



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 Spring Meeting May 4 - 7, 2009

**Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town
901 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia**

Final Schedule

The final agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.

Monday, May 4, 2009

9:00 AM - Noon Winter Flounder Management Board

- Public Comment
- Summary of NMFS Temporary Final Interim Rule, *S. Correia*
- Review and Consider Approval of Addendum I - **ACTION**
 - Written Comment and Public Hearing Summaries, *C. Vonderweidt*
 - Advisory Panel and Technical Committee Recommendations, *B. Brown and S. Correia*
 - Law Enforcement Committee Comment on Proposed Addendum, *M. Howard*
- Advisory Panel Nominations, *T. Berger* - **ACTION**
- Other Business/Adjourn

1:15 - 3:15 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Committee Reports
 - Technical Committee, *D. Kahn*
 - Committee on Economics and Social Sciences
- Discussion of Initiating an Addendum
- Other Business/Adjourn

3:30 - 6:00 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Public Comment
- Plan Review Team Reports, *B. Spear* - **ACTION**
 - State Compliance and FMP Review
- Review of Biomedical Companies' Horseshoe Crab-Related Activities, *B. Spear*
- Adaptive Resource Management Modeling Report, *C. McGowan*
- Joint HSC/Shorebird Technical Committees Report
 - Monitoring Updates
 - ARM Modeling Peer Review Terms of Reference - **ACTION**
 - HSC Stock Assessment Terms of Reference - **ACTION**

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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

4/26 - 29:

65th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

5/4 - 7:

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333 (see final schedule on pages 1, 6, 7 & 12).

5/12 - 14:

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Data Workshop, Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown, 555 E. Canal Street, Richmond, Virginia.

6/1 - 5:

Red Drum SEDAR 18 Assessment Workshop, Charleston, South Carolina.

6/8 - 12:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hutchinson Island Marriott, 555 NE Ocean Boulevard, Stuart, Florida; (800) 775-5936.

6/9 - 11:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Radisson Martinique on Broadway, New York City.

6/23 - 25:

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

7/6 - 10:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

8/4 - 6:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Embassy Suite Alexandria, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, Virginia; (703) 684-5900.

8/17 - 20:

ASMFC Summer Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333.

8/24 - 28:

Red Drum SEDAR 18 Review Workshop, Atlanta, Georgia.

9/14 - 18:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Charleston Marriott Hotel, 170 Lockwood Boulevard, Charleston, South Carolina; (800) 968-3569.

In Memoriam: John I. Nelson, Jr.

May 2, 1945 - April 3, 2009

Our Commission family was saddened by the loss of John Nelson, who died at his home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on April 3rd from cancer. He was 63. John graduated from St. Anselm's College in 1967 with a BA in Biology and Chemistry. He earned a master's degree in Zoology in 1968, an MBA in 1982, and a master's degree in Civil Engineering in 1986. He served in the New Hampshire Army National Guard as a staff sergeant and medic from 1968 to 1974.

John had a long and distinguished career in natural resource management, joining the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game as a senior biologist in 1980. He became the Chief of the Marine Fisheries Division in 1987, a position he held for 21 years. During his many years of service as New Hampshire's Administrative Commissioner, John acted in a spirit of fairness and cooperation with his fellow Commissioners. He was actively involved in the leadership of the Commission for a number of years, serving two years each as Commission Vice-Chair and Chair from 2000-2004.

As Commission Chair, John had the insight to recognize a number of emerging challenges facing the Commission and, through his leadership, implemented effective responses. Anticipating the pending retirements of long-serving Commissioners, John made it a priority to put in place meaningful tools to help guide their successors. He led the development of a new strategic plan, plotting a clear course for the future, complete with key goals and strategies to achieve them.

He helped Commissioners incorporate policies improving the Commission's consistency in decision-making and transparency. He led changes to improve the fairness and efficiency of our public comment process. Strongly believing in the benefit of investing in people, John brought in outside experts to help Commissioners and staff improve their leadership, planning, and meeting effectiveness skills.

