



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2023 Winter Meeting Summary

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

2023 Winter Meeting
January 31 – February 2, 2023

For more information, please
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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Herring Management Board met to consider setting specifications for the 2023-2025 fishing years for Atlantic herring.

In September 2022, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) voted on a 2023-2025 specifications package which was later submitted to NOAA Fisheries for review and approval. NEFMC's recommended specifications are based on the 2022 Atlantic herring stock assessment and recommendations from the NEFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee, which are consistent with the Atlantic herring biomass-based control rule and with the Atlantic herring rebuilding plan. NOAA Fisheries is planning to publish an interim final rule in February 2023 to implement the 2023-2025 specifications package. The Board adopted the 2023-2025 specifications package as recommended by NEFMC, contingent on the final rule being published by NOAA Fisheries.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at EFranke@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to adopt the following specifications for the 2023-2025 fishing years for Atlantic herring as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council, contingent on the final rule being published by NOAA Fisheries:

For 2023

- Annual Catch Limit (ACL) = 12,429 mt
- Domestic Annual Harvest = 12,429 mt
- Area 1A Sub-ACL = 3,592 mt
- Area 1B Sub-ACL = 534 mt
- Area 2 Sub-ACL = 3,455 mt
- Area 3 Sub-ACL = 4,847 mt

For 2024

- Annual Catch Limit (ACL) = 19,189 mt
- Domestic Annual Harvest = 19,189 mt
- Area 1A Sub-ACL = 5,546 mt
- Area 1B Sub-ACL = 825 mt
- Area 2 Sub-ACL = 5,335 mt
- Area 3 Sub-ACL = 7,484 mt

For 2025

- Annual Catch Limit (ACL) = 23,961 mt
- Domestic Annual Harvest = 23,961 mt
- Area 1A Sub-ACL = 6,925 mt for 2025
- Area 1B Sub-ACL = 1,030 mt for 2025
- Area 2 Sub-ACL = 6,661 mt for 2025
- Area 3 Sub-ACL = 9,345 mt for 2025

For all three years:

- Border Transfer = 0 mt each year
- Fixed Gear Set-Aside = 30 mt each year
- Research Set-Aside as % of Sub-ACLs = 0% each year

Motion made by Ms. Griffin and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2023)

Press Release

American Lobster Draft Addendum XXVII Approved for Public Comment *Addendum Considers 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 Draft Addendum XXVII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comment. The Draft Addendum considers implementing management measures – specifically gauge and escape vent sizes – to provide additional protection to the spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock. The Draft Addendum also considers immediate action upon final approval to standardize some management measures within and across the Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) that include 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 exponentially 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 lower densities of settlement could foreshadow decline in recruitment and landings. In the most recent years of the time series, declines in other recruitment indices have also been observed.

Given the economic importance of the lobster fishery to many coastal communities in New England, especially in Maine, potential reductions in landings could have vast socioeconomic impacts. In addition, the 2015 Stock Assessment combined the GOM and GBK stocks into a single biological unit due to evidence of migration between the two regions. As a result, there are now varying management measures within a single biological stock. In response to these two issues, Draft Addendum XXVII considers the standardization of management measures across LCMAs. The purpose of considering more consistency in measures is to resolve discrepancies between the regulations for state and federal permit-holders, to provide a consistent conservation strategy, and simplify enforcement across management areas and interstate commerce.

Draft Addendum XXVII considers two approaches for implementing changes to gauge and escape vent sizes to enhance protection of the GOM/GBK spawning stock. One approach would establish a trigger mechanism whereby pre-determined management changes would be implemented upon reaching a

defined trigger level based on observed changes in recruitment abundance indices. The second approach would establish a schedule for implementing changes to the gauge and escape vent sizes. The proposed measures include an increase to the minimum gauge size and escape vent sizes in LCMA 1 (Gulf of Maine) and decreases to the maximum gauge size in LCMA 3 (offshore federal waters) and Outer Cape Cod. The proposed gauge and escape vent sizes are expected to increase the proportion of

the population that is able to reproduce before being harvested by the fishery, and to enhance stock resiliency by protecting larger lobsters of both sexes.

