

## Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

### Striped Bass Technical Committee

September 11, 2008

#### Participants

Mike Brown (ME)

Alexei Sharov (MD)

Gary Shepherd (NMFS)

Gary Nelson (MA)

Rob O'Reilly (VA)

Nichola Meserve (ASMFC)

Carol Hoffman (NY)

Charlton Godwin (NC)

Russ Allen (NJ)

Wilson Laney (USFWS)

#### Overview

The Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call to develop a work plan to address a charge from the Management Board. In addition, the TC reviewed a draft letter for the Management Board to NMFS regarding MRIP survey coverage, and discussed the status of the 2009 Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise.

#### Management Board Charge

The Management Board requested the Committee to:

- 1) Evaluate the fishery's performance with the management objectives in Amendment 6, and
- 2) Develop background information to assist the Management Board in defining its management objectives. Develop a list of alternative management objectives, and include information on each such as what user group it is appropriate to, what stock characteristics are required to achieve the objective, what it would mean in terms of modifying the management program, and what other consequences of implementing the objective could be expected.

The Committee discussed the Board charge and how to respond to it. As has occurred in the past on this issue, the Board has not provided specific information for the type of fishery it would like to see. This leaves the TC with less direction than is ideal.

Task 1. The Committee discussed some ideas for responding to some of the Amendment 6 objectives. The current stock status of striped bass answers Objectives 1 and 2 (control rule, long term sustainability). Objective 3 has been largely achieved (in general there are coastal area regulations and producer area regulations, and the plan includes flexibility through conservation equivalency), and where there is some inconsistency, proposals continue to be submitted that could bring more consistency (i.e., DE/PA proposal). Objective 4 is more of a question for the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences. Cost effectiveness has been largely achieved (Objective 5), the Committee thought, yet there are some additional ways to increase it (i.e., using regional age keys). There has not been a need for annual changes to the management measures since the implementation of Amendment 6, except for the Chesapeake Bay spring trophy fishery. Results from the 2007 assessment (age 13+ fish) can respond to Objective 6 (improved age structure). **Des Khan will draft responses for Task 1.**

Task 2. The Committee discussed how the last Amendment 6 objective could be further defined, after discussing the reasoning behind it (compromise between constituents with opposing views on a quality fishery). If the Board determined the desired percentage of fish in the population age 15+, the Committee could provide what fishing mortality rate would be needed to achieve it. For

example, Gary S. said that, under the existing selectivity pattern, an  $F=0.30$  would result in 1% of the population being age 15+, an  $F=0.20$  in 3.75%, and an  $F=0.10$  in ~15%. He said that he could also provide additional examples for some other selectivity pattern scenarios (based on alternative management, i.e., a slot limit). **Gary Shepherd will estimate the proportion of the population age 15+ at various F rates given the current selectivity pattern and several alternative selectivity patterns.**

Gary Nelson noted that there is a method in one of Deriso's papers that allows you to determine what the  $F$  would have to be to achieve the maximum number of trophy fish. **Gary Nelson will use Jensen's method of calculating the F at which trophy catches are maximized given an estimate of natural mortality and slot limit values** (Jensen, A. L. 1981. Optimal size limits for trout fisheries. Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci. 38: 657-661).

**The Committee will have another conference call (date and time, TBD).** The agenda will include review the work and see if more is needed, and to also review two proposals expected shortly from Maryland DNR.

#### Letter on MRIP Coverage

Review of Pennsylvania's proposal for revised fishing regulations in the Delaware River highlighted that the MRFSS does not cover PA's portion of the River. Prior to the call, a draft letter asking NMFS to expand the recreational intercept survey coverage for all areas striped bass are caught or targeted was distributed. Carol asked that NY's catch estimates in the Hudson River be noted as limited rather than non-existent. The TC advised that the letter be directed towards all anadromous species and come from the Policy Board, and that it emphasize the mismatch that will occur between the telephone survey and the intercept survey if additional inshore areas are not added to the coverage. **Gary Shepherd will provide suggested language to the draft letter, which will be submitted to the Management Board for consideration at its October meeting.**

#### Cooperative Tagging Cruise Update

Wilson Laney provided an update on the progress of obtaining a vessel and funding for the 2009 cruise. He noted that there has been talk about missing a year, and so asked about the status of the other coastal tagging programs in 2009. Carol said that the funding for New York's program is tenuous and they are having to switch to another gear, so there is uncertainty regarding their 2009 efforts. Wilson will be sending an email to those he is seeking funding from shortly, and will copy the Committee.