



ASMFC

# Fisheries *focus*

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## ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

Commission Chair David Borden and Awards Committee Chair Jack Travelstead presented the first Annual Awards of Excellence to six deserving individuals at the Commission's Spring Meeting on May 18, 1999 in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. In an effort to recognize more than one person a year for their contributions to the success of the organization, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, at last year's Spring Meeting, established these awards, which will be given in the areas of Law Enforcement, Legislation, Management & Policy and Scientific, Technical & Advisory.

### Law Enforcement

The first recipient of the Annual Award of Excellence for Law Enforcement was Special Agent Scott Doyle of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Special Agent Doyle has been involved in marine law enforcement for 12 years in the New Jersey/New York area, one of the most difficult and complex law enforcement areas in the nation due to the wide variety of fisheries and the multitude of statutes and regulations requiring enforcement. He has been instrumental in enforcing striped bass regulations, and has been either the case agent or significantly involved in such criminal investigations as the interstate transport and sale of contaminated shellfish, Lacey Act violations involving illegal red snapper and spiny lobsters, as well the successful prosecution of fishermen trafficking in illegally harvested striped bass from restricted waters of the Hudson River.

### Legislation

Under the category of legislative contributions, two influential legislators -- Senator Ernest F. Hollings and Senator George Gunther -- received awards for significant contributions in marine fisheries conservation and management.

Throughout Senator Ernest F. Hollings' (South Carolina) 33 years in the U.S. Senate, he has contributed tremendously to the conservation of marine fisheries resources and the advancement of marine fisheries management throughout the southeast region and the nation. As a ranking member on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee's Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee, he has influenced the creation of landmark fisheries legislation, such as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which has benefited fisheries nationwide. He has consistently been a driving force to enhance budget of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, securing money not only for fisheries

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*Annual Awards of Excellence Recipients (from left to right) -- Wilson Laney, Michael Street, Paul Perra, and Scott Doyle.*

***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***

David V.D. Borden (RI), Chair  
Susan Shipman (GA), Vice-Chair  
John H. Dunnigan, Executive Director  
Dieter N. Busch, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program  
Dr. Lisa L. Kline, Director of Research & Statistics  
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance and Administration

Tina L. Berger, Editor  
tberger@asmfc.org

(202)289-6400 Phone • (202)289-6051 Fax  
www.asmfc.org

## Upcoming Meetings

### ***6/8 & 9:***

ASMFC Weakfish Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, DoubleTree Hotel Norfolk, 880 N. Military Highway, Norfolk, Virginia; (757)461-9192.

### ***6/8 - 10:***

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Norfolk Airport Hilton, Norfolk, Virginia.

### ***6/9 & 10:***

Joint ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board and the MAFMC, Norfolk Airport Hilton, 1500 North Military Highway, Norfolk, Virginia; (757)466-8000.

### ***6/14 & 15:***

Joint ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section/NEFMC Herring Committee, Holiday Inn, Route 1 North, Peabody, Massachusetts; (978)535-4600.

### ***6/14 - 16:***

ASMFC American Lobster Technical Committee, Urban Forestry Center, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

### ***6/14 - 18:***

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Pier House, Key West, Florida.

### ***6/21 - 25:***

Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee, National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Aquarium Conference Room, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

### ***6/24 & 25:***

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Operations Committee, Capital City Hotel, 1155 - 14th St., NW, Washington, DC.

### ***6/24 - 30:***

American Society of Ichthyologists & Herpetologists, Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania; (814)863-5100.

### ***6/28 & 29:***

ASMFC Uncertainty Modelling Workshop, Jekyll Island Club Hotel, 371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, Georgia; (912)645-2600.

### ***7/12 - 14:***

ASMFC External Stock Assessment Peer Review for American Lobster, location to be determined.

### ***7/27:***

Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Social/Economic Workgroup, Miami, Florida.

Summer is upon us. The 1999 Spring Meeting is over. But before we move on, lets take a final look at the Commission's five-year Strategic Plan.

The Commission's Strategic Plan focuses on providing service to its member states, with a mission of promoting and protecting the shared interest of the states in healthy and productive coastal fishery resources. Our vision is for these resources to be self-sustaining through careful, prudent and mutual efforts among all of the state partners. There are seven goals for the next five years, each involving a critical aspect of effective stewardship:

*FISHERY MANAGEMENT*

*RESEARCH*

*STATISTICS*

*HABITAT*

*LAW ENFORCEMENT*

*FISHERIES POLICY*

*ADMINISTRATION*

The important thing for the Commissioners and staff is that we do not allow this to find the fate of so many strategic planning efforts that we have all seen. That is, simply to become a pretty document that sits on a shelf; and a year or two down the road we all ask why we never seem to have any direction or purpose. Built into the Strategic Plan is an ongoing process for monitoring and evaluating our progress. Each year an Action Plan is prepared addressing the strategies that are designed to achieve the goals. For each strategy, a series of tasks for the year is laid out. Here, in the tasks, can be found the details of what we are going to do this year: all of the fishery management plan actions, the symposia and workshops, support for the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, habitat and law enforcement activities, and even down to the processing of travel vouchers! Each task is then incorporated into the individual work plans of the staff, with time frames and expected results. Moreover, this framework provides a model for reporting on progress to the Commissioners on a regular basis.

