



**ASMFC**

Volume 16, Issue 8  
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# **FISHERIES** *focus*

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

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015*

## **ASMFC 66th Annual Meeting October 29 - November 1, 2007**

**Loews Annapolis Hotel  
126 West Street  
Annapolis, MD  
(410) 263-7777**

### **Preliminary Schedule**

The preliminary agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein. A final agenda and meeting materials will be available and posted to the Commission's website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) two weeks prior to the meeting.

#### October 28, 2007

3:00 - 6:00 PM Registration

#### October 29, 2007

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM Registration

8:30 AM - 11:00 AM American Lobster Management Board

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM Atlantic Herring Section

1:30 - 4:30 PM Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board

1:30 - 5:30 PM Law Enforcement Committee

4:45 - 5:45 PM Sturgeon Management Board

6:30 - 8:00 PM Welcome Reception

#### October 30, 2007

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM Registration

8:00 - 9:30 AM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

9:45 - 11:45 AM 2008 Action Plan Workshop

12:00 - 1:30 PM Legislators and Governors Appointees Luncheon

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**T**he Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**10/29 - 11/1:**

ASMFC 66th Annual Meeting, Loews Annapolis Hotel, 126 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland; (410) 263-7777 (see preliminary agenda on pages 1 and 9).

**11/5 - 9:**

ASMFC Basic Stock Assessment Training Workshop, Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel Virginia Beach, 36th & Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

**11/6 - 8:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel Viking, Newport, Rhode Island.

**11/14 - 15:**

ASMFC Sturgeon Research Protocol Workshop, DoubleTree Hotel, 210 Holiday Court, Annapolis, Maryland; (800) 222-8733.

**12/3 - 7:**

ASMFC Basic Stock Assessment Training Workshop, Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel Virginia Beach, 36th & Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

**12/3 - 7:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Atlantic Beach Ocean Front Hotel, 2717 W. Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina; 800-624-8875.

**12/11 - 13:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Harmon Meadows, 300 Plaza Drive, Secaucus, New Jersey; 201-348-2000.

### 2008

**1/29 - 31:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Embassy Suites, Hampton, Virginia.

**2/4 - 7:**

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

**2/12 - 14:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**4/8 - 10:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Annapolis, 173 Jennifer Road, Annapolis, Maryland; 410-266-3131.

*“The Nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value.”*

~ Theodore Roosevelt

One of the great strengths of successful organizations is their ability to unite their members and constituents through a set of common values and goals. If everyone agrees and believes in where they are going they stand a much better chance of getting there. Our Commissioners have formally committed to a set of values and goals for our Commission, reflecting the core values of our member states. These values are reflective of the fact that each state carries a fundamental responsibility to safeguard the public trust of the fisheries and wildlife resources under its jurisdiction.

Resource managers face many challenges in carrying out that responsibility. Fish populations are part of ecosystems that cross state and federal political boundaries. Thus, no state by itself can effectively protect its natural resources without the cooperation of its sister states and the federal government to optimize the health and value of marine resources. Atlantic striped bass, which spawn in the Chesapeake Bay, forage during the summer in New England waters and spend the winter off the coast of North Carolina, is a great example of this.

Our member states' recognition of the need for cooperative fisheries resource management led to the creation of our Commission. Ours is the only interstate fisheries commission with the authority to prepare and adopt fishery management plans with mandatory compliance provisions. Moreover, the Commission recognizes the importance of conservation to rebuild stocks and sustainable harvest of healthy stocks. These concepts are strongly reflected in the states' values embedded in the Commission's mission and vision. Those values include:

- Conservation is the states' highest priority
- Stewardship is needed to maintain recovery
- All citizens own the marine resources
- State sovereignty is respected, each has its own laws and policies
- Representative decision making is used
- Programs/actions reflect logic and transparency

- Flexibility is provided within basic conservation parameters
- Accountability of actions
- Success

The following basic tenets outline how the states and the Commission will pursue our vision of restoring Atlantic stocks. They include:

**Promoting Fisheries Governance** – Commission members will advocate decisions focusing on long-term benefits of conservation, and maintain focus on policy issues directly related to attaining the vision and goals of the Commission.

**Managing for Success** – The states are committed to proactive management of fishery resources under their jurisdiction, avoiding the historical pattern of taking action only after some type of failure.

