



ASMFC

# Fisheries *focus*

Volume 9, Issue 6  
June 2000

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

## ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

State and federal fisheries managers, scientists and fishermen recognized the enormous contributions of four outstanding individuals to the conservation and management Atlantic coastal resources at a June 7, 2000, evening reception of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Commission Chair David Borden and Awards Committee Chair Jack Travelstead had the honor of leading the ceremony of the Commission's Second Annual Awards of Excellence, presenting awards in the areas of law enforcement, legislation, management & policy and scientific, technical & advisory contributions. The ceremony was held at an evening reception during the Commission's Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine.

### Law Enforcement

Chief Rob Winkel of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife was the evening's the first recipient of the 2000 Annual Awards of Excellence. He received the award in the area of law enforcement.

For over 20 years, Chief Winkel has been involved in marine law enforcement. He has been active participant in the fishery management activities of both the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; and has been particularly instrumental in the development of regulations for such species as summer flounder, scup and black sea bass, tautog and horseshoe crab. In this award, the Commission recognizes Chief Winkel's enormous commitment to protecting our coastal marine resources for future generations by ensuring that fisheries regulations are always workable, enforceable, and understandable to those who must adhere to them – namely, the fishermen.

### Scientific, Technical and Advisory

Generally, the Commission recognizes one individual a year in the scientific, technical and advisory award area. This year, however, the Commission presented awards to two outstanding fisheries scientists, Dr. Vic Crecco of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and Mark Gibson of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish & Wildlife.



*ASMFC 2000 Annual Awards of Excellence Recipients (from left): Mark Gibson, Rob Winkel, Vic Crecco and Dick Sisson. Photo courtesy of L. Leach.*

Both of these gentlemen have served, at one time or another, on just about every technical committee that the Commission has formed. Their intellect and analytical skills have been particularly evident in their work on striped bass, weakfish and shad & river herring – species that have all moved through some difficult phases over the past decade. Dr. Crecco and Mr. Gibson have also made significant contributions to the technical committees for tautog, bluefish, flounder and lobster. They have maintained the highest level of professionalism as they have guided technical committee and board members through difficult discussions on data analysis and stock assessment issues, often times amid the overriding management issues of politics and allocation. In addition, they have maintained their good humor through countless long hours of technical committee meetings and always seem to find a way out of seemingly unsolvable problems. Many coastal stocks would

*continued on page 4*

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

***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

David V.D. Borden (RI), Chair  
Susan Shipman (GA), Vice-Chair  
John H. Dunnigan, Executive Director  
Dieter N. Busch, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program  
Dr. Lisa L. Kline, Director of Research & Statistics  
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance and Administration

Tina L. Berger, Editor  
tberger@asmfc.org

(202)289-6400 Phone • (202)289-6051 Fax  
www.asmfc.org

## Upcoming Meetings

***6/19:***

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section, King's Grant Inn, Route 128 at Trask Lane, Danvers, Massachusetts; (978)774-6800.

***6/19 - 22:***

ASMFC Striped Bass Stock Assessment and Tagging Subcommittees, Holiday Inn Central, 1501 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.; (202)483-2000.

***6/20 - 22:***

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Danfords Inn, 25 East Broadway, Port Jeff, New York.

***6/25 - 28:***

NOAA's Marine Recreational Fisheries Symposium, San Diego, California.

***6/26 - 30:***

31st Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee/Stock Assessment Workshop, National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Species to be addressed: scup, summer flounder, monkfish and ocean quahog.

***7/13 & 14:***

ASMFC Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Embassy Suites BWI, 1300 Concourse Drive, Linthicum, Maryland; (410)850-0747

***7/25 - 27:***

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

***8/3 & 4:***

Joint South Atlantic, Gulf and Caribbean SEAMAP Committee, DeSoto Hilton, 15 East Liberty Street, Savannah, Georgia; (912)232-9000.

***8/15 - 17:***

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

***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.

***9/18 - 22:***

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, location to be determined.

The United States Senate is in a position to demonstrate the kind of courageous leadership that America's coastal and marine fisheries resources need in the coming decades. In April, the House of Representatives passed the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) by an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of 3:1. And now the Senate is considering that bill and similar legislation. It is critical that the Senate act quickly.

CARA represents a commitment by the United States to the conservation of natural resources. It would reinvest, on a permanent basis, some of the financial proceeds of resource use, represented by the existing revenues from offshore oil and gas operations, in the conservation of natural resources, protection of habitat, and amelioration of impacts on coastal areas. The total amount that the House bill would make available is \$2.85 billion. And these are not funds to set up vast new federal programs. The money would be invested through the states and local governments.

One billion would be used for coastal and ocean programs. Nine hundred million would be made available to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Three hundred and fifty million would fund an expansion of the Pittman-Robertson program, and could be used for non-game species and fisheries. Many other programs, such as urban parks, would benefit as well.

