



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*

## **American Eel PID Available for Public Comment States Schedule Hearings for April & May**

In March, the Commission's American Eel Management Board approved the Public Information Document (PID) on American Eel for public review and comment. The PID provides an overview of our current knowledge of American eel, including stock status, a description of commercial and recreational fisheries, and a suite of research and management issues for public comment. These issues include possible changes to the management programs for recreational and commercial fisheries, an evaluation of non-fishing sources of mortality (e.g., habitat and predation), and a review of the plan's current monitoring requirements.

Atlantic coastal states from Maine through North Carolina will be holding hearings on the PID throughout April and May. The specific details of those meetings follow.

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

*April 18, 2005; 6:00 PM*

Gulf of Maine Research Institute  
Third Floor Board Room  
350 Commercial Street  
Portland, Maine

Contact: Lewis Flagg at 207/624-6548

And

*April 21, 2005; 6:00 PM*

Eastern Maine Technical College  
Rangeley Hall, Room 501A  
Sylvan Road  
Bangor, Maine

Contact: Lewis Flagg at 207/624-6548

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

*April 19, 2005; 7:00 PM*

Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station  
30 Emerson Avenue  
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Contact: Mike Armstrong at 978/282-0308

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

*April 21, 2005; 6:00 PM*

URI Narragansett Bay Campus  
Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Jason McNamee at 401/423-1943



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

*April 20, 2005; 7:00 PM*

Marine Headquarters Office  
Education Center  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Contact: Steve Gephard at 860/434-6043

New York Department of Environmental Conservation

*May 19, 2005; 7:30 PM*

Bureau of Marine Resources Headquarters  
205 North Belle Meade Road  
East Setauket, New York  
Contact: Vic Vecchio at 631/444-0476

And

*May 18, 2005; 7:30 PM*

Upper Delaware Council  
311 Bridge Street  
Narrowsburg, New York  
Contact: Vic Vecchio at 631/444-0476

### **Inside This Issue**

**Upcoming Meetings** Page 2

**Species Profile: Scup** Page 4

**ASMFC Spring 2005 Meeting  
Week Agenda** Page 6

**ASMFC Comings & Goings**  
Page 7

**Large Whale DEIS Released**  
Page 7

**NOAA Fisheries Moves Forward  
on its Ecosystem Approach to  
Management** Page 8

**ACCSP Announces 2005  
Funding** Page 10

**Non-Traditional Stakeholders  
Sought for Participation on  
American Eel Advisory Panel**  
Page 12

*continued on page 10*

**T**he 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.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**4/26:**

ASMFC Tautog Technical Committee, Radisson Hotel Airport Providence, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

**4/26 & 27:**

ASMFC Habitat Committee, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland.

**4/27 & 28:**

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council, Historic Inns at Annapolis, Annapolis, Maryland.

**4/28:**

ASMFC Bluefish Technical Committee, Hotel Providence, 311 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

**5/3- 5:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center, 9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland.

**5/9 - 12:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, Alexandria, Virginia.

**6/13- 17:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Radisson Resort at the Port, 8701 Astronaut Blvd., Cape Canaveral, Florida; 800-333-3333.

**6/14 - 16:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Wilmington Hotel, 700 King Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

**6/21 - 23:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Radisson Eastland Hotel, Portland, Maine.

**6/27 - 7/1:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

**8/8-10:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Society Hill Hotel, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**8/15 - 18:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, Alexandria, Virginia.

**9/13 - 15:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Express, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

Fully incorporating science into fishery management decisions is one of the key issues of the current national debate on improving ocean governance. This was a prominent topic in the reports of both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. Some feel fishery managers need to pay more attention to scientists and their recommendations.

Science plays a critical role in shaping our understanding of fish and fish populations. The more we understand what is happening and why, the better equipped we will be to make (and accept) sound management decisions. The Commission places a high value in supporting and enhancing fisheries science. Here are some of our projects and how they fit into our mission of fisheries stewardship.

Stock assessments are the cornerstone of effective fisheries management. They define where we are, help formulate where we want to go, and provide useful advice regarding the best ways to maintain rebuilding progress. We depend on both state and federal scientists to conduct stock assessments for Commission-managed species. ASMFC has established a peer review process, defining standards for formally evaluating the work of our stock assessment scientists. The Commission has also made a substantial investment in human capital by sponsoring workshops to train and update more than 40 scientists in stock assessments, increasing the talent pool available to do this important work. We also coordinate our stock assessment peer reviews with the review efforts of NOAA Fisheries Southeast and Northeast Science Centers.

