



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2015 Winter Meeting Summary

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

2015 Winter Meeting
Alexandria, Virginia
February 3-5, 2015

Toni Kerns, ISFMP, or
Tina Berger, Communications
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703.842.0740

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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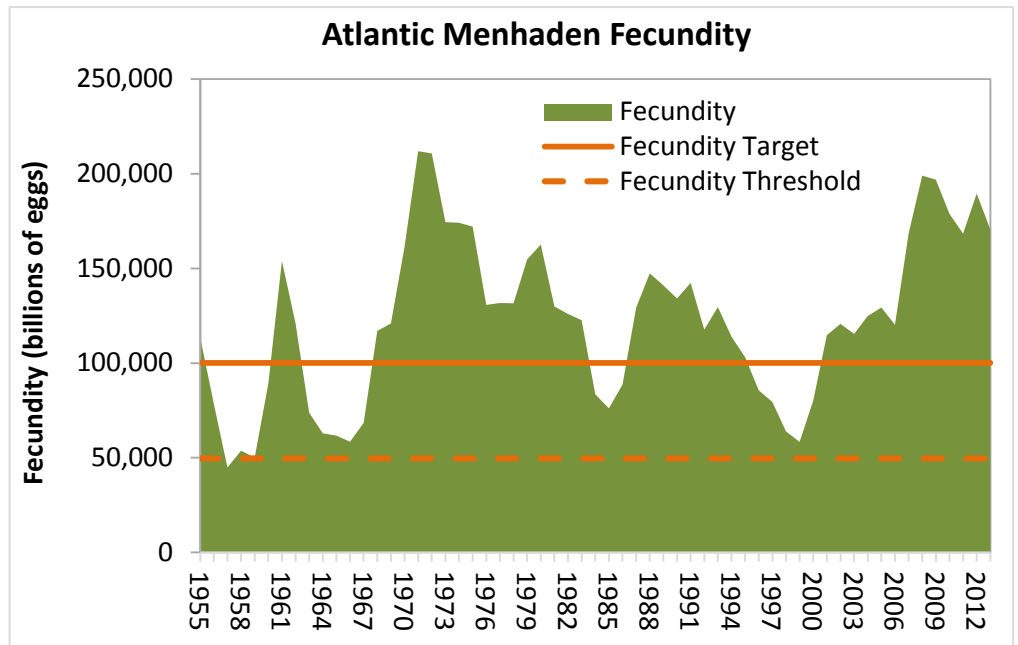
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 3, 2015)

Press Release

Atlantic Menhaden Benchmark Assessment Finds Resource Not Overfished and Overfishing Not Occurring

Alexandria, VA – The 2015 Atlantic menhaden benchmark assessment indicates the resource is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing relative to the current maximum spawning potential (MSP) based biological reference points. Population fecundity, a measure of reproductive capacity, is estimated to be 71% higher than the target value (100 trillion eggs). Additionally, total fishing mortality is estimated to be 0.27, below both the fishing mortality threshold (2.98) and target (1.03). The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved the benchmark stock assessment for management use.

“The assessment findings bring good news regarding the status of the Atlantic menhaden resource and sets the stage for the Board to begin to discuss how it wants to move forward in sustainably managing Atlantic menhaden. This discussion will include Board management objectives that address the needs of the reduction and bait fisheries as well as the ecological services menhaden provides as an important prey species,” stated Board Chair Robert