In addition to his strategic leadership abilities, John

was an exceptional operational leader. He advocated recasting our annual congressional appropriation requests to include much-needed scientific work in high profile fisheries of interest to our stakeholders. John's approach succeeded in bringing in nearly \$6 million in federal funds, which were deployed directly to our states.

John had an exceptional ability to work constructively with others to find solutions to enormously difficult issues related to fisheries management. In all cases, the political stakes were high, the personalities involved were strong, and the issues were complex. Unfailingly,

John succeeded in brokering solutions; Striped Bass Amendment 6 implementation issues and state rules for spiny dogfish are two examples, though there were many others as well.

John was known for his wisdom, sound judgment, and always, common sense. He earned the deep respect of his fellow Commissioners as a strong thinker and an effective

problem solver, with an unflinching sense of humor. The changes he brought about at the Commission and in our fishery management plans have served us well, and will continue to do so for many years to come.

John was a devoted husband to his wife Sue, and a loving father to his daughter, Kim, and son, John. He also leaves behind three (soon to be four) grandchildren. Finding the right words on such a sad occasion is very difficult. John's family decided the following words summarized the life of the man they loved.

What is success? To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty; To find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived; That is to have succeeded.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

John was our colleague, our boss, and for many, our friend; a man who truly succeeded in his life. We will all miss him.



Species Profile: Atlantic Sturgeon

Ancient Species' Slow Road to Recovery

Introduction

In the early 1800s Atlantic sturgeon was regarded as a “junk” fish and was only fit for use as fertilizer for plants or fuel for steam-powered vessels. However, in response to increasing European demand for caviar, a major fishery was established on the Atlantic coast by 1870. As a slow-growing, late-maturing, long-lived species, sturgeon populations could not keep up with the demand. Within 100 years of its emergence, the Atlantic sturgeon fishery collapsed. Wild Atlantic sturgeon stocks are now protected from harvest and possession through a coastwide moratorium until 2038.

Life History

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) are ancient fish, dating back at least 70 million years, and can be found along the entire Atlantic coast from Labrador, Canada to St. Johns River, Florida. They are an anadromous species, which migrate from the ocean into coastal estuaries and rivers in the spring to spawn. Individual fish only spawn once every two to six years. Most juveniles remain in their natal river from one to six years before migrating to the ocean. Little is known about the movements of Atlantic sturgeon when they are in the ocean.

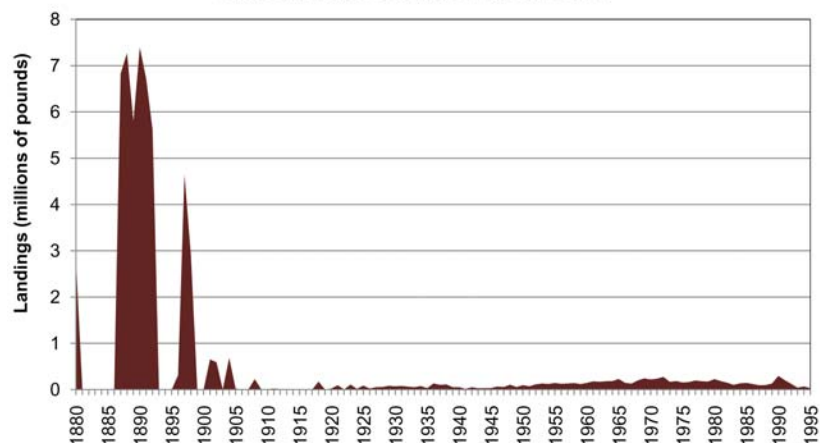
Atlantic sturgeon may live to be 60 years old, grow to lengths of 14 feet and weight 800 pounds. Females reach sexual maturity between the ages of 7 and 30, and males between the ages of 5 and 24. Typically sturgeon in the southern part of the species range mature faster and grow larger than those in the northern part of the range. Atlantic sturgeon are bottom feeders whose prey include mussels, worms, shrimp, and small bottom-dwelling fish.

