



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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May/June 2005

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

Draft Addendum II to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP Approved for Public Comment States Schedule Public Meetings for June & July

At its meeting in May, the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved sending forward Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden for public comment and review. The states

of Maine through Georgia have scheduled the dates, times and locations of their public meetings. The specific details of those meetings follow.

Maine Department of Marine Resources

June 27, 2005; 6:00 PM
Boothbay Harbor Laboratory
194 McKown Point Road
West Boothbay Harbor, Maine
Contact: Lew Flagg at (207)624-6548

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

July 5, 2005; 7:00 PM
Plymouth Harbor Radisson
180 Water Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts
Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617)626-1943

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

July 6, 2005; 6:00 PM
URI Narragansett Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Jason McNamee at (401) 423-1943

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

July 7, 2005; 7:00 PM
Marine Headquarters Boating
Education Center
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: Dave Simpson at (860)434-6043

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

July 7, 2005; 7:00 PM
Bureau of Marine Resources Headquarters
205 North Belle Meade Road
East Setauket, New York
Contact: Byron Young at (631)444-0436

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

June 28, 2005; 6:30 PM
Nacote Creek Research Station
360 New York Road, Route 9
Port Republic, New Jersey
Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609)633-2408

Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

June 27, 2005; 7:00 PM
Division of Fish & Wildlife Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware
Contact: Roy Miller at (302)739-9914

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

June 29, 2005; 7:00 PM
Annapolis Radisson
210 Holiday Court
Annapolis, Maryland
Contact: Howard King, III at (410)260-8281

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

July 13, 2005; 6:30 PM
John T. Parran Hearing Room
222 Taylor Street
Colonial Beach, Virginia
Contact: AC Carpenter at (804)224-7148

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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Preston P. Pate, Jr. (NC), Chair
George D. Lapointe (ME), Vice-Chair

John V. O'Shea, Executive Director
Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries
Management Program
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration

Tina L. Berger, Editor
tberger@asmfc.org

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Upcoming Meetings

6/13 - 15:

ASMFC Multispecies Assessment Subcommittee, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, 777 Waterside, Norfolk, Virginia.

6/14 - 16:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Wilmington Hotel, 700 King Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

6/15 & 16:

ASMFC Spatial Model Development Review Meeting, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, 777 Waterside, Norfolk, Virginia.

6/20 (9:30 AM):

Joint ASMFC Herring Section/NEFMC Herring Committee, Eastland Park Hotel, 157 High Street, Portland, Maine; (207) 775-5411.

6/21:

ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee, Holiday Inn Brownstone, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

6/21 - 23:

New England Fishery Management Council, Radisson Eastland Hotel, Portland, Maine.

6/27 - 30:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Ramada Manchester, 21 Front Street, Manchester, New Hampshire; 603/669-2660 (see page 7 for more information).

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

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

8/8-10:

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

8/15 - 18:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, Alexandria, Virginia.

9/13 - 15:

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

9/19 - 23:

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

The Commission's most valuable resource is the great number of individuals who selflessly provide their talent, time, and effort each year. Our Annual Awards of Excellence is one of the ways we recognize individuals whose outstanding contributions have improved the way we manage and conserve fisheries. We took time during our Spring Meeting to acknowledge their special efforts. This year's list of award recipients is impressive.

Willard "Bill" Cole of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Lewis Flagg, Deputy Commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources received awards in the area of management and policy. With a career that has spanned nearly 40 years, Bill has been a strong supporter of the Commission process and a tireless advocate for improvement of coastwide data collection. Bill helped develop the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise for Striped Bass off North Carolina and Virginia, recognized as the longest running scientific staging survey of striped bass in existence. For many years, Bill served as a senior scientist on the cruise, supervising the tagging of more than 30,000 striped bass and, more importantly, training an enthusiastic new generation of research assistants, including ASMFC staff.

Lewis Flagg has distinguished himself over a 40-year career with a reputation for enthusiasm, professionalism, and fairness. He has worked tirelessly to promote Maine's policy of restoring anadromous fish throughout their historic range, establishing various restoration activities. He has constructively served on many of the Commission's management boards and science committees in a variety of capacities, demonstrating a true spirit of cooperation.