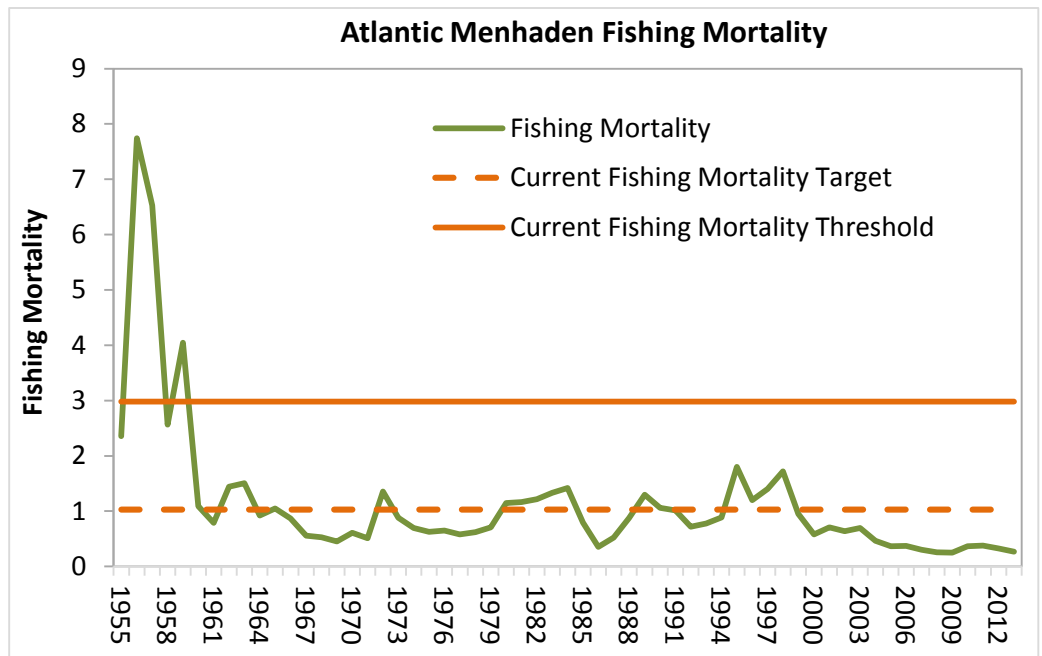
Boyles from South Carolina. “The assessment results are different from prior assessments and this is in large part due to the tremendous efforts of stakeholders, and state and federal scientists to improve upon both the data and modeling approaches used in the assessment. We are grateful for their hard work and dedication in advancing our understanding of the Atlantic menhaden stock status.”

Atlantic menhaden is harvested by both commercial reduction and bait fisheries. From 2010 to 2012, reduction fishery landings averaged 172,600 metric tons and are substantially lower than historical levels. Conversely, total bait landings have been increasing in recent years, averaging about 52,900 metric tons during 2010-2012, with peak landings of about 63,540 metric tons in 2012. In 2013, landings for both fisheries were reduced by 20%, consistent with the requirements of Amendment 2.

Through the consideration of new and existing datasets and the exploration of alternative model configurations, significant changes were made during the 2015 assessment to address the issues identified with the 2010 assessment. Below are a few of the major changes that led to significantly different assessment results.

1. Using new datasets, maturity at age was corrected, resulting in a higher estimated proportion of mature fish at ages 1, 2, and 3. This higher proportion of mature fish at the earlier ages resulted in a stock that had higher reproductive potential (i.e., increased fecundity) than previously estimated.

2. Two composite adult indices of relative abundance were created using nine new standardized fishery-independent indices that spanned a much broader spatial scale. This was a significant improvement from the 2010 benchmark assessment that used



one Chesapeake Bay fishery-dependent pound net index to characterize adult abundance for the entire stock.

3. Dome-shaped selectivity for all fishery fleets was used to account for the fact that larger sized individuals were observed in multiple fishery-independent surveys than captured by the bait and reduction fisheries during the entire history of sampling. This ultimately results in more fish at older ages because the larger fish are not being captured by the fisheries.

All these improvements combined led to significantly different assessment results. A more detailed description of the stock assessment results is available on the Commission’s website at http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/54d26f852015MenhadenStockAssessmentOverview_Feb2015.pdf.

