



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## 2023 Spring Meeting Summary

*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

2023 Spring Meeting  
May 1 – 3, 2023

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### Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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***Press Release***

**American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XXVII  
*Addendum Establishes Measures to Increase Protection  
of Spawning Stock Biomass of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Stock***

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XXVII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes a trigger mechanism to implement management measures – specifically gauge and escape vent sizes – to provide additional protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) spawning stock biomass (SSB). It also implements changes to management measures for Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 1, 3, and Outer Cape Cod (OCC) to improve the consistency of measures across the GOM/GBK stock.

The Board initiated the Addendum as a proactive measure to improve the resiliency of the GOM/GBK stock. Since the early 2000s, landings in the GOM/GBK stock have rapidly increased. In Maine alone, landings have increased from 57 million pounds in 2000 to a record high of 132.6 million pounds in 2016. Maine landings have declined slightly but were still high at 97.9 million and 108.9 million in 2020 and 2021, respectively. However, since 2012, lobster settlement surveys throughout the GOM have generally been below the time series averages in all areas. These surveys, which measure trends in the abundance of juvenile lobsters, can be used to track populations and potentially forecast future landings. Persistent low settlement could foreshadow declines in recruitment and landings. In the most recent years of the time series, declines in recruitment indices have also been observed.

In response to these trends, Addendum XXVII establishes a mechanism where changes to the current gauge and escape vent sizes in LCMAs 1, 3 and OCC will be implemented automatically based on observed changes in recruit abundance indices. If the index of recruit abundance declines by 35% from the reference level (equal to the three-year average from 2016-2018), a series of gradual changes to gauge and vent size will be initiated in the following fishing year. These include two increases to the minimum gauge size in LCMA 1 (Gulf of Maine) and a single decrease to the maximum gauge size in LCMA 3 (offshore federal waters) and OCC. The gauge and escape vent size changes are intended to increase the proportion of the population that is able to reproduce before being harvested, and to enhance stock resiliency by protecting larger lobsters of both sexes.

Additionally, Addendum XXVII implements measures that resolve discrepancies between the regulations for state and federal permit-holders, provide a more consistent conservation strategy, and simplify interstate commerce and enforcement across management areas. Specifically, the Addendum implements a standard v-notch definition of 1/8” with or without setal hairs in LCMA 3 and OCC, and a standard maximum gauge size of 6 ¾” for LCMA 3 and state and federal permit holders in OCC. It also modifies the management program such that for LCMA 1 and 3 permit holders, states must limit the issuance of trap tags to equal the harvester trap tag allocations unless trap losses are documented. The implementation date for these changes is January 1, 2024.

The following table specifies the timing of management changes for each of the three LCMA's addressed under Addendum XXVII.

When change(s) will be implemented	What change will be implemented		
	LCMA 1	LCMA 3	Outer Cape Cod
January 1, 2024	Trap tags issuance limited to harvester allocation		v-notch definition: 1/8" with or without setal hairs; Maximum gauge size: 6 3/4"
Fishing year following an observed 35% decline in the trigger index (Year 1)	Minimum gauge size: 3 5/16"		
Year 3	Minimum gauge size: 3 3/8"		
Year 4	Escape vent size: 2 x 5 3/4" rectangular; 2 5/8" circular		
Year 5		Maximum gauge size: 6 1/2"	Maximum gauge size: 6 1/2"

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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PR23-08

**Meeting Summary**

In addition to approving Addendum XXVII, the Board also received a brief update on the implementation of Addendum XXIX. The work group tasked with reviewing and approving tracking devices for use in the federal American lobster and Jonah crab fishery has approved four devices, and is working with the states to establish processes for administrating the electronic tracking program.

Staff also provided a progress update on the ongoing benchmark stock assessment for Jonah crab. The assessment workshop was held in April 2023, and the assessment is on track to be completed and peer reviewed for Board consideration at the Annual Meeting.

Given concerns about potential economic impacts associated with the management measures adopted under Addendum XXVII, the Board requested the Interstate Fisheries Management Policy Board create a subcommittee to communicate with Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The subcommittee would discuss transboundary issues related to the importation of lobster as it relates to different minimum gauge sizes in the two countries.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org).

**Motions**

**Main Motion**

**Move to select under Issue 2, Option B a trigger level of 38%.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion amended.

**Motion to Amend**

**Motion to amend to select under Issue 2, Option B a trigger level of 35%.**

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. McKiernan. Motion passes (Roll Call: In Favor – NH, RI, CT, NY, NJ; Opposed – MA; Abstentions – DE, MD, VA, NMFS; Null – ME)

**Motion to select under Issue 2, Option B a trigger level of 35%.**

Motion passes (10 in favor and one abstention from NMFS).

**Main Motion**

**Move to select under Issue 2, Option B a modified “Measures Option 2” in which LMA3 and OCC move to a 6½ maximum gauge size in the final year of changes and do not decrease their maximum gauge size further. Initial changes to the gauge sizes for all GOM/GBK management areas should occur on June 1st in the following year. For example, if a trigger is tripped at the fall Annual meeting in 2023, a minimum gauge size change would be implemented June 1, 2024. Should a future stock assessment conclude that the GOM and GBK stocks are not a single biological stock, the Board can revisit the max gauge size decrease in OCC and LMA 3.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Ms. Patterson.

	LMA 1	LMA 3	OCC
Initial gauge size changes (Year 1 implementation)	Min: 3 5/16” (84mm) Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: status quo Max: status quo Vent: Status quo
Intermediate gauge sizes (Year 3 implementation)	Min: 3 3/8” (86mm) Max: Status quo Vent: 2x5 3/4” rect; 2 5/8” circular	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo
Final gauge size (Year 5 implementation)	Min: 3 3/8” (86mm) Max: Status quo Vent: status quo	Min: Status quo Max: 6 ½” Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: 6 ½” Vent: Status quo

**Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend that the increase in the escape vent size in LCMA 1 be implemented in year 5 after the trigger has been reached.**

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion fails (3 in favor, 5 opposed, 3 abstentions).

	LMA 1	LMA 3	OCC
Initial gauge size changes (Year 1 implementation)	Min: 3 5/16” (84mm) Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: status quo Max: status quo Vent: Status quo
Intermediate gauge sizes (Year 3 implementation)	Min: 3 3/8” (86mm) Max: Status quo Vent: status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo
Final gauge size (Year 5 implementation)	Min: 3 3/8” (86mm) Max: Status quo Vent: 2x5 3/4” rect; 2 5/8” circular	Min: Status quo Max: 6 ½” Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: 6 ½” Vent: Status quo

**Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend that the increase in the escape vent size in LCMA 1 be implemented in year 4 after the trigger has been reached.**

Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion passes (10 in favor, 1 abstention).

