



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2010 Summer Meeting Summary

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

2010 Summer Meeting
Alexandria, Virginia
August 2 - 5, 2010

For more information, please contact the identified individual,
Robert Beal, ISFMP, or Tina Berger, Public Affairs

202/289-6400

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (JULY 22, 2010 & AUGUST 2, 2010)	3
<i>Meeting Summary for July 22 Meeting</i>	3
<i>Motions from July 22 Meeting</i>	3
<i>Meeting Summary for August 2 Meeting</i>	4
<i>Motions from August 2 Meeting</i>	4
TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2010)	4
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	4
<i>Motions</i>	5
SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2010)	6
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	6
<i>Motions</i>	6
SPINY DOGFISH & COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2010)	7
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	7
<i>Motions</i>	8
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2010)	8
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	8
<i>Motions</i>	9
ISFMP POLICY BOARD (AUGUST 4, 2010)	9
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	9
<i>Motions</i>	10
WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 4, 2010)	10
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	10
<i>Motions</i>	11
SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 5, 2010)	12
<i>Press Release</i>	12
<i>Motions</i>	14

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 5, 2010)	14
<i>Press Release.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Motions.....</i>	<i>15</i>

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (July 22, 2010 & August 2, 2010)

Meeting Summary for July 22 Meeting

On July 22 in Warwick, Rhode Island, the American Lobster Board held a special meeting to discuss rebuilding of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster stock. The Board agreed to conduct a peer review of the Technical Committee's (TC) analysis "Recruitment Failure in the Southern New England Lobster Stock." The National Marine Fisheries Service agreed to provide funding to support the peer review. The Board discussed TC-recommend terms of reference (TORs) for that peer review. The Board tasked the TC to consider six additional elements for the TORs for review by the Board at its the August meeting (see motion below).

The Board received the results of the deterministic stock projection report. The report gives stock abundance estimates projected out to 2017 under different fishing exploitation and recruitment scenarios (a copy of the report will be posted on the ASMFC website by August 13). One of the major findings of that report is that under current high natural mortality levels and low recruitment, rebuilding the fishery to the target will be very difficult. Even in the absence of fishing, it is projected that the stock will not rebuild to the target level over the next ten years. Given the uncertainty regarding natural mortality, if the level of natural mortality is actually lower, there is reasonable potential to rebuild the SNE stock in the next decade.

The Board had an extensive discussion on the development of the draft addendum document that will include options to begin rebuilding the stock. The Board directed the TC to examine the impacts of regulations on landings including quotas, closed areas, trap limits, seasons, and size limits. The Board also tasked the Plan Development Team to conduct further analysis on the impacts of varying exploitation levels to the stock. The Board also noted that the draft addendum could include an option for a moratorium.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or at (202) 289-6400.

Motions from July 22 Meeting

Move that the Terms of Reference be drafted for review at the Summer ASMFC Meeting.
(1) Specify that the review be of the April 2010 Recruitment Failure Report and the related assigned Technical Committee tasks assigned by the Board. (2) Identify specifically in list form the finding, conclusions and recommendations of the report. (3) Evaluate the stock projection model, methods, and results, provide suggestion for improvement if possible and comment on the reliability of the projections for use in SNE lobster stock management. (4) Add data tables to the document supporting the figures provided. (5) Comment on the applicability of inshore recruitment conclusions to the inshore and offshore resource. (6) Include a review of the M sensitivity analysis of the model that indicated a higher M as suggested in the projections.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson; second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move that the Board task the Technical Committee with evaluating the impacts on landings of (1) closed season by state, LMA, and time period [1-month intervals], (2) closed areas evaluated by state, LMA and/or statistical area, (3) quota based output controls based on landings by state and LMA, (4) evaluate trap limits as an input control and

determine percent landings reduction associated with levels of trap reductions, (5) male only/v-notch program, and (6) modifications to the minimum and maximum gauge size.
Motion made by Mr. Simpson, second by Mr. Culhane. Motion carries.