Commercial Fisheries

Since colonial times, Atlantic sturgeon have supported commercial fisheries of varying magnitude. By the late 1800s, the fishery was second in value only to lobster. While sturgeon were mainly being harvested for their flesh and eggs, other parts had commercial value as well. Sturgeon skin was made into leather for clothes and bookbinding. The swim bladder was used to make a gelatin that served as a clarifying agent in jellies, wine, beer, or glue. Swim bladders were also fashioned into windows for carriages.

Figure 1. Atlantic Sturgeon Commercial Landings, 1880 - 1995

Source: Personal communication with NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, 2008



Atlantic Sturgeon
Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus

Interesting Facts:

- * Sturgeon fossils date back > 150 million years, making them among the oldest invertebrates, around at the time of the dinosaurs.
- * A female can produce up to 2.4 million eggs, which hatch 1 week after fertilization.
- * An Atlantic sturgeon captured in Long Island Sound was found to come from the Altamaha River, GA. This is the 1st evidence of large-scale movement of a sturgeon between the North and South Atlantic.
- * There are 24 species of sturgeon and all occur in the Northern Hemisphere.

Age/Length at 50 % Maturity for the Northeast Population: 20-25 years/6.53'

Stock Status: Overfished and not experiencing overfishing

Designations: Species of Concern (NMFS); Near Threatened (IUCN)

Landings just prior to the turn of the century were estimated at seven million pounds per year. From 1950 through the mid-1990s, landings ranged between 100,000 and 250,000 pounds annually. While a coastwide moratorium on the harvest of wild Atlantic sturgeon stocks was implemented at the close of 1997, cultured Atlantic sturgeon continue to be a valued commercial fish for both its flesh, which consistently brings a higher price per pound than most fish, and its eggs, or roe, which are worth more than \$50 per pound to fishermen and are sold as caviar for more than \$250 per pound.

Stock Status

Very little is known about the stock status of Atlantic sturgeon. Reliable data is difficult to obtain because many river systems have so few fish, and rivers with more fish are often not easy to sample. In 1998, the Commission completed a peer-reviewed coastwide assessment of the population, examining each river system where Atlantic sturgeon were historically found. The assessment concluded that all systems held significantly less sturgeon than they did in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and very few signs of recovery were detected. Consequently, the assessment report recommended a moratorium for each stock until the spawning population includes at least 20 protected year classes of females, which is estimated to take a minimum of 38 years to achieve. Undertaken concurrently with the Commission stock assessment in 1998, the federal government investigated the status of the species with regard to listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). That status review concluded that listing was not warranted at the time. Figures 2 and 3 provide a snapshot of two ongoing fishery-

Figure 2. Fishery-independent Catch Rates of Sub-adult Atlantic Sturgeon Taken in the Delaware River Tag-Recapture Program (Source: DE Fish & Wildlife Division, 2008)

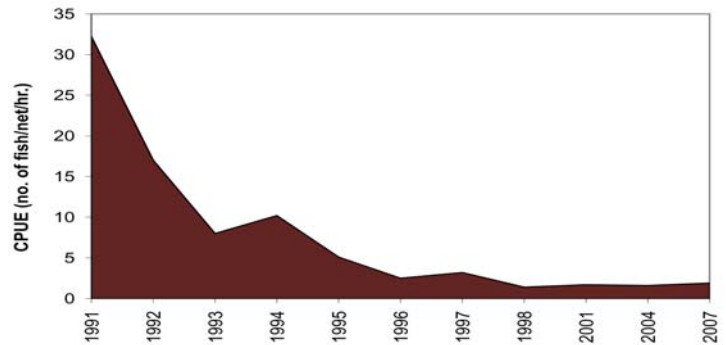
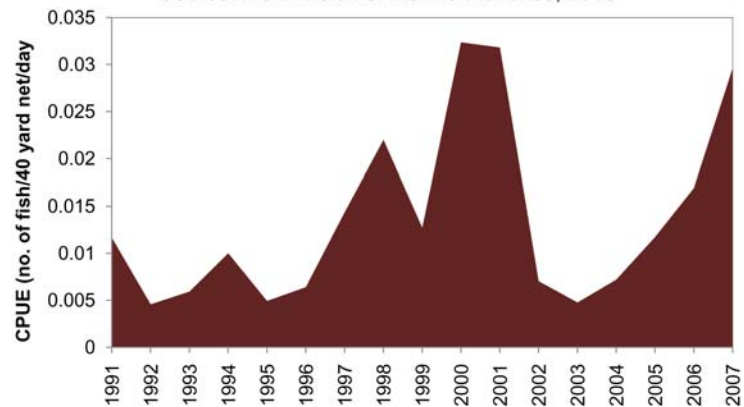