The Draft Addendum will be posted to the website next week at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. A subsequent press release will provide the details on the public hearing schedule and how to submit written comments. The Board will meet to review submitted comment and consider final action on the addendum in May 2023 at the Commission's Spring Meeting in Arlington, VA. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR23-02

Meeting Summary

In addition to approving Draft Addendum XXVII on increasing protection of spawning stock biomass of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock for public comment, the American Lobster Management Board (Board) also considered a report from NOAA Fisheries on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) and progress on Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, and an update on the implementation of American Lobster Addendum XXIX and Jonah Crab Addendum IV.

NOAA Fisheries staff presented the results of the ALWTRT meeting in late 2022. The ALWTRT's goal was to recommend measures in the pot/trap and gillnet fisheries along the Atlantic coast to reduce mortality and serious injury of right whales in US commercial fisheries to below the Potential Biological Removal level required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. NOAA staff reviewed the types of measures considered and stakeholder input provided by the ALWTRT, noting that a consensus recommendation was not produced. NOAA staff also updated the Board on recent North Atlantic right whale entanglement incidents.

Staff provided an update on the implementation of American Lobster Addendum XXIX and Jonah Crab Addendum IV, which establish electronic tracking requirements for federally-permitted vessels in both fisheries. The Work Group that was formed to solicit and review quotes from vessel tracking device manufacturers received five applications for type approval. Four devices met all of the criteria specified in the Addenda, and have been approved for use in the fishery. Over the next several months, ASMFC staff will work with the states to provide information on the approved tracking devices to harvesters and establish administrative programs to implement the addendum requirements.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to modify Option E by including a 1/4" maximum gauge reduction in LCMA 3 with each annual adjustment, and set a maximum gauge size in the OCC management area of 6 1/2" and include a 1/4" maximum gauge reduction in OCC with each annual adjustment. In the final year of adjustments, the maximum gauge size in LCMA 3 and OCC would be 6" at a minimum. The vent size in LCMA 1, LCMA 3 and OCC would be adjusted once, at the same time the final gauge size is implemented. The Board, during final action will specify the years of the schedule, with the first step occurring no later than 2026, and the second step occurring 2 years later.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion approved by consensus.

Move to approve Addendum XXVII for public comment, as amended today.

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

WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2023)

Press Release

Management Track Assessments Find Winter Flounder Stocks for the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Not Experiencing Overfishing

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Winter Flounder Management Board reviewed the results of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center’s (NEFSC) management track stock assessments* for the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder stocks. These assessments found GOM winter flounder is not experiencing overfishing while the SNE/MA winter flounder stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The overfished status for the GOM stock remains unknown. The management track assessments for both stocks include data through 2021.

SNE/MA winter flounder experienced a change in stock status from overfished to not overfished due to a change in the years of recruitment estimates used to estimate biological reference points. Instead of drawing upon the entire time series of recruitment estimates, the projections now only use recruitment estimates from the past 20 years (2002-2021). The SNE/MA winter flounder stock is most likely not capable of achieving the high levels of recruitment that were observed prior to 2000 due to changes in environmental conditions; therefore, using a truncated recruitment time series of only the past 20 years better reflects current stock condition. However, despite a change in stock status; trends in survey indices and model estimates all continue to indicate the SNE/MA stock is in poor condition.

The GOM stock uses a modeling method that incorporates survey indices of abundance to obtain area-swept biomass and exploitation estimates. There have been time series lows in fishery removals (harvest and discards) for GOM winter flounder in recent years. Overall, the indices of abundance have not responded positively to the large declines in commercial and recreational removals since the 1980s. However, there were increases in the fall 2021 and spring 2021 and 2022 area-swept biomass estimates, which, if they continue, could be the beginning of a response to continued low fishery removals. It should be noted, however, that no survey data is available for 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, which is a source of uncertainty in this area-swept assessment that relies on survey data.

Given this information, [specifications recommended by New England Fishery Management Council](#), and recommendations from the Technical Committee and Advisory Panel, the Board maintained 2023 recreational and commercial measures for the GOM and SNE/MA winter flounder stocks for the 2024-2025 fishing years (see Table 1).

* Management track assessments are similar to the Commission’s stock assessment updates, where the model from the most recent benchmark assessment is updated to include recent data. However, with the NEFSC’s process, some changes are allowed to be made to the model, such as a change to the recruitment time series used to estimate biological reference points that occurred for SNE/MA winter flounder.

Table 1. 2024-2025 Winter Flounder Commercial and Recreational Measures for Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Stocks.

