



ASMFC

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# FISHERIES *focus*

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*

## **American Lobster Board Approves Addendum VIII Addendum Establishes New Biological Reference Points and Enhances Data Collection Requirements**

On May 8, 2006, the Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum VIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes new biological reference points to determine the stock status of the American lobster resource. It also expands the mandatory coastwide monitoring and reporting requirements of the plan to improve the ability of scientists and managers to assess and manage the lobster fishery. These actions are based on recommendations from the 2006 peer-reviewed stock assessment.

The new biological reference points replace the  $F_{10}$  egg production goals contained in Amendment 3 and include fishing mortality and abundance targets and thresholds for the three stock assessment areas – Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and

Southern New England (SNE). Unlike the  $F_{10}$  criteria, the new reference points will allow scientists to distinguish between a depleted and overfished stock. They also are designed to make the measures by which the lobster resource is being assessed and managed more transparent. The new biological reference points as well as current stock status (2001 - 2003) for each American lobster stock unit is provided in the adjacent table.

Variable	GOM	GBK	SNE
<b>Fishing Mortality (F)</b>			
Threshold	0.76	0.34	0.82
Target	0.67	0.31	0.74
Recent F (2001- 2003)	0.69	0.29	0.84
Recent F below threshold?	Yes	Yes	No
Recent F near or below target?	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Abundance (Millions of Lobster)</b>			
Threshold	65.58	7.95	22.31
Target	69.62	8.61	23.90
Recent Abundance (2001- 2003)	123.12	9.05	14.01
Recent abundance above threshold?	Yes	Yes	No
Recent abundance near or above target?	Yes	Yes	No

The new reporting and data collection requirements will mandate states to collect, at a minimum, catch and effort data summarized monthly by the National Marine Fisheries Service's statistical areas and the Lobster Conservation Management Areas in an annual recall log format from each permit holder. The states will be required to collect trip-level catch and effort reports either as a census or a sample (at least 10% of the fishery will be sampled). Dealers involved with primary purchases (first point of sale) will be required to report trip-level transaction data. The states will have until January 1, 2008 to implement these measures. These actions will advance the collection of accurate and comparable landings -- the principal data needed to assess the impact of fishing on lobster populations.

In response to poor stock conditions in SNE as indicated by the new reference points, the Board has initiated the development of Draft Addendum IX. Over the next couple of months, the American Lobster Plan Development Team, working with the Commission's American Lobster Advisory Panel and Lobster Conservation Management Teams for Areas 2 through 6, will be developing a suite of management options to rebuild the SNE stock. This document will be available for Board review and consideration in August; once approved, it will be made available for public review and comment.

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**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.

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## Upcoming Meetings

**6/12 - 16:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Grand Bay Hotel, 2669 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove Florida; 800/996-3426.

**6/13 - 15:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hyatt Regency, Newport, Rhode Island.

**6/19 - 23:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Hotel Providence, 311 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island (see page 11 for meeting schedule).

**6/20 - 22:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Select, Claymont, Delaware.

**6/26 (beginning 9:00 AM) - 30 (ending 5 PM):**

ASMFC Shad Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Road, Albany, New York.

**8/1 - 3:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Society Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**8/14 - 17:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia; 703/416-4100.

**8/28 - 9/1:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

**9/10 - 14:**

American Fisheries Society 135th Annual Meeting, Lake Placid, New York.

**9/18 - 22:**

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

**9/19 - 21:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Courtyard by Marriott, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**10/10 - 12:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Garden Inn, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

**10/22 - 26:**

ASMFC 65th Annual Meeting, Sheraton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

One of the great strengths of any organization is the care and attention it takes to recognize the contributions of individuals who support and promote its goals. The Commission does this each year through our Annual Awards of Excellence, when we highlight the special accomplishments of those who have put forth extraordinary efforts in support of managing and restoring Atlantic stocks. The contributions reflected by this year's recipients are truly impressive.

Susan Olsen was recognized in the area of management and policy for her effectiveness and efficiency in managing the various federal grants in support of fisheries management. As Grants Team Leader with NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region's State-Federal and Constituent Program Office, Susan serves as the primary contact in the administration of 10 grant programs, encompassing 250 active awards of more than \$15 million. For nearly twenty years, Susan has helped ensure delivery of critical federal funding to support the fisheries research and management activities of our member states.