Move that the Plan Development Team evaluate 3 options for reductions in exploitation: (1) 75%, (2) 50%, and (3) status quo.

Motion made by Mr. Grout, second by Mr. Simpson. Motion carries.

Meeting Summary for August 2 Meeting

On August 2 in Alexandria, Virginia, the American Lobster Board met to discuss TORs for the upcoming peer review of the SNE recruitment failure report and a timeline for the draft addendum document to rebuild the lobster stock. The TC presented revised TORs based on the Board direction from the July meeting. The Board approved the TORs recommended by the TC with the addition of a TOR to addresses the ability of recruitment indices to forecast future recruitment and landings for the stock area. The other TORs include reviewing the findings and conclusions of the recruitment failure document, as well as a review of the deterministic projections. The Board also discussed the timeline for the draft addendum document. The Board agreed that depending on the timing of the peer review results, it may be necessary to hold a special meeting of the Board outside of the 3 planned meeting weeks in 2011.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or at (202) 289-6400.

Motions from August 2 Meeting

Move that the Lobster Management Board accept the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Peer Review Panel as prepared by the Technical Committee, with the exception of TOR#4, and the addition of a TOR, “Comment on the applicability of the recruitment indices to forecast future recruitment and landings to the inshore and offshore areas.”

Motion made by Mr. Lapointe, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries unanimously.

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 3, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Tautog Management Board (Board) met to review a number of issues, including concerns about black sea bass fishermen targeting tautog as a substitute species, the illegal live market, state compliance, and Technical Committee (TC) and Advisory Panel nominees.

The Board received an overview of previous management actions (since the Board's last meeting was in May 2007). Addenda IV & V were developed in response to the 2005 assessment findings that the tautog resource was depleted. The Addenda required states to reduce their exploitation by 25.6% to achieve a fishing mortality rate of $F = 0.20$. States were required to implement regulations to meet the required reductions by January 1, 2008.

The Board received a report from the TC, which included a review of a Massachusetts/Rhode Island regional virtual population assessment (MA/RI regional VPA), the timing of the next assessment, a shift in recreational fishing effort from black sea bass to tautog, and the illegal live

fish market for tautog. With respect to the MA/RI regional VPA, the TC noted that despite harvest reductions in 2007 and 2008, fishing mortality rates are rising above the target for 2007 and potentially 2008. Further, several fisheries-independent indices have declined as well. The TC provided no recommendations for management at this time.

Following the TC's recommendation, the Board approved the initiation of the next benchmark stock assessment in early 2011.

With respect to a potential shift in recreational fishing effort, the TC found little evidence of increases in fishing pressure from black sea bass fishermen during the 2008 closure and noted that the black sea bass fishery has reopened making future effort shifts unlikely. The TC noted that quantifying any illegal activity is very difficult.

Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, Dr. Patrick Donnelly presented a summary of a July 9, AP conference call. The AP discussed black sea bass recreational effort shift, the illegal live market, and the lack of a federal plan during its call. The AP noted that recreational effort shift always happens when one fishery closes and managers should consider similar species when setting regulations. The AP agreed that the short black sea bass closures were unlikely to cause a significant shift in effort. It also agreed that illegal harvest of live fish was rampant and new management measures are necessary to stop poaching.

Staff presented a Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) memo that finds current regulations enforceable and enforcement aggressive.

Following input from the TC, AP, and LEC, the Board initiated the development of an addendum to reduce illegal harvest of tautog for the live market. The addendum will include several strategies to curb poaching.

Staff presented a review of 2007 and 2008 Fishery Management Plan Reviews and state compliance. All states met or exceeded the requirements of the FMP in 2007 and 2008; North Carolina and Delaware were granted *de minimis* status for 2008 and 2009.

In its last action, the Board approved the appointment of Victor Bunting from Maryland, and Carey Evans from Delaware to the AP. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to initiate an addendum to address the illegal trade of tautog and prevent increase in fishing mortality prior to the completion of the next assessment.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson, second by Mr. McElroy. Motion carries by consensus.

