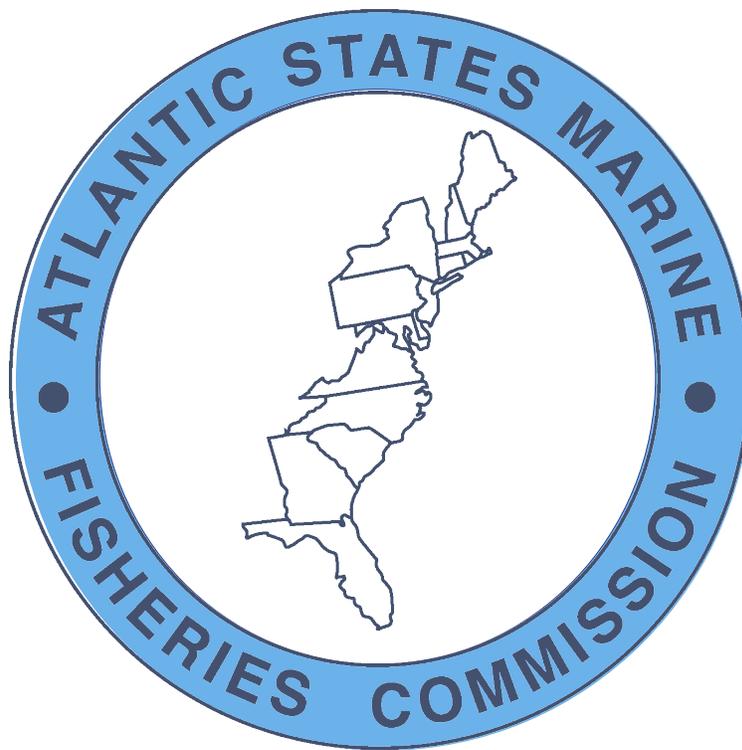


# COMMISSIONER MANUAL



*Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management  
of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

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## PREFACE

**Welcome to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission!** Thank you for your desire and willingness to take on the public trust responsibility of managing and restoring the public's coastal marine fisheries resources. This manual is designed to support you in this important job by providing the information you need to be an effective Commissioner. Key topics include:

- How and why the Commission was formed
- Our mission, vision and goals
- How the Commission functions and is organized
- What our major programs, activities, and funding sources are
- Who the people are within the Commission (fellow Commissioners and ASMFC staff).

This manual is a product of the hard work of a special committee of our Commissioners, some of whom are still current while others have moved on – Steve Bowman, Bernie Pankowski, April Price, Malcolm Rhodes and Ritchie White. They worked closely and tirelessly with staff members Laura Leach and Tina Berger to produce this completely revised Commissioner Manual. Their insight, creativity and attention to detail were invaluable. They all deserve our heartfelt thanks for both their efforts and a product that is well done.

I think you will find this manual to be a useful tool in quickly bringing you up to speed on the Commission and your role. We welcome your feedback on its contents and your recommendations for improvements. This is a dynamic document and will be revised as necessary through updates distributed via email and posted to our website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/commissioners-manual>. Our website is intended to be a user friendly, one stop source for all critical Commission information, including almost all Commission publications. I suggest you visit it as soon as you can.

Your first opportunity to see what the Commission does, and observe how Commissioners interact, will be at the next quarterly meeting of the Commission. You will be seated with the other two Commissioners from your state. I would encourage you to contact them prior to your first meeting for any advice they might offer. Please contact me if you have any questions that are not readily answered in this manual or on the website – we can be reached at (703) 842-0740.

Our Commission was formed in 1942 by the 15 member states for the purpose of protecting and managing marine fisheries within the states' jurisdiction. Our states recognized that they could accomplish far more through cooperation than through their individual efforts. That founding principle has been maintained through the years thanks to the selfless dedication of citizens like you who have stepped forward to share their time, expertise, and judgment to advance our vision of sustainably managing Atlantic coastal fisheries!

Welcome aboard!



Robert E. Beal  
Executive Director

*The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value. – THEODORE ROOSEVELT*

