



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

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

ASMFC May 2004 Meeting Week May 24 - 27, 2004

FINAL AGENDA

Monday, May 24, 2004

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Review and Approve Draft Addendum XII for Public Comment
- Schedule Public Hearings for Addendum
- Review State Recreational Measures

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Advisory Panel Oversight Committee

- Review 2004 Action Plan Tasks
- Review Survey Results from Weakfish Pilot Program and ISFMP SOPPS for Communicating with Active & Inactive Panels
- Identify Key Advisory Panels (AP) for 2004 Attention
- Discuss Pros and Cons of Current AP Process (compare to process of three East Coast Regional Fishery Management Councils)
- Review AP Membership & Composition

Tuesday, May 25, 2004

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Atlantic Herring Section

- Review Issues & Options Paper for Draft Amendment 2
- Report from the Limited Access Workgroup
- Discuss Amendment Coordination between ASMFC and NEFMC

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- New Jersey Proposal for the Recreational Fishery - Technical Committee Review and Advisory Panel Recommendation
- Update on the Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass Symposium
- NOAA Fisheries Rulemaking Update: Reopening EEZ to Harvest of Striped Bass

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Management and Science Committee

- ACCSP Update: SAFIS Implementation, Recreational Data Query Demonstration and Biological Tracking System
- Recommended Priorities for Peer Review
- Modification of External Peer Review Process
- Review and Approval of Conservation Equivalency Protocols
- Presentations by Winergy
- Presentation on Massachusetts Zoning Issues
- Discussion of Conservation Engineering

Inside This Issue

Upcoming Meetings Page 2

Species Profile: Shad & River Herring Page 4

Canada Bans Commercial Fishing for American Eel Page 7

Shad Make a Comeback in the Santee River Page 9

Diverse Interests Convene to Discuss Horseshoe Crabs as Bait Page 9

SAFIS Now Used by Dealers Throughout the Northeast Page 10

ASMFC Employee of the Quarter Named Page 11

ASMFC Comings & Goings Page 11

continued on page 6

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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Upcoming Meetings

5/24 - 27:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, , Alexandria, Virginia (see pages 1, 6 and 12 for the final agenda).

6/14 - 16:

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Marriot, Providence, Rhode Island.

6/14 - 18:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Pier House, 1 Duval Street, Key West, Florida; (305)296-4600.

6/15 (10 AM - 5 PM):

Joint NEFMC Herring Committee and ASMFC Herring Section Meeting, Portland, Maine.

6/16 - 18:

ACCSP Commercial Technical Committee, Marriot, Providence, Rhode Island.

6/17 & 18:

ASMFC American Lobster Model Development and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 205 North Belle Meade Road, East Setauket, New York.

6/21- 25:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

6/22 - 25:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania.

6/29 - 7/1:

Northeast Regional Bycatch Workshop, Sheraton Colonial Conference Center, One Audubon Road, Wakefield, Massachusetts; (781) 245-9300.

7/13 - 15:

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine.

7/14-16:

ASMFC American Lobster Technical Committee, Model Development Subcommittee, and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Maine (specific location to be determined).

8/3 - 5:

ACCSP Operations Committee, Newport or Providence, Rhode Island.

As many of you know, our Commissioners guide operations and set priorities for use of staff and fiscal resources through our annual action plan process each year. In addition, they have recently looked out beyond 2004, identifying five ongoing and emerging issues likely to demand more attention in the near future. Here are five areas to think about.

American Lobster

Lobster is the most valuable commercial species the Commission manages, as well as the single most valuable fishery in New England. Although overall landings are at record levels, the stock is showing signs of stress. Following the 1998 die-off in Long Island Sound, landings plummeted from 12 million pounds a year to less than two million pounds and have yet to recover. Since then landings have taken a sharp drop in Rhode Island and Massachusetts waters south of Cape Cod, where fishermen have reported an increased incidence of lobster shell disease. The Long Island Sound Lobster Task Force was established to oversee a \$6.8 million federally-funded research effort to look at lobster health issues. Those funds expire this year and research results are due out this fall. Given the importance of this fishery, follow-up research from the Task Force needs to be expanded to activities that would assess the health of stocks for the entire Northeast.