Closely related to stock assessments, the Commission has initiated an effort to combine more than 70 databases to facilitate the upcoming stock assessment for American lobster, the most commercially valuable species managed by the Commission. We hope the efficiencies and accuracies gained in this effort will cut the time required to conduct the assessment from 18 months to three months. This is a tall order, but success will mean a more timely assessment, and will point the way for us to make similar improvements for assessing other species.

Regarding multispecies, it seems intuitive that to manage fish like striped bass and bluefish we need to know something about menhaden and the other forage fish predators feed on. Although that is not the way we are

managing now, it is the way we are beginning to look at certain groups of fish. Since the late 90s, ASMFC has been working with scientists to develop a model to capture the relationship between predator and prey species. They've found their model works well with existing fisheries data sets and are currently working to determine how to best integrate model results into stock assessments and fisheries management advice.

If stock assessments are the cornerstone of fisheries management, then fisheries data are the foundation of stock assessments. That's why the Commission is working hard to standardize and improve the collection of fisheries-independent data. This is the information collected through trawl surveys and other scientific observations that count, and measure fish. Standardized survey methodology can improve the value of the results for trend analysis and comparison with other surveys. Standardized data formats can facilitate the processing, storage, sharing and use of fisheries surveys. This effort has the potential to help us optimize the value of fisheries surveys and research work.

The Commission's science efforts have also included the production of several comprehensive documents regarding Beach Nourishment, Aquaculture, Bycatch and Discards, and Stock Assessments. These are the products of the collaborative work of some of the most knowledgeable scientific minds along the Atlantic coast. They outline and define issues, responses, and guidelines for various activities as they relate to fisheries and fisheries habitat. The documents are important resources for state managers to reference in evaluating the impacts of activities within their states, enabling them to base their recommendations on scientific principles adopted by the 15 states.

Finally, the best advice is not very helpful if the recipients don't understand it. That is why the Commission is committed to providing training opportunities for our Commissioners on scientific methodologies and the results they generate. The Commission is also committed to a science process that is open and transparent, allowing stakeholders the opportunity to understand where data are coming from and to ask questions of scientists and researchers. Collectively, our goal should be to make good use of the best science available to optimize the performance of our fishery management plans, resulting in healthy and abundant stocks. Hopefully, that is something we can all agree on.



# Species Profile: Scup

## Recent Survey Indices Provide Encouraging Signs of Stock Rebuilding

### Introduction

For decades, commercial and recreational fishermen throughout southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic have fished for scup. Though landings today are a fraction of what they once were, concerted management efforts by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have begun to yield promising results for this popular fish species. Recent surveys suggest that the availability of fish is increasing, recruitment is strong and age structures are starting to rebuild, offering good news for the rebuilding of the stock.

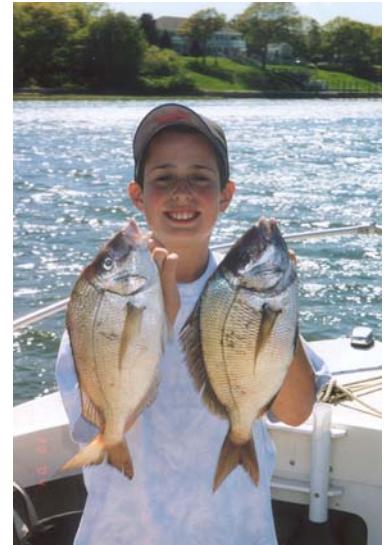


Photo courtesy of Mark Terceiro, NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