CARA is especially important for coastal and marine fisheries. The House bill enumerates twelve different uses for coastal and ocean program funding, and ten of those relate to fisheries. In the Senate, some of the proposals specifically highlight the need to focus on fishery statistics, cooperative research and law enforcement. CARA is the best shot we have at making significant improvements through the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, including the observers and sea sampling that continually come up as priorities for fishermen and bureaucrats alike.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission took a very strong position supporting CARA at its 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting last October. This is the most significant piece of oceans legislation in many years. With

CARA comes hope – hope that the United States will permanently set aside the financial wherewithal that is needed to safeguard the public trust in coastal resources, including fisheries.

The Senate has already started to act. Senator Bob Smith (R-NH) held a rousing hearing in his Environment and Public Works Committee where witness after witness told of the benefits that would accrue under CARA. The bills are now being worked on in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK). A markup is scheduled for the end of June.

The biggest problem that CARA faces now is time. There are only about 30 days left on the legislative calendar for the Senate to act, and for the two houses of Congress to work out any differences. There are lots of people working hard on these bills, but they need to be encouraged. The Commission has taken its strong stand, and is making sure that Senators from Atlantic coast states know what that position is. The Commission is trying to be among those creating a demand for a CARA bill this year, but others must do their part and let Senators know of the critical urgency of this legislation if it is going to have any chance to pass.

How important are marine fisheries to America? The Senate has the opportunity to join with the House and deliver a resounding and positive answer to that question. The Commission urges the Senate to swiftly pass legislation that makes permanent appropriations to fund coastal and ocean conservation, wildlife and fisheries, land and water conservation, urban parks, and the other important values represented by the Conservation and Reinvestment Act. Marine fisheries are at least that important. The Senate, along with the House, should know this and should act.

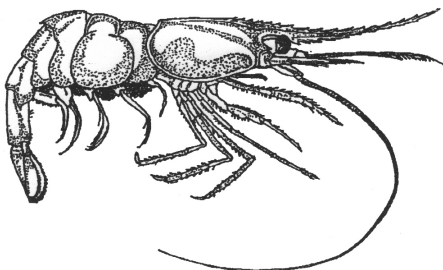
## ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence (continued from page 1)

not be recovered or in recovery without the advice generated by the technical committees of which these gentlemen are members.

### Management and Scientific

Commission Chair David Borden had the great honor of presenting the evening's last 2000 Annual Award of Excellence in the area of management and scientific contributions to a long-standing colleague and friend, Dick Sisson of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish & Wildlife. Mr. Sisson is someone who is no stranger to the Commission. He has been an active member of Commission boards and committees since the early 80s, as a steadfast member and contributor to the Management & Science Committee and as the Administrative Commissioner's proxy on various fishery management boards whenever the need arose. He has consistently brought a reasoned objectivity, level headedness and an ardent conservation ethic to any issue he is involved with. Especially noteworthy, is his commitment to the ever increasing demands associated with the implementation of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, despite having comparatively far fewer resources to work with than a number of the other member states. He had made tremendous contributions to the advancement of interstate shellfish management along the East Coast, including input integral to the passage of the Commission's Shellfish Transport Plan.

The Commission established the awards in 1998 in an effort to recognize the important contributions of individuals to the success of the organization. The awards are given in the areas of law enforcement, legislation, management & policy and scientific, technical & advisory contributions. Each year, the Commission seeks nominees in the four areas of expertise and honors the very best of those nominees at its Spring Meeting, generally held in May or June. For more information about the Annual Awards of Excellence, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at (202)289-6400.



## Northern Shrimp Amendment 1 PID Approved for Public Comment

On June 7, 2000, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Northern Shrimp Section approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public review and comment. It is anticipated that all the involved states – Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts – will hold at least one public meeting on the PID, with meetings being scheduled for August. Details on these meetings will be released once all the meetings have been finalized.

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.

The next step is to schedule public information meetings in all interested states. Following the initial stage of information gathering and public comment, the Section will evaluate potential management alternatives and the impacts of those alternatives. 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 will be available in early July 2000, and 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.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org). For more information, please contact Amy Schick, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, or via email at [aschick@asmfc.org](mailto:aschick@asmfc.org).



# ASMFC Releases Findings of American Lobster Stock Assessment Peer Review: *Current Abundance High, but Panel Urges Use of Precautionary Approach in Management*

The lobster resource of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean is currently experiencing high abundance, but fishing rates are unacceptably high and could bring trouble in the future. These are the results of the latest stock assessment given to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board was presented with the findings of an independent peer review of the Commission's latest American lobster stock assessment. The report was received by the Management Board at the Commission's 2000 Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine.

"This is the culmination of a lot of work," said Gordon C. Colvin of New York, the Chair of the American Lobster Management Board. "Like a lot of scientific advice it raises questions as well as answering them. We know now that American lobster resource abundance is high and that recruitment over the last few years has been very high. But the current landings are so high that if recruitment falls off or returns to normal, we would be facing a real problem."