Following the acceptance of the assessment, the Board tasked the Technical Committee with conducting a thorough review of the peer review findings and performing projections that explore different constant harvest scenarios based on the results of the assessment and the current stock status. The Board will review the projection analyses at the Commission’s Spring Meeting and further deliberate on management objectives that address the needs of the reduction and bait fisheries as well as the ecological services menhaden provides. The final assessment and peer review will be posted to the Commission website the week of February 9th, www.asmfc.org, on the Atlantic Menhaden webpage. For more information, please contact Mike Waine, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or mwaine@asmfc.org.

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PR15-02

Motions

Motion to accept the Atlantic menhaden stock assessment report and peer review report for Management use.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion carries without objection.

Move to approve John Dean and David Sikorski to the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion carries without objection

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee met in a closed session to discuss staff tenure and workload. The Committee reviewed the plans to meet in St. Augustine, Florida for the 2015 ASMFC Annual Meeting. Staff provided an update on the review of the Commission's guidance documents. Staff will provide suggested changes to the ISFMP Charter and the Rules and Regulations for Executive Committee review at the Spring Meeting.

Under other business, the Executive Committee discussed the trade-offs between three and four day meetings. The Committee agreed that there is little cost savings if Commissioners are required to travel the day before a three day meeting. The Committee agreed to consider providing additional detail on the criteria that can be used to appeal a Commission decision. Staff will provide draft language for consideration at the Spring Meeting. The final issue discussed was potential for increased weather related travel problems for winter meetings. The Committee did not make any recommended changes to the meeting schedule. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The ISFMP Policy Board met to discuss meeting protocols for the Northern Shrimp Section, the roles and responsibilities of the Committee on Economics and Social Science (CESS), the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Shark Draft Amendment 6, and the 2016 weakfish benchmark stock assessment terms of reference (TORs).

Under the ISFMP Charter, management boards and sections operate under Roberts Rules of Order, which includes voting on actions taken by the boards and sections. The Northern Shrimp Section is comprised of 3 states. Given the small number of states vested in the fishery, there was a request by one of the Section members that the Section consider acting by consensus versus voting. The Board discussed the request but decided to maintain the process outlined in the Charter in order to maintain consistency among its boards and sections.

The Board reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS). CESS requested the Board increase current Committee participation on ASMFC Technical Committees and Plan Development Teams. The CESS will continue assist the Board in identifying significant socioeconomic data gaps with Commission managed species and, when appropriate and budgetarily feasible, create Requests for Proposals. CESS will review and recommend to the Board its preferred consultants or researchers for socioeconomic data collection or analysis initiatives. The Board also suggested CESS create a set of standard socioeconomic data to be included in FMPs, in addition to the socioeconomic information already provided.

NOAA Fisheries HMS staff presented Draft Amendment 6 to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which proposes a range of management measures for the commercial shark fisheries, including pelagic, bottom longline, or gillnet gear fisheries. The proposed measures respond to a number of issues in these fisheries, including commercial landings that exceed the quotas, declining numbers of fishing permits since limited access was implemented, complex regulations, derby fishing conditions due to small quotas and short seasons, increasing numbers of regulatory discards, and declining market prices. In addition, these measures are based on recent determinations made by NOAA Fisheries as a result of the 2013 stock assessments for Atlantic sharpnose, which was found to be not overfished and not experiencing overfishing, and bonnethead sharks, whose stock status remains unknown because the assessment was not accepted.

The preferred alternatives are in the draft for the Atlantic coast include:

- **Permit Stacking:** Do not implement permit stacking (No Action).
- **Commercial Retention Limit:** Increase the LCS retention limit for directed permit holders to 55 LCS other than sandbar sharks per trip and adjust the sandbar shark research fishery quota to 75.7 mt dw (166,826 lb dw).
- **Atlantic Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas:** Split the Atlantic regional commercial quotas for certain LCS and SCS management groups along 34° 00' N Lat.; maintain SCS quota linkages in the southern sub-region; remove the SCS quota linkages in the northern sub-region and prohibit the harvest and landing of blacknose sharks in that sub-region; and establish a non-blacknose SCS TAC and maintain the current commercial base annual quota of 176.1 mt dw (388,222 lb dw).
- **Commercial Vessel Upgrading Restrictions:** Remove current upgrading restrictions for shark limited access permit holders.