Atlantic Menhaden

Menhaden are an important forage fish for many popular game fish and are taken for use as bait as well as for producing industrial quantities of fish oils and meal. Scientists report in their latest assessment that stocks are healthy and not overfished. However, they recommend additional research to respond to a growing concern from ecologists and recreational fishing interests about our single stock management strategy. This research would focus on the practicality of managing menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay as a separate stock unit. It would also enable scientists to quantify any localized depletion, prey-predator interactions, and total mortality on juvenile fish.

Red Drum

The red drum fishery in the exclusive economic zone is closed and management is being transferred to the Commission. Although we generally know stocks are depressed, we need to gather additional data to assess stock status and abundance of this important recre-

ational and commercial fish. This could include increased survey efforts in nearshore areas, as well as initiation of a coastwide tagging program to estimate mortality and migration patterns. Scientists also need better data on recreational catch and discards, as well as biological sampling of catch to determine size and age structure of the stock.

Fishery-Independent Data Collection

Nearshore trawl surveys are presently conducted by some of our states. Expansion of this work within state waters would complement federal trawl surveys, with sampling in areas not covered by federal efforts. This could help provide additional important information for use in stock assessments. Some of this work could be done through charters with commercial fishing vessels, providing an opportunity to enhance cooperation between fishermen and scientists.

Diadromous Species

Eels, sturgeon, and shad are traditionally low profile species but, unfortunately, are in various states of serious decline due to habitat problems and historic overfishing. Focus on American eel is increasing due to the depletion of Great Lakes' stocks, as well as the European eel. (Both species live in freshwater and spawn in the Sargasso Sea.) Additional research is needed to evaluate why each of these species are at various levels of decline. A better understanding of recreational landings, bycatch, and abundance of the stocks is needed to strengthen our management. A listing under the Endangered Species Act for any of them could have significant and expensive impacts on commercial and recreational fisheries along the entire Atlantic coast.

Collectively, these issues cut across all of our states and stakeholders. For that good reason, we are requesting congressional appropriators increase Commission funding by two million dollars for fiscal year 2005 to enable our states to begin work in these areas. It would be helpful for those of you with an interest in these activities to advise your congressional delegations of your support for this request. Let them know the Commission has a proven track record in restoring stocks, and that additional funds would be a prudent investment to help support our winning streak. Everyone benefits when we succeed in building larger and healthier stocks. Hopefully, that goal is something we can all agree on.

Species Profile: Shad & River Herring: FMP Seeks to Restore American Shad Populations & Improve Understanding of Other Alosines



American Shad *Alosa sapidissima*



General Characteristics:

- **Largest of the herrings**
- **Can reach up to 2 ½' in length, weighing about 11 ½ lbs**
- **Age at maturity
Female = 5 years
Male = 4 years**
- **Range from south-eastern coast of Newfoundland to St. Johns River, Florida**
- **Primarily feed on plankton**
- **Stock status varies by river system**

See side-bar on opposite page for information on remaining alosine species

Introduction

Shad and river herring are anadromous fish that spend the majority of their adult lives at sea, only returning to freshwater in the spring to spawn. Historically, these species spawned in virtually every accessible river and tributary along the coast. However, blockage of spawning rivers by dams and other impediments, combined with degradation of water quality, has severely depleted suitable spawning habitat.

Species of shad and river herring once supported important commercial and recreational fisheries along the Atlantic coast. Today, these fisheries are just a fraction of what they were due to riverine habitat loss and fishing pressure. Management under Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad & River Herring (Amendment 1) seeks to restore these species through conservative regulatory measures and state-by-state monitoring requirements to improve our understanding of species stock status.

