



ASMFC

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LCMT Area 1 and Outer Cape Cod Members Scramble to Meet October 1 Deadline

In June 2001, the American Lobster Management Board directed staff to begin development of Addendum III. This Addendum is intended to implement all approved elements of the June 2001 Lobster Conservation Management Team (LCMT) proposals. Area 1 (Gulf of Maine) and Outer Cape Cod were given until October 1 to revise their June proposals, given that neither of these proposals was projected to meet $F_{10\%}$ by 2008 at that time. LCMTs from Area 1 and Outer Cape Cod have been meeting at frequent intervals following the July 2001 Board meeting. Following are highlights from recent meetings.

Area 1 (Gulf of Maine)

The most recent meeting for Area 1 LCMT was held on September 6, 2001. During this meeting updates were provided on the outcome of the Technical Committee and the Management Board's consideration of the Area 1 proposal. The LCMT reviewed the Management Board's July motion, which stated "If the revised Area 1 LCMT proposal due in October 2001 does not meet the egg production required under Addendum II, minimum gauge sizes would increase and/or maximum gauge sizes would decrease until such time as this action produces the necessary percentage to reach $F_{10\%}$ by 2008". As a result of this pending Board action, the LCMT discussed the possibility of adding additional items to the original proposal to ensure that Area 1 would indeed meet the egg production goals in 2008. After due consideration of all alternatives, the LCMT decided to propose an escape vent size increase to two

inches, which would be effective in 2007 if necessary to reach the egg production goals in 2008.

The revised Area 1 proposal was submitted to the Commission in mid-September 2001. The Technical Committee will review the revised proposal at its October 2, 2001 meeting in Pocasset, Massachusetts. The results of the Technical Committee evaluation will be presented to the Management Board during the October 17, 2001 meeting in Rockport, Maine.

Outer Cape Cod

The LCMT for Outer Cape Cod convened on September 12, 2001 to ratify changes to their original proposal as requested by the Management Board in July 2001. The Outer Cape Cod LCMT decided to work from suggestions that the Technical Committee had made earlier this year. Specifically, the Technical Committee suggested that traps be reduced from 1998 trap levels. The following motion was made by Robert Maraghy: "The percent reduction of the total traps intended to provide an allocation to new licensees who entered the Outer Cape Cod Lobster Conservation Management Zone (LCMZ) in 2001 from a transfer from outside the Outer Cape Cod LCMZ or from the waiting list, be limited to two percent of the overall trap cap." The motion

passed by a vote of 36 in favor and 1 opposed. In addition, Mr. Maraghy presented a motion to accept the Outer Cape Cod LCMZ proposal with the existing wording changes, plus those motions that had passed during the meeting. This motion also passed with a vote of 36 in favor and 1 opposed.

The revised Outer Cape Cod proposal is anticipated to be for submitted to the Commission by October 1, 2001. The Technical Committee will review the revised proposal at its October 2, 2001 meeting in Pocasset, Massachusetts. The results of the Technical Committee evaluation will be presented to the Management Board during the October 17, 2001 meeting in Rockport, Maine.

For more information please contact, Heather Stirratt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 ext. 301.



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, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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Upcoming Meetings

10/14 - 18:

ASMFC 60th Annual Meeting, Samoset Resort, 220 Warrenton Street, Rockport, Maine; (800)341-1650.

10/17 - 20:

Florida Artificial Reef Summit, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For more information, please contact William Horn, Summit Coordinator at (850) 922-4340.

10/30 - 11/2:

Fourth Annual Wetlands Regulatory Workshop, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

11/6 & 7:

ACCSP For-Hire Subcommittee, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; (410) 859-8400.

11/6 - 8:

New England Fishery Management Council, Tavern on the Harbor, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

11/26 - 30:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Blockade Runner, 275 Waynick Drive, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina; (800)541-1161.

11/ 29 & 30:

ASMFC Summer Flounder Reagulatory Discards Workshop, Baltimore, Maryland.