	LMA 1	LMA 3	OCC
Initial gauge size changes (Year 1 implementation)	Min: <b>3 5/16" (84mm)</b> Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: status quo Max: status quo Vent: Status quo
Intermediate gauge sizes (Year 3 implementation)	Min: <b>3 3/8" (86mm)</b> Max: Status quo <b>Vent: status quo</b>	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo
Year 4	<b>Vent: 2x5 3/4" rect; 2 5/8" circular</b>		
Final gauge size (Year 5 implementation)	Min: 3 3/8" (86mm) Max: Status quo	Min: Status quo <b>Max: 6 1/2"</b> Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo <b>Max: 6 1/2"</b> Vent: Status quo

**Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to select under Issue 2, Option B a modified "Measures Option 2" in which LMA3 and OCC move to a 6½ maximum gauge size in the final year of changes and do not decrease their maximum gauge size further. Initial changes to the gauge sizes for all GOM/GBK management areas should occur on June 1st in the following year. For example, if a trigger is tripped at the fall Annual meeting in 2023, a minimum gauge size change would be implemented June 1, 2024. Should a future stock assessment conclude that the GOM and GBK stocks are not a single biological stock, the Board can revisit the max gauge size decrease in OCC and LMA 3. The increase in the escape vent size in LCMA 1 would be implemented in year 4 after the trigger has been reached.**

**Motion to Amend**

**Motion to amend to strip the motion of the maximum size changes in OCC and LCMA 3 that are scheduled to go in this motion.**

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion fails (4 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention).

	LMA 1	LMA 3	OCC
Initial gauge size changes (Year 1 implementation)	Min: <b>3 5/16" (84mm)</b> Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: status quo Max: status quo Vent: Status quo
Intermediate gauge sizes (Year 3 implementation)	Min: <b>3 3/8" (86mm)</b> Max: Status quo <b>Vent: status quo</b>	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo
Year 4	Min: <b>3 3/8" (86mm)</b> Max: Status quo <b>Vent: 2x5 3/4" rect; 2 5/8" circular</b>		

<b>Final gauge size (Year 5 implementation)</b>	<del>Min: 3 3/8" (86mm)</del> <del>Max: Status quo</del>	<del>Min: Status quo</del> <del>Max: 6 1/2"</del> <del>Vent: Status quo</del>	<del>Min: Status quo</del> <del>Max: 6 1/2"</del> <del>Vent: Status quo</del>
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**Main Motion as Amended**

Move to select under Issue 2, Option B a modified “Measures Option 2” in which LMA3 and OCC move to a 6½ maximum gauge size in the final year of changes and do not decrease their maximum gauge size further. Initial changes to the gauge sizes for all GOM/GBK management areas should occur on June 1st in the following year. For example, if a trigger is tripped at the fall Annual meeting in 2023, a minimum gauge size change would be implemented June 1, 2024. Should a future stock assessment conclude that the GOM and GBK stocks are not a single biological stock, the Board can revisit the max gauge size decrease in OCC and LMA 3. The increase in the escape vent size in LCMA 1 would be implemented in year 4 after the trigger has been reached.

Motion passes 9 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention.

	LMA 1	LMA 3	OCC
<b>Initial gauge size changes (Year 1 implementation)</b>	<b>Min: 3 5/16" (84mm)</b> Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: status quo Max: status quo Vent: Status quo
<b>Intermediate gauge sizes (Year 3 implementation)</b>	<b>Min: 3 3/8" (86mm)</b> Max: Status quo <b>Vent: status quo</b>	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo Max: Status quo Vent: Status quo
<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Vent: 2x5 3/4" rect; 2 5/8" circular</b>		
<b>Final gauge size (Year 5 implementation)</b>	Min: 3 3/8" (86mm) Max: Status quo	Min: Status quo <b>Max: 6 1/2"</b> Vent: Status quo	Min: Status quo <b>Max: 6 1/2"</b> Vent: Status quo

Move to approve Issue 1, sub-option B1 and sub-option B4. This combination of options will set a standard v-notch definition of 1/8" in LCMAs 3 and OCC, maintain the zero tolerance definition in LCMA1, and establish a maximum gauge size in OCC of 6 3/4" for state and federal permit holders. It will also limit the issuance of trap tags to equal harvester trap tag allocations.

Motion by Mr. Keliher, second by Mr. Borden. Motion separated.

**Move to Separate**

**Motion to separate B1 and B4.**

Motion by Mr. Borden, second by Mr. McKiernan. Motion passes by consent.

Move to approve Issue 1, sub-option B1. This option will set a standard v-notch definition of 1/8" in LCMAs 3 and OCC, maintain the zero tolerance definition in LCMA1, and establish a maximum gauge size in OCC of 6 3/4" for state and federal permit holders.

Motion passes (8 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention).

**Main Motion**

Move to approve Issue 1, sub-option B4. This will limit the issuance of trap tags to equal harvester trap tag allocations.

### **Motion to Amend**

#### **Move to amend to exempt the OCC from this requirement.**

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes (6 in favor, 5 abstentions).

### **Main Motion as Amended**

#### **Move to approve Issue 1, sub-option B4, except for OCC. This will limit the issuance of trap tags to equal harvester trap tag allocations for LCMA 1 and LCMA 3.**

Motion passes (3 in favor, 1 opposed, 7 abstentions).

#### **Move to approve Lobster Addendum XXVII, as modified today, with an implementation date of January 1, 2024.**

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion passes (10 in favor and one vote in opposition from MA).

#### **Move to request the Interstate Fisheries Management Policy Board approve the creation of a subcommittee to engage Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans to discuss transboundary issues related to the importation of lobster as it relates to different minimum gauge sizes in the two countries. The subcommittee shall be made up of up to four members of the Lobster Management Board who have license holders that fish in Area 1 and/or 3, one representative from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Commission's Executive Director or his designee.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes by consent with one abstention from NMFS.

### **ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 1, 2023)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to review a report by the Commonwealth of Virginia on recent developments in the management of its menhaden fishery, receive an update on the Atlantic menhaden single-species and Ecological Reference Point (ERP) stock assessments, and consider approval of the Draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the ERP Benchmark Stock Assessment.

In response to public comments at recent Board meetings, the Board requested a report from the Commonwealth of Virginia on recent menhaden management in the state. Virginia representative Pat Geer updated the Board on the proposed and enacted legislative and regulatory changes since 2019, as well as management responses to recent fish kill events.