Life History

American & Hickory Shad

American shad, *Alosa sapidissima*, are found in many Atlantic coastal rivers from Newfoundland to the St. Johns River in Florida. Shortly after recruitment, juveniles emigrate from estuarine nursery areas and join a mixed-stock, migratory population. After four to six years as coastal migrants, individuals become sexually mature and migrate to their natal rivers during spring spawning seasons that vary by latitude. The percentage of shad that survive to spawn more than once decreases from north to south. Shad that spawn in more northerly rivers may survive to spawn again, while shad native to the rivers south of Cape Fear, North Carolina die after spawning. American shad adults that exhibit repeat spawning return to the sea soon after spawning and migrate northward to summer feeding grounds in the Gulf of Maine.

Hickory shad, *Alosa mediocris*, spawn in rivers and tributaries along the Atlantic coast from the Bay of Fundy to the Tomoka River in Florida. After spawning, hickory shad return to the ocean, but their distribution and movements are essentially unknown. Fertilized eggs are carried by river currents, and eventually develop into larvae, which begin to feed four to seven days after hatching. Larvae drift downstream into tidal freshwater reaches of the spawning rivers, and gradually mature into juveniles. In early to late summer, juvenile shad migrate out of their nursery areas to the sea. With increasing water temperatures in the spring, mature hickory shad will migrate back to their native rivers to compete their life cycle.

Alewife & Blueback Herring

Alewife and blueback herring (collectively known as “river herring”) are relatively small anadromous fish, spending most of their adult life at sea, but returning to freshwater areas to spawn in the spring. Alewife spawn in rivers, lakes, and tributaries from northeastern Newfoundland to South Carolina, but are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast states. Blueback herring prefer to spawn in swift flowing rivers and tributaries from Nova Scotia to northern Florida, but are most numerous in waters from the Chesapeake Bay south. Mature alewife (ages three to eight) and blueback herring (ages three to six) migrate rapidly downstream after spawning. Larvae begin to feed three to five days after hatching, and transform gradually into the juvenile stage. Juveniles remain in tidal freshwater nursery areas in spring and early summer, but may also move upstream with the

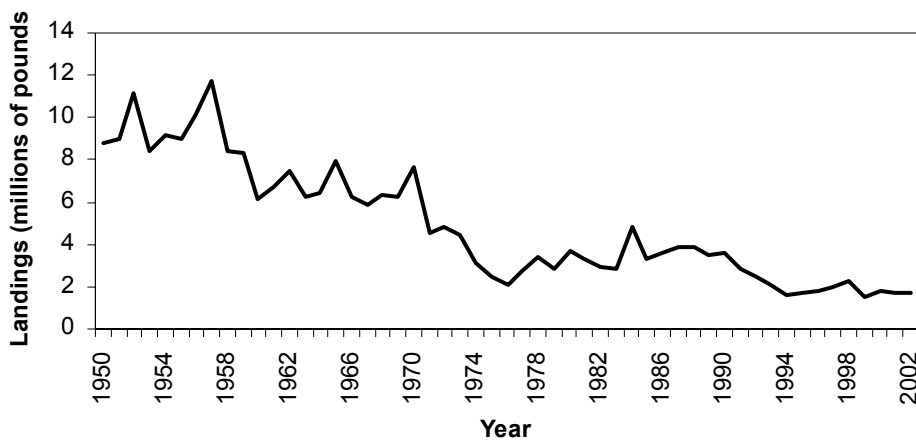
encroachment of saline water. As water temperatures decline in the fall, juveniles move downstream to more saline waters. Little information is available on the life history of juvenile and adult alewife and blueback herring after they emigrate to the sea as young-of-the-year or yearlings, and before they mature and return to freshwater to spawn.

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

American shad, hickory shad, and river herring formerly supported significant commercial and recreational fisheries throughout their range. Fisheries are executed in rivers, estuaries, and coastal waters. Although recreational harvest data are scarce, most harvest is believed to come from the commercial industry. Commercial landings for all these species have declined dramatically from historic highs. Following is a summary of fisheries by species.

Figure 1. American & Hickory Shad Commercial Landings, 1950-2002

Source: National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics and Economics Division, 2004



American Shad

Total in-river commercial landings have declined steadily from over 3.2 million pounds in 1980 to 711,840 pounds in 2002. Coastal intercept landings rose steadily from 1980 to a peak of two million pounds in 1989, then declined thereafter to 1.1 million pounds in 2002. Landings in the coast intercept fishery are not expected to increase given the scheduled closure of the fishery by December 31, 2004.