Robert Glenn was recognized for his accomplishments in the area of scientific, technical, and advisory, through his work with American lobster. For the last ten years, as a scientist with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Bob Glenn has been dedicated to the study of the Commission's most economically valuable commercial species, American lobster. As Chair of the Lobster Technical Committee, Bob led a diverse group of scientists through the difficult process of producing an American lobster benchmark stock assessment that was rigorously reviewed and accepted by a peer review panel of internationally recognized scientists. His technical expertise and calm demeanor have enabled him to engage in a productive and respectful manner with the full range of participants in the lobster fishery, including managers, scientists, and fishermen.

Andrew Kahnle was recognized for his accomplishments in the scientific, technical, and advisory area for his work over the past 25 years while serving on the Striped Bass, American Shad, and Atlantic Sturgeon Technical Committees. A scientist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Andy is currently leading a complex effort to complete a benchmark stock assessment of American shad, a species that is present in the waters of each of our 15

member states. Prior to this effort, as long serving Chair of the American Sturgeon Technical Committee, he developed an aggressive agenda leading to a coastwide stock assessment. He demonstrated that, even when there are gaps and uncertainty in scientific data, there are creative and compelling analyses that scientists can provide managers to help them make decisions. As a result, the Commission is taking action to protect the few sturgeon that remain and, hopefully, help ensure the survival of an ancient fish that has been in existence for 70 million years.

Bryon Young was recognized for his contributions in the scientific, technical, and advisory area for his work over the past 30 years while a scientist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, particularly in the area of striped bass research and management. He initiated the Hudson River young-of-year index that continues today. In fact, all of New York's current striped bass monitoring projects, which are essential components of the Commission's science process, began under Bryon's supervision. In addition, he served as New York's first appointee to the Commission's Management and Science Committee, a group that subsequently developed the Commission's first fishery management plan in response to the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. Byron's many contributions to marine fisheries science have been far reaching, providing ongoing benefits to coastal resources and fishermen of both New York as well as those of our other coastal states.

We had the pleasure of hosting the Awards of Excellence winners at a special reception held in their honor during our Spring Meeting Week in Crystal City, Virginia (see page 12 for some pictures from the event). Collectively, this year's winners represent more than 85 years of public service dedicated to the better understanding, protection, and sustainable management of marine fisheries. Although they were recognized for their exceptional contributions, the award recipients are representative of the hundreds of dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to support our Commission process and assist in the sustainable management of the public marine fisheries resources under the Commission's stewardship. We should all be grateful for their dedication. Taking time out to say thanks to all those who work so hard is important and, hopefully, something all of us can agree to do.

## Species Profile: Bluefish

### Joint Plan Seeks to Restore Premier Fighting Fish

#### Introduction

Bluefish are one of the most sought after recreational species along the Atlantic coast. In the late 1970s, anglers petitioned the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to develop a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Bluefish to address concerns over the potential for harvest of bluefish by tuna purse seiners. Today, bluefish are jointly managed by the Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission). The Bluefish FMP, developed in the late 80s, is the first management plan developed jointly by an interstate commission and regional fishery management council. As a result of harvest restrictions imposed under Amendment 1 (1998), bluefish are rebuilding, with 2004 stock biomass estimated at 104 million pounds, above the current biomass threshold of 73.5 million pounds.

#### Life History

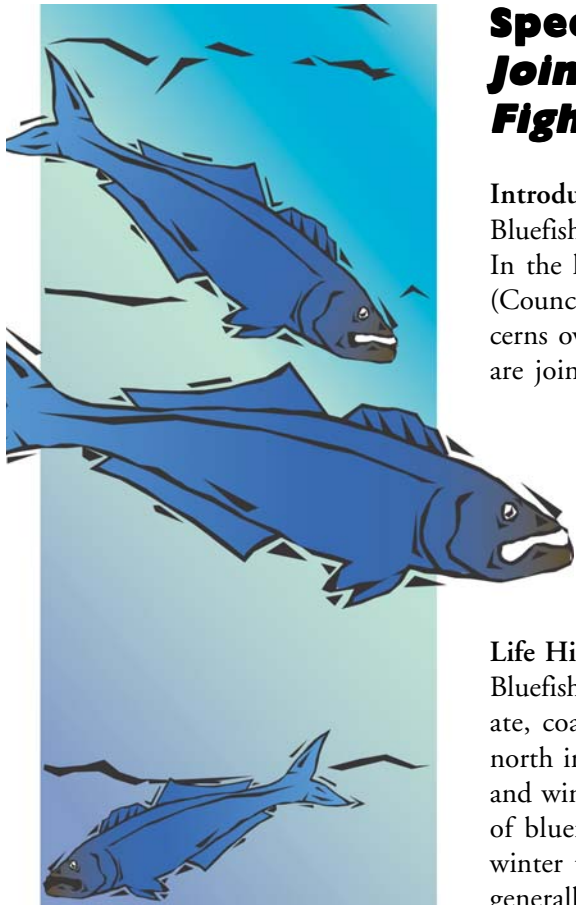
Bluefish are a migratory, pelagic species found throughout the world in most temperate, coastal regions, except the eastern Pacific. Bluefish migrate seasonally, moving north in spring and summer as water temperatures rise and moving south in autumn and winter to waters in the South Atlantic Bight. During the summer, concentrations of bluefish are found in waters from Maine to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. In winter they tend to be found offshore between Cape Hatteras and Florida. Bluefish generally school by size, with schools that can cover tens of square miles of ocean, equivalent to around 10,000 football fields.