The Commissioners were presented with a draft of the 1999 Action Plan at the 1999 Spring Meeting, and it will become final shortly. Within a month, the first report on progress under the Action Plan will be presented. At the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the Commissioners will be presented with the Action Plan for the year 2000. My objective as Executive Director is to have a comprehensive, integrated system of planning that runs throughout the administration of the Commission's activities. We should always be able to answer the questions: What are we doing here? Why? And how does it all fit together?

This has been the result of a lot of long, hard work by the senior staff working with many Commissioners. But the results should be readily seen in terms of a more transparent and more easily accessible Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. We, the staff, have been reminded that we work for the states, and must always try to promote their common interest in their mutual efforts. Staff and Commissioners alike have been reminded that we all serve the interests of the people who own and use their shared fishery resources; and that by putting the resource first we can best promote and protect the common interest that the states share in those resources.

# ASMFC Supports Federal Shark Management Initiatives through Development of Complementary Regulations in State Waters

On May 26, 1999, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announced its intent to initiate a planning process for the development of a spiny dogfish and Atlantic coastal shark fishery management plan in order to complement federal actions for those species.

This action, taken by the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board on May 20, 1999, followed on the heels of the federal government's recent release of the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which includes over 30 Atlantic coastal shark species. The New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' FMP for Spiny Dogfish, now under Secretarial review through the Department of Commerce, is also due for release later this year.

This action was taken for several reasons. One prevailing reason for state involvement is the importance of inshore nursing and pupping areas to these species. Additionally, states are concerned about a possible shift in fishing effort toward state waters as a result of federal water closures for other species. This, combined with the belief that there may be significant landings of spiny dogfish and other Atlantic coastal shark species in state waters, necessitates the need for state management action. The availability of adequate data is also a major problem in the management of these species and the states can play an important role in helping to begin collecting this information.

The most pressing reason, however, is the desire of the states to fully support current federal initiatives regarding the conservation and management for Atlantic coastal shark species. We want to make sure that management of these valuable species occurs in a seamless fashion with adequate management throughout the full range of the species. The states can play a valuable role in helping to collect the necessary data to manage these species, as well as providing protection to areas that are critical to the nursing and pupping of these species," states David V.D. Borden, Commission Chair.

The Commission is currently forming a management board for spiny dogfish and Atlantic coastal sharks, which will meet for the first time in early August, during the Commission's meeting week (August 2 - 5) in Alexandria, Virginia. At that meeting, the Board will setup the planning structure for the species, which includes the establishment of a technical committee, plan development team and advisory panel. The Board will also begin to discuss strategies for the development of a combined plan or separate plans for spiny dogfish and Atlantic coastal sharks. For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 329.

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## ASMFC Advisory Committee Reviews AP Process

On May 19, 1999, during the Commission's Spring Meeting Week in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, the Advisory Committee, comprised of the various species advisory panel chairs, meet to review the Commission's advisory panel process. Over the last couple of years, members of both the Advisory Committee and the species management boards have become increasingly concerned about the adequacy of advisory panel input into the fisheries management planning process. Participation on most advisory panels have been decreasing and, for some panels, are at the lowest levels ever.

Possible reasons for the lack in participation range from poor planning and inadequate meeting notice to the perception that advisory input has little impact on management board decisions. In an effort to get at the heart of the matter, the Advisory Committee has drafted a questionnaire to be sent to all advisory

panel members to gauge their experience of the Commission's advisory panel process. The purpose of the questionnaire is to elucidate both the real and perceived problems with the advisory panel process and identify possible solutions to these problems.

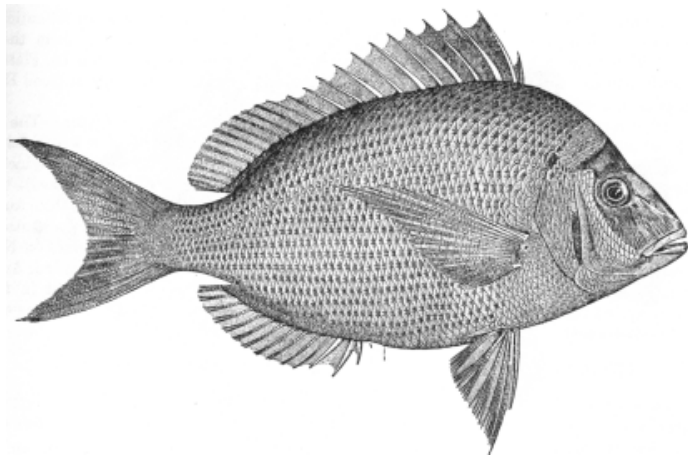
The questionnaire is under final review by the Advisory Committee and will be distributed to the Commission's some 240 advisors by the end of June/beginning of July. Answers will be tabulated and summarized for presentation to both the Advisory Committee and the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board in late October/early November, during the Commission's 58th Annual Meeting in Mystic, Connecticut.

