

**ASMFC Shad and River Herring Technical Committee Meeting
Providence, RI - September 28th and 29th, 2011**

TC Members: Wilson Laney (USFWS), Larry Miller (USFWS), Ruth Haas-Castro (NMFS), Bill Post (SC), Mike Brown (ME), Don Harriosn (GA), Mike Stangl (DE), Brad Chase (MA), Jacque Benway (CT), Kathy Hattala (NY), Heather Corbett (NJ), Reid Hyle (FL), Harry Rickabaugh (MD), Phil Edwards (RI), Mike Hendricks (PA), Kathy Rawls (NC), Ellen Cosby (PRFC) and Eric Hilton (VIMS)

ASMFC Staff: Kate Taylor and Katie Drew

River Herring Sustainable Fishing Plan

New York

Request for fishery: In Hudson River only. Recreational – Season limited to March 15 to June 15; creel limit of 10 fish/day/angler and boat limit of 50 fish/day (includes recreational charter boats); angling only in tributaries; Commercial – increasing regulation by eliminating the use of the NY bait license to take herring and creating a single Hudson River permit to allow use of gill net, cast net, scap nets; all require monthly reporting. Spawning area gear and area restrictions.

Target: Less than 25th percentile for YOY alewife and blueback surveys for three consecutive years; The JAI is the most reliable survey, but will also watch the commercial CPUE and the annual mean total length

TC recommendation: The TC recommends Board consider approval of New York’s River Herring Sustainable Fishing Plan

Shad Sustainable Fishing/Recovery Plans

South Carolina

Request: Proposed regulations will close all fisheries except for the Pee Dee, Waccamaw (Winyah Bay to Big Bull Crek), Santee Cooper, Edisto, Combahee and Savannah River fisheries, which will be maintained at current levels or have gear/season limits imposed. (Fisheries currently operate in the following systems and will be closed: Waccamaw (Big Bull Creek to North Carolina border), Black, Sampit, Ashley, Charleston Harbor, Wando and Ashepoo Rivers.)

Target: 75% of the annual mean of CPUE for recent years, by system.

TC recommendations: The TC recommends the Board consider approval of the SC plan with the recommendations described below. (*Note: Report revised with all recommendations*)

1. Include what management action will be taken if target is hit.
2. Changing target timeframe from five to three years and use consecutive years instead of a running average. This will make it more consistent with other plans. There was concern over drought years, which was why used five years running average at first, but using consecutive years should alleviate this problem.
3. Need to state the actual number of years (instead of “recent years”) when defining the sustainability target.
4. Monitor effort to ensure there is not a shift once fisheries are closed.

Florida

Request: Maintain the status quo

Target: Fisheries Independent spawning stock survey index. If the index drops below the 25th percentile of the time series for three consecutive years then action should be taken to adjust the fishery by reducing bag limits or closure depending on the trajectory of other indices (fisheries independent JAI and fisheries dependant creel survey) that are still in development.

TC Recommendations: The TC recommends the Board consider approval of Florida plan with recommendations described below. (*Note: Report revised with all recommendations*)

1. Include a map
2. Include additional data on scale and otolith aging
3. Consider other changes besides creel limit adjustment
4. Include recommendations on what you would like to do in the future

Georgia

Request: Status Quo

Benchmark: Population < estimated 90,000 fish or if total exploitation rates > 30% on the Altamaha, for 3 consecutive years; hope to develop additional benchmarks from Ogeechee surveys; benchmark for Savannah developed with SC

TC Recommendations: The TC does not recommend the Board consider approval of the GA Plan until the items below are addressed and the TC can review the updated plan.

1. Provide more detail on tagging methods used to estimate population
 - a. TC recommends implementing a high reward tagging study (1 2007 Shad Stock Assessment recommendation)
2. Add hydrograph since plan reports catch is dependent on flow
3. Provide more information on how exploitation target was developed.
4. Look into using different time series.
 - a. Recommend using the 75th percentile on whatever is the most appropriate time frame. A description on why timeframe is chosen must be included. There was one option stated that the entire timeframe should be used and data should not be excluded.
5. TC supports addressing the issues brought up in the 2007 assessment
6. Include timeframe of when the plan will be revisited so as to be adaptive

Delaware River Cooperative Plan

Request: Status quo. New Jersey and Delaware commercial fisheries are limited entry; Delaware catch limited by striped bass quota.