In general, the Peer Review Panel supported many of the findings of the stock assessment prepared by the Commission's American Lobster Technical Committee. Specifically, the Panel concurred with the assessment's findings that both abundance and recruitment for all three stock areas (i.e., Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and Southern New England Outer Shelf, and South of Cape Cod to Long Island Sound) are high with either increasing or stable trends. Additionally, stocks in all three stock areas are in a state of growth overfishing; with greater than 60 percent of the landings comprised of lobsters that have just molted into the fishery at or above the minimum size.

The findings of the Peer Review Panel, however, diverged from those of the stock assessment regarding the issues of egg production per recruit and recruitment overfishing. According to the Peer Review, even though abundance and total egg production have been high, the number of eggs produced by newly recruited lobsters has probably been low. The Panel believes that recruitment overfishing has been occurring for some time. This has created a situation where there is a strong reliance on newly recruited lobsters to provide not only the majority of landings but also a large proportion of the total egg production. While strong recruitment could continue in the short-term (possibly 20 years), it is unrealistic to expect it will do so indefinitely, and the Panel cautions that under current conditions in some segments of the fish-

ery the risk of significant recruitment declines in unacceptably high.

Given that growth overfishing and possibly recruitment overfishing have been occurring for some time, the Panel recommended that the Commission's American Lobster Management Board maintain a precautionary approach in the management of this resource, with the primary goal of increasing egg production in the fishery. The Panel suggests a range of management approaches to achieve this goal. These approaches include increasing the minimum size and the size of the trap escape vent, establishing spatial closed areas or sanctuaries, and reducing fishing mortality.



*Photo courtesy of A. Schick*

The Panel also provided advice on ways to improve the data used in the assessment and the assessment methods. The Panel pointed out several problems with the quality of data used in the assessment and major gaps in sampling that may have influenced the assessment results. The Panel also suggested improvements to current assessment methods for American lobster, including the modified DeLury model that is used to estimate abundance and fishing mortality. The Panel suggested that several new methods be explored, including continued development of the Mark model (a new simulation model), development of a biomass dynamic model, expansion of the yield per recruit model, and development of

*continued on page 7*

# ASMFC Finds Virginia Out-of-Compliance with Addendum I to the Horseshoe Crab FMP

As of June 8, 2000, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission found the Commonwealth of Virginia out-of-compliance with the required landings cap provision of Addendum I to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crab. Specifically, Virginia's state plan for its 2000 fishing season fails to meet the required landings cap of 152,495 horseshoe crabs, which is 25 percent below the Commonwealth's average landings between 1995 – 1997.

This action was based on the recommendations of the Horseshoe Crab Management Board and the Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board. The Commonwealth of Virginia reported that it is unable to implement the landings cap of Addendum I because it does not meet the Commonwealth's legal standards for fishery management regulations. These standards include measures that define overfishing and establish stock rebuilding targets. Virginia believes that implementing the required landings cap would require legislative action by the General Assembly, which is not scheduled to meet again until January 2001.

The implications of Virginia's inaction are expected to be substantial and have the potential of negating most of the conservation measures gained by reductions in other Atlantic coast states. Under Addendum I, the total coastwide reduction in horseshoe crab landings in 2000 is expected to be 1.15 million crabs. This figure includes additional efforts by the States of Maryland and New Jersey to further reduce their landings by more than the required 25 percent (70 and 50 percent, respectively). By maintaining its established cap of 710,000 crabs, Virginia's harvest would consume



nearly half of the coastwide reductions sought by the Management Board through Addendum I.

The Commission's ISFMP Charter requires the Executive Director to notify the State, Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior of the Commission's determination within 10 working days of the Commission's finding. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Secretary of Commerce has 30 days to review the recommendation and take final action. If Virginia should remain out-of-compliance with Addendum I then the Secretary of Commerce could place a moratorium on Virginia's horseshoe crab fishery (pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 5106). These actions are the result of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, which mandates a cooperative state/federal program to conserve and manage valuable coastal fisheries. It requires the Commission to prepare and adopt FMPs. It also imposes an obligation on each state covered by a FMP to implement and enforce the FMP's regulations in state waters, or else face the possibility of a federal moratorium on fishing for the affected species in that state.

Regardless of what action is taken by Virginia or the Secretary of Commerce this year, any overages in a state's landings cap will be subtracted in the fol-

lowing year(s), based on action taken by the Board this week. Given that Virginia's overage in 2000 is likely to be substantial, Virginia could be required to close its horseshoe crab fishery for several years.

For more information, please contact Thomas O'Connell, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (410) 260-8271 or [toconnell@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:toconnell@dnr.state.md.us).

## ASMFC Releases Findings of American Lobster Stock Assessment Peer Review (continued from page 5)

a predictive capability from trawl survey data. The Panel also suggested the development of biological reference targets that are distinct from thresholds to provide a more reliable overfishing definition. The Panel suggested the use of surplus production or stock recruitment models to develop biomass-based reference points that can be cast in a precautionary context.

