

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

ISFMP Policy Board

August 7, 2019
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Arlington, Virginia

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*J. Gilmore*) 8:30 a.m.
2. Board Consent (*J. Gilmore*) 8:30 a.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Proceedings from May 2019
3. Public Comment 8:35 a.m.
4. Update from Executive Committee and State Director's Meeting (*J. Gilmore*) 8:45 a.m.
5. Review 2019 Annual Performance of the Stocks (*T. Kerns*) 9:00 a.m.
6. Review and Consider Changes to Commission Guiding Documents (*T. Kerns*) 9:30 a.m.
 - ISFMP Charter **Final Action**
 - Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process **Final Action**
 - Working Group SOPPs **Possible Action**
7. Update on American Lobster Enforcement Vessel (*R. Beal*) 9:50 a.m.
8. Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Committee Report (*L. Havel*) 10:00 a.m.
9. Progress Update on the Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment (*J. Kipp*) 10:10 a.m.
10. Review Noncompliance Findings, If Necessary **Action** 10:15 a.m.
11. Other Business 10:20 a.m.
12. Adjourn 10:30 a.m.

The meeting will be held at the Westin Crystal City, 1800 S. Eads Street, Arlington, Virginia; 703.486.1111

MEETING OVERVIEW

ISFMP Policy Board Meeting
Wednesday August 7, 2019
8:30-10:30 a.m.
Arlington, Virginia

Chair: Jim Gilmore (NY) Assumed Chairmanship: 10/17	Vice Chair: Pat Keliher (ME)	Previous Board Meeting: May 2, 2019
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS (19 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from May 2, 2019

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Update from State Director’s Meeting and Executive Committee (8:45-9:00 a.m.)

Background

- The State Director’s will meet with NOAA Fisheries on August 5, 2019
- The Executive Committee will meet on August 6, 2019

Presentations

- J. Gilmore will provide an update of the two meetings

Board action for consideration at this meeting

- none

5. Review 2019 Annual Performance of the Stocks (9:00-9:30 a.m.)

Background

- As part of the ASMFC Strategic Planning process, the Commission agreed to conduct more frequent reviews of stock status and rebuilding progress.
- **The ASMFC’s 2019 Action Plan tasks the Policy Board with conducting a review of stock rebuilding performance.**

Presentations

- A presentation will be given on the stock rebuilding performance for species managed by the Commission by T. Kerns (**Briefing Materials**)

Board discussion at this meeting

- Determine if the rebuilding performance for each species is consistent with the Commission Vision and Goals.
- If the performance is not consistent with Vision and Goals, what action should be taken.

6. Review and Consider Changes to Commission Guiding Documents 9:30-9:50 a.m.) Final Action/Possible Action**Background**

- Two of the Commission Guiding Documents have been revised. The ISFMP Charter was revised to reflect the number of public hearings required for an FMP/Amendment in the ACFCMA. The Technical Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment document was revised to add ACCSP Committees and provide greater clarity to Commission processes.
- A Working Group SOPPs was created to give guidance to Boards forming work groups.

Presentations

- T. Kerns will provide an overview of the changes to the Charter and TC Guidance Documents and review the WG SOPPs (**Briefing Materials**)

Board action for consideration at this meeting

- **Approve Changes to the ISFMP Charter**
- **Approve Changes to the Technical Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment**
- **Approve the Working Group SOPPs**

7. Update on Lobster Enforcement Vessel (9:50-10:00 a.m.)**Background**

- The ASMFC LEC has been discussing way to improve enforcement capabilities of the offshore lobster fishery. A WG was formed to develop a plan for logistic support and staffing of an offshore enforcement vessel
- The Committee met via conference call to discuss next steps

Presentations

- R. Beal will present next steps for an offshore enforcement vessel.

Board action for consideration at this meeting

- **None**

8. Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Reports (10:00-10:10 a.m.)**Background**

- The ACFHP Steering Committee met on May 15 – 16, 2019
- FY2020 USFWS-NFHP funding RFP is currently open
- ACFHP recently endorsed projects in Brookhaven, NY and Atlantic County, NJ
- Black sea bass research project in Mid-Atlantic Bight was completed. Presentation provided to the black sea bass management board on Wednesday by Dr. Brad Stevens.

Presentations

- L. Havel will present an overview of the ACFHP activities

Board action for consideration at this meeting

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None |
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9. Progress Update on Benchmark Stock Assessments (10:10-10:15 a.m.)

Background

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next American shad benchmark stock assessment is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2020. |
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Presentations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeff Kipp will provide a progress report on the shad assessment. |
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Board action for consideration at this meeting

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None |
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10. Review Non-Compliance Findings, if Necessary Action

11. Other Business

12. Adjourn

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ISFMP POLICY BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
May 2, 2019**

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the ISFMP Policy Board
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to Order, Chairman James J Gilmore 1

Approval of Agenda 1

Approval of Proceedings from February 2019..... 1

Public Comment..... 1

Update from the Executive Committee 1

Update on the Risk Policy Work Group 4

Update on the MRIP Transition to New Surveys 5

Committee Reports..... 8

 Law Enforcement Committee..... 8

 Artificial Reefs Committee..... 12

Other Business 12

 Tasks for the Spiny Dogfish Board 13

 Letter to NOAA Fisheries from the American Lobster Board requesting a Control Rule for Area 1 16

 Letter to NOAA Fisheries from the Striped Bass Board Regarding the Block Island Transit Zone 17

 State Allocations..... 17

Adjournment..... 24

TABLE OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda by Consent** (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of February 2019** by Consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to direct the Spiny Dogfish Management Board to initiate an Addendum to allow unused quota allocated to the northern states collectively to be transferred in the second half of the fishing year to the states that have state-specific allocations. This action is intended to promote full utilization of the overall commercial quota.**

It is intended that these proposed transfers shall only be allowed if there is unanimous consent among the northern states regarding the timing and the amount. Also, the Board shall include quota overage forgiveness language similar to that in Addendum XX of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP where in the event the overall annual quota of black sea bass and scup (during the summer) among the states is not exceeded, then individual state overages are forgiven. (Page 13). Motion by Dan McKiernan; second by Justin Davis. Motion carried (Page 16).
4. **On behalf of the Atlantic Striped Bass Board, move to forward the Block Island Transit Zone letter to NOAA Fisheries** (Page 17). Motion carried (Page 17).
5. **Motion to Adjourn** by consent (Page 24).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Doug Grout, NH (AA)	John Clark, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Dan McKiernan, MA, proxy for D. Pierce (AA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Ray Kane, MA (GA)	Lynn Fegley, MD, proxy for D. Blazer (AA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Russell Dize, MD (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Phil Langley, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Justin Davis, CT (AA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)
William Hyatt, CT (GA)	Steve Murphey, NC (AA)
Jim Gilmore, NY (AA)	Robert Boyles, SC (AA)
Maureen Davidson, NY, Administrative proxy	Mel Bell, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Spud Woodward, GA (AA)
John McMurray, NY, proxy for Sen. Kaminsky (LA)	Doug Haymans, GA (GA)
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Erika Burgess, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	Marty Gary, PRFC
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Andrzejczak (LA)	Casey Brennan, NMFS
Andy Shiels, PA, proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)	

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Staff

Bob Beal	Caitlin Starks
Toni Kerns	Jessica Kuesel
Mark Robson	

Guests

Richard Cody, NOAA	Chip Lynch, NOAA
Catherine Krikstan, ECS, NOAA	Jack Travelstead, CCA
Arnold Leo, E. Hampton, NY	John Whiteside, SFA

The ISFMP Policy Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia; Thursday, May 2, 2019, and was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m. by Chairman James J Gilmore.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN JAMES J. GILMORE: Good morning everyone. Welcome to the ISFMP Policy Board, I'm Jim Gilmore; I'll be Chairing the meeting today. Thank you everybody for getting up early. The coffee is flowing, so please help yourself.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: We have several items on the agenda today, so we'll just get right into it. First off we have Approval of the Agenda. Are there any additions to the agenda? Dan McKiernan.

MR. DANIEL MCKIERNAN: Yes, under Other Business I would like to discuss the possibility of a Policy Board tasking the Spiny Dogfish Board between the next two meetings to develop a draft addendum to facilitate transfers of quota that would be essentially underages midyear, to the southern states collectively, because at this point there isn't an opportunity if there is an underage in the north to get that fish into the hands of the states that still have fisheries.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Dan, I'll add that. Are there any other additions, Ray Kane?

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: I would like to address state allocations under Other Business.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Ray, I'll add that to it. We also have two other items. We have to talk about a lobster letter, and also a striped bass letter probably, so I'm going to add those two. Are there any other additions to the agenda? Okay seeing none, we will adopt the agenda.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: The next item is the approval of the proceedings from the February, 2019 meeting.

That information was in your briefing documents. Are there any changes to the proceedings from the last meeting? Okay seeing none, we will adopt those by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Before every meeting we have public comments on items not on the agenda. Is there any public comment today?

UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay seeing none, we will move right into an Update from the Executive Committee, which is actually me. Our Executive Committee met yesterday morning at 7:30, so you know you guys slept in today.

We essentially went through several items, and I'll do a brief summary on those. First off the FY2020 budget was discussed. Pat Keliher, who is Chairman of the Administrative Oversight Committee, led that discussion, but Laura Leach had given us kind of a brief overview of the detailed document. There was generally a modest increase from the previous year, so everything pretty much stayed the same. There was some discussion about it, but very minimal, and the Executive Committee approved the budget for 2020 by unanimous consent. We can go into detail if anybody has any questions on it, and Toni has got more detail. Does anybody have any questions on the budget? Go ahead, Adam.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: Do you have any update on Plus-up funds and availability, and what the Executive Committee would intend to do with them for this year?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: We're getting to that Adam, a couple of items down. Are there any other questions on the budget? Okay, so in any event the budget has been adopted for 2020. The next item was an issue about some, particularly Pennsylvania, there are some dues issues that were discussed about Pennsylvania has a rather unique situation, and our Rep at the table has proudly paid his dues every year.

However, the other two Commissioners, they pay them independently and they're a little bit in arrears right now to the tune of several years, so we are going to write a letter to the Governor, instructing them that the longstanding since 1942 issue about paying dues to sit at the table needs to be addressed. We'll be sending a letter off on that and hopefully correcting that.

Next item was, Bob did go over the APAIS budget and a little bit more detail on that as to what was going on, and that was just sort of an update, so if anybody has any questions on that we can get into it. But, generally it was just an update on what we're doing for 2019 and 2020. Are there any questions on the APAIS budget?

Seeing none, now we've got to the allocation of the Atlantic Coastal Plus-up Funding. As you realize, and it's been discussed by Bob for the last few meetings is that we have additional funds, and we had talked about some different options on how we were going to use that money. It was delayed because of the federal shutdown, initially.

Then we finally got numbers, and Laura and Derek from NOAA Fisheries went over them and agreed with the numbers. There were some small projects that were approved, but it was decided that we were just going to add the additional funding and spread it among the states, based upon the distribution that's under the Commission charter.

That motion was put up and unanimously approved that any of the additional funding will

be distributed to the states according to the distribution. Are there any questions on that and Adam, does that answer your question, or do you have additional comments on that?

MR. NOWALSKY: Those small projects then, they're all funded. The rest of the money is going to the states, so that allocates what there was to allocate.

MS. TONI KERNS: Adam, I believe there is roughly a little over \$200,000.00 left from the Plus-up money from this year, and the states have not determined what projects to use those for. I believe when they were talking that because there is some uncertainty in the 2020 budget, due to that being a census year that that money will sit on the table, and if there are projects that come up that folks think we should work on, then we can use those funds. But those funds can last for another three years.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Is there any other question on the Plus-up funding? Okay seeing none we'll move along. The next item was, at the February meeting, because of some of the work groups and some of the issues that had come out of some of the working groups we had; we had tasked staff to come up with a standard operating set of procedures and policies for the management board working groups.

Toni had taken that task on, and developed a draft that we discussed yesterday. There were some changes that were discussed during the Executive Committee that were incorporated into the document, and then at the end the new Standard Operating Procedures and Policies were adopted by the EC by unanimous decision.

We'll be distributing that I guess soon. Essentially it's a good set of rules. It really does give some guidance as to some sideboards on how the work group should operate, and if there are some decisions that need to be made,

it gives a bunch of authority to the Board Chairs to make decisions. But Toni could add anything.

MS. KERNS: Once the Executive Committee finalizes the document, I will review those policies and procedures with the Policy Board at the August Board meeting.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay any questions on that? Seeing none, we will move next to the future annual meetings. For 2019 for all of you who have not been paying attention, the next meeting will be in New Hampshire, October 28th through the 31st. I don't know if Doug or Dennis wants to say anything about that. But they're planning a wonderful good time, better than New York, if you can believe that. Do you guys have anything to add on that?

DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I'll just say it's going to be a beautiful time of year in the fall. There is fishing opportunities, but the Laura Leach tournament will probably be indoors, just in case. We're planning a lobster bake. The dress will be casual, not business casual, casual. Come prepared to have a delicious meal, and please take advantage of our beautiful nearby town, the city of Portsmouth. You'll really enjoy it.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: I understand there was a move to have host Commissioner's wives were not allowed to participate, after my wife won in the New York one. But, I don't know if that's true or not, but anyway. Then Laura went in too, so in 2020 it will be in New Jersey. I don't think they've picked a venue yet.

But, we were talking about that at dinner last night, so we've got a bunch of suggestions for you folks if you're running out of ideas. In 2021 we'll be back to North Carolina, and then 2022 we'll be back at Maryland, so we will be planning those. In 2021, I will be my full cycle. I will have done 15 annual meetings, so back to Annapolis, or hopefully in Annapolis to start over again. Yes, Dennis.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Yes, back to the New Hampshire meeting. If you Google Wentworth by the Sea, Newcastle, New Hampshire, that is where we'll be. It's a grand hotel from the old days, which has been refurbished by Marriott. It's right on the, not call it in a harbor, back channel. A very nice location, a very nice hotel, and I am sure your spouses will sure enjoy being there. They did 15 years ago.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Yes, Ray.

MR. KANE: A question to the New Hampshire contingency. Are you going to make sure that the hotel keeps the heat on, because I can remember Doctor Duval having to wear wool gloves at the round table at the Maine annual meeting?

MR. ABBOTT: It's not our problem that the folks from the southern states have such thin blood.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: That was actually Maine, Ray. It's much warmer in New Hampshire than it is in Maine. The next item we actually got a discussion which was an add-on, on the annual report. I forgot my prop, but Tina has done an outstanding job. That annual report is just gorgeous this year, and not because New York City is on the cover, it just is a beautiful report that was done.

However, there was a discussion about it is pretty long, and there was a combination of the time to prepare it, and how many pages it is, the length of it. Was it useful to the Commissioners, in terms of their business, and would it be better to keep producing that report as it is, would it be a paper copy and printing it?

Would it be better to, or use just the electronic version? It is on the website, completely available on that. We had quite a bit of discussion about this, and I don't think we got to any conclusion other than there was a bunch of folks that were yes, they use that report.

They bring it when they're meeting with legislators, or different fishing groups or whatever that are interested in seeing the report.

Others prefer the electronic version. What we have concluded at the end of, I think a healthy discussion that was pretty much split down the middle. Some folks really would like the report to stay as it is, others would like an electronic version. Then Jay McNamee came up with a suggestion that maybe there was a hybrid version of this is that maybe we could have a scaled down version of it, and so we would have a paper copy to bring, but maybe not as lengthy.

Then also have an electronic version of that. What staff is going to do is work up maybe a mock up that we can look at and review for maybe the upcoming meeting or whatever, and see. Then we'll discuss it again, and see where everybody wants to go on it. Keep your eyes out for that and again, we'll see what everybody's opinion is. I've been going more electronic these days, because my experience has been as I bring that a legislator will flip through it and throw it on the table, and never look at it again.

But evidently there are other states that have representatives that actually use that document quite extensively. We'll have further discussion on that. But at this point are there any questions or comments on that? Okay, stay tuned on the annual report and what we do with that. The last official item we had on was the Executive Director's Review. We sent Bob out of the room for three or four hours, it was a rather good discussion. I'll be happy to note that it was completely unanimous and a lot of accolades about the job that Bob is doing. We all believe he's doing a terrific job, and we want to keep him on. There was actually a long list of accomplishments he's done for the last year, which is including, and the one I think we should highlight again, remember that some of the additional money Bob stuck to and did a lot

of work on that and kept our 12 percent increase.

Anyway, Bob has passed his performance evaluation with flying colors, as voted by the Executive Committee. Keep up the good work, Bob! That is the Executive Committee, and that's everything, any other questions on the Executive Committee from yesterday?

UPDATE ON THE RISK POLICY WORK GROUP

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, next item on the agenda is an Update on the Risk Policy Work Group, and Jay McNamee is going to lead us on that. Jay.

MR. JASON McNAMEE: I'll be really brief. We just wanted to remind people that we were out there still. Last time we chatted, we had developed a couple of things to kind of support the Risk and Uncertainty Policy. Sara Murray and I have been continuing to develop that specifically with an eye towards developing guidance for the technical folks that will take a look at this.

The current plan is to bring that now developed guidance to the Striped Bass Technical Committee. We'll introduce it to them on an upcoming call. They are going to be busy. We don't think this is going to take up a lot of their time, but it is really important that we get this in front of them, so that they can review it, because this is exactly the type of process that it's meant for, and that's what we all agreed to as a Board.

Then the other group that we will be bringing this to is the SAS Committee, and we'll get on a call with them as well. We've got a couple more groups we're going to get this in front of, and work through, and then once we get that pilot run done, we will bring it back before this Board, and that's it.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Are there any questions for Jay? John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Jay, the Technical Committee report for the striped bass. I noticed they had in there the 50 percent chance of reaching F in one year. Is this sort of what you're talking about doing?

MR. McNAMEE: Yes, thanks John, exactly. This would better inform the process of arriving to that probability. As it happened, I thought the other day was a perfect example of why this is needed. I just kind of lobbed that out on the table, just to give them some guidance, because they had none otherwise. This process is meant to get them through a series of questions that arrived at the appropriate probability based on all of the parameters in the decision process.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Go ahead, John.

MR. CLARK: It is follow up. I hope when we get this ready to take out to the public that it's explained very clearly what it actually means, when you say 50 percent probability of getting F back down to the target.

MR. McNAMEE: Yes, good point. I think it is a difficult concept. I brought that up at the meeting too. People often, oh it's a coin toss. That's not right. It drives me crazy. Hopefully this will help both explain that better and also let people know in a very clear way how we get to these decisions.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other questions for Jay. Okay seeing none, keep up the good work, Jay, and we'll look forward to the new progress.

UPDATE ON THE MRIP TRANSITION TO NEW SURVEYS

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Next we have an update from the MRIP transition to new surveys. Dave Van Voorhees was originally on the schedule, but Rich Cody is going to give the presentation for that so would Rich, come on up.

MR. RICHARD CODY: I'll just introduce myself. I'm Richard Cody with the Marine Recreational

Information Program. I just wanted to give you some updates, short updates on some ongoing activities with MRIP, but also basically to ask for your help in that we're trying to better establish a communications at all levels between states and MRIP, and between all the stakeholders.

If you have any concerns, I'm planning to make myself available at the ASMFC meetings regularly, so if there are any concerns I'll be here to help address those. I want to just make a point that we welcome any kind of questioning or concerns that you may have, and try to address them as best I can.

The other item that I wanted to mention is related to that and that we have been invited to participate in a South Atlantic Council Workshop on looking at potential differences in the FES based estimates relative to the older CHTS estimates. The workshop is hopefully planned for some time in August, and we'll keep you updated on the developments there.

But we're seeing it as an opportunity for us to address some of the concerns that were out there that we don't necessarily hear on a regular basis. Hopefully, by trying to establish this relationship here, we can do a better job of addressing them more proactively. That's basically what I wanted to mention, Jim.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Thanks, Richard. Are there any questions for Richard? Tom Fote.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: Richard, with the shutdown there was a lot of problems, because we rushed things through, and it wasn't a lot of communication going on during the shutdown. I found it very upsetting to find out at the joint meeting what was going on and all of a sudden this huge increase in the quota.

It didn't give us time, and I think it was a missed opportunity, how we could have figured out to do something on the quota. I think I'm going to later on in the meeting ask for a working group. If it happens in black sea bass, let's get out in

front of it, so we decide what we're going to do with that increase.

But also, nobody looked at the impact. I mean I got a strange call from a commercial fisherman that was a former Council member saying, Tom, will you take half of our quota on the recreational side, and I said you've got to be kidding me? We can't do it, but why? He said, because we're going to flood the markets, and basically because you're giving that quota all in the last half of the year. Now it's a combination, I know it's not all yours, but it's a combination of things, so it needs better coordination. I'll leave it at that. Because they're worried that it will not only hurt this year, but hurt future years on that. We need to know ahead of time, and we need to work through that.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Toni has got a comment on that, Tom.

MS. KERNS: Hey Tom, I actually don't think that is, the quota difference is how the numbers went into the assessment. We all knew that these assessments would be having higher numbers. Then the results of the assessment were that we had a much higher stock number, and then thus got higher quotas.

Something that the Council and the Commission Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board will have to look at is do the states want to look at the quotas, the allocations between the commercial and the recreational sector? Do we want to make any shifts to those numbers, because that's how the commercial quota ended up getting a lot more fish, because we haven't looked at that allocation yet?

MR. FOTE: I think Toni, you misunderstood what I said. I'm not saying about the allocation. What I'm saying is between the commercial communities, how do we deal with that huge increase at one shot, because it affects their markets? That's what I'm saying, how do we do that? Plus, we could have done some of that

where we're trying to smooth out states, do something like that. That's why I'm saying we need to get out in front of this, in case it happens with one of the other species that we come back with a huge quota.

MR. CODY: Tom, I agree with you that probably the commercial sector should have been a little bit more engaged in the process all along. I mean that said though, I think that we have made some steps towards improving that level of communication.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Lynn Fegley.

MS. LYNN FEGLEY: To that point, all I wanted to say was thank you for making yourself available. We do field some pretty tough questions, and some of them are good from our stakeholders, so really appreciate your presence and willing to help us answer some questions, so thank you for that.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other questions? Erika.

MS. ERIKA BURGESS: Hi Richard, Erika Burgess with Florida FWC. The state of Florida, as I know you're aware, is extremely disturbed by the results of the new FES survey estimates, not the survey itself, but the estimates that are actually produced. Let me give you an example. FES generated an estimate of an average of 4,000 trips per day for each of Florida's 35 coastal counties, which is an average of 65 trips per day for each mile of tidal shoreline in Florida, and that is unrealistic. What is MRIP going to do to address and identify the biases in the FES estimates?

MR. CODY: Well to that affect, we are meeting with FWC this coming week, actually May 22, Beverly Sauls and Luiz Barbieri are coming up to Silver Springs to plan a workshop, to look at differences between the FES and the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, and other Gulf surveys, and to evaluate those concerns that the state has said to us.