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 3, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Board (Board) reviewed sustainable fishing plans (SFMPs) submitted by Maine, New Hampshire, the District of Columbia (DC), North Carolina and South Carolina as required under Amendment 2 to the Shad and River Herring FMP. The Technical Committee (TC) recommended the Board consider approval the SFMPs from North and South Carolina. The TC felt that additional information was needed from the SFMPs from Maine, New Hampshire and DC before it could provide a recommendation to the Board for approval of the plans. Based on the TC's recommendations, the Board approved the SFMPs from North and South Carolina. The SFMPs from Maine, New Hampshire and DC will be updated based on the TC's requests. The TC will review the updated plans and develop recommendations for the Board to consider at the Annual Meeting in November. The next available option for states and jurisdictions to submit a SFMP is July 1, 2011. States or jurisdictions without an approved plan in place will be required to close their commercial and recreational fisheries by January 1, 2012.

The Board approved two new members to the Advisory Panel: Perry Hubbard, a commercial fisherman from South Carolina, and Thomas Rowe Jr., a recreational fisherman from South Carolina.

The ISFMP Policy Board met later in the week and requested the Shad and River Herring TC inform those states that need to submit a SFMP for their directed fisheries. Additionally, the Policy Board directed the Shad Board to write a letter to the Joint International Commission urging a more aggressive and comprehensive plan for restoring alewife to their historic St. Croix River watershed.

For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or ktaylor@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to accept the Technical Committee's recommendation to approve the SC and NC sustainable fishery management Plan.

Motion made by Mr. Adler, second by Mr. Fote. Motion passes (19 in favor).

Move that the ASMFC Shad and River Herring Board recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board write a letter to the Joint International Commission with a copy going to the Marine Resources Committee of the Maine State Legislature, USFWS, and NOAA urging a more aggressive and comprehensive plan for restoring alewife to their historic St. Croix River watershed.

Motion made by Sen. Damon, second by Mr. Grout. Motion passes (16 in favor).

Main Motion:

Move that states are required to submit their River Herring Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan by July 1, 2011.

Motion made by Mr. O'Connell, second by Mr. Travelstead. Motion withdrawn by consensus.

Motion to Amend:

Move to amend the submission date to January 31, 2011.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore, second by Mr. Grout. Motion fails (8 in favor, 9 opposed).

Motion to Withdraw Main Motion:

Move to withdraw main motion that states are required to submit their River Herring Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan by July 1, 2011.

Motion passes (16 in favor, 1 against).

Move to approve Perry Hubbard and Thomas Rowe Jr. to the Shad & River Herring AP.

Motion made by Mr. Self, second by Mr. Adler. Motion passes without opposition.

SPINY DOGFISH & COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 3, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board (Board) met to review a number of issues. These include the TRAC Assessment and Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Biological Reference Points for Spiny Dogfish documents; Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) Spiny Dogfish Amendment 3 (Amendment 3); a spiny dogfish state shares whitepaper; and review nominations to the Coastal Sharks and Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panels (AP).

Staff presented the updated spawning stock biomass (SSB) estimates from the 2009 TRAC and updated target and threshold SSB and fishing mortality (F) biological reference points. All reference points were lowered slightly due to the fishery selecting for smaller individuals. SSB was estimated at 163,356 mt in 2009 and the updated $SSB_{TARGET} = 159,288$ mt, $F_{TARGET} = 0.325$, and $F_{THRESHOLD} = 0.207$. Even with the slightly lower reference points, SSB exceeded the proposed target and threshold for the last two years. The Board was hesitant to approve the lower reference points, being that there is no need to approve them until the 2011/2012 fishing season start in May 2011. It agreed to wait until the ASMFC 2011 Annual Meeting to consider the proposed reference points.