Figure 3. Fishery-independent Catch Rates of Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon in Albemarle Sound

Source: NC Division of Marine Fisheries, 2008



ing activities. Figures 2 and 3 provide a snapshot of two ongoing fishery-

Recent Projects Seek to Increase Our Understanding of Atlantic Sturgeon

Over the years, several states and organizations have taken actions to improve our understanding of Atlantic sturgeon and explore ways to aid in its recovery. Following are examples of recent measures taken:

- In 2006 and 2007, the Commission sponsored an Atlantic sturgeon bycatch workshop, bringing together coastwide sturgeon biologists and managers, to assess and examine the NMFS observer database and develop estimates of bycatch rates and bycatch mortality by fishery and region.
- In 2008, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation completed a three year study on the movement and habitat use of Atlantic sturgeon within and outside the Hudson River Estuary. A total of 134 fish were tagged during the study-period, including 4 fish that were tagged in the first year of the study and then re-caught at the same location in the last year of the study.
- The Seaboard Fisheries Institute hosted the 1st Symposium on Atlantic Sturgeon: A Regional Approach to Atlantic Sturgeon Recovery in 2009.



Photo courtesy of New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

ASMFC Spring Meeting Final Schedule (continued from page 1)

3:30 - 6:00 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board (continued)

- Discussion of Office Fax from Defenders of Wildlife Regarding Joint Technical Committee Participants
- Other Business/Adjourn

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

8:00 - 9:30 AM South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Public Comment
- Vice-Chair Election - ACTION
- Spot Plan Review Team Report, *J. Grist*
 - Review Data Availability and Stock Monitoring Report
 - Board Discussion
- Spanish Mackerel Amendment, *N. Meserve*
 - Consider Approval of Plan Development Team Membership - ACTION
 - Review Amendment Timeline
 - Review and Consider Approval of Public Information Document - ACTION
- Atlantic Croaker and Red Drum Assessment Updates, *N. Meserve*
- Other Business/Adjourn

9:45 - 10:45 AM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Public Comment
- Plan Review Team Reports, *B. Spear* - ACTION
 - State Compliance
 - FMP Review
 - Stock Assessment Update and Timeline
- Discussion of Initiating an Addendum to Extend Chesapeake Bay Reduction Harvest Cap - ACTION
- Terms of Reference for Ecological Reference Points Work – ACTION
- Update on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Research
- Other Business/Adjourn

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review Technical Committee Report on Data Poor Workshop Peer Review, *R. Wong* - ACTION
 - Scup
 - Black Sea Bass
 - Consider Acceptance of Assessment Documents and Adoption of New Reference Points
- Review Technical Committee Report on Slot Limits and Mandatory Regions, *R. Wong*
- Consider Postponed Motion on Mandatory Regions - ACTION
- Review of MAFMC Progress on ACLs and AMs, *J. Coakley*
- Discussion of Quota Transfer Regulatory Language within Fishery Management Plans, *D. Pierce*
 - Scup Summer Period (State-by-State Quotas)
 - Black Sea Bass (State-by-State Quotas)
- Other Business/Adjourn