For more information, please contact: Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at (202)289-6400.

# ASMFC Recommends Reestablishment of the Scup State-by-State Quota System for the 1999 Summer Period: *ASMFC Takes Emergency Action*

On May 20, 1999, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board recommended to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that it take steps to reestablish the state-by-state quota system for the 1999 summer period of the scup fishery. Further, state shares were to be adjusted consistent with updated landings data supplied to NMFS by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

For its part, the Commission revised the state-by-state shares accordingly for 1999 through emergency action. The emergency action, which became effective May 20, 1999 and extends for 180 days, alters the percent shares allocated to the states (Massachusetts through North Carolina) based on the additional data supplied by Massachusetts and accepted by NMFS. According to Massachusetts, the new landings data, covering scup landings from 1986 to 1996, more accurately reflects historic landings.



Scup is managed jointly by the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). The Commission manages scup through Addendum 1 to the Scup Fishery Management Plan (FMP), while the Council manages the species through a Regulatory Amendment to Amendment 8 of the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP.

Since June 1997, Massachusetts has been in litigation against the Secretary of Commerce, alleging that the state's scup quota for the summer period (May 1 through October 31) was calculated using incomplete historical data that resulted in quota discrimination against Massachusetts residents. The final ruling, which was made by the First Circuit Court of Appeals on February 24, 1999, found in favor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, citing that Massachusetts may have been dis-

criminated against. However, the Court stated that if state-by-state quota system is the only reasonable, effective way to make the overall summer quota enforceable, the Secretary maintains the authority to reinstitute the state-by-state quota system on an emergency basis.

Massachusetts submitted its additional historical data to NMFS for recalculation. On May 19 & 20, 1999, the Management Board reviewed the revised data and the resultant recalculation of state quota shares and agreed to uphold the new quota system for the 1999 summer period.

"It has taken a great deal of work by the Commission to reach state consensus on this issue. I think we have finally gotten to the point where the states are satisfied with the agreed upon outcome for the 1999 summer period. Now the challenge will be to develop a workable plan for the year 2000 and beyond," stated Dieter N. Busch, the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Director.

To that point, the Management Board resolved to meet jointly with the Council at the earliest possible date to determine how to amend the scup management program beginning in the year 2000. Some of the issues to be addressed in the new amendment include: reducing discards in small mesh fisheries; revising the stock rebuilding schedule; and developing a year 2000 fishing mortality target.

The Management Board also hoped to get a jump on the discards issue by forwarding a recommendation to NMFS that it prioritize its programs in order to afford greater sea sampling efforts towards the scup and summer flounder fisheries.

The Commission's procedures require that four public hearings must be held concerning the emergency action. The dates, times and locations for the hearings will be announced in the near future. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 318.

# ASMFC Adopts Habitat Strategic Plan

At the Spring Meeting, the Commission adopted a Strategic Plan to guide the Habitat Program for the next five to ten years. The plan outlines an ambitious program of habitat protection activities that will be pursued individually or integrated with other Commission programs. The plan incorporates and expands upon the habitat goals outlined in the recently adopted strategic plan for all Commission programs.

The Commission is uniquely suited to provide for coordinated marine fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. Its cooperative nature has provided for coastwide programs in support of fisheries management, including research, development of legislation, law enforcement, data collection, sportfish restoration, and habitat conservation. Commission member states have common concerns regarding habitat loss and destruction, and stand to benefit by working on these issues in a coordinated fashion. Habitat regulatory authority for most state agencies resides outside the realm of marine fisheries management, which creates additional challenges for both intra- and inter-state coordination. These challenges require a creative approach, building upon the basis of the Commission's strengths in problem-solving and interjurisdictional cooperation. These issues serve as the basis for the Commission's Habitat Program.

The Habitat Program was formally initiated in 1991, although a number of resolutions supporting habitat protection had been previously adopted by the Commission. The initial program focused on education of fishermen and fisheries managers about the link between healthy fisheries and healthy habitats. Education has remained a component of the Habitat Program; however, program activities have effectively extended into the areas of policy development, fisheries management planning, and coordination between fisheries and habitat management programs. These subject areas will continue to be primary areas of focus, as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Program activities for the next 5-10 years were identified for areas in which the Commission could have the greatest amount of impact, considering the nature of its objectives, members, and constituents. The Strategic Plan classifies these activities into four program areas, including: fisheries management planning; Commission policies and resolutions; state and federal policies; and outreach, technical information transfer, and education. Recent progress has focused on the development of effective habitat sections for fishery management plans, with the 1998 publication of guidance for habitat section development. Habitat sections are under development for new amendments for both the winter flounder and menhaden fishery management plans.