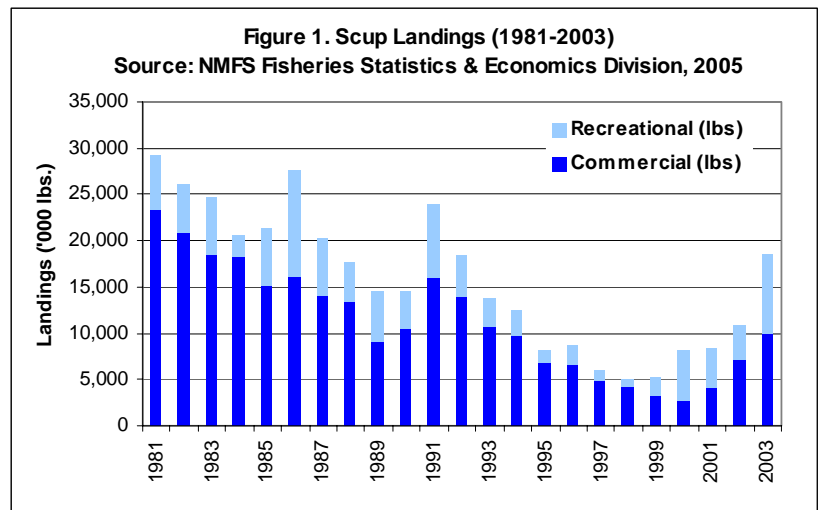
### Life History

Scup are a migratory, schooling species found on the continental shelf of the Northwest Atlantic, commonly inhabiting waters from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Scup overwinter in offshore waters from southern New Jersey to Cape Hatteras. When water temperatures begin to rise in spring and summer, scup migrate to more northern and inshore waters to spawn. Spawning areas include locations from southern New England to Long Island, New York. Large fish arrive to the spawning grounds first, followed by successive waves of smaller individuals, suggesting that scup school by size. Larval scup are pelagic and are found in coastal waters during warmer months. Juvenile scup use a variety of coastal habitats and can dominate the overall fish population in large estuarine areas during the summer months.

### Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Scup support commercial fisheries from Massachusetts to North Carolina. From 1974 to 1986, commercial landings fluctuated between 15.4 and 22 million pounds without trend. By 2000, in response to low stock abundance and stringent quota management, landings dropped to 2.7 million pounds, an all-time low for the time series (1930-2003). Since then, landings have been slowly increasing, with an estimated 9.9 million pounds landed in 2003. The primary commercial fishing gear is the otter trawl, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the total catch. About one-third of the commercial landings occur in state waters, the largest share of which are landed in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

The recreational fishery for scup is significant, with anglers account-



**Scup**  
*Stenotomus chrysops*  
**Common Names:** porgy  
**Family:** Sparidae  
**Interesting Fact:** Scup are thought to spawn in the morning unlike most fish that spawn at night.  
**Largest Recorded:** 6 lbs, 3 oz., Fenwick Shoals, Maryland  
**Age/Length at Maturity:** 50% recruited at age 2 (6.1"); 100% recruited at age 3 (8.3")  
**FMP Stock Rebuilding Goals:** Biomass Threshold = 0.9 kg/tow  
 Fmax = 0.25  
**FMP Rebuilding Schedule:** 2010  
**Stock Status:** Not overfished & overfishing status unknown



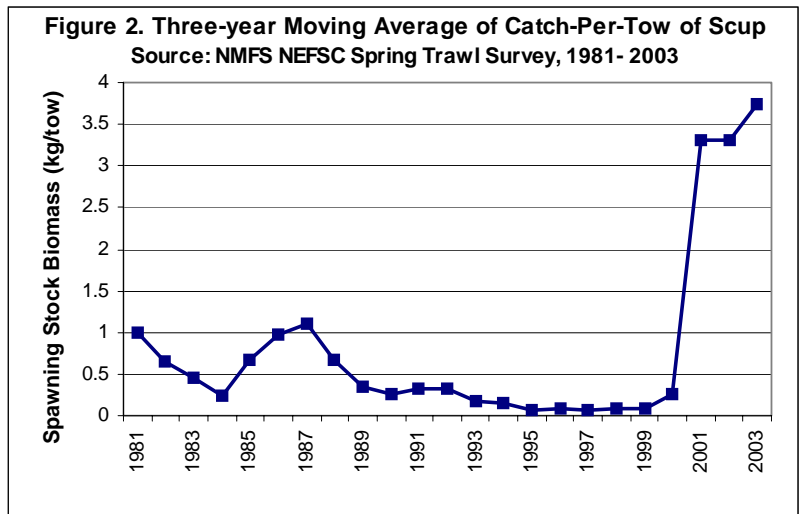
ing for 17 - 67 percent of total annual catches from 1985 -2001. Angler landings have fluctuated since 1998. Data shows increases through 2001, decreases in 2002, and substantial increases in 2003. The majority of recreational landings come from state waters, with anglers in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut catching the greatest proportion.

**Stock Status**

The 2000 stock assessment indicated that scup were overfished and overfishing was occurring. The primary concerns identified by the assessment were excessive discarding of scup and near collapse of the stock. In 2002, the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee changed the status of scup to no longer overfished but could not determine if overfishing was occurring due to a lack of information on fishing mortality. The change in stock status is a result of a high survey index in 2002 and its inclusion in the 3-year moving average calculation. The 2002 survey was considered highly uncertain because the abundance of all age groups increased substantially from the 2001 survey, suggesting that increased availability of scup to the survey gear was an important determinant in the 2002 survey results. Despite an incomplete picture of fishing mortality and concerns about the 2002 survey, more recent surveys



Photo courtesy of Rod McLeod, CT DEP



indicate strong recruitment and some rebuilding of age structure (Figure 2).