**Seeking Ecological Sustainability Over the Long-term** – Habitat issues, protected species interactions and ecosystem concerns will be integrated with other elements of fisheries management.

**Respond to the Needs of Member States** – The Commission's service strategy is to ensure that the policy agenda and work priorities are responsive to the needs of the member states' stakeholders. Federal agencies work with the Commission as partners to carry out this strategy.

Our states through our Commissioners have committed to these goals and values, including the cooperative philosophy by which they work towards restoring Atlantic fish stocks. So the next time you hear of an action or a decision by our Commissioners that you disagree with, think for a moment about whose interests are being looked after.

We frequently hear from those who make their living and derive their entertainment from the resources under Commission stewardship. The fish have no voice and future generations who expect to enjoy these resources in healthy abundance have yet to be heard. Teddy Roosevelt, one of our greatest conservationist presidents, charged us with looking out for the fish in the interest of the next generation. Hopefully, this is something we can all agree to.

# Species Profile: Shad & River Herring

## Atlantic States Seek to Improve Knowledge of Stock Status & Protect Populations Coastwide

### Introduction

The long-awaited release of the American shad benchmark stock assessment has brought heightened attention to the status and management needs of American shad populations along the Atlantic coast. The assessment highlights the depleted status of this historically important fish species, finding shad stocks at all-time lows. Having just received this news in August, the Shad and River Herring Management Board has yet to determine how it will respond to these findings and the recommendations of the assessment's independent review panel of fisheries scientists.

The current status of river herring populations is largely unknown though it is hoped that the benchmark stock assessment on these species, which is anticipated to be completed by 2012, will shed some light on their health. In the interim, based on concern about low survey indices and reduced landings levels, the Management Board has initiated the development of a Public Information Document to solicit public comment on potential management actions to protect river herring stocks coastwide.

### Life History

Shad and river herring are anadromous fish that spend the majority of their adult lives at sea, only returning to freshwater in the spring to spawn. Historically, these species spawned in virtually every accessible river and tributary along the coast. However, blockage of spawning rivers by dams and other impediments, combined with degradation of water quality, has severely depleted suitable spawning habitat. Following are descriptions of each species' life history characteristics.

#### *American & Hickory Shad*

American shad, *Alosa sapidissima*, are found in many Atlantic coastal rivers from Newfoundland to the St. Johns River in Florida. Spawning occurs far enough upstream for the eggs to drift downstream and hatch before reaching saltwater. The eggs mature rapidly and transform into young fish in three to four weeks. Juveniles remain in estuarine nursery areas until early fall before entering the sea and joining the mixed-stock, migratory population. After four to six years in coastal waters, individuals become sexually mature and migrate to their native rivers during spring spawning seasons that vary by latitude. The percentage of American shad that survive to spawn more than once decreases from north to south. American shad that spawn in more northerly rivers may survive to spawn again, while shad native to the rivers south of Cape Fear, North Carolina die after spawning. American shad adults that exhibit repeat spawning return to the sea soon after spawning and migrate northward to summer feeding grounds in the Gulf of Maine.



Photo courtesy of Peter L. Groves, Woo's Shad Fishing Website - [www.woofish.com/shad.html](http://www.woofish.com/shad.html)



**American Shad**  
*Alosa sapidissima*



#### General Characteristics:

- **Largest of the herrings**
- **Can reach up to 2 ½' in length, weighing about 11 ½ lbs**
- **Age at maturity**  
Female = 5 years  
Male = 4 years
- **Range from south-eastern coast of Newfoundland to St. Johns River, Florida**
- **Primarily feed on plankton**
- **Stock status varies by river system**

See side-bar on page 7 for information on remaining alosine species

Hickory shad, *Alosa mediocris*, spawn in rivers and tributaries

along the Atlantic coast from the Bay of Fundy to the Tomoka River in Florida. After spawning, hickory shad return to the ocean, but their distribution and movements are essentially unknown. Fertilized eggs are carried by river currents and eventually develop into larvae, which begin to feed four to seven days after hatching. Larvae drift downstream into tidal freshwater reaches of the spawning rivers, gradually maturing into juveniles. In early to late summer, juvenile hickory shad leave their nursery areas for the sea. With increasing water temperatures in the spring, mature hickory shad will migrate back to their native rivers to compete their life cycle.

