



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

ASMFC Presents Patten White Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award



Hart Award Recipient, Patten White (center) with George Lapointe (left) and ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea

expects the same in return. He has conducted himself as a true gentleman and in doing so, has elevated the role of fishermen in the fisheries management process.”

A lifelong commercial lobsterman, Mr. White has been passionately committed to the success of marine fisheries management at the state, regional, and national levels for over 20 years. He believes that the only way for fisheries management to succeed, for both the resource and the fishermen, is for fishermen to be knowledgeable and personally involved in the management process. This belief is clearly evident in all his efforts related to fisheries conservation and management. It was under his leadership that the Maine Lobsterman's Association became actively involved in the New England Fishery Management Council's lobster management process and was a key proponent of including industry participation in the process through the establishment of lobster management teams.

With the passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act and the transfer of lobster management authority from the New England Fishery Management Council to the Commission, Mr. White and other lobstermen shifted their focus to the Commission. In 1995, he was appointed Governor's Appointee for the State of Maine to ensure that the state's fishermen had a strong voice in the Commission's fisheries management process. As an ASMFC Commissioner, Mr. White has been firmly committed to

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Patten White, Maine lobsterman and long-time ASMFC Commissioner, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission's 70th Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

“Pat truly exemplifies the spirit of Captain Dave, bringing together a rich fishing history, a commitment to sustainable fisheries management, a dedication to the Commission and its Mission, and an unquenchable enthusiasm and optimism for doing the right thing in an easygoing and friendly way,” stated Jack Travelstead, Chair of ASMFC's Award Committee. “He treats members of the public, fishermen, fellow Commissioners, and congressional representatives with the utmost respect, and

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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 diadromous 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

Paul J. Diodati (MA), Chair
Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III (NC), Vice-Chair

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Upcoming Meetings

12/14 (8 AM - 6:30 PM):

Joint MAFMC/ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board, Kingsmill, 1010 Kingsmill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia.

12/21 (5:30 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VII, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Fisheries Service, Ocean Pines Library, 11107 Cathell Road Ocean Pines, Maryland.

1/5 (7 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VII, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Atlantic County Library, Galloway Township, 306 East Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway, New Jersey.

1/6 (7 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VII, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), DNREC Auditorium, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware.

1/10 (6 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VII, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Avenue, Fourth Floor, Newport News, Virginia.

1/17 (begins at Noon) - 19 (ends at Noon):

ASMFC Shad & River Herring Technical Committee, The Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

1/19 (1 - 6 PM) - 20 (8 AM - Noon):

ASMFC American Eel Technical Committee, The Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

1/31 - 2/2:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harbor-side, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

2/7 - 9:

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; 703.683.6000.

2/14 - 16:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, 3001 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, Virginia.

3/5 - 9:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Savannah Hilton DeSoto, 15 East Liberty Street, Savannah, Georgia.

Honoring Those Who Have Served

One of the great strengths of our Commission is the strong commitment and long-term experience of many of the people who lead, participate, and support our process. At our Annual Meeting in Boston this November we paused to recognize some of those who have worked so hard to advance and promote our Vision of restored stocks.

The Commission presented its highest recognition, the Captain David H. Hart Award, to Maine lobsterman and long-serving Governor-appointed Commissioner, Pat White, for his untiring work in supporting the Commission and advancing sustainable fisheries management. A lifelong commercial fisherman, Pat has distinguished himself through his enthusiasm and commitment to doing the right thing. The courteous and respectful way he has treated others has elevated the role of fishermen in the fisheries management process.

Over the years, Pat has earned national recognition as an industry leader for his efforts to strengthen and direct the Maine Lobsterman's Association (MLA). American lobster is the single most valuable commercial fishery managed through the Commission and the highest value fishery for the State of Maine. For these reasons, Pat has worked hard to promote and facilitate the MLA's full participation in the Commission's process. At the same time, he has recruited a strong cadre of forward thinking younger fishermen, encouraging them to participate in the management process.

Pat also served as a Pew Ocean Commissioner, one of two commercial fishermen to do so. For more than a year, he traveled the country learning about regional fishery and ocean issues. He subsequently worked with his fellow Commissioners to develop a comprehensive report detailing specific actions and changes needed in national policy to address identified problems. His work continues to live on through those recommendations as well as the hundreds of contacts he has made and maintained throughout the country.

The Commission presented Robert H. Boyles, Jr., South Carolina Director of Marine Fisheries, its Chairman's plaque in recognition and thanks for his five years of service as Commission Chair and Vice Chair. Under his leadership, protection and management measures for a number of species were strengthened. At the broader policy level, Robert worked closely with Commissioners to increase the Commission's focus on and accountability to address depleted and overfished stocks, as well as end overfishing on Commission managed species.

