



ASMFC

Fisheries *focus*

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

RecFish 2000 Looks to the Future

Conference Focuses on Conservation, Outreach & Involvement

Recreational fisheries of the 21st century will be more diverse, and will face new challenges in conservation. The only way to successfully build and maintain these fisheries is through consistent angler commitment and involvement.

These were among the themes at the highly successful conference, RecFish 2000: Managing Marine Recreational Fisheries in the 21st Century – *Meeting the Needs of Managers, Anglers & Industry*. The national conference, held in San Diego on June 25-28, 2000, was convened by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Among the cosponsors were the three interstate marine fisheries commissions. Over 200 participants met for four days to talk about the future of marine recreational fisheries – the challenges coming in the future and how to define and achieve visions for success.

Penny Dalton, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, helped to keynote the conference, challenging the participants and the marine recreational fisheries community at large to help shape the future of their fisheries. She likened the transforming of federal policy and agencies to the task of turning a freighter on the open ocean – a daunting task requiring time and patience. Mike Hayden, President of the American Sportfishing

Association, urged the participants to begin focusing on success, and addressing what is really important to fishermen about restored fisheries. So much of our energy has been given over to recovering depleted species that we haven't learned how to regulate a healthy fishery.

One of the panels addressed how well the current management agencies and system are addressing the needs of anglers. John H. Dunnigan, Executive Director of the Commission, said that this is a mixed bag. Some fisheries, such as striped bass, summer flounder and weakfish, are showing positive signs. And some important programs, such as statistics, seem to be coming along. But more needs to be done to improve biological information, incorporate socioeconomic information and involve fishermen in the decision-making process.

Another very interesting panel looked at ONTAs or “other non-traditional anglers.” Programs to do a better job of opening recreational fisheries to the handicapped, women and youth were explored. Captain Tony DiLernia from New York opened eyes with the possibilities for exciting recreational fisheries even near the concrete canyons of a major metropolitan area. One of the panels focused on ethics and education, and focused on the need for anglers to become a part of making policy. As panelist Ellen Peel, Executive Director of the Billfish Foundation, said, “Don't preach to us – involve us!”

The conference was staffed primarily through the NMFS Office of Intergovernmental and Recreational Fisheries, with most of the work being done by Dick Schaefer, Bill Price, Dallas Miner, Ginny Fay, Ann Lange, Marty Golden, Michael Bailey, and Pete Allen. They were assisted by the NOAA Office of Sea Grant with assistance from Emory Anderson and Jim Murray.

ASMFC's 59th Annual Meeting October 15 - 19, 2000 Clearwater Beach, Florida

If you have not already done so, you should make your hotel reservations now to attend the Commission's 59th Annual Meeting in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Rooms are filling up fast, so if you are not sure what days you will be attending reserve space for the full week and you can always modify those arrangements later. The meeting details follow:

Adam's Mark Clearwater Beach
430 South Gulfview Boulevard
(727)443-5714

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, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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Upcoming Meetings

8/9 & 10:

ACCSP Commercial Technical Committee, Holiday Inn BWI Airport, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; (410)859-8400.

8/14 - 17:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), Sheraton Society Hill, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (215)236-6000.

8/14 & 15:

Joint ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board and MAFMC, Sheraton Society Hill, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (215)236-6000.

8/15:

Joint ASMFC Bluefish Management Board and MAFMC, Sheraton Society Hill, One Dock Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (215)236-6000.

8/15 & 16:

ASMFC Multispecies Workshop, Embassy Suites, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, Virginia; (703)684-5900.

8/20 - 24:

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri.

8/21 - 24:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (703)683-6000.

8/29 - 31:

ACCSP Operations Committee, Embassy Suites, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, Virginia; (703)684-5900.

9/11 & 12:

ASMFC Interstate Tagging Committee, Comfort Inn BWI, 6921 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland; (410)789-9100.

9/13 & 14:

ACCSP Advisory Committee, Ramada Inn Philadelphia International Airport, 76 Industrial Highway, Essington, Pennsylvania; (610)521-9600.

9/15 - 19:

90th International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting, Hyatt Regency Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana. For more information, please contact Hannah Kirchner at hannahk@kiva.net

It was reaffirming a few weeks ago to join together with people from across the country who are concerned about and dedicated to productive recreational fisheries. RecFish 2000 was a well-attended, four-day celebration of the joys and challenges of this country's recreational fisheries, and the opportunities available to us in the 21st century.