The Commission conducted the American Lobster Stock Assessment Peer Review on May 8-9 in Providence, Rhode Island. The Peer Review Panel was composed of an impressive group of lobster assessment biologists from both the U.S. and Canada. Panel members included Dr. Gerald Ennis (DFO Canada), Dr. John Hoenig (Virginia Institute of Marine Science), Dr. Peter Lawton (DFO Canada), Dr. Robert Muller (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), Dr. Saul Saila (retired, University of Rhode Island), and Dr. David Sampson (Oregon State University).

Copies of both the Advisory and the Stock Assessment Reports will soon be available from the Commission. The Advisory Report, which details the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review, can be obtained by contacting the Commission or through its website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) on the NEWS page under Stock Assessment Reports. Copies of the assessment report, which is approximately 600 pages in length, can be obtained by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400 or [vjones@asmfc.org](mailto:vjones@asmfc.org).

## Atlantic Menhaden Board Reviews AMAC Stock Status Report

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met on June 7, 2000 to review the annual report of its technical and advisory committee (AMAC), and to discuss possible overfishing definitions for inclusion in Amendment 1.

Each year, the AMAC reviews the current stock and fishery status and provides recommendations to the Board for future management and monitoring initiatives. According to this year's report, the 1999 Atlantic menhaden reduction fishery landings decreased 30 percent from 1998 to 171,200 metric tons (mt), and bait fishery landings were approximately 36,000 mt. The report states that reduction fishery landings fell off from last year due to adverse weather conditions (three

hurricanes) during the height of the fishing season and an abnormally wet spring. Although both AMAC and the Board were concerned that the harvest of age-0 menhaden increased last year (18.4 percent of the total reduction fishery landings), preliminary evidence from juvenile finfish surveys indicate that a large yearclass of menhaden (age-0 fish) may have also been produced in 1999. Preliminary estimates of recruitment to age-1 generated by the stock assessment, indicate that at least a moderate yearclass was produced in 1998 as well.

The AMAC report states that spawning stock biomass continued to decline last year, falling to 32,800 mt, which is below the long-term median value of 40,400 mt for this population. Despite this, the percent maximum spawning potential ratio (SPR) remains high at 9.7 percent.

The AMAC report concludes that:

- estimated landings in the 2000 reduction fishery will be approximately 185,000 mt;
- fishing mortality has declined since the mid-1960s to  $F = 1.1$ ;
- spawning stock biomass will continue to decline unless recruitment improves in the near future;
- increased survival of age-2+ menhaden may be a result of closed areas along the coast acting as refugia for adults and could be contributing to the high SPR;
- concerns still remain over the status of the forage base in Chesapeake Bay; and
- initial estimates of recruitment in 1998 and 1999 indicate at least moderate yearclasses were produced.

The AMAC report also included a number of management recommendations for the Board's consideration. These included:

- no additional restrictions for the 2000 fishing year, since Atlantic menhaden recruitment success is related to environmental conditions rather than fishing effort, as supported by recent published reports (i.e., SABRE);
- encouraging the reduction fishery to avoid the harvest of age-0 menhaden; and
- including a management option into Amendment 1 that coastal states should open closed areas to the reduction fishery in order to reduce fishing pressure in the Chesapeake Bay.

The Management Board voted to accept the AMAC report with the understanding that it was not approving any of the management recommendations proposed by AMAC.

*continued on page 13*

# ASMFC Finds South Carolina Out-of-Compliance with the Shad and River Herring FMP

On June 8, 2000, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission found the State of South Carolina out-of-compliance relative to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad and River Herring.

Specifically, Amendment 1 stipulates that all states and jurisdiction shall not exceed an aggregate 10 fish daily creel limit in recreational fisheries for American shad or hickory shad. According to Amendment 1, creel limits must be reported in both the annual compliance reports and the state fishing recovery plans. Upon review of South Carolina's reports the Plan Review Team noted that the state lacks a recreational/sport creel limit of any kind.

The Commissioner from South Carolina, David Cupka, has explained that the state agency is limited by inaction on the part of the state legislature in this regard. While the Commission recog-

nizes that the schedule of the state legislature and its deliberation process makes it difficult for South Carolina to meet compliance requirements, South Carolina will need to implement a recreational creel limit and submit such changes in writing to the Commission to reverse this compliance decision. According to David Cupka, the South Carolina State Legislature will meet again on June 20, 2000 to address the necessary creel limit in state waters.

The Interstate Fishery Management Program Charter requires the Executive Director to notify the State, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of the Interior of the Commission's determination within ten working days of the Commission's finding. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Secretary of Commerce has 30 days to review the recommendation and take final action. If South Carolina should remain non-compliant with Amendment 1 then the

Secretary of Commerce could place a moratorium on South Carolina's Shad and River Herring fisheries (pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 5106).