12/11 - 13:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Society Hill, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (215) 238-6000.

Year 2002

1/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Courtyard by Marriot, New Hampshire.

2/18 - 21:

ASMFC Meeting Week, location to be determined.

2/28 - 3/2:

Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockland, Maine.

3/20 & 21:

New England Fishery Management Council, Mystic Hilton, Mystic, Connecticut.

One of the lovelier drives along the Atlantic coast is on Route 1 in mid-coast Maine, from Portland to Rockport. The road traverses a series of rolling hills, crosses wide rivers and snakes through some of the most memorable communities we will find in coastal America -- at the same time the hardest and the "heartiest."

Damariscotta was always a scenic favorite of mine. As you drive north on Route 1, just south of town, you come up over a rise and catch a brief glimpse to the right, looking down into the valley at what appears to be the quintessential New England village, with a tall church steeple rising out of the landscape. And then, too quickly, the road takes a turn to the left and dips down, and it is gone. A few years ago, on vacation, I pulled off of Route 1 and into Damariscotta for the first time, and the town was every bit as picturesque as I had imagined. The church that I had eyed for years and its churchyard were post-card-perfect. The homes in the neighborhood surrounding the small business district reminded me of so many lovely small towns I had visited in New England. Linda and I took a bike ride down the river and passed through other small towns before returning to Damariscotta for a late lunch. All my imagining of what this small town would like was fulfilled.

And there is much more to coastal Maine. One of the prettiest places anywhere is Camden, just a few miles beyond Rockport. Old-timers might complain that there is just a bit too much of the upscale, L.L. Bean crowd around to call Camden traditional. But to this city boy it is interesting and pretty all the same. Outside of the town to the north is one of the country's great campgrounds, at Camden Hills State Park. The park has a road up to the top of a small mountain, looking down onto the Camden harbor, which in the summertime is filled with sailboats, including sail cruising vessels.

Rockland seems to be a busy working town, home to much of the history of Gulf of Maine fisheries. And

Rockport itself, just next door, presents the Samoset Resort along the shores of Penobscot Bay. The Samoset hosts the outstanding Maine Fishermen's Forum each winter, and hosted the ASMFC's 42nd Annual Meeting in 1983. And will host the 60th Annual Meeting later this month, on October 14-18, 2001.

It could be, of course, that the wonders of the Maine coast will divert all of our attentions from the business at hand. But I doubt it. Striped bass, dogfish and Northern shrimp are pretty important in this part of the world, as are eels from time to time. Oh yes, I think that there even may be some lobster fishermen along the Maine coast! Seriously, these are critical issues to Maine fishermen and will be among the many fisheries agenda items that the Commissioners will work through over five days. Also among the highlights is a special presentation for Commissioners concerning possibilities for local management of fisheries; and a luncheon with the new NMFS Assistant Administrator exploring the benefits of partnerships and mutual cooperation in fisheries conservation and management. Toss in the Captain David H. Hart Award, the Laura Leach Fishing Tournament, the Samoset's magnificent golf course and more, and this is going to be an exciting and fulfilling week.

By the way, one of the great joys of Route 1 is the ability to get off of it, and head down smaller roads to really experience Maine's coast. Delightful towns and villages, stunning scenery and warm welcomes are to be found. Be sure to take the opportunity to explore, on this trip or when you return.

See you in Maine!

New England & Mid-Atlantic Spiny Dogfish Committees Meet to Recommend 2002/2003 Fishing Season Measures

Increasingly over the last few years, spiny dogfish has been the subject of intense focus and debate. Fisheries, which have grown over the last ten years, are being significantly diminished by federal actions and stocks continue to show signs of overfishing. In the middle of all this are the fishermen and processors who are struggling to survive with substantially reduced landings. Following is an overview of the recent events that affect spiny dogfish management.