The Board received an overview of the MAFMC Amendment 3 Scoping Document. The document proposes research set asides, alternate allocation of the commercial quota, sex-specific management measures, recreational measures and limited access commercial permits.

Additional administrative measures may include specification rollover in years when the National Marine Fisheries Service does not set a quota prior to the start of a fishing season and an updated essential fishing habitat section. The Board expressed support for the MAFMC setting an annual quota only and concern for limited access permits. It agreed to send a letter to the MAFMC asking it to include an annual quota option and fully consider the full impact of limited access on the states.

The Board reviewed the Spiny Dogfish State Shares Whitepaper which proposed a variety of management measures to allocate quota based on landing history, mitigate landings for states with low landing history, and set possession limits seasonally. After an extensive discussion, the

Board agreed that further deliberation was necessary to fine tune the options for a public comment draft. It postponed moving forward with a draft for public comment so that states in each region (Maine – Connecticut and New York – North Carolina) could meet and agree on which possible options work best for them. The Board will review these options at its next meeting and consider including them in a draft for public comment.

The Office of Highly Migratory Species (HMS) updated the Board on the final measures of Amendment 3 to the HMS FMP. Amendment 3 to the HMS FMP establishes a 221.6 mt quota for small coastal sharks with a 19.9 mt quota for blacknose. The fishery for both groups will close when 80% of either quota has been harvested. HMS staff explained that this measure is designed to encourage fishermen to avoid blacknose sharks. In addition, Amendment 3 will implement a quota for smooth dogfish in 2012.

The Board reviewed Advisory Panel (AP) nominations and appointed Peter Grimbilas of New Jersey, Mark Sampson of Maryland, Terry Annibale of South Carolina, and Reese Michalove of South Carolina to the Coastal Sharks AP. Marty Buzas of New Jersey was appointed to the Spiny Dogfish AP.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on recreational shore anglers targeting prohibited and research species from shore. HMS sent a letter to the Board asking it to consider management measures to prevent recreational anglers from targeting sand tiger and sandbar sharks from shore. The Board agreed to forward the request to the Law Enforcement Committee who will report back to the Board at the Commission Annual Meeting in November.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to appoint Peter Grimbilas, Mark Sampson, Terry Annibale and Reese Michalove to the Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move to appoint Marty Buzas to the Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 3, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Board reviewed state compliance and the FMP Review for 2009 and found all jurisdictions to be in compliance with the plan. Reported coastwide landings for 2009 were 181,674 metric tons (reduction fishery: 143,800 mt + bait fishery: 37,874 mt).

The Technical Committee and Multi-Species Technical Committee presented their initial findings and work plans to address the Board tasks to develop alternative reference points. The Board provided both committees further guidance to refine its tasks. In addition, the Board

initiated an addendum to include options for alternative reference points of percent spawning potential ratio (SPR) at the current level (10%), as well as 15%, 25%, and 40%. A draft addendum will be presented to the Board at the Commission's Annual Meeting in November.

The Board received a presentation from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science regarding a study it conducted to estimate menhaden's net removal of nitrogen from Chesapeake Bay.

The Board approved the nomination of Donald Swanson (NH) to the Menhaden Advisory Panel. For more information, please contact Brad Spear, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to accept the FMP review report and approve *de minimis* status for South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Carpenter. Motion approved.

Move to initiate an addendum to consider a range of percent MSP reference points including the current level, 15%, 25% and 40% MSP.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson, second by Mr. R. White. Motion carries (16 in favor).

Move to approve the nomination of Donald Swanson (NH) to the Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Grout, second by Mr. P. White. Motion carries.

Motion to continue the Chesapeake Bay Reduction cap for 2011.

Motion made by Mr. Goldsborough, second by Mr. P. White. Motion tabled until Annual Meeting.

ISFMP POLICY BOARD (August 4, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) met to address a number of issues. The Policy Board received an update on the progress being made by the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (see new website at <http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/>).