The Board received an update on the Atlantic menhaden single-species and ERP stock assessments. The Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) and Assessment Science Committee recommended converting the single-species assessment from a benchmark to an update, since the model has been peer-reviewed several times and no new data sources were identified that would necessitate utilizing the benchmark process. Additionally, the Board considered and approved the Draft TORs for the ERP Benchmark Stock Assessment. The Single-Species Assessment Update and ERP Benchmark Stock Assessment are scheduled to be presented to the Board at the Annual Meeting in 2025.

For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [jboyle@asmfc.org](mailto:jboyle@asmfc.org).



**Motions**

**Move to approve the Terms of Reference for the 2025 Atlantic Menhaden Ecological Reference Point Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review.**

Motion made by Dr. McManus and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion carries unanimously.

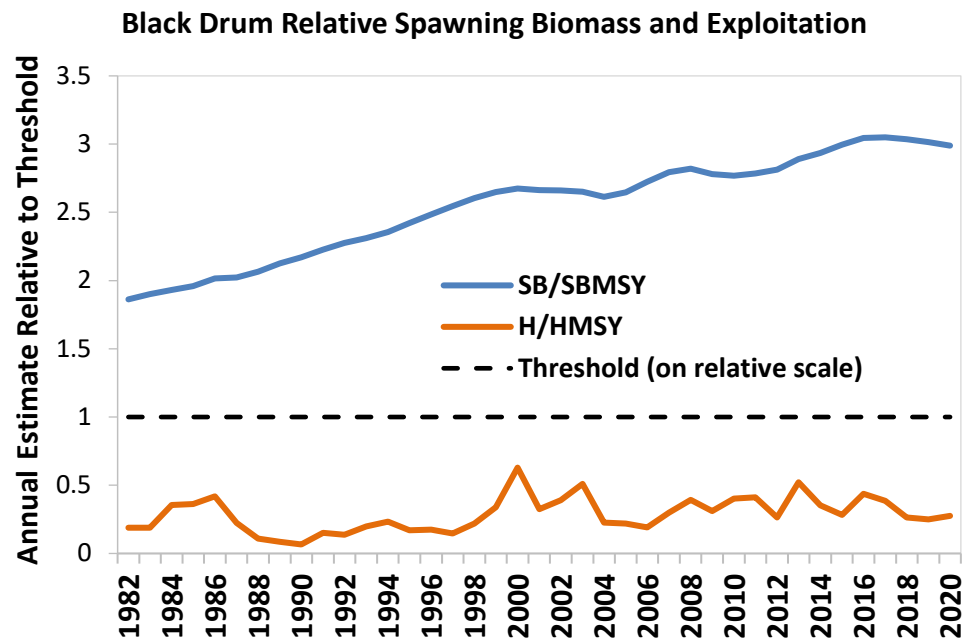
**SCIAENIDS MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 1, 2023)**

**Press Release**

**Black Drum Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Find Stock to be Not Overfished nor Experiencing Overfishing**

Arlington, VA – The 2023 Black Drum Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report indicates the Atlantic coastal stock of black drum are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. The Commission’s Sciaenids Management Board approved the benchmark stock assessment and peer review report for management use. No management action was taken because there were no major concerns with the stock.

The assessment estimates annual spawning biomass (SB) and exploitation (H; i.e., the proportion of stock biomass removed by fishing). Estimates from the last year of the assessment (2020) are compared to the spawning biomass and exploitation associated with maximum sustainable yield<sup>1</sup> (MSY),  $SB_{MSY}$ , and  $H_{MSY}$  respectively, to determine stock status.



This assessment also developed indicators of stock abundance, and stock and fishery characteristics. The abundance indicators include several fishery-independent indices from the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions that track young-of-year and sub-adult fish. There is also one coastwide fishery-dependent index calculated from the Marine Recreational Information Program catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) that tracks all exploitable sizes of black drum. A majority of the indices show no clear trend, although the CPUE has been increasing throughout the time series (1982-2020). Several of the indices in the Mid-Atlantic saw greater recruitment events in the 1990s and 2000s than observed in more

<sup>1</sup> MSY is the largest average catch that can be taken from a stock over time without negatively impacting the reproductive capacity of the stock.

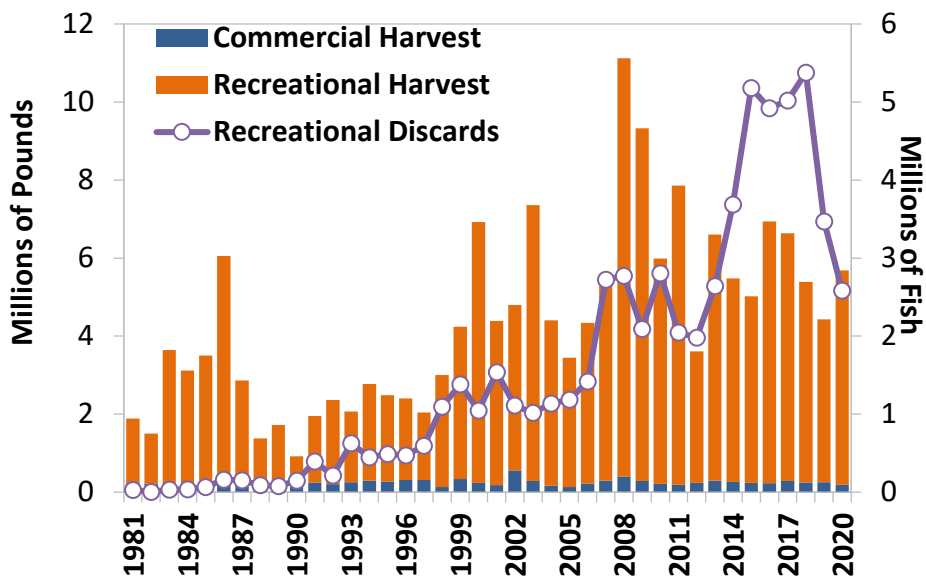
recent years. One index, the New Jersey Ocean Trawl, will serve as an indicator of range expansion, as black drum are becoming more common in the northern areas of their range.

Recreational harvest and discards, as well as commercial landings, will serve as indicators of fishery characteristics. Overall, there has been increased harvest in the past 20 years. The recreational fishery contributes a majority of the total harvest, with a smaller-scale commercial fishery occurring primarily in North Carolina and northward. Recreational harvest was moderately high in the mid-1980s and increased again starting around 2000, peaking in 2008 at 11 million pounds and has remained relatively high, especially in the South Atlantic. A majority of the recreational harvest occurs in Florida. Recreational discards had been steadily increasing and peaked in 2018 at 5.4 million fish, after which they declined.