The Board reviewed and approved the 2016 weakfish benchmark stock assessment and peer review TORs. The Board discussed the need for the stock assessment to explore the spatial component of the stock due to differences seen in stock availability north and south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the Terms of Reference for the Stock Assessment for Weakfish as well as the Peer Review Panel for Weakfish.

Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carries.

WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Winter Flounder Board Sets 2015 Commercial and Recreational Measures for Inshore Stocks

Alexandria, VA – The Commission's Winter Flounder Management Board maintained its winter flounder commercial and recreational management measures for the inshore waters of the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) for the 2015 fishing season (see Table 1).

Table 1. Minimum commercial and recreational management measures for the Inshore Winter Flounder FMP.

| Stock | Sector | Trip Limit/ Possession Limit | Size Limit | Season | Gear |
|--------|--------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|---|
| GOM | Commercial | 500 lbs/trip/ day | 12" | Maintain Closures | Minimum 6.5" square or diamond mesh in cod-end |
| | Recreational | 8 fish | 12" | NA | |
| SNE/MA | Commercial | 50 lbs 38 fish/trip/day | 12" | Maintain Closures | Minimum 6.5" square or diamond mesh in cod-end 100-lb mesh trigger |
| | Recreational | 2 fish | 12" | March 1 – December 31 | |

The Board maintains its commitment to work with the New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office to collaboratively manage winter flounder stocks throughout their range. For more information, please contact, Melissa Yuen, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at myuen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

PR15-04

Motions

No motions made.

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Draft Addendum XXIV for Public Comment

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum XXIV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Lobster Fishery Management Plan for public comment. Draft Addendum XXIV responds to recently finalized trap transfer regulations for the federal waters of Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2, 3, and Outer Cape Cod. While the majority of the implemented federal water measures are based on Commission recommendations and are consistent with the Commission plan, there are a few measures which are either inconsistent or are not addressed by the Commission plan. Specifically, the Draft Addendum includes options to better align state and federal measures regarding the conservation tax on trap allocations when whole fishing businesses are transferred, trap allocation transfer increments, and restrictions on trap allocation transfers among permit holders who are authorized to fish both state and federal waters within a single lobster management area.

States are not anticipated to conduct hearings on the Draft Addendum, since NOAA Fisheries has already held hearings on the same issues. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXIV, which can be obtained at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AmLobsterDraftAddendumXXIV_PublicComment.pdf or via the Commission’s website, www.asmfc.org, under *Public Input*. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on March 20, 2015 and should be forwarded to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries

Commission, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Lobster Draft Addendum XXIV).

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR15-03

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Management Board met to address a number of issues including review and approval of Draft Addendum XXIV for public comment, consider changes to the closed season for Lobster Conservation Management Area 5 (LCMA 5), and receive a progress report on the development of the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan. Draft Addendum XXIV, which addresses improving consistency between state and federal trap transfer processes was approved for public comment (see above press release). The Board also approved Maryland's request to remove the mandatory season closure for LCMA 5 in April and May. LCMA 5 will remain closed for February and March, and will re-open in April. Further management for the areas will be considered when the benchmark stock assessment is finalized, which will be in 2015.

To aid in the development of the Jonah Crab FMP, Board members from Massachusetts and Rhode Island will work with Plan Development Team to address a number of outstanding issues. These issues include 1) determining what constitutes a directed trip versus a non-directed trip to help characterize the fishery; 2) identify current fishery practices to help determine appropriate management options for inclusion in the Draft FMP; and 3) determining permit requirements for participants in the Jonah crab fishery. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve Draft Addendum XXIV for Public Comment, contingent on changes discussed during the Board meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Baum. Motion passes unanimously.

Main Motion

Move to reconsider the following motion from October 2014:

Move to approve a closed season from April 30 to May 31 for Lobster Conservation Management Area 4 and 5 to achieve the required 10% reduction in Addendum XVII, and allow the setting of unbaited lobster traps 1 week prior to the season reopening, and replace the following measures for LCMA 5: a closed season of February 1-March 31 and with mandatory v-notching.