This September, the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center, in cooperation with state biologists and recreational and commercial fishermen, will conduct a cooperative scup tagging study that will go a long way to increase our knowledge base on scup and improve future assessments. The study, funded through the Marine Fisheries Initiative program (MARFIN), is geared to evaluate scup’s seasonal distribution and rates of exploitation (fishing mortality) from Massachusetts through New Jersey. Study participants hope to tag upwards of 10,000 fish this fall.

**Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations**

In an effort to coordinate management actions in both state and federal waters, the Commission and the Council established a joint management program for scup in 1995. This program is currently managed under Amendment 12 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, and several subsequent addenda. The plan contains a suite of reference points to evaluate if the stock is overfished or overfishing is occurring.

The management program divides a total annual quota between the recreational fishery (22%) and the commercial fishery (78%). Each fall the Commission and Council meet to set recreational fishery management measures for the following year; these measures usually include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits and fishing seasons. In 2002, the Commission’s management program was modified to include a state-by-state conservation equivalency system. Current recreational management measures are provided in the accompanying table.

State	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	Open Season
CT	10.5"	25 Fish	July 1 – October 31
		60 Fish	Party and Charterboat only September 1 – October 31
NJ	9"	50 Fish	January 1 – February 28
			July 1-December 31
DE	8"	50 Fish	All Year
MD	8"	50 Fish	All Year
VA	8"	50 Fish	All Year
NC	8"	50 Fish	All Year

\* MA - NY are regulations are currently undergoing public review.

management measures for the following year; these measures usually include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits and fishing seasons. In 2002, the Commission’s management program was modified to include a state-by-state conservation equivalency system. Current recreational management measures are provided in the accompanying table.

The commercial quota is divided into three quota periods, Winter I (January - April), Summer (May - October) and Winter II ( November - December). A coastwide quota regulates the winter periods, while state-by-state quotas regulate the summer period. Specific management measures for the commercial fishery include minimum size limits, minimum mesh requirements for trawls, a moratorium on entry into the fishery and closed seasons. For more information, please contact Julie Nygard, Scup Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <jnygard@asmfc.org>.

# ASMFC Spring 2005 Meeting

## May 9 - 12, 2005

**Radisson Hotel, Old Town Alexandria**  
**901 N. Fairfax**  
**Alexandria, VA 22314**  
**(703) 683-6000**

### PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

(The preliminary agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein. For the final agenda, please check the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/may05IMtgWk.htm>)

**Monday, May 9**

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Summer Flounder, Scup & Black Sea Bass Management Board
10:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	NEAMAP Board
3:45 PM - 5:45 PM	American Lobster Management Board
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	NMFS Public Information Meeting: New Highly Migratory Species FMP

**Tuesday, May 10**

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	American Eel Management Board
9:15 AM - 12:15 PM	Commissioner Workshop
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Management & Science Committee
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Law Enforcement Committee
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board
2:45 PM - 5:30 PM	Weakfish Management Board
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM	Annual Awards of Excellence

**Wednesday, May 11**

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Winter Flounder Management Board
8:00 AM - Noon	Management & Science Committee (continued)
8:00 AM - Noon	Law Enforcement Committee (continued)
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	Commissioner Workshop on Economic Modeling Approaches
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
12:45 PM - 3:45 PM	Legislators & Governors' Appointees Meeting (Buffet Lunch for Members)
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

**Thursday, May 12**

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Executive Committee
8:45 AM - 2:45 PM	ISFMP Policy Board (Buffet Lunch for Board Members)
2:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Business Session



## ASMFC Comings & Goings

**Dick Snyder** -- This February, friends and colleagues of Dick Snyder came together to celebrate his lifelong accomplishments and bid him a fond farewell as he enters the next phase of his life -- retirement. Dick's career in fisheries management spans almost 40 years and all of it involves work with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). He first started with PFBC back in the late 1960s/early 1970s as a seasonal employee while obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Forest Management and a Master's degree in Wildlife Biology from West Virginia University. He joined PFBC full-time in 1973 as an Aquatic Biologist, beginning his career-long interaction with trout management issues. Throughout his career he received awards recognizing his efforts to improve trout management and trout fishing in Pennsylvania.