MS. BURGESS: To that point, the Gulf Reef Fish Survey estimates refer to offshore fishing effort for reef fish, and I specifically brought up the shoreline estimates that are state wide.

MR. CODY: The question is, or you had a question?

MS. BURGESS: What are the plans to address the shoreline estimates? Do you plan to move beyond the Gulf Reef Fish Survey estimates, and address larger biases?

MR. CODY: The main concern with the FES right now is the discrepancy between the CHTS and the FES. We all know the CHTS was wrong. It was biased and it was biased low. I don't want to get into a back and forth here, but I think we will present information in the SSC workshop in August that will show that the FES is a better fit overall for estimating effort, than the CHTS was.

I would caution against surveys, or states that want to align their survey estimates with the previous estimates, because we know they were low. We know they were biased; they weren't representative of the general population. We have specific information that we'll present in that workshop, and also at the FWC workshop.

The plan is to plan the workshop on May 22 with Beverly and Luiz, probably in the St. Pete FWRI Lab, and involve the necessary folks. We're hoping that we can get some engagement from Division of Marine Fisheries Management, as well as the FWRI crew, the research end of things.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other questions? Justin. I have to say everybody's last name. They actually said say your last names, I said Davis.

DR. JUSTIN DAVIS: I'm wondering, would it be helpful ahead of this August workshop for states, if they have certain estimates that have come out of the new MRIP model with the FES survey that seem aberrant, that seem to not

make sense. Would it be helpful to forward those to the program as examples to potentially look at when you're trying to reconcile, perhaps differences between FES and CHTS?

I'll echo some of the comments that were made from Florida that we've seen some estimates from our shore modes that just seem astronomical, and don't seem to make sense. Now I understand the overarching that the survey FES may very well be a much better survey than CHTS, but that there may be certain instances for certain fisheries, and perhaps there is patterns across states that might emerge if states send in examples of certain fisheries that seem to be producing unusual estimates. Would that be helpful to send in that sort of thing ahead of August?

MR. CODY: It probably would. There are a suite of species that the South Atlantic Council wants to look at in their workshop, and they've listed three or four that they would specifically like to look at, and they might be good examples for other states as well, because I think what you were referring to is the calibrations that are being used, and how they may have impacted the previous trends, so you know resulting in spikes or troughs in the data.

Those are the things. I mean I would be happy to look at other species, but I think that for the workshop we would like to keep it to a limited few, so we can get through them and give them a good thorough deep dive, so to speak.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Go ahead, Justin.

DR. DAVIS: Just to clarify, I'm talking about some estimates that have come out of recent years, the new years, not necessarily the back calibrations of the old surveys. But from what I'm hearing you say is that it might be helpful to forward that information. It might not get addressed in the August workshop, but that it might generally be helpful for the program to forward that?

MR. CODY: It certainly would be helpful.

DR. DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Any other questions for Richard? Seeing none, thanks Richard for being here and giving us an update. I think it's going to be a definite benefit having better communication on this. Just so you know, Richard actually has come to; he recently did a meeting in New York at our Council meeting.

It was great having him there, because the fishermen were more angry at him than me, and he's got a very thick skin. He thought that was an easy meeting, so I thought that was very good. Thanks a lot.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, next we're going to get into committee reports. The first one up is the Law Enforcement Committee. Law Enforcement met this week for two days, and Mark Robson is going to give us an update on that. Mark.

MR. MARK ROBSON: As Jim indicated, we met Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, and had a very productive meeting. I would also like to thank several members of the Commission who attended the meeting, and helped participate in some of the discussion. We provided some initial input.

Mike Schmidtke from staff came in and briefed the Law Enforcement Committee on some of the preliminary options that are being considered for management of the cobia fishery in federal waters. We took a look at some of those. I don't want to go into great detail, because some of that information will be presented to the South Atlantic Board today.

But of course, as usual, the Law Enforcement Committee is certainly always striving for some level of consistency. To the extent that that can

happen between state and federal waters, and between state boundaries adjacent to federal waters that's going to be very important. But there were some concerns expressed about some of the options, in terms of their complexity.

We recognize there is a lot of moving parts to this, in terms of either having coastwide regulations in federal waters or not. But we'll allow that process to go forward. These are just initial comments that we're going to be making on the cobia draft amendment. We also had some discussions, again with some of the Commissioners who came in, and helped in that review of the ongoing efforts to work with improving enforcement in the offshore American lobster fishery.

As you've probably heard, we have a group who is working on a way to purchase and operate a large offshore enforcement vessel, particularly for extending out beyond 12 miles, in some of these deeper waters. We also related to that had some review of the discussions going on with another work group, to develop an offshore tracking system for these vessels that are operating far from shore, and also tracking systems that might be useful in determining when traps are actually being hauled, when hydraulic gear is actually being activated.

We reiterated the importance of having that kind of a tracking system available to better target the use of this eventual offshore vessel to make it more effectively operating, and going where the fishermen are working, and being able to maximize the efficiency of that equipment. There are a lot of details that will continue to be worked out.

The state of Maine is taking kind of a lead role in looking at operating that vessel, but it would also be a shared platform, perhaps with other states. Of course there were questions from the Law Enforcement Committee about funding, and getting the money for the vessel,

not only to purchase it, but also for its continued maintenance and operation.

It's important to the Law Enforcement Committee members that that money doesn't somehow get taken away from existing joint enforcement agreement funds, or other funds that are needed to do the operations that they're doing now. We also had some pretty good discussions about some enforcement tools and technology.

Pat Moran from Massachusetts, our Committee member from Massachusetts, their state has been working closely with an organization called PAARI which is the Police Assisted; get this right, the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative. This is an organization or an agency that is set up to assist law enforcement agencies around the country in dealing with response to opioid overdoses, and problems that are encountered by officers in those situations.

Just like everywhere else in our society, this is something that we think is obviously, potentially a problem in the fishing industry in certain areas, just as it is in the community at large. Several of the states have indicated that in terms of enforcement, they are already carrying some of the antidote equipment with kits, to deal with opioid or fentanyl, and some of the other kinds of drugs, overdoses when they're encountered.

This potentially is a lifesaving action. But in addition to that PAARI, this organization is focusing also on outreach and education and follow up, sort of a community policing approach. This is something that I think is very helpful for our Natural Resource Officers to engage with the community at large, and to work with them, not just to react to an overdose situation, but to actually help in dealing with this problem, which is a serious one obviously throughout the country. We also discussed a little bit about the development of continuing use of drones in enforcement work,

and particularly in natural resources. It's interesting, a number of the states, now we talked about this a little bit last year, and it sounded like there are two or three more states now that have acquired drones, and have got officers trained up to be pilots of those drones.

It's still at an early stage of technology use in law enforcement, where it's definitely being used as a tool in search and rescue, general surveillance, security, making sure that an area is secure, if groundwork is being done. But most of the states are still not using it directly as an enforcement tool to make cases, or to detect violations, or to use that surveillance information in making a case.

It's working its way in that direction. There are obviously concerns and issues from a privacy standpoint, and an admissibility of evidence issue. But it is something I think you're going to see more of our resource agencies using in the future for enforcement work. We also had a request through George Lapointe from the NOAA Southeastern Region Office down in St. Petersburg, to get some input from the Law Enforcement Committee regarding the development of electronic reporting systems, and implementation of those systems for the for-hire sector.

These are things that are being implemented, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico and up the east coast. The NOAA Southeast Region was very interested in getting some input from this Law Enforcement Committee, the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee. We heard that report from George; it was a very good one.

We're going to continue to follow up with him, and try to address some of the questions that he has for law enforcement, as far as how such a system would work, and whether there are any pitfalls or problems that we need to address from an enforcement perspective. Also, I think there were some comments made at a Commission meeting regarding, are there

ways that we can take a look at measuring the effectiveness of our enforcement activities.

This is a very good question that is something that our Law Enforcement Committee generally wrestles with all the time, I think. We started an initial discussion at our meeting this week to think about ways that we can take a look at, or measure, or evaluate the effectiveness of our enforcement. We'll be continuing to develop those kinds of ideas. But it was interesting to me, because in the discussions it came out that one of the key areas is in terms of how do we determine how effective we are being?

We have issues with basic staffing and equipment levels. If there are some standards that could be applied that would indicate how much staffing you need, how much equipment you need, to adequately address enforcement needs in our marine areas based on population size or coastal area, or criteria like that.

But these are standards that might be good to try to work up. I think as a Committee we're going to put our heads together and try to take a look at some of those evaluation techniques, for how we determine how to best be effective as an enforcement agency. Then finally, at the last meeting in October, we received a presentation from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, looking for some input from our Committee on a For-Hire Enforcement Workshop that was being planned for November. We provided that input, and then we also followed up with some materials provided to Andy Loftus from the Mid-Atlantic Council, and Doug Mesick from our Committee, Delaware representative from our Committee attended the workshop.

We kind of did a circle back around on that to let the members of the LEC know how that workshop went. We kind of reiterated some of the basic concerns with the questions that were being asked, about the responsibility of for-hire captains for any activities or violations that occur on their vessels.

Of course, the Law Enforcement Committee members did feel pretty strongly that the captains do need to be held accountable, that they are accountable for potential violations. This particularly is important when you start thinking about comingling of catch, sharing of fish and other issues where it may be difficult otherwise to find a violator on that vessel, if you're making a dockside or a boarding check.

But it becomes even more important to hold those captains accountable for the activities on their vessels. I think we've had a request for more input on enforcement issues from the Mid-Atlantic Council. We will pursue that and work through Toni and you as a Policy Board, in developing any further recommendations on those issues, and Mr. Chairman that's my report.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Toni's got an addition to that. Toni.

MS. KERNS: What Mark was alluding to at the end there was a specific request from the Council regarding tilefish, and making a recommendation to have consistent regulations between federal and state waters. We're going to circle back with the Council to get a better understanding of what they're actually looking for us to do, since the Commission does not manage tilefish. We're just trying to have a better understanding of what they're looking for from us, and the Law Enforcement Committee.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, questions for Mark. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Thank you for the report, Mark. Hey, on the effectiveness of enforcement. I was just wondering if the topic of actual prosecution for violations came up. I know one of the frustrations that our officers have is that they'll write up a bunch of violations, and a lot of times the Attorney General's Office will plea it down to practically nothing.

I know it's also a frustration for the vast majority of our commercial fishermen that are playing by the rules, that we have developed a small group of guys that feel it's more profitable to break the rules than follow the rules. I'm just curious as whether it's a problem in other states also.

MR. ROBSON: Yes that's a good question, and it did come up. Those are sort of the basic metrics that we initially were thinking about. A year or two ago this came up, and there was some concern or problems expressed that it was hard to get that information as to the actual disposition of cases, because in some cases they are handled through county courts, and so you have a lot of judicial jurisdictions that you have to work through to get that data. But apparently more of that information is now readily available to the enforcement officers, or the administrators. It is something that I think we would look at to get a better handle on how well cases are working through the system, and whether actual convictions and penalties are being applied adequately, because that certainly has a lot to do with their effectiveness.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Mel Bell.

MR. MEL BELL: Hi Mark. I know you guys talked about cobia the first day, and I didn't get to hear that. As we move forward with Amendment 1, obviously with cobia there are going to be a lot of different boundaries and things, where perhaps you have dissimilar regulations on either side of a boundary.

Did you all discuss, or have kind of a preference for what would work most effectively for enforcement in that situation? In other words, would it be preferred or better if in the waters in which you intercept the fishermen while they're fishing, if everything was consistent there, or if it's easier to deal with it from a standpoint of back in the waters in which they're landed, or at the dock or that type of thing? Was there a preference? Did you all discuss that some?

MR. ROBSON: We did, Mel. Basically, Mike presented us with three different options that are being looked at in the Amendment, and frankly the Committee had some issues with pretty much all three of the options as being somewhat problematic to actually enforce out there on the water, or to have situations where you might have an area closure in federal waters on one side, but not on the other, depending on which state regulations are being applied.

I think in general, first of all there was an Option C, I believe, and Mike can get into this in more detail. It was going to provide for the regulations for the state to apply, depending on where you're landing. But with the additional complication of special areas, special area regulations and how those would fit in, and that seemed very complicated, and I don't think the LEC was too much in favor of that one.

I think the issue of having the state regulations apply to where the fish are landed made the most sense, as far as the available options. But the Law Enforcement Committee suggested that that be tied specifically to the state where they're permitted as well. You nail it down a little bit better, and that furthermore if it's somebody who has multiple permits from different jurisdictions that the regulations would apply that are the strictest. That is kind of where they left that issue.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other questions, Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: Thank you, Mark. At the Coastal Shark Board meeting the other day, the issue came up of potential circle hook compliance for fishing for Mako sharks, and other regulated species of sharks. It was noted that as the Commission wrestles with this particular concept, Law Enforcement personnel input would be highly valued and appreciated. I'm just kind of giving you a heads up that that is on our radar, probably between now and the annual meeting we'll be looking for Law

Enforcement's input to help us wrestle with this concept of mandatory use of circle hooks for shark fishing.

ARTIFICIAL REEFS COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Are there any other questions for Mark? Okay thanks, Mark, great report. Next up we have another Committee report, Artificial Reefs, my favorite topic in New York these days, so Lisa Havel is going to give us an update from the Committee. Lisa.

MS. LISA HAVEL: As usual I'll be very brief. I only have a couple slides. Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership and Habitat Committee are meeting in three weeks, so I'll have an update at the summer meeting on those two committees. The Artificial Reef Committee met February 26 and 27 in Savannah, with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Artificial Reef Committee.

There were discussions on the artificial reef materials guidelines update, which should be coming out soon. The deadline to submit all of the updates, was April 1, so hopefully that is getting released soon. We had a discussion on the impacts by Hurricane Michael to artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico, off of Florida.

We discussed monitoring protocols across the states, and how to better integrate artificial reefs into the Commission process. I welcome any feedback from all of you on that. We had guest presentations from Geoff White on the APAIS Artificial Reef Survey Question, and a presentation on ocean brick system in the Red Sea.

Everyone presented state updates, and then our next meeting will be held in 2020 by the Gulf States. We had a couple of committee changes. After the meeting Jordon Byrum replaced Jason Peters as the North Carolina representative, and the new Chair. Paul Medders replaced January Murray as the Georgia representative; Patrick Barrett replaced

Eric Schneider as the Rhode Island representative.

Jeff Renchen replaced Christine Kittle as the Florida representative, David Molnar is representing Connecticut now on the Committee, and Chris LaPorta is the new Vice Chair, and he is from New York. As always, we welcome any suggestions for action items that you would like the Committee to work on, and with that I'll take any questions.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Any questions, John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Just curious about the materials update you were doing. Is this related to just overall, the durability of some of the materials that have been used in the past, or is this more based on contaminant guidelines?

MS. HAVEL: It covers all different reefing materials. What's been done in the past, what we're no longer doing, anything from train cars to descriptions on tires, to the different types of reef modules that we're putting out there, how to reef ships, all of that is going to be covered and updated.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Yes, John. Actually that is a good question, because with the resurgence of the New York program, I have been getting some interesting requests on materials, anything from voting machines, all the way up to entire buildings. That is going to be very helpful as we move forward. Are there any other questions for Lisa?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Lisa, thanks very much for that.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: We're up to Item 8, which is a Review of Noncompliance Findings, which we don't have any here, so we can jump right past that one. We're into Other Business, so let's take these in order. We'll start with the

issue on spiny dogfish. Dan, do you want to start that discussion?

TASKS FOR THE SPINY DOGFISH BOARD

MR. McKIERNAN: As you know, the Spiny Dogfish Plan is a little complicated, a little unique, in that the northern part of the range, the northern states have a quota that is shared, and they have a seasonal fishery, which typically ends by Thanksgiving, or around Christmas. Then all the states to the Mid-Atlantic and South have state-by-state quotas.

With the reduction in the quota that's occurring this year or next year, much lower than what has been historically. **It has been brought to our attention, among some of the processors that they fear that if there is an underage in the first part of the year that that fish cannot be transferred, as the second half of the year's fish can be. The southern states are allowed, under the plan, to move fish between them to cover overages, and unexpected occurrences.**

I'm suggesting, and I'll say it right up front, I don't think this is a complicated proposal, and the Division of Marine Fisheries will pledge to carry a lot of the work burden on developing this document, because I know it's not in the ASMFCs work plan. **But I propose that we develop an addendum to be reviewed at the next meeting, at the August meeting, to allow such transfers, and I have a motion if staff could put it up.**

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Let's see if we've got a second to that first. All right, second by Justin Davis.

MR. McKIERNAN: A little bit more detail.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Go ahead, Dan. Why don't you speak to your motion?

MR. McKIERNAN: My vision here is that around Thanksgiving, is it four or five states? I can't recall what the northern group is, I think it's

four states, would get together and decide either to, if not send all the fish, a majority of the unused fish, maybe 75, 80, 90 percent that they don't feel is going to be coming in, in the last four or five months of the year, to the overall quota of the south, and all those other states could get them in equal shares, equal shares meaning consistent with the shares that they have now proportional.

Then the second part you can see here after the word also. **I'm suggesting that we adopt for spiny dogfish, a very favored approach that we like in the black sea bass and scup plans, where if an individual state has a minor overage, and the overall quota is not exceeded, then no harm, no foul, and that state doesn't have to pay back the overage.** I think it works well, it's consistent with the overall conservation rules, and it minimizes the administrative burden of people having to move fish around.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: I'm going to have a new rule, no Pierce-sized motions before 9:00 a.m., but anyway, Toni, do you have some comments on it?

MS. KERNS: I just want to give the Board some information, and just as Dan said, spiny dogfish is a low priority in the action plan this year. As you recall we worked on the action plan a little bit differently, and you all set high priority and low priority species. The only thing that is in the action plan would be to respond to changes in the data update for spiny dogfish for this year.

But because it's only a data update, I do not anticipate the quotas changing much, unless there is some dramatic change that we see in the data information. There is no money in the budget for spiny dogfish this year. You will see here the southern states total catch this year was roughly 8.3 million pounds, and if Jess slides over, obviously they had a higher quota this year at 16 million pounds.

Next year's quota they'll be at 8.6 million pounds. If the southern states were to catch equal amount this year, next year they'll still be under their quota. There would have to be a pledge for transferring of fish amongst those southern states, but they would be able to take care of it without that transfer from the northern states.

Then next year after that the quota does go up in total by 7 million pounds. The southern states will have roughly 3 million more pounds, so that quota would be increasing. I'm not sure if this is a resolution to a short term problem, or if it does need to be a long term fix or not. There are some other issues that we are trying to work through with the Mid-Atlantic Council and the New England Council, in terms of the trip limit.

The Spiny Dogfish Board has requested, as well as members of the Mid-Atlantic Council, to lift the federal trip limit to allow states and regions to set trip limits, in order to utilize their full quota, and so if that ever does change, which we're hoping that we can move forward action on that as early as next year, through the Council process.

Then I don't know how that would impact these types of transfers, et cetera, or if there would need to be any additional changes to the Commission's management plan, which would require action at that time. Just putting this out there, certainly if the Board prioritizes to make changes, then we would need to adjust the budget accordingly, to pay for public hearings, which I assume the states would want to have, to do this change. That would be up to this Board.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Dan.

MR. McKIERNAN: I would counter that this is such a simple proposal that I don't expect a need for a road show and public hearings. The total addenda may be two pages in length. I

would urge this Board to approve this going forward.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Dan, Rob O'Reilly.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: I support what Dan is indicating, and the concern I think is, and Toni will have the information, but I think it was 2016-17 season the landings were closer to 26 million. There is concern that with the just over 20 million pound quota that the market will stop early. You know that type of approach doesn't bode well for the following season even. I know that the quotas were much higher. I think they were approaching 50 million pounds, maybe five years ago. There is a data issue definitely. You know without going into a lot of that I think that's still being worked on, as far as strictly taking the average of three years of the spring trawl survey, when there is imperfect coverage of all the stations that need to be covered, and using that and making that decision.

That decision stands right now. I hope there is more work on that. One of the things that were talked about is the situation of a mismatch between the survey and the abundance of spiny dogfish, so we can look forward to that too. But I think the main problem is you are allowed to carry over 5 percent, and that's not a whole lot. Virginia this year was fortunate to receive a transfer from North Carolina, but can't guarantee that those transfers that Toni is talking about among the southern states will be available this coming season, which started yesterday.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other discussion on the motion, I've got Jay McNamee. Actually, Jess, can you put the motion back up? Go ahead, Jay.

MR. McNAMEE: Rhode Island can support this as well, however maybe I'll start here. I talked with Toni. One of the things that we're interested in, is readdressing possession limits in Rhode Island. It's my understanding, based

on my discussion with Toni that that can happen external to an addendum. I just wanted to get it on the record that we're okay with this, but we have some other items that we would like to discuss with regard to spiny dogfish, namely possession limits.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Jay, thanks, Eric.

MR. ERIC REID: I certainly support anything that would max out the fishery. It is a relatively market driven situation. Certainly addressing Mr. McNamee's comments are correct. You need to be able to take advantage of economies of scale, to keep the cost down, in order to just make it work period.

But as far as this motion goes, it's also critical for the U.S. as a whole, the fishermen, the dealers, the processor and everybody, to maintain a constant supply of raw material into the market, so we can maintain our market share on an international basis. If this motion helps us do that I think in the long run, for the success of the fishery. I think that's a very good outcome.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other discussion. Steve Murphy.

MR. STEVE MURPHY: I would support this motion. As Rob indicated, North Carolina was able to transfer a little quota. We don't anticipate necessarily being able to do that with the reduced overall quota. But this processing of these fish is fairly specialized, and as indicated, you kind of have to have supply in order for this to work. We would support this.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other comments? I'll go to the audience in a second, but anybody else at the table want to have a comment or a question? Well, I have one comment and Dan, I understand. You know we can try to simplify this. You know the workload issue is probably from the Chair seat, is the concern for staff. I think it can be maybe quick, but we know how these things go sometimes, and maybe the

question for Toni. Are there other alternatives for addressing this that doesn't get us into an addendum right away? I'm just thinking off the top of my head. I mean if it did come. We're going to do an addendum for essentially the one year. Then it's going to kind of get fixed again, and then is there maybe if we are going to hit the problem this year, a fast track later in the year, or something along those lines. But I'll turn it over to Toni, and see if there are other options for this. Go ahead, Dan.

MR. MCKIERNAN: Could we ask the states if this were to go forward if they would want a public hearing, so that Toni can be comfortable about workload, because Massachusetts will not be requesting a public hearing, we'll take the public comment.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: All right, well that's a good question. Go ahead, Doug.

MR. GROUT: Well, I would request the public hearing for it, yes. You know I'm certainly willing to move forward with this, to consider this concept, if Mass DMF is doing the lion share of the administrative workload. I ask that we have some landings data in there, showing it by month to see how late in the year spiny dogfish landings are occurring up in the north.