### *Alewife & Blueback Herring*

Alewife and blueback herring (collectively known as “river herring”) are relatively small anadromous fish, spending most of their adult life at sea, but returning to freshwater areas to spawn in the spring. Alewife spawn in rivers, lakes, and tributaries from northeastern Newfoundland to South Carolina, but are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. Blueback herring prefer to spawn in swift flowing rivers and tributaries from Nova Scotia to northern Florida, but are most numerous in waters from the Chesapeake Bay south. Mature alewife (ages three to eight) and blueback herring (ages three to six) migrate rapidly downstream after spawning. Larvae begin to feed three to five days after hatching, and transform gradually into the juvenile stage. Juveniles remain in tidal freshwater nursery areas during the spring and early summer, but may also move upstream with the encroachment of saline water. As water temperatures decline in the fall, juveniles move downstream to more saline waters. Little information is available on the life history of juvenile and adult river herring after they emigrate to the sea as young-of-year or yearlings, and before they mature and return to freshwater to spawn.

### Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

American shad, hickory shad, and river herring formerly supported significant commercial and recreational fisheries throughout their range. Fisheries were traditionally executed in rivers, estuaries, and coastal waters. Although recreational harvest data are scarce, most harvest is believed to come from the commercial industry. Commercial landings for all these species have declined dramatically from historic highs.

### *American Shad*

Total in-river commercial landings have declined steadily from over 3.2 million pounds in 1980 to 711,840 pounds in 2002. Coastal intercept landings rose steadily from 1980 to a peak of two million pounds in 1989, then declined thereafter to 1.1 million pounds in 2002. In 2005, the commercial ocean-intercept fishery for American shad was closed.

Fishing in the Chesapeake Bay for American shad has been banned since 1994, but there are currently small bycatch allowances. Total landings for 2006 totaled 677,362 pounds.

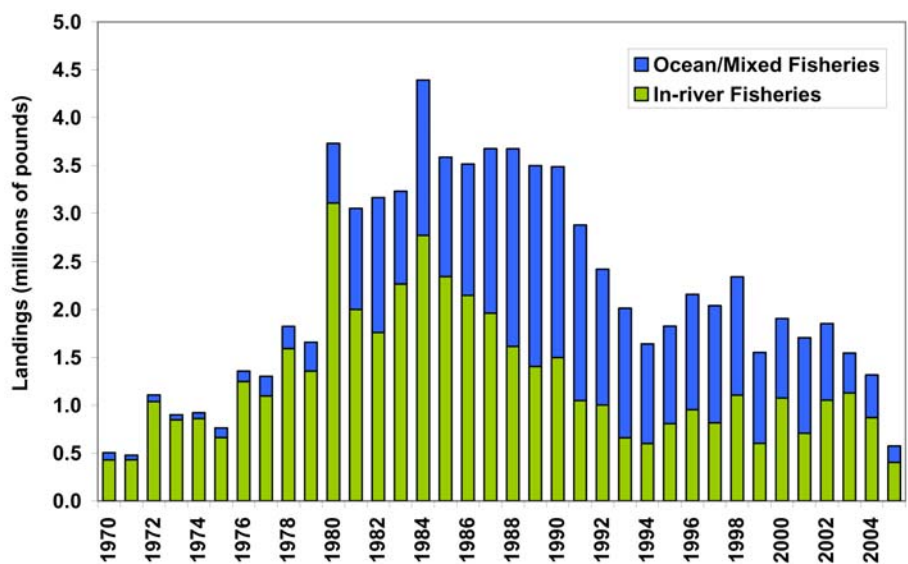
### *Hickory Shad*

Atlantic coast (Maryland to Florida) hickory shad landings are poorly monitored. Federal and state data collected for this species is questionable because of mixing with American shad upon landing, poorly understood geographic ranges, and poorly monitored recreational fishing areas. This species supports a significant recreational fishery in some areas, but good recreational harvest data do not exist. North Carolina has historically dominated the commercial fishery. Total hickory shad landings appeared to have a recent peak in the late 1990s and again in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, landings dropped from over 200,000 pounds to about 83,000 pounds.