David Whaley, Senior Staff for Fisheries Policy for the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, received this year's legislative award for his fisheries work and strong support for the Commission. During his distinguished 22-year career on the Hill, he has worked on the development of the Striped Bass Conservation Act and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. These key pieces of legislation have strengthened the Commission's process and enabled our interjurisdictional fisheries management programs to succeed. In addition, he has been the primary staffer in developing House versions of re-authorizations of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Throughout all of these activities, he has consistently taken into account

the states' perspectives, and has earned a reputation for being knowledgeable and respectful of all views.

Doug Grout of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and Gary Shepard of the National Marine Fisheries Service received scientific, technical and advisory awards. Doug has been active in marine fisheries research, science, policy, and management at the state and regional level for more than 20 years. He has willingly served on and led Commission subcommittees and work groups, always highly respected for adding value to the effort at hand. As Chair of our Management and Science Committee, he led the group to develop a standardized stock assessment and peer review process to ensure that the best available science supports the decision-making processes of our fisheries management boards. In addition, his peers and colleagues hold him in high regard for his fair, professional, and deliberative approach to problem-solving.

Gary Shepard has been providing stock assessment expertise to technical committees and sound scientific advice to management boards for over 20 years. He has served on numerous scientific, technical, and assessment committees. He developed the first age-based analytical assessment of the mixed stock complex of Atlantic striped bass and subsequent refinement of the virtual population analysis (VPA) model used to estimate striped bass populations. He is recognized for his consistent willingness and ability to put complex concepts into understandable terms. Perhaps most significantly, he has earned a well-deserved reputation among his peers, ASMFC staff, and Commissioners for his professionalism, scientific integrity, strong analytical skills, and unwavering dedication to hard work.

This year's recipients represent more than 140 years of dedicated service to fisheries management and science. Their contributions are reflective of their exceptional talents, profound dedication to public service, and commitment to sustainable fisheries. I am particularly proud of the fact that they represent a cross section of our key partners in the Commission process, namely the states, the Congress, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They are also representative of many of their colleagues whose tireless efforts contribute to our ability to solve problems in fisheries management and conservation.

Next time you see them, take a moment to say thanks. Hopefully, that is something we could all agree to do.



Spot
Leiostomus xanthurus

Common Names:
Norfolk spot

Family: Sciaenidae

Interesting Fact: Only member of the drum family, which includes weakfish, red and black drum, and croaker, with a forked tail.

Largest Recorded: 16 inches, 1 1/2 pounds

Oldest Recorded: 5 years

Age/Length at Maturity:
Age 2 (7.3 inches) and 3 (8.4 inches)

Stock Status:
Unknown

Species Profile: Spot

Popular South Atlantic Stock Benefits from Bycatch Reduction Efforts

Introduction

Spot directly support recreational and commercial fisheries in the South Atlantic and function as an important forage species in the region. The range of this short-lived species includes brackish and saltwater habitats predominately between the Chesapeake Bay and South Carolina. Annual variation in landings, typically composed of fish belonging to a single year class, is due in part to the prevailing environmental conditions at spawning and nursery sites. To date, a formal coastwide stock assessment of spot has not been conducted. The 1987 Management Plan identified data requirements to conduct a stock assessment to manage the resource more effectively. Small-sized spot remain a major component of the bycatch associated with seine, trawl, and pound net fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay and North Carolina, as well as that of the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. However, substantial reductions in the magnitude of bycatch have occurred in the latter fishery. Upon the future completion of an assessment, additional management measures may be designed to protect the stock if necessary.