Noon - 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee

- Species Updates
- VMS Updates, *Jon Pinkerton*, NMFS
- Magnuson-Stevenson Act Authorities for State Officers, *B. Hogan*
 - Enforcement of State Laws in Federal Waters, non-JEA
 - Follow-up on Case Backlog
- Reissue of Guidelines Document without Numerical Weights Proposal
- Action Plan 2009 Update for Law Enforcement Committee
- Other Business
 - SAFIS Information for Prosecution, *K. Blanchard*
- Adjourn

1:45 - 2:45 PM Commissioner Workshop: Length-Based Stock Assessment Models 101

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

- Public Comment
- Stock Assessment and Advisory Report Review
 - Review of Stock Assessment & Advisory Report, *K. McKown & T. Miller*
 - Consider Acceptance of Assessment and Advisory Report - **ACTION**
- Discussion of Management Response to Assessment Results - **ACTION**
- Draft Addendum XIV, *T. Kerns* - **ACTION**
 - Review Public Comment
 - Discussion and Consider Approval of Addendum XIV
- Area 1 LCMT Report, *T. Stockwell*
- Other Business/Adjourn

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

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

8:30 - 11:30 AM Shad & River Herring Management Board

- Public Comment
- Draft Amendment 2 (River Herring) - **ACTION**
 - Review Working Group Recommendations
 - Review Technical Committee and Advisory Panel Comments, *R. Sadzinski and B. Young*
 - Discuss and Consider Approval of Draft Amendment 2
- Draft Amendment 3 (American Shad) - **ACTION**
 - Review of Amendment 3, *K. Taylor*
 - Review Technical Committee and Advisory Panel Comments, *R. Sadzinski and B. Young*
 - Discuss and Consider Approval of Draft Amendment 3 for Public Comment
- Other Business/Adjourn

1:00 - 3:00 PM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review and Consider Approval of 2007 Spiny Dogfish FMP Review, *C. Vonderweidt* - **ACTION**
- Review Adjusted 2009/2010 Spiny Dogfish Regional Quotas
- Review and Consider Approval of Draft Addendum I to the Coastal Sharks FMP for Public Comment, *C. Vonderweidt* - **ACTION**
- Plan Review Team Review of State Regulations for Coastal Sharks FMP, *C. Vonderweidt* - **ACTION**
- Summary of Spiny Dogfish Joint Committee Recommendations and Mid-Atlantic Council Action, *R. Munden*
- Other Business/Adjourn

3:15 - 5:45 PM ISFMP Policy Board

- Public Comment
- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities
- Discussion on Board Performance Review Format
- Discussion on State Delegation Participation During Meetings
- Habitat Committee Report
 - Consider Approval of the 2009-2013 Habitat Program Strategic Plan
 - Consider Approval of MARAD and Navy Correspondence Regarding Reefing
- NMFS Presentation on the 2010 Atlantic Trawl Rule
- Reports from the Management and Science Committee, Assessment Science Committee, and Law Enforcement Committee
- Review Next Steps for Ecosystem-based Fishery Management by the Commission
- Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Update
- Other Business/Recess

Thursday, May 7, 2009

8:00 - 10:30 AM Executive Committee

- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee, *R. Boyles*
 - Presentation of the FY10 Budget - **ACTION**
 - Interim Review of the 2009 Action Plan Accomplishments

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Species Profile: Atlantic Sturgeon (continued from page 5)

independent surveys conducted by Delaware and North Carolina that encounter Atlantic sturgeon. While the North Carolina survey shows slight improvement in catch per unit effort, both surveys indicate that sturgeon continue to be at very low levels.

In 2005, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) initiated a second status review to reevaluate whether this species required protection under the ESA. The Status Review Team (SRT) determined that Atlantic sturgeon should be broken down into five distinct population segments (DPS): (1) Gulf of Maine, (2) New York Bight, (3) Chesapeake Bay, (4) Carolina, and (5) South Atlantic. The SRT determined that the most significant threats to all of the DPSs are bycatch mortality, poor water quality, lack of adequate state and/or federal regulatory mechanisms, and dredging activities. Additional stressors that are unique to some DPSs include habitat impediments and ship strikes.