### *Alewife & Blueback Herring*

Commercial landings of Atlantic coast river herring have ranged from a high of 74.9 million pounds in 1958 to a low of less than 1.5 million pounds in recent years. New England landings have declined dramatically from the 1970s to the end of

**Figure 1. American Shad Commercial Landings by In-river and Ocean/Mixed Fisheries, 1970 - 2005 (Source: ASMFC American Shad Stock Assessment Report for Peer Review, 2007)**



*continued on page 6*



Photo courtesy of Geoffrey White

## Species Profile: Shad & River Herring (continued from page 5)

the 1990s. In the Mid-Atlantic, landings have declined dramatically since the mid-1960s and have remained very low in recent years. In the South Atlantic, the landings have steadily declined from an all time high of 11.5 million pounds in 1985 to less than 500,000 in 1999. During 2005, Maine, Virginia, and North Carolina accounted for the majority of coastwide commercial landings. As of 2007, four states -- Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and North Carolina -- have instituted moratoria on the harvest of river herring.

### Stock Status

While Amendment 1 addresses four species -- American shad, hickory shad, alewife, and blueback herring -- lack of comprehensive and accurate commercial and recreational fishery data for the latter three species make it difficult to ascertain the status of these stocks.

#### *American Shad*

A stock assessment for American shad was completed in 1997 and submitted for peer review in 1998. The 1998 assessment estimated fishing mortality rates for nine shad stocks and general trends in abundance for 13 shad stocks. The 1998 assessment indicated that current stock levels appeared greatly reduced from historic levels. Three of the seven stocks assessed (Hudson, Edisto, and Altamaha Rivers) were fully exploited. The short time series used in this stock assessment was of limited applicability in analyzing the long-term health of American shad stocks.

In August 2007, a coastwide American shad stock assessment was endorsed by an independent review panel of fisheries scientists and accepted by the Shad & River Herring Management Board. The assessment found that American shad stocks are currently at all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering. Recent declines of American shad were reported for Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Georgia stocks, and for the Hudson (New York), Susquehanna (Pennsylvania), James (Virginia), and Edisto (South Carolina) Rivers. Low and stable stock abundance was indicated for Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, the Chesapeake Bay, the Rappahannock River (Virginia), and some South Carolina and Florida stocks. Stocks in the Potomac and York Rivers (Virginia) have shown some signs of rebounding in recent years. Data limitations and conflicting data precluded the report from indicating much about the current status or trend of many of the stocks from North or South Carolina. Table 1 provides trends in American shad stock status stock from the 1998 and 2007 benchmark stock assessments.

**Table 1. Trends in Stock Status of American Shad Populations from the 2007 and 1998 Benchmark Assessments. A “?” in the status column indicates that either there was insufficient data or various data analyses gave conflicting indications of trend.**

State	River	2007 Status Trend	1998 Status Trend
ME	Merrymeeting Bay	Declining	
	Kennebec		
	Androscoggin		
NH	Saco		
	Exeter	Declining	
MA	Merrimack	Stable	Stable
RI	Pawcatuck	Declining	Stable
CT & MA	Connecticut	Stable	Stable
NY	Hudson	Declining	Declining
NY, PA, NJ, DE	Delaware River & Bay	Stable	Stable
MD	Nanticoke	Stable	Increasing
PA & MD	Susquehanna River & Flats	Declining	
MD, DC, VA	Potomac	Increasing	
VA	York	Increasing	Declining
	James	Declining	Stable
NC	Rappahannock	Stable	Stable
	Albemarle Sound	Stable	
	Roanoke	Stable	
	Tar-Pamlico	?	
	Neuse	?	
SC	Cape Fear	?	
	Winyah Bay	Stable	
	Waccamaw	?	
	Great Pee Dee	?	
	Santee	?	Increasing
SC & GA	Cooper	Stable	
	Combahee	?	
	Edisto	Declining	Stable
GA	Savannah	Stable	
FL	Altamaha (+ Ocmulgee)	Declining	Increasing
	Ogeechee		
FL	St. Johns	Stable	

The 2007 report identified primary causes for stock decline as a combination of overfishing, pollution, and habitat loss due to dam construction. In recent years, coastwide harvests have been around one to two million pounds, nearly two orders of magnitude lower than in the late 19th century. Given these findings, the peer review panel recommended that current restoration actions need to be reviewed and new ones need to be identified and applied. The peer review panel suggested considering a reduction of fishing mortality, enhancement of dam passage and mitigation of dam-related fish mortality, stocking, and habitat restoration.