The Strategic Plan is meant to guide the direction and activities of the Habitat Program, without hindering program flexibility

and momentum. Program activities are not limited to the contents of the Plan; however, the Commission's Habitat Coordinator is directed to work closely with the Habitat Committee regarding any deviations. The Habitat Committee is empowered to revise or amend the plan at any time, and the plan will be reviewed at five year intervals. A final copy of the plan may be obtained from the Commission's Habitat Specialist, Robin Peuser, at (202)289-6400 or email [rpeuser@asmfc.org](mailto:rpeuser@asmfc.org). An electronic version of the plan will soon be available on the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org).

## Other Recent Commission Habitat Activities

The Commission's Habitat Committee met at the Spring meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina on May 19, 1999. The primary order of business was review and adoption of the Habitat Program Strategic Plan (see accompanying article). In addition, the Committee reviewed recent program activities, revised the Commission's position on federal wetland legislation, and provided comments on the draft "Fishable Waters Act" and recently adopted resolution on drilling revenues (see article and accompanying resolution on pages 11 and 13, respectively).

In action earlier this year, the Habitat Committee determined that habitat sections for fishery management plan (FMP) source documents would be developed and available in the same timeframe as the completed FMP. The mechanisms for development of this information included, in order of preference, (1) partnerships with agencies or other organizations and (2) contracting with academic institutions. The Committee will coordinate with the Policy Board to identify funding sources for this work. Sources for development of habitat information for two FMP amendments currently under development have already been identified. A partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been established to develop the habitat information for the Atlantic menhaden amendment, and information previously synthesized by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center of the National Marine Fisheries Service for designation of essential fish habitat (EFH) will serve as the basis for the habitat section of the winter flounder amendment.

Atlantic Herring Amendment 1 marked the first official designation of EFH adopted by the Commission. Last June, the ISFMP Policy Board determined that EFH designated by councils for species managed jointly with the Commission would also be adopted into the Commission's management program. This policy also applies to management of black sea bass, scup, summer flounder, and bluefish.

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## ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence (continued from page 1)

but also for habitat, law enforcement and essential fish habitat work.

Senator George Gunther of Connecticut has been an ASMFC Commissioner since 1973, and has been actively involved throughout the years. He has worked with the other Commissioners in his state to manage and conserve their state's fisheries resources, and has also worked with fellow legislators in advancing the mission of the Commission. There are probably very few people involved with the Commission who have not had some interaction with Senator Gunther!



*Commission Executive Director, John H. Dunnigan, Awards Committee Chair, Jack Travelstead (far left) and Commission Chair and Vice-Chair, David V.D. Borden and Susan Shipman (far right) flank awards recipients Wilson Laney, Michael Street, Paul Perra, and Scott Doyle (center, left to right).*

### Management & Policy

No stranger to anyone involved in the management of Atlantic coastal fisheries, Paul Perra of the National Marine Fisheries Service received the Management and Policy Award of Excellence. Mr. Perra single-handedly ran the Commission's interstate fisheries management program for ten years, laying the groundwork and leading the growth for the very successful program that all of the states participate in and benefit from today. Paul's dedication to the success of the interstate program was unwavering – it was never a 9-5 job for him; he believed in the program and did whatever it took to insure its success. Even though he has "gone to the other side" he continues to assist the states and the Commission with the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Conservation Management Act (ACFCMA).

### Scientific, Technical and Advisory

The recipient of the Scientific, Technical and Advisory Award of Excellence, Dr. Wilson Laney of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has often been referred to as the "Dr. Linda Mercer of the 1990s" because of his involvement in fishery management plan (FMP) preparation. He has been a major contributing author to a number of fishery management plan amendments completed since the passage of the ACFCMA, especially those dealing with anadromous species. He has worked tirelessly and selflessly in many capacities to insure wise and technically sound decisions by regional fishery managers. A recent check of the database shows Wilson as a member of 15 ASMFC commit-

tees! He is an active member of the Habitat Committee and developed the outline for the habitat sections of the FMPs.

### Special Award

The Awards Committee was given great latitude in selecting award recipients, and this year they presented a special award to Michael W. Street of North Carolina. Throughout the years, from the 1970s through today, Mike has made highly significant contributions to the management of Atlantic coastal fisheries in the scientific, technical and advisory as well as the management and policy areas. He has been dedicated to the goals of the Commission from the time he became a member of the Management & Science Committee's predecessor, the Advisory Committee. He has served in numerous leadership positions within the Commission, and has done yeoman's work on many committees and subcommittees. He was instrumental in the development of the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter, and has served on the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Committee and plan development team, the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program Committee, Metadata Subcommittee among many others.

For more information about the Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence, please contact: Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at (202)289-6400, ext. 306.

# ASMFC Takes Action on Several Atlantic Coastal Fisheries: *Approves Plan Amendments for Winter Flounder, Atlantic Menhaden & Summer Flounder*

During its Spring Meeting Week in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission took several significant actions in the management of a number of important Atlantic coastal species. Specifically, it approved plan amendments/addenda for winter flounder, Atlantic menhaden, summer flounder and tautog; and set stock assessment priorities for tautog and Atlantic croaker. Following are summaries of the actions taken with regard to these species.