Commercial landings have been fluctuating without trend in recent years, with peaks in 2002 and 2008 at roughly 555,000 pounds and 400,000 pounds, respectively. Gill nets, pound nets, and haul seines are the primary gears used in the commercial fishery. Overall, the indicators do not show negative conditions, but will be monitored annually. Should any concerning trends occur, the Black Drum Technical Committee may recommend an expedited assessment in advance of the next benchmark stock assessment (tentatively 2028).

A stock assessment overview, which provides a more detailed description of assessment results, as well as the stock assessment and peer review report will be available on the Commission’s website at <https://asmfc.org/species/black-drum> under Stock Assessment Reports. For more information on the stock assessment, please contact Jeff Kipp, Senior Stock Assessment Scientist, at [jkipp@asmfc.org](mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org); and for more information on black drum management, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [tbauer@asmfc.org](mailto:tbauer@asmfc.org).

**Black Drum Recreational and Commercial Harvest and Recreational Discards**



###

PR23-09

**Meeting Summary**

In addition to reviewing the 2023 Black Drum Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report and accepting it for management use (see above press release), the Board also considered an update on the 2023 Atlantic croaker and spot Traffic Light Analyses (TLAs). The TLAs, as established in Addendum III, evaluate a harvest metric and an adult abundance metric. Metrics are evaluated annually using a color proportion of green, yellow, or red based on comparing the most recent year of data to a reference period, and management

action is triggered if the proportion of red exceeds specific thresholds. Staff updated the Board with a proposal to not conduct the Atlantic croaker and spot TLAs in 2023. Benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic croaker and spot are currently underway to be completed in 2024. Not conducting the TLAs in 2023 will reduce the workload and allow the Atlantic Croaker and Spot Technical Committees to focus on conducting the benchmark stock assessments for these two species. In addition, it is uncertain if a key dataset for the TLAs will be available this year. If the TLAs are conducted without these data, the results would not be very informative. The Board agreed to not conduct the Atlantic croaker and spot TLAs in 2023. The TLAs will be conducted next year with the completion of the 2024 benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic croaker and spot. Atlantic croaker and spot management measures put into place in 2021 will remain status quo until the TLAs can be reevaluated in 2024.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [TBauer@asmfc.org](mailto:TBauer@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

**Move to accept the 2023 Black Drum Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use.**  
Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Fegley. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

### **Main Motion**

**Move to have the Technical Committee annually present the indicators, as described in the black drum 2023 Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report.**

Motion made by Mr. Brust and seconded by Ms. Madsen. Motion amended.

### **Motion to Amend**

**Motion to amend by adding to inform the need for a new stock assessment**

Motion made by Ms. Burgess and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries without objection.

### **Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to have the Technical Committee annually present the indicators, as described in the black drum 2023 Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report to inform the need for a new stock assessment.**

Motion passes by unanimous consent.

## **ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 2, 2023)**

### ***Press Release***

# **ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Board Acts to Support Stock Rebuilding through Emergency Action and Addendum II Initiation *Addendum I Approved to Allow Ocean Commercial Quota Transfers Contingent on Stock Status***

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved an emergency action to implement a 31-inch maximum size limit for striped bass recreational fisheries, effective immediately for 180 days (through October 28, 2023). This action responds to the unprecedented magnitude of 2022 recreational harvest, which is nearly double that of 2021, and new stock rebuilding projections, which estimate the probability of the spawning stock rebuilding to its biomass target by

2029 drops from 97% under the lower 2021 fishing mortality rate to less than 15% if the higher 2022 fishing mortality rate continues each year.

“Based on concern for the stock and the long-term interests of its stakeholders, the Board acted decisively to protect one of the few remaining strong year classes,” said Board Chair Marty Gary with the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. “The public is concerned about stock rebuilding and has urged the Board to expeditiously respond to the new stock projections. Striped bass is one of the flagship species of the Commission, and this action sends a strong signal that the Board is firmly committed to rebuilding the stock for current and future generations. At the same time, the Board recognizes that this action will have a profound impact on the for-hire industry and recreational anglers, however, it feels it is a necessary step to ensure rebuilding.”

As outlined in the Commission’s Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter, a management board can take emergency action to address circumstances under which public health or the conservation of coastal fishery resources or attainment of fishery management objectives has been placed substantially at risk by unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery.

The Board implemented the emergency 31-inch maximum size limit for 2023 to reduce harvest of the strong 2015-year class. The 31-inch maximum size limit applies to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the May Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries which already prohibit harvest of fish less than 35 inches. All bag limits, seasons, and gear restrictions will remain the same. Jurisdictions are required to implement the required measure as soon as possible but no later than July 2, 2023. If it deems necessary, the Board may extend the emergency action for two additional periods of up to one year each at a future Board meeting.

The Commission will hold at least four virtual public hearings in mid- to late May to inform the public about the emergency action and identify next steps for management. A subsequent press release will provide the details of the public hearing schedule and webinar information.

### **Draft Addendum II Initiated**

To address the concerns about increased removals and stock rebuilding beyond 2023, the Board initiated Addendum II to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. The Draft Addendum will consider 2024 management measures designed to reduce fishing mortality to the target. Specifically, the Draft Addendum will propose options for the ocean recreational fishery, including modifications to the slot limit with harvest season closures as a secondary non-preferred option. It will also propose options for the Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries, as well all commercial fisheries, including maximum size limits. Board members emphasized the importance of soliciting public input through the addendum process for 2024 measures following the 2023 emergency action.

For measures beyond 2024, the Board intends to consider the results of the upcoming 2024 stock assessment update to inform subsequent management action. To enable an expedited management response to the 2024 stock assessment update, the Draft Addendum will propose a provision that would enable the Board to respond to the results of the stock assessment updates via Board action if the stock is projected to not rebuild by 2029. The Board will consider the Draft Addendum at the

Summer Meeting, when it will either approve the document for public comment, or provide feedback for further development of the document.

### **Addendum I Approved**

The Board also approved Addendum I to Amendment 7. When the stock is not overfished, the Addendum enables the Board to decide every one to two years whether it will allow voluntary transfers of ocean commercial quota. The Board can also set criteria for allowable transfers, including a limit on how much and when quota can be transferred in a given year, and the eligibility of state to request a transfer based on its landings. When the stock is overfished, no quota transfers will be allowed.

To inform final action on this Addendum, the Board considered public comments, Advisory Panel input, and a Technical Committee report addressing the impact of additional quota utilization on stock rebuilding.

