



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 8, 2012

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

Horseshoe Crab and Whelk Processors & Dealers Contribute \$10,000 to Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey

Arlington, VA – Members of the horseshoe crab and whelk industry from the Chesapeake Bay Packing, LLC and Bernie's Conchs, LLC, have collectively pledged \$10,000 to support the Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey for 2012. An additional \$500 was contributed by Parenteral Drug Association, a biomedical organization. This is the second year the commercial fishing industry has provided much needed funds to help support the Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. Last year, the survey was funded in total through the combined contributions of the commercial fishing and biomedical industries with a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

“On behalf of the Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board, I want to sincerely thank and commend Rick Robins for his advocacy and support of horseshoe crab scientific and management activities from his valuable input on the development of the ARM framework to his continuing fundraising on behalf of the Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey,” stated Board Chair David Simpson. “Hopefully, the seed money provided by Chesapeake Bay Packing, Bernie’s Conchs, and Parenteral Drug Association will encourage other interested groups to come forward to help support this important survey. An additional \$190,000 is needed to fully fund the survey in 2012.”

Rick Robins, who coordinated the commercial fishing industry’s support for the survey, stated, "The Commission deserves credit for putting the Delaware Bay regional horseshoe crab population on a solid path to recovery. The Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey provides scientific information to the Commission that is essential to the successful management of this ecologically and economically important fishery."

The survey, which has been administered by Virginia Tech since 2002, is the only survey designed to sample the horseshoe crab population in coastal waters. Its data are a critical component of the coastwide stock assessment and the new Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) framework, both of which were endorsed through an independent peer review in 2009. The ARM framework, which is to be implemented in 2013, includes modeling that links management of Delaware Bay horseshoe crab harvest to multispecies objectives, particularly red knot shorebird recovery. It was developed jointly by the Commission, U.S. Fish

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

1050 N. Highland St – Suite 200A-N – Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmfc.org

and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region.

Generally supported by congressionally-directed funds in the past, the survey would have been shut down last year without the generosity of the companies from the biomedical and fishing industries, who depend upon a healthy population of horseshoe crabs. To garner support for the 2012 survey, the Commission has reached out to various stakeholders groups that have an expressed interest in shorebird conservation and horseshoe crab management. Currently, donations have been received from the commercial horseshoe crab and whelk processors and dealers with a minor contribution from a biomedical association. Support is still being sought to fund the remainder of the 2012 survey, as well as the long-term continuance of the survey.

Horseshoe crabs play an important role on many levels – their blood is used to produce Limulus Amoebocyte Lysate, an important tool for detecting contaminated medical devices and drugs; their eggs are consumed by hundreds of thousands of migratory shorebirds as they complete their northward migration to the Arctic; and the crabs themselves are harvested by fishermen to be used as bait for whelk and eel fisheries. The Commission and the states manage horseshoe crabs through the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crabs (adopted in 1998) and subsequent addenda. The commercial bait fishery is controlled through state quotas, male-only harvest, and closed seasons.

###