A couple of overall themes wove their way throughout the proceedings. One of the things I thought was most interesting was the emphasis on the "people" side of the recreational fisheries equation. It seemed to be a given – as it should be – that recreational fisheries today are significant from the standpoint of harvest and fishing mortality for many if not most of the coastal fisheries that affect the states. But even as we strive to get a better handle on fishing mortality, the larger questions for the next century relate to recreational fishermen themselves. Bob Ditton from Texas A&M reported on where the changing demographics are telling us our future anglers will come. As the overall angling community begins to mirror more the society at large, the question is whether anglers of the future will continue to share the ethics that have guided recreational fisheries in the past. A larger and more diverse angling community will present new challenges to fishery managers and conservationists.

There was also a lot of talk about ONTAs or "other non-traditional anglers." We heard how women and the disabled are finding their way more fully into the angling community. After all, recreational fishing as an experience is a quality of life issue, and appeals to all segments of our citizenry. We also focused on the needs of young anglers, where the mantra should not be just catch and release, but rather catch, EDUCATE, and release. Fishing gives us a wonderful way to open children's minds to the wonders of the coastal environment.

Other workshops at the conference dealt with fisheries management institutions, new markets and opportunities for recreational fisheries, angling practices, fisheries management and allocation (even individual fishing quotas for recreational fisheries!), angling ethics, outreach, and data and statistics. The panelists were uniformly excellent, and the interactive discussion was pointed and lively. It was largely not a commercial-fishery-bashing venue, but rather some spirited soul-searching from recreational fishermen about the direction they would like recreational fisheries to go in the new century.

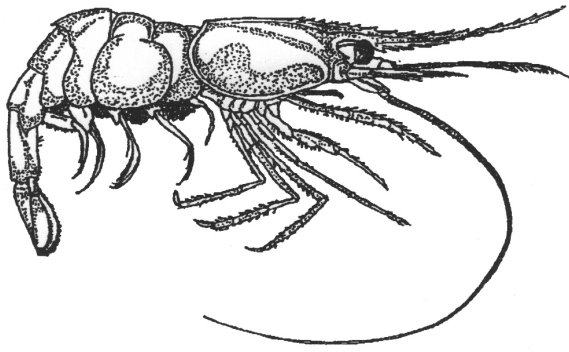
One issue received only scant attention, but it relates to a lot that was discussed at RecFish 2000. It continues to be

paradox that so many of our states along the Atlantic coast still fail to license recreational fishermen in saltwater. All of our sister states along the Pacific and Gulf coasts have recognized the benefits and the justice in licensing saltwater anglers. It is the "right" thing to do because the fish in the ocean do not belong to the angler but to the people at large. And with the growing commitment to catch and release fisheries, this becomes even a more important factor. Stewardship is not just the role of the government, it is a responsibility that all fishermen owe to each other. Licensing programs bring all fishermen together into a community of interest with a stake in proper management. Licenses also greatly facilitate the collection of data so important to understanding our fisheries.

The old objections to a saltwater fishing license have nothing going for them other than they are old. The arguments against a saltwater fishing license are rooted in emotion and a wistful yearning for a time long past. Recreational fishing is going to get better in the next century only if government and fishermen work hard to make it so. The money generated by a license can be and must be dedicated to marine recreational fisheries. It is a necessary investment in the future. But even more so, the license helps to identify those fishermen who have the greatest interest in what that future is going to look like, and the greatest stake in making that future successful.

There is no doubt that no government agency, nor any legislature, is going to be able to force a saltwater angling license. The commitment to enact one will have to come from recreational fishermen. It is time that all of us who have the opportunity take a strong stand to urge saltwater recreational fishermen to support a license in each of the states that have not yet enacted one.

We all owe a great amount of thanks to Dick Schaefer, Bill Price and the rest of the staff at the NMFS Office of Intergovernmental and Recreational Fisheries for their dedication and hard work in making RecFish 2000 such a success. It was a long haul for them, but their perseverance paid great dividends for all who could be there. And by the way, I think that commercial fisheries deserve for someone to step forward and organize a conference that would give the same probing, thoughtful attention to the future of commercial fishing in the new century. But the focus in San Diego at the end of just was on the recreational side of our community; and the attendees were justly rewarded.



Public Comment Sought on Northern Shrimp Amendment 1 PID: *Public Meetings to be held in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts throughout August*

In mid-July, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announced the availability of the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public review and comment. Additionally, the three states involved in northern shrimp management – Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts – have scheduled their public information meetings to gather input on the PID. The details of the state information meetings follow.

August 15, 2000 (7:00 PM)

Maine Department of Marine Resources
Radisson Eastland
157 High Street
Portland, Maine
Contact: Lewis Flagg, (207)624-6550

August 17, 2000 (7:00 PM)

Maine Department of Marine Resources
Holiday Inn
215 High Street
Ellsworth, Maine
Contact: Lewis Flagg, (207)624-6550

August 16, 2000 (7:00 PM)

New Hampshire Fish & Game
Urban Forestry Center
Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Contact: John Nelson (603)868-1095

August 29, 2000 (7:00 PM)

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
Annisquam River Office
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts
Contact: Mike Armstrong, (978)282-0308

Approval of the PID is the first step in developing Amendment 1. The purpose of the PID is to seek public input on the long-term management of northern shrimp stocks. Currently, northern shrimp is managed under a plan that was first developed in 1979 and later updated in 1986. Under this plan, the fishery has been managed through the establishment of fishing seasons, which are set each fall. The plan also allows for the use of gear limitations.