Bluefish feed voraciously on their prey, eating almost anything they can catch and swallow. Over 70 species of fish have been found in their stomach contents, including butterfish, mackerel, and lobster. Razor sharp teeth and a shearing jaw movement allow bluefish to ingest large parts, which increases the maximum prey size bluefish catch. Bluefish live for up to 12 years and may exceed lengths of 39 inches and weights of 31 pounds.

Bluefish reach sexual maturity at age two and spawn offshore from Massachusetts through Florida. Discrete groups spawn at different times and are referred to by the season in which they spawn: the spring-spawned cohort and the summer-spawned cohort. Recent research has also identified a fall-spawned cohort, demonstrating an expansive and prolonged spawning season. The cohorts mix extensively on the fishing grounds and probably comprise a single genetic stock.

#### Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Bluefish are caught along the entire Atlantic coast. Recreational anglers from New England to the upper part of the South Atlantic pursue blues, no doubt due to their aggressive feeding habits and the spirited fight. According to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, recreational catch averaged 60 million pounds annually from 1981 to 1993. Catch declined from 93 million pounds



#### Bluefish *Pomatomus saltatrix*

**Common Names:**  
snapper, baby blue,  
choppers, elfs, tailors

**Interesting Fish Facts:**  
• Voracious foragers,  
traveling in large schools  
of similar size fish in  
pursuit of baitfish  
• Are known to be  
cannibalistic

**Largest Recorded:** 31  
pounds, 12 ounces

**Age at Maturity:** 2  
years (14.9 - 20.1")

**Age at Recruitment:** 1  
year (9.3 - 11.1")

**FMP Rebuilding Goals:**  
• Biomass threshold ( $\frac{1}{2}$   
 $B_{MSY}$ ) = 73.5 million lbs  
• Biomass target = 147  
million lbs

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



Photo courtesy of NC Division of  
Marine Fisheries

in 1986 to 11 million pounds in 2002. Since 2002, total catch has increased and reached 16 million pounds in 2005.

Commercially, bluefish are harvested using a variety of fishing gear including trawls, gillnets, haul seines, and pound nets. The commercial fishery landed 5.9 million pounds in 2005, down from eight million pounds in 2000, and the peak of 16.5 million pounds in 1981.