The Policy Board reviewed the rebuilding progress for each of the species under Commission management. This review was intended to determine if the progress toward each species rebuilding goals was occurring at an appropriate rate. The Board asked staff to repackage the information contained in the report and bring the document back at the Annual Meeting in November for reconsideration. The Policy Board feedback will also be considered as the Commission develops its 2011 Action Plan.

At the end of 2009, the Commissioners completed a survey to evaluate the Commission's progress. The Commissioners have discussed the results of this survey at the two previous

meetings. At this meeting the Policy Board approved a series of action items to address concerns identified in the survey results. The action items are intended to improve the Commission's efficiency and results.

The Policy Board received an update on the Marine Recreational Information Program development and implementation. The update provided a description of ongoing efforts to address the NRC comments regarding the MRFSS program.

The Policy Board authorized the Executive Director to send a letter to the International Joint Commission and the Maine State Legislature seeking to improve river herring passage on the St. Croix River to help rebuild this stock. The Board also authorized the Executive Director to send a letter to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on the development of Amendment 3 to the Council's Spiny Dogfish FMP. The letter will provide input on a number of issues that the Commission is seeking to be addressed as the Amendment is developed.

At the request of the American Lobster Management Board, the Policy Board discussed the criteria that trigger a peer review for assessments and technical committee analyses. The Policy Board agreed that the current criteria are sufficient, however, it was noted that a management board can request additional review of a technical product at any time.

The final issue addressed by the Policy Board was a request for clarification by the Shad and River Herring Management Board. The Policy Board passed a motion that provided additional direction to the states on the upcoming river herring moratorium. The Policy Board agreed that the management board will need to address bycatch issues on a case-by-case basis.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at (202) 289-6400 or rbeal@asmfc.org.

Motions

On behalf of the Shad and River Herring Board, I move that the ISFMP Policy Board write a letter to the Joint International Commission with a copy going to the Marine Resources Committee of the Maine State Legislature, USFWS, and NOAA urging a more aggressive and comprehensive plan for restoring alewife to their historic St. Croix River watershed.

Motion carries without objection.

Move to have the Shad and River herring Technical Committee notify the states that need to put together sustainable fishery management plans for directed fisheries only.

Motion made by Mr. Lapointe; second by Mr. Gilmore. Motion carries (12 in favor, 4 against).

WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 4, 2010)

Meeting Summary

The Weakfish Management Board met to discuss a number of issues related to the implementation of Addendum IV, and also review the state biological sampling plans for 2010.

All states have implemented the requirements of Addendum IV, which include a 100 lb commercial trip limit and bycatch limit and a one fish recreational creel limit. The Management Board discussed the implications of the new commercial trip limit on weakfish discarding, both in the short-term (under low weakfish biomass) and in the long-term (under rebuilding weakfish biomass). An increase in discarding was an anticipated effect of the 100 lb commercial trip limit. However, under a rebuilding stock, the trip limit has the potential to create excessive discarding, an unwanted outcome for managers and stakeholders alike. Consequently, the Management Board tasked its Technical Committee with developing a set of indicators to monitor the stock and prompt consideration of easing the trip limit.

The Management Board also reviewed a conservation equivalency proposal from North Carolina. The Board approved North Carolina's request to implement commercial regulations allowing 10 percent bycatch of weakfish up to 1000 lbs, in place of the 100 lb trip limit. Analysis of North Carolina commercial data for 2005-2008 indicated that the alternative regulations would result in an equivalent landings reduction as the 100 lb commercial trip limit. The methods used in the proposal were the same as those used to develop the estimated landings reduction from coastwide implementation of the 100 lb trip limit for Addendum IV. Concern that the bycatch allowance may not reduce landings the same amount as a trip limit under a rebuilding weakfish stock prompted the Management Board to request that the Technical Committee annually review the fishery to ensure that conservation equivalency is maintained.