Because I believe our landings have been going later and later in the year. I may be incorrect, and obviously I can check that myself, but I would ask that that be in it. But I'm certainly willing to consider this, because I certainly believe in trying to be able to achieve optimal yield here.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Before I go to Rob, just a show of hands. How many states think they would want a public hearing if we go with this addendum? Five, okay go ahead.

MR. O'REILLY: From time to time ASMFC staff enlists the state representatives to conduct the public hearings. I agree, if there is a public hearing there is no reason why the state

representatives can't hold those public hearings. That may help out as well. You know granted, usually when we do that there is a ton of public hearings.

But in this case if there are just four public hearings, I don't see why the states couldn't conduct those public hearings with the materials provided by staff, which doesn't seem to be insurmountable. Am I not in the microphone again, Kirby?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Toni's got a question.

MS. KERNS: Let me know if you want a hearing with Commission staff at the hearing.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, let's have a show of hands, so who wants a hearing with Commission staff. Okay that looks better, nobody. I had a couple of hands up again. Steve Murphy, are you good or do you need another comment? Okay, anybody else have a question or a comment? Okay, I do have a comment from the audience, if you want to come up to the microphone and identify yourself, your name and affiliation.

JOHN F. WHITESIDE, JR.: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Attorney John Whiteside, representing the Sustainable Fisheries Association, the Dogfish Processors, and my first comment would be a follow up to Mr. Grout's question. There is no appreciable landings in the north after December 1st, just a very minimal when you're considering the overall 8.5 million pounds that were landed.

By my calculations we're talking about roughly 3.5 million pounds that we were using this year's landings figures that around December 1st we were looking at having just over 3.5 million pounds left in the north quota that could not be transferred to the south. At that point there was just over a million in the south.

As of now there is just over a million in the south, and we're just under 3.5 in the north

that can't be transferred down. With this really dramatic, roughly 50 percent cut in the quota, it really would help with just being able to sustain our market share throughout the world, and be able to alleviate any issues of transfers within the southern states, by sending the rest of some appreciable amount of that quota down to the south where it's needed, so we can maximize landings for the year.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, back to the table, are there any other comments, questions? Dan, are you going to run the hearing in my state? Only kidding, seeing no additional comments, ready to call the question. Do we need any time to caucus? All right, I'm seeing everyone shaking their head no. **Why don't we start with, is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, we will adopt the motion by unanimous consent.** Okay Dan, thanks.

LETTER TO NOAA FISHERIES FROM THE AMERICAN LOBSTER BOARD REQUESTING A CONTROL RULE FOR AREA 1

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Our next item is the lobster letter. Toni is going to talk to us about that. Toni.

MS. KERNS: The Chairmen have left the building for Lobster, so on behalf of the Lobster Board; I will give you some background. The Lobster Board heard an update from the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team. That meeting had happened a week ago. That Team made a recommendation to NOAA Fisheries to collectively make a 60 percent reduction in risk to Atlantic Large Whales, through reductions in vertical lines, as well as changes in rope, which would be 1,700 pound rope, or a configuration of that.

The Board made a motion to do a Control Rule for Area 1, which is the New England portion, Gulf of Maine portion of the lobster fishery. In that we are going to be asking NOAA Fisheries to implement that control rule as well for the federal waters portion of that fishery. The

Lobster Board would be requesting that the Policy Board send a letter to NOAA Fisheries making that request for a Control Rule.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: This is on behalf of the Board, so we don't need a second.

MS. KERNS: It's not to actually establish the Control Rule, but it's just for the NOAA Fisheries portion of it, so it's not the Control Rule in state waters that this Board is taking care of, it's just making the recommendation to NOAA Fisheries, so we'll need to clean this up a little bit. We don't actually need a motion if we can just have consensus. But I wanted to put the motion up there for reference, for folks to see what the Lobster Board actually did.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Toni, thanks for the clarification, any comments, questions? Eric Reid.

MR. REID: I wanted clarification at that meeting about what we're asking the Feds to do, which is to set a control date for the offshore portion of Area 1 only, not for all federal waters. That was clarified that that was the intent, just so we're clear on that.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Any other comments? We don't need a vote on this, we just need a consensus, so if there is anybody that has an issue with this. Okay, seeing none I think we're good to go on it.

LETTER TO NOAA FISHERIES FROM THE STRIPED BASS BOARD REGARDING THE BLOCK ISLAND TRANSIT ZONE

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: The next letter from the Striped Bass Board, we have to do some action on that so Toni.

MS. KERNS: This one I do have a motion for, and I lost both of my Chairs for the Striped Bass Board. The Striped Bass Board took up the discussion of the Block Island Transit Zone, and the motion is, **On behalf of the Atlantic Striped**

Bass Board, move to forward the Block Island Transit Zone letter to NOAA Fisheries. This letter is a comment to NOAA Fisheries to not open that transit zone.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: **Discussion on this motion? Okay seeing none, is there objection to this motion? Actually, I guess I should have seen, does anybody need to caucus? No, is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, we will adopt that by unanimous consent.** Thanks, Toni.

STATE ALLOCATIONS

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Our last item that we had for additional business, Ray Kane wanted to talk about allocations. Ray.

MR. KANE: First and foremost, I want to congratulate the Commission, we just had a Kumbaya moment with the dogfish motion. Now I'm going to regress to yesterday's conversation on summer flounder. Presently, one of the states that belong to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is going through a judicial and a legislative process for fairness within the Plan.

I've heard from another state about the socioeconomic impacts, and I'm speaking specifically to the state of Massachusetts. We have endured this failed plan for years. For years when I sat in the public audience and this is my third year at the table. I have to respond to fishermen, recreational, commercial, fishermen harvesters in the state of Massachusetts.

Fortunately, being the Governor's Appointee, I can tell the fishermen, if you can't speak to me in a civil tone then I'm not going to continue the conversation. Unfortunately, the employees on the DMF staff in Massachusetts, being how they're state employees, they have to deal with civil unrest on this entire management plan.

We've been told for years, and this is the message I brought back to our fishermen and our state that there is a process in place, we come through with management plans starting at the Mid-Atlantic Council, moving through the Commission. My charge now is that the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council has failed this Commission, in moving forward on that Summer, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan.

I'm going to recommend to the Commission, and I've thought about this for years, and I've heard it spoken about for years that the Commission reach out to a third independent party, a well-respected party, and have them review the entire FMP plan coming out of the Mid-Atlantic, because I don't feel that the northern region is being treated fairly, and I've been telling constituents for years that we will get this changed. I heard yesterday, one state sends vessels; they steam for 24 hours, fish for 12, and steam for another 24 hours to take out. In Massachusetts, the fishermen steam 10 minutes and they're catching black sea bass.

I saw what happened with summer flounder, and my fear is that the Mid-Atlantic Council is going to say well, we pushed it through for summer flounder, let's use the same method to push black sea bass through. I'm really looking to this Commission, because I believe in this Commission more so than the Councils, that we bring in a third party, independent party that's well respected, to review the entire FMP.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Well let me just make some comments on that first, and I'll try to stay neutral. It's a great idea. I think part of what we're seeing; I was sort of in a quandary myself, because I'm looking at two issues that happened yesterday. As Commission Chair, I really want to protect our process, but as a State Commissioner, I want to make sure that we're moving forward, so it was a difficult time for me.

So you know, along those ideas, Bob and I and Mike Luisi, and Chris Moore, Pat Keliher, and

Warren Elliot, have had a couple of meetings now, and we're looking at the bigger picture of that. Along the same lines, but not only just for that species, but for the other ones, black sea bass, summer flounder.

It came up from Delaware this week about maybe reallocating striped bass. We need a different approach, and I think you're 100 percent right. One of the problems we have is our territories. We have to protect our state's interest, in addition to the conflict that we have to look at the best data. Right now we're running into brick walls over that.

We need to look at the approach, and maybe in our toolbox right now we don't have it, and maybe your suggestion is what we've already talked about. We need some independents of this, and maybe a process that we're going to agree to, so that when we get to the table, it maybe neutralizes some of that.

I don't know what the solution is. But your suggestion of a third party, I mean we even hit it around as maybe we should have the Gulf States manage our fisheries and we'll do theirs, because we all know the science. But when you have a dog in the fight it gets to be more difficult to try and say yes, the science is saying this is different than it was a time ago, but I don't want to lose something for my state.

Anyway, we're going to pursue that through the leadership, and try to come up with some better ideas on who the third party would be, or different ideas on the third party. But anyway, we are already going ahead with that and I think we're going to have a lot of discussion on that. That is my opinion; I'll open it up to the table for discussion. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I just wanted to check to see if you're talking about this for all species, not just for – because as Craig brought up the other day – striped bass of course is a special concern to us, and I'm sure every state has allocation issues that they would like to see discussed.

Are you talking like an arbitrator or a marriage counselor?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: First off, to answer your question yes, it's for all species, because again it's a process issue or whatever that we really need to look at. Again, we've talked to NOAA Fisheries about this. Everybody seems to be coming to the same conclusion at that point. What it is right now, I don't know, and working group sounds too light for me. Whatever we put together is going to have to have more clout to it than a typical working group. Robert Boyles.

MR. ROBERT H. BOYLES, JR.: I agree with the comments that have been made. It is regretful that we find ourselves in these tough spots. I would just challenge us and encourage us, as we move forward with these difficult issues. To your point, Mr. Chairman, your struggle with being the Chairman, and also representing state interests, we all have people we answer to back home.

I would just challenge us and encourage us that as we move forward that we recognize our obligations to those folks back home. But also, recognize our obligations to each other, as a body, as a process. We've all been banged on when we go back home, and for instance, a number of times I have been yelled at for not fighting for South Carolina, necessarily.

I recognize I'm guilty of that from time to time. But the way I look at this is I view my role here is to bring a South Carolina perspective to the problems and the challenges that we are facing, and perhaps not necessarily all the time fighting for South Carolina. A little bit of a nuance, but I would just encourage us and challenge us as we move forward, to keep that longer term and broader perspective in view.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other comments from the Board? Dennis.

MR. ABBOTT: Could we expect some sort of feedback in August, or solution in August? No, not really.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Feedback absolutely, and yes we don't want to let this thing sit. We really need to start addressing this. I think our meeting with the Council, they agree 100 percent. We're probably late to the table at this, and we really need to start working on it, so yes we will definitely have feedback at the August meeting. I seriously doubt we'll have a solution. Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: I agree with what Raymond was saying, and I certainly support going forward to explore an option here, to help us make some strides, and real effort towards allocation and reallocation. I can certainly understand why Commissioner's from states that have a relatively high allocation of whatever species, are going to be resistant to voting to reduce their state's allocation for the benefit of another state.

But if we can develop a system, whereby we don't put those Commissioners really on the spot, to vote to reduce their own state's allocation, maybe the process would work a little bit better. How we do that I don't know, but that's something to explore going forward.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Other comments from the Board, Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: As I said when we were talking about this yesterday. We had a system in place we had worked on at working group that actually came up with a solution many years ago. The problem was that we went from where we thought our quota was going to go up to about 32 million pounds, and we were going to do this over a certain point. It went just the opposite direction.

I never brought up the fact about looking at reallocation between commercial and recreational, because what are we fighting over,

scraps? It wouldn't make that much difference when you're looking at these low numbers. As the numbers increase, and again I think we missed an opportunity where we could have done something with this great increase. That's why I said; we should get out in front and see what happens in the future on those types of issues.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, I have a comment from the audience. Arnold Leo, do you want to come up to the public microphone?

MR. ARNOLD LEO: I am Arnold Leo, representing the Fishing Industry of the Town of East Hampton. With mention of that idea of using an independent body, you know to address some of our issues. I thought it worthwhile to bring up, because I was once involved, in an arbitration procedure between a labor union and an employer. There you have that situation, where the Union and the employer simply are never going to agree.

Wisely, somewhere along the line they created the arbitration system, and it works. I think it would be very wise now for the Commission to consider beginning to use that technique of arbitration, with some of these issues such as allocation, where we simply cannot expect, at least not readily, to come to any kind of sane compromise. I just wanted to introduce that idea, thanks.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Thanks, Arnold, back to the table, Eric Reid.

MR. REID: I would have no problem with an independent body of some sort. Yesterday I suggested we needed an unbiased something. But it would not surprise me if an independent body would come back to us and say, well if you had a mathematical model that it would help you in an unbiased way, which in my opinion we may have. It may need further work, but I think we have that tool in the toolbox, you know. But if it takes an independent body to tell us that's

what it is going to take, I think that's a good step.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Dennis.

MR. ABBOTT: It's a very good idea to have a third party. But I think that we have to consider having the agreement of the Commission, to abide by the results of the arbitrator, prior to even any decisions being made. I mean if a third party comes back and says this is the results, and there are pluses and there are minuses, and we sit down at the table, and it's time for a vote. We're back at Ground Zero, are we not? I think that the Commission really has to come to an agreement that we would abide by the results of whatever we decide to move forward with. Is that not true?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Excellent point, Dennis. That's exactly, you said it much better than I did, but yes we would have to have a process we would agree to, before we could go down a road of an arbitrator, or whatever we're going to do. But it's a great point. I've got, oh now everybody has lightened up. I've got Bill, go ahead, Bill.

MR. WILLIAM HYATT: Maybe just stating the obvious, but just to point out that setting up an arbitration process or a third party review actually removes or **disincentives** the initiative to compromise at this level. It's just something to keep in mind that going this route might actually reduce some of the compromise that takes place around this table.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Next I have Adam. Dan's up. Let me go to Adam first.

MR. NOWALSKY: I just wanted to offer that with our jointly managed species, we essentially have a third party that's been telling us what to do with things that being the Mid-Atlantic SSC. I think many of us would agree that that has given us a lot of angst over the years. I would caution us all who say we can't do this on our own, let's let somebody else take a crack at it,

because I'm not sure that it gets us to a better place.

It's a lot of work. The work that the Board is going through on the black sea bass side, I give a lot of credit to Chairman Ballou, for helping spearhead this effort. But there have been a lot of people who have gotten onboard with it, including the Service. It may not be moving as quickly as we would like it to, but at least we're making progress. I have every confidence that we can continue to make that progress on all of these issues, if we just make that commitment to work on them, and do the very best we can for everyone.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: I would have absolutely no desire to abdicate our responsibility, maybe something of a hybrid, but again, don't know what it's going to look like, but it's a good point. Dan.

MR. McKIERNAN: One thing I've noticed that we're facing is sort of the Magnuson conundrum, where we've got these dual objectives, or those competing, counteracting objectives. I noticed in the discussion yesterday, we talked about reallocating based on redistribution, but then there is this caveat that talks about preserving communities. They are really counteracting. I think at some point the Commission should not be giving that kind of a task to a third party.

The Commission could give the first one or the second one, but you can't be everything to everyone. If we're going to redistribute quota, based on shifting stocks that's got to be what it is, or if we want to give this group or an arbitration group a mandate, preserve 25 percent of the change, keep it for the community, do that. But everything is just too fluid with these counteracting objectives.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: I've been through arbitration and seen it work with unions, and there is always a

bias when you get to the arbitrator. He has his own bias, or she has her own biases when they start arbitrating. We're a compact of 15 states. That is what we basically signed on when we passed the Atlantic Coast Conservation Act. We're supposed to work together to come up with solutions.

I think the biggest problem here is we have to deal with the Council and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, because I think if it were just us sitting around the table, we could come up with a solution fast. We could have implemented this thing we did yesterday, we voted on the other day, which actually would have started solving some of the problems.

I don't think it's the Compact that is failing us, I think it's the ability that we can work within ourselves to basically come up with solutions, without going through the other parties involved. I don't trust outside arbitrators, I really don't. I learned over the period of time dealing with it. Nobody is purely unbiased; they are all bringing what they basically have gone through over the years and where you're from.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Maybe we just need a special council doing an investigation that worked so well lately. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I know the idea went over like a led balloon about auctions, but quota is money, and that is the reason this is such a contentious issue between states. Psychology shows that people feel the pain of loss much more than they savor the feeling of gain. I can guarantee that states that lose quota in the process will be hearing about it in the states that gain it. They'll be hearing, why is that all you got for us, when you come back with an extra 1 or 2 percent. I think again that it is an economic issue, and we should start looking at some sort of market-based solution to this.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Rob O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: That was my sentiment as well, in that we often don't talk about the economic aspects. We hear time and again how quickly

market forces change. We heard a little bit about that with dogfish today. Yes, there can be more quota spread around, but what does it do to the economics? I think the social and economic part is something that I know is difficult to really get information that's current.

But you know we talked about the summer flounder yesterday, and North Carolina and Virginia and New Jersey, they do try to at least increase their market share by virtue of when these commercial fisheries open and close. We have interjurisdictional fisheries, and yet we don't have interjurisdictional considerations of the market, and how that all takes place.

I mean this has been talked about for years at the ASMFC, and yet we're just talking about wanting differences, you know allocations give differences the way they stand now. But it would be really great if we had some economic profiles, and even some social profiles. You know we've heard a lot before about with New York, some of the infrastructure has been lost.

I mean I've heard that from Emerson a couple of times, and now we have to consider how we bring infrastructure back, if there is reallocation. I think along the coast that is the case. I don't know how we do that in particular. I know with menhaden there was at least a social and economic profile of that fishery.

Short of that I can't really remember anything in depth from the ASMFC. When you talk about the federal side, and doing an EIS or an EA, I mean that's incumbent on those plans there. But I'm not even sure there that it translates into the decision making. I agree wholeheartedly with John Clark that that is something that we really should consider, and when the day is done, and reallocation happens. What have we done for the economics for the market and everything else?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Steve Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: I totally agree with the market analysis. Really if you look at this, if you kind of did root cause analysis, it leads you to limited entry discussion, to me. It's important to note that even though these are interstate fisheries, commercial fisheries at least in North Carolina, and I would suspect in other states as well, are certainly coastwide. North Carolina trawlers travel to Florida for shrimp, and work up and down the coast, just as those trawlers travel up here.

We fish for scallops off New England. All of those have been sort of integrated into business models, markets, and largely into coastal counties, where that's all there is. You either commercial fish or you farm. If you're in the Wanchese or Dare/Hyde County areas, there is not a whole lot unless you're into tourism. It's important to keep that market in the equation, because that's really what's so important for the states with this allocation.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Lynn Fegley.

MS. FEGLEY: Just jumping off of what Steve just said. I sat on a webinar with some social scientists who were starting to look at the dynamics, and the socioeconomics of shifting stocks. What they were seeing was, you know the fleets will follow, the fleets will travel, because that's all they can do is move where the stocks are going.

But they would obviously prefer to fish close. But the problem is that they can't, because there is nothing to fish on close, because they don't have the allocation, or the quota, or the species. What that kind of leads to, is that this is the sort of thing that can't be considered in a species-specific vacuum. It really almost becomes a multispecies problem, whereas the stocks are shifting, if we're trying to keep fleets close to home, what's going to fill the void as allocation shifts?

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay, I think we've had a good discussion on this. Again, this is the

beginning of this right now. Obviously, we're going to be discussing it quite a bit. I thank Ray for raising it. It's a great point, and obviously just about every state weighed in on this, so it's something we are going to have to address. I guess Bob and I work with the Council, and we'll come back, and hopefully start getting something on paper that maybe gets us in the right direction. Tom Fote. Is there any other business to come before the Board? Go ahead, Tom.

MR. FOTE: As we saw with striped bass, and as we're seeing with summer flounder and black sea bass and red snapper, we have a big problem with catch and release. When the numbers in the recreational sector start basically rising above what we're taken home, we're killing by catch and release, it starts being an extreme problem, especially when it starts affecting the stocks.;

Years ago the ASMFC formed a committee, I sat as Chair of that actually a working group to look at circle hooks and what circle hooks we should be doing if we were going to do it with law enforcement. Since I was on the Board of ASA at the time, I asked them if they would get the hook manufacturers.

Well after two years of trying to deal with Mustad, Gamakatsu, Eagle Claw, trying to find out what they thought was a circle hook. There were 14 different hooks they said were circle hooks. It winds up being a problem, but we need to move in that direction. I would be willing to basically talk to ASA again, try to get the hook manufacturers and do that.

The other thing I looked at years ago on summer flounder. We shouldn't be selling rigs in the tackle stores that have 1-0 and 2-0 hooks for summer flounder. It's a gut hooking experience when I see them up there. Again, we looked at a phase-in period that way you get off those hooks, because we now know they should be at least 5, 6, or 7-0 hooks.

I think we really should start looking at that. Of course, I sit as Governor of Affairs at ASA, so I hear all the red snapper stories going on and on forever in the Gulf and the West Coast. I think we need to do that. We need to start looking at how we do that. I would volunteer to be on any of those working groups you want, and if you want me to reach out to ASA about the hook thing, I could put a little group together, to sit and look at it.

But we're not discussing how the hook is. We go to Law Enforcement and tell them we want circle hooks, then they're going to ask us, well what is a circle hook, can it be offset, can it not be offset, and all those questions. I'm just trying to get the ball rolling. I know it's late, and I've got to catch a flight, but anyway. I'm just bringing that to your attention, and I'm willing to work on it.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Okay Tom, thanks and I'll follow up with you on that after, Marty.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Just hopefully a simple inquiry into the status of the funding for the Cooperative Winter Striped Bag Tagging Efforts, if we know any. I know we had that bridge for this past year. That dataset is now past 30 years, and I'm just curious where we are with that if we know.

MS. KERNS: Marty, I'm going to have to e-mail the Board out that information. I don't think we've really brought up questions about next year's tagging study yet, and we'll have to do that and go there.

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: You win the award, Marty. You stumped Toni. Roy Miller.

MR. MILLER: Just a quick follow up to Tom Fote's comments. I think as a Commission we would be wise to be thinking in the future about ways to reduce hook and release mortality. It isn't just circle hooks. There are other methods in the toolbox for reducing hook and release mortality. Maryland made some strides with

that with their striped bass proposal in the Bay. There may be other possibilities that would help us down that road, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIRMAN GILMORE: Agreed, Roy, good point. Okay, anything else to bring up before the Policy Board. Seeing none; a motion to adjourn by Doug Grout, and seconded by everyone. Thanks, everyone.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 9:45 o'clock a.m. on May 2, 2019)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Annual Performance of the Stocks: 2019 Review

July 2019

Objective: – Support the ISFMP Policy Board’s review of stock rebuilding performance and management board actions and provide direction to management boards for 2020 Action Plan.

- A. Validate status/rate of progress (acceptable/not acceptable)
- B. If not acceptable, identify appropriate corrective action

Species Groups: – Species are grouped under five major categories (1) rebuilt/sustainable; (2) recovering/rebuilding; (3) concern; (4) depleted; and (5) unknown, as defined below.