### Stock Status

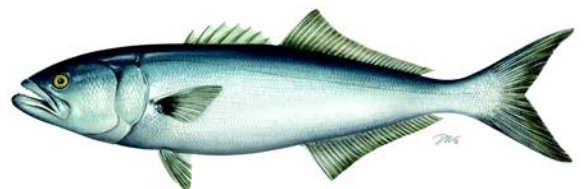
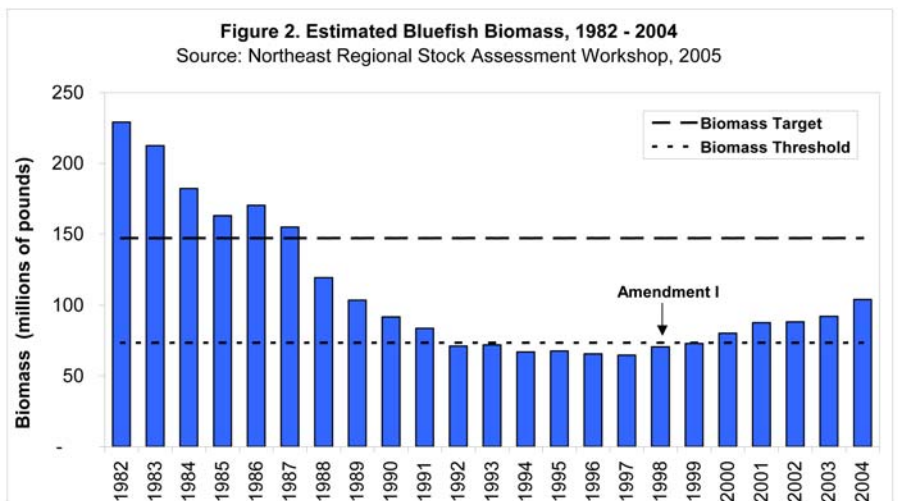
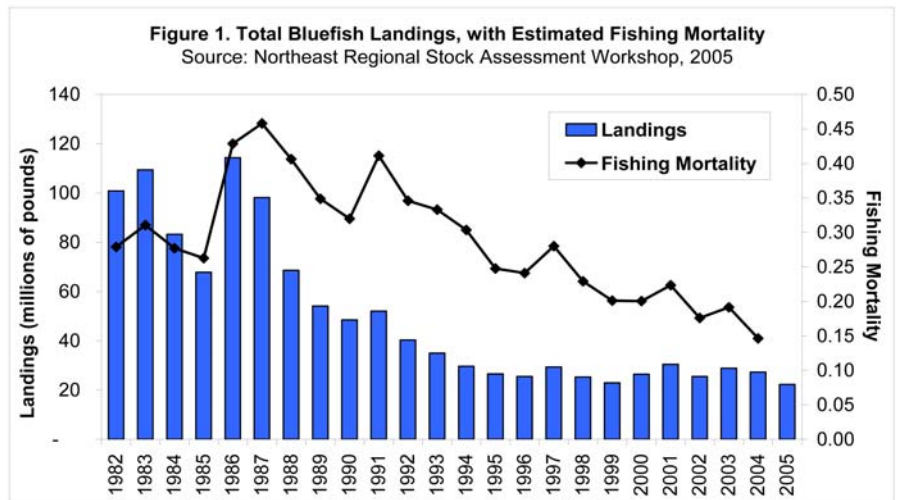
The most recent stock status information indicates that bluefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, based on the biological reference points developed in the 2005 stock assessment (see sidebar opposite page). Trends in state and Northeast Fisheries Science Center data show a decreasing trend in fishing mortality, an increasing trend in population biomass, and an increasing trend in population numbers. Population abundance estimates show a general increase in overall abundance since 1997. Abundance peaked in 1982 at 176 million fish, declined to 57 million fish in the mid-1990s and has since increased to 92 million fish.

While the 2005 stock assessment was approved for management purposes, a number of research needs were identified including increased collection of age data, improved estimates of discard mortality, and initiation of tagging studies to improve understanding of migration and distribution.

### Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

The Commission and Council approved Amendment 1 to the FMP in 1998. Amendment 1 allocates 83 percent of the resource to recreational fisheries and 17 percent to commercial fisheries. However, the commercial quota can be increased up to 10.5 million pounds if the recreational fishery is projected to not land its entire allocation for the upcoming year. The commercial fishery is controlled through state-by-state quotas based on historic landings from 1981-1989. The recreational fishery is managed using a 15 fish bag limit. The Commission and NOAA Fisheries approved a total allowable landings limit of 24.8 million pounds for 2006. Of that amount, the Commission allocated 9.5 million pounds to the commercial fishery. Based on updated landings projections that suggest that recreational harvest levels could be exceeded, NOAA Fisheries allocated 7.9 million pounds to the commercial fishery.

Amendment 1 established a rebuilding schedule that sets a target fishing mortality (F) value to achieve a biomass that will support the maximum sustainable yield by year 2008, while providing the Commission and Council with the flexibility to modify the management program based on changes in the fishery or the resource. For the first two years of the bluefish rebuilding schedule (1999-2000), F was set at 0.51, reduced to 0.41 in years 3-5 (2001-2003) and finally to 0.31 in years 6-9 (2004-2007). During the rebuilding period, the target F for the next fishing year will be set at the level specified in the schedule or the level estimated for the most recent year, whichever is lower. This strategy has allowed for rebuilding of the resource. For more information, please contact Julie Nygard, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at <jnygard@asmfc.org>.



# Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Additional Restrictions in Delaware Bay Region

In an effort to balance the needs of migratory shorebirds and commercial watermen, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board has approved the implementation of a partial moratorium for horseshoe crab fishing in the Delaware Bay Region. The action is designed to maximize egg availability to migratory shorebirds in the Delaware Bay by prohibiting harvest of horseshoe crab prior to and during the peak spawning season for the crabs as well as the peak feeding period for shorebirds.



Addendum IV allows a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware for two years. Specifically, it prohibits year round the harvest and landing of female horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay and restricts the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. This is a 33 percent reduction in available quota for each state.

The Addendum also establishes a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 for two years. The Addendum further prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from federal waters from January 1 through June 7 for two years. No more than forty percent of Virginia's quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1. As is the case with all ASMFC species management plans, the states have the option to impose more conservative regulations.

The Addendum intends to address the needs of the migratory shorebirds, particularly the red knot, while allowing a limited commercial bait fishery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Technical Committee has indicated that the red knot, one of many shorebird species that feed upon horseshoe crab eggs, is at low population levels. Red knots have shown no sign of recovery, despite a four-fold reduction in horseshoe crab landings since 1998. Population counts of red knots in its Tierra del Fuego wintering ground have dropped from 51,255 in 2000 to 17,653 in 2005. Further evidence of the red knot population decline are seen in the Delaware Bay counts that have decreased from 43,145 individuals in 2000 to 15,300 in 2005.

Affected states are required to implement the provisions of Addendum IV by October 1, 2006. Copies of the final Addendum will be available by mid-June via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [bspear@asmfc.org](mailto:bspear@asmfc.org).

## Important Facts

- Estimated horseshoe crab abundance in 2004 in the Delaware Bay is 13.3 million crabs.
- Horseshoe crab bait landings have been reduced by 76 percent since 1998, with a preliminary coastwide total of 730,890 crabs landed in 2005.
- Successful conch and eel trap fisheries depend on horseshoe crabs for bait.
- Horseshoe crab eggs provide a crucial food source for migratory shorebirds (including the red knot) in the Delaware Bay.
- Red knot population counts in the Delaware Bay are down to 15,300 in 2005 from 43,145 in 2000.
- The ASMFC's Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee indicated that both the partial and full moratorium on bait harvest in New Jersey and Delaware would provide a small increase in egg availability for shorebirds.
- The Addendum does not limit states from taking more restrictive management measures. For example, New Jersey has implemented a two-year moratorium on horseshoe crab landings and Delaware is considering similar action.
- Addendum IV reduces the available horseshoe crab bait harvest quota by 33% in Delaware Bay and eliminates all harvest of females.
- The Addendum provides additional protection to horseshoe crabs of Delaware-Bay origin through restrictions to harvest in Maryland and Virginia waters.

# **ASMFC Board Approves Addendum XVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan: Addendum Establishes Procedures to Address Delayed Implementation of Required Fisheries Management Measures**

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board has approved Addendum XVI to the Fishery Management Plan. The Addendum addresses issues of delayed implementation of required management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries. It provides a species-specific mechanism of ensuring that states meet their obligations under the plan in a way that minimizes the probability that a delay in complying does not adversely affect other states' fisheries or the conservation of the resource. The measures promote the long-term conservation of summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass.

The Addendum responds to an ISFMP Policy Board directive to its management boards to improve the states' implementation of all interstate fishery management plans (FMPs). Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass man-

agement programs have been given the highest priority since these species FMPs have repeatedly been affected by delays in implementation of required regulations. This has limited the effectiveness of the management program and adversely affected the timely conservation efforts of other states. The Addendum establishes a mechanism to ensure states meet their obligations under the management program and provides disincentives to minimize delayed implementation of required management measures.

The Addendum addresses delayed implementation of both commercial and recreational fishing measures. In the commercial fishery, season closures will be used to address delays in implementing size and trip limits, while quota adjustments will address harvest overages. For example, if a state does not implement appropriate minimum fish sizes for the first two weeks of the fishing sea-

son, in the following year the season would be closed for the first two weeks of the season. In the recreational fishery, season closures will be used to address delays in implementing size limits, possession limits, and seasons. For example, if a state does not implement appropriate possession limits for the first two weeks of the fishing season, in the following year the season would be closed for the first two weeks of the season. The addendum also deals with the timeliness of the notification period for management changes.

Copies of the Addendum will be available by June 1 via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).

