

# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

1444 Eye St., N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-6400 phone  
(202) 289-6051 fax  
[www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org)

## **Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel Meeting Summary**

**November 19, 2007  
Baltimore, Maryland**

### *Participants:*

Joe Fletcher, AP member, DC  
Mike Burton, AP member, PA  
Richard Fasanello, AP member, NJ  
Patty Jackson, AP member, VA  
Andy Kahnle, Chair, SASC

Jeff Kaelin, observer  
Dave Ellenton, observer  
Ken Hinman, observer  
Erika Robbins, ASMFC

### ***Introduction***

The Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel (AP) met to hear presentations on the 2007 American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment and the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 2 to the Shad and River Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Following the presentation of the PID, the AP developed their comments to the Board related to the PID for Amendment 2.

### ***2007 American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment***

Andy Kahnle, Chair of the Shad and River Herring Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SASC), presented the results of the 2007 American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment. The presentation generated the following comments and questions from AP members:

- Mr. Fletcher has heard reports that water quality in the Potomac River has been declining in recent years, which is different from what the SASC had believed. He heard a presentation that stated that the chemical composition of the river has been altered and that there has been an increase in sediment load.
- Mr. Fletcher has heard reports of American shad spawning in the Potomac River below Ft. Belvoir. Is it possible that there are multiple stocks of American shad within the Potomac?
- It was noted that there has been an apparent increase in hickory shad abundance in the Chesapeake Bay, which may be affecting American shad.
- When Mr. Fasanello traveled to Georgia to fish for shad, the person selling the recreational permits advised him that most people purchased commercial licenses to avoid bag limit restrictions.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that recreational fishermen saw more American shad on the Delaware River in 2007 than in previous years.
- Mr. Fasanello suggested that microchips be used to track the movements of American shad in place of traditional tagging methods.

- Mr. Kahnle was asked if there were standard protocols for when to tag American shad. There are none.

### *Public Information Document for Amendment 2*

Erika Robbins gave a presentation on the PID for Amendment 2 to the Shad and River Herring FMP. The following are comments, questions, and recommendations from the AP and observers at the meeting. **Bolded text indicates recommendations to the Board from AP members regarding the options within the PID.**

#### *Advisory Panel*

- River herring are commonly used by recreational fishermen as bait for striped bass.
- It is important to protect river herring as they are an important forage fish.
- River herring are not a priority species for recreational fishermen.
- The nature of the recreational fishery for river herring has changed over time. While they were once caught for food, they are now caught for bait.
- Some states have changed their regulations to limit the number of river herring that may be harvested per day.
- Cormorants feed on river herring in the Potomac River.
- River herring are fun to catch on light tackle.
- River herring populations seem to be in worse shape than American shad populations.
- **The majority of the AP supports Option 3 for commercial fishing because it would reduce mortality on river herring stocks, and it would be likely that under this option you would be able to collect information on bycatch of river herring that is occurring in other fisheries. Others support Option 4 for commercial fishing because it may result in lower mortality for river herring.**
- **The AP supports Option 3 and 4 for recreational fishing until there is more information on the status of the stocks.**
- **Changes in regulations should be equally stringent for both recreational and commercial fishing.**
- **The AP suggests adding an Option 5 for commercial fishing that would reduce effort and regulate bycatch. This option could be revisited after the assessment is completed.**

#### *Observers*

- More fisheries should be listed in the PID as potential sources of ocean bycatch for river herring (e.g., northern shrimp fishery, groundfish fishery).
- States should be requested to gather bycatch information from other fisheries, such as the northern shrimp fishery and groundfish fishery.
- Biological information should be collected from bycatch (i.e., age, river of origin).
- Seal predation on river herring is an issue.
- It should be stated in the PID that one of the objectives of the new amendment is to maintain an abundance of river herring for forage.