Hickory Shad

Atlantic coast (Maryland to Florida) hickory shad landings are poorly monitored. Federal and state data collected for this species is questionable because of mixing with American shad upon landing, poorly understood geographic ranges, and poorly monitored recreational fishing areas. This species supports a significant recreational fishery in some areas, but good recreational harvest data do not exist. North Carolina has historically dominated the commercial fishery. Total hickory shad landings at 195,054 pounds in 1996 and 165,386 pounds in 1997 were the highest in 30 years. Landings in 2002 were 93,219 pounds.

Alewife & Blueback Herring

Commercial landings of Atlantic coast river herring have ranged from a high of 74.9 million pounds in 1958 to a low of less than two million pounds in recent years. New England landings have declined dramatically from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s. In the Mid-Atlantic, landings have declined dramatically since

Hickory Shad *Alosa mediocris*



General Characteristics:

- Can reach up to 2' in length; 18" fish weighs about 2 lbs
- Range from Bay of Fundy to Tomoka River, Florida
- Prey on small fish such as lance, anchovies, cunners, and silversides
- Stock status unknown

Alewife *Alosa pseudoharengus*



General Characteristics:

- Adults average 10 - 11" in length; 8 - 9 oz in weight
- Range from Nova Scotia to South Carolina
- Primarily feed on plankton
- Congregate in large schools, numbering in the thousands
- Excellent food fish, marketed both fresh and salted
- Stock status unknown

Blueback Herring *Alosa aestivalis*



General Characteristics:

- Adults average 11" in length; 7 oz in weight
- Range from Nova Scotia to Northern Florida
- Primarily feed on plankton
- Name derived from dark blue/bluish gray coloring on back
- Stock status unknown

continued on page 8

ASMFC May 2004 Meeting Week Final Agenda (continued from page 1)

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM Management and Science Committee (continued)

- Reports of the Multispecies Subcommittee and the Interstate Tagging Committee
- Updates on Fisheries Characterization Project, Asian Oyster EIS, NEAMAP, Power Plant Assessment, Ageing Manual, ASMFC Habitat Program, Lobster Stock Assessment Database, Board Guidance Subcommittee, and Anecdotal Data Workshop Planning

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee

- Species Board Reports, Federal Agencies Updates
- Vessel Monitoring Systems
- Review Documents on Conservation Equivalency, Enforceability and Guidelines for Resource Managers

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Winter Flounder Management Board

- Review and Consider Approval of Draft Amendment 1 for Public Comment

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Weakfish Management Board

- Elect Chair and Vice Chair
- PRT State Compliance Report and FMP Review
- Technical Committee Update: Approval of Terms of Reference for 2004 Stock Assessment
- Update on Advisory Panel Pilot Program

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

Wednesday, May 26, 2004

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Technical Committee Update on Research Proposals for Chesapeake Bay
- Discuss Postponed Motion
- Approve Draft Addendum for Public Comment

8:00 AM – Noon Management and Science Committee

8:00 AM – Noon Law Enforcement Committee

11:00 AM – Noon Executive Committee

- Administrative Oversight Committee Report on FY05 Budget & Interim Review of 2004 Action Plan Accomplishments
- Future Annual Meetings Update

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM American Eel Management Board

- Discussion of Potential Management Changes for American Eel
- Review/Approve 2003 PRT Report on State Compliance and 2003 FMP Review

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM American Lobster Management Board

- Plan Review Team Report on State Compliance
- Stock Assessment Progress Update
- Transferability Subcommittee Update
- Recent Lawsuits Impacting Lobster Management
- Database Update

Thursday, May 27, 2004

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM ISFMP Policy Board

- Discuss and Consider Action on Appeal Process White Paper
- Review Draft Consistency White Paper

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM ISFMP Policy Board (continued)



continued on page 12

Canada Bans Commercial Fishing for American Eel in Lake Ontario and Upper St. Lawrence River

In early April, the Canadian government, through its Ministry of Natural Resources, acted decisively to protect the vanishing American eel by banning commercial eel fishing in Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River.