The Management Board reviewed the 2010 Weakfish Biological Sampling Plans. Under Addendum I, states are required to measure the length of six weakfish per commercial metric ton of landings, and collect and age three weakfish otoliths per total metric ton of landings. These biological samples are used to characterize the landings for use in stock assessments. In addition to approving the plans, the Board also supported a recommendation from the Plan Review Team to develop a template to streamline the sampling plans.

For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or nmeserve@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move that the Weakfish Management Board direct the Technical Committee to develop indicators for possible management use as the stock recovers.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Dr. Daniel. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to approve the North Carolina request for conservation equivalency with a 10% bycatch allowance up to 1000 pounds, and require an annual review by the Technical Committee and Board to ensure conservation equivalency is maintained.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel, second by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion passes (Roll Call Vote: In favor – MA, RI, CT, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, FL, NMFS; Opposed – NY, NJ, DE, USFWS; Null – SC, GA).

Move to approve the 2010 sampling plans, and support the PRT recommendation to minimize the content of sampling plans.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Himchak. Motion passes without opposition.

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 5, 2010)

Press Release

Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Assessment Finds Resource on the Increase and Overfishing Not Occurring

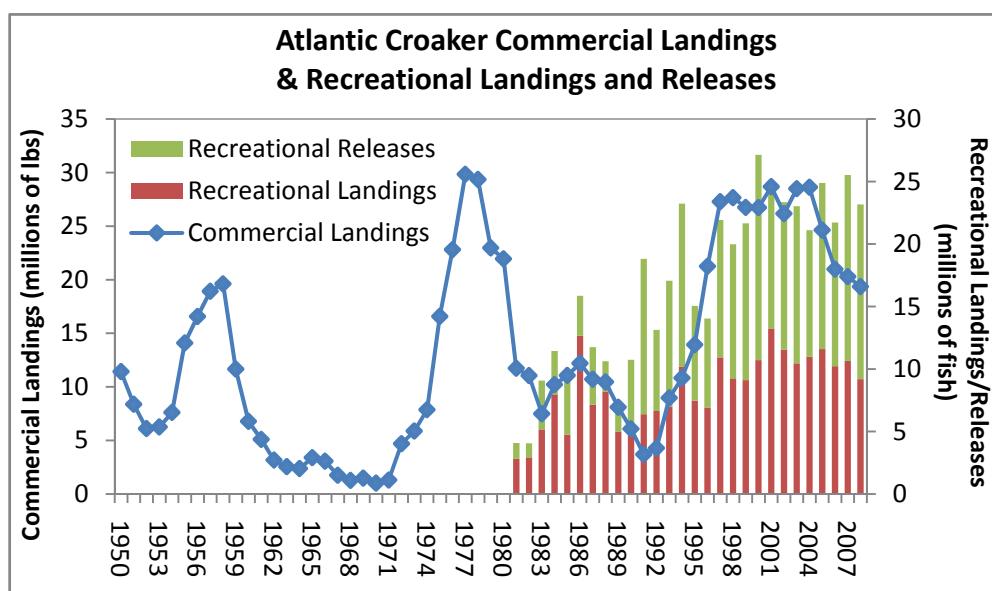
Alexandria, VA – The 2010 peer-reviewed stock assessment for Atlantic croaker indicates that the resource is not experiencing overfishing. Although model estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) were too uncertain to be used to precisely determine overfished stock status, biomass has been increasing and the age-structure of the population has been expanding since the late 1980s. Atlantic croaker are considered to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast. The previous stock assessment divided the stock into Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions and assessed only the Mid-Atlantic region. This assessment used data from both regions to produce a single, coastwide assessment. Data from 1988 to 2008 were included.

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board first reviewed the findings of the 2010 assessment in May. Upon the advice of the Peer Review Panel, the Board directed its Technical Committee to produce an additional analysis that would provide for a more certain stock status determination. With the extra analysis complete, the Board approved use of the stock assessment for management decisions.

Landings of croaker have fluctuated widely over time. Total reported landings (recreational and commercial) in 2008 were 24.7 million pounds, down from the most recent high of 39.7 million pounds in 2001, but still above the long-term average.