In 1980, Dick became the Chief of the Fisheries Management Division for the Bureau of Fisheries, a position he held until his retirement. It was in this capacity as Bureau Chief that ASMFC staff and state members came to know and work with Dick Snyder. He was a long-standing member of the ASMFC's Management & Science Committee (MSC). For the last several years, he represented PFBC on various ASMFC species management boards. As both a MSC and Board member, Dick brought to the table his extensive knowledge of anadromous species management and strong dedication to resource conservation. While he will be sorely missed, we wish Dick a healthy and happy retirement, and many, many years of great fishing!



Photo courtesy of Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

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## NOAA Fisheries Releases DEIS on Proposed Changes to Protect Large Whales

With the help of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT), NOAA Fisheries developed the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) to reduce the level of serious injury and mortality of North Atlantic right, humpback, and fin, and minke whales. The ALWTRP, first implemented in 1999, was meant to evolve over time as knowledge of whale/fishing gear interactions increased. In general, the ALWTRP consists of a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory programs, including broad gear modifications, time-area closures, expanded disentanglement efforts, extensive outreach efforts in key areas, gear research, and an expanded right whale surveillance program to supplement the Mandatory Ship Reporting System. The plan currently in place addresses large whale interactions with the Northeast sink gillnet fishery, the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American lobster trap/pot fish-

ery, the U.S. Mid-Atlantic coastal gillnet fishery, and the Southeastern U.S. Atlantic shark gillnet fishery.

In response to the continued serious injury and mortality of large whales from entanglement in commercial fishing gear, NOAA Fisheries determined that additional modifications to the ALWTRP were warranted. They therefore reconvened the ALWTRT in 2003 to help evaluate the ALWTRP and discuss additional modifications necessary to meet the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act. During this round of meetings the Southeast Atlantic coastal gillnet fishery and the Atlantic mixed species trap/pot (e.g., hagfish, Jonah crab, red crab, shrimp, black sea bass, and conch/whelk) fisheries were added to the ALWTRT process. The recommendations from this series of meetings were used to develop new alternatives for re-

ducing whale interactions with fishing gear and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was produced. The DEIS is available online at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>.

The DEIS identifies alternatives for amending the ALWTRP and analyzes the biological, social, and economic impacts of the proposed amendments. Comments on the DEIS are due to NOAA Fisheries by May 16, 2005. After the completion of a final environmental impact statement, NOAA Fisheries will publish a proposed rule in the *Federal Register*, which will describe how modifications to the ALWTRP will be implemented. For more information, please contact Elizabeth Griffin at [egriffin@asmfc.org](mailto:egriffin@asmfc.org).

**UPCOMING MEETING**  
ALWTRT, April 25 - 27  
Baltimore, Maryland.

# NOAA Fisheries Moves Forward on Its Ecosystem Approach to Management

by

**Dr. Douglas P. DeMaster**  
**Science and Research Director, Alaska Region**  
**NOAA Fisheries Service**

It's hard to read a newspaper, newsletter, journal or book about marine resource management without reading about ecosystem management. Certainly, recent reports by the Pew Ocean Commission, the US Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP), and the Bush Administration agree on the need for an approach that is "managed to reflect the relationships among all ecosystem components, including human and nonhuman species and the environments in which they live." While that quote is from the USCOP report, there is considerable literature to support this consensus opinion. But the \$64,000 question remains, "what does it all mean?"

Well, here's what NOAA believes it means, and this is taken from the NOAA Strategic Plan (<http://www.spo.noaa.gov>). An ecosystem approach to management is: (1) adaptive, (2) geographically specified, (3) accounts for ecosystem knowledge, (4) accounts for uncertainty, (5) considers multiple external influences, and (6) strives to balance diverse societal objectives. In other words, an ecosystem approach to management (EAM) is regional, takes account of what we know and do not know about ecosystems, considers human and natural influences, and strives to balance diverse and sometimes competing societal objectives. NOAA also acknowledges that implementation will need to be incremental and collaborative.

EAM is not a one size fits all approach. It has to be tailored to the needs of a specific region or ecosystem. EAM will not replace the existing system of regional fishery management councils established in 1977. Instead, EAM is in-

tended to complement the existing system under which federal fisheries are managed. EAM is much broader than fisheries management alone. EAM does not mean that in the absence of perfect knowledge fisheries must be curtailed. Rather, EAM embodies the concept often referred to as the precautionary approach. This means that societal objectives associated with utilization of marine resources are best balanced by managing the risk of adverse affects of human actions. Such management has to incorporate uncertainty in our ability to predict immediate and long-term consequences. EAM makes irreversible change in a region's ecosystem unlikely, while allowing for the social and economic benefits associated with the exploitation to be realized.