These actions are the result of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, which mandates a cooperative state/federal program to conserve and manage valuable coastal fisheries. It requires the Commission to prepare and adopt fishery management plans (FMPs). It also imposes an obligation on each state covered by the FMP to implement and enforce the FMP's regulations in state waters, or else face the possibility of a federal moratorium on fishing for the affected species in that state.

For more information, please contact Heather Stirratt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 ext. 301.

## Commission Seeks Public Input to SAV Fishing Gear Impacts Implementation Recommendations

The Habitat Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be releasing a report entitled "Evaluating Fishing Gear Impacts to Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) and Determining Mitigation Strategies." While many of the agencies represented on the Commission do not have authority to regulate habitat protection, most are able to regulate fisheries in order to protect habitat. This report outlines fishing gear impacts to SAV and develops standard mitigation strategies.

Following-up on the SAV report, the Habitat Committee has also drafted an options paper, which outlines ten specific recommendations to implementing the SAV Gear Impacts Report, including three different implementa-

tion strategies. **It is this report that the Commission is currently seeking public input on.** What approaches are the most viable/feasible, and what approaches will simply not work? This is your chance to let the Commission know your opinions and help guide the Commission on this issue.

Copies of both reports can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), under Public Input, or by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202)289-6400. All comments on the draft paper should be forwarded to Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, 1444 Eye St, NW, Washington DC, 20005 or via email at [cselberg@asmfc.org](mailto:cselberg@asmfc.org).



## Management and Science Committee Addresses Various Scientific Issues

The Management and Science Committee (MSC) met on June 5 & 6 in Portland, Maine. The Committee discussed several issues pertaining to the Commission's Research and Statistics Program, including the Commission's stock assessment peer review process, power plant issues, scientific and display permits, and several upcoming Commission workshops.

The MSC reviewed the Commission's peer review process for possible modification based on input and concerns expressed by various Commission technical and stock assessment committees. The MSC Peer Review Subcommittee will meet this summer to develop recommendations for modifications to improve the process. The Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board previously prioritized Gulf of Maine winter flounder for an external peer review of the science underlying the assessment of this species. The Commission will attempt to complete this peer review in late 2000 or early 2001, depending on funding. No other species have been prioritized for review by the Commission's external review process or through the Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee at this time.

During the Commission's February meeting week, the ISFMP Policy Board approved a recommendation that the Management and Science Committee and Habitat Committee jointly conduct the following tasks:

1. Secure funding to convene a panel of experts, including state, federal, and independent population dynamics scientists, to review methods to estimate the cumulative coastwide impacts of power plant impingement and entrainment on managed fish stocks, and to determine the appropriate analytical methods to assess power plant mortality.
2. Examine the prospects for species-by-species coastwide assessments of the effects of power plant mortality using American shad and winter flounder as the first case surveys.

The MSC will be convening a panel this summer to discuss implementation of these tasks, including developing a more detailed workplan, timeline, and budget estimates, as well as developing recommendations for potential funding sources.

The MSC reviewed information on scientific and display permits, including a list of organizations and individuals that have been issued permits during the past year. The Committee will be following up on this survey by collecting more

detailed information on sharks, horseshoe crabs, and Atlantic sturgeon in order to determine the magnitude of any problems associated with organizations/individuals being issued permits in multiple jurisdictions.

The MSC will be conducting a multispecies workshop in August 2000 to determine the feasibility of conducting multispecies assessments on Atlantic menhaden. This workshop will bring together scientists conducting various multispecies assessment methods with various representatives of Commission stock assessment and technical committees, as well as experts in environmental and ecological data. The intent of this workshop is to review the data requirements of various multispecies assessment methods in comparison with existing species-specific and environmental data to evaluate the feasibility of conducting a comprehensive multispecies assessment for menhaden. The Commission, given successful solicitation of external fiscal resources, will then issue a contract to conduct this assessment. The MSC is also developing a workshop on alternative uses of regulatory discards to be conducted in early 2001. For more information, please contact Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research and Statistics, at (202)289-6400 or via email at [lkline@asmfc.org](mailto:lkline@asmfc.org).



## American Lobster Board Sets the Stage for Addendum II Development

The American Lobster Management Board met at the Commission's Spring Meeting in Portland, Maine on June 6, 2000. The Board reviewed the results of the lobster stock assessment and peer review results (see story on pages 5 & 7). Following a discussion of the reports, the Board directed the Plan Review Team to prepare a report on the management implications of the peer review. This report will be presented to the Board in August 2000, at which time the Board will discuss possible changes to the management program through Addendum II. The report will also include an evaluation of each Lobster Conservation Management Team (LCMT) proposal that was submitted during the fall of 1998.

In an effort to promote a more transparent and efficient lobster management program, the Board approved changes to the program operations. The composition, leadership and operational procedures were revised on several of the lobster committees, including the Technical Committee, Stock Assessment Committee, Advisory Panel, and Plan Review Team. The document also more explicitly identifies the different roles of the Advisory Panel and the LCMTs. Any person affected by these changes will be notified by the Commission.