Benchmark: Triggers are FI juvenile & adult abundance indices plus a combination FD/FI ratio (harvest to adult) abundance target

TC Recommendations: The TC does not recommend the Board consider approval of the DE Cooperative Plan until the items below are addressed and the TC can review the updated plan.

1. Include lower Delaware Bay versus River landings
2. Include tagging data and mixed stock composition
3. Management action – State specifically what management actions will occur or which ones will be considered. The TC felt if the plan needs accountability, with specific actions to be taken. TC suggested a list of management options with consequence if a trigger is reached. Or state if benchmark is triggered then mortality will be reduced by choosing:
 - a. Preferred options v. last straw
 - i. Recreational fishery – catch and release (instead of 3 fish/day)
 - ii. Commercial fishery – reduce harvest by setting limits, season, or closures
4. Develop a commercial fishery benchmark or control rule to prevent expansion of and to reduce exploitation (harvest) on out of basin stock and harvest of non-DE fish harvested in the commercial fishery in lower Delaware Bay.

Massachusetts

Request: Prohibit all harvest except for Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers, where bag limit will be reduced from 6 fish to 3 fish; catch and release will be allowed in other rivers.

Benchmark: Percentile Distribution Threshold - 25th percentile on Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers for three consecutive years. Mortality benchmarks (warning threshold used in conjunction with Percentile Distribution) – Z estimate – 1.0, z30 – 0.98 in Merrimack River

TC Recommendations: The TC does not recommend the Board consider approval of the MA Plan until the items below are addressed and the TC can review the updated plan.

1. The two plans need to be combined to create basin plans (MA/NH for the Merrimack River and MA/CT for the Connecticut River)
2. The plan needs to address fish passage efficiency, or at least acknowledge since there may not be sufficient answers.
3. There needs to be a better sense of the status of the stock right now. What is the stock status goal that MA would like to reach and how can the state get there?

PRFC

Request: Increase in the discard take from one bushel to two bushels to convert dead discards to harvest and eliminate waste.

Benchmark: If geometric mean CPUE of pound net landings falls below target (31.1 pounds per net-day) then the regulations would revert back to one bushel.

TC Recommendations: The TC does not recommend the Board consider approval of the PRFC Plan until the items below are addressed and the TC can review the updated plan.

1. Include additional data to produce more of a basin wide plan (data from MD, VA and hatchery takes)
2. Document broodstock numbers, and require reporting of biological data from partners
3. Add in a column to Table 1 showing the annual numbers

Additional Review

Due to time constraints the TC did not have a chance to review recovery plans submitted by Maryland, DC, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Hampshire. These plans, in addition to others submitted, will be reviewed by the TC in January 2012.

2012 Bycatch Proposals

Maine Bycatch Proposal

- Floating Ocean Trap net fishery, set spring through fall; Eight fishermen; fishery catches everything
- Proposed research on bycatch reduction devices in 2011 was limited due to funding problems; request to conduct research in 2012 only
- Request submitted as river herring will need to be retained as all catch are brought to shore for sorting and collecting data

TC Recommendations: TC recommends Board consider approval of proposal for 2012 and allow harvest of river herring. The final use of the fish (to sell or not to sell) is up to the state.

Virginia Bycatch Proposal

- Same request as previous years
- Will most likely be the last year requesting this limited bycatch fishery; the Commonwealth does not plan on submitting a sustainable fishery request in the future

TC Recommendations: TC recommends Board consider approval of the request

PRFC Bycatch Proposal

- Seeking a slight increase in the discard take from one bushel to two bushels to convert dead discards to harvest and eliminate waste based on recovering shad populations in Potomac River (the 2007 Shad Stock Assessment benchmark goal / restoration target was reached in 2011).
- If geometric mean CPUE of pound net landings falls below target then the regulations revert back

TC Recommendations: The TC does not feel comfortable recommending expansion on the bycatch allowance in 2012 after meeting the benchmark for only one year.