A common question related to EAM implementation is how these "regional ecosystems" will be delineated. Again, here is what NOAA intends to do. NOAA will delineate the scale of individual ecosystems based on the spatial extent of the system dynamics that are to be studied or influenced through management. Specific ecosystem boundaries are based on discontinuities in the geographic distribution of ecosystem characteristics and management jurisdictions. For example, an ecosystem region would be defined based on a combination of its distinct oceanographic characteristics, geographic

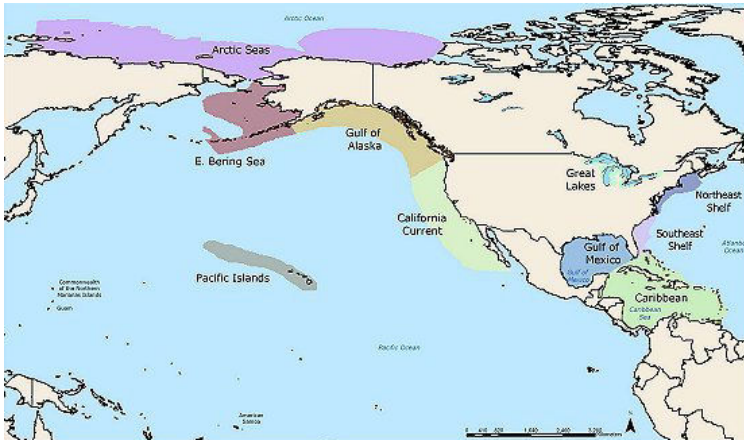
Editor's Note: Special thanks to Dr. DeMaster for sharing NOAA's vision of ecosystem-based management to our Commissioners and broader constituencies with this article and his presentation at the Commission's 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting last November.

The Commission continues to work incrementally towards an ecosystem approach to management (EAM) through adoption of habitat protection principles and development of multispecies models. The Commission will monitor the EAM initiatives taken by NOAA Fisheries Service to enhance the management, protection, and restoration of our nation's marine and coastal resources.

scope and jurisdictional management authority.

To further this concept of regional ecosystem management, NOAA convened a workshop in Charleston, South Carolina in August of 2004 ([http://ecosystems.noaa.gov/workshops\\_&\\_meetings.htm](http://ecosystems.noaa.gov/workshops_&_meetings.htm)). Workshop participants included representatives from several of the regional fishery management councils, federal agencies, state agencies, environmental groups, and universities. The participants unanimously supported delineating marine regions along the scientifically accepted construct of Large Marine Ecosystems (<http://www.lme.noaa.gov/>). Ten large-scale marine and coastal ecoregions were identified in US waters: (1) Arctic Seas, (2) East Bering Sea, (3) Gulf of Alaska, (4) California Current, (5) Pacific Islands, (6) Gulf of Mexico, (7) Caribbean, (8) Southeast Shelf, (9) Northeast Shelf, and (10) Great Lakes. NOAA has adopted this recommendation in its efforts to implement an ecosystem approach to management.





Regional Ecosystems of the United States (Source: <http://ecosystems.noaa.gov/>).

However, the real key to implementing an EAM is to let the stakeholders in each region figure out how it should be done. This was one of the primary findings of the USCOP, and one of the recommendations that the President has heartily adopted (<http://ocean.ceq.gov/actionplan.pdf>). That means there will be about 10 regional experiments going on in the US at once. Some approaches will be common to all of the regions, while other approaches will be specific to the unique aspects of a given region. For example, it is not hard to imagine that some of the performance measures used to evaluate whether the Arctic ecosystem is healthy might not work in the tropical and subtropical ecosystem of the Pacific Islands. You just don't see polar bears denning on a beach in Guam or Hawaiian monk seals hauling on a sheet of ice in the summer. Some approaches will be so successful in one region that other regions will choose to adopt them as well. All of the regions will have to develop and adopt their own set of performance measures or indices that can be used to regularly assess the health of the ecoregion and whether the ecoregion is getting more or less healthy.

In summary, we aim to manage human activities, not ecosystems, and actively involve regional stakeholders in the development and implementation of regionally-based, ecosystem approaches to management that lead to a balanced use of resources by all stakeholders.