Robert also helped his fellow Commissioners focus on the importance of producing meaningful management results as a strategy to protect and maintain the regulatory flexibility provided by the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. He worked closely with Commissioners and staff in coordinating the relocation of the Commission office, ensuring a smooth and cost-effective transition. Recognizing the fiscal challenges facing the states and federal governments, Robert encouraged the development of non-traditional sources to fund important surveys of nearshore fish species and horseshoe crabs.

The Commission elected its new Chair, Paul J. Diodati, Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. Paul brings to the position nearly 30 years of experience in natural resource management, including a long history of service to our Commission, beginning with his membership on various technical committees, most notably, Atlantic striped bass. He has served as the Massachusetts Administrative Commissioner since 2000 and as Commission Vice Chair for the past two years. In praising the accomplishments of his predecessor, Paul expressed his intention to build on the Commission's recent successes to restore stocks, noting that healthy fisheries create both jobs and vibrant coastal communities. The Commission also elected Dr. Louis B. Daniel, North Carolina Director of Marine Fisheries, as Vice Chair.

Finally, during our week in Boston, we received the sad news that former New Hampshire Commissioner and long time Commission friend, Herb Drake, had died. Herb served as both a Legislative and Governor-appointed Commissioner. A life-long commercial and recreational fisherman, and a strong supporter of Commission programs, Herb dedicated his life to promoting fisheries management and conservation. Although a high-liner gillnetter since the early 1970s, in his later years, Herb was an active member of the Coastal Conservation Association.

He represented New Hampshire coastal communities as a state legislator and served three full terms on the New England Fishery Management Council. For the past ten years, he worked with the Commission providing strategic advice and helping secure additional funding from Congress to support our states. Herb was known and respected by thousands throughout New Hampshire, D.C., and the country. He was one of a kind. He will be missed.

From the Executive Director's Desk



Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass *Stock Assessment Indicates Healthy Stock Although Management Concern Remains*

It may still be winter but in just a few short months adult striped bass will be returning to their natal streams, marking the beginning of the annual spring spawning season.

With the striped bass also come other anadromous fish, such as river herring, shad, and sturgeon. While in some jurisdictions the striped bass commercial fishery is open nearly year-round, it is the recreational anglers that race to catch (and potentially release) their first striped bass of the spring season.

Although there has been some recent concern about the status of the striped bass population, the 2011 stock assessment update concluded that striped bass are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Abundance has increased from less than ten million fish in 1982 to nearly 42 million fish in 2010, although it was estimated to have peaked in 2004 at 67 million fish. The Commission is focused on addressing existing and emerging challenges such as illegal harvest, disease, species interactions, and the possible contraction in the species' northern range. Additionally, a new benchmark stock assessment will be completed in 2013, offering new information to manage this valuable resource.

Life History

On the Atlantic coast, striped bass range from the St. Lawrence River in Canada to the St. John's River in Florida. Migratory populations under Commission management range from Maine through North Carolina. Striped bass can live up to 30 years. The majority of their adult life occurs in estuaries or the ocean, where striped bass tend to school with other similar sized striped bass. Mature males and females ascend freshwater rivers to spawn in the spring months, releasing millions of eggs into the ecosystem. The fertilized eggs drift downstream while developing and eventually hatch into larvae, which begin feeding on microscopic animals. The larvae mature into juveniles and remain in coastal sounds and estuaries for two to four years before joining the coastal migratory population in the Atlantic Ocean. In the ocean, fish tend to move north during the summer and south during the winter, but these migrations can be influenced by their age, sex, degree of maturity, and the river in which they were born. Important wintering grounds for the mixed stocks are located from offshore from New Jersey to North Carolina. In general, Chesapeake Bay spawning areas produce the majority of coastal migratory striped bass.



Striped bass collected during a Cooperative Federal/State/ Industry Bycatch Survey on the James River, VA.

Atlantic Striped Bass *Morone saxatilis*

Interesting Facts:

- * Striped bass tagged in the Chesapeake Bay have been recaptured as far away as the Bay of Fundy
- * Striped bass don't have eyelids; when the sun comes up they retreat to deeper water to avoid bright light.
- * Females grow larger than males; fish larger than 15 lbs are most likely female, with the potential for producing a million eggs/10 lbs of body weight.
- * US striped bass regulations date to pre-Colonial times, when striped bass were prohibited from being used as fertilizer (c. 1640)
- * In 1669, the 1st public school in North America (MA) was financed through taxes imposed on striped bass harvest.

Largest Recorded: New world record was caught in 2011 in CT, weighing 81.88 lbs. Historic records confirm a 125 lb. female caught off NC in 1891.