Life History

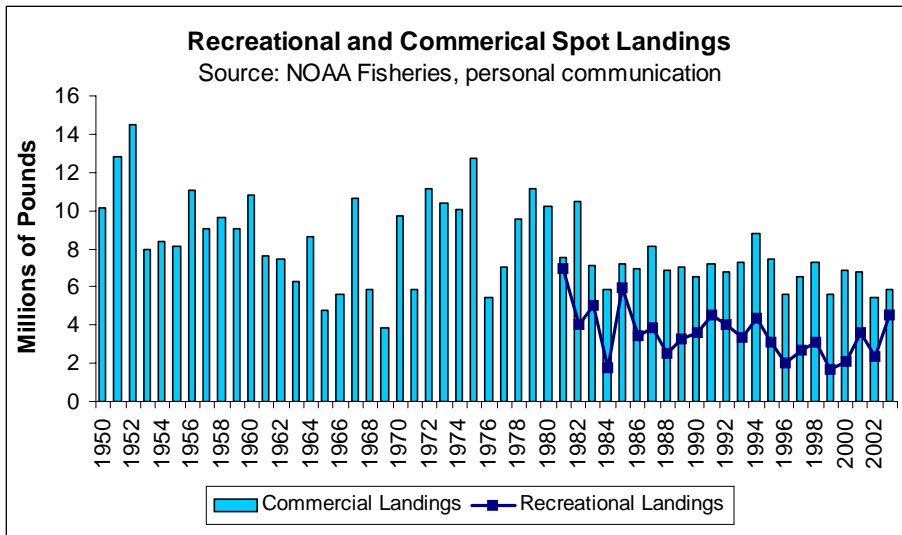
Spot occur along the U.S. Atlantic coast in estuarine and coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to Florida, although they are most abundant from Chesapeake Bay south to South Carolina. Spot migrate seasonally, entering bays and estuaries in the spring, where they remain until late summer or fall when they move offshore to spawn. Spot mature between the ages of two and three, at lengths of up to seven or eight inches. Their maximum life span is about five years, although fish older than three years are uncommon. Spawning takes place in the ocean from fall to early spring, and the post-larvae move into estuaries, utilizing low salinity tidal creeks where they develop into juveniles. As they grow, they move toward higher salinity areas during the summer and early fall and offshore in the fall as water temperatures decrease. Those that summered in the northern portion of their range also move south in the autumn. Spot are opportunistic bottom feeders, eating mainly worms, small crustaceans and mollusks, as well as organic material. The post-larvae prey on plankton, but become bottom feeders as juveniles or adults. Such predators as striped bass, weakfish, summer flounder, bluefish, and sharks eat them in turn.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Spot support commercial fisheries along the Atlantic coast, particularly from the Chesapeake southward. They are harvested by a variety of commercial gear including haul seines, pound nets, gillnets, and trawls. Commercial catches have fluctuated widely since 1930 with no apparent long-term trends. Landings peaked in 1952 at 14.5 million pounds, and have since ranged between 3.9 and 12.7 million pounds. Since 1983, commercial landings on the Atlantic coast have remained steady, ranging from 5.6 to 8.8 million pounds. Commercial landings were 5.86 million pounds in 2003.

Spot is a popular recreational species that is sought by anglers from Delaware Bay to northern Florida. Most of the Atlantic recreational harvest is taken within three miles of the coast, from shore or by private or rental boats rather than by party or charter boats. The recreational catch of spot has fluctuated from a high of 6.9 million pounds in 1981 to a low of 1.6 million pounds in 1999. In 2003, 4.5 million pounds were landed, the highest number in almost a decade.

Spot are short-lived and year-to-year fluctuations in landings can be expected since the catch in most years consists of a single year class. Moreover, year class abundance is thought



to be determined by environmental conditions that prevail on the spawning and nursery areas in any particular year. Changes in fishing effort, habitat degradation, and economic conditions may also affect the quantities of fish caught in any year.

Stock Status

Except for Virginia, there is no specific spot stock status survey, but the species is a major component of samples in generalized trawl and seine surveys in several states. An analysis of spot catches in Maryland's juvenile seine survey showed a trend of increasing abundance from 1957 to 1976, and then a protracted decline, punctuated by occasional high years, to very low levels in 2003. Spot young-of-the-year abundance, as determined by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science via the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Trawl Survey, was relatively high from 1981 through 1990. Since 1992, spot young-of-the-year abundance has remained low except for a fair to moderate-sized 1997 year class. The abundance of juvenile spot in the North Carolina Pamlico Sound Survey has fluctuated without trend since 1979.

Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

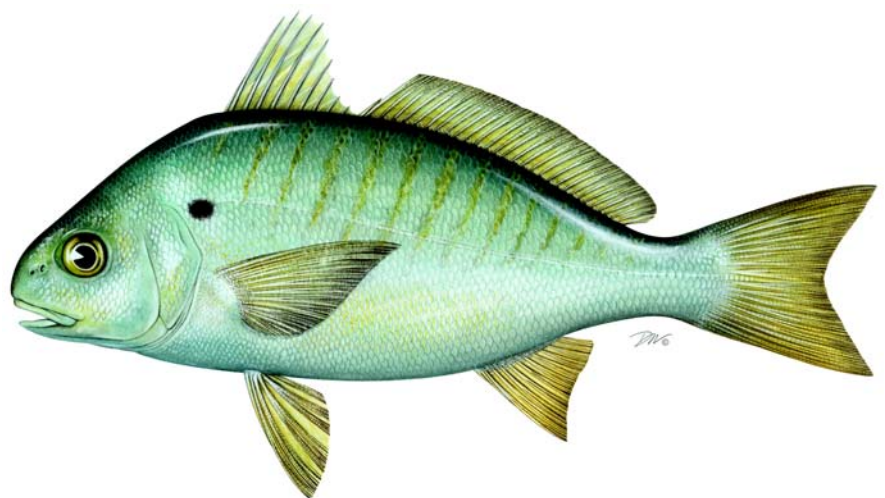
The Commission adopted the Spot Fishery Management Plan (Plan) in 1987. Management is overseen by the South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board (South Atlantic Board), which includes participating states from Delaware through Florida, as well representation from the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and South Atlantic Council. The major problem addressed in the Plan is the lack of stock assessment data for effective management of the resource. Basic data requirements include information on recruitment, age, size, and sex composition, and variations in these characteristics over time and space. In addition, ac-

curate catch and effort statistics are needed from the recreational and commercial fisheries to assess the impact of fishing activities on the population. Another problem addressed by the Plan is the bycatch (i.e., the inadvertent catch of undersized or unwanted fish) of spot in the southern shrimp trawl, pound net, long haul seine and trawl fisheries. The magnitude of the problem was underestimated at the time of Plan development, although it was cited as having potentially significant impacts on spot stocks.

Since plan adoption in 1987, significant progress has been made in the development of bycatch reduction devices to reduce the

magnitude of bycatch of fish such as spot by shrimp trawlers. These devices are designed to retain shrimp while shunting bycatch out of escape openings. In some tests, bycatch has been reduced by 50 to 75 percent. Although commercial fishermen did not readily accept use of these devices initially because of their expense and handling problems, the devices are now used by shrimpers throughout the South Atlantic states.

Unlike the majority of the Commission's fishery management plans, the Spot Plan does not contain mandatory management measures, but rather provides recommendations for states to follow in reaching the Plan's goals. Each year, the South Atlantic Board is provided with a review of the Spot Plan, the current year's landings, and data from fishery independent surveys to determine whether revised management action is required. For more information, please contact Nancy Wallace, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or nwallace@asmfc.org.



States Schedule Public Meetings to Gather Comment on Draft Addendum XVII to the Summer Flounder FMP

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Draft Addendum XVII to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum proposes a program that allows the Board to subdivide the recreational coastwide allocation into regions as an option under conservation equivalency. It also initiates a public dialog to discuss the ability to average multiple years of data as well as multiple years of landings to establish recreational management programs.

Atlantic coastal states from Massachusetts through North Carolina have scheduled the dates and times of their public meetings to gather comment. The specific details of those meetings follow:

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

July 5, 2005; 7:00 PM

Plymouth Harbor Radisson
180 Water Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617)626-1528

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

June 28, 2005; 6:00 PM

URI Narragansett Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Brian Murphy at (401)423-1941

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

July 7, 2005; 7:00 PM

Marine Headquarters Office Education Center
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: Dave Simpson at (860)434-6043

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

July 12, 2005; 7:00 PM

205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1

East Setauket, New York

Contact: Gordon Colvin at (631)444-0430

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

June 29, 2005; 6:30 PM

Atlantic County Library Galloway Township

306 East Jimmie Leeds Road

Absecon, New Jersey

Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609)292-2083

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

July 13, 2005; 7:30 PM

Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control
Richardson and Robbins Building
Auditorium

89 Kings Highway

Dover, Delaware

Contact: Rick Cole at (302)739-4782

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

July 7, 2005; 6:30 PM

Ocean Pines Library
Worcester County Library
11107 Cathell Road
Ocean Pines, Maryland

