@accsp.org).

### Record Funding Requests from ACCSP Partners for 2004

The ACCSP's partners requested over \$7.3 million with a record 34 proposals for 2004 when the request period closed on July 11.

"We are very pleased with the response to this years RFP," said David Cupka, Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council. "This demonstrates the need for improved marine fisheries data."

- 14 catch and effort proposals -- 12 commercial & 2 recreational
- 1 proposal for registration tracking
- 14 proposals for biological sampling
- 2 proposals for bycatch sampling
- 1 administrative grant.

### Upcoming Meetings

**August 26, 2003 (8 AM - Noon)**  
ACCSP Coordinating Council  
Crystal City Doubletree  
Arlington, Virginia

**September 9 & 10, 2003**  
ACCSP Advisory Committee  
Boston, Massachusetts

**September 23 - 25, 2003**  
ACCSP Operations Committee  
Location to be determined

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

### Staff:

**Toni Kerns** -- Toni joined the Commission staff in July as the Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for bluefish, black sea bass, scup and summer flounder. Recently graduated from Duke University with a Master in Coastal Environmental Management, her thesis was on "Recreational Fishermen's Perception of Marine Protected Areas." Toni also has Bachelor of Arts from Colgate University, where she majored in geology. Recent past employment includes Seacamp/NHMI, where Toni taught SCUBA and marine science adventures to kids in the Florida Keys. Toni's enthusiasm and fresh perspective are a welcome addition to the Commission staff.



### Commissioners:

**Peter Colangelo** -- Last month, with his retirement from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pete Colangelo stepped down as the state's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. For nine years, Pete participated in the Commission's programs and activities, serving on various species management boards, including those for shad and river herring, American eel and striped bass. With his retirement, Dennis Guise will be serving as Deputy Executive Director and Chief Counsel for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, as well Acting ASMFC Administrative Commissioner. We welcome Dennis and wish Pete a healthy and happy retirement.

## New ASMFC Publications Available

The following reports can be obtained from the Commission office or via the website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), under the NEWS page, Special Reports series.

**Circle Hook Definition and Research Issues** -- Summarizes the discussions and recommendations of the Management & Science Committee Workgroup, formed to address issues surrounding hook and release mortality and develop an enforceable definition of a circle hook. Approved in June by the ISFMP Policy Board and provided to the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board and Technical Committee for consideration in the management process, the report recommendations also has application to other Commission managed species.

**Proceedings of the Summer Flounder Bycatch and Regulatory Discards Workshop** -- Provides background on the status of the summer flounder stock and a characterization of the fisheries that discard summer flounder as regulatory bycatch. Information and recommendations are provided on eight discussion topics: (1) reducing regulatory discards in the recreational fishery, (2) reallocating from commercial directed fisheries towards bycatch fisheries and multispecies management, (3) minimizing derby fishing while increasing utilization of existing bycatch, (4) implementing harvest incentives for utilizing gear known to reduce discards, (5) involving the commercial industry and recreational sector in data collection and monitoring through study fleets and industry-based surveys, (6) establishing a National Gear Research Program, including experimental gear research and fishermen education, (7) amending fishery management plans to focus on reducing overcapitalization, while protecting diversity in the fishery, and (8) considering the impacts of economic market forces on summer flounder discards.

Staff	Species Coordination Responsibilities
<b>Megan Gamble, FMP Coordinator</b>	Atlantic Herring, Atlantic Striped Bass and Spiny Dogfish
<b>Toni Kerns, FMP Coordinator</b>	Bluefish, Black Sea Bass, Scup, Summer Flounder
<b>Lydia Munder, FMP Coordinator</b>	American Eel, Shad & River Herring, Tautog, Winter Flounder
<b>Carrie Selberg, FMP Coordinator &amp; Habitat Specialist</b>	American Lobster, Habitat
<b>Braddock Spear, FMP Coordinator</b>	Horseshoe Crab, Northern Shrimp, Weakfish
<b>Nancy Wallace, FMP Coordinator</b>	Atlantic Croaker, Atlantic Menhaden, Red Drum, Spanish Mackerel, Spot, Spotted Seatrout

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