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"	Open all year	
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"	Maintain closures	

The next management track assessments for both stocks are scheduled for 2024, and the next research track assessment, the equivalent of the Commission’s benchmark stock assessments, are scheduled for both stocks in 2026. As part of this analysis, the NEFSC will attempt to incorporate climate data into the SNE/MA winter flounder stock assessment. The management track assessment reports for GOM and SNE/MA winter flounder are available on the Commission’s website at <http://www.asmfc.org/species/winter-flounder> under Stock Assessment Reports. An overview of the assessment is available at http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/63d6c34bWinterFlounderStockAssessmentOverview_Feb2022.pdf. It was developed to aid media and interested stakeholders in better understanding the assessment results.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org.

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PR23-01

Meeting Summary

The Winter Flounder Management Board approved state compliance and Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Reviews for the 2021 fishing year for winter flounder. All states’ regulations were found to be consistent with the FMP, and the Board approved all *de minimis* status for New Jersey’s commercial fishery. The Board also considered and approved the nomination of Allan Butler of Massachusetts to the Winter Flounder Advisory Panel.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at TBauer@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve status quo commercial and recreational Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic and Gulf of Maine winter flounder measures for the 2024-2025 fishing years.

Motion made by Mr. McManus and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the Winter Flounder FMP Review for the 2021 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for New Jersey commercial fisheries.

Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Allan Butler of MA to the Winter Flounder Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to consider selecting management measures and final approval of Addendum I to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass.

The Board initiated Draft Addendum I in August 2021 after deciding that changes to the striped bass commercial quota system would not be considered during the ongoing development of Amendment 7. The Draft Addendum considers voluntary quota transfers which could provide some relief to states seeking additional quota. In November 2022, the Board approved Draft Addendum I for public comment with proposed options to consider permitting voluntary transfers of commercial quota, including options based on stock status and options allowing the Board to set criteria for transfers on a regular basis.

The Board received a summary of the 1,979 written public comments and 186 public hearing comments submitted for Draft Addendum I, as well as a report and recommendations from the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel. After initial discussion on the proposed management options, the Board voted to postpone action on Addendum I until May 2023 when analysis from the Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) will be available. The Board tasked the TC with conducting stock projections to determine how specific quota utilization scenarios would impact the stock and rebuilding timeline. The first scenario assumes the entire ocean commercial quota is harvested and the second scenario assumes the entire ocean quota is harvested except for New Jersey's quota, since New Jersey's quota is reallocated to the recreational fishery and therefore unavailable for commercial quota transfers. These scenarios would be compared to the baseline scenario which assumes commercial quota utilization does not change. The TC projections will incorporate preliminary 2022 MRIP data in response to the Board's interest in reviewing 2022 removals data as soon as possible (other 2022 removal data will be considered if available).

The Board's rationale for this TC task is to address concerns raised by a majority of public comments that commercial quota transfers would negatively impact stock rebuilding. Board

members asked questions regarding how much commercial quota transfers would increase the fishing mortality rate, and what the resulting impact on the probability of 2029 rebuilding would be. The TC projections for May 2023 discussion are intended to address these questions.

2022 removals will be incorporated into the Fishery Management Plan Review of the 2022 Fishing Year. For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at EFranke@asmfc.org.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to approve Option D (Board discretion commercial quota transfer provision (with overfished conservation tax)).

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to postpone action on Addendum I and task the Technical Committee (TC) 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 TC 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.

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion passes (13 in favor, 3 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to postpone action on Addendum I and task the TC 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 TC 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.

Motion passes (15 in favor, 1 opposed).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 1, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee (Committee) met to discuss several issues, including Consolidated Appropriations Act (CCA) Update; potential stipend for Legislative and Governor Appointee (LGA) Commissioners; collection of sharks for scientific and educational purposes; distribution of Fishery Disaster Funding in FY23 Omnibus Spending Bill; and Northeast biological sampling. The following action items resulted from the Committee's discussions:

- Staff provided an update on the balance in the CAA cooperative agreement. There is projected to be roughly \$8.6 million remaining that will be reallocated to states who indicated additional need

after the November Executive Committee meeting. Eight states indicated a need and a proposed reallocation was approved at the Executive Committee meeting.