Contact: Howard J. King, III at (410)260-8281

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

July 13, 2005; 6:00 PM

2600 Washington Avenue
Fourth Floor Conference Room
Newport News, Virginia

Contact: Jack Travelstead at (757)247-2247

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

July 14, 2005; 7:00 PM

Classroom 1
Crystal Coast Civic Center
3505 Arendell Street
Morehead City, North Carolina

Contact: Preston P. Pate, Jr. at (252)726-7021

The management options within Addendum XVII respond to concerns ex-

pressed by fishermen and managers regarding the potential variability of data from the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) when used on a state-by-state basis. By adopting regional or coastwide management approaches, MRFSS coverage area increases while data variability decreases, thereby enhancing the credibility of both the data and the management program. The Addendum also initiates a public dialog to discuss the ability to average multiple years of data and multiple years of landings to establish recreational management programs.

When state-specific conservation equivalent measures are adopted, water bodies used by fishermen from several states (such as the Long Island Sound) may have multiple or conflicting regulations. These differing regulations create confusion for fishermen fishing in that area. Regional approaches to summer flounder recreational management could potentially minimize differences in adjacent states fishing on the same water body.

The Board will meet in August to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under "Breaking News" or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on July 20, 2005** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or tkerns@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

Weakfish Board Initiates Development of Addendum to Address Stock Declines

The Commission's Weakfish Management Board authorized development of an addendum to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Weakfish to address stock declines. The action is taken in response to the latest stock assessment, which indicates that total mortality has risen substantially since 1995, and biomass has sharply declined from 2000 to 2003. Weakfish biomass has fallen below Amendment 4's biological reference points, triggering the requirement of state action to rebuild biomass to 30 percent of an unfished stock in six years or less.

"Amendment 4 requires the states to reduce weakfish mortality once the biological reference points are triggered. In initiating development of an addendum, the Board has taken an important first step in responding to decreased landings and biomass of weakfish," stated Board Chair Dr. Louis Daniel of North Carolina.

The Board has tasked the Technical Committee with developing a range of management options to reduce fishing mortality, including the anticipated rebuilding effects of those options. The draft addendum will also propose revisions to Amendment 4's biological sampling requirements in order to meet the data needs of the annual stock assessment. These data include information on age, length, and weight of weakfish landed commercially and recreationally. The Board will be reviewing the draft addendum in August.

For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <bspear@asmfc.org>.



ASMFC Board Approves Addendum II to the Atlantic Sturgeon FMP

The Commission's Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon. The Addendum provides exemptions to Amendment 1 to allow a commercial aquaculture operation in North Carolina. The exemptions will permit importation of Atlantic sturgeon from a Canadian source and allow possession, production, and sale of cultured fish by a private company in North Carolina. It is anticipated that sale of cultured sturgeon caviar and meat would not occur for at least three years.

Amendment 1 establishes a moratorium on harvest and possession of Atlantic sturgeon to allow for recovery of spawning stocks to population levels that will provide for sustainable fisheries and viable spawning populations. The target of the Amendment is to have at least 20 protected age classes of females in each spawning stock, which may take 20 to 40 years from initiation of the moratorium in 1998.

Historically, the United States supported a large market for Atlantic sturgeon products. Addendum II seeks to reestablish part of that market by providing a domestic product through an environmentally and socially sound aquaculture operation. To ensure protection of wild stocks, the Addendum requires that the prior to the sale of caviar or meat from cultured sturgeon, the commercial aquaculture operation must prove to the Commission's satisfaction that the caviar and meat were produced from cultured fish and not wild stocks. Additionally, the Addendum prohibits aquarium or pet trades to prevent the accidental or planned release of cultured sturgeon into the wild.