“The Board’s decision on Addendum I balances the commercial industry’s desire for a quota transfer mechanism with the need for caution when the stock is overfished,” said Board Chair Gary. “This was the most restrictive option for allowing transfers, giving the Board the ability to establish boundaries around quota transfers, as needed.”

Addendum I will be available by the end of May on the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/species/atlantic-stripped-bass> under Management Plans and FMP Reviews. For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [efranke@asmfc.org](mailto:efranke@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

###

PR23-10

### ***Motions***

#### **Main Motion**

**Move to initiate an Addendum to implement commercial and recreational measures for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries in 2024 that in aggregate are projected to achieve F-target from the 2022 stock assessment update (F = 0.17). Potential measures for the ocean recreational fishery should include modifications to the Addendum VI standard slot limit of 28-35” with harvest season closures as a secondary non-preferred option. Potential measures for Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries, as well as ocean and Bay commercial fisheries should include maximum size limits.**

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion amended.

#### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to add “The addendum will include an option for a provision enabling the Board to respond via Board action to the results of the upcoming stock assessment updates (e.g., currently scheduled for 2024, 2026) if the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029 with a probability greater than or equal to 50%.”**

Motion made by Dr. Armstrong and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes unanimously.

### **Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to initiate an Addendum to implement commercial and recreational measures for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries in 2024 that in aggregate are projected to achieve F-target from the 2022 stock assessment update (F = 0.17). Potential measures for the ocean recreational fishery should include modifications to the Addendum VI standard slot limit of 28-35" with harvest season closures as a secondary non-preferred option. Potential measures for Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries, as well as ocean and Bay commercial fisheries should include maximum size limits. The addendum will include an option for a provision enabling the Board to respond via Board action to the results of the upcoming stock assessment updates (e.g. currently scheduled for 2024, 2026) if the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029 with a probability greater than or equal to 50%."**

Motion passes unanimously.

### **Main Motion**

**Move that the Striped Bass Board, by emergency action as outlined in the Commission's ISFMP Charter, implement a 31" maximum size to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries. All other recreational size limits, possession limits, seasons, gear restrictions, and spawning protections remain in place. Jurisdictions are required to implement compliant measures as soon as possible and no later than July 2, 2023.**

Motion made by Dr. Armstrong and seconded by Mr. Borden.

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to add "Measures for the for-hire sector will remain status quo. In the event the Board extends the emergency action past the initial 180-day effective period, the for-hire sector exemption from emergency measures cannot be extended."**

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion fails (Roll Call: In Favor – RI, CT, NY, NJ; Opposed – MA, PRFC, PA, NC, VA, DC, MD, DE, ME, NH; Abstentions – NOAA, USFWS; Null – None).

### **Main Motion**

**Move that the Striped Bass Board, by emergency action as outlined in the Commission's ISFMP Charter, implement a 31" maximum size to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries. All other recreational size limits, possession limits, seasons, gear restrictions, and spawning protections remain in place. Jurisdictions are required to implement compliant measures as soon as possible and no later than July 2, 2023.**

Motion made by Dr. Armstrong and seconded by Mr. Borden.

### **Motion to Postpone**

**Motion to postpone until the Summer Meeting.**

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Pugh. Motion fails (2 in favor, 14 opposed).

### **Main Motion**

**Move that the Striped Bass Board, by emergency action as outlined in the Commission's ISFMP Charter, implement a 31" maximum size to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries. All other recreational size limits, possession limits, seasons, gear restrictions, and spawning protections remain in place.**

**Jurisdictions are required to implement compliant measures as soon as possible and no later than July 2, 2023.**

Motion made by Dr. Armstrong and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion carries (15 in favor, 1 opposed).

#### **January 2023 Board Motion**

**Move to postpone action on Addendum I and task the Technical Committee with running two population projections:**

- **One which assumes harvest of the entire ocean commercial quota from all states**
- **One which assumes harvest of the ocean commercial quota from all states except New Jersey (since their quota is reallocated out of the commercial fishery)**

**The Technical Committee may use their expert judgement on other needed assumptions for the projections (i.e., selectivity) to produce the most realistic output for consideration by the Board.**

**Move to approve Option E (Board discretion of commercial quota transfer provision except no transfers if stock is overfished).**

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion passes (10 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions, 3 null).

**Move to approve Addendum I as modified today with an implementation date effective today.**

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes unanimously.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (May 2, 2023)**

##### ***Meeting Summary***

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met to discuss a number of items, including law enforcement activities related to species management actions, possible revisions to Guidelines for Resource Managers, and receive a presentation on the National Association Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy/International Conservation Chiefs Academy (NACLELA/ICCA) Wildlife Officer Exchange Program. The LEC welcomed alternate representatives Lt. Sean Reilly from NY and Lt. Bo Hale from the US Coast Guard.

##### **Species Issues**

**American Lobster** - Members of ASMFC/ACCSP updated the LEC on the status of vessel monitoring system (VMS) implementation in the lobster fishery under Addendum XXIX to Amendment 3 of the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan. Specifically, a review of the current software program in use for this management measure and a review of the approved hardware vendors for VMS systems. ASMFC staff will continue to include LEC input to working group discussions regarding further VMS development and use in the lobster fishery.

The LEC discussed the current proposals under Addendum XXVII of Amendment 3. Specific discussion was about the consistency of management measures across specific Lobster Conservation Management Areas. The LEC recognizes the uniqueness of certain LCMAs but continues to support consistent management measures within each of the LCMAs.

**Atlantic Striped Bass** – The LEC discussed the current findings of the Technical Committee – Stock Assessment Subcommittee as reported at the May 2023 meeting of the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board. Specifically, the technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee reported that there was a 40% increase of recreational removals, with a 33% estimated removal over both sectors of this fishery. Recognizing that the board may wish to act on these findings, the LEC discussed how a mid-season regulatory change would affect enforcement efforts in this fishery. Specifically, members reported that regulations have been promulgated and advertised for the current fishing year. This may cause confusion among fishers and a potential enforcement concern with the inability to effectively enforce the regulatory change.

Law enforcement compliance reporting for the annual Atlantic Striped Bass Management Plan Review process was discussed by the committee. In the recent plan review the Plan Review Team (PRT) identified an inconsistency in how state law enforcement was reporting patrol activity. Some states would provide specific patrol data of inspections, citations, and seizures. Where others would report current trends and observations within the fishery. In working with the FMP Coordinator and the PRT, it was agreed by all that a narrative Identifying common striped bass violations in the current year and any new or emerging enforcement issues would be beneficial. Quantitative information is optional as most states do not collect species specific data.