The SRT found that the Carolina, Chesapeake Bay, and New York Bight DPSs were likely (>50% chance) to become endangered in the next 20 years. They recommended that these DPSs be listed as threatened under the ESA. The South Atlantic and Gulf of Maine DPSs

have a moderate risk (<50% chance) of becoming endangered in the next 20 years, but available science was insufficient to allow the SRT to fully assess these populations so they do not provide a listing recommendation. If the NMFS proposes to list any DPSs of Atlantic sturgeon, it will publish a Federal Register notice(s), allowing for a public comment period(s). Comments will be reviewed and addressed as appropriate before making any final determinations on whether to list any DPSs.

Atlantic Coastal Management

The Commission adopted the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Sturgeon in 1990. All of the 15 member states (Maine to Florida, including Pennsylvania) and two member jurisdictions (District of Columbia and Potomac River Fisheries Commission) participate in the FMP. In 1998 the FMP was amended to implement the recommendation of the 1998 peer reviewed stock assessment to prohibit harvest and possession of Atlantic sturgeon and sturgeon parts, including roe, in all participating jurisdictions. In 1999, the federal government complemented state actions by banning the possession and harvest of Atlantic sturgeon in the exclusive economic zone. Amendment 1

Reflections from the Past

According to A. Kahnle, C.A. Shirey and K. Hattala in the 1998 Atlantic Sturgeon Stock Assessment for Peer Review:

The Delaware River supported the largest stock of Atlantic sturgeon of any Atlantic coastal river system. Commercial landings of sturgeon from the Delaware Estuary were reported by the states of DE, PA, and NJ. Highest landings for these states (2,968 metric tons or 6.5 million pounds) occurred in 1888 and accounted for over 90 percent of the total Atlantic coastal landings in that year. No other stock or region has supported landings of this magnitude.

also contains provisions to reduce Atlantic sturgeon bycatch in other fisheries. Subsequent addenda have outlined the protocols and requirements for importing Atlantic sturgeon for aquaculture purposes. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or ktaylor@asmfc.org,

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners

Jessica McCawley -- In April, Ms. Jessica McCawley became Florida's new Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC, taking over the position recently held by Mr. Gil McRae. Ms. McCawley is the Administrator of the Analysis and Rulemaking Subsection for the Florida Division of Marine Fisheries Management, which analyzes stock assessments and reports, gathers public opinions, and creates management options for marine fisheries rule promulgation. Ms. McCawley holds a Master of Science in Marine Science from the University of Alabama and a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology from Spring Hill College in Alabama. Her graduate work investigated the role of artificial reefs in the life history of red snapper. Ms. McCawley's experience includes ecology of artificial reef communities, reef fish, predator prey relationships in fish populations, and human dimensions of fisheries management. Welcome aboard, Ms. McCawley!



continued on next page

Science Highlight: *Fish Tagging Certification Plan*

The Commission's Interstate Tagging Committee (ITC) is committed to improving collection methods and use of fish tagging information on the Atlantic coast. Recently, the ITC has focused its efforts on implementation of the Fish Tagging Program Certification process. The certification process involves careful review of a tagging program's planning, training, and data collection protocols to determine if that program promotes good tagging and data management practices. Programs that pass review are certified by the ITC, meaning they have been given the Commission's stamp of approval. Anglers interested in learning to tag fish can be directed to these exceptional programs.

The first program to be reviewed and certified was the angler-based fish tagging program conducted by the American Littoral Society (ALS, www.littoralsociety.org). The ALS tagging program began in 1965 and has involved anglers from Maine to the Gulf Coast in tagging and reporting recaptures of many saltwater marine game fish such as striped bass and bluefish. Tag return data collected by ALS have been used by Commission technical committees to characterize migration patterns of

bluefish and striped bass along the Atlantic coast. In addition, ALS data have been used to help identify individual stocks and to characterize recreational discards for striped bass, bluefish, and tautog.