Rebuilt/Sustainable – Stock biomass is equal to or above the biomass level established by the FMP to ensure population sustainability. When between benchmark assessments a stock can still be considered rebuilt/sustainable if it drops below the target but remains above the threshold.

Recovering/Rebuilding – Stocks exhibit stable or increasing trends. Stock biomass is between the threshold and the target level established by the FMP.

Concern – Those stocks developing emerging issues, e.g., increased effort, declining landings, or impacts due to environmental conditions.

Depleted – Reflects low levels of abundance though it is unclear whether fishing mortality is the primary cause for reduced stock size

Unknown – There is no accepted stock assessment to estimate stock status.

Status as of 2019

Rebuilt/Sustainable:

American Lobster (GOM/GBK)
Atlantic Menhaden
Black Drum
Black Sea Bass
Bluefish
Horseshoe Crab (Southeast)
Cobia
Scup
Spanish Mackerel
Spiny Dogfish

Recovering/Rebuilding:

Horseshoe Crab (Delaware Bay)
Red Drum
Summer Flounder
Tautog (MA/RI)

Concern:

Coastal Sharks
Winter Flounder (GOM)

Depleted:

American Eel
American Lobster (SNE)
American Shad
Atlantic Herring
Atlantic Striped Bass
Atlantic Sturgeon
Horseshoe Crab (New York)
Northern Shrimp
River Herring
Tautog (LIS, NJ/NY Bight, DelMarVa)
Weakfish
Winter flounder (SNE/MA)

Unknown:

Atlantic Croaker
Horseshoe Crab (New England)
Jonah Crab
Spot
Spotted Seatrout



Status as of 1998

Rebuilt/Rebuilding

Atlantic Herring
Atlantic Striped Bass
Bluefish
Black Sea Bass
Spanish Mackerel
Summer Flounder

Concern/Depleted

American Lobster (SNE)
Atlantic Menhaden
Northern Shrimp
Red Drum
Scup
Spiny Dogfish
Tautog
Weakfish
Winter Flounder (SNE/MA and GOM)

Unknown

American Eel
American Shad
Atlantic Croaker
Atlantic Sturgeon
Horseshoe Crab
River Herring
Spot
Spotted Seatrout

Summary Table of Rebuilt/Sustainable Species

Species	Biomass % of Target	Assessment Schedule	Caveats/Notes (what actions need to be taken to maintain rebuilt status)
American Lobster (Gulf of Maine/ Georges Bank)	375% of abundance threshold (2015 benchmark assessment)	Benchmark Assessment – 2020	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Dramatic increase in stock abundance since the late 1980s, and at an increasing rate since 2005. Average spawning stock and recruit abundance are above the 75 th percentile, while young-of-the-year indicators are generally below the median. Management action is being considered regarding the stock’s resiliency, but is currently on hold pending resolution of the immediate issues concerning the fishery’s interactions with right whales.
Atlantic Menhaden	84% of fecundity target (2017 stock assessment update)	Benchmark Assessment – 2019	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. High abundance of older fecund fish in the population. Fecundity has been increasing since the mid-2000s after a period of low fecundity in the 1990s. Menhaden-specific ecological reference points are being pursued to assess the status of the species in an ecosystem context.
Black Drum	192% of B_{MSY} (2015 benchmark assessment)		The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Future assessments can be improved by applying a more complex, data-rich assessment method such as a statistical catch-at-age model. This would require fishery-dependent biological sampling of lengths and ages and a fishery-independent survey to track abundance and age structure of the mature stock, which not all states are collecting.
Black Sea Bass	229% of the SSB target (2016 benchmark stock assessment)	Assessment Update – 2019 (SAW/SARC Operational Assessment)	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Recent strong recruitment has led to the highest biomass estimate in the time series. It is unknown whether strong year classes/recruitment will continue to maintain high abundance in future years.
Bluefish	85% of SSB target (2015 benchmark assessment)	Assessment Update – 2019 (SAW/SARC Operational Assessment)	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Considered less vulnerable to becoming overfished relative to the biological reference points due to their life history characteristics (e.g., pelagic species, opportunistic feeder, multiple spawning events per year).

Summary Table of Rebuilt/Sustainable Species

Cobia	175% of minimum stock size threshold (MSST) (2013 benchmark stock assessment)	SEDAR Benchmark Assessment – 2019	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, according to the 2013 assessment. However, the commercial fishery has exceeded its federal annual catch limit (ACL) in each of the last four years. The recreational fishery, as of 2018, is subject to a recreational harvest limit (RHL) that is allocated among the states and evaluated as a 3-year average. Coastwide recreational harvest exceeded the RHL in 2018. While the last assessment did not determine an overfished status, there was a notable declining trend in spawning stock biomass from 2002 through the terminal year of 2011.
Horseshoe Crab (Southeast Region)	Unknown (2019 benchmark assessment)		No overfishing or overfished definitions have been adopted for management use. Stock status is based on the percentage of surveys within a region having a >50% probability of the final year being below the ARIMA reference point. “Good” status indicates <33% of surveys had a >50% probability. 0 of the 2 surveys in the Southeast region had a probability >50%. The Southeast region’s status has remained “good” through the last three assessments.
Scup	206% of SSB target (2017 stock assessment update)	Assessment Update – 2019 (SAW/SARC Operational Assessment)	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. There is no consistent internal retrospective pattern in fishing mortality, spawning stock biomass, or recruitment evident in the scup assessment model.
Spanish Mackerel	$SSB_{2011}/SSB_{MSY}=1.49$; $SSB_{2011}/MSST=2.29$ (2012 benchmark stock assessment)	SEDAR Benchmark Assessment – 2020	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing.
Spiny Dogfish	67% of SSB target in 2018 (based on the 3 year averaging approach)	Benchmark Assessment 2022 (SAW/SARC Research Track Assessment)	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) was 67% of the SSB target in 2018. Despite remaining over the threshold, biomass has declined in recent years, requiring a significant reduction in 2019-2020 to ensure overfishing does not occur.

Summary Table of Species Undergoing Recovery/Rebuilding

Species	Biomass % of Target	Assessment Schedule	Caveats/Notes (what actions need to be taken to continue rebuilding)
Horseshoe Crab (Delaware Bay)	Unknown (2019 benchmark assessment)		No overfishing or overfished definitions have been adopted for management use. Stock status is based on the percentage of surveys within a region having a >50% probability of the final year being below the ARIMA reference point. "Neutral" status indicates 34-65% of surveys had a >50% probability. 2 of the 5 (40%) surveys in the Delaware Bay region had a probability >50%. The Delaware Bay region's status has remained "neutral" since the 2009 benchmark assessment.
Red Drum	Unknown	5-year Trigger – 2021	Red drum does not fit into any of the Commission categories perfectly. The stock is not experiencing overfishing. The estimates of biomass from the assessment are highly uncertain and were not recommended for management use. While indices used in the assessment are variable, the long term trends are stable.
Summer Flounder	78% of SSB Target (2018 benchmark stock assessment)	Assessment Update – 2021 (SAW/SARC Management Track)	The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The 2018 stock assessment data indicated an expanding age structure, but also showed a decrease in relative total abundance since the late 2000s, as well as decreasing trends in average lengths and weights at age for both sexes, suggesting slower growth and delayed maturity. The assessment shows current mortality from all sources is greater than recent recruitment inputs to the stock, which has resulted in a declining stock trend.
Tautog (Massachusetts/Rhode Island)	82% of SSB Target (2016 assessment update)		The stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing (spawning potential ratio was used to determine stock status). Total abundance and SSB declined rapidly from 1982 until 2000. SSB decreased from 8,994 mt in 1985 to the current estimate of 2,196 mt in 2015.

Overview of Species of Concern

Coastal Sharks: Concern

Assessment Findings

Species or Complex Name	Stock Status		References/Comments
	Overfished	Overfishing	
Pelagic			
Porbeagle	Yes	No	Porbeagle Stock Assessment, ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2009); Rebuilding ends in 2108 (HMS Am. 2)
Blue	No	No	ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2015)
Shortfin Mako	Yes	Yes	ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2017)
All other	Unknown	Unknown	
Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks (LCS)			
Atlantic Blacktip	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 11 (2006)
Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks Atlantic Region	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 11 (2006); difficult to assess as a species complex due to various life history characteristics/ lack of available data
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks (SCS)			
Atlantic Sharpnose	No	No	SEDAR 34 (2013)
Bonnethead	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 34 (2013)
Finetooth	No	No	SEDAR 13 (2007)
Hammerhead			
Scalloped	Yes	Yes	SEFSC Scientific Review by Hayes et al. (2009) Hayes, et al. (2009): Rebuilding ends in 2023 (HMS Am. 5a)
Blacknose			
Blacknose	Yes	Yes	SEDAR 21 (2010); Rebuilding ends in 2043 (HMS Am. 5a)
Smoothhound			
Atlantic Smooth	No	No	SEDAR 39 (2015)
Research			
Sandbar	Yes	No	SEDAR 54 (2018)

Overview of Species of Concern

Prohibited			
Dusky	Yes	Yes	SEDAR 21 (2016); Rebuilding ends in 2107 (HMS Am. 5b)
Basking		No	Campana (2008)
Night		No	Carlson et al (2008)
Sand Tiger		No	Carlson et al (2008)
White		No	Curtis et al (2014)
Bigeye Thresher		No	Young et al (2016)
All other	Unknown	Unknown	

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- In April 2019, the Board increased the recreational minimum size limit for Atlantic shortfin mako sharks in state waters. These measures specify a 71-inch straight line fork length (FL) for males and an 83-inch straight line FL for females. The measures are consistent with those required for federal highly migratory species (HMS) permit holders under HMS Amendment 11, which was implemented in response to the 2017 Atlantic shortfin mako stock assessment that found the resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing.
- May 15 – July 15 closed season from New Jersey – Virginia to protect pupping females for the following species: sandbar, silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead.

Monitoring and Management Measures

- Fins must remain attached to the carcass through landing for all species except smooth dogfish (25% catch composition applies), which complements the Shark Conservation Act.
- The 2019 commercial fishery is year-round, starting January 1 and remaining open through December 31 unless NMFS determines landings for a shark management group have reached, or are projected to reach, 80 percent of the available quota.
- For 2019, adjustable commercial retention limits for the aggregated large coastal shark (LCS) and hammerhead shark management groups were implemented in both state and federal waters. The fishery opened with a commercial retention limit of 25 sharks per trip per vessel and was increased to 36 LCS per trip on June 25th. The revised retention limit will remain in effect for the rest of the 2019 fishing season or until NMFS announces another adjustment to the retention limit. Additionally, a commercial possession limit of 8 blacknose sharks per trip was implemented in both state and federal waters.
- Recreational fishing is controlled through possession limits except for the following species: Atlantic sharpnose, finetooth, blacknose, and bonnethead.
- Recreational anglers can only harvest sharks caught with a handline or rod & reel.
- In August 2018, the Board approved Addendum V, which provides the Board the ability to respond to changes in the stock status of coastal shark populations and adjust regulations through Board action rather than an addendum, ensuring greater consistency between state and federal measures for coastal sharks.

Next Assessment: Variable by species/complex

Rebuilding Trajectory: Variable by species/complex

Overview of Species of Concern

Winter Flounder - GOM: Concern

2017 Groundfish Operational Stock Assessment

Overfished Unknown

- Assessment is based on 30+ cm area-swept biomass estimated directly from the surveys.
- B_{MSY} and F_{MSY} are unknown, and consequently the fishing mortality (F) and SSB targets could not be generated.
- The primary source of uncertainty for the estimate of biomass is the survey gear catchability (q).

Overfishing Not Occurring

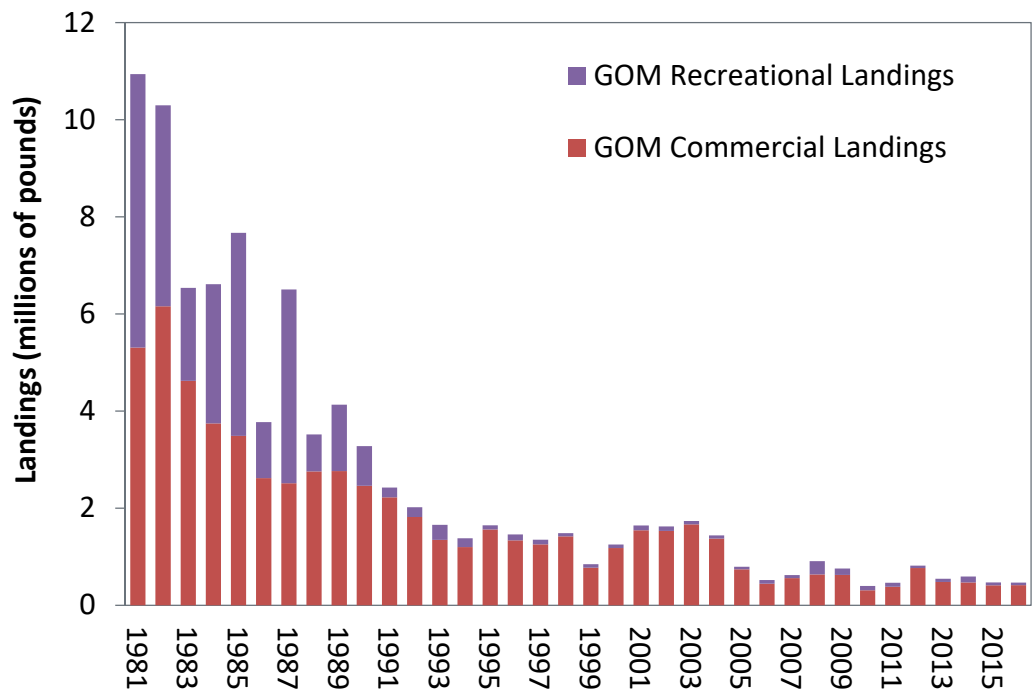
- The 2016 30+ cm exploitation rate is estimated to be 0.086, which is 37% of the overfishing exploitation threshold proxy.
- It is unknown why large declines in recreational and commercial catch have had little impact on the GOM winter flounder survey indices, which are relatively flat and show minimal change in size structure.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Addendum I measures, implemented in 2009, reduced recreational and commercial harvest by an estimated 11% and 31%, respectively
- In response to the 2011 stock status, NOAA Fisheries increased the 2012 state water sub-component to 272 mt (a 450% increase from 2010 levels) based on the overfishing status.
- Following this federal action, the Commission’s Winter Flounder Board approved Addendum II in October 2012 to increase the maximum possession limit for non-federally permitted commercial vessels from 250 pounds to 500 pounds.
- In 2017, NOAA Fisheries reduced the state waters sub-component to 67 mt (from 122 mt in 2016) and reduced the total stock-wide annual catch limit to 428 mt (from 776 mt in 2016).
- The Commission’s Board has maintained the trip limits and size limits in GOM winter flounder fishery since 2012.

Winter Flounder GOM Commercial & Recreational Landings

NEFSC Operational Assessment of 19 Groundfish Stocks, 2017



Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Flat at low levels

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP & Addendum I ('92); Addendum II ('98); Amendment 1 ('05); Addendum I ('09); Addendum II ('12); Addendum III ('13)

Overview of Depleted Species

American Eel: Depleted

2017 Stock Assessment Update

Depleted: Trend analyses and model results indicate American eel has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern.

Overfishing Determination: No overfishing determination can be made at this time.

Assessment Findings

- In recent decades, there has been neutral or declining coastwide abundance.
- Decreasing trends in yellow eels were seen in the Hudson River and South Atlantic regions.
- Although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions from historical levels, current fishing effort may still be too high given the additional stressors affecting the stock, such as habitat loss, passage mortality, and disease, as well as potentially shifting oceanographic conditions.
- Management efforts to reduce mortality on American eels in the U.S. are warranted.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

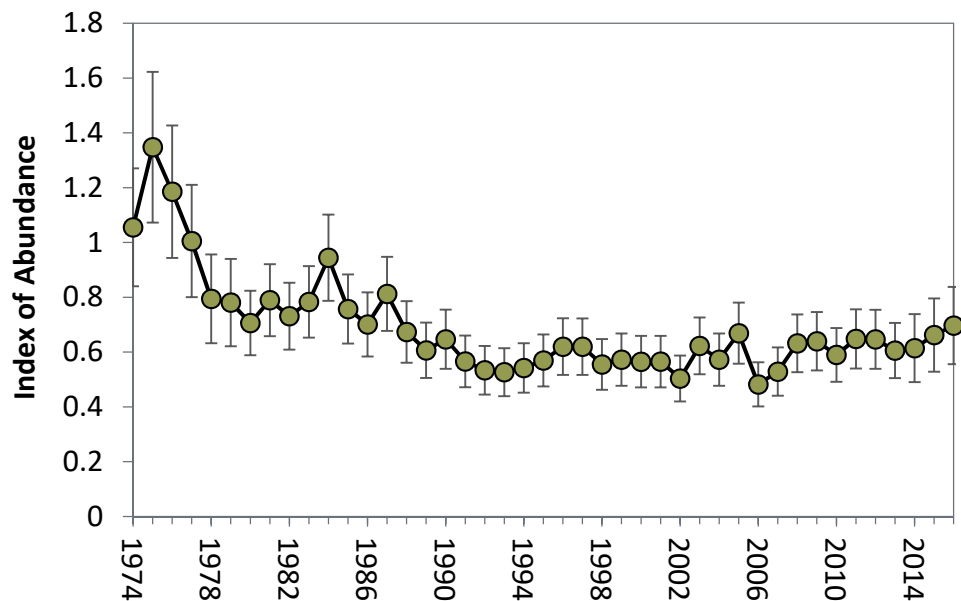
- Based on results of the 2012 benchmark assessment, the Board implemented two Addenda (III and IV) to reduce fishing mortality on American eels through size and possession limits for yellow eel, prohibiting most silver eel fisheries, establishing a 907,671 pound coastwide quota for yellow eel fisheries, and reducing Maine's glass eel quota to 9,688 pounds.
- The Board approved Addendum V in August 2018, which slightly increases the yellow eel cap, inconsistent with the advice of both the Technical and Stock Assessment Committee. The Addendum also adjusts the management trigger and response should the cap be exceeded.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Unknown

40+ Year Index of Abundance of Yellow American Eel along the Atlantic Coast, 1974 - 2016

Source: ASMFC American Eel Stock Assessment Update, 2017



The error bars represent the standard errors about the estimates.

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('99); Addendum I ('06); Addendum II ('08), Addendum III ('13); Addendum IV ('14); Addendum V ('18)

Overview of Depleted Species

Trend Analysis of Regional and Coastwide Indices of American Eel Abundance by Young-of-the-year (YOY) and Yellow Eel Life Stages

Region	Life Stage	Time Period	2012 Trend	2017 Trend
Gulf of Maine	YOY	2001–2016	NS	NS
Southern New England	YOY	2000–2016	NS	NS
	Yellow	2001–2010	NS	-
Hudson River	YOY	1974–2009	↓	-
	Yellow	1980–2016	↓	↓
Delaware Bay/ Mid-Atlantic Coastal Bays	YOY	2000–2016	NS	NS
	Yellow	1999–2016	NS	NS
Chesapeake Bay	YOY	2000–2016	NS	NS
	Yellow	1990–2009	↑	↑
South Atlantic	YOY	2001–2015	NS	↓
	Yellow	2001–2016	↓	↓
Atlantic Coast	YOY (short-term)	2000–2016	NS	NS
	YOY (long-term)	1987–2013	NS	NS
	Yellow (40+ year)	1974–2016	NS	↓
	Yellow (30-year)	1987–2016	↓	↓
	Yellow (20-year)	1997–2016	NS	NS

Overview of Depleted Species

American Lobster – Southern New England: Depleted

Assessment Findings (2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment)

- Depleted and overfishing not occurring
- Abundance at 42% of threshold
- Current exploitation (0.27) below threshold (0.41)
- Model estimates for recruitment are near zero and the lowest on record
- The inshore portion of the stock shows a dramatic decline in spawning stock abundance
- The stock has not rebuilt and is in recruitment failure
- Little possibility of recovery unless fishing effort is significantly curtailed

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Technical Committee has advised use of output controls; Board continues to use input measures
- Technical Committee has advised prohibiting conservation equivalency (CE) in LCMA 6; Board approved CE program
- Technical Committee has advised 50-75% reductions in SNE LCMAs; Board approved 10% reduction
- Technical Committee has advised 100% trip level harvester reporting; via Addendum XXVI, the Board established a deadline that, within five years, states are required to implement 100% harvester reporting

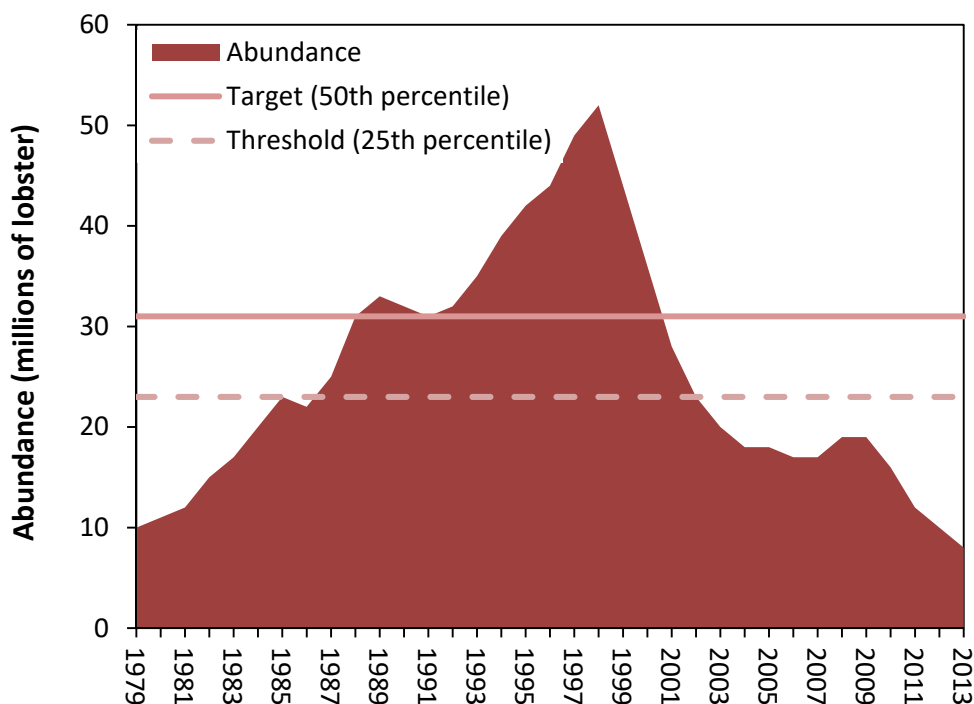
Rebuilding Trajectory:

Population continues to decline; Addendum XI (2007) established a 15-year rebuilding timeline (ending in 2022) with a provision to end overfishing immediately.