#### *Alewife & Blueback Herring*

In 1990, the Commission assessed the status of 15 river herring stocks between New Brunswick and North Carolina. At the time of the assessment, five stocks were found to be overfished: St. John River, New Brunswick (alewife and blueback), Damariscotta River, Maine (alewife), Potomac River, Virginia (alewife), and Chowan River, North Carolina (alewife). Four other stocks were found to be in decline: Potomac River, Virginia (blueback), Chowan, North Carolina (blueback), Nanticoke River, Maryland (alewife), and Rappahannock River, Virginia (alewife). The assessment stated that heavy fishing pressure in Maine, Virginia, and North Carolina was primarily responsible for the continued decline of river herring stocks in the Damariscotta, Rappahannock, and Chowan Rivers. The report recommended additional conservation measures be implemented to reduce fishing mortality.

A new benchmark stock assessment for river herring is anticipated for 2012.

#### **Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations**

All 15 Atlantic coastal states from Maine through Florida currently manage shad and river herring species under Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad & River Herring. The Amendment seeks to restore these species through conservative regulatory measures and state-by-state monitoring requirements to improve our understanding of species stock status.

While Amendment 1 focuses primarily on American shad regulations and monitoring programs, it also requires the states to conduct fishery-dependent monitoring programs for river herring and hickory shad in order to improve data collection and stock assessment capabilities for these species.

Amendment 1 contains three primary regulatory requirements. The first is a five-year phase out of the ocean-intercept fishery, which began on January 1, 2000. States were required to achieve at least a 40% reduction in effort in the ocean-intercept fishery by December 31, 2002. The total closure of the fishery occurred on December 31, 2004. The second requirement establishes a fishing mortality target for in-river fisheries, and calls for the maintenance of existing or more conservative regulations for river herring and hickory shad. Lastly, the Amendment implements an aggregate 10-fish daily creel limit in recreational fisheries for American and hickory shad, with all jurisdictions maintaining existing or more conservative recreational regulations for river herring.

In August 2007, the Shad and River Herring Management Board initiated the development of Public Information Document for Amendment 2. This Document will discuss potential management actions for river herring. The Management Board will review and possibly approve the document for public comment at the Commission's 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in October. For more information, please contact Erika Robbins, Shad & River Herring FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or [erobbins@asmfc.org](mailto:erobbins@asmfc.org).

#### **Hickory Shad** *Alosa mediocris*



#### **General Characteristics:**

- **Can reach up to 2' in length; 18" fish weighs about 2 lbs**
- **Range from Bay of Fundy to Tomoka River, Florida**
- **Prey on small fish such as lance, anchovies, cunners, and silversides**
- **Stock status unknown**

#### **Alewife** *Alosa pseudoharengus*



#### **General Characteristics:**

- **Adults average 10 - 11" in length; 8 - 9 oz in weight**
- **Range from Nova Scotia to South Carolina**
- **Primarily feed on plankton**
- **Congregate in large schools, numbering in the thousands**
- **Excellent food fish, marketed both fresh and salted**
- **Stock status unknown**

#### **Blueback Herring** *Alosa aestivalis*



#### **General Characteristics:**

- **Adults average 11" in length; 7 oz in weight**
- **Range from Nova Scotia to Northern Florida**
- **Primarily feed on plankton**
- **Name derived from dark blue/bluish gray coloring on back**
- **Stock status unknown**

## Protected Species News

**Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP)** -- NOAA Fisheries Service has issued a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the ALWTRP that details new measures aimed at reducing the risk of entangling large whales along the East Coast. The species of particular concern is the endangered northern right whale. NOAA's preferred measures include more trap/pot and gillnet fisheries under the whale protection plan, expanding the areas exempted from the plan, and requiring more markings on fishing gear to improve understanding of how and where entanglements occur. The final rule implementing the preferred measures is expected to be published in the Federal Register on October 5. For more information, please visit: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>

**Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team (HPTRT)** -- The HPTRT is being reconvened by NOAA Fisheries Service to address current mortality and serious injury levels of harbor porpoises in commercial gillnet gear. Recently, rather than moving toward the long-term zero mortality rate goal of the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan (HPTRP), harbor porpoise mortality and serious injury have been increasing due to compliance-related issues and potential shifts in harbor porpoise distribution. The HPTRP was implemented in 1998 in response to high mortality of harbor porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) in the Gulf of Maine and Mid-Atlantic gillnet fisheries. The HPTRP is intended to reduce interactions between commercial gillnet fishing gear and the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoises. The HPTRP covers a large area of the U.S. East Coast from the Maine/Canada border to the North Carolina/South Carolina border, and includes regulations such as time/area closures and gear modifications. For more information, please visit: [http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/porptrp/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/porptrp/)

**Endangered Species Act, Sea Turtle Observer Final Rule Published** -- On August 4, NOAA Fisheries Service published a final regulation to require fishing vessels (under U.S. jurisdiction and identified through the annual determination process specified in the rule) to take observers upon the request of NOAA Fisheries Service. The purpose of the measure is to learn more about sea turtle interactions with fishing operations, to evaluate existing measures to reduce sea turtle takes, and to determine whether additional measures to address prohibited sea turtle takes may be necessary. NOAA Fisheries Service and/or interested cooperating entities will pay the direct costs of the observer. Under this rule, NOAA Fisheries Service also extends the number of days from 30 to 180 that the agency may place observers. The final rule became effective September 4, 2007. For more information, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/> or contact Tanya Dobrzynski or Therese Conant at (301) 713-2322 or [Tanya.Dobrzynski@noaa.gov](mailto:Tanya.Dobrzynski@noaa.gov) and [Therese.Conant@noaa.gov](mailto:Therese.Conant@noaa.gov), respectively.



Photo courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Dept. of Commerce



Photo courtesy of Commander Alan Bunn, NOAA Corps (ret.), NOAA Sea Grant



Photo courtesy of Dann Blackwood, USGS ([http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/pgallery/pgstellwagen/living/living\\_4.html](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/pgallery/pgstellwagen/living/living_4.html))

**Seabird Die-off in the Southeast** -- In June, hundreds of sick or dead greater shearwaters, a gull-like bird, as well as some other species, were reported along the southeast coast. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) received reports of more than 200 along Florida's east coast. The birds have been found from Hobe Sound in Martin County to South Ponte Vedra Beach in St. Johns County. Additionally, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources received reports of more than 140 dead or sick greater shearwaters, beginning June 26, 2007 along the entire South Carolina coast. Necropsy results have not been definitive. To date, findings indicate that starvation during the migration is the most likely cause of deaths. According the Peterson Field Guide for Eastern Birds, shearwaters spend their lives at sea, well offshore in the open ocean except for when they breed, nest and rear young. Greater shearwaters

*continued on page 12*



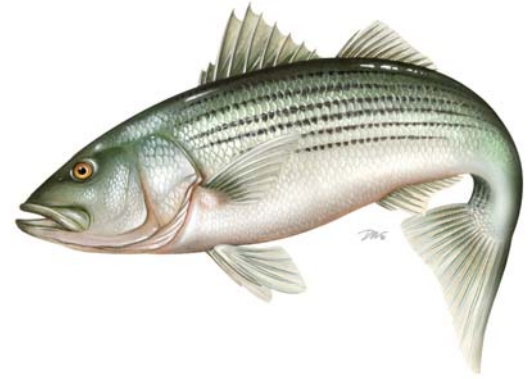
# ASMFC 66th Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

## October 30, 2007 (continued)

1:00 – 5:00 PM	Management and Science Committee
1:00 – 5:00 PM	Law Enforcement Committee (continued)
1:45 - 3:45 PM	Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Tautog Management Board
6:00 - 8:00 PM	Annual Dinner

## October 31 , 2007

8:00 - 11:00 AM	Shad and River Herring Management Board
8:00 – Noon	Habitat Committee
11:15 AM - 12:15 PM	ISFMP Policy Board
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Captain David H. Hart Award Luncheon
1:45 - 3:45 PM	ISFMP Policy Board
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board



## November 1, 2007

8:00 - 9:00 AM	Executive Committee
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Interim Steering Committee
9:15 - 11:45 AM	South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board
12:00 - 1:00 PM	ISFMP Policy Board (continued)
1:00 -1:30 PM	Buffet Lunch for Commissioners
1:30 - 2:00 PM	Business Session
2:15 – 5:15 PM	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

### **BoatU.S. Seeks Local Help with Fishing Line Recycling Program**

Thanks to a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water hopes to reduce the amount of monofilament fishing line in the water by enlisting individuals or local fishing and boating groups to install, monitor and periodically empty recycling bins and return their contents to a recycler.