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Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Striped bass has been one of the most important fisheries on the Atlantic coast for centuries. Currently, commercial fisheries operate in eight jurisdictions regulated by the Commission, while recreational fisheries operate in 14. Commercial fishermen harvest striped bass with a variety of gears including gillnets, pound nets, haul seines, trawls, and hook and line, while recreational fishermen use hook and line almost exclusively. Commercial landings peaked at almost 15 million pounds in 1973 before declining below two million pounds by 1983 (Figure 1).

During the mid-to-late 1980s, a number of states closed their striped bass fisheries in order to initiate stock rebuilding. The commercial fishery grew slowly under a partial reopening of state waters in the early 1990s, with coastwide landings rising from about 800,000 pounds in 1990 to two million pounds in 1994. Under Amendment 5, striped bass harvest grew from 3.8 million pounds in 1995 to 6.3 million pounds in 2002. Since the passage of Amendment 6 in 2003 the commercial harvest has been managed through a quota system and landings have averaged just over seven million pounds annually. Commercial landings in 2010 (6.979 million pounds) were dominated by Chesapeake Bay fisheries, which made up approximately 60 percent of the total commercial landings.

Between 1982 and 1989, recreational anglers landed an annual average of 1.4 million pounds due to a combination of low stock abundance and strict regulations. Under Amendment 4, recreational landings grew from 2.2 million pounds in 1990 to 6.8 million pounds in 1994. With the declaration of restored status, landings increased from 12.5 million pounds in 1995 to a record 29.2 million pounds in 2006. Since 2006, recreational landings have annually declined, with 21.33 million pounds taken in 2010 (Figure 1). Of those recreational landings, New York anglers took 26 percent, followed by Maryland (23 percent), Massachusetts (18

Figure 1. Annual Coastwide Striped Bass Landings

Source: Personal communication with NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD and ASMFC State Reports

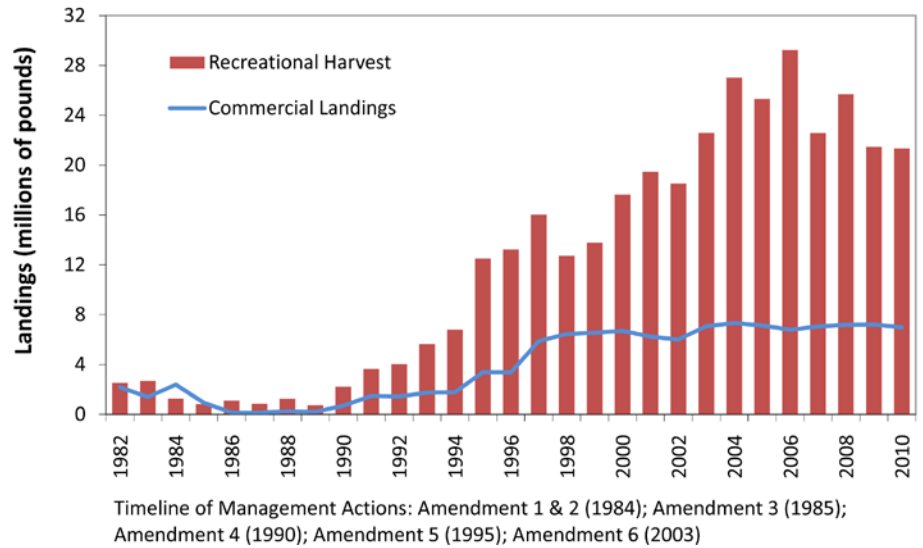
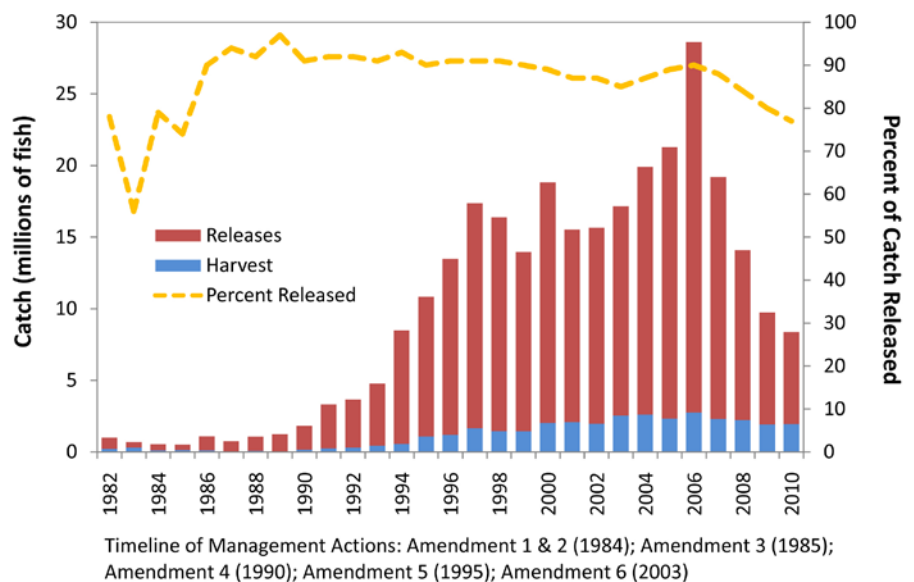