- A discussion was held regarding providing a stipend to the LGA Commissioners for their service to ASMFC. The discussion focused on providing stipends for participation in meetings beyond the four quarterly meeting weeks and joint meetings with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, noting this work is beyond the traditional scope of Commissioner responsibilities. The Committee asked staff to research potential tax advantages for Commissioners for volunteering their time to the Commission. This issue will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.
- The coordination of the collection of sharks for scientific and educational purpose was discussed. Currently, the states have different procedures for approving and issuing permits for collecting sharks. The states agreed that improved coordination would help ensure that the collection of sharks is not having a negative impact on the populations of sharks. If additional coordination between the states and NOAA Fisheries is necessary, the issue will be referred to the Coastal Shark Management Board.
- The Committee discussed the distribution of \$300 Million in Fishery Disaster Funding provided in the FY23 Omnibus Spending Bill. Staff was directed to send a letter to NOAA Fisheries requesting that the available funding be partially applied to fishery disasters on the Atlantic coast. The letter will also request that NOAA work with Congress to streamline the process for fishery disaster declaration, funding, and spend plan approval.
- Biological sampling in the Northeast has been significantly reduced in the past few years. The reduction erodes the assessment and management of multiple species in the northeast. The states agreed to explore opportunities to assist NOAA Fisheries in collecting fish length and otolith samples. A meeting between the states and NOAA Fisheries will be scheduled to determine where there are opportunities for collaboration.
- Chair Woodward noted that the Commission received a letter from The Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance expressing concerns about the management of horseshoe crabs.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

No motions were made.

AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The American Eel Management Board met to consider the 2022 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Reports and the Fishery Management Plan Review (FMP) and state compliance reports for the 2021 fishing year.

The American eel stock is at or near historically low levels due to a combination of historical overfishing, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease. The stock assessment presentation outlined the continued challenges for assessing the species, models and analyses used in the assessment, an index-based method for setting catch limits, and stock status. For this assessment, a delay-difference model was explored and associated reference points were developed, but the Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) did not recommend it for management use. Instead, the SAS used an index-based method called I_{TARGET} to determine stock status and to develop catch advice.

The Peer Review Panel found that the stock assessment sufficiently addressed all terms of reference, but recommended additional work to test the robustness of the I_{TARGET} method for setting catch limits using a simulation approach within a management strategy evaluation (MSE) framework before it is used for management. The SAS indicated that additional simulation work is possible to address several of the peer review comments and would be more informative than an MSE. Additionally, the SAS and Peer Review Panel provided differing advice on stock status. Consistent with the Commission's Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process, the Board tasked the SAS with providing justification for deviating from the advice from the Peer Review Panel the peer review advice. The SAS will provide a report and additional analyses to the Board at a future meeting.

The Board also approved the American Eel FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2021 fishing year. Commercial yellow eel landings increased in 2021 compared to 2020, but are still low relative to prior years. The Board also approved *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Georgia, and Florida for their yellow eel fisheries. Florida did not meet the *de minimis* criteria because their landings for the last two years slightly exceeded 1% of the coastwide landings. However, the Board agreed to grant Florida continued *de minimis* status because the state's contribution to the coastwide landings of yellow eel has increased as a result of the decrease in total landings.

For more information on the stock assessment, please contact Dr. Kristen Anstead, Stock Assessment Scientist, at kanstead@asmfc.org; and for more information on management, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to approve the American Eel FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2021 Fishing year, and *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, and Georgia for their yellow eel fisheries.

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

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to add Florida to the *de minimis* request.

Motion made by Ms. Burgess and seconded by Mr. Maniscalco. Motion passes (14 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention, 1 null).

Main Motion as Amended

Move to approve the American Eel FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2021 Fishing year, and de minimis requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Florida, and Georgia for their yellow eel fisheries.

Motion passes (18 in favor, 1 opposed).

Move to elect Kris Kuhn as Vice Chair of the American Eel Management Board.

Motion made by Ms. Madsen and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes by consent.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to review the Plan Review Team (PRT) report on state implementation plans for Addendum I and to consider Technical Addendum I to Addendum I for approval.

The PRT determined that each state satisfied the requirements of Addendum I to Amendment 3 by the May 1, 2023 deadline established by the Board and gave a few recommendations for states to consider. The Board approved the state implementation plans, as presented.

The Board also approved Technical Addendum I to Addendum I, which corrects a paragraph in Addendum I to redistribute relinquished quota based on landings from 2018, 2019, 2021. This change is consistent with the timeframe approved by the Board in Addendum I to allocate commercial quota. The Technical Addendum will become effective for the 2023 fishing year, and the 1,000,000 pounds relinquished by the state of Delaware will be redistributed according to the new timeframe.