“Discarded fishing line can last for hundreds of years, harming marine life and damaging boat propulsion systems,” said BoatU.S. Foundation Environmental Program Director Susan Shingledecker. “We’re looking to provide groups who have access to popular fishing spots, launch ramps or marinas, a free pre-made PVC monofilament bin and signage suitable for mounting outdoors. In return, all we ask is that you agree to keep an eye on the bin, keep track of how many containers get filled and when full, return the collected line to the recycler, Berkley Conservation.”

There are a limited number of bins, and bin locations will be determined by geographic area and demonstrated demand for monofilament recycling. For more information, please contact [CleanWater@BoatUS.com](mailto:CleanWater@BoatUS.com) or visit <http://www.BoatUS.com/foundation/Monofilament/>



**If you have ever wondered who makes up the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, check out our new feature, *Our People*, which highlights the valuable partners we rely on to help guide our program.**

## ***Our People: Mike Bucko, ACCSP Industry Advisor***



Mike Bucko, an avid recreational fisherman who runs a tackle shop in Fall River, Massachusetts, is one of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's many important partner representatives whose insights and suggestions help steer the program. When not serving ACCSP as an Advisory Committee representative, Bucko sees fishermen from all over who visit his shop in search of his expertise in reel repair.

Tackle shops run in Bucko's family. Growing up, his father and uncle also ran a bait and tackle shop in Massachusetts. Having enjoyed the experience in his youth, he chose to start his business, Bucko's Parts and Tackle, after graduating from University of Massachusetts in 1978. He's been running the shop ever since.

**Joining ACCSP:** In 2000, Bucko moved to Rhode Island and became even more involved in fisheries. Not only did he continue to fish recreationally, he began showing up at the Rhode Island council meetings more often. He was contacted by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management asking if he would like to serve as a Rhode Island recreational industry advisor to an Atlantic-coast marine fisheries statistics program. "I was intrigued by the opportunity to learn more about the MRFSS (Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey), and thought that I could make a contribution" says Bucko. Bucko began working with ACCSP in January 2004.

**His Stake:** Bucko was particularly interested in participating in the program because of its role with the MRFSS. He welcomed the opportunity to learn more about how the data is collected, and how ACCSP could help improve the survey. One of Bucko's first duties with the ACCSP was to serve as an advisory liaison to the MRFSS constituent review. Today, he keeps himself informed and stays involved as the recreational survey undergoes major changes.

**The Challenge:** Bucko says that when he first got involved with ACCSP, he found it challenging to learn about all the components beyond recreational data, such as priorities surrounding commercial, biological, and bycatch data. Even though the learning curve was steep, Bucko thought the time was worth it. He says, "I have really enjoyed the people on the Advisory Committee and the fact that we're all trying to make the fisheries better by sharing our personal inputs and observations."

### **About the ACCSP**

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org) or call (202) 216-5690.

## Georgia Conducts Operation Short Spot

During a coastwide on-the-water enforcement operation on September 15 aimed at collaring recreational fishing violators, state conservation rangers inspected 155 vessels and checked 328 anglers, but wrote just 18 citations and seven written warnings. Five of these were related to violations of fish length limits, with the remainder issued for boating safety and fishing license violations.

For more than two decades, Georgia saltwater fishermen have been required to abide by length limits for species such as red drum and spotted seatrout. While many anglers understand the regulations and comply, a few succumb to the temptation and keep fish that are too short or too long, particularly when legal-size fish are scarce. **Operation Short Spot** focused on-the-water patrol activities to maximize interaction with inshore saltwater anglers. Seventeen conservation rangers were involved in the operation.