Motion made by Mr. O'Connell and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes (Roll Call: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, MD, VA; Opposed – NJ; Abstention – NMFS).

Motion to Amend

Motion to amend to include LCMA 4.

Motion made by Mr. Baum and second by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion fails.

Move to endorse Maine’s pilot trap tag program for one year.

Motion made by Mr. Train and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes (9 in favor, 2 opposed).

NORTHEAST AREA MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) Board met to receive reports from its three surveys and technical committees, as well as to discuss emerging issues. The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Nearshore Trawl Survey, the Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey, and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Bottom Trawl Survey provided updates on their 2014 activities and summarized the increasing use of survey data in stock assessments. The Board also received reports from the Operations and Data Management Committees and provided feedback on how best to achieve Committee tasks. The Operations Committee presented the 2015 Operations Plan for Board review. The NEAMAP Board offered a number of suggested minor edits to the 2015 Operations Plan. The Operations Committee will review the changes and finalize the Plan for Board approval. Finally, Board members discussed the creation of an Industry Advisory Panel to provide guidance to the surveys. The Board noted that this Panel would need clearly defined goals for advice recommendations and agreed to follow-up on the idea in the future. For more information, please contact Shanna Madsen, Fisheries Science Coordinator, smadsen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

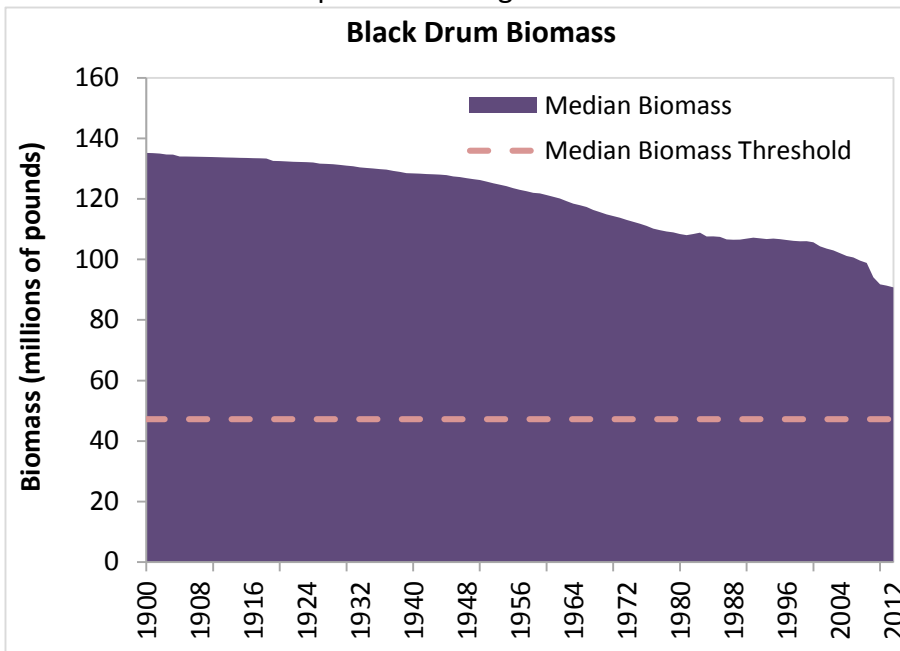
SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Press Release

Black Drum Benchmark Assessment Finds Resource Not Overfished and Overfishing Not Occurring

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Management Board approved the 2015 Black Drum Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use. Based on the

assessment results, black drum is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Median biomass was estimated to have declined slowly and steadily from 135.2 million pounds in 1900 to 90.78 million pounds in 2012, though the median biomass estimate in 2012 is still well above the median biomass that produces maximum sustainable yield (B_{MSY} ; 47.26 million pounds). The median maximum sustainable yield (MSY) estimate is 2.12 million pounds and provides an annual catch target that can be used to sustainably manage the fishery. The median



overfishing limit (OFL), which provides a catch threshold indicating when overfishing is occurring, is estimated to be 4.12 million pounds.