In many ways, the northern shrimp management program has been viewed as a success and an example of how other fisheries should be managed. Much of its success is due to the cooperative nature of the program; with the fishing industry, scientists and managers all working together to develop annual regulations that not only conserve the resource, but are also responsive to the needs of the fishing industry. What the plan lacks is a full suite of management options to provide greater flexibility in the conservation of the resource. The intent of the amendment is to maintain the character of the current program, while expanding the available tools for managing the fishery.

Following the initial stage of information gathering and public comment, the Section will evaluate potential management alternatives and the impacts of those alternatives; this will most likely occur in late October 2000 when the Section meets to set its annual fishing season. The Section, in consultation with its technical committee and industry advisors, will then develop a draft amendment to the FMP with the preferred management measures identified for public review. Following that review and public comment, the Section will specify the management measures to be included in the new amendment.

Copies of the PID can be obtained by either contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400, or via the Commission's webpage under "Public Input" at www.asmfmc.org. Comments should be forwarded to Amy Schick, Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 Eye Street, N.W., Sixth Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax). **Public comment will be accepted until September 15, 2000.** For more information, please contact Amy Schick at (202) 289-6400, or via email at aschick@asmfc.org.

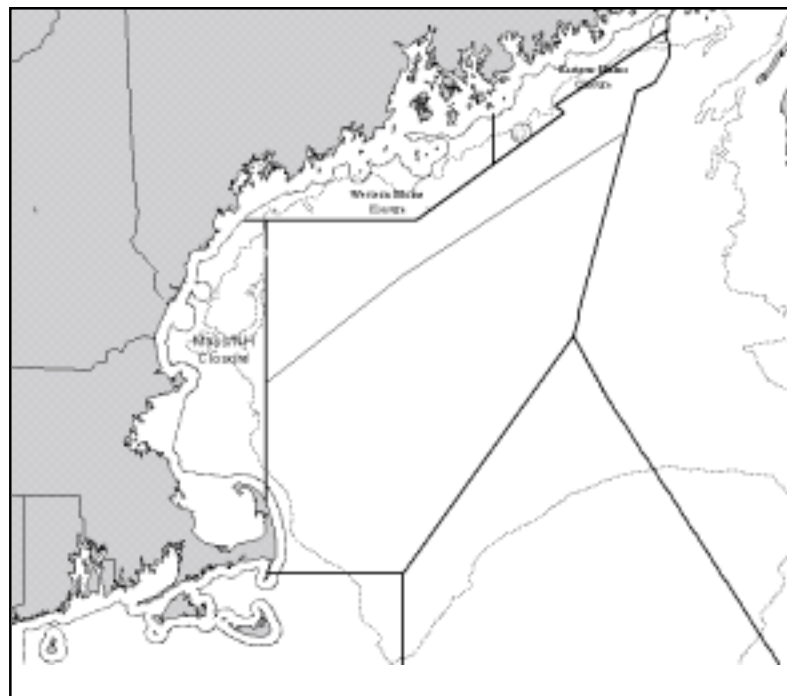
Atlantic Herring Section Approves Addendum I to Adjust Spawning Closure Regulations; Approves Specifications for 2001

The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section met in mid-July to review and approve Addendum I to the Atlantic Sea Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Addendum I changes the regulations for fishing during the herring spawning season and changes the areas such regulations apply to. These changes include: (1) flexible starting dates based on biological sampling criteria; (2) a four-week long initial closure period; (3) the possibility of extending the closure period an additional two weeks based on biological sampling, and (4) a tolerance level of 20 percent spawn herring (those fish in spawning condition) to be possessed on-board at any time. In addition, Addendum I specifies default starting dates for the new regulations in each of the three re-defined spawning areas in the Gulf of Maine: eastern Maine, western Maine, and Massachusetts/New Hampshire (see figure).

The need for Addendum I came after the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Region disapproved proposed spawning regulations included in the New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) Atlantic Herring FMP last year. This action, along with the absence of a federal FMP, resulted in the states implementing the spawning regulations contained in Amendment 1 of the Commission's Atlantic Herring FMP for all herring landed from the Gulf of Maine last year. The regulations in Amendment 1 also included a tolerance provision of 20 percent but was too restrictive in that the majority of herring were defined as "spawn" herring for a major portion of

the fall fishery. This resulted in reported shortages of herring for the canneries in Maine and as bait for the lobster fishery. The regulations included in Addendum I should allow fishermen to target some herring during the closure periods without jeopardizing the sustainability of the population.