If you have any questions about what is meant by ecosystem management, there are many resources at your disposal. If you do a web search on "*ecosystem approach to management*," you will get more websites to search than you could imagine. I recommend you start with the websites for NOAA (<http://ecosystems.noaa.gov/>), the US Commission on Ocean Policy, the PEW Ocean Commission, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES). If we can help you make sense of it all, don't hesitate to contact your nearest NOAA office. We are all committed to facilitate the implementation of EAM. Without a planned strategy, our efforts will likely not prove useful. So, take the time to get acquainted with the stakeholders in your region. Hopefully, before the end of 2006 there will be an implementation strategy in place for your favorite piece of marine or Great Lakes environment.

## ASMFC Releases Draft Atlantic Sturgeon Addendum II for Public Comment

The Commission's Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board approved Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon for public review and comment. The Draft Addendum provides exemptions to Amendment 1 to allow a commercial aquaculture operation in North Carolina. Specifically, the exemptions will permit importation of Atlantic sturgeon from Canadian sources and allow possession, production, and sale of cultured fish by a private company in North Carolina.

Amendment 1 establishes a moratorium on harvest and possession of Atlantic sturgeon to allow for recovery of spawning stocks to population levels that will provide for sustainable fisheries and viable spawning populations. The target of the Amendment is to have at least 20 protected age classes of females in each spawning stock, which may take 20 to 40 years from initiation of the moratorium. Historically, the United States supported a large market for Atlantic sturgeon products. Draft Addendum II seeks to reestablish part of that market by providing a domestic product through an environmentally and socially sound aquaculture operation.

Copies of Draft Addendum II are available via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. **Public comment will be accepted no later than 5 PM, April 29, 2005**, and should be forwarded to Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (subject line: Atlantic Sturgeon).



## American Eel PID Available for Public Comment (continued from page 1)

### New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

May 5, 2005; 7:00 PM

Atlantic County Library  
306 East Jimmie Leeds Road  
Absecon, New Jersey

Contact: Bruce Freeman at 609/633-2408

### Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

May 17, 2005; 7:00 PM

Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control  
Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover, Delaware

Contact: Roy Miller at 302/739-3441

### Maryland Department of Natural Resources

May 16, 2005; 7:00 PM

Tawes State Office Building-C-1, Conference Room  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, Maryland

Contact: Keith Whiteford 410/643-4601

### Potomac River Fisheries Commission

May 4, 2005; 7:00 PM

John T. Parran Hearing Room  
222 Taylor Street

Colonial Beach, Virginia

Contact: A.C. Carpenter at 804/224-7148

### Virginia Marine Resources Commission

April 18, 2005; 6:00 PM

Fourth Floor Conference Room  
2600 Washington Avenue  
Newport News, Virginia

Contact: Jack Travelstead at 757/247-2247

### North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

April 13, 2005; 6:00 PM

943 Washington Square Mall  
Washington, North Carolina

Contact: Mike Potthoff at 252/946-6481

In March 2004, the American Eel Management Board authorized development of a PID to begin an informational scoping process in response to concerns regarding coastwide declines in eel abundance. Canadian and US data show 2003 commercial landings are the lowest on record since 1945 and there are

indications of localized recruitment failure in the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River system. The International Eel Symposium at the 2003 American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting reported a worldwide decline of eel populations, including the Atlantic coast stock of American eel.

Depending upon the public's reaction and comment on the issues presented in the PID, the Management Board may decide to pursue an addendum to the American Eel FMP, or proceed with the development of an amendment. An addendum would allow the Board to rapidly address specific issues that the public feels require immediate attention, while the amendment process would allow the Management Board to conduct additional fact-finding and outreach activities for public participation and comment on broader issues.

The Management Board may also decide to proceed on both an addendum and an amendment to the FMP simultaneously. Through such a process, certain issues would be resolved expeditiously via an addendum. Likewise, other issues that require more information (e.g., data expected from the pending stock assessment or federal status review) or are otherwise inappropriate for an addendum may be more thoroughly examined over a longer period of time via an amendment.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of PID are available via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. **Public comment will be accepted no later than 5 PM on June 10, 2005**, and should be forwarded to Lydia Munger, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (subject line: American Eel).



## ACCSP Announces 2005 Funding

The Coordinating Council of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a state and federal partnership for marine fisheries statistics, has allocated nearly \$3.5 million to its state and federal partners for new and ongoing projects to improve fisheries-dependent data in 2005.

ACCSP partner agencies requested more than six million dollars to fund a variety of statistics programs coastwide, ranging from commercial landings programs for American lobster to bycatch monitoring in the southern shrimp fishery. The Coordinating Council was unable to fund several quality proposals due to tightening budget constraints.