Black drum are a data-poor species. Their rarity and migratory patterns lead to highly variable levels of encounter in state surveys and fisheries. Further, limited size composition data has been collected, making the use of age-structured models unreliable. For these reasons, data-poor, catch-based modeling methods were used for the assessment. These models estimate reference points based on historical catch data and life history information.

Three modeling methods were evaluated to estimate catch reference points for assessing population health such as MSY and OFL. These methods included Depletion-Corrected Average Catch, Catch-MSY, and Depletion-Based Stock Reduction analysis (DB-SRA). These methods have been evaluated against data-rich assessments and are considered robust given inputs and assumptions are correct. DB-SRA was selected as the preferred method based on the underlying configuration of the methods, the required inputs, and performance of the methods evaluated through sensitivity analysis and simulated projections.

The Black Drum Stock Assessment Subcommittee noted the black drum stock assessment would be improved by applying a more complex, data-rich assessment method such as a statistical catch-at-age model. Data limitations that need to be addressed to successfully make this transition are biological sampling (length and age) of recreational and commercial fisheries and a fishery-independent survey tracking abundance and the age structure of the mature stock. Additionally, information about fish discarded in commercial fisheries and movement of fish would improve the assessment.

Under the Black Drum Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which was approved in 2013, states were required to implement a maximum possession limit and minimum size limit (of at least 12 inches) by January 1, 2014, with an additional increase of the minimum size limit to at least 14 inches required by January 1, 2016. The FMP also includes a management framework to adaptively respond to future concerns or changes in the fishery or population. Given the assessment findings, the Board choose to not make any additional changes to the management program at this time.

A more detailed description of the stock assessment results is available on the Commission's website at http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/54d3a0462015BlackDrumAssessmentOverview_Feb2015.pdf. The final assessment and peer review reports will be posted to the Commission website the week of February 9th, www.asmfc.org, on the Black Drum webpage. For more information on the Stock Assessment, please contact Jeff Kipp, Stock Assessment Scientist, at jkipp@asmfc.org; and for more information on black drum management, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.

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PR15-05

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic State/Federal Management Board met to review a number of items including the Black Drum Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, an update on southern flounder management, and the recent publication of Amendment 20B to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Coastal Migratory Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

Dr. Daniel provided an overview on a recent southern flounder stock assessment conducted by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NC DMF). Southern flounder range from Virginia through the Gulf of Mexico, seasonally migrating from coastal estuaries offshore to the continental shelf to spawn in the fall through winter. Southern flounder are understood to be single stock in the South Atlantic from Virginia to Florida based on tagging studies from NC DMF (1980s-1990s) and state Sea Grant programs (2000s). Additionally, genetics research have shown that stock mixing may be occurring in the South Atlantic, further highlighting the migratory nature of the resource, not only nearshore to offshore, but also from north to south. In terms of harvest and landings, Virginia to Florida recreationally harvest southern flounder, and a significant commercial inshore fishery is prosecuted from in North Carolina and Florida. Currently, Virginia through Florida manage southern flounder through individual state by state FMPs. The NC DMF stock assessment indicated there has been decadal decline in indices of abundance, as well as a declining trend in North Carolina commercial landings. Due to significant emigration of the resource out of the North Carolina coastal estuarine system, the state-level stock assessment was rejected by the peer review panel. To address management and abundance concerns moving forward, the Board discussed ways to improve the exchange of data and cooperation between the South Atlantic states of Virginia to Florida to improve interstate management and move toward the development of a regional stock assessment. The Board did not move forward with initiating a new ASMFC FMP or stock assessment.