Figure 2. Recreational Catch (Harvest + Releases) and the Percent of Fish Released

Source: personal communication with NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD



percent), and New Jersey (16 percent); the remaining states each landed five percent or less. Anglers continue to release the majority of striped bass they catch. In recent years, the amount of releases has been estimated to be more than 75 percent coastwide (Figure 2).

Stock Status

Based on the results of the 2011 update stock assessment, Atlantic coast striped bass are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The statistical catch at age (SCA) model estimates that the resource remains at a high level with female spawn-

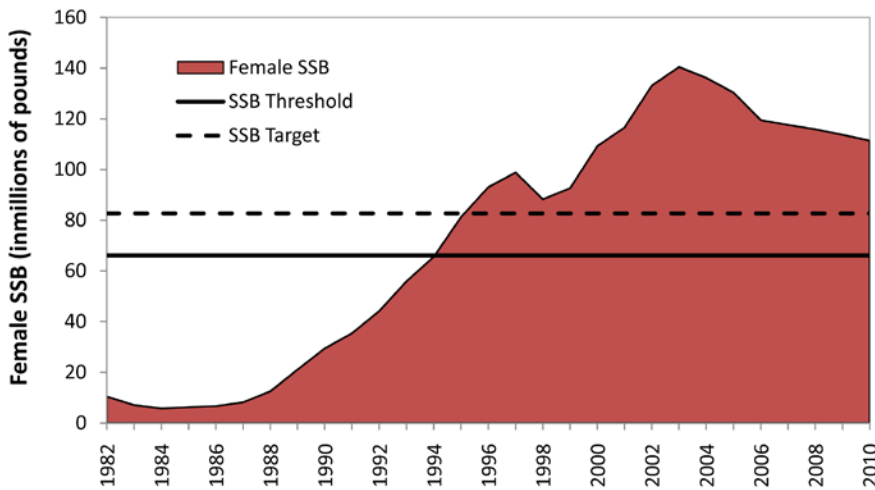
ing stock biomass (SSB) at 111.5 million pounds, above the SSB target and threshold (Figure 3). Recruitment estimates averaged 9.5 million fish from 1982 through 2010. The stock assessment update identified a period of increased recruitment from 1994-2004 and a more recent period of lower recruitment (2005-2010). However, recruitment increased from 7.1 million fish in 2009 to 9.1 million fish in 2010 (Figure 4). The SCA model estimated the 2010 fishing mortality rate on age 8-11 fish to be 0.23, well below the

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Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass (continued from page 5)

Figure 3. Atlantic Striped Female Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)

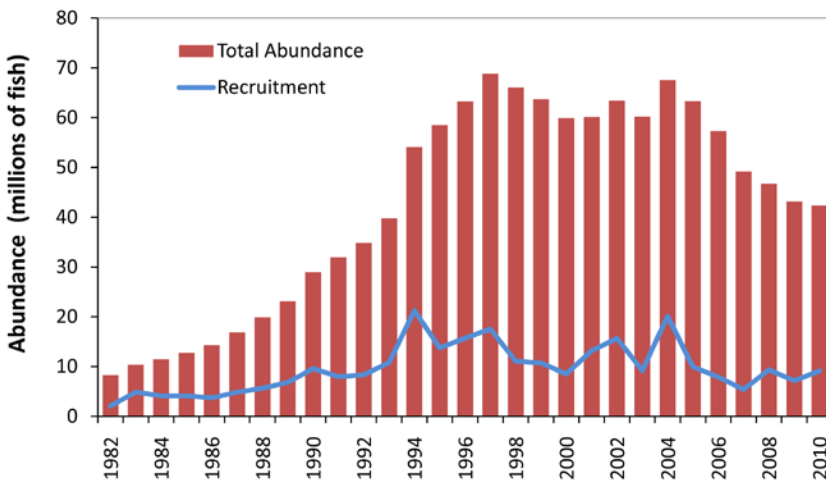
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update, 2011



Timeline of Management Actions: Amendment 1 & 2 (1984); Amendment 3 (1985); Amendment 4 (1990); Amendment 5 (1995); Amendment 6 (2003)

Figure 4. Estimates of Striped Bass Abundance and Recruitment

Source: ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update, 2011



Timeline of Management Actions: Amendment 1 & 2 (1984); Amendment 3 (1985); Amendment 4 (1990); Amendment 5 (1995); Amendment 6 (2003)

a new set of biological reference points based on female SSB. On a regular basis, SSB and fishing mortality are estimated and compared to target and threshold levels. These reference points, as well as new management triggers, have enabled the Management Board to be more responsive to changes in the stock.