Next Assessment: Benchmark assessment in 2020

Southern New England Lobster Abundance

Source: American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2015



Timeline of Management Actions: Amendment 3 ('97); Addendum I ('99); Addendum II ('01); Addendum III ('02); Addenda IV & V ('04); Addenda VI & VII ('05); Addenda VIII & IX ('06); Addenda X & XI ('07); Addendum XIII ('08); Addenda XII & XIV ('09); Addendum XV ('09); Addendum XVI ('10); Addendum XVII ('11); Addendum XVIII ('12); Addenda XIX – XXII ('13); Addendum XXIII ('14); Addendum XXIV ('15); Addendum XXVI ('18)

Overview of Depleted Species

American Shad: Depleted

2007 Assessment Findings

- 86 river systems assessed; 64% of which have unknown stock status
- Collectively, stocks are at all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- Improved monitoring (fishery-independent and -dependent) and fish passage
- Management measures based on total mortality (Z), which combines fishing and natural mortality
- Lower JAI threshold needed to trigger management action

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Management Board approved Amendment 3 in February 2010.
- Management actions contained in the Amendment are based on recommendations from the stock assessment.
- Member states/jurisdictions were required to submit sustainable fishery management plans (SFMPs) by August 1, 2012 (for Technical Committee review and Board approval). As of January 1, 2013, the Shad and River Herring

Trends in Stock Status of American Shad Populations from the 2007 and 1998 Benchmark Assessments. A “?” indicates either insufficient data or various data analyses gave conflicting indications of trend.

Source: ASMFC American Shad Stock Assessment Report, 2007

State	River	2007 Status Trend	1998 Status Trend
ME	Merrymeeting Bay	Declining	
	Kennebec		
	Androscoggin		
	Saco		
NH	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
	Rappahannock	Stable	Stable
NC	Albemarle Sound	Stable	
	Roanoke	Stable	
	Tar-Pamlico	?	
	Neuse	?	
	Cape Fear	?	
SC	Winyah Bay	Stable	
	Waccamaw	?	
	Great Pee Dee	?	
	Santee	?	Increasing
	Cooper	Stable	
	Combahee	?	
	Edisto	Declining	Stable
SC & GA	Savannah	Stable	
GA	Altamaha (+ Ocmulgee)	Declining	Increasing
	Ogeechee		
FL	St. Johns	Stable	

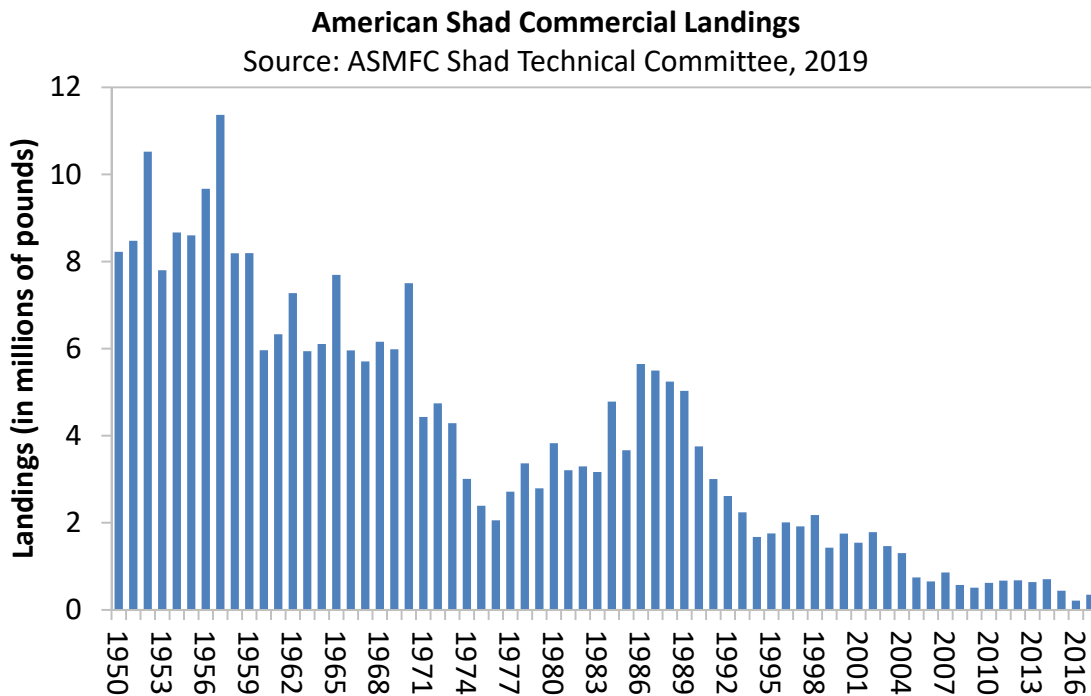
Management Board approved SFMPs for Massachusetts, Connecticut, the Delaware River, the Potomac River, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. States/jurisdictions without approved SFMPs by January 1, 2013 were required to close their American shad fisheries, with the exception of catch and release recreational fisheries. All SFMPs were updated as of February 2019.

Overview of Depleted Species

- By August 1, 2013, states/jurisdictions were required to submit a Habitat Plan, which contains a summary of current and historical spawning and nursery habitat; the most significant threats to those habitats; and a habitat restoration program to improve, enhance and/or restore habitat quality and quantity. In February 2014, the Board approved habitat plans for the majority of states and jurisdictions.

Next Assessment: Benchmark assessment in 2020

Rebuilding Trajectory: Variable by River System (see accompanying table)



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('85); Amendment 1 ('99); Amendment 3 ('10)

Overview of Depleted Species

Atlantic Herring: Depleted

2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment Findings

- Not overfished nor experiencing overfishing
- Recruitment has been below the time series average for the past five years; 2016 has the lowest on record at 1.7 million fish
- SSB has been lower in recent years and was below the SSB threshold in 2017
- Based on projections, and assuming recruitment and landing trends continue at similar levels, the stock was expected to become overfished with overfishing occurring starting in 2018
- Fishing mortality has also decreased in recent years and was below the F threshold in 2017

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

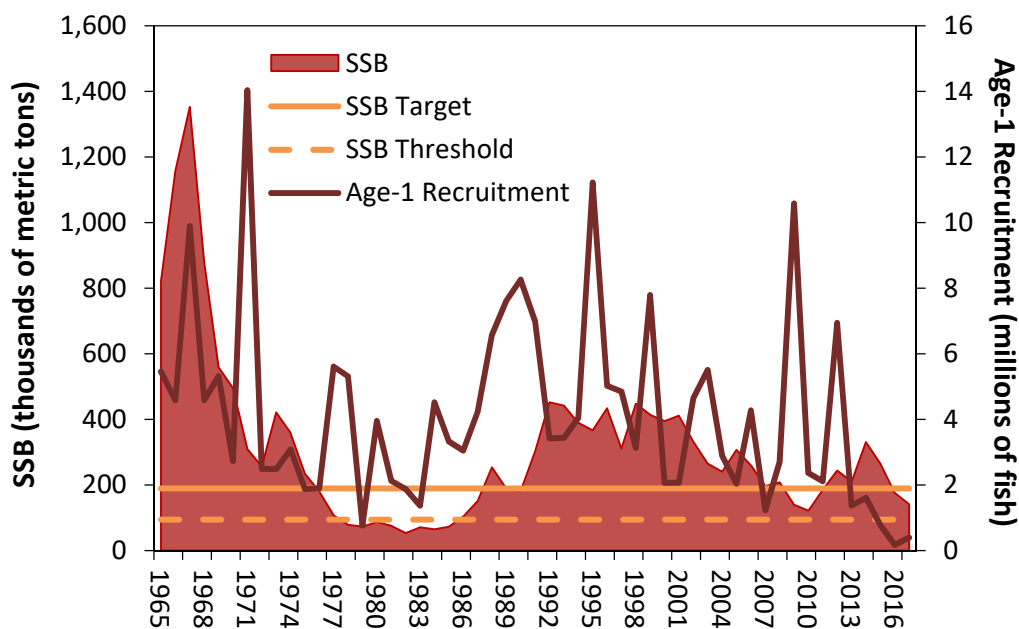
- Technical Committee analysis suggests that reducing the GSI₃₀ trigger value to 23 or 24 would reduce the probability of greater than 25% spawning fish in the catch, especially for years with fewer GSI₃₀ samples.
- Technical Committee concluded that the use of a 4-week spawning closure would likely result in frequent use of the re-closure protocol; Board could consider implementing a 5- or 6-week spawning closure.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Board approved Addendum II in April 2019. The addendum strengthens the protections provided to spawning herring in Area 1A by: 1) lowering the threshold that triggers initial spawning closure (From 25 to 23); 2) increasing the length of the initial spawning closure (from 4 to 6 weeks); and 3) lowering the threshold that triggers a re-closure due to spawning activity, in order to provide greater protection to the stock (from 25% to 20% or more mature herring).
- The Board is working on Draft Addendum III, which considers the establishment of a spawning protection program in Area 3 (off of Cape Cod and Georges Bank) to promote stock rebuilding.

Atlantic Herring Spawning Stock Biomass & Recruitment

Source: 65th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop, 2018



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('93); Amendment 1 ('99); Amendment 2 ('06); Technical Addendum I ('06); Addendum I ('09); Addendum II ('10); Addendum V ('12); Addendum VI ('13); Amendment 3 ('16); Addendum I ('17); Addendum II ('19)

Next Assessment: Benchmark Assessment Update in 2020 (SAW/SARC Management Track)

Rebuilding Trajectory: Declining

Overview of Depleted Species

Atlantic Striped Bass: Depleted

2018 Benchmark Assessment Findings

- The assessment used fisheries-dependent and -independent data, as well as tagging data, to determine the status of the stock.
- The stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing.
- Female SSB was estimated at about 75% of the SSB threshold in 2017.
- F was estimated at about 128% of the F threshold in 2017.
- The stock experienced a period of low recruitment (age-1 fish entering the population) from 2005-2011 (although not as low as the early 1980s), which contributed to the decline in SSB in recent years.
- Recruitment has been variable since 2011, and was estimated at 109 million fish in 2017 which is 23% below the time series average.

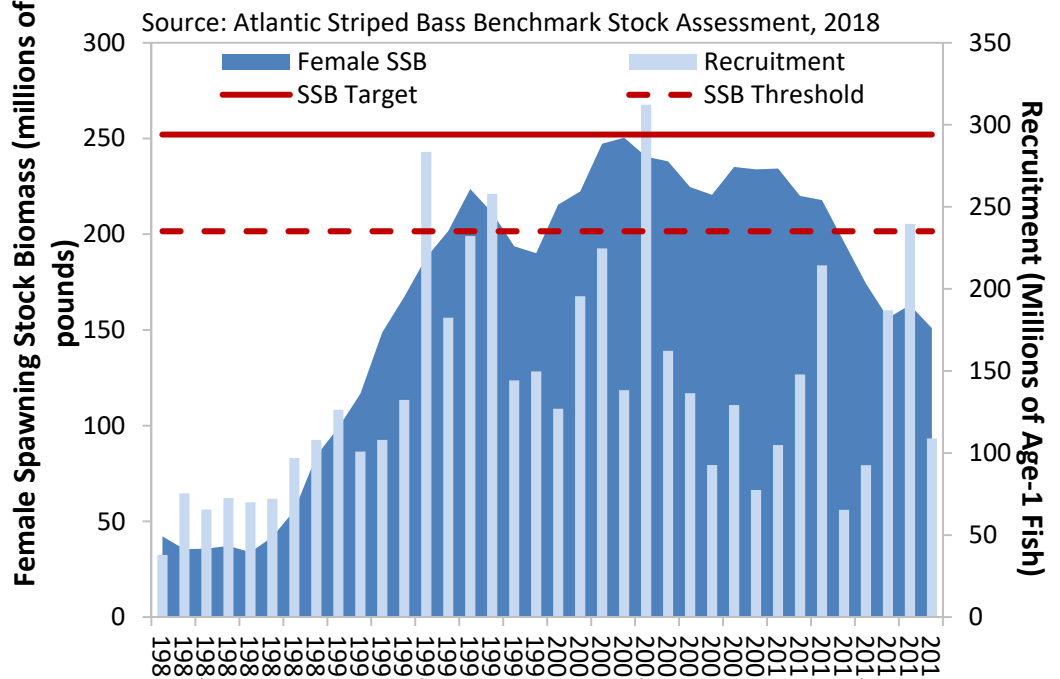
Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- The Technical Committee estimated an an approximate 17% reduction in total removals (commercial and recreational harvest, including dead releases) to reduce F to the target in 2020 relative to 2017 levels.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- The Board initiated the development of a Draft Addendum to consider measures aimed to reduce F to the target level for implementation in 2020.
- The Draft Addendum will explore combinations of commercial quotas and recreational measures (including minimum size and slot limits) for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries to achieve the desired reduction removals, as well as a coastwide circle hook requirements.
- In August, the Board will consider a motion to initiate the development of an Amendment which will address other issues including reference points, management triggers, regional management, and rebuilding the biomass.

Atlantic Striped Bass Female Spawning Stock Biomass and Recruitment



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('81); Amendment 3 ('85); Amendment 5 ('95); Addenda I & II ('97); Addendum II ('98); Addendum IV ('01); Addendum V ('01); Amendment 6 ('03); Addendum I ('07); Addendum II ('10); Addendum III ('12); Addendum IV ('14)

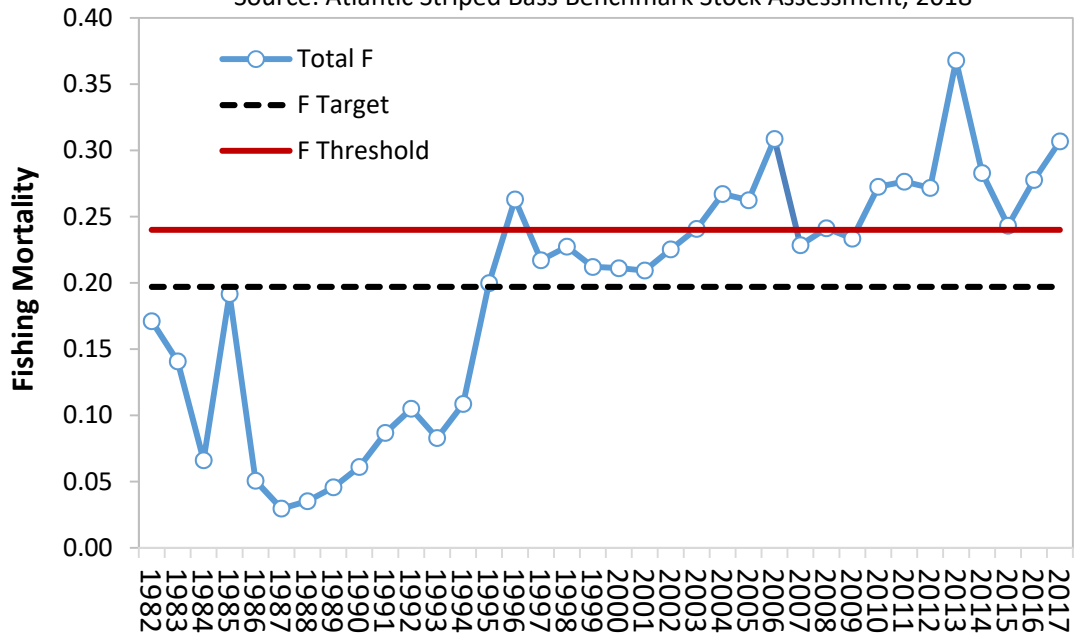
Next Assessment: Recommended for 2024

Rebuilding Trajectory: Declining

Overview of Depleted Species

Atlantic Striped Bass Fishing Mortality

Source: Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2018



Overview of Depleted Species

Atlantic Sturgeon: Depleted

Available Information

- Commercial landings of Atlantic sturgeon peaked in 1890 at an estimated 7.5 million pounds.
- A 2007 status review identified five distinct population segments (DPS) – discrete population units with distinct physical, genetic, and physiological characteristics – along the Atlantic coast; the Gulf of Maine DPS, New York Bight DPS, Chesapeake Bay DPS, Carolina DPS and South Atlantic DPS.
- In April 2012, NOAA Fisheries listed the Gulf of Maine DPS as threatened and the New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina and South Atlantic DPSs as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- In 2017, areas of habitat considered essential to the species' conservation were designated for each DPS.
- A 2017 benchmark stock assessment indicated the coastwide population appears to be recovering slowly since 1998 – the year ASMFC implemented a complete moratorium – although populations remain depleted at the coastwide and DPS-levels relative to historical abundance.
- Despite the moratorium, the population still experiences mortality from several sources, but the assessment indicates total mortality is sustainable.
- The assessment listed bycatch, habitat loss, ship strikes, and climate change as the primary threats to recovery.
- NOAA Fisheries is currently conducting a 5-year Status Review of the ESA listing and developing a Recovery Plan for the species.

Needed Information/Data

- Efforts to assess the status of Atlantic sturgeon are hampered by a lack of data
- Better DPS-specific life history information including age, growth, fecundity and maturity
- Better information on population trends, especially at the DPS-level, is a high priority
- Increased fishery-independent monitoring efforts directed at Atlantic sturgeon
- Improve fishery-dependent monitoring of sturgeon bycatch and bycatch mortality
- Collect information on regional ship strike occurrences, including mortality estimates
- Maintain and expand current networks of acoustic receivers and acoustic tagging programs

Monitoring and Management Measures

- Monitoring: States must report annually on Atlantic sturgeon bycatch, fisheries-independent monitoring, habitat status and authorized aquaculture operations.
- Management: In 1998, the ASMFC implemented a coastwide moratorium until a minimum of 20 year classes of spawning females have been protected.
- States have been working with NOAA Fisheries to obtain Section 10 incidental take permits for various fisheries and gear types regulated in its jurisdictions.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('90); Amendment 1 ('98); Addendum I ('01); Addendum II ('05); Addendum III ('06); Addendum IV ('12)

Overview of Depleted Species

Atlantic Sturgeon Coastwide and DPS-level Stock Status Based on Mortality Estimates (Z) and Biomass/Abundance Status Relative to Historic Levels and the Last Year of Available Indices Data Relative to the Start of the Coastwide Moratorium

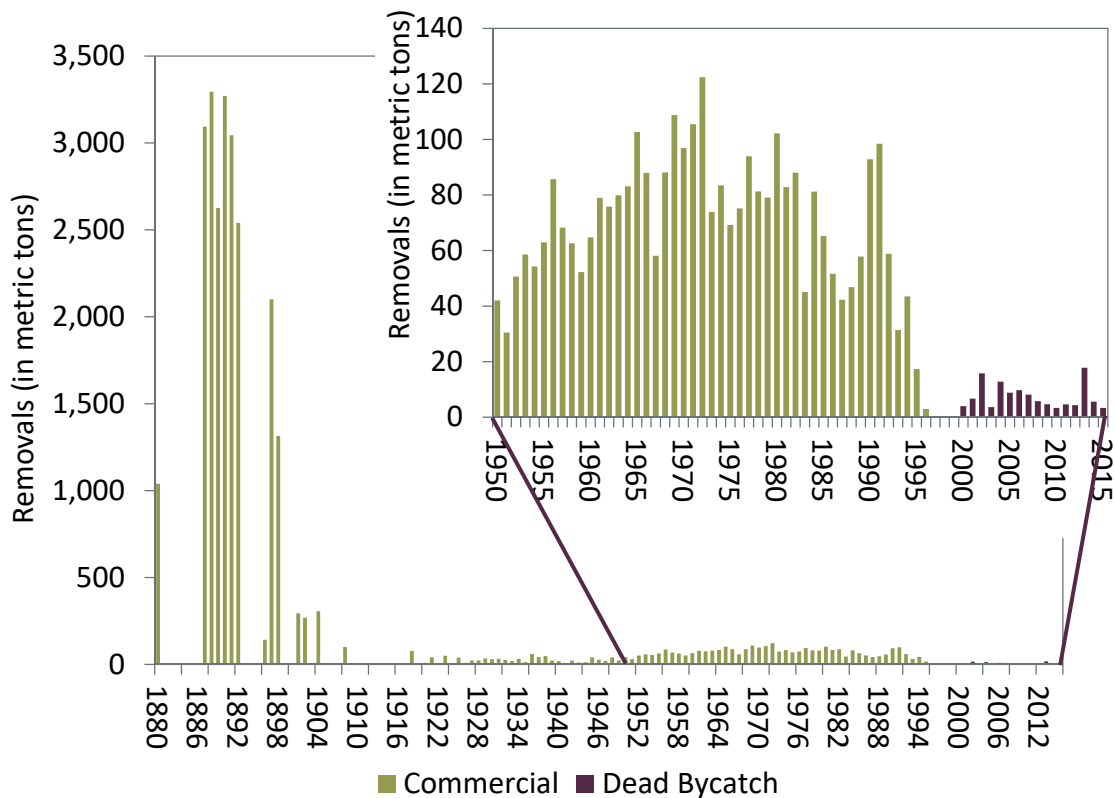
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Sturgeon Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2017

Stock status was determined via the probability that the terminal year of the indices for a given DPS was greater than the 1998 index value (or first year of the time series if after 1998) as evaluated by the ARIMA analysis, and by comparing estimates of total mortality (Z) from the tagging model to estimates of $Z_{50\%EPR}$ (that level of mortality that would result in 50% of the egg production of an unexploited population), with 80% confidence.

	Mortality Status	Biomass/Abundance Status	
Population	Probability that $Z > Z_{50\%EPR}$ 80%	Relative to Historical Levels	Average probability of terminal year of indices > 1998* value
Coastwide	7%	Depleted	95%
Gulf of Maine	74%	Depleted	51%
New York Bight	31%	Depleted	75%
Chesapeake Bay	30%	Depleted	36%
Carolina	75%	Depleted	67%
South Atlantic	40%	Depleted	Unknown (no suitable indices)

Coastwide Atlantic Sturgeon Commercial Landings and Dead Bycatch, 1880–2014. Inserted graph provides same information but for a more recent timeframe, 1950–2014.

Source: ASMFC Atlantic Sturgeon Benchmark Stock Assessment, 2017



Overview of Depleted Species

Horseshoe Crab (New York): Depleted

2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment Findings

- Stock status was based on the percentage of surveys within a region (or coastwide) having a >50% probability of the ARIMA-fitted index for the final year (i_f) being below the 1998 reference index value (i_{1998}). “Poor” status was >66% of surveys meeting this criterion, “Good” status was <33% of surveys, and “Neutral” status was 34-65% of surveys.
- With 4 of 4 surveys (100%) having a >50% probability in the New York Region, the region is considered “poor.”
- The New York region’s status has declined from “Good” (2009 Benchmark Assessment), to “Neutral” (2013 Assessment Update), and now to “Poor.”