“We are facing the loss of the American eel from the Great Lakes ecosystem,” said Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay. “By taking the lead and delivering real, positive change to protect our natural resources, we are ensuring that the American eel will continue to be part of Ontario’s rich biodiversity.”

Ontario commercial eel harvests peaked at more than 500,000 pounds in 1978, but by 2003 had dropped to less than 30,000 pounds as eel numbers declined. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) will assist the fishing industry with the transition resulting from the closure of the commercial eel fisheries.

The province is also proposing regulations to close the eel sport fishery. To address some of the other causes of the decline in the eel population, the province is working with other stakeholders, including Ontario Power Generation, to encourage the safe passage of eels around hydro dams.

Young eels migrate to fresh waters where they take up to 25 years to mature. They then migrate great distances back to the ocean to spawn and die. Eel and eel fisheries are also found in the coastal waters of Quebec, the Maritime provinces and the eastern US.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission issued an emergency declaration about the American eel last December and pledged to work with the Ministry and other jurisdictions to protect and enhance the species. “The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is deeply concerned about the future of this very important, highly migratory species,” said Dr. Bill Beamish, Commission Chairman. “We applaud Ontario’s initiative to protect the American eel and look forward to working with Ontario, other Canadian provinces and the Atlantic states to rehabilitate this native species.”

For more information, please contact Alastair Mathers, Ministry of Natural Resources, at (613)476-8733.

Protecting the Vanishing American Eel

The American eel is in danger of extinction in the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River part of its range (waters are co-managed by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation).

Factors contributing to this decline include eel harvest, death in hydro turbines, barriers to migration routes (e.g. dams) and changing environmental and climatic conditions.

American eel is a very unusual species:

- There is only one spawning location (in the Atlantic Ocean);
- Eel larvae are distributed by ocean currents along the eastern coast of North America;
- Young eel enter fresh waters (such as the St. Lawrence River) where they grow for up to 25 years;
- Mature eels migrate back to the ocean to spawn and die; and
- American eel is often confused with lamprey because of its appearance. In fact, the lamprey is not an eel but a parasitic fish that preys on other large-bodied fish.

Ontario commercial eel harvests peaked at over 500,000 lbs in 1978. Harvests between 1984 and 1993 remained stable (between 228,000 and 273,000 lbs per year.) Since 1993, eel harvests have declined precipitously to less than 30,000 lbs in 2003 with a landed value of less than \$75,000.

Ontario is protecting American eel by:

- Cancelling the commercial fishing quota for 2004 and for the foreseeable future;
- Proposing regulation changes for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to close the eel sport fishery; and
- Working with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to improve safe eel passage across hydro dams on the St. Lawrence River.

Other actions to protect eel:

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Ontario, Quebec and the eastern provinces are working to develop a coordinated action plan to protect eels.

Factsheet courtesy of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources



Angler with an American shad. Photo courtesy of Brian Mullaney.

the mid-1960s and have remained very low in recent years. In the South Atlantic, the landings are steadily declining from an all time high of 11.5 million pounds in 1985 to less than 500,000 in 1999. During 2002, Maine, Virginia, and North Carolina accounted for the majority of coastwide commercial landings.

Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

All 15 Atlantic coastal states from Maine through Florida currently manage shad and river herring species under Amendment 1. The Amendment focuses primarily on American shad regulations and monitoring programs, but also requires states to initiate fishery-dependent monitoring programs for river herring and hickory shad, in addition to current fishery-independent programs. The goal of the monitoring programs is to

Species Profile: Shad & River Herring (continued from page 5)

improve data collection and stock assessment capabilities. Furthermore, Amendment 1 contains specific measures to control exploitation of American shad populations, while maintaining the status quo in other fisheries for hickory shad and river herring.