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## **Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Public Meetings to Gather Input on Coastal Sharks PID**

Atlantic coastal states from Maine to Florida have scheduled their public meetings in order to gather public comment on the Public Information Document (PID) for the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The dates, times, and locations of those meetings follow:

### North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

*Thursday, June 1, 2006; 6:00 pm*

Crystal Coast Civic Center

3505 Arendell Street

Morehead City, North Carolina

Contact: Louis Daniel at (252) 726-7021

### Georgia Division of Coastal Resources

*Wednesday, June 7, 2006; 6:00 pm*

Holton's Restaurant

13711 E Oglethorpe Highway

Midway, Georgia

Contact: Spud Woodward at (912) 264-7218

### South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

*Monday, June 5, 2006; 7:00 pm*

Marine Resources Division Office

217 Fort Johnson Road

James Island/Charleston, South Carolina

Contact: Mel Bell at (843) 953-9007

### Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

*Thursday, June 8, 2006; 6:00 pm*

Public Water Works Reclaim Building

1600 Minuteman Causeway

Cocoa Beach, Florida

Contact: Michelle Mitchell at (727) 896-8626

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# Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Public Meetings to Gather Input on Coastal Sharks PID (continued from page 7)

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Tuesday, June 13, 2006; 6:00 pm  
 Ocean Pines Library  
 11107 Cathell Road  
 Berlin, Maryland  
 Contact: Mike Luisi at (410) 260-8341

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

June 15, 2006; 7:00 pm  
 Nacote Creek Enforcement Office  
 Route 9, 360 New York Road  
 Galloway, New Jersey  
 Contact: Paul Scarlett at (609) 748-2020

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Monday, June 19, 2006; 7:00 pm  
 205 North Belle Mead Road  
 East Setauket, New York  
 Contact: Gordon Colvin at (631) 444-0433

Maine Department of Marine Resources

June 19, 2006; 6:00 pm  
 194 McKown Point Road  
 West Boothbay Harbor, Maine  
 Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207) 624-6562

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Wednesday, June 21, 2006; 6:00 pm  
 Plymouth Radisson  
 180 Water Street  
 Plymouth, Massachusetts  
 Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617) 626-1528

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

Thursday, June 22, 2006; 6:00 pm  
 Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory  
 3 Fort Wetherill Road  
 Jamestown, Rhode Island  
 Contact: Chris Powell at (401) 423-1929

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Wednesday, June 28, 2006; 6:00 PM  
 2600 Washington Avenue  
 Fourth Floor Conference Room  
 Newport News, Virginia  
 Contact: Jack Travelstead (757) 247-2247

New Hampshire, Connecticut and Delaware have declined to hold public meetings.

As the first step in the development of an interstate FMP, the PID presents a broad overview of the issues facing Atlantic coastal sharks and the fishing industry. It provides the public with the opportunity to tell the Commission about changes observed in the fishery, things that should or should not be done in terms of management, regulation, enforcement, research, development, and enhancement, and any other concerns about the resource or the fishery as well as the reasons for those concerns.

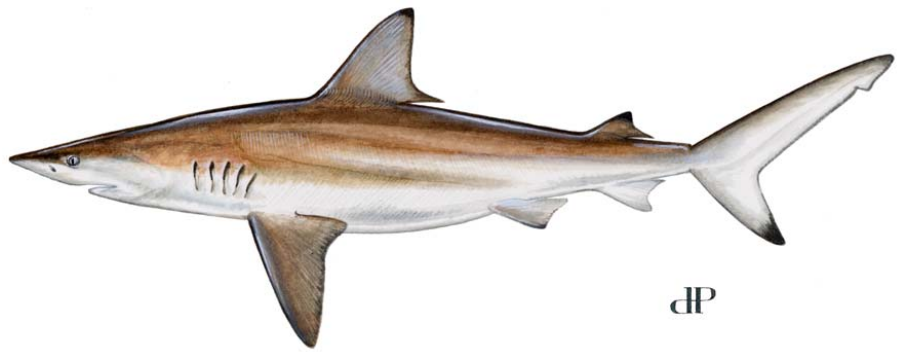
Please note that the PID focuses entirely on Atlantic coastal sharks (see table below). This species complex does NOT include spiny dogfish, as such, commenters are asked to direct their input on those species under consideration for inclusion in the PID.