On September 11, 2001, the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee met to review updated stock status information and recommend management measures for the 2002/2003 fishing year. The federal fishery management plan (FMP) requires that management measures for the upcoming year achieve a fishing mortality rate (F) not to exceed $F=0.03$. Based on the new stock assessment information, the Committee made a recommendation to maintain the status quo, a quota of four million pounds for fishing year 2002/2003. A separate motion was made to maintain the current trip limits of 600 pounds for quota period 1 (May to October) and 300 pounds for quota period 2 (November to April). The Monitoring Committee expressed concern regarding the status of the stock and the ability of current regulations to achieve $F=0.03$.

At the Monitoring Committee meeting, Dr. Paul Rago presented an updated stock status report, which included in-

formation on landings, discards, fishing mortality estimates and stock projections. Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.27, much greater than the threshold level of $F=0.11$ which defines overfishing. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) survey data estimates that the average size of the female dogfish in commercial landings has decreased from about 4.4 kg in 1987 to 1.8 kg in 2000. The abundance of mature females ($>80\text{cm}$) has decreased well below the target biomass levels. The number of intermediate-sized dogfish has also declined over the past six years. The number of pups entering into the stock is among the lowest on record for the fifth consecutive year. The abundance of the intermediate-sized female dogfish are vital to rebuilding the stock in the coming years. The greater the number of mature females in the stock the greater the opportunity for pup production.

On September 28, 2001, the Joint Council Spiny Dogfish Committee reviewed the updated fisheries and stock assessment information that was presented to the Monitoring Committee earlier in the month. Additionally, Dr. Rago presented a risk analysis comparing four different management strategies for spiny dogfish: (1) maintaining the status quo $F=0.28$, (2) implementing a $F=0$ strategy, (3) implementing a constant fishing mortality of $F=0.03$, and (4) implementing a constant harvest of eight million pounds per fishing year. The analysis showed a difference of five years in the rebuilding schedule for

the current FMP regulations and the constant harvest strategy.

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Getting All the Dogfish Committees Straight

If you think that you are the only one who cannot get all the dogfish committees straight, you are not alone. Following is a brief overview of the various state, regional and federal committees involved in spiny dogfish management.

Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee -- This is the joint technical committee of the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (NEFMC and MAFMC, respectively). The committee is composed of representatives from the New England and Mid-Atlantic states, Council staff, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and industry. Its role is to review current stock status information and relevant regulatory actions, and provide recommendations to the Joint Spiny Dogfish Committee.

Joint Spiny Dogfish Committee -- This is the joint policy-level committee of the NEFMC and MAFMC, made up of a subset of members from both Councils. Its task is to develop recommendations for Council action.

Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel -- This panel provides additional expertise during the Council decision-making process. The panel has industry representatives, scientists, and other interested parties. The members are from both the New England and the Mid-Atlantic regions.

ASMFC Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Shark Management Board -- This Board is the policy-making body for the ASMFC and is composed of administrative, legislative and governor-appointed representatives from Maine through Florida, as well as representatives from NMFS and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is advised of technical issues by its **Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee** and fishery-related issues by its **Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel**, which is composed of recreational and commercial fishermen, processors and environmental interests.



New England & Mid-Atlantic Spiny Dogfish Committees Meet (continued from page 4)

The Joint Committee was tasked with reviewing the recommendations of the Monitoring Committee and developing recommendations for the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils to review.

The Joint Spiny Dogfish Committee recommended that the Councils take any means necessary to implement a constant fishing mortality strategy with a quota of 8.8 million pounds for the 2002/2003 fishing year. The Committee also recommended trips limits of 7,000 pounds. The final recommendation of the Committee was to alternate the seasonal quota percentages every other year to address the issue of equity among the states. The recommendations of the Joint Spiny Dogfish Committee will go before both Councils for review and approval.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will meet on October 10, 2001 to review the recommendations of the Monitoring and Joint Committees and develop its own recommendations for the 2002/2003 fishing year. The Council's recommendations will then be forwarded to the NMFS' Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval. Also during this meeting, the Council will discuss progress on the development of Amendment 1 to the Federal Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan.