For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the state implementation plans for Addendum I to Amendment 3.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion carries without opposition.

Move to approve Technical Addendum I to Addendum I and have the measures become effective for the 2023 fishing year.

Motion made by Mr. Kuhn and seconded by Ms. Meserve. Motion carries without objection.

SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2023)

Press Release

ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Board Sets Quota for 2023/2024 Fishing Season

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Spiny Dogfish Management Board approved a coastwide commercial quota for the 2023/2024 fishing season (May 1-April 30) of 12 million pounds (state-specific allocations are provided in table below). The quota is consistent with the measures recommended to NOAA

Fisheries by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). The Board also maintained the commercial trip limit in state waters of 7,500 pounds for the northern region states of Maine through Connecticut. The states of New York through North Carolina have the ability to set state-specific trip limits based on the needs of their fisheries. The Commission’s actions are final and apply to state waters (0-3 miles from shore). The MAFMC and NEFMC will forward their recommendations for federal waters (3 –200 miles from shore) to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Administrator for final approval.

Spiny Dogfish State Allocations (in pounds) for the 2023-2024 Fishing Season

	Northern Region (ME-CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	7,500	To be specified by the individual southern region states					
Allocation	58%	2.71%	7.64%	0.90%	5.92%	10.80%	14.04%
<i>2022-2023</i>	17,144,556	800,413	2,259,728	264,866	1,749,935	3,191,020	4,149,062
2023-2024	6,960,000	324,935	917,359	107,525	710,403	1,295,426	1,684,352

* Any overages in the above quota allocations will be deducted from that region’s or state’s quota allocation in the subsequent year. Similarly, any eligible rollovers from one season can be applied to that region’s or state’s quota allocation the following year.

The 2023/2024 coastwide quota represents a 59.4% reduction from the current fishing season’s coastwide quota of 29,559,580 pounds. The decreased quota is based on declining trends in several indicators including survey abundance, catch per unit of effort, pup production, and dogfish growth. A research track stock assessment was completed in late 2022, and management advice will be provided through the Northeast Fisheries Science Center’s management track assessment that is scheduled for June.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR23-03

Motions

Move to adopt a 12-million-pound commercial quota for the 2023/2024 fishing year (May 1-April 30) for spiny dogfish, with a 7,500-pound trip limit for the Northern Region, consistent with the actions of the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council and New England Fishery Management Council.

Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Move to nominate Pat Geer as Vice-Chair of the Spiny Dogfish Board.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion passes with no objection.

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 2, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Management Board met to consider an update to the North Carolina American shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan (SFMP); receive a progress update on the River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment; consider the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review for the 2021 fishing year; consider approval of Advisory Panel (AP) nominations; and elect a Vice-Chair.

The Board considered an update to the North Carolina SFMP for American shad, which is required for all states and jurisdictions that have a commercial fishery for American shad under Amendment 3 to the Shad and River Herring FMP. Plans are updated and reviewed by the Technical Committee every five years. As a plan update, the general framework of the plan remains relatively the same with some changes to a few of the sustainability parameters to better reflect the data currently being collected and how that data analysis is applied. Commercial fisheries season dates have been changed from fixed season dates to potential time frames in which the fishery can occur to improve management flexibility. For the recreational fishery, the statewide bag limit was changed from a 10 fish shad aggregate to a 10 fish shad aggregate with only one of those fish permitted to be an American shad, resulting in a potential reduction in American shad harvest. The Board approved the presented SFMP.

The Board received an update on the river herring benchmark stock assessment, which outlined the ongoing work of the Life History and Index Working Groups of the Stock Assessment Subcommittee, and gave the schedule for the Methods Workshop. The assessment is scheduled to be presented to the Board at the Annual Meeting in October 2023.