Management Unit (36)	Shark Species Included
Large Coastal Sharks (11)	Sandbar, silky, tiger, blacktip, bull, spinner, lemon, nurse, smooth hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, and great hammerhead sharks
Small Coastal Sharks (4)	Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, finetooth, and bonnethead sharks
Pelagic Sharks (5)	Shortfin mako, thresher, oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, and blue sharks
Prohibited Species (16)	Whale, basking, sandtiger, bigeye sandtiger, white, dusky, night, bignose, narrowtooth, longfin mako, bigeye thresher, sevengill, sixgill, bigeye sixgill, smalltail, and Atlantic angel sharks.

The PID and subsequent FMP are being developed to help coordinate the conservation and management of coastal sharks among the Atlantic coastal states and between the states and the federal government. Currently, Atlantic coastal sharks are managed by individual states in inshore waters (0 – 3 miles from shore) and by the federal government through the 1999 Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish and Sharks in offshore waters (3 to 200 miles from shore). Cooperation between federal and state governments in developing coordinated conservation measures is important to successful domestic management of coastal shark species because range, migrations, mating and pupping areas overlap state and federal jurisdictions. Many coastal species utilize highly productive



bays and estuaries within state waters as nursery habitat. In addition, because the unique nature of shark biology (late maturity, low fecundity) makes shark species more susceptible to overfishing, traditional fisheries management methods become less effective.



Following the initial phase of information-gathering and public comment, the Commission will evaluate potential management alternatives and develop a draft FMP with preferred management measures identified for public review.

Following that review and public comment, the Commission will specify the management measures to be included in the new FMP. A tentative schedule for the completion of the FMP for Atlantic Coastal Sharks is included in PID.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID, either through attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on July 14, 2006** and should be forwarded to Ruth Christiansen, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; 202-289-6051 (FAX) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Coastal Sharks). For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen at 202-289-6400.

## Board Establishes Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board has approved the full slate of members to its newly established Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel. Created to provide guidance to the Board as it develops the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Sharks, the Panel includes representatives from the commercial, recreational and for-hire fishing sectors, as well as two individuals representing nontraditional stakeholders. The members are:

**Francis W. Blount Jr.**

Rhode Island Headboat Fleet  
Owner & Operator

**Stephen C. Segerson**

Rhode Island Recreational Angler

**Captain Steve Witthuhn**

New York Charterboat Captain

**Marty Buzas**

New Jersey Commercial Longline &  
Gillnet Fisherman

**James Donofrio**

New Jersey-based Recreational  
Fishing Alliance

**Daniel T. Dugan**

Delaware Recreational Angler

**Ernest L. Bowden Jr.**

Virginia Commercial Gillnetter

**Claude M Bain III**

Virginia Recreational Angler and  
Fishing Coordinator

**Dewey Hemilright**

North Carolina Commercial  
Longline & Gillnet Fisherman

**Captain Bill Parker**

South Carolina Charterboat Captain

**Frank Blum**

South Carolina Commercial  
Longliner

**Captain Greg Hildreth**

Georgia Charterboat Captain

**Russell Howard Hudson**

Florida Commercial Hook & Line  
Fisherman and For-hire Captain

**Stephen R. Haigis**

Florida Recreational Angler

**Tim Fitzgerald**

Nontraditional Stakeholder  
Environmental Defense

**Sonja Fordham**

Nontraditional Stakeholder  
The Ocean Conservancy

The first meeting of the Advisory Panel is tentatively scheduled for mid-to late July. Members will be provided with an overview of the latest stock assessment for coastal sharks as well as a summary of the public comment received on the Public Information Document. With this information, the Panel will be asked to develop recommendations for consideration by the Management Board on possible management options and issues to be included in the first Draft of the Interstate Plan.



## ACCSP in Review

### ***IT Priorities for the Remaining Year, Surplus Funds, & New Staff***

#### **IT Priorities**

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Information Systems staff have been busy this year, working on a number of projects. These include: transitioning the Data Warehouse from Business Objects to ORACLE Discoverer, development of the SAFIS eVTR module, deployment of the SAFIS eDR auditing module, and working with Northeast partners on the deployment a PC-based data collection system that feeds the SAFIS database.

The recent IS Committee meeting resulted in changes in priority. These priorities include an effort to get the SAFIS registration tracking module in place as soon as possible, populating the Data Warehouse with commercial catch and effort legacy data (data from 1981-2003), and continuing to update and upgrade the SAFIS data auditing process.

In addition, work for the remaining year includes continued migration of commercial and recreational queries to ORACLE Discoverer, completion of the eVTR module (specifically the fisherman allocation and dealer reporting portions of the system), continuing populating the InPort system with metadata, and creating the New Jersey striped bass trophy fish reporting application.