# Important Notes for New Commissioners

1. Status counts. We depend on written notification from the appropriate authority within the state to advise us of changes to a Commissioner's status. Legislative Commissioners' status, and that of their proxies, expires the day they resign, or if not re-elected, the day the new Legislature convenes. Proxy designations for all Commissioners must be made in writing.
2. A Commissioner and his/her on-going proxy may sit together at a Board meeting; however, only one may speak during that Board meeting. Any Commissioner is authorized to seek recognition from the Chair to speak at the public microphone.
3. Meeting-specific proxies cannot vote on final action. This rule was adopted following complaints from the public about perceived conflicts of interest of issue-specific proxies.
4. The Commission has been engaged in a series of lawsuits challenging Commission action. These cases are tried on the Administrative Record, that is, what is said on the record during Board meetings and deliberations. The majority of Commission meetings are recorded and transcribed. Commissioner words become permanent.
5. The Commission amended its Regulations to specify that a two thirds vote of board members is required to amend or rescind a previous action, regardless of whether prior notice is given of such action. This reflected concerns about backsliding on important and difficult decisions.
6. Species management board meetings have little flexibility to exceed their allotted time. Public comment is purposely taken through hearings held within the states and through written public comment period. All information collected is available for Commissioner review. Summaries are provided to each Board prior to their deliberations. Last minute testimony from advocates at Board meetings has raised questions of fairness and efficiency.
7. Commission staff is prepared to enable Commissioners to make best use of their time during board and Commission meetings. Staff can and will help with drafting motions to avoid the need for boards to wordsmith motions on the run. Having pre-drafted motions reduces the chances of errors and allows Commissioners to focus on understanding what the motion will do and exchange views on the merit of the proposal.
8. Given the large number of members for most boards, chairs will use various methods to provide the opportunity for all members to speak. One technique will be to alternate recognizing speakers for and against a motion. Another is to ask if anyone's mind will be changed by further discussion or debate.
9. A recommended reading list in prioritized order follows (all of which can be found in the Commissioner Manual or on the Commission website):
  - Compact – Rules and Regulations (Compact, Rules and Regulations tab of Commissioner Manual)
  - ASMFC 2014-2018 Strategic Plan (Action Plan & Strategic Plan tab of Commissioner Manual)
  - 2020 Annual Report [http://www.asmfc.org/files/pub/ASMFC2021AnnualReport\\_web.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/pub/ASMFC2021AnnualReport_web.pdf)
  - Chairman's Report from 2021 Annual Meeting (following Preface of Commissioner Manual)
  - Overviews of fish species that your state has declared an interest in (Interstate Fisheries Management Program tab of Commissioner Manual)
  - Meeting Summary from last Meeting Week available at: <http://www.asmfc.org/home/meeting-archive>

**Key staff to assist you** if you have any questions or require assistance are: **TONI KERNS** for fisheries management issues at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org), **LAURA LEACH** for finance and administration issues at [lleach@asmfc.org](mailto:lleach@asmfc.org), **PAT CAMPFIELD** for science related issues at [pcampfield@asmfc.org](mailto:pcampfield@asmfc.org), **GEOFF WHITE** for data collection and management issues at [geoff.white@accsp.org](mailto:geoff.white@accsp.org), and **TINA BERGER** for outreach and general information at [tberger@asmfc.org](mailto:tberger@asmfc.org).

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR



**PAT KELIHER**  
Commissioner  
Maine Department of  
Marine Resources

I am so grateful for the individual and collective efforts of our Commissioners and proxies, our technical and industry advisors, and our regional and federal partners in advancing the sustainable management of Atlantic coast fisheries despite the challenges that the pandemic has placed upon us.

As outgoing Commission Chair, I wanted to thank our Commissioners and proxies for the support you have given Spud Woodward and me over the past two years. It has certainly been a challenging time for the Commission, the states, our stakeholders and the world at large. With the exception of my first meeting as Chair in February 2020, we have been conducting all the Commission's business through virtual meetings. And, despite the drawbacks of not meeting in person, I continue to be impressed with the scope of work we have accomplished over that time.

These accomplishments include quick action by the states to end overfishing of Atlantic striped bass; implementation of ecological reference points to manage Atlantic menhaden; positive stock status for all four tautog populations after years of effort to rebuild these stocks; a new plan amendment for bluefish; and the completion of benchmark stock assessments for American lobster, American shad, Atlantic cobia and tautog. We have also had difficult but important discussions about reallocation that will continue into next year and beyond as we seek to respond to changes in species distribution along the coast.

Looking ahead, Spud and our new Vice-Chair Joseph Cimino will have a full plate of issues to address. These include a new plan amendment for Atlantic striped bass, as well as broader issues such as responding to climate change impacts to our managed stocks, and reallocation.

I know one of Spud's goals while Chair will be to strengthen the Commission's fundamental management principles – such as conservation equivalency, use of *de minimis* provisions, and our appeals process – to ensure management and regulatory stability.

I am so grateful for the individual and collective efforts of our Commissioners and proxies, our technical and industry advisors, and our regional and federal partners in advancing the sustainable management of Atlantic coast fisheries despite the challenges that the pandemic has placed upon us.

From a personal standpoint it is very humbling to be elected by my peers to oversee this Commission. I have a long history with the Commission from starting as an advisory panel member to serving as your Chair. I can honestly say that all of this time, while sometimes frustrating and even infuriating, has always been a privilege. For me that link is directly related to the fact that the Commission is a state's rights organization, and we should never, ever lose sight of that. Our individual state's rights create our greatest challenges as we balance sustainability with the needs of our respective states. Climate change and shifting stocks, without a doubt, will continue to clash with state needs. I urge you all, in the years ahead to stay committed to addressing these challenges. It will not be easy, but it must happen.

I remain committed to working with our new leadership and you all in the year(s) ahead to further our mission and shared goals. Thank you for all you do!