## **Winter Flounder**

The Interstate Fisheries Program (ISFMP) Policy Board approved the development of Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder. Specifically, the amendment would address the reconciliation of overfishing definitions and rebuilding targets with the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) for both the Southern New England/Massachusetts and Gulf of Maine stock complexes. Both the Commission and the Council manage winter flounder but under different regulatory regimes and this has made joint management difficult. With this action, the Commission commits to working with the Council over the coming year to develop complementary regulations. For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 329.

## **Atlantic Menhaden**

The ISFMP Policy Board approved development of Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP in order to address several modifications to the management system. Such modifications include: changes in the management structure and process (i.e., Board/Committee structure and membership), an investigation into the role that menhaden play in the ecosystem as a filter feeder and in predator/prey interactions, and incorporation of an overfishing definition and rebuilding targets as needed. The amendment will also address recent changes in the stock assessment as recommended by the Atlantic menhaden stock assessment peer review, which was conducted by the Commission last November.

A Public Information Document (PID) is being completed and will be available by June 14. Hearings on the PID will be held throughout July and August. For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 329. Copies of the PID can be obtained by contacting the Commission or via the Commission's webpage at: <http://www.asmfc.org>.

## **Summer Flounder**

The ISFMP Policy Board approved the development of Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan to implement a three to five year constant harvest strategy that is

consistent with rebuilding the stock over a 10-year period. Under this management approach, commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits will remain unchanged for a period of three to five years. The actual level of the quota will depend on the results of the summer flounder assessment that will be completed in the middle of July. The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board will meet jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on June 9 and 10 to discuss the details and schedule of the amendment. For more information, please contact: Robert Beal, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 318.

## **Tautog**

On May 18, 1999, the Tautog Management Board directed staff to prepare Addendum III to the Tautog FMP in order to delay implementation of the final reduction in fishing mortality rates, as specified by the Plan, for two years. The delay is deemed necessary since the effects of the first tier of regulatory changes will not be reflected in the tautog stock assessment, which is currently being completed and scheduled for external peer review by the Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop in the fall. Unlike many other species, tautog are slow growers and do not become reproductively mature until ages 3 or four. As a result, the effects of any regulatory changes will take several to years to show up in the stock assessment. The first scheduled reduction in fishing mortality occurred in April 1998.

In addition to developing the addendum, the Board will also begin to examine alternative reference points and stock rebuilding schedules for future consideration and action. The Board and Advisory Panel are scheduled to meet in early August to review the draft addendum for public hearings. Final approval is slated for late October/early November during the Commission's Annual Meeting in Mystic Connecticut. For more information, please contact: Robert Beal, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 318.

## **Atlantic Croaker**

The ISFMP Policy Board reviewed the Commission's stock assessment priorities and elevated the Atlantic croaker stock assessment to the top of the list, calling for its preparation over the next year.

In a related issue, stock assessment peer reviews will be conducted for American lobster, a Commission external peer review is scheduled for July 12 to 14, and weakfish and scup, which are scheduled to be reviewed by the Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop in the fall. For more information, please contact: Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research & Statistics, at (202)289-6400, ext. 305 or [lkline@asmfc.org](mailto:lkline@asmfc.org).



## ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section to Discuss Control Date: *Meeting Set for June 14 & 15*

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will investigate the possibility of establishing a control date for limiting entry into the coastal Atlantic herring fisheries. The control date under consideration is August 1, 1999. It would put fishermen on notice that anyone entering the fishery after that date may not be guaranteed future access to the fishery.

The decision to discuss the need for a control date was made by the Commission's Atlantic Herring Section. The Section met during the Commission's 1999 Spring Meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina on May 17, 1999. The Section's next meeting where it will take up this issue will be on June 14, 1999, when it meets jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) in Peabody, Massachusetts.

This action was in response to a recent recommendation from the joint Commission/Council Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel, which met on May 13. The advisors recommended that the Commission's Atlantic Herring Section and Council Herring Committee begin developing a limited entry or controlled access system for the inshore Gulf of Maine herring fishery (Management Area 1A). Further, the advisors recommended that a control date of August 1, 1999 be established for the entire herring fishery. The advisors were divided in their

opinions and the recommendations were hardly unanimous, passing by a margin of one vote.

Concern over access to the resource and the status of the inshore herring stock component led to the advisors' actions. Scientists report that overall the herring resource is at record levels, but the Gulf of Maine stock component may be fully utilized. This is the component most readily available to fishermen, occurring in nearshore waters during the summer and fall. Fishermen looking to preserve their current participation in the fishery are concerned over displaced groundfish fishermen entering the herring fishery and an influx of vessels from the West Coast. One of the results of this would be harvesting the total allowable catch earlier in the year and a closure of the inshore fishery to all vessels.

The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section will meet jointly with the Council's Herring Committee on June 14 and 15, 1999. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on June 14 and will be held at the Holiday Inn, Route 1 North, Peabody, Massachusetts; (978)535-4600. Interested fishermen and the public are encouraged to attend the meeting and provide their input.