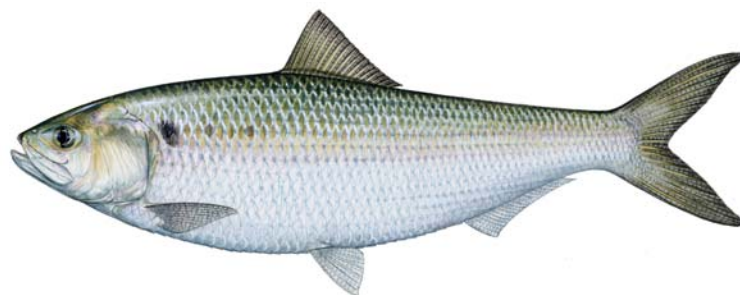
Amendment 1 contains three primary regulatory requirements. The first is a five-year phase out of the ocean intercept fishery, which began on January 1, 2000. States were required to achieve at least a 40% reduction in effort in the ocean intercept fishery by December 31, 2002. The total closure of the fishery will occur by December 31, 2004. The second requirement establishes a fishing mortality target for in-river fisheries, and calls for the maintenance of existing or more conservative regulations for river herring and hickory shad. Lastly, the Amendment implements an aggregate 10-fish daily creel limit in recreational fisheries for American and hickory shad, with all jurisdictions maintaining existing or more conservative recreational regulations for river herring.

Stock Status

While the FMP addresses four species -- American shad, hickory shad, alewife, and blueback herring -- lack of comprehensive and accurate commercial and recreational fishery data for the latter three species make it difficult to ascertain the status of these stocks.

A stock assessment for American shad was completed in 1997 and submitted for peer review in 1998. The 1998 assessment estimated fishing mortality rates for nine shad stocks and general trends in abundance for 13 shad stocks. At the time of the 1998 assessment, current stock levels appeared greatly reduced from historic levels. Estimates of exploitation status were not provided for the majority of American shad stocks (12 of 19). Three of the seven stocks assessed (Hudson, Edisto, and Altamaha Rivers) were fully exploited. A conservative approach should be used to determine the status of other assessed stocks due to uncertainties in available data and model inputs.

During the period 1992-1996, most stocks varied without trend (i.e., stable), but some stocks were increasing (in part due to hatchery supplementation) and the Hudson River stock was declining. The York River stock declined during the period 1980-1993. These trends in abundance over the 1992-1996 period may reflect natural variability, changes in fishing pressure, or both. The short time series is of limited applicability in analyzing the long term health of American shad stocks. The next stock assessment update to be peer-reviewed is scheduled for 2005. For more information, please contact Lydia Munger, Shad & River Herring FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or lmunger@asmfc.org.



Shad Make a Comeback in the Santee River

Shad are an important species to the sport fisheries of South Carolina and along the Atlantic coast, both as a targeted recreational species and as food for other sport fish, such as striped bass. Shad populations on the Santee River in South Carolina have been recently examined as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) re-licensing process for Santee-Cooper's 150,000-acre Marion-Moultrie Lakes hydroelectric power project.

Shad abundance in the Santee basin began to decline in the 19th century, when grist mills began to dam inland rivers and tributaries. The combination of better fishing gear, dam building, more people and the in-

creased demand for electricity after World War II severely depleted shad populations by the 1970s.

Sixty years ago, the Santee was dammed by Santee Cooper to generate electricity. Lakes Moultrie and Marion diverted most of the Santee's flow to the Cooper River through the Pinopolis dam. The Pinopolis lock was opened for boat traffic and shad began to move through it. In 1985, most of the flow was re-diverted to the Santee through a channel 40 miles below the Santee dam. A lift was added to the re-diversion dam to provide spawning blueback herring as food fish for species such as striped bass. This fish lift had another effect of helping shad stocks recover in the Santee basin.

Counts of shad through the fish lift at the re-diversion dam were approximately 10,000 in 1988. Recent counts place the number of shad passing through the fish lift at about half a million fish per year. This recovery of shad stocks is encouraging and serves as a positive example of the benefits of fish passage. South Carolina is continuing its efforts in the Santee basin with the 2003 Santee Basin Migratory Fish Restoration Plan. Through this plan, South Carolina is working with NOAA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies to enhance water quality, restore stream flows, develop upstream and downstream passages at dams, and remove old dams.