**Tautog Tagging Study** – The LEC was briefed on an ongoing survey by ASMFC and the State of New York in reference to tautog tagging. The survey will assess the varied types of tags in different environments. The goal behind this study is to identify a tag for use that will not damage a fish in the live market and hold the appropriate information necessary for tracking in the fishery.

### **Other issues**

Members reviewed the current ASMFC document “Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures (August 2015)”. This document has not been reviewed since 2015. With the always evolving strategies to address the development of fishery management plans, the LEC wished to keep this document relevant for the fishery managers of today. Our review focused on the relevance of past management measures and new and emerging management measures. Consideration of re-scoring each of the past management measures while scoring and updating newly identified measures was discussed by the committee. It was agreed by consensus that there would be no need to completely rewrite the document. The document was still relevant but needed updating of newly identified management measures. The committee will move forward with updating this document, with a plan to have Policy Board approval in the Fall of 2023.

A presentation about the NACLELA/ICCA Wildlife Officer Exchange Program. This program is of interest as the Chair of the LEC, Deputy Chief Jason Snellbaker (NJ) was invited by the organizers to participate in this program in his role as a state officer and a NACLELA graduate. This exchange was with an ICCA graduate from the Fisheries Compliance and Enforcement agency of Belize. This shared experience helped to increase international collaboration and individual capacity to address wildlife crime globally.

A closed session of our meeting was afforded to openly discuss new and emerging law enforcement issues.



Respective agencies were provided time to highlight their agencies and offer current enforcement efforts. For more information, please contact Kurt Blanchard, LEC Coordinator, at [kurt.blanchard@verizon.net](mailto:kurt.blanchard@verizon.net).

## **ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL (MAY 2, 2023)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The ACCSP Coordinating Council met to review and take action on the FY2024 ACCSP Funding Decision Document and Request for Proposals package. The Council was provided an overview of the updated documents to support approximately \$1.6 million for Partner and Committee projects. The approved RFP is now open for proposal submissions through June 16, 2023. See <https://www.accsp.org/what-we-do/partner-project-funding> for more information. All proposals will be evaluated and ranked on merit according to the schedule in the RFP.

The Council was also provided an ACCSP Program update that included a summary of activities involving accountability and commercial data validation workshops, software projects, activities related to the Atlantic recreational implementation plan, the Data Warehouse spring load, stock assessments support, current funding and staffing. For more information, contact Geoff White, ACCSP Director, at [geoff.white@accsp.org](mailto:geoff.white@accsp.org).

### ***Motions***

**Move to approve the FY24 Funding Decision Document and RFP as presented to the ACCSP Coordinating Council.**

Motion made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Ms. Zobel. Motion passes (17 in favor).

## **COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 2, 2023)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Coastal Sharks Management Board received a presentation from NOAA Fisheries on several recent and ongoing actions related to coastal sharks. Final Amendment 14 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was published in January 2022. Amendment 14 establishes a new framework to use to implement acceptable biological catch (ABCs) and annual catch limits (ACLs) for Atlantic shark fisheries, with the option to phase in new ABCs. It also allows for ACL management of recreational fisheries, removes linkages between commercial quotas, and changes quota carry-over provision.

NOAA Fisheries recently published the Atlantic Shark Fishery Review (SHARE) document. The SHARE document is a review of the state of the Atlantic shark fishery as a whole that may be used to help develop future management measures. It identifies areas of success, concerns, and potential future modifications to regulations and management measures, and assesses external factors affecting the fishery.

A proposed rule was published in March 2023 to consider prohibiting retention of oceanic whitetip sharks in US Atlantic waters. Oceanic whitetip sharks are listed as threatened under the Endangered

Species Act. Thus, the rule proposes adding oceanic whitetip sharks to the prohibited species group. NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on this action by **May 22, 2023**.

Over the next few months, NOAA Fisheries will also be scoping for Amendment 16 to the HMS FMP. The scoping document will consider a range of issues and options, including a variety of commercial and recreational fishery options based on the framework established under Amendment 14, potential revisions of shark management groups and quotas, and commercial and recreational management measures.

A proposed rule will be published later this month for Draft Amendment 15 to the HMS FMP, which considers two issues: (1) modification, data collection, and assessment of four commercial longline spatial management areas, and (2) administration and funding of the HMS pelagic longline electronic monitoring program.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org).

**Motions**

No motions made.

**ANNUAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE RECEPTION (MAY 2, 2023)**

**Press Release**

**ASMFC Presents 2023 Annual Awards of Excellence**

Arlington, VA - The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented its Annual Awards of Excellence to a number of individuals for their outstanding contributions to congressional/legislative issues, fisheries science, and law enforcement along the Atlantic coast. Specifically, the 2023 award recipients were Miranda Peterson for congressional/legislative contributions; Carol Hoffman for technical and scientific contributions; and Region 3 New York State Department of Conservation Police from for law enforcement contributions.



From left to right: ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal, Environmental Conservation Officer Lieutenant Sean Reilly, Carol Hoffman, Awards Committee Chair Jim Gilmore, and ASMFC Chair Spud Woodward

“Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission’s Annual Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve our fisheries,” said ASMFC Chair Spud Woodward of Georgia. “I am humbled by the breadth and extent of accomplishments of the recipients and am grateful for their dedication to Atlantic coast fisheries.”

## **Congressional and Legislative Contributions**

### ***Miranda Peterson, Legislative Assistant for Representative Frank Pallone***

As a Legislative Assistant in Representative Frank Pallone's office, Miranda Peterson has consistently gone above and beyond to help secure funding for the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. Understanding the importance of the sustainable management of this species, Miranda has worked diligently to help fund this program. In 2023, she secured the signatures of seven U.S. Representatives on a Dear Colleague letter, which was an all-time high in signatories who support funding the survey.

The Virginia Tech Trawl Survey is necessary for the effective and timely management of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay. The survey has been in operation since 2002, but lost funding for several years which complicated the stock assessment and management in the region. Since 2016, Congress has annually instructed NOAA Fisheries to fund this survey to provide a consistent time series. A healthy Delaware Bay population supports the economically and ecologically important birding, fishing, and biomedical communities. The continuation of this yearly data is due in a large part to Miranda's efforts.

In addition to these efforts, Miranda's in-depth knowledge of coastal and marine issues, including commercial and recreational fisheries, marine mammals, and offshore energy development is not only an asset to Representative Pallone and New Jersey constituents, but also to the management of marine resources along the Atlantic coast.