For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 329.

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## ASMFC Research & Statistics Program Update

On May 20, 1999, the Commission's Executive Committee approved the program design for a coordinated fisheries-independent data collection program for the Northeast Region (Maine through Cape Hatteras, North Carolina). This program, the Northeast Area Assessment and Monitoring Program (NEAMAP), is similar to the SEAMAP program in the South Atlantic region. NEAMAP will provide for coordination of existing fisheries-independent data collection programs and develop new programs to fill gaps in sampling. A NEAMAP Board will be appointed to provide policy oversight to the program.

The Executive Committee also approved a coordinated tagging program to provide guidance to both angler-based and scientific tagging programs. An Interstate Tagging Committee, composed of representatives of state and federal fisheries agencies, as well as members of long-standing angler organizations, will be appointed to provide oversight to this program.

The Commission's Management and Science Committee (MSC) developed general language concerning the requirements of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) to

be incorporated into all Commission fishery management plans (FMPs) and amendments. This language will insure that the fishery-dependent monitoring requirements in all Commission plans will be consistent with the reporting requirements of the ACCSP. The MSC is also developing a standard format for submission of all compliance reports required under Commission FMPs.

Other issues being addressed by the MSC include development of a workshop on alternative uses of regulatory discards and a workshop on multispecies issues that focuses on Atlantic menhaden and Atlantic sea herring as forage fish. The MSC is also developing a stock assessment user's manual to assist in the training of state biologists in stock assessment methods, a publication outlining sources of fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data as a source of information to Commission stock assessment and technical committees, and recommendations for the Commission on incorporating aquaculture into Commission programs.

For more information, please contact Dr. Lisa Kline at (202)289-6400 or lkline@asmfc.org.

## ACCSP Update

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's (ACCSP) Coordinating Council met on May 18, 1999, in conjunction with the Commission's Meeting Week in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. Connie Young-Dubovsky (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) was presented with a plaque for her work as the first ACCSP Program Manager. Joe Moran and Mike Cahall were introduced formally to the Council as the new Program Manager and Information Systems Program Manager, respectively.

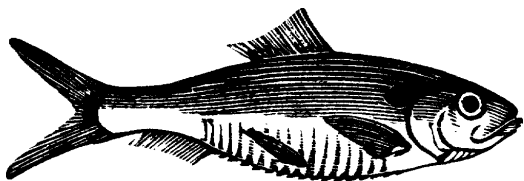
The business of the Coordinating Council included:

- approval of the ACCSP 2000 Operations Plan;
- approval of a four-year pilot study for the collection of social and economic data from commercial harvesters;
- approval of the ACCSP Funding Decision document, the guiding document for submission of proposals for ACCSP funding and the evaluation criteria for the review of proposals;
- approval of an addendum to the ACCSP MOU, which acknowledges the cessation of the South Atlantic states' active participation in the southeast fisheries information network (FIN) initiatives. FIN and ACCSP staffs will continue to closely coordinate the two programs.
- agreement to bolster the active membership in the ACCSP Outreach and Advisory Committees.

The ACCSP Program Design Document is complete. It is the compilation of the four technical source documents and including all standard codes, data elements, and guidance from the Coordinating Council for each of the modules designed to date. The document will be available shortly.

Partner Implementation meetings are underway. The first two were held in the States of Rhode Island and New Jersey in early May. Partner agencies that collect data within state boundaries come to the table and discuss what is done presently and where deficiencies exist. Additional meetings between the agencies will divide tasks to bring those jurisdictions up to ACCSP standards for all modules of the program. It is hoped to have all of the implementation meetings completed by the end of July.

For additional information, please contact: Joe Moran, ACCSP Program Manager, at (202)289-6400 or by email at [jmoran@asmfc.org](mailto:jmoran@asmfc.org).



## ASMFC Supports Congressional Efforts to Bolster Steady Source of Fisheries Funding

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has approved a resolution strongly supporting congressional proposals to invest offshore oil and gas lease agreement revenues into coastal and aquatic resources restoration programs. The resolution was adopted by the Commission at its Spring Meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina on May 20, 1999.

For decades, the federal government has been collecting revenues on leased aquatic bottom in the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic and on the Pacific coast including off Alaska. Though the federal government agreed to share these revenues with states impacted by the drilling, the funds have been reserved for reduction of the federal deficit since the early 1980s. With the balancing of the federal budget, the lease funds have become available in the Federal treasury.

"The Commission believes that this congressional initiative is long overdue. The time is ripe to now channel the revenues accrued from offshore oil and gas leases toward restoring and managing the fish and wildlife resources so impacted by offshore drilling activities. We see this as a win-win situation with the public benefiting from not only increased national gas reserves but also from an investment in healthy, renewable natural resources," stated John H. Dunnigan, the Commission's Executive Director.