However, the tolerance provision will only be in effect for this season. States



Atlantic Herring Spawning Closure Areas as implemented through Addendum I

are required by Addendum I to implement a "bycatch only" provision on or before January 1, 2001 for subsequent fishing seasons. This bycatch provision limits fishermen to landing 2,000 pounds of herring from a spawning area per calendar day (24 hours). Fishermen should be able to continue to meet the demand for herring since the closures should be staggered based on default starting dates, the actual spawning condition of the fish, and a reduction in the size of the spawning areas (compared to the entire Gulf of Maine).

Addendum I also changed the due date for submission of annual state compliance reports from October 1 to February 1.

The Section also met in conjunction with the Council's Herring Oversight Committee to review the 2000 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report and approve specifications for the 2001 fishing season. The Section approved specifications that are basically the same as this season's with the only difference being an increase of 26,000 metric tons (mt) to optimum yield (OY). This increases OY to 250,000 mt from 224,000 mt. The increase was specifically added to the Area 2 total allowable catch (TAC) reserve (see table on page 7). This action was viewed as sending a positive signal to the fishing industry that there is room for expanding the fishery, particularly in the offshore areas. The inshore Gulf of Maine portion of the resource (Area 1A) is

believed to be fully exploited with a TAC of 60,000 mt that will probably be reached prior to the end of the year unless some sort of effort controls are implemented to slow the catch rates down. At the time this article was being prepared, the State of Maine was in the process of implementing the "days out of the fishery" provision of Amendment 1, which would prohibit the landing of herring on Friday, Saturday and Sunday when 50 percent of the TAC was taken. This prohibition would be in place from 12:01 AM on Friday until

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ASMFC August 2000 Meeting Week

August 21 - 24, 2000
Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria
901 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia

Agenda*

*Dates and times are subject to change up to the times meetings are held

Monday, August 21, 2000

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM NEAMAP Board

- Elect Chair and Vice-Chair
- Update and review program documentation
- Appoint Operations Committee
- Identify and prioritize Operations Committee tasks
- Discuss possible cooperative agreement

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Review NMFS' request for Board advice on horseshoe crab regulatory issues, including horseshoe crab sanctuary in federal waters off of Delaware Bay; prohibiting at-sea transfer; and other EEZ measures
- Review, at the request of the NMFS, Virginia's proposed modification to its management program for horseshoe crab
- Update on formation of Shorebird Technical Committee

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Spiny Dogfish Management Board

- Review Technical Committee Report regarding Massachusetts management strategy
- Consider Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's request for Emergency Action
- NMFS update on coastal shark issues

Tuesday, August 22, 2000

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board

- Discuss Amendment 1 Technical Addendum
- Consider exemption requests and draft document

10:00 AM – Noon South Atlantic Board

- Updates on SEAMAP, Atlantic croaker assessment, and red drum amendment issues
- Discuss formation of species advisory panels
- Discuss fish tissue sampling for contaminants/analysis

10:00 AM - Noon Tautog Management Board

- Review Reports of Plan Review Team & Technical Committee

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Weakfish Management Board

- Review Reports of the Technical Committee, Stock Assessment Subcommittee and Advisory Panel regarding SARC results and possible FMP adjustment
- Discuss FMP adjustment

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM Menhaden Management Board

- Review and approve preferred overfishing definition specifications and management options for Draft Amendment 1; Approve Draft Amendment 1 for Public Hearing

Wednesday, August 23, 2000

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM Legislators

- Discuss challenges of the states to identify resources necessary for FMP implementation/compliance
- Review ISFMP process
- Review and discuss Commission budget constraints
- Review and discuss Commission priority setting
- Discuss annual August Legislators Meeting versus standard Spring and Annual LGA Meetings
- Discuss Commission integration and communication of input by State Legislators

10:00 AM - Noon Technical Workshop Series -- Determining Fishing Mortality

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ISFMP Policy Board

- Update on ISFMP Charter revision and approval
- Update on progress of East Coast Take Reduction Teams
- Discuss fiscal year 2001 funding issues
- Update on South Carolina's action to address its out of compliance status with Amendment 1 to the Shad & River Herring FMP

2:30 PM – 7:00 PM Striped Bass Management Board

- Review 1999 stock assessment results
- Review Technical Committee Report on Biological Reference Points for Amendment 6
- Review issue of hook-and-release mortality associated with circle hooks
- Discuss 2001 striped bass management
- Discuss Amendment 6 schedule

Thursday, August 24, 2000

8:30 AM – 2:30 PM American Lobster Management Board

- Discuss State Compliance Reports
- Review PRT Report on the Management Implications of the Peer Review
- Discuss Trap Tag Program with a Stoffel Seals Representative

Atlantic Herring Section Approves Addendum I to Adjust Spawning Closure Regulations (continued from page 5)

midnight Sunday. If 75 percent of the TAC is taken or projected to be taken prior to September 1, landings of herring from Area 1A will be prohibited from 12:01 AM Thursday to midnight Sunday. For further information, please contact Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Atlantic Herring FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400.