Diverse Interests Convene to Discuss Horseshoe Crabs as Bait

Thirty watermen, researchers, managers, and representatives from different industries met outside of Baltimore this past February to discuss the use of horseshoe crabs for bait in the conch fishery. Everyone was there for the purpose of exploring ideas to increase or maintain conch fishing success while lowering dependence on horseshoe crabs as bait. This workshop, building on a similar workshop conducted in 1999, resulted in a number of positive outcomes that will get us closer to this goal.

With coordination by ASMFC and Ecological Research and Development Group (ERDG) and funding from New Jersey, Delaware, and University of Delaware Sea Grant, the workshop brought together individuals from Maine to Virginia. The watermen shared their experiences with gear modifications to catch the most conch with the least amount of horseshoe crab. The use of bait bags in conch traps has led to some watermen using as little as an 1/8th of a crab. Watermen also agreed

that horseshoe crab is, without question, the most effective bait currently available to catch conch. Researchers confirmed through lab and field testing that no other bait catches conch as effectively as horseshoe crabs.

One of the most promising opportunities to significantly reduce or even eliminate the use of crabs for bait may come from the work of a University of Delaware researcher and private company in Maine. The laboratory of Nancy Targett from University of Delaware Sea Grant believes they have isolated the natural compound from the horseshoe crabs that attracts conch. The ultimate goal is to synthetically develop the compound without dependence on horseshoe crabs. The other piece of the puzzle, the substrate to hold the attractant, is being developed by Hydrophilix. It produces 1' x 1' sheets of synthetic "scaffold" that have about 12 sq ft of surface area and can be used to release substances into the water. If conch fishing effectiveness can be dem-

onstrated, which may be many years away, potential benefits include decreased dependence on horseshoe crabs, ease of handling bait, decrease in cost of bait, and ability to reuse and recycle sheets.

Another way to decrease dependence on horseshoe crabs for bait may be to use hemolymph, the by-product of the biomedical bleeding process, to attract conch. Watermen have experimented with bait made from injecting hemolymph into a substrate, such as menhaden, and had fishing success equal to that using horseshoe crabs. Associates of Cape Cod (Massachusetts) and Cambrex (Maryland), biomedical companies that bleed horseshoe crabs, offered to provide watermen hemolymph for testing its effectiveness in attracting conch.

For more information, please contact Brad Spear, Horseshoe Crab FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.



SAFIS Now Used by Dealers Throughout the Northeast

With the 2004 fishing season underway, more seafood dealers in the Northeast are reporting landings data on-line using SAFIS, a real-time, web-based reporting system developed by the partners of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) Northeast Region mandated that its nearly 700 permitted seafood dealers report trip-level landings electronically beginning May 1, 2004 as part of Amendment 13 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan.

“Thanks to the forward thinking of the Rhode Island DEM and the Maryland Fisheries Service, SAFIS has been a successful reporting tool for over a year, and it was available to the National Marine Fisheries Service when they needed it most,” said Maury Osborn, ACCSP Director.

To supplement the SAFIS data entry function, NOAA Fisheries developed an integrated file upload function that allows dealers to submit landings reports generated through existing inventory or accounting software. Dealers who wish to use the file upload func-

- Massachusetts plans to offer SAFIS to dealers. The schedule is to be determined.
- New York State will work with the ACCSP staff and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program to integrate SAFIS into the state’s weekly reporting system for dealers.
- New Jersey plans to submit a proposal for ACCSP funding for FY05 to implement SAFIS.
- North Carolina is offering dealers electronic reporting software that includes inventory functions and is compatible with SAFIS.

While the federally permitted dealers in Delaware and Virginia will be required to report landings electronically, those states have no plans to implement SAFIS at this time.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit www.accsp.org or call Abbey Compton at 202.289.6400, ext. 314.



The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the ACCSP staff first developed SAFIS in 2002 as part of the state’s transition to on-line reporting of commercial landings. The Maryland Fisheries Service adopted SAFIS in 2003 for real-time quota monitoring. These states worked closely with the ACCSP staff and dealers to develop a user-friendly data entry application.

tion should contact their port agents for assistance.