Survey	i_f	i_{1998}	$P(i_f < i_{1998})$
New York Region			
CT Long Island Sound Trawl - Fall	0.06	0.86	1.00
NEAMAP - Fall	1.19		
NY Jamaica Bay Seine	-0.69	0.10	0.96
NY Little Neck and Manhasset Bay Seine	0.33	1.47	1
NY Peconic Trawl	-1.65	0.38	1.00

Needed Information/Data

- Development of a population model and reference points
- Better characterization of commercial discards and resulting mortalities, as well as fishery-independent surveys and landings by fishery, sex, and life stage
- Expanded data collection and analysis of current fishery-independent surveys and implementation of new surveys that target horseshoe crabs throughout their full range
- Dedicated funding for a coastwide survey or surveys by broader geographical region

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- The New York region shows a concerning trend of population decline, despite no biomedical use and bait harvest lower than the quota allowed by the Fishery Management Plan (quota shown in the figure is the sum of CT and NY state quotas).

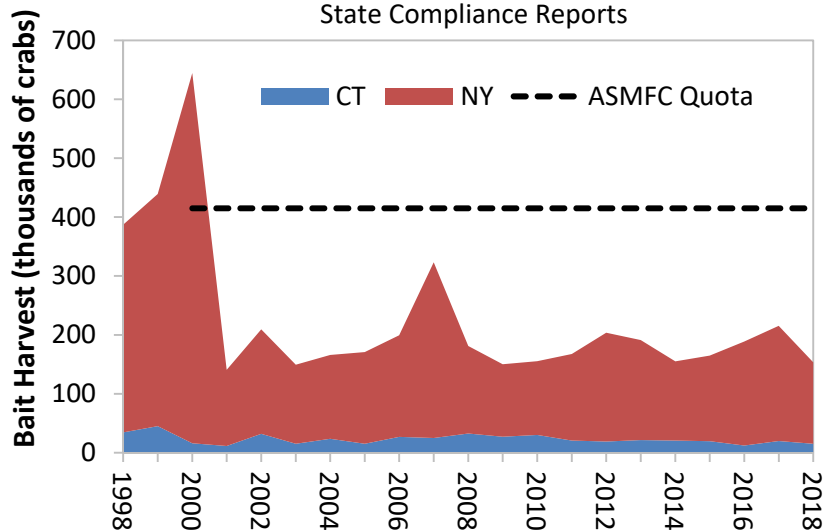
Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- The Board will consider a possible management response to the assessment in August.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Declining

New York Region Horseshoe Crab Bait Harvest
Source: ASMFC 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment and State Compliance Reports



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('99); Addendum I ('00); Addendum II ('01); Addendum III ('04); Addendum IV ('06); Addendum V ('08); Addendum VI ('10); Addendum VII ('12)

Overview of Depleted Species

Northern Shrimp: Depleted

Assessment Findings (2018 Stock Assessment Update)

- The Technical Committee used a length-structured stock assessment model to analyze catch and landings data, survey indices of abundance and biomass, and environmental conditions, to determine the status of the stock.
- Based on the results of the 2018 Stock Assessment Update, the northern shrimp stock in the Gulf of Maine remains depleted, with spawning stock biomass at extremely low levels since 2013.
- Fishing mortality has been very low in recent years due to the moratorium.
- Recruitment failure has been observed in five of the past eight years (the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016 year classes), and recruitment of the 2013, 2015, and 2017 year classes was below average. Long-term trends in environmental conditions are not favorable for northern shrimp, suggesting a need to conserve spawning stock biomass to help compensate for what may continue to be an unfavorable environment.
- Low recruitment and high natural mortality hinder stock recovery.

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

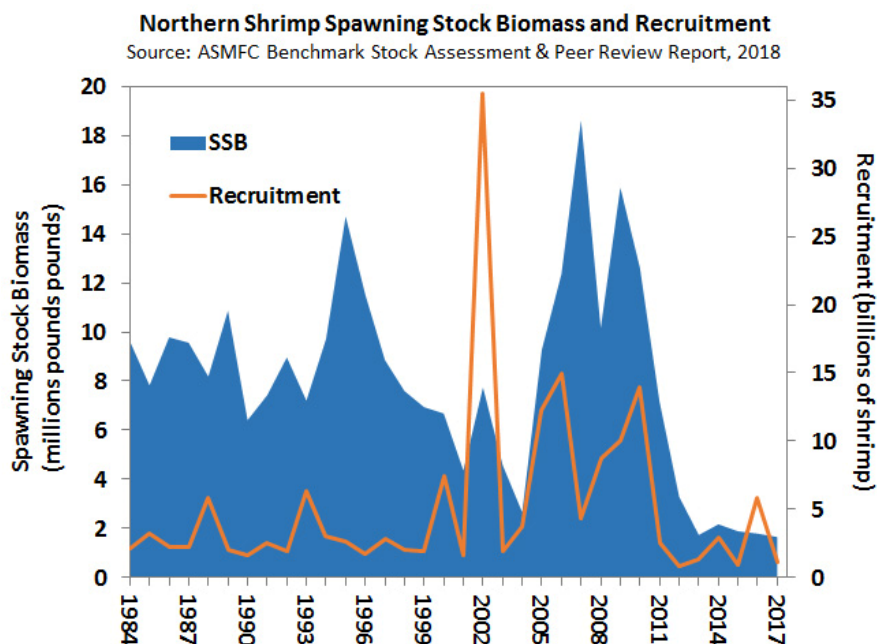
Given the continued poor condition of the resource, the poor prospects for a 2019 commercial season, and the value of maximizing spawning potential to rebuild the stock, the Technical Committee recommended extending the moratorium on fishing through 2019.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- The Section has implemented a fishery moratorium since 2014. In 2018, the Section extended the moratorium until 2021.

Next Assessment: Stock Assessment Data Update in 2019

Rebuilding Trajectory: Declining



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('86); Amendment 1 ('04); Amendment 2 ('11); Addendum I ('12); Amendment 3 ('17)

Overview of Depleted Species

River Herring: Depleted

Depleted: The coastwide meta-complex of river herring stocks on the US Atlantic coast remains depleted to near historic lows (2017 Assessment Update).

Overfishing Determination: No overfishing determination can be made at this time.

Assessment Findings (2017 Assessment Update)

- Of the 54 in-river stocks of river herring for which data were available, 16 experienced increasing trends over the ten most recent years of the Assessment Update data time series, 2 experienced decreasing trends, 8 were stable, 10 experienced no discernible trend/high variability, and 18 did not have enough data to assess recent trends, including 1 that had no returning fish.
- One of sixteen young-of-the-year seine surveys indicated a declining trend over the last ten years, two indicated increasing trends, and thirteen indicated no trend.
- For both species, mean length continues to decline; there is no significant change in trends in maximum age and mean length-at-age since the 2012 Benchmark Assessment.
- Recent domestic landings totaled <2.3 million pounds in any given year.
- Commercial landings by domestic and foreign fleets peaked at 140 million pounds in 1969.
- The “depleted” determination was used instead of “overfished” and “overfishing” because of the many factors that have contributed to the declining abundance of river herring, including habitat loss, predation, and climate changes.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

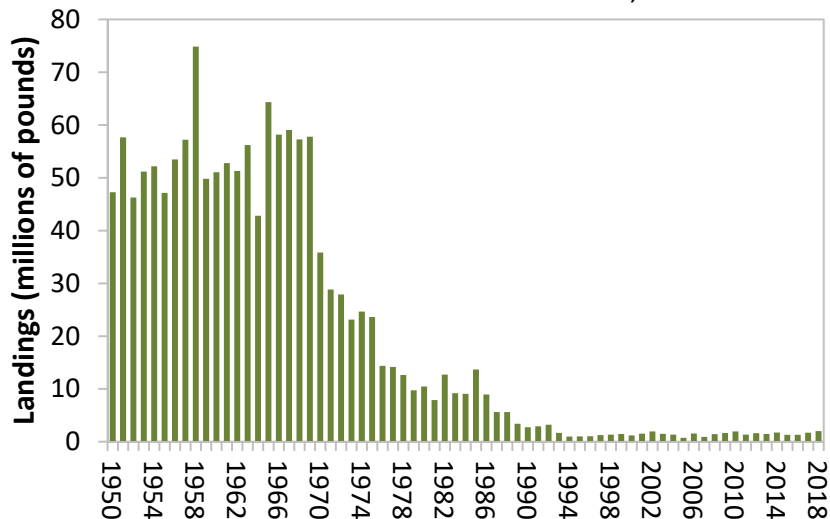
- In 2009, the Board approved Amendment 2, in response to concern for river herring stocks.
- The Amendment prohibits state waters commercial and recreational fisheries beginning January 1, 2012, unless a state or jurisdiction has a SFMP plan reviewed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Management Board.
- Amendment 2 required states to implement fisheries-dependent and -independent monitoring programs, and contains recommendations to conserve, restore, and protect critical river herring habitat.
- As of January 1, 2012, the Shad and River Herring Management Board approved SFMPs for Maine, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina and South Carolina. As of March 2017, the Board approved updates to all SFMPs.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Unknown

River Herring Commercial Landings

Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2019



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('85);
Amendment 1 ('95); Amendment 2 – River Herring ('09)

Overview of Depleted Species

Abundance Trends of Select Alewife and Blueback Herring Stocks along the Atlantic Coast from the 2012 Benchmark Assessment and the 2017 Assessment Update

State	River	Benchmark Trends (2001-2010)	Updated Recent Trends (2006-2015)
NE U.S. Continental Shelf (NMFS Bottom Trawl) [^]		NA	Increasing ^{A,B}
ME	Androscoggin	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^A
	Kennebec	Unknown ^{RH}	Increasing ^{RH}
	Seabiscuit	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^{RH}
	Damariscotta	Stable ^A	Increasing ^A
	Union	Stable ^A	No Trend ^A
NH	Cochecho	Stable ^{A,B}	Increasing ^{A,B}
	Exeter	Unknown ^{A,B}	Stable ^{RH}
	Lamprey	Increasing ^A	Increasing ^{RH}
	Oyster	Stable ^B	Decreasing ^{RH}
	Taylor	Decreasing ^B	No Returns ^{RH}
	Winnicut	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
MA	Mattapoissett	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^A
	Monument	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^{A,B}
	Nemasket	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^A
	Parker	Unknown ^A	Stable ^A
	Stony Brook	Unknown ^A	Unknown ^A
RI	Buckeye	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^A
	Gilbert	Decreasing ^A	Stable ^A
	Nonquit	Decreasing ^A	Decrease ^A
CT	Bride Brook	Unknown ^A	Increasing ^A
	Connecticut	Decreasing ^B	Stable ^B
	Farmington	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Mianus	Unknown ^{A,B}	No Trend ^A , Increasing ^B
	Mill Brook	Unknown ^A	No Trend ^A
	Naugatuck	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Shetucket	Unknown ^{A,B}	No Trend ^A , Stable ^B
NY	Hudson	Stable ^{A,B}	Increasing ^{RH}
NJ, DE, PA	Delaware	Unknown ^{A,B}	No Trend ^{A,B}
MD, DE	Nanticoke	Decreasing ^{A,B}	Stable ^A , No Trend ^B
VA, MD, DC	Potomac	Unknown ^{A,B}	Stable ^A , Unknown ^B
VA	James	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Rappahannock	Unknown ^{A,B}	No Trend ^A , Increasing ^B
	York	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
NC	Alligator	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Chowan	Stable ^{A,B}	No Trend ^A , Stable ^B
	Scuppernong	Unknown ^{A,B}	Unknown ^{A,B}
SC	Santee-Cooper	Increasing ^B	No Trend ^B
FL	St. Johns River	NA	Unknown ^B

[^]NE shelf trends are from the spring, coastwide survey data which encounters river herring more frequently than the fall survey. A = Alewife only; B= Blueback herring only; A,B = Alewife and blueback herring by species; RH = alewife and blueback herring combined.

Overview of Depleted Species

Tautog: Depleted

Assessment Findings

2016 Stock Assessment Update

- The assessment includes data through 2015
- The LIS and NJ/NY Bight regions indicate overfishing
- LIS, NJ/NY Bight and DelMarVa regions are overfished

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- The assessment proposed new reference points for each region (see table for stock condition and regional stock definition)

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Board approved Amendment 1 in October 2017, which includes new management goals and objectives, biological reference points, fishing mortality targets, and stock rebuilding schedules. The Amendment institutes regional management and delineates the stock into four regions based on stock definition.
- The Board approved a lower harvest reduction for Long Island Sound (20.3%) than that recommended by scientific advice (the assessment recommended a 47% reduction) based on economic and data concerns.

Rebuilding Trajectory: Flat at low levels

Tautog Biological Reference Points and Stock Status by Region								
Source: ASMFC Tautog Stock Assessment Update, 2016								
Region	Fishing Mortality			Spawning Stock Biomass (mt)			MSY or SPR	Status
	Target	Threshold	3-Year Average	Target	Threshold	SSB ₂₀₁₅		
Massachusetts – Rhode Island	0.28	0.49	0.23	2,684	2,004	2,196	SPR	Not overfished, overfishing not occurring
Long Island Sound	0.28	0.49	0.51	2,865	2,148	1,603	MSY	Overfished, overfishing occurring
New Jersey – New York Bight	0.20	0.34	0.54	3,154	2,351	1,809	SPR	Overfished, overfishing occurring
Delaware – Maryland – Virginia	0.16	0.24	0.16	1,919	1,447	621	SPR	Overfished, overfishing not occurring

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('96); Addendum I ('97); Addendum II ('99); Addendum II ('02); Addenda IV & V ('07); Addendum VI ('11); Amendment 1 ('17)

Overview of Depleted Species

Weakfish: Depleted

2016 Benchmark Assessment - Depleted:

SSB at 37% of threshold in 2014

Overfishing Not Occurring: Total mortality (Z) in 2014 was above the threshold but below the target, indicating that Z is still high but within acceptable limits.

Assessment Findings (2016 Benchmark Assessment)

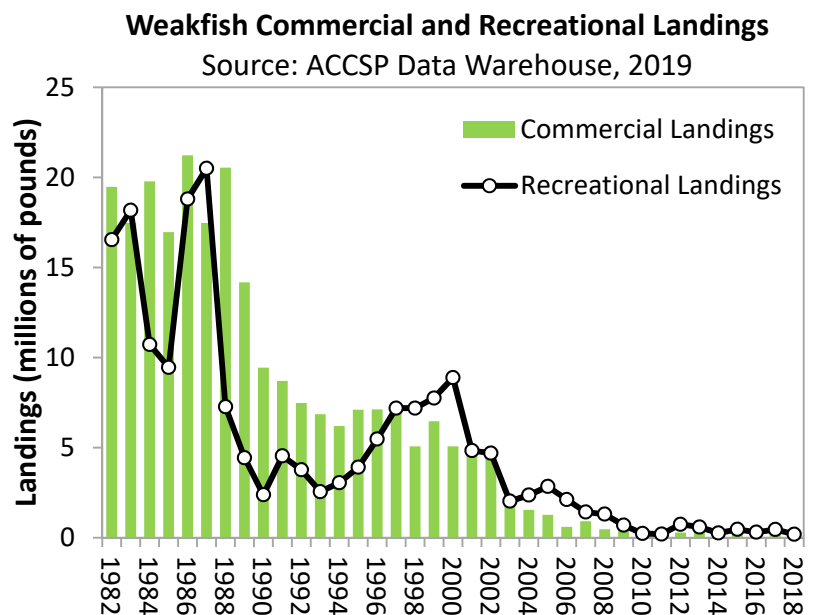
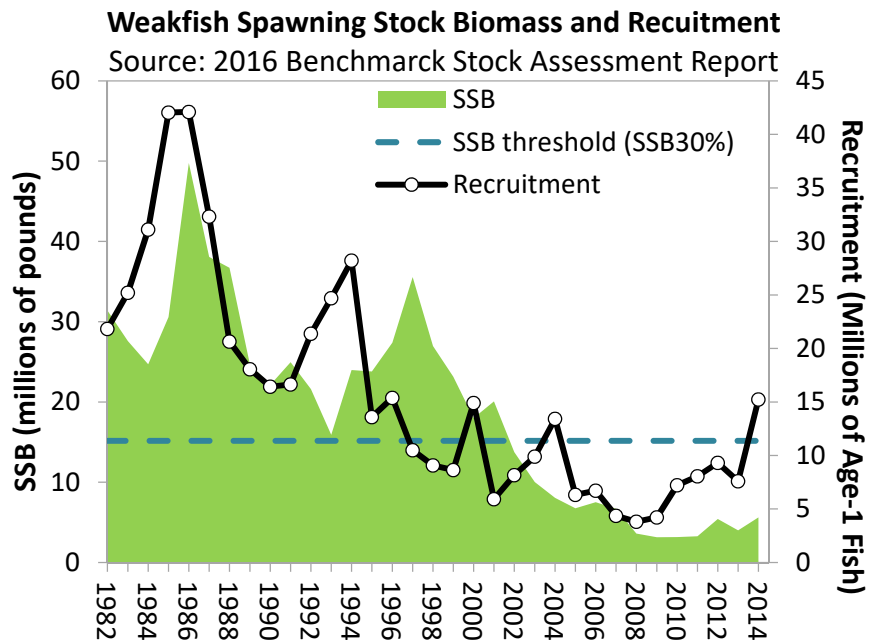
- Natural mortality (M) has increased since the mid-1990s, from approximately 0.16 in the early 1980s to an average of 0.93 from 2007-2014. Potential factors causing high M include predation, competition, and changes in the environment.
- While the assessment indicates some positive signs in the weakfish stock in the most recent years, including a slight increase in SSB and total abundance, the stock is still well below the SSB threshold.
- Weakfish landings have dramatically declined since the early 1980s, dropping from over 19 million pounds in 1982 to roughly 299,522 pounds in 2018.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Based on results of the 2009 stock assessment and peer review, the Board approved Addendum IV, which 1) revised the biological reference points; 2) implemented a commercial trip limit, and 3) reduced the recreational bag limit, the commercial bycatch limit, and the finfish trawl fishery's allowance for undersized fish.
- Following the 2016 stock assessment, the Board maintained strict regulations on the harvest of weakfish in the commercial and recreational fishery. The Board also adopted new reference points based on SSB and Z, per the recommendation of the Technical Committee.

Next Assessment: Assessment Update in 2019

Rebuilding Trajectory: Slight increase in SSB and abundance



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('85); Amendment 1 ('91); Amendment 2 (1995); Amendment 3 ('96); Amendment 4 ('02); Addendum I ('05); Addenda II & III ('07); Addendum IV ('09)

Overview of Depleted Species

Winter Flounder - SNE/MA: Depleted

2017 Groundfish Operational Stock Assessment

Overfished:

- 2016 SSB was estimated to be 4,360 mt, which is 18% of the SSB target and 36% of the SSB threshold.
- Overall, there is a declining trend for SSB throughout the time series, with current estimates near the time series low; however, recruitment has increased since an all-time low in 2013.

Overfishing is Not Occurring:

- F in 2016 was estimated to be 0.21, which is 52% of the overfishing threshold.
- Estimates of fishing mortality have remained steady since 2012.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- Stock status remains unchanged since the 2011 benchmark assessment.

- After reviewing the 2015 assessment update, the Board sent a letter to the New England Council and NOAA Fisheries expressing its concern regarding winter flounder stocks, specifically highlighting the SNE/MA stock. The Board requested the Technical Committee further investigate the impacts of the zero possession limit on the SNE/MA stock.

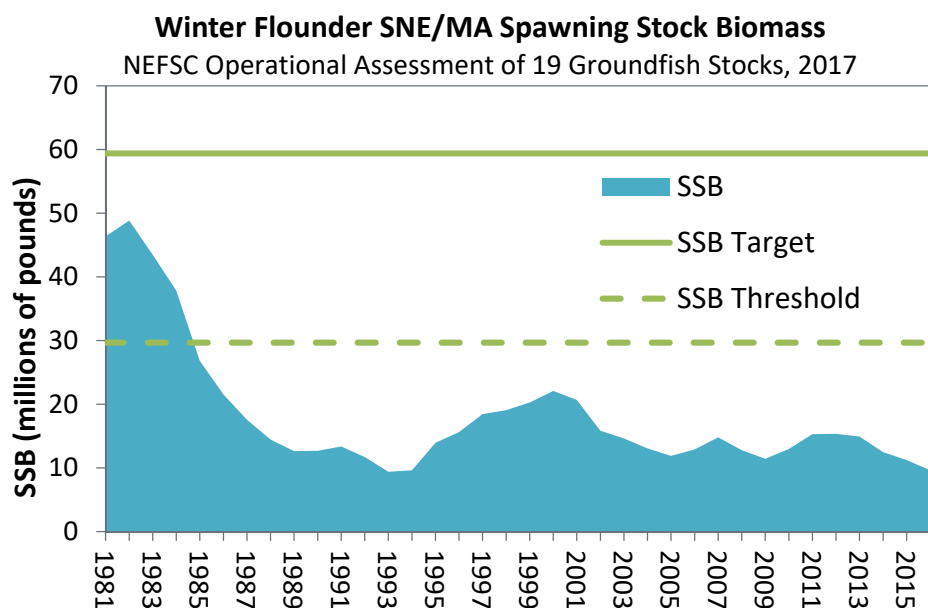
- In 2016, the Technical Committee presented the following report to the Board, *A Review of the SNE/MA Winter Flounder Fishery and Management Program Under Zero Possession Limits*.

The Technical Committee believes the length of the moratorium (May 1, 2009-April 30, 2013) may not have been long enough to positively impact the stock. Most surveys indicate a declining trend in abundance, suggesting the moratorium did not result in increased stock size. While the Technical Committee did not recommend a reduction in the trip limits, currently set at a bycatch limit of 50 pounds, it encouraged the Board to choose management actions that continue to reduce fishing mortality and maintain a bycatch fishery in state waters.

- Following Technical Committee advice, the Board maintained a 50-pound trip limit for non-federally permitted commercial vessels for the 2017 and 2018 fishing seasons.
- For 2018, NOAA Fisheries set the state waters sub-component to 73 mt, a slight increase from the 70 mt in 2017. The total stock-wide annual catch limit was reduced to 700 mt in 2018 (from 749 mt in 2017).

Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Flat at low levels



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP & Addendum I ('92); Addendum II ('98); Amendment 1 ('05); Addendum I ('09); Addendum II ('12); Addendum III ('13)

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

Atlantic Croaker: Unknown

2010 Stock Assessment Findings

- Atlantic croaker were not experiencing overfishing. The assessment showed increasing biomass and an expanding age structure in the population since the 1980s. Atlantic croaker are considered to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast.
- Due to a high degree of uncertainty in the amount of shrimp trawl discards, the overfished status could not be determined. Similarly, values of SSB and F were not considered reliable; however, estimated trends show increasing biomass and decreasing fishing mortality.