Specification	Metric Tons (mt)
Allowable Biological Catch	300,000
Optimum Yield	250,000
Domestic Annual Harvest	250,000
Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing	0
Domestic Annual Processing	226,000
US At-Sea Processing	20,000
Border Transfer	4,000
Joint Venture Processing (JVP) - total	20,000
JVP (Areas 2 and 3)	10,000
Internal Waters Processing	10,000
Reserve	0
Management Area TACs	Amount
Area 1A	60,000
Area 1B	10,000
Area 2	50,000 (plus 80,000 TAC reserve*)
Area 3 (Georges Bank)	50,000

* TAC reserve can only be released for fishing after April 1, when there is little or no possibility of harvesting Gulf of Maine portion of the stock complex

Summer Flounder & Scup Assessment Results Released

On July 26, 2000, the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) released the results of the latest stock assessments for summer flounder and scup. The results show promising news for summer flounder and continued concern for scup. Both species support important recreational and commercial fisheries from southern New England through North Carolina.

In the case of summer flounder, the SARC reports that spawning stock biomass continues to increase, the number of new fish entering the population has improved, and the population reflects a wider range of ages than prior to the rebuilding plan. On the downside, the assessment indicates that

these gains may be slowing. Additionally, although the harvest rate for summer flounder has declined significantly since 1994, it is still higher than the target rate. Combined these factors point to the importance of achieving the long-term target fishing harvest rates established by the Commission and the Council in their respective plans.

For scup, the assessment indicates that the current spawning stock biomass is still only a fraction of that anticipated in a rebuilt stock. Analyses showed that a moderately high number of fish born in 1999 have survived their first year, thus representing an opportunity for improved spawning stock in the future if they continue to survive. The report also notes the ongoing problem of discards, and that reducing catch by vessels targeting other species would have immediate benefits for rebuilding.

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board will be meeting jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on August 14 and 15 to recommend the quotas and commercial management measures for summer flounder and scup for 2001. During this meeting the Board and Council will review the latest assessment information and determine what the appropriate management measures. The Board and Council will meet again in December to develop the recreational management measures for 2001.

For more information on the Commission's summer flounder and scup management program, please contact Robert Beal, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 318 or via email at rbeal@asmfc.org. To obtain a copy of the complete summer flounder and scup stock assessment report please contact Pie Smith at (508) 495-2370, or via email at pie.smith@noaa.gov.

ACCSP Update

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) continues to progress into its second year of implementation with advances in partner agency implementation, program components for biological sampling and discard/release monitoring, and a for-hire pilot study. Details on these and other activities follow.

➤ ACCSP partners are fully engaged in the 2001 Funding Decision Process. Proposals were solicited in late April and were due August 1, 2000. Several proposals have been received and more are expected before the deadline. The Operations Committee will meet during the last week of August to review the proposals and make their funding recommendations. These recommendations will be reviewed by the ACCSP Advisory Com-

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ASMFC to Conduct Multi-species Assessment Workshop

Over the last two decades, there has been a great deal of discussion concerning multi-species and ecosystem management. More recently, state and federal fisheries management agencies have conducted a series of workshops to begin identifying the full suite of issues and/or problems involved in moving from a single species management philosophy to one that encompasses the management of species complexes.

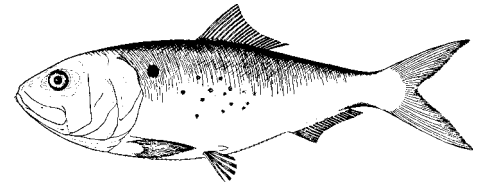
On August 15 & 16, 2000, the Commission will be conducting a technical workshop aimed at determining the feasibility of developing multi-species assessment models on the Atlantic coast, with a particular emphasis on Atlantic menhaden as a forage fish. Specifically, workshop participants – all experts in multi-species and ecosystem assessments – will be evaluating (1) the various mod-

els that are currently available to conduct this type of assessment, (2) the specific data needs of each model (which are large), and (3) the availability of data needed to conduct these assessments. Examples of specific data needs include information of predator/prey interactions, food web dynamics and nutrient loads. The primary objective of the workshop will be to determine whether a multi-species assessment of the Atlantic menhaden/striped bass/bluefish species complex can be conducted with currently available data. And, if so, what models are the most appropriate to use.