WRD Law Enforcement Region VII supervisor Capt. Stephen Adams commented about **Operation Short Spot**: "Conservation rangers along the coast have a very diverse mission ranging from boating safety to hunting to saltwater fishing. We wanted to give specific attention to saltwater fish length limits since they're good numbers of short red drum and trout in our coastal waters at

this time of year. Our priority was to educate not just to issue citations. However, as always, each ranger had discretion to issue citations when they encountered a serious violation. It was encouraging to check over 300 saltwater anglers and find so few violations."

September is the traditional kickoff of the autumn fishing season in coastal Georgia. During this month, anglers will often encounter large numbers of yearling red drum, also known as spottail bass or redfish, shorter than the 14-inch minimum length limit. It's also common for anglers to catch spotted seatrout below the 13-inch length limit. Even experienced anglers get frustrated with length limits, and novices don't understand the reasoning behind the regulations. Many believe that keeping a fish that's an inch or two shorter than the legal limit can't really hurt.

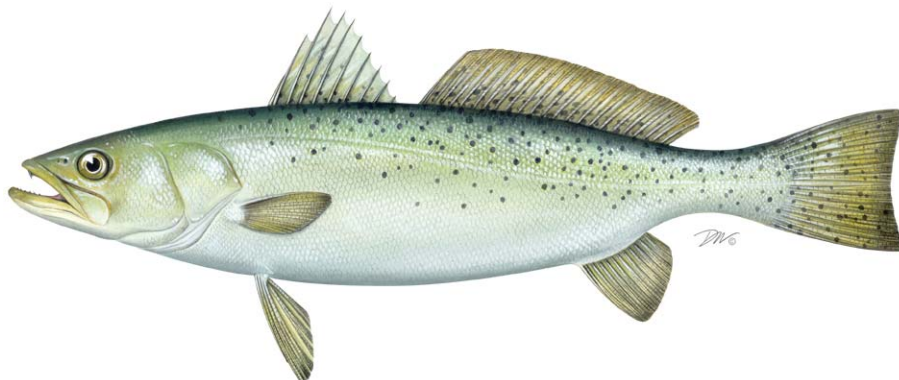
Coastal Resources Division assistant director, Spud Woodward explained the importance of length limits, "Length limits are a basic tool of fishery management. They allow a fish the opportunity to reproduce before it's harvested and protect some species from overfishing. Just as important, they help reduce wanton waste by preventing anglers from keeping fish they ultimately dis-



Photo courtesy of Spud Woodward, Georgia Coastal Resources Division

card as being too small for the table. Since all fish don't grow or mature at the same rate, length limits must be customized for each species. Many anglers don't believe fish caught on a hook will survive when released, but studies in Georgia have shown that hook-caught fish, even those that are deep hooked, can survive the experience. When anglers use proper handling techniques and release fish, they're doing their part to ensure the future of saltwater fishing."

Detailed information on saltwater fishing regulations is available at [www.gadnr.org](http://www.gadnr.org) under the Coastal Resources link or by directly contacting the DNR Coastal Regional Headquarters at (912) 264-7218. Adhesive rulers for measuring fish and adhesive stickers with saltwater fishing regulations are available upon request.



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## **Protected Species News (continued from page 8)**

breed primarily on Tristan da Cunha Island in the South Atlantic and wander the sea north to Greenland and Iceland, and back. Storms at sea can weaken the birds and cause them to become sick, dehydrated and die.

The public can assist the investigation by reporting sick, injured or dead birds on-line at [MyFWC.com/bird](http://MyFWC.com/bird). The public is asked not to handle birds and to contact a local wildlife rehabilitative facility for assistance with sick or injured birds. The on-line wild bird mortality database is a cooperative program between FWC and the Florida Department of Health to monitor bird health.



Photo courtesy of NOAA's Estuarine Research Reserve Collection

**Florida Postpones Adoption of Manatee Plan** -- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) postponed a decision to adopt a new management plan and two rules to reclassify manatees from endangered to threatened. Commissioners had planned to take final action on the proposals during their September 12 session, but Governor Charlie Crist, in a September 10 letter to FWC Chairman Rodney Barreto, asked for the postponement. Crist expressed concern that three FWC commissioners have just begun their terms and may need more time to evaluate manatee issues. New commissioners Dwight Stephenson, Ron Bergeron and Kenneth Wright said they would make every effort to be prepared to vote on the issue by the FWC's December meeting in Key Largo.