The Board once again tabled action on a possible finding of non-compliance for Rhode Island. While the state Marine Fisheries Council voted to repeal the regulation on non-trap gear, changes to this regulation have not been promulgated. The Board will revisit the issue in August 2000.

At the April 2000 Board meeting, the Board initiated the development of Amendment 4. Two issues were approved for consideration: (1) allowing conservation equivalency for the limits on non-trap gear; and (2) allowing conservation equivalency for the protection of v-notched lobsters. Several additional issues were proposed for inclusion, however all such motions were defeated. Specifically, Connecticut re-

quested adding the issue of transferable pot allocations to Amendment 4, while Maine requested including a refinement of the v-notch definition and application of a five-inch maximum size to the Gulf of Maine. The Board anticipates a Draft Public Information Document for review at the August 2000 meeting.

The next Lobster Board meeting will be held during the Commission's meeting week, August 21-24, 2000 in Alexandria, Virginia. For more information, please contact Amy Schick, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 317.

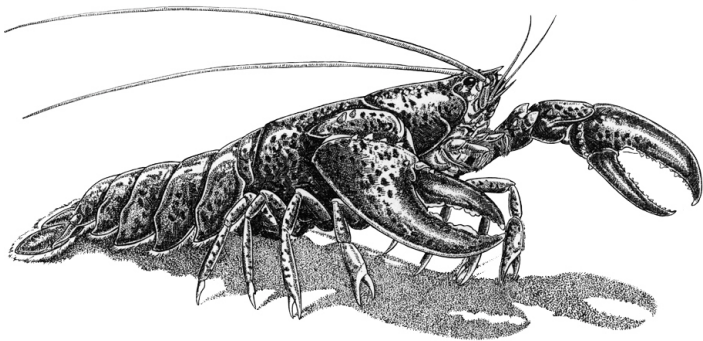
## Striped Bass Board Continues Amendment 6 Development

On June 8, 2000, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met in Portland, Maine to continue the development of Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Striped Bass. During this meeting the Management Board reviewed the extensive public comment that was received on the Public Information Document for Amendment 6. This public comment includes information submitted directly to the Commission, as well as input received at the 19 public hearings that were held in late May from Maine through North Carolina. Also, during this meeting the Management Board received advice from the Striped Bass Advisory Panel on the issues that are to be addressed in Amendment 6.

Based on the input received at the meeting, the Management Board selected a series of preferred management alternatives and issues to be addressed in Amendment 6. It also directed the Technical Committee to evaluate the impact of various recreational fisheries management alternatives on striped bass stock structure and its biological reference points.

The Management Board will hold its next meeting in August at the Commission's Meeting Week to review the draft of Amendment 6 and hear the results of the latest stock assessment that will be completed in July. Based on the progress on the draft of Amendment 6, the Board may decide to approve the draft of Amendment 6 for public hearings or direct the Plan Development Team to continue working on sections of the draft prior to the next Board meeting.

For more information, please contact: Robert Beal, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 318.



## ASMFC Advisory Committee Develops Advisory Primer & Gains Support of LGAs in Improving the Process

The Advisory Committee met during the Commission's June meeting week to conduct its standard review of the Commission's advisory panel process, as well as review the Draft Advisory Primer. In its first order of business, the Committee welcomed a new member (David Spencer, incoming Lobster Panel Chair) and said goodbye to a longtime member (Ralph Maling, outgoing Lobster Panel Chair). The first issue to be discussed concerned the Committee's meeting schedule. For the last 4-5 years, it has been standard procedure for the Committee to meet twice a year during the Commission's Spring and Fall Meeting Weeks, with members provided the opportunity to attend the full meeting weeks. It was suggested this may not be the most productive way for the Committee to conduct its business. It was agreed that staff would poll the full Committee as to this issue and provide a recommendation to the Commission's Executive Director and Chair for action.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the Legislators and Governors' Appointees (LGAs) meeting held earlier this week. The Committee is encouraged by the LGAs renewed interest in improving the advisory panel process and looks forward to working with them.

There was significant discussion regarding the restructuring the American Lobster Advisory Panel (AP), as detailed in the new American Lobster Operating Guidelines adopted by the Board. Specific areas of concern included: the loss of adequate user group representation through the culling of AP members; failure to provide the Lobster AP and the Advisory Committee with the opportunity to provide input prior to the Board action; inadequate mechanism for communication between the Lobster AP and the Lobster Conservation Management Teams; and possible implications for similar restructuring activities with other panels. Staff was directed to draft a memorandum outlining the Committee's concerns for possible action by the Lobster Board and/or the ISFMP Policy Board.

The remainder of the meeting focused on reviewing the Draft Advisory Primer, with particularly emphasis on the use of proxies/alternates by advisors. There was no resolution of the proxy issue, although the Committee agreed to raise the issue with the LGAs. The Committee will also be working on completing the Draft Advisory Primer, with the goal of adoption by the ISFMP Policy Board in November. For more information, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at (202)289-6400, ext. 310.