The next steps in this process will involve contracting to one or more multi-species/ecosystem modeling experts to conduct the assessment using the most appropriate model(s). This will take about one year to complete. From there

Atlantic coast state and federal fisheries managers will have to determine how this new information can best be incorporated into their fisheries management planning processes – either through species specific plans or through the development of multi-species plans. And, this may take several years to determine.

For more information, please contact Geoff White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or gwhite@asmfc.org.



NOAA Releases Report on Nutrient Related Water Quality Conditions in U.S. Estuaries

Conditions in most of the nation's estuaries are expected to worsen by 2020, according to a recently released report of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Ocean Service. The report, "National Estuarine Eutrophication Assessment: Effects of Nutrient Enrichment in the Nation's Estuaries," indicates that by the year 2020 conditions may worsen in the majority of estuaries, if population growth and development in the coastal zone is not managed properly.

According to NOAA scientist Dr. Suzanne Bricker, lead author of the report, the results, developed from information and data collected over a seven-year period from hundreds of experts, represent the best and most comprehensive understanding of the scale, scope, and characteristics of nutrient-associated problems affecting the nation's coastal water bodies to date.

To complete the study, NOAA compiled information about water quality parameters associated with nutrient enrichment and eutrophication for 138 estuaries and the Mississippi River Plume. Problem conditions range from excessive algal blooms

to low dissolved oxygen, losses of submerged aquatic vegetation, and occurrences of nuisance and toxic algal blooms.

The results show that 44 of the 139 systems studied have significant problem conditions, and 40 have moderate problems. According to the report, these problem conditions are not isolated. Although they occur in estuaries along all coasts, the Gulf of Mexico and Mid-Atlantic regions have the greatest percentage of estuaries with high-level problems. These conditions have been shown by other studies to alter the uses of the estuaries, at times closing shell fishing beds, causing human health risks, destroying habitat for fisheries, and leading to loss of tourism.

The NOAA study indicates that for the majority of estuaries with significant problems, human related nutrient inputs are an important influence on development of those problems. However, many of these estuaries are also naturally sensitive to nutrient imports. "These results can be used to

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Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Approves CARA BILL

After months of negotiating and review, the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) on July 25, 2000. By a strong 13 to 7 vote, the Committee recognized the importance of establishing a stable and significant source of funding for a broad array of conservation programs.

The bill is funded through federal oil and gas offshore drilling lease revenues. More than two decades ago, the federal government agreed to share these revenues with the states that allow oil and gas drilling off their shores. Though the revenues were collected, the Federal Government never upheld its commitment to returning a portion of the funds to the states.

Though the Senate has reviewed other CARA bills, the Committee substituted the language of the House approved H.R. 701 when it acted. The \$2.99 billion bill provides funding for: coastal impact assistance; coral reef restoration; land acquisition and conservation programs (including the Land and Water Conservation Fund); historic preservation; Native American and farm land protections; rural community assistance; youth ecologically-based job programs; and payments to states for federal land holdings resulting in the reduced available tax base in the state, or payment in lieu of taxes.

In order to alleviate some of the controversy expressed in negotiations on the bill, Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Frank Murkowski (AK), and Ranking Member Jeff Bingaman (NM) incorporated provisions requiring Congress to specifically approve federal land acquisitions through an Appropriations Act. These land acquisitions would be obtained from willing sellers on a voluntary basis, unless otherwise authorized by Congress. No other funding under the bill could be released until this \$450 million in Federal land acquisition is approved by Congress.

Of the total \$2.99 billion designated in the bill, \$430 million is provided for the seven states that conduct oil and gas drilling off their shores for shoreside infrastructure improvements and mitigating environmental degradation caused by the drilling activities. The bill provides \$350 million to all coastal states for coastal, marine and fisheries conservation and management; these funds are divided with \$250 million for general coastal

stewardship and \$100 million for marine fisheries research and management and for state/federal law enforcement partnerships. According to the earlier version of the bill, the funding is divided based on the following formula: 50 percent equally divided between the coastal states, 25 percent based on coastal population, and 25 percent based on coastline miles. Additionally, \$25 million is provided in the bill for coral reef protection administered equally by the Departments of Commerce and the Interior.

The bill also provides \$350 million for game or non-game wildlife conservation administered under the Pittman-Robertson program. The Committee-approved version increases the minimum state share to one percent (from one half of a percent in earlier versions). The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly supported this section as the latest evolution of their "Teaming with Wildlife" initiative.