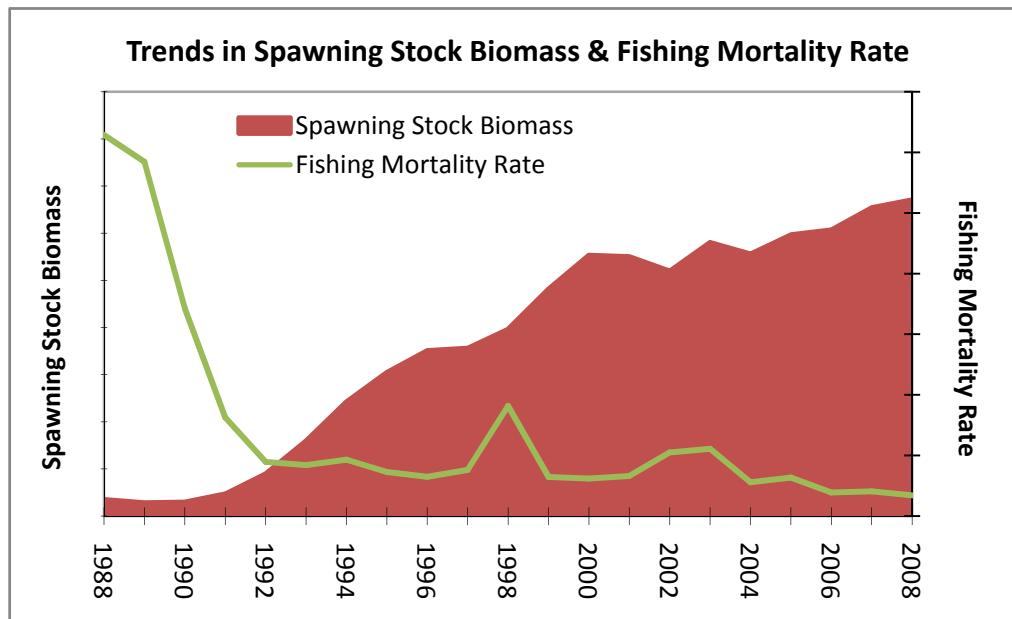
Commercial landings make up about 75% of total reported landings. The majority of the landings come from North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia, which report 78% of the coastwide recreational landings and 95% of coastwide commercial landings.

The major source of uncertainty for the assessment is the magnitude of Atlantic croaker bycatch in South Atlantic shrimp trawls. Most croaker caught in this fishery are less than 1 year old, too small to be marketed, and thus are discarded. Croaker are one of the largest components of the shrimp trawl catch; some studies found that shrimp trawls caught more



croaker than shrimp. There are no continuous monitoring programs to account for these discards. This is a problem because the best available estimates of these landings are, in some years, as large or larger than reported landings.

Because of the high degree of uncertainty in the amount of shrimp trawl discards, the estimated values of stock size and fishing mortality are not considered reliable. However, the estimated trends showing increasing biomass and decreasing fishing mortality were very similar whether estimates of shrimp trawl discards were



included in the model or not. A series of sensitivity runs conducted over a range of plausible values of shrimp trawl mortality all indicated that overfishing was not occurring, thus the Review Panel and the Management Board agreed that Atlantic croaker are not subject to overfishing. Estimates of SSB based on the same range were less stable; therefore a biomass determination could not be made. The Review Panel stressed the importance of developing valid estimates of shrimp trawl discards to improve the certainty of future stock assessment results.

Given that biomass is increasing and overfishing is not occurring, the Board did not initiate any changes to the management program at this time. It did approve the development of an addendum to modify the reference points and remove the distinction of two separate management regions based on the stock assessment. The draft addendum for public comment may be available for Board review at the Commission's Annual Meeting in November.