In addition to the control rule, Amendment 6 phased in new regulations for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. In 2003, the coastal commercial quotas for striped bass were restored to the states' historical average landings during the 1972-1979 base period, a 43 percent increase from the 2002 coastal commercial quotas. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle-Roanoke fisheries, and states with approved conservation equivalency proposals. The Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle-Roanoke regulatory programs differ from the coastal migratory stock because these programs are predicated on a more conservative fishing mortality target than the coastal migratory stock. The independent fishing mortality target allows these jurisdictions to implement separate seasons, harvest caps, and size and bag limits as long as they remain under that target.

fishing mortality threshold and target levels of 0.34 and 0.30, respectively. Tag-based estimates of fishing mortality for striped bass 28 inches and greater along the coast and in the Hudson River, Delaware Bay, and Chesapeake Bay are all below the target in 2010. Overall stock abundance has declined since 2004, but SSB remained relatively high due to the growth and maturation of the 2003 year class. The next benchmark assessment is scheduled to be completed in 2013. For this assessment, the Striped Bass Stock Assessment and Tagging Subcommittees will be developing new/updated population models and will work to refine discarding, poaching, and disease related mortality estimates.

Atlantic Coastal Management

Before the Interstate FMP for Striped Bass (1981), states independently promulgated regulations to constrain the fishing mortality on the Atlantic coast striped bass population. However, it was not until passage of the 1984 Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, the precursor to the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, that the Atlantic coastal states gained the necessary tools to cooperatively and more effectively conserve and manage striped bass stocks. Through a stringent management program begun in 1985, the population began to rebuild, such that in 1995 the Commission declared Atlantic coastal striped bass stocks fully recovered.

Since Amendment 4, the foundation of the striped bass management program has been to maintain harvest below a target fishing mortality rate. Amendment 6, approved in 2003, modified the fishing mortality targets and thresholds, and also introduced

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Atlantic Menhaden Board Approves Addendum V: Addendum Establishes New Fishing Mortality Reference Points to Increase Spawning Stock Biomass

The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board has approved Addendum V to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The Addendum establishes a new interim fishing mortality threshold and target (based on maximum spawning potential or MSP) with the goal of increasing abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species. The new threshold and target equates to a MSP of 15% and 30%, respectively. The Board has initiated development of an amendment to establish management measures for all fishing sectors and gear types to implement the new fishing mortality reference points. The percent of harvest reductions associated with the new reference points as well as an implementation process and timeline will be identified in the Draft Amendment.

The MSP approach identifies the fishing mortality rate necessary to maintain a given level of stock reproductive potential relative to the potential maximum stock productivity under unfished conditions. A 15% MSP would equate to a fishing mortality rate threshold required to main-

tain approximately 15% of the spawning potential of an unfished stock. An unfished stock is equal to 100% MSP. Given the current fishing mortality equates to a MSP of approximately 8%, the new reference points are intended to provide increased protection for spawning adults, which given optimal environmental conditions, may result in increased juvenile abundance. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of the 2009 stock assessment peer review panel.

With the newly adopted fishing mortality reference points, the fishing mortality threshold is set at 1.32 and the target is set at 0.62. Based on the revised 2009 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment and the new fishing mortality threshold, overfishing is occurring. Fishing mortality in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 2.28. Based on the current reference point to evaluate stock condition, Atlantic menhaden are not overfished.

The first step in the amendment process



will be the development of a Public Information Document (PID), which will contain preliminary discussions of biological, environmental, social, and economic information, fishery issues, and potential management options for action. The PID also provides for public input about changes observed in the fisheries; actions that should or should not be taken in terms of management, regulation, enforcement, and research; and any other concerns about the resources or the fisheries. A Draft PID will be presented to the Board at the Commission's Winter Meeting in February 2012. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at <tkerns@asmfc.org>.

Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass (continued from page 6)

Two additional issues under review are mycobacteriosis and illegal harvest. The Striped Bass Technical Committee and Management Board continue to monitor information on the prevalence and effect of mycobacteriosis, a disease caused by bacterial infection, on striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay and beyond. Analysis of tagging data suggests increasing natural mortality in the Chesapeake Bay, possibly the result of mycobacteriosis. However, a recent tagging study by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science suggests that the impact of mycobacteriosis may not be as significant as once thought. Illegal

striped bass harvest investigations conducted within the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River since 2003 have resulted in over \$1.6 million dollars in fines levied against 19 individuals and three corporations for more than one million pounds of illegally harvested striped bass with an estimated worth of up to seven million dollars. The Management Board continues to coordinate efforts with law enforcement officials to reduce opportunities for future illegal harvest. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, FMP Coordinator, at <ktaylor@asmfc.org>.

Striped Bass Facts (continued from page 4)

Age at Maturity

- * Females - 50 % mature at age 6 (25-26"); 100% mature at age 9 (32")
- * Males - 100% mature at age 3 (18")

Age at Recruitment

- * Chesapeake Bay Fishery = age 4 (18")
- * Coastal Fishery = age 8 (28")

Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing is not occurring

American Lobster Board Adopts 10% Reduction in Exploitation for the Southern New England Stock as First Phase of Rebuilding Program

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board has adopted a 10% reduction in exploitation by all fishing sectors and all gear types starting January 1, 2013 as the first phase in the Board's efforts to rebuild the Southern New England stock. The 10% reduction would come from changes in the minimum size limit, maximum size limit, and/or closed seasons.

State agencies will convene meetings of the Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMT) for Areas 2 through 6 to develop exploitation reduction plans consistent with the suite of approved options contained in Draft Addendum XVII. States are required to submit plans by December 24, 2011 for Technical Committee review. The Board will consider final approval of the plans through adoption of Draft Addendum XVIII at the Commission's 2012 Winter Meeting.

The Board also moved forward on the development of Draft Addenda XVIII

and XIX to initiate the second phase of its rebuilding efforts. Both addenda will propose area-specific measures to scale the scope of the Southern New England fishery to the size of the resource. Draft Addendum XVIII will propose effort control programs for Lobster Conservation Management Areas

2 and 3. Draft Addendum XIX will include options based on recommendations from LCMTs for Areas 4 through 6, the American Lobster Technical Committee and the Plan Development Team. These options would include, but are not limited to, a minimum reduction in traps fished by 25%.

The Board's actions are taken in response to status of the Southern New England lobster stock which is at low levels of abundance and experiencing persistent



Photo courtesy of (c) Harvey Spears/Marine Photobank

low recruitment caused by a combination of environmental factors and continued fishing mortality. It is this low recruitment that is preventing the Southern New England stock from rebuilding. Under the assumptions of poor recruitment and high natural mortality, the Technical Committee is not certain the stock would recover to the target level under a total fishery moratorium. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at <tkerns@asmfc.org>.

Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Draft Addendum VII for Public Comment: States Schedule Hearings for December and January

The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Draft Addendum VII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum proposes implementing the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, which incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized horseshoe crab harvest levels for the Delaware Bay area. The ARM framework was developed by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region and was peer-reviewed in 2009.

The Draft Addendum will additionally address allocation of the ARM harvest output among the four states (New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland) that harvest horseshoe crabs from the Delaware Bay population. The allocation is based upon multiple decision options, including the proportion of horseshoe crabs harvested that originate from Delaware Bay and a potential harvest cap for Virginia and Maryland to protect crabs that do not originate from Delaware Bay.

In addition to public hearings and comments, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Advisory Panels, as well as the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical

Committee and the Law Enforcement Committee will be providing input to the Board on the Draft Addendum prior to the Board's final approval of the document. These groups played an important role in the development of initial draft of the addendum.

The States of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum VII; the details of those hearings can be found on page 2 under Upcoming Meetings.

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Northern Shrimp Section Approves Amendment 2 & Sets 2012 Fishing Season Specifications

There was a lot of activity this fall surrounding management of northern shrimp, which is jointly regulated by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine through the Commission's Northern Shrimp Section. The Commission approved Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp, which includes a new suite of management tools, such as trip limits, trap limits, and days out of the fishery, to regulate the fishery. The Amendment also modifies the fishing mortality reference points to include a threshold level, includes a more timely and comprehensive reporting system, and allows for the initiation of a limited entry program to be pursued through the adaptive management addendum process.