To begin the review process, ALS's application was reviewed by several species technical committees. Feedback from these committees was summarized and reviewed by a subcommittee of the ITC. The ITC then conducted a complete review of every aspect of the ALS tagging program. After careful consideration, the ITC decided to grant certification status to ALS. A detailed review of the program's strengths and suggestions for improvement was well received by Pam Carlsen, former Fish Tagging Program Director at ALS. Jeff Dement, the new Director, has already begun working on implementation of several recommendations from the ITC review. ALS will update the ITC on their progress at committee meetings, and the ITC will review those changes again when ALS submits an application for certification renewal in five years.

In 2009, the ITC will conduct reviews of several governmental fish tagging programs. However, all fish tagging programs are welcome to apply for certification at any time. A full description of the certification process and a copy of the application form can be found at the Cooperative Tagging Web Site and Registry (www.fishtag.info).



Photo: Robert Wiggers, South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

For more information about the ALS angler-based tagging program, contact Jeff Dement, Fish Tagging Program Director at (732) 291-0055. For information about the ITC or the tagging program certification, contact Katie Drew, Stock Assessment Scientist, at (202) 289-6400 or kdrew@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 8)



Staff

Katie Drew -- In April, Katie Drew joined the Commission staff as its newest Stock Assessment Scientist. Katie will be assisting the Red Drum and Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Subcommittees as they prepare benchmark assessments for peer review through the SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review process. She will also take over as lead staff to the Fishing Gear Technology Work Group, the Otolith Collection Program, and the Interstate Tagging Committee. Katie comes to us straight from the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, where she received a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and Fisheries. Her doctoral work was on the age, growth, and population dynamics of white marlin. Katie earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. Welcome aboard, Katie!



ACCSP: What Can the Program Do for Your Data Review?

Integral Partner in Stock Assessments

In order to make sound and informed decisions for fish stocks and populations, there must be a fluid assessment process between all those involved. Decision makers rely on fisheries scientists to provide input of current and past fish stocks based on reliable fisheries dependent and independent data analyzed during stock assessments.

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is an important contributor to this process due to its ability to compile and disseminate fisheries-dependent data for various audiences. Fisheries-dependent data are collected from commercial sources (vessel or dealer reports, portside sampling information, onboard observer information,) and recreational sources (individual anglers, party or charter boats). Fishery-independent data are collected by scientists conducting long-term resource monitoring surveys, which are specifically designed to follow consistent methods using the same gear for the duration of the survey in order to develop unbiased and independent indices of abundance.

During 2007 and 2008, ACCSP participated in several of the SouthEast Data Assessment and Reviews (SEDAR). Initiated in 2002, SEDAR is a three step process to improve the quality of fish stock assessments in the South Atlantic. The steps occur over a period of several months and include an initial data workshop for review, followed by an assessment workshop to develop and estimate population parameters, and finally concluded with an

independent review to formulate recommendations of the species of focus.

During the most recent SEDAR (18 - Red Drum), the major contributions of the ACCSP Data Team were commercial data from 1950 to 2007 for all Atlantic coast states (with the exception of North Carolina) and an index of abundance from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey from 1981 to 2007. This information was compiled from the ACCSP Data Warehouse. The Data Warehouse is the online database populated with fisheries-dependent data supplied by the ACCSP Program Partners.

Additionally, the ACCSP Data Team was on hand throughout the Data Workshop to guide technical committee and stock assessment subcommittee members in properly submitting permissions for confidentiality, determine specialized formats for data tables, and provide details about particular records that were questionable so the group could move forward quickly and make decisions.

The Data Team's participation in the stock assessment process increased visibility among those that work on the assessments of the various capabilities of the Data Warehouse. Also, the ACCSP Data Team was able to see firsthand how the information in the Data Warehouse were used and, therefore, what subsequent steps are necessary to maintain the Data Warehouse as an essential link to fisheries-dependent data for future stock assessments.

Future planned SEDARs include SEDAR 19 to review red and black grouper and SEDAR 20 planned to review Atlantic menhaden and Atlantic croaker. The ACCSP Data Team is already actively involved in the process for SEDARs 19 and 20.

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 more information please visit www.accsp.org or contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at ann.mcelhatton@accsp.org.