A more detailed overview of the stock assessment is available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. It was developed with the intent of aiding media and interested stakeholders in better understanding the Commission's stock assessment results and process. Copies of the Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Report and Assessment Peer Review Report are also available on the Commission website (under Breaking News). For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400.

Motions

Move to accept the benchmark stock assessment & peer review report for management use.
Motion made by Mr. Woodward, second by Mr. Frampton. Motion carries by consent.

Move to initiate an addendum for Atlantic Croaker.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. McCawley. Motion carries by consent.

Move to appoint Harry Rickabaugh to the PRT.

Motion made by Mr. O'Connell, second by Mr. Carpenter. Motion carries by consent.

Move to recommend to the Policy Board that spotted seatrout be listed as ‘concern’ in the stock performance document.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles, second by Mr. Duren. Motion carries by consent.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (August 5, 2010)

Press Release

Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Addendum VI

Provisions of Addendum V Extended While Development of ARM Framework Continues

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum VI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab. The Addendum extends the provisions of Addendum V through April 30, 2013, while the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework is further developed and long-term funding is secured to support the horseshoe crab monitoring program that the ARM Framework is dependent upon.

Addendum VI’s measures include a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware, prohibiting the harvest and landing of male and female horseshoe crabs from January 1 through June 7 in the Delaware Bay, and restricting the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. As with all Commission plans, states can implement more conservative management measures. In the case of New Jersey, it currently maintains a moratorium on the harvest and landing of horseshoe crab.

The Addendum also requires a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 and prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from waters outside the Bay from January 1 through June 7. No more than forty percent of Virginia’s quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1. Like New Jersey, Maryland has also implemented more conservative measures in 2009 to include a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1.

“I am pleased with the action taken by the Board,” stated Tom O’Connell, Board Chair and Maryland DNR Fisheries Service Director. “We chose to adopt provisions that are closely aligned with the optimal harvest package produced by the ARM models. The ARM Framework has the potential to be a valuable tool for the Board once it is further refined, funding is secured to support a biological survey to provide needed abundance estimates for the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population, and a methodology is developed to allocate the sustainable harvest

among the effected states (NJ, DE, MD, and VA). The Board also agreed today to pursue strategies to secure this needed funding.”

Starting November 1, 2010, the provisions of Addendum VI will come into effect and run through April 2013, unless they are replaced with provisions of another addendum before that time. The Board remains committed to development of the ARM Framework and will seek input from its advisors and the public before it is fully adopted as a management tool.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News by August 13. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

###

PR10-21

Motions

Move to select Option 2 for Addendum VI to remain in place through April 30, 2013. At any time prior to this date the Board may, through an addendum process, adopt the ARM framework and allocation methodology as the basis for the management of the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population. This will provide time for the technical committee and the advisory panels to continue to develop the ARM approach.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Shirey. Motion carries.

Move to approve Addendum VI as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Adler, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries by consent.

Move the Horseshoe Crab Management Board recommend that the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to send letters to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird Management, NGOs that have an interest in shorebird issues, and biomedical companies to request funding to support the horseshoe crab benthic trawl survey. Also encourage the Delaware Bay states to submit a multi-state proposal to ACCSP to support the benthic trawl survey.

Motion by made Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Culhane. Motion carries by consent.

Move to approve the nominations of Amanda Dey, Jeff Brust, Stew Michels, Kevin Kalasz, Steve Doctor, and Eric Hallerman, Mike Millard, and Greg Breese to the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak, second by Dr. Geiger. Motion carries by consent.

Move to approve the nominations of Larry Niles, Jeff Brust, Rich Wong, Steve Doctor, Kevin Kalasz, and Michelle Klopfer, John Sweka, Conor McGowan, Dave Smith, and Jim Lyons to the Adaptive Resource Management Subcommittee.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries by consent.

Move to approve the nominations of Jean Woods, Sarah Karpanty, and Chris Bennett to the Shorebird Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries by consent.

Move to approve the nominations of Benjie Swan and Cynthia Sires to the Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries by consent.