The New England Fishery Management Council is scheduled to meet from November 6 - 8, 2001. During this meet-

ing, it will also review the recommendations of the Monitoring and Joint Committees and develop its recommendations for the 2002/2003 fishing year, which will also be forwarded to NMFS' Northeast Regional Administrator for review and approval.

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board will meet during the Commission's 60th Annual Meeting Week in Rockport, Maine. The Board is scheduled to meet from 10 AM to noon on Monday, October 15th. The Board will review the recent actions taken by the Councils, and discuss how it wants to proceed given that the current emergency action in state waters is due to expire January 31, 2002.

In an effort to coordinate with federal management of this species, the Board has delayed further development of interstate regulations to review the Councils' course of action for managing spiny dogfish, as well as to review a risk analysis of some of the available management options. Depending on the recommendations of the Board at its next meeting, the Commission could potentially have an interstate fishery management plan in place by the start of the next fishing season, which begins May 1, 2002.

For more information, please contact Megan Gamble, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <mgamble@asmfc.org>.

Don't Miss the Multispecies Workshop at the Annual Meeting!

Over the past year, the Commission has been developing a multispecies assessment focused on Atlantic menhaden and several key predator species (striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish). This model has been developed by Dr. Lance Garrison and Dr. Jason Link. Dr. Garrison will present this model to the Commission during a workshop to be held October 16, 2001 from 10 AM -11 AM.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide an overview of the model, with particular emphasis on application of model results to management of Atlantic menhaden. This model is an extension of the current assessment method

for Atlantic menhaden (VPA), but includes extensive predator-prey information

Multispecies modeling approaches are appealing because they can be implemented as a straightforward extension of the single species approach. They can also provide information on the interactions between different fisheries and can be used to manage for optimal "mixes" of species for long-term sustainability.

To learn more about multispecies assessments, attend the workshop or contact Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research and Statistics, at (202)289-6400 or <lkline@asmfc.org>.



Maine Takes the Lead to Improve Atlantic Herring Sampling

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), with the financial support of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), is expanding sampling of the Atlantic herring fishery to cover much of the northern Atlantic coast.

A successful Atlantic herring, or *Clupea harengus*, fishery supports the economic stability of the New England seafood industry. Approximately 70 percent of the herring catch supplies the lobster fishery with bait. Canneries and other processing facilities utilize the remainder.

Atlantic herring are primarily caught in the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and in the waters of southern New England. Recent total annual catches have hovered around 100,000 metric tons. Since 1960, Maine DMR has collected and processed Atlantic herring commercial catch samples. Sampling has been conducted with the cooperation of private companies and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Maine DMR believes this project will result in better sampling throughout the Atlantic herring fishery. In the past, herring sampling was focused on those ports with NMFS port agents, which may or may not have corresponded to ports with large landings. This program allows all ports with significant landings to be sampled on a regular basis and provides more complete representation of the Atlantic herring population, as opposed to the voluntarily private industry sampling that did not necessarily follow a specific protocol.

The Commission and other coastal states will also benefit from this study. The Commission has an Atlantic Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that requires intensive data collection and sampling for effective monitoring and management. The FMP stipulates that member states enforce spawning area closures for Atlantic herring*. These flexible closures are based on a gonadosomatic index from commercial catch samples, data for which is collected through biological sampling.

The program has been in place since the spring of 2001. To date, about 100 com-

mercial catch samples of Atlantic herring have been collected. "Considering there has been a slow spring catch rate and limited availability of herring, the progress of the program is impressive," says David Libby, Marine Resources Scientist at Maine DMR.

In addition to the numbers of samples collected, the program has afforded the opportunity for Maine DMR to obtain Atlantic herring from previously unsampled areas. For example, the fixed gear fishery along the Perry shore of Maine has been sampled for the first time in about 10 years. Less significant ports have also been added into the sampling route, allowing the small purse seine fleet to be sampled effectively. Finally, having a dedicated sampler has afforded Maine DMR the opportunity to sample a new processing facility in Gloucester, Massachusetts. This facility plans to process tens of thousands of metric tons a year and would not be adequately covered without this program.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a state and federal coastal marine fisheries data collection and data management Program. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coast-wide, including ASMFC, the three regional fisheries management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Section, NMFS and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Together these resource managers have developed a plan to cooperatively collect, manage and disseminate fishery statistical data for the Atlantic coast and to support the development and operation of a national program.