Several legislative proposals have been introduced in Congress to redirect these lease revenues for environmental purposes. S. 25 introduced by Senators Landrieu of Louisiana and Murkowski of Alaska, and H.R. 701 introduced by Representatives Young of Alaska and Dingell of Michigan are similar in nature. These bills would dedicate over half of the collected oil and gas revenues (approximately \$2 billion) for improving coastal environments in all the coastal states, and providing assistance to each state to purchase public green areas and parkland and for fish and wildlife conservation.

S. 25 would dedicate 27 percent for coastal impact restoration and conservation, 16 percent for land acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and seven percent for fish and wildlife restoration in an extension of the Pittman/Robertson program. H.R. 701 would establish a similar mechanism with 27 percent dedicated for coastal impact restoration, 23 percent for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and 10 percent for the Pittman/Robertson program extension.

*continued on page 12*

# ASMFC Schedules Public Hearings on Draft American Eel FMP

In March the American Eel Management Board approved for public hearing the Draft American Eel Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The public comment period will extend through **July 23, 1999**. The Commission anticipates taking final action on the FMP by October 1999, during its 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Mystic, Connecticut.

At this time, public hearings have been scheduled for Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. **Additional hearings will be announced at a later date.** The dates, times and locations of the scheduled hearings are as follows:

## **June 9, 1999, 7:30 PM**

Delaware Department of Natural Resources  
and Environmental Control  
Richards and Robbins Building Auditorium  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover, Delaware  
Contact: Roy Miller, (302)739-3441

## **June 10, 1999, 7:00 PM**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Talbot County Public Library  
100 West Dover Street  
Easton, Maryland  
Contact: Howard King, (410)260-8264

## **June 16, 1999, 5:00 PM**

Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management  
Comfort Inn Airport  
1940 Post Road  
Warwick, Rhode Island  
Contact: Dick Sisson, (401)789-3094

## **June 17, 1999, 7:00 PM**

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Bureau of Marine Resources  
205 N. Belle Meade Road  
East Setauket, New York  
Contact: Victor Vecchio, (516)444-0476

## **June 21, 1999, 7:00 PM**

Maine Dept. Marine Resources  
Pennobscot VoTech Institute  
Bangor, Maine  
Contact: Gail Whipplehauser, (207)624-6349

## **June 22, 1999, 7:00 PM**

Maine Dept. Marine Resources  
Boothbay Harbor Laboratory  
West Boothbay Harbor, Maine  
Contact: Gail Whipplehauser, (207)624-6349

## **June 23, 1999, 7:00 PM**

Maine Dept. Marine Resources  
Sheraton South Portland  
363 Maine Mall Road  
South Portland, Maine  
Contact: Gail Whipplehauser (207)624-6349

## **June 24, 1999 (7:00 PM)**

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
21 South Putt Corners Road  
New Paltz, New York  
Contact: Victor Vecchio, (516)444-0476

## **June 29, 1999, 6:00 PM**

Potomac River Fisheries Commission  
222 Taylor Street  
Colonial Beach, Virginia  
Contact: Jewel Hudson, (804)224-7148

## **June 30, 1999, 6:00 PM**

New Jersey Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife  
A Wing Lecture Hall  
Stockton College  
Pomona, New Jersey  
Contact: Bruce Freeman, (609)292-2083

## **July 1, 1999, 7:00 PM**

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Marine Headquarters  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Contact: Eric Smith, (860)434-6043



*continued on page 12*

## ASMFC Supports Congressional Efforts (continued from page 10)

In its resolution, the Commission encourages Congress to add language to the Coastal Impacts sections of the bills to emphasize that Title I funds are authorized for marine fisheries management and fisheries independent research. The Commission supports language in H.R. 701, which would forward unspent money provided to political subdivisions to the state (i.e., town or county); and language in S. 25, which authorizes states to administer the programs of the bill without placing arbitrary limits on administrative funding available. Finally, the Commission strongly encourages sponsors to endorse fisheries uses as an eligible component for determining state apportionments for Title I.

Several other proposals exist concurrently with these bills. Two companion bills, H.R. 798 by Representative Miller and S. 446 by Senator Boxer, would provide resources for aquatic resource restoration, as well as funding for several other purposes including historic preservation, forest conservation and Native American lands recovery. Legislation by Senator Feinstein (S. 532) and Representative Campbell (H.R. 1118) would provide funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund only. Finally, the Administration's fiscal 2000 budget proposes providing funds to several federal agencies including the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for aquatic resources restoration and habitat preservation as part of the Lands Legacy Initiative.

A full resolution can be found on page 13. For more information, please contact: Lori Rosa, Special Assistant, at (202)289-6400, ext. 314.

## ASMFC Schedules Public Hearings on Draft American Eel FMP (continued from page 11)

The draft FMP was developed in response to concern over the perceived growing exploitation of American eel as expressed by state and federal fishery resource agencies, conservation organizations and fisheries interests. Domestic and overseas markets utilize nearly every life stage of eel, and demand for the species continues to be greater than the fishery can supply. The economic value of eel and the importance of the species in supporting the diversity of the waters that it inhabits are significant. Currently, the status of the American eel population along the Atlantic seaboard is poorly understood. Therefore, the Atlantic coastal states concluded that a coordinated, interstate plan could best address conservation and fishery needs for the American eel.