The Board was briefed on Amendment 20B to the SAFMC Coastal Migratory Pelagic Species FMP. Amendment 20B was published on January 27, 2015 and stipulates changes to the Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial quota, creating two new subzones on the Atlantic coast (Northern subzone: New York/Connecticut/Rhode Island to the North Carolina/South Carolina border; and Southern subzone: North Carolina/South Carolina border south to the Florida Miami-Dade County line). Amendment 20B was initiated to address concerns that the previous Atlantic commercial quota could be filled by fishermen in one state before fish are available to fishermen in other states. Approximately 19.9% of the coastwide annual catch limit/quota will be allocated to the Northern subzone, with the remaining 80.1% allocated to the Southern subzone. Quota for each of the new subzones can be transferred between zones, with consent from the states in each zone. NOAA Fisheries will monitor the commercial quotas separately by zone, and close federal waters in each zone when the respective quota is met or expected to be met. Amendment 20B will take effect on March 1st, 2015. The Board decided to not take any action in response to the Amendment 20B at this time.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the Black Drum stock assessment and peer review report for management use.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion carries.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 4, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board Continues Summer Flounder Recreational Regional Management for 2015 & Approves State Plans for 2015 Recreational Black Sea Bass & Scup Fisheries

Alexandria, VA –The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, continuing adaptive regional management for the 2015 recreational summer flounder fisheries. The approved regions are Massachusetts; Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina. The Addendum provides the option for the Board to extend the adaptive regional management approach into 2016 through Board action.

Addendum XXVI was initiated to consider a continuation of regional management approved in Addendum XXV. Both addenda address concern that summer flounder management measures under state-by-state conservation equivalency were not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities to the resource. The adaptive regional management approach is designed to respond to changes in resource availability and effort in the fishery. The Board decided to continue 2014 management measures for the 2015 fishing season.

For black sea bass, the Board approved the methodologies used by the states of Massachusetts through New Jersey to establish their minimum size, bag limits, and season lengths to achieve a 33% reduction in the 2015 recreational harvest levels from the 2014 harvest level. The 33% reduction is required in order to achieve but not exceed that 2015 recreational harvest limit.

For scup, the Board approved the maintenance of 2014 recreational management measures for the 2015 fishing season, with the exception of Connecticut which will increase its size and possession limit to be consistent with the other states’ private and for-hire fisheries. States will finalize their regulations over the next couple of weeks for the recreational summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup fisheries.

Addendum XXVI will be available on the Commission website by the end of February. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR15-06

Motions

Move to approve Option 2 Adaptive Regional Management as the management program under Addendum XXVI.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passes.

Move to approve regional option 1, status quo.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion passes (Roll Call: In favor – MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Opposed – NJ; Abstentions – USFWS, NMFS).

Move to approve Option 2 under Section 3.1.1 Timeframe for Summer Flounder Measures.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion carries.

Move to approve Addendum XXVI as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion passes (Roll Call: In favor – MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Opposed – NJ; Abstentions – USFWS, NMFS).

Move to approve the black sea bass proposals and methodologies for use in 2015 management as approved by the technical committee.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries (Roll Call: In favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Opposed – NJ; Abstentions – NY, USFWS, NMFS).

Move to approve Connecticut’s reduction in minimum size (10”) and increase in bag limit to 30 fish to be consistent with the states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York for 2015.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Roll call vote; motion carries without objection.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 5, 2015)

Press Release

**ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Board
Approves State Implementation Plans to Reduce Harvest**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved Addendum IV implementation plans and conservation equivalency proposals for all the states and jurisdictions. The implementation plans, which were reviewed and approved by the Technical Committee, contain state-specific management options that achieve a 25% reduction in harvest from 2013 levels for the coastal fishery and 20.5% reduction in harvest from 2012 levels for the Chesapeake Bay fishery. Given the wide range of options being considered, the Board recommended neighboring states and jurisdictions work together to implement consistent management measures, especially on shared water bodies. This recommendation was also supported by the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee. Additionally, the Board reminded states there is greater certainty in the percent reductions of simple management measures (i.e., changes in bag or size limits) relative to more complex measures (e.g., slot/trophy fish and mode-specific options).