For more information, please contact Abbey Compton, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or abbey.compton@accsp.org.

* Addendum 1 to Amendment 1.

ACCSP Staff Update

The ASMFC Executive Director, John H. Dunnigan, began serving as the Interim ACCSP Director on September 1. He will serve as the Interim Director, in addition to his ASMFC responsibilities, while the Coordinating Council searches for candidates to fill the position permanently. A search committee of Council members, lead by Council Vice-Chair David Cupka, has been formed.

The ACCSP also welcomed a new data management analyst on October 1. Jennifer Ni is now aboard to help accomplish the Program's data management goals. She recently earned her masters degree in Computer Science from Virginia Tech. While studying, she worked as a software engineer for Toco Information Inc., and on campus as a research programmer. Prior to that, Jennifer worked for DMR Consulting Group, Bell Atlantic and the Bank of China.

ASMFC Habitat Committee Welcomes New Members

This past year has seen an expansion in membership to the Commission's Habitat Committee. The expansion is in large part due the Committee's desire to include representation from all the 15 Atlantic coastal states. New members include:

Henry Ansley (Chair, ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee), Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Jed Brown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Karen Chytalo, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Phil Flournoy, Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Robert Grabb, Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Dr. Ken Haddad, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Jeff Tinsman, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Gail Wippelhauser, Maine Department of Marine Resources

These individuals join the ranks of over a dozen long-standing members, who have worked hard to establish the Commission's Habitat Program and more fully integrate habitat issues into the Interstate Fisheries Management Program. The long-standing members are:

Tom Bigford, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Habitat Conservation

Paul Caruso, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Rob Dunlap, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Bruce Freeman, New Jersey Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife

Tom Fote, Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Bill Goldsborough (Committee Chair), Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Wilson Laney, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4

Lenny Nero, Florida Department of Environment Protection

Chris Powell, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Roger Pugliese, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Melvin Shepard, proxy for Representative David Redwine (North Carolina)

Dianne Stephan, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region

Dr. Lance Stewart, University of Connecticut Marine Research Laboratory

Mike Street, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or <cselberg@asmfc.org>.



Finding Solutions for Summer Flounder Regulatory Discards: Commission Workshop to be Held in November

Fishery discards are a concern in virtually every fishery, both commercial and recreational. Regulatory discards are those animals returned to the water because of regulatory restrictions, such as size limits, possession limits, or closed seasons. These discards are a direct result of fishery management agencies imposing fishing regulations.

The greatest concern with discards is the high rate of mortality associated with discarded animals. The goal of fishery management is to provide optimal benefits to user groups and society while maintaining a sustainable resource level; however, discard mortality represents removals from the fish stock with no resultant benefits to industry or the public. Reducing discard mortality will increase substantially the quality of our commercial and recreational fisheries, facilitate the management of exploited stocks, and assist fishery management agencies in attaining the objectives of fishery management.

On November 29 & 30, 2001, the Commission will be conducting a workshop to address regulatory discards of summer flounder. This fishery will function as a case study with which to evaluate how well a detailed plan for reducing regulatory discards can be identified, developed, and integrated into a fishery management plan. This workshop will be the first step in the process. The goal of the workshop is to provide a solution-driven forum where realistic options are developed for reducing discards or utilizing bycatch of summer flounder.

The workshop will be geared towards the Summer Flounder Advisory Panel, members of the Summer Flounder Management Board, Summer Flounder Technical Committee, Management and Science Committee, and Committee on Economics & Social Sciences. Other participants are also welcome. For more information, please contact Darren Benjamin, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext 309 or <dbenjamin@asmfc.org>.

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