Most of the other Northeast states have plans to integrate SAFIS into their reporting systems:

- Maine, New Hampshire, and Connecticut plan to offer SAFIS to their state-permitted dealers in 2004 as an option for reporting trip-level landings.

Jonna Ellis Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

Although she has been with the Commission for just two years, Jonna Ellis, Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2004 has made herself indispensable! Jonna is the Commission's Human Resources (HR) Administrator, who also shares the accounting duties with Kristina Ballard.

The award is intended to recognize special contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results. Jonna has exemplified these traits in her daily work. Our HR functions are carried out in a professional and consistent manner. She has expanded and improved upon the services provided to all employees with regard to benefits and personnel issues. She has made positive improvements to our hiring process and has provided terrific assistance to the senior managers in the hiring process. Jonna is a true team player - if there is something that needs to be done she'll do it. She has very good judgment and decision-making skills when analyzing issues, taking into account both the issue and the potential impact on the Commission.

Jonna came to the Commission with an Associate's degree in Business Administration and is currently working on a B.A. in Human Resource Management, specializing in recruiting and benefits. Jonna is married to a retired Marine who is currently working for the Defense Intelligence Agency at the Pentagon. She has one son and two daughters.

As an Employee of the Quarter, Jonna received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for her personnel record. In addition, Jonna's name will be engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Jonna!



ASMFC Comings & Goings

Staff

Dr. Lisa Kline -- On April 19th, Commission staff bid a fond farewell to Dr. Lisa Kline after 11 years of outstanding service to the Commission and its 15 member states. As the Commission's first Director of Research and Statistics, Lisa established a collaborative and productive environment for the states to conduct research projects. Demonstrating outstanding leadership and vision, she led the development of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program through her service as the first Chair of the Operations Committee. Through her steadfast commitment to integrating science into the management process, Lisa ensured that comprehensive information was provided to Commissioners, supporting their efforts to improve the quality of their management decisions. Other notable accomplish-

ments included establishment of the Commission's external stock assessment peer review process and development the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program.

Beginning in May, Lisa will start her new position with the National Marine Fisheries Service (Silver Spring office), where she will be responsible for developing its National Cooperative Research Program. We wish Lisa the very best and look forward to continuing to work with her for the betterment of Atlantic coastal fisheries research and management.

Chris Van Maaren -- Last month, Commission staff said good-bye to Chris Van Maaren. With the Commission for about seven months as its Fisheries Research Specialist, Chris decided to return to upstate New York to work with the New York State Department of En-

vironmental Conservation on regional freshwater fisheries issues. While at the Commission, Chris assisted in the coordination of fishery independent data collections programs such as SEAMAP and NEAMAP. He also worked with the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences to more fully integrate socioeconomic into the Commission fisheries management plans. We wish Chris the very best!

Commissioners

Robert H. Boyles, Jr. -- Robert Boyles joins the Commission as the Legislative Commissioner from the State of South Carolina, serving as permanent proxy for Senator J. Verne Smith. Currently, Mr. Boyles is Deputy Director for Marine Resources with the South Carolina De-

continued on page 12

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 11)

partment of Natural Resources. In this position, Mr. Boyles oversees the State of South Carolina's marine resources research, management, and education operations. Prior to joining the DNR, Robert worked as Assistant to the Director for Programs at the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, where he was responsible for managing Sea Grant-sponsored research efforts at the Consortium's eight member institutions. In 1993, Robert was a Dean John A.



Knauss Sea Grant Marine Policy Fellow, where he worked for the NOAA Coastal Ocean Program. Mr. Boyles holds a Master of Marine Policy from the University of Delaware and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Economics from Wake Forest University. Welcome aboard, Mr. Boyles!

ASMFC May Meeting Week Agenda (continued from page 6)

- Reports of the Habitat Committee, MSC, Advisory Panel Oversight Committee, Law Enforcement Committee
- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities
- Review Non-Compliance Recommendations (if necessary)

11:00 AM – Noon Business Session

- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp FMP

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