The Board also tasked the Technical Committee with expanding the exploration of stock-specific reference points to include the other producer areas, such as the Delaware Bay and the Hudson River stocks, in addition to the Chesapeake Bay. The Board will review progress on the stock-specific reference points at its Spring Meeting in May.

States and jurisdictions must have final measures for implementing Addendum IV in place by the beginning of their 2015 fishing seasons. For more information, please contact Mike Waine, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR15-08

Motions

Main Motion

Move to approve all state implementation plans including any conservation equivalency proposals for both Recreational and Commercial fisheries submitted to and approved by the Technical Committee for the states and jurisdictions of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Motion made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend the motion to include an additional option for Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission for a spring trophy fishery, pending approval by the TC, of one fish at 28-36" or one fish over 40".

Motion made by Mr. O'Connell and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion carries unanimously.

Main Motion as Amended

Move to approve all state implementation plans including any conservation equivalency proposals for both Recreational and Commercial fisheries submitted to and approved by the Technical Committee for the states and jurisdictions of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, and North Carolina and to include an additional option for Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission for a spring trophy fishery, pending approval by the TC, of one fish at 28-36" or one fish over 40".

Roll call vote; motion passes unanimously.

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 5, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Tautog Management Board accepted the 2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use. Unlike previous assessments, which assessed the stock on a coastwide basis, the 2015 assessment evaluated stock status regionally to reflect differences in life history information and exploitation patterns. The stock assessment is the most comprehensive to date, and provides multiple alternatives for how tautog can be managed regionally.

The assessment presents a preferred three-unit stock structure: Southern New England (Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut), Mid-Atlantic (New York/New Jersey), and DelMarVa (Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia). In addition, the assessment provides an alternative three-region definition where Connecticut is part of the Mid-Atlantic region, and a two-region definition with a Northern stock (MA through NY) and a Southern stock (NJ through NC). The assessment proposed new biomass and fishing mortality reference points for all regional stock structures as alternatives for management use.

Upon acceptance of the assessment and peer review, the Board tasked the Tautog Technical Committee to continue exploring reference points for all possible stock unit definitions. This analysis will be presented to the Board at the Commission's Spring Meeting at which time the Board will consider next steps for management.

A press release and stock assessment overview on the details of the benchmark assessment will be released by February 10th. For more information, please contact Melissa Yuen, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at myuen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to accept the Tautog Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion passes (7 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 null).

Main Motion

Move to move forward with exploration of two regions, northern and southern, for tautog management.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Augustine.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to add “with management measures in each region to end overfishing and rebuild overfished regions to target biomass levels.”

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion fails (4 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Main Motion

Move to move forward with exploration of two regions, northern and southern, for tautog management with management measures in each region to end overfishing and rebuild overfished regions to target biomass levels.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to develop an addendum with 3 regions, northern, southern, and DelMarVa, with management measures in each region to end overfishing and rebuild overfished regions to target biomass levels.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion tabled.

Move to table motion until May meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Allen. Motion carries (8 in favor, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve the 2013 FMP report and *de minimis* status for Delaware and North Carolina for commercial fisheries for 2015.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion carries unanimously.

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 5, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Board reviewed state compliance and the FMP Review for the 2013 fishing season. The Board granted Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts *de minimis* status for shad, and New Hampshire and Massachusetts *de minimis* status for river herring. All of these states have been granted *de minimis* in the past. The Board approved New Hampshire's request to remove the monitoring requirement for the Taylor River. The Board also received updates on Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, New England Fishery Management Council and River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG) actions and progress. For more information, please contact Marin Hawk, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mhawk@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the 2014 FMP Review and *de minimis* status for shad for the states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts; and *de minimis* status for river herring for the states of New Hampshire and Massachusetts for the 2015 fishery.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion approved without objection.

Move to approve the proposal from New Hampshire to discontinue monitoring on the Taylor River

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion approved without objection