## **Scientific and Technical Contributions**

### ***Carol Hoffman, (retired) New York State Department of Environmental Conservation***

Carol Hoffman, previously with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was recognized for her longstanding scientific and technical contributions to the management of Atlantic striped bass and American eel. Her keen understanding of fishery management plans and strong analytical abilities helped to ensure that New York manages these species in consideration of both state and coastwide needs. Carol's thorough and detailed approach to data analysis and report development has been key to maintaining New York's high quality of work. Her unmatched ability to meticulously remember the Commission's procedures and timelines ensured that New York consistently fulfills its interstate management responsibilities.

A strong communicator and dedicated team player, Carol fostered strong relationships not only within the marine district, but also with New York's inland and Hudson River fisheries. She developed vital working relationships with her neighboring states of New Jersey and Connecticut which allowed striped bass and eel to be monitored and managed successfully on a regional level. Particularly for eel, Carol worked tirelessly to provide alternative data sets from a citizen science group and a power plant in New York, both of which are now used to assess the species.

Not only has Carol delivered timely and accurate data analyses and compliance reports, she has also been instrumental in the extensive process of regulation formulation that supports the Commission's mandates. Her efforts contributed to New York being an active and dedicated participant in the Commission's fisheries management process.

## **Law Enforcement Contributions**

### ***New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police, Region 3***

The last award of the evening was presented to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police for their efforts in the protection of the Atlantic striped bass along the spawning grounds of the Hudson River. Over the past three years, Region 3 officers have conducted patrols of the Western, Putnam, Orange, and Rockland Counties for recreational fishery compliance inspections.

Throughout February and March, the Environmental Conservation Police dedicated its resources to the protection of migrating striped bass. During 14 dedicated patrols in 2023 alone, officers issued 430 tickets for violations of striped bass regulations and other associated violations. Officers also seized 184 illegally possessed striped bass during their patrols; these fish were later donated to a local zoo. The dedicated patrols were conducted at varied times of the day and night. Officers used specialized night vision gear to aid in the detection of anglers. Over the course of this operation, violations included: fishing without a marine registration; failure to use circle hooks; exceeding the possession and size limits; and targeting striped bass during a closed season.

With the opening of the season on April 1, the dedicated patrols have ended, but officers continue to diligently monitor the fishery. Through their efforts, these officers have helped to ensure that fishing regulations are upheld and the resource is given its best chance to rebuild.

###

PR23-11

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (MAY 3, 2023)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Executive Committee met to discuss several issues, including the proposed FY24 Budget; the potential for a Legislative and Governors Appointee Commissioner (LGA) stipend; potential changes to the Conservation Equivalency Policy; a Legislative Committee update and the Executive Director's Performance review. The following action items resulted from the Committee's discussions:

- Staff presented the proposed FY24 Commission budget which was reviewed by the Executive Committee, which was unanimously approved by the Committee.
- Staff presented an update on the potential for a LGA members stipend. It was determined there is not a way for ASMFC to offer a tax break or benefit for participation in the Commission's meetings. Additionally, the determination of who is eligible and who would accept a stipend needs to be worked through. Ultimately, the Committee decided that LGA Commissioners will continue to serve on a volunteer basis and not receive a stipend from the Commission.
- Staff presented the work group's recommended revisions to the Commission's Conservation Equivalency Policy. There was considerable discussion on the proposed revision, and a bit of concern about the revision being too prescriptive and not flexible enough. The Chair requested that staff work on a further revision of the Policy, and set aside time at a future meeting to go through the Policy step-by-step to determine the appropriate revisions to the Policy.
- Staff presented on four bills that the Executive Committee should be aware of. These included: the Federally Integrated Species Health Act (FISH Act, H.R. 872), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Act of 2023 (H.R. not yet assigned), Restoring Effective Science-

based Conservation Under Environmental laws protecting Whales Act of 2023 (RESCUE Whales Act, H.R. 1213), and the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S. 1149). Bill Hyatt, the Chair of the Legislative Committee, noted that the Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems (RISEE, S.373 and H.R.913). Act has been reintroduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress and should continue to be monitored.

- The Executive Committee went into a closed session to discuss the Executive Director's Performance Review.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at [lleach@asmfc.org](mailto:lleach@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

#### **Move approval of the FY24 Budget.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Move moved to accept Option 1 of the Stipend White Paper, which states "the LGA Commissioners will continue to serve on a volunteer basis and not receive a stipend from the Commission."**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motions passes (14 in favor, 1 opposed).

### **INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (MAY 3, 2023)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The ISFMP Policy Board met to receive an update from Executive Committee; discuss follow up from the 2022 Commissioner Survey results; consider options for possible paths for Atlantic bonito and false albacore management; receive an update on the next addendum for the harvest control rule; discuss the future of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC or Council) Research Set-Aside Program (RSA), receive Assessment Science Committee (ASC) and Law Enforcement Committee reports; receive and update on the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative; consider a recommendation from the American Lobster Management Board; and review a request from New York regarding tautog tags, and a request to streamline the commercial quota transfer request process.

The Commission Chair, Spud Woodard, presented the Executive Committee Report to the Policy Board (for more details see Executive Committee meeting summary earlier in this document).

#### **Commissioner Survey**

Commissioners completed a survey of Commission performance in 2022, which measures Commissioners' opinions regarding the progress and actions of the Commission in 2022. The Policy Board discussed the results of the survey in February. The Board reviewed possible short- and long-term issues and drivers of change from the survey results. These include issues such as improving meeting efficiency, summaries of lengthy documents, greater incorporation of ecological consideration in decision making, conflicts with offshore wind, and stocks not responding to management decisions. No action was taken at this time.

### **Management of Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore**

In February, the Policy Board tasked staff to present an options paper on possible paths forward for management of Atlantic bonito and false albacore after concerns were raised regarding increased recreational catch of juvenile fish in some state waters. There is currently no federal or Commission fishery management plan for either species. Staff presented three possible options for developing different paths to management for both Atlantic bonito and false albacore including limitations to state processes. These included states developing measures on their own, development of a white paper, or the initiation of a fishery improvement project (FIP). It was noted if additional species were added to the Commission portfolio, it would increase the workload for Commission and state staff, some of which are already at full capacity. Staff noted there was an extensive literature review of both species submitted as public comment by American Saltwater Guides Association. Some Policy Board members were concerned with the Commission directing the states regarding these species because their states have determined management is not needed at this point. While there are some states that would like to further explore possible management due to concerns of what increased harvest could do to an unregulated species. Those states with an interest will work together to explore state management and report back to the Policy Board if they find further action by the Commission may need to be discussed.