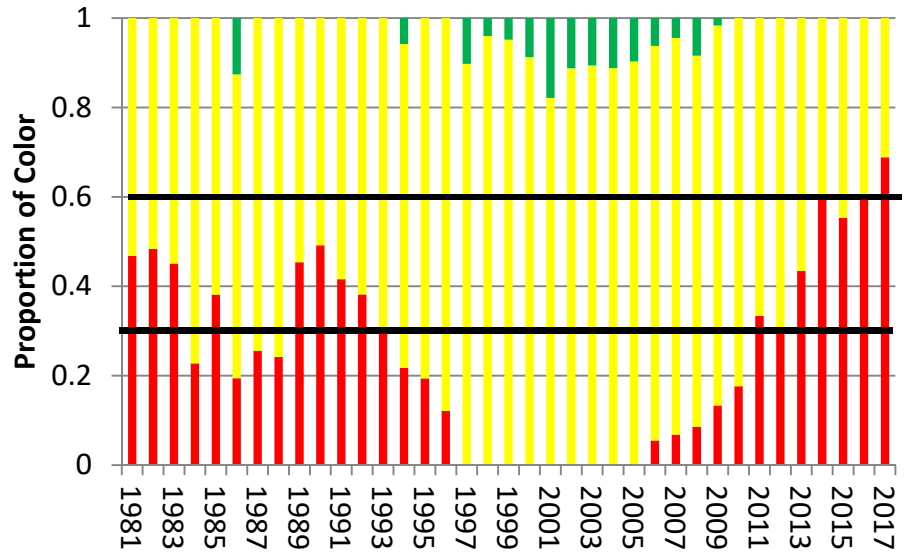
2017 Stock Assessment

- The 2017 benchmark stock assessment used a stock synthesis model to address a major source of uncertainty from previous assessments – the magnitude of croaker bycatch in South Atlantic shrimp trawls. However, due to conflicting trends in abundance and harvest, as well as other uncertainties, this assessment was not recommended for management use.

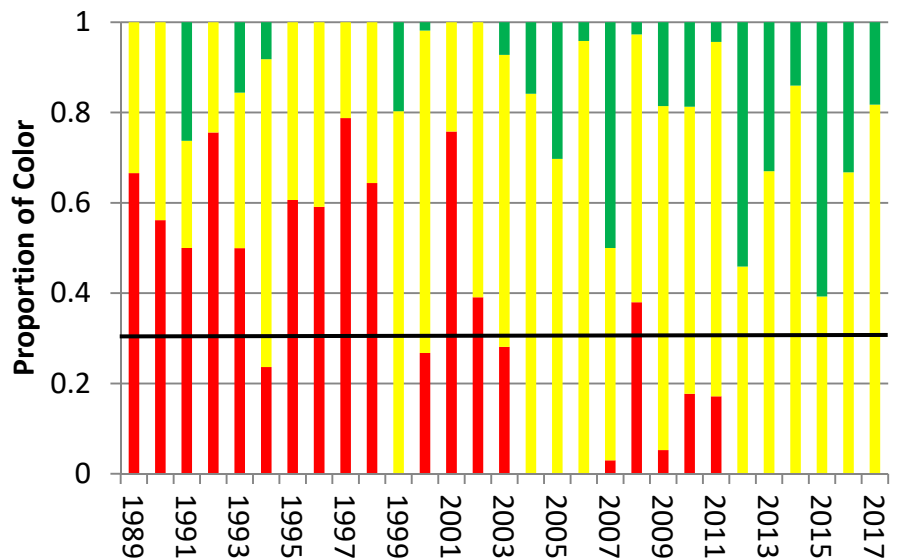
Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- In August 2018, the PRT completed a traffic light analysis (TLA) for the 2017 fishing year. The results showed increasing trends in the fishery-independent indices, but a drop in both commercial and recreational landings. While the harvest index was above the 30% and 60% thresholds with a red proportion of 69%, management measures were not tripped since the abundance index was below the threshold at 0% red.

Traffic Light Analysis Harvest Metric
Solid lines represent the 30% and 60% thresholds



Traffic Light Analysis Abundance Metric
Solid line represents 30% threshold



Management response is triggered when proportion of red exceeds the 30% threshold level (black line) for three consecutive years in both fishery characteristics (landings and fishery-independent survey indices).

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('87); Amendment 1 ('05); Addendum I ('11); Addendum II ('14)

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

- The 2017 stock assessment was not approved for management advice, in part, due to conflicting trends in abundance and harvest, which are also seen in the TLA. The Technical Committee determined this conflict was impacted by juvenile fish being captured by purportedly adult surveys. The Technical Committee recommended several adjustments to the TLA that would allow adult abundance trends to be more apparent and agreeable with harvest trends. The South Atlantic Board initiated an addendum to incorporate these adjustments and redefine the management response at the 2019 Spring Meeting.

Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- The 2017 Peer Review Panel stressed the importance of developing valid estimates of shrimp trawl discards to improve the certainty of future assessment results. The following were also highlighted as needs for data and analysis:
 - More information on the coastwide distribution, behavior, and movement of croaker by age, length, and season, with an emphasis on collecting larger, older fish
 - Continuation of fishery independent surveys throughout the species range with subsamples for individual lengths and ages
 - Continued development of estimates of length-at-maturity and year-round reproductive dynamics throughout the species range to determine whether temporal and/or density-dependent shifts in reproductive dynamics have occurred

Monitoring and Management

- Under the TLA, if thresholds for both population characteristics (adult abundance and harvest) achieve or exceed the management threshold of 30% for the specified three year period, management action will be taken.

Rebuilding Trajectory: Unknown

Next Assessment: Unknown

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

Horseshoe Crab (Northeast): Unknown

2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment Findings

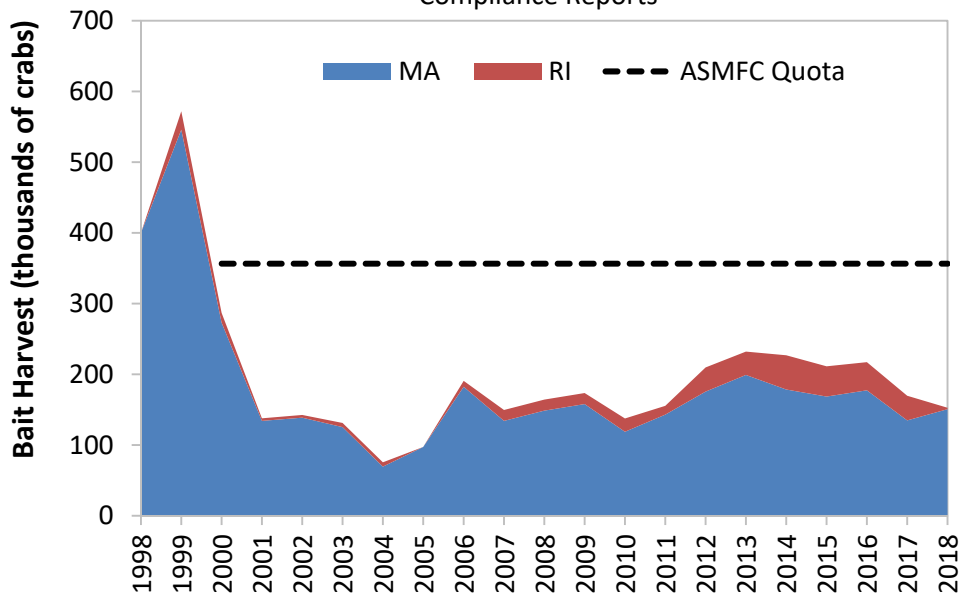
- Stock status was based on the percentage of surveys within a region (or coastwide) having a >50% probability of the final year being below the ARIMA reference point. “Poor” status was >66% of surveys meeting this criterion, “Good” status was <33% of surveys, and “Neutral” status was 34-65% of surveys.
- With 1 of 2 surveys (50%) having a >50% probability in the Northeast Region, the region is considered “neutral.” This may be an improvement from the previous two stock assessments, which categorized the region as “poor;” however, there is considerable uncertainty to this designation due to the conflicting signals and the limited amount of spatial coverage by the surveys modeled.
- One of the two surveys used in analysis showed an increasing trend, while the other showed a decreasing trend, so the region’s stock status is unknown.

Survey	i_f	i_{1998}	$P(i_f < i_{1998})$
Northeast Region			
MA DMF Trawl – South of Cape Cod	-0.11	-1.13	0.08
RI Monthly Trawl - Fall	-1.16	-0.88	0.62

Needed Information/Data

- Development of a population model and reference points
- Better characterization of commercial discards and resulting mortalities, as well as fishery-independent surveys and landings by fishery, sex, and life stage
- Expanded data collection and analysis of current fishery-independent surveys and implementation of new surveys that target horseshoe crabs throughout their full range
- Dedicated funding for a coastwide survey or surveys by broader geographical region

Northeast Region Horseshoe Crab Bait Harvest
Source: ASMFC 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment and State Compliance Reports



Scientific Advice Based on Assessment Findings

- The Northeast population of horseshoe crab should continue to be monitored due to uncertainty of the population’s status. The regional quota shown in the figure is the sum of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island state quotas.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- The Board will consider a possible management response to the assessment at its next meeting in August.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Rebuilding Trajectory: Unknown

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

Jonah Crab: Unknown

Available Information

- Landings have increased 6.48 fold since the early 2000s, with over 17 million pounds of crab landed in 2014. These high landings have continued with 20.2 million pounds of Jonah crab landed in 2018.
- The status of the Jonah crab resource is relatively unknown and there is currently no data on juvenile recruitment.
- Bottom trawl surveys conducted by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries found an exponential increase in Jonah crab abundance since 2010, particularly in the spring.
- The Northeast Fisheries Science Center 2014 surveys showed record high abundance in the Georges Bank and Gulf of Maine regions. The spring survey in Southern New England has been fairly stable.

Needed Information/Data

- Conduct age-at-maturity studies in U.S. waters.
- Investigate the extent and motivation of annual migration patterns.
- Research the timing and rates of maturity at different regions along the coast.
- Determine Jonah crab growth rates, including the frequency of molting and molt increments.

Management and Monitoring Measures

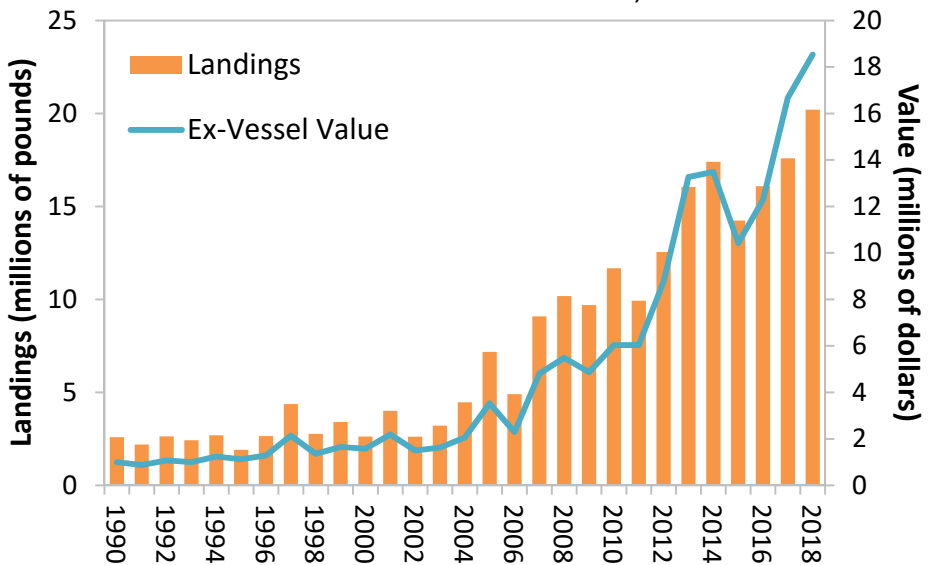
- Following the recommendations of the Jonah Crab Fishery Improvement Project, the Board approved an Interstate Fishery Management Plan in August 2015 which included a 4.75" minimum size and a prohibition on the retention of egg-bearing females.
- To address concerns about bycatch in the fishery, the Board approved Addendum I in May 2016, setting a 1,000 crab limit for non-trap gear and non-lobster traps. Addendum II built upon this management measure by defining bycatch based on the composition of catch, by weight. Addendum II also established a coastwide standard for claw landings in the fishery.
- In 2018, the Board approved Addendum III, which expanded the required harvester reporting data elements, established a timeline for increased harvester reporting, and improved the spatial resolution of harvester data.

Next Assessment

No assessment is currently scheduled due to a lack of data.

Commercial Landings and Ex-Vessel Value

Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2019



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('15); Addendum I ('16); Addendum II ('17); Addendum III ('18)

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

Spot: Unknown

Available Information

- Coastwide commercial landings have declined since 1950, with a high of 14.52 million pounds landed in 1952 and a low of 675,515 pounds landed in 2016.
- Recreational catches between 1981 and 2018 show a general decline, with the lowest recreational harvest (3.29 million pounds) occurring in 2018.
- Traffic Light Analysis of the 2017 fishing year showed a red proportion above the 30% threshold (37%) for the third consecutive year. 2017 adult abundance decreased significantly from 2016, but was still just below the 30% threshold at 29% red. Management measures were not tripped since the abundance index was below the threshold and has been for the last three years.
- Recruitment indices are highly variable but have shown low abundances since 2013.
- A stock assessment was completed in 2017, but no assessment has been recommended for management advice; ability to conduct a defensible assessment has been hindered by inadequate discard data, particularly in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery, and difficulties caused by misclassification of juveniles in adult abundance surveys.

Board Adherence to Scientific Advice

- In August 2018, the PRT completed a traffic light analysis for the 2017 fishing year. The results showed increasing trends in the fishery independent indices and an increase in both commercial and recreational landings. While the harvest index was above the 30% threshold with a red proportion of 37%, management measures were not tripped since the abundance index was below the threshold at 29%.
- The 2017 stock assessment was not approved for management advice, in part, due to conflicting trends in abundance and harvest, which are also seen in the TLA. The Spot PRT determined that this conflict was impacted by juvenile fish being captured by purportedly adult surveys. The PRT recommended several adjustments to the TLA that would allow adult abundance trends to be more apparent and agreeable with harvest trends. The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Board initiated an addendum to incorporate these adjustments and redefine the management response at the 2019 Spring Meeting.

Monitoring and Management Measures

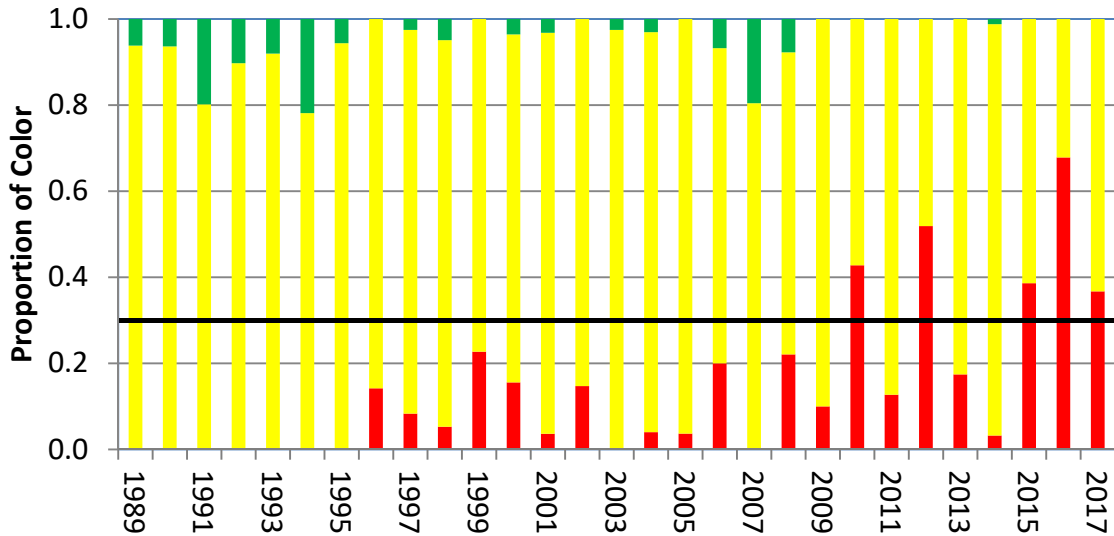
- Addendum I (2014) established the Traffic Light Analysis as the new management framework to evaluate trends in the fishery. When harvest and abundance thresholds are exceeded for two years, management actions are developed. The Traffic Light Analysis is not updated during years in which a stock assessment is being conducted.

Next Assessment: Unknown

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

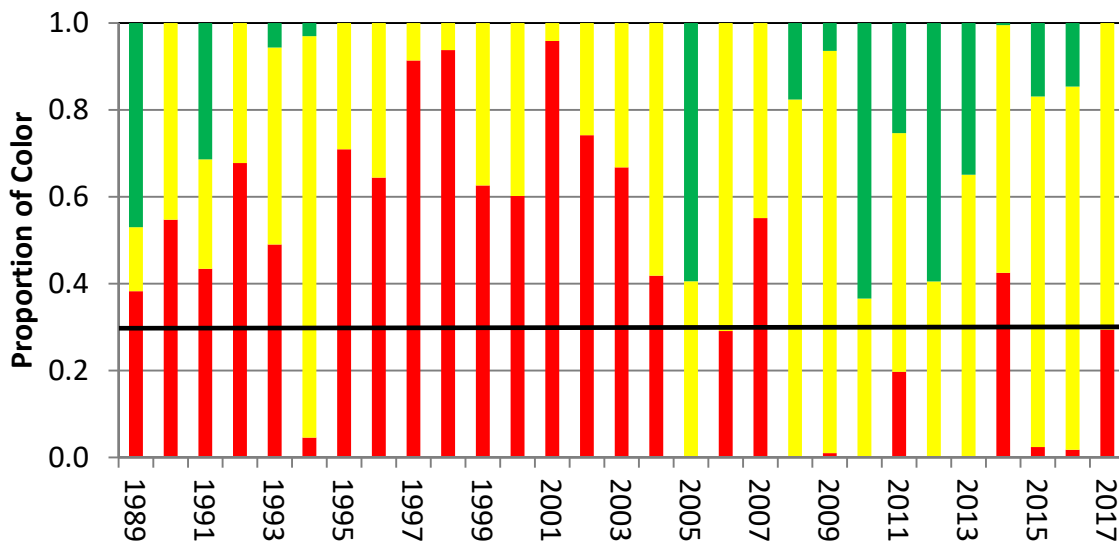
Traffic Light Analysis Harvest Metric

Solid line represents 30% threshold



Traffic Light Analysis Abundance Metric

Solid line represents 30% threshold



Management response is triggered when proportion of red exceeds the 30% threshold level (black line) for two consecutive years in both fishery characteristics (landings and fishery-independent survey indices).

Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('87); Omnibus Amendment ('11); Addendum I ('14)

Overview of Species of Unknown Stock Status

Spotted Seatrout: Unknown

Available Information

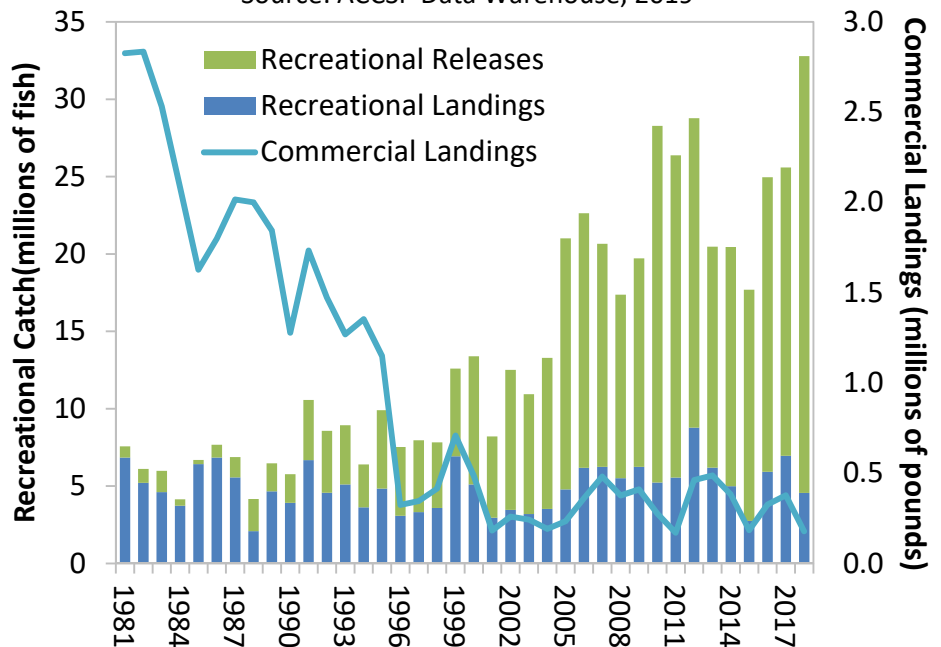
- Commercial landings have generally decreased from the 1970s through 2018, but have varied without much directional trend since 1996.
- Recreational catches have increased since 1981. However, this is due to an increase in the number of releases; harvest has remained stable.
- State stock assessments
 - NC and VA: stock assessment covering 1991-2013 indicated SPR above 20% goal; shows an expanded age structure, but a decline in recruitment after 2010
 - SC: SPR just above 20% goal in 1992; non-peer reviewed assessment through 2004 indicated SPR below 20% goal
 - GA: SPR below 20% goal in 1995
 - FL: SPR = 29% northeast region, 45% southeast regions during 2013-2015; goal of 35% SPR; overfishing not likely in either region

Needed Information/Data

- Conduct state-specific stock assessments to determine stock status relative to the plan objective of maintaining a spawning potential of at least 20%
- Collect data on the size or age of spotted seatrout released alive by anglers and the size and age of commercial discards
- Research release mortality and how this changes with factors such as season, habitat (e.g., depth, temperature, salinity), fish life history (e.g., size, age) and fishing methods (e.g., gear types)

Spotted Seatrout Commercial Landings and Recreational Catch

Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2019



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP (1985); Amendment 1 (1991); Omnibus Amendment (2011)

Monitoring and Management

- Amendment I sets the objective of the FMP to achieve 20% spawning potential to minimize the possibility of recruitment failure. Florida has established a 35% SPR.
- The Omnibus Amendment, approved in 2011, updated the Spotted Seatrout FMP to include at 12" TL minimum size and recommended measures to protect the spawning stock.

Next Assessment: No coastwide assessment planned or recommended by PRT due to the non-migratory nature of the species and the lack of available data.

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

August 2019

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

Preface

This document outlines the standard operating procedures and policies of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program. It was first developed in response to passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993, which provided the Commission with responsibilities to ensure member state compliance with interstate fishery management plans. The Act authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to pre-empt any state fishery not in compliance with a Commission fishery management plan.