Copies the Addendum II are available via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

June Technical Committee Meeting Week

June 27 - 30, 2005

Ramada Manchester Hotel
21 Front Street
Manchester, New Hampshire

Weakfish Technical Committee

June 27 (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

June 28 (8:30 AM – 5:00 PM)

June 29 (8:30 AM – 12:00 PM)

Tautog Technical Committee

June 27 (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

June 28 (8:30 AM – 4:00 PM)

Striped Bass Tagging Subcommittee

June 29 (1:00 PM – 5:00 PM)

June 30 (8:30 AM – 3:00 PM)

House Members Urge Support for ASMFC in NOAA Budget

Earlier this spring, 18 members of the House of Representatives signed a letter to Chairman Frank R. Wolf and Ranking Member Alan B. Mollohan of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies, urging support for federal funding for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and its 15 member states. The requested funding would support the following programs in the NOAA 2006 Budget:

- Atlantic Cooperative Management Act (\$9.25 million) to provide funding for states to implement the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act.
- Fish Statistics – Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (\$2 million) to support the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program and its state and federal program partners to improve data collection and use.
- Interjurisdictional Fisheries Grants (\$2.59 million) to provide re-

sources to state marine fisheries agencies to conduct activities such as fisheries surveys.

- Conservation and Recovery with States (\$1 million) to support state cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement the Endangered Species Act.
- Interstate Fish Commissions – Three Commissions (\$750,000) to provide core funding for the administration of the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions.

The majority of the requested funds would be passed through the Commission to the member states. The funds would support ongoing fishery management activities along the Atlantic coast, as well as help address emerging issues related to American lobster, Atlantic menhaden, red drum, nearshore trawl sampling, and diadromous fish (eels, sturgeon, shad and river herring).

The letter of support was a bipartisan effort led by Congressmen Tom Allen (D-ME), Jim Saxton (R-NJ), and Jeb Bradley (R-NH), and supported by the following Members of Congress: Rob Simmons (R-CT), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Michael N. Castle (R-DE), Michael H. Michaud (D-ME), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Barney Frank (D-MA), John F. Tierney (D-MA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA), William Delahunt (D-MA), Charles F. Bass (R-NH), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Steve Israel (D-NY).

The Commission is grateful for the support from these members and the work done by their staffs to circulate the letter. On the Senate side, the Commission continues to work with Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), who has been one of our most consistent and strongest supporters. The Commission is committed to maintaining Congress' trust and confidence by continuing to work effectively towards restoring Atlantic stocks.

ASMFC Issues NEAMAP RFP for Mid-Atlantic Nearshore Trawl Survey Pilot Study

The Commission has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development and implementation of a pilot study to assist in the design and execution of the Mid-Atlantic Nearshore Trawl Survey, in support of the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP).

The goal of the Mid-Atlantic Nearshore Trawl Survey is to establish a coordinated long-term, nearshore, fisheries-independent database of trawl-caught living marine resources, for the purpose of resource and habitat assessment and management. The collected data will complement ongoing state and federal surveys and will fill an existing gap in survey coverage along the eastern seaboard. Ide-

ally, the survey will avoid or minimize seasonal disassociation or redundancy of concurrent projects.

The pilot study will serve to test and modify survey procedures as necessary, satisfying the following objectives:

- collect data on species composition, biomass, relative abundance, distribution, and seasonality of living marine resources;
- record biological information to include size, age, sex, and reproductive condition for target species;
- identify and monitor essential fish habitat;

- collect environmental data coincident with living marine resource monitoring activities;
- provide biological specimens to cooperating agencies and other investigators upon request, subject to time and space limitations; and
- manage and disseminate data collected by the survey.

Funding in the amount of \$250,000 has been designated for the pilot survey. The deadline for proposal submission is **5:00 PM on June 23, 2005**. For more information on the RFP requirements visit the ASMFC website at <http://www.asmfc.org/breakingNews.htm>.

ASMFC Winter Flounder Board Approves State Implementation Plans: Plans Pave Way for Rebuilding of SNE/MA Stock

The Commission's Winter Flounder Board approved state proposals (ME through DE) for the implementation of Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder. The approved winter flounder proposals were determined to meet the stock-wide conservation standards established in Amendment 1. These measures, in combination with those of Amendment 13 to Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish, are intended to initiate stock rebuilding for the Southern New

England/Mid-Atlantic stock, which is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Amendment 1 also seeks to maintain a healthy and sustainable Gulf of Maine stock.

Amendment 1 stock-wide conservation standards are provided in the table below. States have the option of imposing more conservative regulations. For example, both Rhode Island and Massachusetts (SNE/MA stock) have implemented a four fish bag limit; size limit and season closure regulations remain

consistent with the standard. Although the Board deferred action on New Jersey's recreational fishery, it approved New Jersey's proposed commercial management measures.