Upcoming Meetings

April 21 & 22, 2009:

Operations Committee, Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel, 200 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa, Florida

April 23, 2009:

Recreational Technical Committee, Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel, 200 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa, Florida

May 6, 2009:

Coordinating Council, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Toni Kerns Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

In the five plus years Toni Kerns has been with the Commission, she has firmly established herself as an exceptional employee and important contributor to the Commission's vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." In recognition of her efforts, Toni was awarded Employee of the Quarter (April - June 2009). The award recognizes special contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

For the last several years, Toni has skillfully juggled the intensive demands of four high profile species management programs (American lobster, summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass). For American lobster, the most commercially valuable species the Commission manages, Toni has developed over half a dozen addenda to the fishery management plan in response to changes in stock conditions and industry needs, and overseen the completion of two benchmark stock assessments. The latest benchmark stock assessment was peer-reviewed in March and will be presented to the American Lobster Board for review and acceptance in May. The assessment was over two years in the making and will provide the basis for future management decisions. The remaining three species management programs are among the most demanding and contentious species programs managed by the Commission. Toni consistently meets the demands of these programs at a very high level -- producing excellent work products frequently under tight deadlines in order to facilitate informed decision-making by the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board. Toni also spends considerable time mentoring ISFMP staff, ensuring consistency among work products and efficiencies in the Commission process.

Through it all Toni maintains a cheerful, energetic attitude, and a terrific sense of humor. She unfailingly makes time for others who need her help and is an inspiration for all who work with her. Toni has a Master in Coastal Environmental Management from Duke University and a Bachelor of Arts from Colgate University. As Employee of the Quarter, she received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for her personnel record. In addition, her name will be engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Toni!



On the Legislative Front

Last month, the Senate confirmed President Obama's nominees to head the Department of Commerce and its largest agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). As Commerce Secretary, former Washington Governor Gary Locke will oversee a department with broad jurisdiction covering business development, census, and a major portion of climate change, oceans, and fisheries. Secretary Locke's experience with ocean and fisheries issues comes from work to recover wild salmon populations and maintain the health of Puget Sound. In his Senate confirmation hearing, he pledged to enforce the strict new mandates of the Magnuson Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006.



Secretary Locke's Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of NOAA, Dr. Jane Lubchenco is internationally recognized for her contributions to marine conservation and climate science. Prior to her appointment, Lubchenco was on the faculty at Oregon State University for the 30 years. She served on the Pew Oceans Commission and more recently on the Joint Oceans Commission Initiative. Since Under Secretary Lubchenco has taken office, she has been critical about the state of many U.S. fisheries, saying that regulatory tools such as catch shares can be used to restore sustainability of our oceans. The Commission looks forward to working with Secretary Locke and Under Secretary Lubchenco and to their leadership in dealing with important coastal and fisheries issues.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington D.C. 20005

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ASMFC Spring Meeting Final Schedule (continued from page 7)

8:00 - 10:30 AM **Executive Committee (continued)**

- Future Annual Meetings Update, *L. Leach*
 - November 1-5, 2009: Newport, RI; November 8-11, 2010: SC; 2011: MA; 2012: PA; and 2013: GA
- Strategic Leadership Discussion, *G. Lapointe*
- Other Business/Adjourn

10:45 - 11:15 AM **ISFMP Policy Board (continued)**

- Public Comment
- Review of Noncompliance Findings (if applicable)
- Other Business/Adjourn

11:30 AM - Noon **Business Session**

- Public Comment
- Review of Non-compliance Findings (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of FMPs or Amendments (if necessary)
- Other Business/Adjourn

Noon **Lunch for Commissioners & Proxies**

12:30 - 2:30 PM **Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council**

- Public Comment
- ACCSP Status Report
- MRIP Actions, *M. Cahall*
- Review and Approve Bycatch and Biological Matrices, *M. Cahall* - **ACTION**
- Review and Approve RFP, *M. Cahall* – **ACTION**
- Review ACCSP 2008 Annual Report, *M. Cahall*
- Adjourn