#### **Surplus Funds**

The negotiated contract with the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey for 2006-2008 was recently completed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and unexpectedly, prices went down in several areas. This has resulted in a surplus of approximately \$134,000 from two projects funded for FY06 through the Recreational Technical Committee. The ACCSP Director and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Operations Committee discussed options for the surplus and they recommend that the money fund the next two highest priority projects in line for funding. These projects are the consolidation of Maryland's biological sampling data for inclusion in the ACCSP biological module (data warehouse) and the socioeconomic analysis of commercial fisheries of the Core Sound area of North Carolina.

However, funding these two projects would still leave approximately \$24,000, which is not enough to fund any of the other remaining projects that were submitted for FY06. The recommendation was to add the remainder to the ACCSP Administrative Grant to pay for contract labor to assist with

some of ACCSP's many IT projects that are currently underway in order to speed up their completion. Those projects include (in no particular order) completing the deployment and testing of SAFIS electronic reporting for vessel trip reports (E-VTR) in New Hampshire and Connecticut and eventually to all interested partners, completing the transition from Business Objects to ORACLE Discoverer, starting the New Jersey striped bass trophy fish reporting application, deploying BioTarget, and building the next version of SAFIS electronic dealer reporting in ORACLE HTML-DB.

The recommended use of the \$134,000 surplus will benefit all of ACCSP's partners and provide a diverse use of funds over ACCSP modules.

#### **About the ACCSP**

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org) or call (202) 216-5690.

#### **New Staff**

In late April 2006, Benjamin Baron-Taltre joined the ACCSP as its new Program Coordinator. Mr. Baron-Taltre brings to the position many years of project management/coordination experience as well as experience working on marine fisheries issues. Mr. Baron-Taltre earned a Master's degree in Marine Policy from the University of Maine and a Bachelor's degree in Marine Biology & Limnology from San Francisco State University.

## Braddock Spear Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

For more than three and a half years Braddock Spear has played a vital part in the management of a number of Atlantic coast fisheries, significantly contributing to the Commission's vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." In recognition of his efforts, Brad was awarded Employee of the Quarter (April - June 2006). The award is intended to recognize special contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

Since coming to the Commission in October 2002, Brad has made substantial contributions to the management of northern shrimp, horseshoe crab, Atlantic sturgeon, and weakfish. He spearheaded the completion of Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp. The first plan revision in 20 years, the Amendment establishes biological reference points and provides new tools for management of the northern shrimp fishery. The benefits of these measures are already being realized through a recovering stock that allows for expanded fishing seasons in 2006 and 2007.

Brad has also contributed to the development of multiple addenda for Atlantic sturgeon, weakfish, and horseshoe crab. Most notable are his efforts working with the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's Shorebird Technical Committee to identify the ecological interactions of horseshoe crabs and migratory shorebirds in the Delaware Bay region. Guided by their collec-



tive input, the states have reduced coastwide landings by 76 percent since 1998, and have initiated further reductions in the Delaware Bay region for 2006 and 2007.

Brad has played an important role in gathering necessary data for the management of northern shrimp and horseshoe crab. For the last three years, he has participated in the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Summer Survey, which provides the foundation for this species' annual stock assessment. Every year he has also taken part in collaborative horseshoe crab tagging activities led by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Brad has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Maryland (College Park) and a Master of Arts in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island. As Employee of the Quarter, he received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for his personnel record. In addition, his name will be engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Brad!

### ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week

**June 19 - 23, 2006**

**Hotel Providence  
311 Westminister Street  
Providence, Rhode Island**

#### American Eel Stock Assessment Subcommittee

Monday, June 19	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Tuesday, June 20	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

#### Striped Bass Technical Committee

Wednesday, June 21	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
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#### Weakfish Technical Committee

Thursday, June 22	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Friday, June 23	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM



## **AAE Award Recipients Celebrate!**



The New York Contingent (from left): Gordon Colvin, Byron Young (Award Recipient), Pat Augustine, Andy Kahnle and Brian Culhane



The Massachusetts Contingent (from left): Mike Armstrong, Bob Glenn (Award Recipient), Paul Diodati and Dan McKiernan



Federal Partners from NMFS' Northeast Regional Office (from left): Pat Kurkul, Bob Ross, Susan Olsen (Award Recipient), and Harry Mears

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

*Return Service Requested*