### **Next Steps in Recreation Management Reform Initiative**

In June 2022, Policy Board and the MAFMC passed a motion when taking final action on the Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addenda to start a new draft management document to further develop the approved percent change approach for recreational management of summer flounder, scup, black sea bass and bluefish, in addition to two of the other options in the document that had gone out for public comment. Staff presented a timeline for the new draft addendum/framework and Recreational Amendment (addressing sector management and recreational accountability for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass and bluefish). The Board also approved the Plan Development Team (PDT) membership to work on developing the draft addendum. Approved PDT membership includes Corrine Truesdale, Rachel Sysak, Mike Celestino, Alexa Galvan, and Sam Truesdall. The Board also approved a work group of Commissioners and Council members to provide direction to the PDT/Fishery Management Action Team in developing the draft addendum.

### **MAFMC Research Set-Aside Program**

In 2014, MAFMC suspended the RSA Program due to concerns associated with administrative, enforcement, and science issues. The Council is considering the potential redevelopment of the RSA program. From July 2021 through February 2022, the Research Steering Committee (RSC) held a series of four exploration workshops focusing on the key issues of RSA research, funding mechanisms, and enforcement, monitoring, and administration. Based on input from the workshops, the RSC developed a draft framework for a potentially revised RSA program that would seek to address the issues of the original RSA program. At its August meeting, Council staff will provide the Council with a presentation on a potential draft RSA framework, draft RSA program elements, and recommendations developed by the RSC for Council consideration. Any potential management action considered by the Council through a management document would need to be developed cooperatively with the Commission for jointly managed species to ensure a consistent and compatible RSA program across FMPs. Policy Board members were concerned there was not sufficient time to discuss and recommend a position on re-establishing the RSA program. A webinar

will be held prior to the Council's August meeting for Board members to continue the discussion and develop recommendations.

### **Assessment Science Committee Recommendations**

The Assessment Science Committee met on April 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss and approve a revised Commission Stock Assessment Schedule, in anticipation of overwhelming stock assessment subcommittees workloads for 2023-2025. The Board approved the following recommended changes to the schedule: Atlantic menhaden and Atlantic sturgeon will switch from benchmark stock assessment to an assessment update, and while river herring will still be peer-reviewed in 2023, the results will not be presented to the Board until early 2024.

Staff presented a report of the Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) work (more details can be found in the LEC meeting summary earlier in this document)

### **Commerce of American Lobster between the US and Canada & Tautog Tagging**

Under other business, the Policy Board approved a motion establishing a subcommittee that will find solutions that are beneficial to both the sustainability of the lobster stock and commerce between the US and Canada and then work with Canada on implementing those solutions.

New York reported the state will be conducting a new tagging study to look at additional tag types for the tautog program. While the new study is conducted, New York requested the ability to tag fish in a different location for this fishing season, if needed to address concerns raised by industry. The Policy Board had no issues with the requested change. Lastly, a Policy Board member requested staff to look into possible ways to simplify the quota transfer communication process, if allowed by the FMPs.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

**Move that the Commission establish a temporary technical committee to review the two papers on Atlantic bonito and little tunny that were submitted by the American Saltwater Guide Association. The Commission will inform the State Directors of this proposal and ask them to nominate a scientific staff member of their choice to join the review. The review will assess the technical quality of the papers, the relevance of the information, and suggest possible revisions, data gaps, and management implications and options. The committee will convene online, elect their own chairperson, and prepare a report with their findings and recommendations for presentation to the ISFMP Policy Board at the Summer Meeting.**

Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion fails (2 in favor, 11 opposed, 3 abstentions, 1 null).

**Move to approve the ASMFC Stock Assessment Schedule as presented today.**

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries unanimously.

**On behalf of the American Lobster Board, recommend ISFMP Policy Board approve the creation of a subcommittee to engage Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans to discuss transboundary issues related to the importation of lobster as it relates to different minimum**

**gauge sizes in the two countries. The subcommittee shall be made up of up to four members of the Lobster Management Board who have license holders that fish in Area 1 and/or 3, one representative from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Commission's Executive Director or his designee.**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee on behalf of the American Lobster Management Board.

**Motion to substitute to request the ISFMP Policy Board create a subcommittee to be made up of up to four members of the American Lobster Management Board who have license holders that fish in LCMA 1 and/or 3 and at least one representative from NMFS and the Commission's Executive Director or his designee. The Subcommittee, prior to the engagement with parties in Canada who have an interest in lobster management and commerce, shall discuss and develop an approach on how best to find solutions that would be beneficial to both the sustainability of the lobster stock and commerce between the countries.**

Motion made by Mr. Ruccio and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

### **HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 3, 2023)**

#### ***Press Release***

## **Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Best Management Practices for the Biomedical Industry**

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board accepted revisions to a guidance document on *Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Handling Horseshoe Crabs for Biomedical Purposes*. The document recommends broadly applicable industry standards that are expected to minimize mortality and injury of horseshoe crabs associated with the biomedical process. It also provides background on the horseshoe crab biomedical fishery, information on current regulations in the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crab related to biomedical collections, and research recommendations that could further inform the BMPs and potentially further reduce mortality or injury of biomedical horseshoe crabs.

The revised document is the product of a Board-appointed work group that was tasked with reviewing and updating the BMPs for handling biomedical catch since over a decade has passed since the BMPs were originally developed. The work group included technical committee and advisory panel members with expertise in horseshoe crab biology, ecology, and biomedical processing.

It is the Board's intention to keep this document up-to-date, with periodic updates in the future. The final document will be posted to the horseshoe crab webpage at <https://asmfc.org/species/horseshoe-crab> under quick links by the end of May.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

###

PR23-12



### ***Meeting Summary***

In addition to accepting the revised *Best Management Practices for Handling Biomedical Catch of Horseshoe Crabs*, the Board also discussed potential approaches for evaluating management objectives for the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab bait fishery. The Board agreed to form a work group to develop a survey that will be distributed to stakeholders including bait harvesters and dealers, biomedical fishery and industry participants, and environmental groups. The results of the survey will inform the Board on whether to consider future changes to horseshoe management for the Delaware Bay region.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

**To move to accept the draft BMP document as final and publish it on the ASMFC website.**

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion approved by consent.

**Move to pursue option 1 from the memo dated April 17, 2023 with the intent to include a wide range of stakeholders in a survey formulated by a workgroup of board members.**

Motion made by Ms. Madsen and seconded by Mr. Jacobson. Motion approved by consent.