State plans must be implemented by July 31, 2005. Annual compliance reports will be due on November 1 of each year, beginning in 2006. For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen, FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or rchristiansen@asmfc.org.

	Commercial	Recreational
Gulf of Maine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12" minimum size limit - 6.5" minimum square or diamond mesh size in codend (consistent with EEZ regulations) - Maintenance of existing seasonal closures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12" minimum size limit - 8 fish/day bag limit - No required closed seasons
Southern New England Mid-Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12" minimum size limit - 6.5" minimum square or diamond mesh in codend (including 100 lb. Trip limit if smaller mesh is used) - Maintenance of existing seasonal closures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12" minimum size limit - 10 fish/day bag limit - 60 day open season split into no more than 2 blocks (20 days must be closed during March and April)

Draft Addendum II to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP Approved for Public Comment (continued from page 1)

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

July 12, 2005; 6:00 PM

Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Waterman's Hall
Route 1208 Grete Road
Gloucester Point, Virginia
Contact: Jack Travelstead at (757)247-2247

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

July 11, 2005; 6:00 PM

Classroom 2, Crystal Coast Civic Center
3505 Arendell Street
Morehead City, North Carolina
Contact: Trish Murphy at (252) 726-7021

Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

July 18, 2005; 6:00 PM

Mighty 8th Air Force Museum
175 Bourne Avenue
Pooler, Georgia
Contact: Spud Woodward at (912) 264-7218

The Draft Addendum was developed in response to concern regarding the possibility of localized depletion of menhaden stocks in the Chesapeake Bay. It presents a suite of management options to limit the catch of menhaden in both the Chesapeake Bay and coastwide, including various harvest caps, timeframes, and gears.

The Draft Addendum also proposes initiating a research program immediately to determine the status of menhaden populations in the Chesapeake Bay and assess whether localized depletion is occurring. It identifies the following research priorities: (1) determine menhaden abundance in the Chesapeake Bay; (2) determine estimates of menhaden removal by predators; (3) evaluate the rate of exchange of menhaden between the Bay and coastal systems; and (4) conduct larval studies to determine recruitment to the Bay.

The Board will meet in August to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under "Breaking News" or by contacting the Commission at (202)289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on August 1, 2005** and should be forwarded to Nancy Wallace, Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Menhaden). For more information, please contact Nancy Wallace at nwallace@asmfc.org.

ACCSP Plans Peer Review for Spring 2006 Review to Guide the Next ACCSP Strategic Plan



The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) will be peer reviewed in the spring of 2006 in preparation for the Program's next five-year strategic plan.

The peer review comes as the ACCSP approaches its tenth anniversary. The 23 state and federal partners signed the Memorandum of Understanding that initiated the program in 1995.

Periodic peer reviews were established as a program standard in the ACCSP Program Design, "The ACCSP will conduct internal reviews annually and external peer reviews at least every five years to evaluate its success in meeting the needs of fisheries managers, scientists, and fishermen."

The ACCSP Coordinating Council, which is the program's governing body overseeing program design and implementation, approved a plan at its May 11, 2005 meeting to begin the peer review process. The Council will hold a facilitated session during the Commission's August meeting week to revisit the vision, goals, and objectives outlined in the ACCSP Strategic Plan 2002-2006 and to develop a specific list of issues and challenges to guide discussions in the external peer review.

The facilitated session should last about six hours and cover:

- The ACCSP's funding
- The Coordinating Council's view of the ACCSP's success to-date
- The ACCSP's relationship to the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- The current structure of the ACCSP, including design, processes, and the administrative home, and staffing

The Council's discussions will focus on new and ongoing issues and challenges the ACCSP faces and will be guided by a report to be prepared by volunteers from the Operations Committee. The report will include a brief history of the ACCSP, including its purpose, scope, status, milestones, governance structure, and future needs.

Following the Council's facilitated session, the Operations Committee will submit a proposal for 2006 funding to complete the review. Participants in the peer review should represent the full range of geographic and fishery management perspectives, including stock assessment science, commercial and recreational fishing industries, conservation groups, legislators, and regulatory bodies.

When the peer review is complete, work on the ACCSP's next five-year strategic plan can begin. The current plan is effective through 2006.