The Section received the results of the 2011 stock assessment update, which indicates the northern shrimp stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Current fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.68, above the F target, threshold and limit. Biomass is estimated at 6,500 mt, below the biomass threshold of 9,000 mt, and close to the biomass limit of 6,000 mt. Additionally, shrimp abundance in the western Gulf of Maine has declined

steadily since 2006. The latest survey showed a much lower than normal abundance of large females and juveniles, with the remaining males and females being small for their age. These findings are based on the Collie-Sissenwine Analysis, which has been endorsed by three peer review panels as the preferred model to assess northern shrimp stock condition. The FMP specifies that if fishing mortality exceeds the limit level and biomass is less than the threshold level, the Section must act immediately to reduce fishing mortality.

Based on these findings, the Section approved a total allowable catch (TAC) of 2,000 mt for the 2012 fishing season, with the season closing when landings are projected to reach 95% of the TAC (1,900 mt). The trawl season will start January 2, 2012 with three landing days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). Vessels may only land once a day. The trap season will start February

1, 2012 with a 1,000 pound landing limit per vessel per day. The Section will meet on January 19, 2012 to assess where total landings are relative to the TAC. If necessary, the Section may adjust the closing date or modify management options (e.g.,

Given the favorable stock condition of the last two years, the Section set relatively long fishing seasons in an effort to accommodate industry's demands for expanded fishing opportunities. Unfortunately, substantial increases in both effort and participation resulted in early season closures and significant overages in both seasons – 28% and 48% overharvest in the 2010 and 2011 seasons, respectively. Consequently, the stock is now overfished and overfishing is occurring, requiring a shortened season and limited fishing opportunities in 2012.

-- Outgoing Section Chair Doug Grout from New Hampshire

trip limit, days out) at the meeting in order to prevent an overage of the TAC. At its January 19 meeting, the Section will also discuss the findings of a Technical Committee review of an independent analysis that explores an alternative assessment modeling scenario. For more information, please contact Mike Waine, FMP Coordinator, at <mwaine@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Presents Patten White Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award (continued from page 1)

the Commission's overall fisheries programs, recognizing the importance of the entire marine environment, not just fish and lobster. He has chaired the Commission's American Lobster Management Board, Atlantic Menhaden Management Board, and the Northern Shrimp Section, and has been an active participant in the discussions and activities of the Legislators and Governors' Appointees.

Mr. White has also engaged in broader ocean management efforts, most notably as a member of the Pew Oceans Commission. He is a long standing member of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, convinced that it is possible to have good lobster fishing while simultaneously protecting our nation's endangered species. Among other notable activities, Mr. White served on the editorial board for National Fisherman magazine and was a founding member of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. He has served on the Sea Grant Policy Advisory Committee and Northeast Consortium review team.

Through all of his endeavors, Mr. White has carried himself in a positive, friendly, and effective way that is a model for all. He truly embodies the spirit and character of the Captain David H. Hart Award. The Commission instituted the Award in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The award is named for one of the Commission's longest serving members, who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

ACCSP Welcomes Captain Morgan to its Advisory Committee & Seeks New Members

ACCSP Welcomes Captain Morgan to Advisory Committee

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest advisor, Captain Jerry Morgan. Captain Morgan, who now holds the recreational advisor's seat in Connecticut, has been fishing the marine and fresh waters from Maine to the Caribbean for over 50 years. He and his mate (and wife) of 33 years seek out any and all of the estuarine habitats, inland fisheries, and islands in between where they can fish. For the past 20 years, Captain Morgan has operated a full-service fishing outfitter and conducts seminars and workshops with people from both the recreational and commercial communities.

His weekly feature column, Connecticut's Shoreline, has appeared in all of The Day's/Shore Publishing papers for over 15 years. This column features marine topics including fishing conditions, environmental issues, hot topics affecting our fisheries, reviews, regulatory agendas, controversies, and current events. Ad-

ditionally, Captain Morgan is an active member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, and has served as Commissioner on one of Connecticut's Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commissions for over a decade. He believes Long Island Sound is an unparalleled resource that is a fantastic habitat for fish and fishermen and needs to be conserved for posterity without negatively impacting nature's work in progress.

ACCSP Seeks Advisors

Do you want to get involved in providing input on the collection and management of Atlantic coastal fisheries data? ACCSP is currently seeking nominations to its Advisory Committee, specifically, at least one recreational representative from New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia; and at least one commercial representative from Maine, Connecticut, New York, Delaware, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The Advisory Committee is expected to provide perspectives from a variety of

fishing experiences. Members evaluate technical recommendations and advise on developments and implementation of the Program. There is at least one in-person joint meeting with the Operations Committee in the fall to rank the following fiscal years projects based as a part of the funding decision process.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Advisory Committee, please send a letter of interest to the Operations Committee member from your state. A list of Operations Committee members with contact information can be found at <http://www.accsp.org/opercommittee.htm>.