---

## Fish Passage Opening at Three Mile Island

On June 1, 2000, the York Haven Power Company hosted a fish passage opening ceremony at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania. According to Bob Wise, President of York Haven Power Company, the York Haven facility will complete the last of four fish passageways, in addition to the Conowingo, Holtwood, and Safe Harbor facilities in the Susquehanna River. The passage at York Haven utilizes a vertical slot fish ladder design and will pass 500,000 American shad annually. The Commission would like to congratulate York Haven Power Company and all other cooperating agencies for supporting restoration efforts in the Susquehanna River!

For more information on the fish passage facility, please contact Dick St. Pierre, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at (717) 238-6425.



*From left: Dick St. Pierre (USFWS), Fred Rice (ASMFC Commissioner) and Bob Wise (York Haven Power Company) at the opening ceremony. Photo courtesy of H. Stirratt.*

# Legislative Committee Encourages Senate Passage of CARA

The Legislative Committee met on June 5, 2000 and primarily focused on recent and pending legislative activities the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, or CARA. CARA was approved by the House of Representatives by a three-to-one margin on May 11, 2000. Supporters hope this momentum will spur Senate action. The Commission is in strong support of CARA, as well as all Governors and hundreds of hunting and fishing organizations.

The Legislative Committee adopted a suggested position forwarded by the Habitat Committee regarding coral reef legislation. The Habitat Committee, charged with preparing this recommendation during the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, presented a position supporting research and management of coral reefs, coordinated with the states, the Commission, regional fishery management councils, and appropriate federal agencies.

The Committee reviewed H.R. 3671, a bill to clarify the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson programs.

Though the Committee identified some concerns with this bill, particularly the level of administrative funding provided, the Committee supported the bill, which is similarly supported by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and American League of Anglers and Boaters.

The Committee reviewed H.R. 4278 and S. 2441, the Fishable Waters Act, which provides a granting structure for fisheries conservation projects. The Committee notes that concerns regarding the bill which were forwarded to the drafters in early 2000 were not incorporated into the introduced bill. The Committee remains concerned with both the minimal references to marine areas and funding provisions of the bill.

The Committee also reviewed H.R. 2335 and S. 740, the Hydroelectric Licensing Process Improvement Act of 1999, to provide environmental reviews of hydroelectric facilities. The Committee asked an ad hoc Hydroelectric Facility Fishing Mortality Subcommittee,

consisting of members of the Management and Science Committee, Habitat Committee, and ISFMP Policy Board, to provide further information on this issue regarding the possibility of increased fisheries mortality related to operation of these facilities.

The Committee reviewed a bill to reauthorization the Magnuson/Stevens Act, and anticipate introduction of similar bills in the near future. Over the next few months, the Legislative Committee will be developing extensive comments regarding the reauthorization of the Magnuson/Stevens Act. Additionally, the Committee will be considering ways in which to implement a Commission Strategic Plan objective 6.5.2 which states "Develop means of communicating progress on major legislative issues of interest to the states." Compiled comments regarding this issue will be distributed to the Committee in the following weeks for consideration.

For more information, please contact Lori Goodwin, Special Assistant, at (202)289-6400, ext. 314.

---

## LGAs Discuss Advisory Process at 2000 Spring Meeting

The Legislators and Governor's Appointees (LGAs) met on June 5, 2000, with a quorum of both groups represented. The groups discussed Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) policy issues and advisory participation.

The LGAs discussed the continued success of the caucus voting system. In a further evolution of the process, the LGAs supported extending the process to system to all Commission boards, including the ISFMP. The LGAs forwarded a recommendation to the Policy Board requesting all Commission management boards use the caucus voting procedures as defined in the ISFMP Charter. Though all species management boards and sections currently adhere to the caucus voting procedures, the motion would also require the ISFMP Policy Board to use the new procedures.

LGAs discussed the proxy policy adopted at the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, noting that Commissioners have discretion whether

or not to appoint proxies. LGAs remain concerned regarding inadequate conference table seating for all Commissioners and proxies particularly at joint meetings with the regional fishery management councils.

LGAs will be meeting casually, likely during lunch to identify agenda items for future meetings. LGAs were reminded that legislators will hold their annual meeting in August to discuss issues of particular pertinence to legislators.

The LGAs reviewed the advisors participation and interest survey compiled by Commission staff last year. Commissioners heard from Bob Munson, Chair of the Advisory Committee, regarding advisors concerns. As per direction from the Policy Board, the LGAs will be developing recommendations to improve the advisory process. For more information, please contact Lori Goodwin, Special Assistant, at (202)289-6400, ext. 314.