### Maine

The Maine Department of Marine Resources was awarded \$224,749 to continue implementing its mandatory dealer reporting system for commercial landings. This is the second year that the state has received ACCSP funding for this project. Maine was also awarded \$69,949 for biological and bycatch sampling in the Atlantic herring, mackerel, and halibut fisheries.

### New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department was awarded \$30,784 to continue implementing mandatory reporting for dealers and harvesters, and to begin collecting metadata. The metadata will include statutory and regulatory information related to reports by dealers and harvesters. This is the first year New Hampshire has received funding for metadata collection and the third year it has received funding for landings data collection. Trip-level reporting of lobster landings became mandatory in New Hampshire in March 2005, and 43 dealers are reporting using SAFIS, the ACCSP's real-time online data entry system.

### Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries was awarded \$156,064 to continue implementing electronic dealer re-

porting. Trip-level reporting became mandatory in Massachusetts in January 2005. Most dealers are reporting on paper, but state data entry personnel are entering the data through SAFIS.

### Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management received \$95,365 to continue implementing data collection standards for commercial fisheries. This is the sixth year Rhode Island has received funds.

### New York

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation was awarded \$218,900 to continue trip-level data collection in commercial fisheries and biological sampling. This is the third year New York has received funds.

### New Jersey

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife was awarded \$89,180 to continue implementing commercial landings reporting and use SAFIS. This is the second year New Jersey has received funds for this project. ACCSP staff is also assisting New Jersey with development of a web-based reporting system for its Striped Bass Bonus Fish Program, valued at \$12,274.

### Maryland

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources was awarded \$115,000 for completing its trip ticket system for harvesters and continuing implementation of SAFIS for quota monitoring. Maryland has been phasing-in landings reporting for harvesters for five years. This is the third year they have received funds for electronic data collection.

### North Carolina

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries was awarded \$15,400 to conduct telephone sampling for recreational and for-hire fishing effort data during January and February. They were also awarded \$70,885 for data maintenance and coordination for dealer electronic reporting.



### Florida

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was awarded \$83,845 for at-sea sampling of for-hire fisheries.

### NOAA Fisheries

The ACCSP awarded a total of \$190,587 to NOAA Fisheries for a variety of data collection projects, including evaluation of biological and bycatch sampling methodologies in Southeast commercial fisheries, a research study of a supplement to the recreational fishing effort survey, an electronic vessel trip report pilot project, and funds to support travel for Northeast Region staff.

The remaining funds were allocated to the Commission to support committee meetings, personnel costs, and operation of the data warehouse and SAFIS.

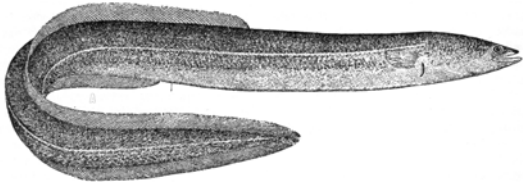
### About the ACCSP

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](http://www.accsp.org) or call Abbey Compton at (202)216.5690.

## **Non-Traditional Stakeholders Sought for Participation on ASMFC American Eel Advisory Panel**

The Commission's American Eel Management Board is seeking to expand membership to its Advisory Panel to include two nontraditional stakeholders. Examples of such stakeholders include, but are not limited to, non-governmental organizations, hydropower interests, grassroots organizations, and individuals/groups with an interest in American eel conservation and/or riverine habitat restoration.

The intent of this action is to broaden the scope of public input to the American Eel Management Board as it explores



possible changes to the American eel management plan over the next year. Individuals interested in serving as advisors should contact the Commission at 202/289-6400 and ask for an Advisory Panel (AP) nomination form, along with a copy of the AP Primer. Interested individuals may also download the nomination form and supporting materials at [http://www.asmfc.org/ad\\_panel.htm](http://www.asmfc.org/ad_panel.htm). A completed nomination form must be submitted to the Commission by May 10, 2005.

The Commission's advisory panel process arose as part of our increasing responsibilities under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. The Act mandates, among other considerations, that the Commission provide ad-

equately public participation in its fishery management planning process, including at least four public hearings and procedures for submission of written comments to the Commission. The Commission believes that input from nontraditional stakeholders can only strengthen our efforts in successfully managing American eel. To date, advisory panels have been developed for Atlantic croaker, Atlantic herring, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, American lobster, black sea bass, bluefish, horseshoe crab, northern shrimp, red drum, scup, shad & river herring, spiny dogfish, striped bass, summer flounder, tautog, weakfish, and winter flounder.

For more information, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or [tberger@asmfc.org](mailto:tberger@asmfc.org).

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**  
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