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 more information please visit www.accsp.org or call Abbey Compton, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202) 216-5690.

2006 Request For Proposals is Open

The ACCSP's annual Request For Proposals was issued to the ACCSP's 23 partners in May.

Proposals for fiscal year 2006 are due by **July 8, 2005**. Proposal submission details and funding criteria are available at <http://www.accsp.org/FY06rfp.htm>.

Correction to the April Issue of *Fisheries Focus*

The article "The ACCSP Announces 2005 Funding" (*Fisheries Focus* April 2005) omitted a project funded at \$582,895 for additional sampling of for-hire fisheries. NOAA Fisheries Service Headquarters will administer the project. In addition, the Commission was allocated \$1.4M to pay for ACCSP activities and expenses, including salaries, travel, office space, meeting expenses, and operation of the ACCSP data warehouse and SAFIS, under the terms of the administrative support agreement between ACCSP and the Commission.

Congratulations to Shannon Bettridge, Ph.D.

Shannon Bettridge, ACCSP Program Coordinator, earned her doctorate in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island in May.

Her dissertation focused on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan and its effects on fishing activity. Dr. Bettridge has been on staff with the ACCSP since August 2003.

Cecilia Butler Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

In her three years at the Commission, Cecilia Butler has become an invaluable asset to the Commission staff, significantly contributing to the Commission's efforts of achieving "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." In recognition of her efforts, Cecilia was awarded Employee of the Quarter (April - June 2005). The award is intended to recognize special contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

In her position as Administrative Assistant, Cecilia provides primary staff support to nearly the entire staff, including Finance & Administration, ISFMP, and the Science Department. She has a keen ability to handle multiple projects while consistently performing at a very high level. She is recognized for her attention to detail, commitment to completing work, often ahead of schedule, and doing it all with a positive attitude. She willingly takes on added responsibilities when her plate is full, and often anticipates and addresses staff's needs. The Commission's meeting materials and work products clearly reflect Cecilia's commitment to a job well done.

When not working, Cecilia likes to stay busy, either assisting with the care of her mom, spending time with her husband, David, or keeping active walking, swimming or jogging. As Employee of the Quarter, Cecilia received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for her personnel record. In addition, her name will be engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby (and seen in the above picture). Congratulations, Cecilia!



ASMFC Comings & Goings

Staff:

Jonna Ellis -- After three years as ASMFC Human Resources Administrator, Jonna Ellis has left to provide administrative support to the Acquisition Support Division for the Directorate for Analysis for the Defense Intelligence Agency. The move will not only provide her career growth potential within the federal government but will also enable her to work closer to home, allowing her to spend more time with her children. While at the Commission, Jonna expanded and improved personnel benefits provided to all employees, made positive improvements to the Commission's hiring process, and oversaw the development of Standard Operating Practices and



Procedures for many of the Commission's operations and activities. We wish Jonna the very best.

Joseph D. Grist -- This May, Joe Grist joined the Commission staff as a Stock

Assessment Specialist. In this capacity, Joe will provide much needed support to the Commission's stock assessment processes. His first task will be to work with the Weakfish Technical Committee to refine the biological sampling program contained in Amendment 4. Previously, Joe worked for the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, where he oversaw the Division's stock assessments for striped bass, southern flounder, river herring, king mackerel and snapper-groupers. Joe has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Christopher Newport University and a Master of Science in Fisheries Science from Virginia Tech. Joe is a great asset to the Commission and its member states. Welcome aboard, Joe!

Kara Laws -- This May, Kara Laws joined the Commission staff as its new Human Resources Administrator. Kara's prior employment includes work-



2005 AAE Recipients Celebrate!



From left to right: David Whaley, Senior Staff for Fisheries Policy for the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, Gary Shepard, NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center, ASMFC Chair Preston P. Pate, Jr., ASMFC Executive Director John V. O'Shea, Bill Cole, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lewis Flagg, Maine Department of Marine Resources, and Douglas Grout, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 11)

ing for a large (500 employees) patent and trademark intellectual property law firm in the Human Resources Department. Before that she was responsible for starting up the employee benefits and payroll for the new Hilton Alexandria in Old Town, Virginia. Kara has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park. Kara brings valuable professional experience to the Commission. Welcome aboard, Kara!

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
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