## Atlantic Menhaden Board Reviews AMAC Stock Status Report (continued from page 7)

Dr. Douglas Vaughan (NMFS) presented the Board with background information on stock performance and possible options for an overfishing definition for Atlantic menhaden. Following a lengthy discussion, the Board requested additional information be prepared while incorporating the overfishing definition discussion document into the draft Amendment 1. The Board provided further guidance to the Plan Development Team (PDT) and requested more information be prepared to incorporate into the management options for Amendment 1. The PDT will prepare this information and forward it to the Board for review during the Commission's August meeting week at which time the Board should be prepared to approve the draft amendment for public hearings. For more information please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400.

## Interstate Tagging Committee Meets

The Commission's Interstate Tagging Committee convened their first meeting in Baltimore, Maryland on March 20 & 21, 2000. Membership on the Committee includes representatives from each state (Maine to Florida), the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and several large angler based tagging programs. The primary goal of the Committee is to improve the quality of all tagging programs on the East Coast through the coordination of activities and the promotion of quality scientific objectives, strong program design, and continued data analysis.

The Committee's first task was to revise the protocols which tagging programs should follow, drafted at a 1998 workshop on tagging. The protocols identify and describe eight broad characteristics of a good tagging program: (1) program objectives, (2) design elements, (3) data management issues, (4) commitment, (5) training, (6) communication, (7) coordination, and (8) program certification. A number of additional ideas have been incorporated into the protocols based on the Committee's discussion. In particular, the Committee limited the geographic scope and species to include under its umbrella. Geographic scope was limited to the U.S. Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida. In addition to programs based in that area, program data will also be included for those marine and anadromous species that are commonly landed off the East Coast of the U.S. For example, tag pro-

gram data from the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas should be included in the database because its bluefin tuna tags are recaptured from Massachusetts to North Carolina.

The Committee began to plan and prioritize their activities. Its top priorities are to:

1. Update the tagging database (QA/QC current program information, and add new information from tagging programs);
2. Collect/compile base information on training and certification programs and study design guidelines for future development of coastwide guidelines;
3. Draft a generic section on tagging for inclusion in fishery management plans; and
4. Develop guidelines/protocols to encourage greater return of tags and/or outreach video on proper tagging methods to be used by member tagging programs.

Bill Hubbard, past-president of the New Hampshire Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association, and Kurtis Gregg of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission were elected Committee Chair and Vice-chair, respectively. The next meeting is planned for September 2000. For more information, please contact Geoff White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or [gwhite@asmfc.org](mailto:gwhite@asmfc.org).

## American Eel Board Reviews State Implementation Plans

On June 8, 2000, the American Eel Management Board met to review the recommendations of the Technical Committee regarding the status of state/jurisdictional implementation plans. Unfortunately, the Technical Committee could not provide guidance with respect to *de minimis* determination given the lack of commercial harvest data available at the time of evaluation.

A thorough discussion of state fisheries for American eel allowed the Management Board to approve all state/jurisdictional implementation plans in addition to *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Georgia, District of Columbia, and Florida. In addition, the Management Board granted year 2000 exemptions to the District of Columbia, Georgia and New Hampshire for the purpose of delaying execution of the young-of-the-year sampling survey until 2001. An update on the CITES Appendix III listing of American eel was provided by Commission staff on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For more information, please contact Heather Stirratt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 301.

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

### Staff

**Marina Guedes** -- In May, Marina left the Commission to pursue other career opportunities. Since she began with the Commission in 1998 as a Fisheries Research Specialist, Marina worked with the Commission's Committee on Economics and Social Sciences to provide valuable information on the anthropological, sociological, and economic aspects of marine fisheries management. We wish Marina the very best!

### Commissioners

**Steve Driscoll** -- This past February, the Commission said farewell to long-standing friend and colleague, Steve Driscoll, who served as New Hampshire's Governor's Appointee to the Commission since 1993. Continuing a long family tradition, Steve began lobstering at the age of 10 years old, and has been fishing ever since. During his time with the Commission, he served as the Chair of the Governor's Appointees and worked for equal access to the fisheries by all user groups. Steve is much loved up and down the coast and will be missed by all who have worked with him in the Commission process. We wish him and his wife all the best for the future.

**G. Ritchie White** -- This past February also brought the arrival of New Hampshire's new Governor's Appointee to the Commission, G. Ritchie White. Ritchie is no stranger to the Commission or his state's fisheries management issues, having served as New Hampshire's recreational fishing advisor to the Striped Bass Advisory Panel since the Panel's establishment in early 1994. For the last nine years, Ritchie has also been a Coastal Commissioner for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission. As an avid recreational angler for over forty years, Ritchie brings to the Commission his lifelong commitment to marine resource conservation. Welcome, Ritchie!

**Kathy Barco** -- This month Katherine Barco joins the Commission as the Governor's Appointee from the state of Florida. She is the co-owner and president of a construction company, Barco-Duval Engineering, Inc. and a graduate of the Harvard Business School. She has twenty years of experience in the construction business. What does all this have to do with fish? Well, Kathy is also a lifelong recreational and tournament fisherman, with a strong passion for ensuring that fish will be there for generations to come! Welcome aboard, Kathy!

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

*Return Service Requested*