Fishermen and other interested parties can provide their input into the decision-making process by attending any of the scheduled public hearings, contacting their state agency, or by contacting the Commission. Copies of the Draft FMP can be obtained by either contacting Jeanette Braxton, Administrative Assistant, at (202)289-6400, ext. 333, or via the Commission's webpage at <http://www.asmf.org>.

Comments on the draft American Eel FMP should be forwarded to the Commission, c/o American Eel FMP Coordinator. For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 329.

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## ASMFC Comings & Goings

**Representative George Crady** -- On May 17, 1999, Representative George Crady ended his twelve year term as Florida's legislative representative to the Commission. Over his twelve-year term with the Commission, Representative Crady was appointed to several management boards and was a member of the Legislators and Governors' Appointees Committee. The Commission wishes Representative Crady good luck in his future endeavors.

## Mark Your Calendars!

The Commission's next meeting week is scheduled for August 2- 5, 1999 at the Ramada Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia.

AND

The Commission's 58th Annual Meeting will be held on October 31 - November 4, 1999 at the Mystic Hilton in Mystic, Connecticut.

## **Resolution of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in support of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 to Reinvest Proceeds of Offshore Oil and Gas Lease Agreements for the Conservation and Management of Aquatic Fisheries Resources of the Atlantic Seaboard**

WHEREAS, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed to promote the conservation and management of the marine fishery resources of the Atlantic seaboard; and

WHEREAS, the Commission strives to uphold its commitment to its mission through cooperative management of interjurisdictional marine fisheries and aquatic resources within the jurisdictions of the States along the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, the individual states of the Commission pursue independent strategies, research and regulatory, management and educational programs customized and appropriate for that state, coordinating these strategies and programs with the neighboring Atlantic coastal states through the umbrella of the activities of the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the 106th U.S. Congress is presently considering important conservation legislation that would benefit the member States of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act introduced in the House as H.R. 701 and in the Senate as S. 25 would dedicate 50% or more of the annual revenues from offshore oil and gas leases, into three separate funds, available to the States to mitigate coastal impacts due to offshore oil and gas drilling, to acquire public land for conservation, such as wetland refuges, and provide funds for conservation, restoration, and management of wildlife, including marine fisheries; and

WHEREAS, several Atlantic coastal states, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the National Governors Association are in support of Congressional proposals to provide the states offshore oil and gas lease proceeds to reinvest in renewable natural resources and recreation; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 701 and S. 25 if enacted would provide a total of over \$520 million in much needed resources to the Atlantic coastal states and the District of Columbia for the purposes of the act; and

WHEREAS, the language of H.R. 701 does not encourage future oil and gas drilling by excluding those future revenues from eligible revenues under the program; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 701 and S. 25 provide a creative solution to meet the need for ongoing support for conservation and management of aquatic fisheries resources as well as for other renewable resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission supports the enactment of legislation to dedicate a substantial portion of outer continental shelf revenues to reinvesting in the conservation of the renewable natural resources of the coastal states, particularly programs that enhance the ability of coastal fishery resources to contribute to healthy and sustainable fisheries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission endorses H.R. 701 and S. 25, and urges the passage of such legislation by the Congress, and its approval by the President, as swiftly as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that distribution of these funds to the coastal states should not constitute incentives for states to support increased OCS oil and gas development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission recommends to the Congress that the language in the bills concerning the use of these funds for coastal fishery research, assessment and management should be strengthened; that the formula for allocation among the states take into account the relative amount of use of resources within the states; and that particular attention should be given to the need for developing and implementing coastwide programs to adequately monitor and report the use of aquatic resources.

## Other Recent Commission Habitat Activities (continued from page 6)

A draft copy of a report on mitigation of fishing gear impacts to submerged aquatic vegetation is forthcoming. A workshop was held late in 1998 to review fishing gear impacts and mitigation strategies. This coming fall, the Management and Science Committee and Habitat Committee will meet jointly to review the pending report, and develop recommendations for mitigation strategies.

A database of habitat managers is nearing completion. The database is being developed for use in coordination with habitat managers, and distribution of habitat management information regarding Commission managed species. The database will be reviewed by state experts early this summer, and should be completed by the fall.

The next meeting of the Habitat Committee is scheduled for the Commission's Annual Meeting in Connecticut this November. For more information, please contact: [rpeuser@asmfc.org](mailto:rpeuser@asmfc.org) or [Dianne.Stephan@NOAA.gov](mailto:Dianne.Stephan@NOAA.gov).

## American Lobster Board & Advisory Panel Review Draft Addendum I

On June 2 & 3, 1999, the American Lobster Advisory Panel and Management Board met respectively to review the comments received during the 13 public hearings held in Maine through New Jersey and review the current draft of Addendum 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Board prepared final edits to the Addendum, which will be reviewed for final approval during the Commission's August Meeting Week (August 2-5) in Alexandria, Virginia.

For more information, please contact: Amy Schick, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 317.

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

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