The bill now requires approval of the full Senate before it can be forwarded back to the House for approval or negotiation between the House and Senate versions before clearing for Presidential signature. With October 6, 2000 scheduled as the target adjournment and the entire month of August dedicated for work within congressional districts, few days remain for regular legislative activities in Washington, DC. With every legislative day that passes with inaction, urgency for final enactment increases. CARA supporters are encouraged to contact their federal elected officials to communicate or reiterate their support for enactment of CARA.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Receives AFS Carl R. Sullivan Fishery Conservation Award

The Commission would like to extend congratulations to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on receiving the American Fisheries Society's Carl R. Sullivan Fishery Conservation Award for outstanding contributions to the conservation of fishery resources for 2000. In particular, the Foundation was recognized for its exemplary work in support of fisheries conservation and environmental education in the Bay region. The Foundation has been an active public policy advocate for sustainable fisheries for over 15 years, and has worked for improved conservation and management of species such as striped bass, shad, oysters, and blue crab. It has also played a lead role in developing educational materials and curriculum about the Chesapeake and its resources. Congratulations, Chesapeake Bay Foundation!

ACCSP Update (continued from page 7)

mittee in September and forwarded to the Coordinating Council for review and approval in mid-October.

➤ Technical Source Document V, which includes data elements and draft protocols for the Biological and Discard/Release Monitoring components of the program, were made available for public comment until July 31, 2000. Public comment will be reviewed by the ACCSP Advisory Committee in mid-September. It is anticipated that the Operations Committee will review and approve the components, including a consideration of the public comments and Advisory Committee advice, in late September. The Coordinating Council will do the same at the Commission's Annual Meeting.

➤ Data transfer software has been written and put into place for the Florida Commercial Trip Ticket system, and two years (1998 and 1999) of trip ticket data is now in the ACCSP data management system. Similar efforts have been completed for South Carolina's 1998 and 1999 commercial data, after obtaining that information from the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Work is in progress on data loads from Georgia, the Marine

Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), North Carolina, and the NMFS Northeast Regional Office.

➤ Georgia continues to collect quality data as a part of the ongoing socioeconomic pilot study. The Office of Management and Budget very recently approved the survey to be used in the Northeast Region's portion of the pilot. The Commercial Harvesters Subcommittee is moving quickly to begin implementation of this portion of the pilot.

➤ The for-hire fishery pilot study began in March 2000 and continues to run smoothly. Personnel from South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, MRFSS, and NMFS Beaufort Headboat Survey have been working closely together to test the three data collection methodologies. Also included are observers aboard headboats to verify self-reported catch and effort supplied by those vessel captains. The pilot is scheduled to end in February 2001, with analyses and an independent review scheduled to be completed by the end of the Summer 2001.

➤ The ACCSP Outreach Committee recently posted a Request for Proposals, to enlist assistance with drafting the ACCSP Outreach Strategic Plan. This document is anticipated to be the

blueprint for partners to utilize when planning outreach activities within their jurisdictions, and for the Program to garner national/regional acceptance. The tentative date for completion of the Strategic Plan is January 1, 2001.

➤ ACCSP staff and Committee members have been working closely with our colleagues from the Gulf Fisheries Information Network (FIN) to insure compatibility between the two programs. In the recent past, the Gulf's State/Federal Management Board (equivalent to the Coordinating Council) agreed to fund development of the data management system associated with its biological data collection program. After completion, the ACCSP will receive this system and tailor it to ACCSP protocols. Because of the close coordination of FIN and ACCSP in the development of this program component, it is anticipated that only minor modifications will be necessary. Discussions are also ongoing for future coordination in the development of a permitting/licensing system.

For more information, please contact Joe Moran, ACCSP Program Manager, at (202)289-6400, or by email at jmoran@asmfc.org.

NOAA Releases Report on Nutrient Related Water Quality Conditions in U.S. Estuaries (continued from page 8)

more effectively focus management of this problem and, specifically, to develop a national response strategy," says Bricker. For example, the priority for estuaries in serious condition should be the reduction of nutrients. For those in less serious condition, but in areas where coastal population growth puts them at high risk, the priority should be on monitoring and prevention of future degradation.

Nutrient-related water quality problems have become worse in 48 estuaries since 1970 while conditions have improved in 14 estuaries. Alarming, scientists predict that conditions will become even worse in 86 estuaries by the year 2020 as population growth and development in the coastal zone increases. Conditions are predicted to improve in only eight estuaries. According to NOAA scientists, these results highlight the

need for a strong national response to this pervasive problem. Limited copies of the report are available to libraries and organizations. To obtain a copy, please contact Susanna Shapiro at (301)713-3000, ext. 112 or via email at Susanna.Shapiro@noaa.gov. You can also download the report at http://cammp.nos.noaa.gov/spo/proddetails.taf?offeringcode=1_SEA_99-13

ASMFC Releases CD-ROM Compilation of Fisheries Data Sources

Between 1995 and 1998, the Commission's Management and Science Committee conducted several surveys of fisheries data collection programs along the Atlantic coast, including stocking and aquaculture activities, tagging programs, power plant information, and fisheries-independent research surveys. Responses from each survey have been entered into *Microsoft Access* databases which can be queried using key data elements of that survey. The Commission's Research and Statistics Program has recently developed a CD-ROM containing these five databases.