The Board also reviewed the FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2021 fishing year. In 2021, river herring landings were approximately 2.11 million pounds, which was a 12% increase from 2020, including a 99.7% decrease in bycatch landings. However, it was noted that the dramatic decrease in bycatch could be attributable to the elimination of the Massachusetts portside sampling program and potential differences in NOAA's Northeast Fishery Observer Program data. Non-confidential American shad landings totaled 195,642 pounds, a 39% decrease from 2020. Bycatch landings increased by 96% to represent 17% of the total commercial landings. Hickory shad landings amounted to 99,419 pounds, an 8% increase from 2020, although bycatch landings decreased by 89% to represent 2% of commercial landings. The Plan Review Team (PRT) noted that a number of states could not complete the required monitoring under Amendments 2 and 3 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and persistent staffing issues, among some other minor issues with the new compliance format. However, the PRT did not consider any of the inconsistencies with the FMP significant. Therefore, the Board approved the 2021 FMP Review, state compliance reports, all *de minimis* requests, and the PRT recommendation to slightly alter the format of the compliance reports to improve the consistency of bycatch reporting data.

The Board considered and approved the nominations of Stephen Gephard and William Lucey of Connecticut to the Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel. Additionally, the Board elected Phil Edwards of Rhode Island to the role of Vice-Chair of the Management Board. Finally, the Board tasked staff to arrange an update from the U.S. Geological Survey on the alosine genetic stock identification and tissue repository and for the Technical Committee to provide recommendations regarding future sample collections.

For more information contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the updated Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan from North Carolina as presented today.

Motion made by Dr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Dize. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the Fishery Management Plan Review, state compliance reports, and de minimis requests for ME, NH, MA, and FL for American shad and NH, GA, and FL for river herring for the 2021 fishing year.

Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Ms. Burgess. Motion passes by consent.

Move to approve Stephen Gephard and William Lucey of CT to the Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion passes by consent.

Move to nominate Phill Edwards as Vice-Chair of the Shad & River Herring Board.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion passes by consent.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (FEBRUARY 2, 2023)

Meeting Summary

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board met to receive an update from Executive Committee; review the 2022 Commissioner survey results; discuss Atlantic bonito harvest in state waters, and consider terms of reference (TORs) for the red drum, spot and Atlantic croaker benchmark stock assessments.

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

Staff presented the results of the 2022 Commissioner survey results. Overall, the results indicated Commissioners felt the Commission was making progress towards many of the survey questions. It was noted some obstacles to the Commission's success in rebuilding stocks are concerns that have been brought up in the past, such as building state and regional buy-in to make hard management decisions, but climate change and shifting stocks were by far the biggest. Some of the issues Commissioners would like to focus more on include big picture issues such as climate change, ecosystem-based management and shifting stocks. Staff will provide the Executive Committee with a list of major concerns identified in the survey.

A Policy Board member raised concerns regarding increased recreational catch of small Atlantic bonito in their state waters and raised the question, should states put a minimum size limit in place as a cautionary measure for the species? Other states have also seen some increased catch. There is currently no federal or Commission FMP for Atlantic bonito. Some states raised concerns that without a Commission or state FMP their state would not be able to put measures in place. It was

noted, similar discussions were held at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council for false albacore. Staff will provide an options paper for developing different levels of management for both Atlantic bonito and false albacore at the next meeting. The paper will include state process limitations.

Staff presented the Policy Board with TORs for the upcoming Red Drum, Spot and Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessments since the Sciaenids Board did not meet this week. The Board approved the TORs noting they would like the Stock Assessment Committee to look at changes in natural mortality rates over time, with a specific focus on predation potential, for spot and Atlantic croaker. For red drum it was suggested the Stock Assessment Committee reach out to NOAA's Ecosystem Dynamics Assessment Branch for potential participation in the Committee's work. Lastly, there was a request that a bag and size limit analysis be conducted regardless of stock status for Atlantic croaker and spot. Staff confirmed that the analysis could be conducted shortly after the assessment is complete.

Under other business, Emerson Hasbrouck invited the Board and members of the public to complete a [survey on monkfish](#). The Fisheries Department of Cornell Cooperative is working with industry and food exports to increase consumption and demand of local seafood throughout the Northeast region, specifically monkfish via a Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Lastly, NOAA Fisheries commented on recent questions regarding the NOAA representatives voting on allocation issues during species management boards. It was stated NOAA's interest in allocation issues is focused on the creation of more dynamic allocation systems that set up the Commission and Regional Councils to be more responsive to climate-induced impacts on fisheries.

Motions

Move to approve the Terms of Reference for the 2024 Red Drum Benchmark Stock Assessment as presented today.

Motion made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Geer. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the Terms of Reference for the 2024 Atlantic Croaker and Spot Benchmark Stock Assessments as presented today.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries by unanimous consent.