Final nominations will be formally appointed by the Coordinating Council, ACCSP's governing body. Coordinating Council members from each partner state may designate one commercial and one recreational and/or for-hire representative to the Advisory Committee. Please contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at ann.mcelhatton@accsp.org for more information.

Laura C. Leach Celebrates 30th Anniversary with ASMFC

Laura C. Leach, longtime Director of Finance and Administration, was recently honored by Executive Director John V. O'Shea and the full contingent of Commissioners and staff for her 30 years of outstanding service to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The first Commission employee to reach this impressive milestone, Laura began working at the Commission on November 3, 1981, as its bookkeeper/accounting manager. Since April 1991, she has been the Director of Finance and Administration, capably managing the Commission's fiscal and human resources in times of scarcity and abundance. Laura has also provided critical continuity through her support to three Executive Directors and by her service as interim Executive Director.

Of particular note are her efforts to support the growth of the Commission staff and promote the financial strength of the Commission during her tenure. Consistently projecting energy and enthusiasm in supporting the needs of the Commissioners and staff, she has become the human and caring voice of the Commission. In honor of her great energy, commitment, and loyalty, Laura was presented with a retrospective photo book spanning her 30 years at the Commission with contributions from Commissioners and staff, past and present. Congratulations, Laura!



Laura C. Leach with ASMFC Executive Director John V. O'Shea and Outgoing ASMFC Chair Robert H. Boyles, Jr.

Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Board Sets Spiny Dogfish 2012/2013 Fishing Year Quota at 30 Million Pounds

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board approved a 30 million pound quota for the 2012/2013 fishing season (May 1 – April 30), with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds per day for the northern region states (Maine through Connecticut). The quota represents a 50% increase from last season's quota of 20 million pounds. State-specific shares for the southern region states (New York through North Carolina) are provided in the accompanying table. Any overages from the 2011/2012 fishing season will be paid back by region or state in the 2012/2013 season. The New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils forwarded a recommendation for a 35.6 million pound quota to the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Administrator for final action prior to the start of the 2012/2013 fishing season.

The Board's action responds to the findings of the 2011 Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Update on the Status of Spiny Dogfish, which estimates that spiny dogfish are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 373.56 million pounds in 2011, and has exceeded the target (351.23 million pounds) for the last four years. Fishing mortality (F) is estimated to be 0.093 in 2010, well below the plan's target (0.207) and threshold (0.325). While the stock remains not overfished, it is projected record low recruitment from 1997 to 2003 will cause SSB to decrease in the future. Projections indicate that the magnitude of this drop is reduced by lower F rates (quotas).

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee and MAFMC's Monitoring Committee (MC) both recommended a maximum quota of 35.6 million pounds for the 2012/2013 fishing season. However, members of the public cautioned

the Board against setting a 35.6 million pound quota, citing the market cannot absorb a 75% increase in quota and dogfish prices are likely to drop significantly with increased supply. In addition, they asked that the Board set a lower quota to minimize future fluctuations in the annual quota given concern regarding the limited

will not increase in the near future given the lack of demand for the product and the subsequent closure of Canadian spiny dogfish processors.

Based on the recommendation of its Coastal Sharks Technical Committee, the Board approved a 33 fish possession

Regional/state quotas and possession limits for the 2012/2013 fishing season (in pounds). Quotas will be adjusted for any over/under harvests in the 2011/2012 fishing season.

	Northern Region (ME - CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	3,000	To be specified by the individual southern region states					
% Allocation	58%	2.707%	7.644%	0.896%	5.920%	10.795%	14.036%
2012/2013 Base Quota	17,400,000	812,100	2,293,200	268,800	1,776,000	3,238,500	4,210,800

contributions of the 1997 to 2003 year classes to the fishery.

Discards decreased by 31% from 2009 (13 million pounds) to 2010 (8.1 million pounds) and the number of commercial groundfish trips decreased by 48% following the implementation of Amendment 16 the Northeast Multispecies Groundfish FMP. Canadian landings have also decreased significantly in recent years (3.5 million pounds in 2008; 249,000 pounds in 2009; 13,230 pounds in 2010). It is believed the Canadian dogfish harvest

limit for sharks in the large coastal sharks (LCS) species group (silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead sharks) for 2012. The Board maintained the 33 fish LCS possession limit since it worked well in distributing the quota in 2010 and 2011 and is consistent with proposed federal shark specifications.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, FMP Coordinator, at <cvonderweidt@asmfc.org>.

Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VII Available for Public Comment (continued from page 8)

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum are available on the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on January 31, 2012 and should be forwarded to Danielle Chesky, Horseshoe Crab FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or <dchesky@asmfc.org> (Subject line: Draft Addendum VII).

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