The intent of this CD is to provide a convenient and easily accessible data source for several types of fisheries-related data being collected by state and federal agencies coastwide. The data is limited to programmatic information; however, each response includes information on who to contact to obtain actual survey data. Data from these programs will be useful in fisheries stock assessment, fisheries and habitat research, and program or survey development. A brief overview of each database is given below.

Fisheries-Independent Data Collection Programs

This survey was conducted in 1997. Information is provided on over 100 state, federal, and university run fisheries-independent data collection projects on the Atlantic coast with at least a five-year time series. These programs collect data on over 200 species using more than 30 different gears. Provided data include information on contacts, survey design, sampling strategy, survey objective, waterbodies sampled, species biological data, environmental data, and data management protocols (operating system, storage format, data availability). Data can be queried by agency, gear used, or species.

Tagging Information Database

Responses from the 1998 survey include information from over 60 scientific and angler-based tagging programs from across the U.S., including those for freshwater. Information provided in the database include: the tagging organization; contact information; species tagged; tag type, color, and number series; reward type, and data management. Data can be queried by species or state. In addition, several summary reports are provided.

Power Plant Database

This survey was conducted in 1996. Information is provided on 55 power plants on the Atlantic coast in marine or estuarine environments. Specific information include: contacts, power plant name and location, fuel source, types of monitoring surveys, and gears used in surveys. Data can be queried by state, water body, fuel source, and survey gear.

Aquaculture

This survey was conducted in 1995. Responses provide in-

formation on finfish and shellfish aquaculture activities for both commercial and research projects for each Atlantic coastal state. Information provided in this database include contacts, leasing requirements, interagency cooperation information, safety and health regulations, and data collection requirements.

Stocking

This survey was conducted in 1995. Available data include information on contacts, the purpose of stocking activities, associated projects or fishery management plans, species stocked in terms of numbers and frequency, environmental concerns, licensing and monitoring requirements, and cooperating agencies.

All attempts have been made to ensure that the data included on the CD are accurate and up-to-date. The Commission will continue to accept corrections and updates to the data, as well as feedback on the content, format, and utility of the CD. Updates to the CD are being planned, but the timing of those updates will depend on the number and types of comments/edits received.

Copies of the CD are available from the Commission upon request. *Microsoft Access* software is required to use the CD. The databases were developed in *Access 97*, but should work in both earlier and later versions of *Access* with only minor formatting inconsistencies. If you would like a copy of the CD, please fill out the below form and mail or fax it to the Commission. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. If you have any questions about the CD or its contents, please call Jeffrey Brust, Statistics Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or via email at jbrust@asmfc.org.

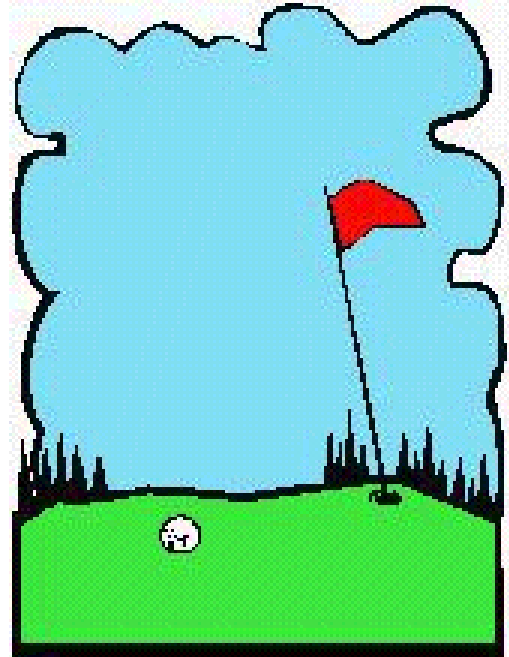
ASMFC Fisheries Data Source CD-Rom Order Request Form

How many copies of the CD would you like? _____

Please give the address where the CDs will be sent.

Join the Friendly Competition at the ASMFC's 59th Annual Meeting Golf Tournament

The Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions will sponsor a friendly golf tournament the day before their joint Annual Meeting in Clearwater Beach, Florida. The tournament is scheduled for Sunday, October 15, 2000 with a shotgun start at 1:00 PM at the Belleview Biltmore Resort in Belleair, Florida (just north of Clearwater). The tournament format is a scramble and scores will be adjusted based on handicap (or your average score). There will be prizes for the winning team and the closest to the pin on both the front and back nine. The cost will be \$200 per 4-person team (or \$50 per single golfer). If you are interested in playing but don't have a team, need more information, or you have a team interested in participating, please contact Joe Desfosse at (202)289-6400, or Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, at (228)875-5912.



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