The Charter was first printed in April 1995 and subsequently revised in May 1996, October 2000, and November 2002. It was further edited in April 2001 (to reflect changes in the membership of the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board); July 2003 (to correct for incorrect references); January 2006 (to reflect a policy decision on voting by specific proxies); November 2008 (to reflect the addition of a habitat addendum provision); August 2009 (minor editorial changes); May 2013 (to reflect the Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process Document). The revisions were adopted in February 2016 to reflect current Commission practices regarding appealing noncompliance findings; defining final actions and two-thirds majority; public hearing requirements for public information documents, FMPs, amendments and addenda; the timing of advisory panel input on proposed management actions; and clarifying regional management council participation on species management boards that manage multiple species. The last revisions were adopted in November 2017 to reflect changes in the membership on the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences.

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

Table of Contents

Section One. Introduction and Policy	1
Section Two. Role of the Commission	1
Section Three. ISFMP Policy Board.....	1
Membership.	1
Proxies.....	2
The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission	2
Role and Functions	2
Section Four. Management Boards.....	3
Fishery Management Board.....	3
Management Board Membership.....	3
Proxies.....	4
Conduct of Meetings.....	4
Functions.....	5
Sections under Amendment One.	5
Coordination with Regional Fishery Management Councils.....	5
Appeal Opportunity.	5
Section Five. Staff, Management, Technical, and Advisory Support.....	6
Staff Support.	6
Committee Organization.....	6
Plan Development Teams	6
Plan Review Teams.....	7
Assessment Science Committee..	7
Technical Committees.	8
Species Stock Assessment Subcommittees.....	9
Other Technical Support Subcommittees	10
Advisory Panels.	10
Habitat Committee.....	10
Artificial Reef Committee.....	11
Law Enforcement Committee.....	11
Management and Science Committee.....	12
Committee on Economics and Social Sciences	12
Other ASMFC Committees.....	13
Section Six. Standards and Procedures for Interstate Fishery Management Plans.....	13
Standards.....	13
Contents.	14
Section Seven. Compliance	20
Implementation and Enforcement.....	20
Schedule for Reviews.	21
Role of the Management Board/Section.....	21
Role of the Policy Board.....	21
Review and Determination by the Commission	21
Withdrawal of Determination.	21
Procedure to Address Management Program Implementation Delays.	22
Section Eight. Definitions.....	23

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

Section One. Introduction and Policy

(a) **General.** The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed in 1942. The purpose of the Commission is:

....to promote the better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the Atlantic seaboard by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries, and by the prevention of the physical waste of the fisheries from any cause. It is not the purpose....to authorize the states joining herein to limit the production of fish or fish products for the purpose of establishing or fixing the price thereof or creating and perpetuating monopoly.

(b) **Interstate Fisheries Management Program.** The Commission carries out an Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP), authorized by Article IV of the Commission's Rules and Regulations.

(c) It is the policy of the Commission that its ISFMP promote the conservation of Atlantic coastal fishery resources, be based on the best scientific information available, and provide adequate opportunity for public participation.

Section Two. Role of the Commission

(a) **General.** The Commission is responsible generally for the Commission's fishery management activities. These activities will be carried out through the ISFMP established under this charter.

(b) **Final Approval Authority.** The Commission will be the final approval authority for:

- (1) Any fishery management plan (FMP) and FMP amendment; and
- (2) Any final determination of a state's non-compliance with the provisions of a Commission approved FMP.

Section Three. ISFMP Policy Board

(a) **Membership.** The membership on the ISFMP Policy Board shall be comprised as follows:

- (1) All member states of the Commission shall be voting members, and shall be represented by all of its Commissioners (or duly appointed proxies) in attendance. The position of a state on any matter before the Policy Board shall be determined by caucus of its Commissioners in attendance;
- (2) One representative from the NOAA Fisheries and one representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall each be a voting member;

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(3) One representative from the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and one representative from the government of the District of Columbia shall each be a member, eligible to vote, on any matter which may impose a regulatory requirement upon their respective jurisdictions; and

(4) One representative of the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee shall be a non-voting member.

(b) **Proxies**. Any Commissioner from a state, or duly authorized representative of a jurisdiction or agency, that is a member of the Policy Board may designate a permanent, ongoing, board or meeting specific proxy. A change in the designation of a permanent or ongoing proxy may be made only once during the year. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a Commissioner may appoint specific proxies as needed to ensure representation. Proxies must be from the same state, jurisdiction, or agency as the individual making the designation. The Commission's code of conduct shall apply to all proxies. Only an individual who is serving as a permanent or ongoing proxy may further designate a specific proxy.

(c) The **Chair and Vice-Chair** of the Commission shall respectively be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ISFMP Policy Board.

(d) **Role and Functions**. The ISFMP Policy Board will be responsible for the overall administration and management of the Commission's fishery management programs. In this regard it will:

(1) Interpret and give guidance concerning the standards and procedures contained in Sections Six and Seven, and generally provide Commission policy governing the preparation and implementation of cooperative inter-jurisdictional fishery management for coastal fisheries of the Atlantic coast;

(2) Establish the priority species to be addressed by the Commission's fishery management program, taking into account the following criteria:

(i) The species constitutes a "coastal fishery resource" as defined in Section 803(2) of the Act;

(ii) The degree to which the species is of importance along the Atlantic coast; and

(iii) The probability that the species and associated fisheries will benefit from cooperative inter-jurisdictional management.

(3) Establish management boards/sections described in Section Four;

(4) Review and approve declarations of interest in species management by states according to the standards contained in the Commission Rules and Regulations;

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

- (5) Monitor and review the implementation of FMPs for which no management board or section is currently operational;
- (6) Review and approve action plans, including priorities for activities, for the ISFMP;
- (7) Establish, for any matter that does not come under the purview of an existing management board or section, a committee to provide it with any relevant analysis, reviews, and recommendations;
- (8) Recommend to the Commission that it make a determination of a state's non-compliance with the provisions of a Commission approved FMP, according to the procedures contained in Section Seven;
- (9) Consider and decide upon appeals of states to actions of any management board or section under Section Four(h); and
- (10) Take any other action that is consistent with this Charter and that is necessary and appropriate to carry out the fishery management program of the Commission; except that a final determination of a state's non-compliance with the provisions of a Commission-approved plan must be made by the Commission.

Section Four. Management Boards

(a) **Fishery Management Board.** Upon determining that a need exists in a fishery for the development of an FMP or amendment, the ISFMP Policy Board shall establish a management board for that fishery. A management board may be disbanded by the Policy Board upon a determination that it is no longer needed for the preparation, review, or ongoing monitoring of the implementation of an FMP or amendment.

(b) **Management Board Membership.** The voting membership of each management board shall be comprised as follows:

- (1) Each state with an interest in the fishery covered by the management board shall be a voting member, and shall be represented by all of its Commissioners (or duly appointed proxies) in attendance. The position of a state on any matter before the management board shall be determined by caucus of its Commissioners in attendance;
- (2) A representative from the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and the District of Columbia may each elect to serve as a voting member on any management board in which they have an interest or which may result in the imposition of regulatory requirements on their jurisdictions;
- (3) NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may each elect to serve as a voting member of any management board; and

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(4) Any one of the Executive Directors/Chairs of the Regional Fishery Management Councils may be invited to be a voting member of an ISFMP species management board when the management board determines that such membership would advance the inter-jurisdictional management of the specific species. When the management area includes more than one Council, the applicable Councils will need to identify one Executive Director/Chair to receive the invitation to participate on that board as a voting member. If a Council has been invited as a voting member of a Board/Section that manages multiple species, the Board/Section will designate which species can be discussed and voted on by the Council representative. A council staff member or member of the council may be appointed as a proxy for the Executive Director or Council Chair.

(c) **Proxies.** Any Commissioner from a state, or duly authorized representative of a jurisdiction or agency, that is a member of a management board may designate a permanent, ongoing, board specific or meeting specific proxy. A change in the designation of a permanent or ongoing proxy may be made only once during the year. In addition, a Commissioner may appoint specific proxies as needed to ensure representation. Proxies must be from the same state or jurisdiction or agency as the individual making the designation. The Commission's code of conduct shall apply to all proxies. Only an individual who is serving as a permanent or ongoing proxy may further designate a specific proxy.

(d) **Conduct of Meetings.**

(1) Meetings will generally be run according to the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order."

(2) Any Commissioner or proxy of a Commissioner or duly authorized representative of a jurisdiction or agency that is a member of a management board may make or second any motion; provided that the maker of the motion and second (when necessary) must each come from a different state, jurisdiction, or agency.

(3) Any meeting specific proxy appointed by a Legislative or Governor's Appointee Commissioner may not vote on a final action being considered by a board, section, or committee. For this section a final action will be defined as: setting fishery specifications (including but not limited to quotas, trip limits, possession limits, size limits, seasons, area closures, gear requirements), allocation, final approval of FMPs/amendments/addenda, emergency actions, conservation equivalency plans, and non-compliance recommendations. A meeting specific proxy may participate in the deliberations of the meeting, including making and seconding motions. Meeting specific proxies may vote on preliminary decisions such as issues to be included in a public hearing draft or approval of public information documents. Questions of procedure will be determined by the chair of the meeting upon the advice of the Executive Director or the senior Commission employee in attendance.

(4) Advisory Panel Chairs will only be reimbursed to attend Commission meetings if the advisory panel met between board/section meetings to provide feedback on an issue.

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(e) **Functions.**

- (1) Each management board shall be responsible for the development of an FMP, amendment, or addendum with respect to the fisheries under its jurisdiction as established by the ISFMP Policy Board.
- (2) Management boards/sections shall solicit public participation during the development of FMPs, amendments, or addenda.
- (3) A management board may, after the necessary FMP, amendment, or addendum has been approved, continue to monitor the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the FMP, amendment, or addendum or take other actions specified in the applicable document that are necessary to ensure its full and effective implementation.
- (4) Each management board shall select its own chair and vice-chair. The chair of management boards/sections will rotate among the voting members every two years, with the vice-chair acceding to the chair.

(f) **Sections under Amendment One.** Under Amendment One to the Compact creating the Commission, one or more states may agree to designate the Commission as a joint regulatory agency; Commissioners of these states shall constitute a separate section for these purposes. In any such instance the following procedures apply:

- (1) Agreements among states under Amendment One shall be in writing, and open to participation by all states with an interest in any fishery to which the agreement applies;
- (2) All Commissioners from states forming a section under Amendment One shall be members of the section; and
- (3) Regulatory authority exercised by the Commission under Amendment One shall be carried out pursuant to an FMP prepared according to this Charter. For these purposes, including determinations of non-compliance under Section Seven, a section shall have the same authority and responsibility as set forth in this Charter for a management board.

(g) **Coordination with Regional Fishery Management Councils.** Each management board shall work with appropriate committees of the Regional Fishery Management Councils and appropriate federal officials to insure that state and federal fishery management programs are coordinated, consistent, and complementary. It will be the policy of the Commission to develop FMPs jointly with Regional Fishery Management Councils wherever applicable

(h) **Appeal Opportunity.** Any state that is aggrieved by an action of the management board may appeal that action to the Policy Board, with the exception of a non-compliance finding in accordance with Section Three (d)(9).

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

Section Five. Staff, Management, Technical, and Advisory Support

(a) **Staff Support.** The Commission's Executive Director or the ISFMP Director shall serve ex-officio as non-voting members of all management boards and sections. Commission staff shall serve as ex-officio members of all technical committees and will chair the plan development teams (PDTs) and plan review teams (PRTs). Staff will provide liaison among the PDTs, PRTs, species stock assessment subcommittees, technical committees, and advisory panels and the management boards/sections. Commission staff will also provide liaison among the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, the Assessment Science, Habitat, Artificial Reef, Law Enforcement, and Management and Science Committees and the management boards/sections, and the Policy Board.

ISFMP and Science Program staffs have specific responsibilities with respect to supporting the activities of the technical support groups. These responsibilities are detailed in the [*Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process*](#) (approved February 2016).

(b) **Committee Organization.** Unless otherwise specified, each group included in this section shall elect its own chair and chair-elect (or vice-chair), which shall rotate every other year among the Committee members, with the chair-elect acceding to the chair. Committees shall maintain a record of their meetings compiled by the chair-elect (vice-chair) in consultation with the chair and Commission staff.

(c) **PDTs** shall be appointed by the management boards/sections to draft FMPs, amendments and addenda.

(1) PDTs shall be comprised of personnel from state and federal agencies who have scientific and management ability, knowledge of a species and its habitat, and an interest in the management of a species under the jurisdiction of the relevant management board. Personnel from Regional Fishery Management Councils, academicians, and others as appropriate may be included on a PDT. The size of the PDT shall be based on specific need for expertise but shall generally be kept to a maximum of six persons.

(2) It shall be the responsibility of a PDT to prepare all documentation necessary for the development of an FMP, amendment, or addendum using the best scientific information available and the most current stock assessment information. Each FMP, amendment, or addendum shall be developed by the PDT in conformance with Section Six of the ISFMP Charter.

(3) PDTs shall be tasked directly by the management boards/sections. In carrying out its activities, the PDT shall seek advisement from the appropriate technical committee, stock assessment subcommittee, advisory panel, Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, and the Assessment Science, Habitat, Artificial Reef and Law Enforcement Committees, where appropriate.

(4) Following completion of its charge, the PDT will be disbanded unless otherwise

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

determined by the board/section.

(d) **PRT** shall be appointed by the management boards/sections to review regulations and compliance. Members should be knowledgeable concerning the scientific data, stock and fishery condition, and fishery management issues. The PRT shall generally be kept to a maximum of six persons.

(1) PRTs will be responsible for providing advice concerning the implementation, review, monitoring, and enforcement of FMPs that have been adopted by the Commission, and as needed be charged by the management board/sections.

(2) Each PRT shall at least annually or as provided in a given FMP, conduct a review of the stock status and Commission member states' compliance for which implementation requirements are defined in the FMP. The PRT shall develop an annual plan review in order to evaluate the adequacy of the FMP. This report will address, at a minimum, the following topics: adequacy and achievement of the FMP goals and objectives (including targets and schedules), status of the stocks, status of the fisheries, status of state implementation and enforcement, status of the habitat, research activities, and other information relevant to the FMP. The PRT shall report all findings in writing to the management board/section for appropriate action. Compliance review shall be consistent with the requirements of Sections Six and Seven of the ISFMP Charter and the respective FMP requirements. In addition to the scheduled compliance reviews, the PRT may conduct a review of the implementation and compliance of the FMP at any time at the request of the management board/section, Policy Board, or the Commission. When a plan amendment process is initiated by the management boards/sections, the PRT will continue its annual review function applicable to the existing plan.

(3) In carrying out its activities, the PRT shall seek advisement from the appropriate technical committee, stock assessment subcommittee, advisory panel, Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, and the Assessment Science, Habitat, Artificial Reef Law Enforcement, and Management and Science Committees.

(e) **Assessment Science Committee.** The Assessment Science Committee (ASC) shall be appointed by the ISFMP Policy Board. All agencies should nominate individuals for appointment to the ASC based on stock assessment and population dynamics expertise. Agencies may nominate personnel that require some training prior to official appointment as a committee member. The ISFMP Policy Board should review all nominations and appoint members to the ASC based on expertise, as opposed to agency representation. The ISFMP Policy Board may appoint a limited number of ASC members that are currently being trained in stock assessment methods, with the intent of formalizing the appointment upon completion of training. ASC membership should be kept to a maximum of 25 members and periodic rotation of membership should be considered.

(1) ASC will assist the ISFMP Policy Board in setting overall priorities and timelines for conducting all Commission stock assessments in relation to current workloads.

(2) ASC will provide guidance to species stock assessment subcommittees, technical

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committees, and management boards on broad technical issues (e.g., stock assessment methods, biological reference points, sampling targets, and other assessment issues common to multiple Commission-managed species).

(3) ASC may provide input and advice to the species stock assessment subcommittees mainly during a benchmark assessment, when a model change and/or a major revision of the data are conducted. The species stock assessment subcommittee will be responsible for conducting the species assessment and will report directly to the species technical committee. ASC may provide overall guidance to the development of the species assessment, but will not be involved in peer review of the assessment. Assessment updates will be conducted by the species stock assessment subcommittee, with input from the ASC upon written request.

(f) **Technical Committees.** A management board/section may appoint a technical committee to address specific technical or scientific needs requested periodically by the respective management board/section, PDT, PRT, or the Management and Science Committee.

(1) A technical committee shall be comprised of state, federal, Regional Fishery Management Council, Commission, university or other specialized personnel with scientific and technical expertise and knowledge of the fishery or issues pertaining to the fishery being managed, and should consist of only one representative from each state or agency with a declared interest in the fishery, unless otherwise required or directed by the management board.

(2) Technical committees are responsible for addressing specific technical or scientific needs requested periodically by the respective management board/section, PDT, PRT, or the Management and Science Committee. At times the board/section may task the technical committee to provide a technical analysis of species advisory panel recommendations. All requests to the technical committee should be in writing from the board/section chair and should include all specific tasks, the deliverable expected, and a timeline for presentation of recommendations to the board/section. Even though the technical committee may respond to requests from multiple committees, the management board/section provides the oversight to technical committee tasks and priorities. When tasked by multiple committees, it is the responsibility of the ISFMP staff in consultation with the technical committee and management board/section chairs to prioritize these tasks.

(3) It shall be the responsibility of a technical committee for addressing specific technical or scientific needs requested by the respective management board/section, PDT, and PRT in the development and monitoring of an FMP or amendment as requested, including evaluating fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data, evaluating state monitoring programs, and providing information on the status of the stock and the fishery to the PDT and PRT. At times the board/section may task the technical committee to provide a technical analysis of an advisory panel recommendation.

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(4) Among its duties, the technical committee shall provide a range of management options, risk assessments, justifications, and probable outcomes of various management options.

(5) The technical committee will coordinate the process of developing stock assessments for Commission-managed species.

(6) It is not the responsibility of the technical committee to conduct a review of the Commission member states' compliance for which implementation requirements are defined in the FMP. This is a responsibility of the PRTs.

(g) **Species Stock Assessment Subcommittees.** Upon the request of a management board/section, the technical committee shall appoint individuals with appropriate expertise in stock assessment and fish population dynamics to a species stock assessment subcommittee, which will report to the technical committee and shall continue in existence so long as the management board/section requires.

(1) Membership to a species stock assessment subcommittee will be comprised of technical committee members with appropriate knowledge and experience in stock assessment and biology of the species being assessed. Individuals from outside the technical committee with expertise in stock assessment or biology of the species may also be nominated and appointed, if necessary. The technical committee chair will serve as an ex-officio member of the species stock assessment subcommittee. Overall membership should be kept to a maximum of six persons, unless otherwise required and directed by the management board/section.

(2) The species stock assessment subcommittee is responsible for conducting a stock assessment for use by the PDT in formulation of an FMP, amendment, or addendum; and conducting periodic stock assessments as requested for use by the technical committee in reporting status of the stock to the respective management board. A stock assessment update consists of adding the most recent years of data to an existing, peer-reviewed, and board-accepted stock assessment model without changing the model type or structure.

(3) The species stock assessment subcommittee is responsible for data analysis and preparation of a stock assessment report. Initial input on available data and stock assessment methods may be provided by ASC and technical committee. Additional input may be requested of the ASC upon written request of the species stock assessment subcommittee. The species stock assessment subcommittee shall use the best scientific information available and established stock assessment techniques. Stock assessment techniques should be consistent with the current state of scientific knowledge.

(4) The species stock assessment subcommittee will be tasked directly by the technical committee and will report to the technical committee for review and approval of work. All subcommittee recommendations and documents must be approved by the technical committee and forwarded by the technical committee to the management board/section. Any substantive issues and concerns raised by the technical committee during the

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

approval process should be referred back to the species stock assessment subcommittee to be addressed.

(h) **Other Technical Support Subcommittees** (e.g., tagging, stocking – with the exception of ISFMP socioeconomic subcommittees). Upon the approval of a management board/section, the technical committee shall appoint individuals with special expertise, as appropriate, to other technical support subcommittees in order to support technical committee deliberations on specific issues. All technical support subcommittees shall report to the technical committee and shall continue in existence so long as the management board/section requires. All technical support subcommittees should elect their own chair and vice-chair, who will be responsible for reporting to the technical committee. Overall membership should be kept to a maximum of six persons.

(1) Special subcommittees may be required to address specific scientific issues important to the assessment and management of the species. These subcommittees will be tasked directly by the technical committee and will report to the technical committee for review and approval of work. All subcommittee recommendations and documents must be approved by the technical committee before being forwarded to the management board/section. Any substantive issues and concerns raised by the technical committee during the approval process should be referred back to the technical support subcommittee to be addressed.

(i) **Advisory Panels**. A management board/section may at any time establish an advisory panel in conformance with the Commission's Advisory Committee Charter, to assist in carrying out the board's/section's responsibilities. Advisory panels shall also work with PDTs and PRTs, as requested. Advisory panel chairs should present reports to Boards/Sections and answer any specific questions relevant to their report. Chairs may not ask questions or present their own viewpoints during Board/Section deliberations. If the chair would like to present their own viewpoints, they must go to the public microphone during the public comment portion of the meeting.

(j) **Habitat Committee**. The Habitat Committee is a standing Commission committee appointed at the discretion of the Chair of the Commission. The purpose of the Habitat Committee is to review, research, and develop appropriate response to concerns of inadequate, damaged or insufficient habitat for Atlantic coastal species of concern to the Commission. Among its duties for the Commission, the Habitat Committee shall:

(1) Serve as a consultant to the ISFMP regarding habitat on which the species of concern to the Commission are dependent, whether salt, brackish or freshwater;

(2) Provide comment on the habitat sections of FMPs, and provide suggested text for these sections;

(3) Propose habitat mitigation measures, comment on proposed habitat mitigation measures, and proposed alternate measures if necessary to ensure appropriate habitat conservation;

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(4) Establish subcommittees or other work groups as are necessary to research various habitat related issues; and

(5) Formulate habitat specific goals for consideration of and adoption by the Commission.

(k) Artificial Reef Committee. The Artificial Reef Committee is a standing Commission committee appointed at the discretion of the Commission Chair. The Committee advises the ISFMP Policy Board with the goal of enhancing marine habitat for fish and invertebrate species through the appropriate use of man-made materials. The Committee is comprised of the state artificial reef coordinators, representatives from NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Artificial Reef Committee works in close coordination with Habitat Committee, and reports to the ISFMP Policy Board.

(l) Law Enforcement Committee. The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) is a standing committee appointed by the Commission. LEC carries out assignments at the specific request of the Commission, the ISFMP Policy Board, the management boards/sections, the PDTs, and the PRTs. In general, the Committee provides information on law enforcement issues, brings resolutions addressing enforcement concerns before the Commission, coordinates enforcement efforts among states, exchanges data, identifies potential enforcement problems, and monitors enforcement of measures incorporated into the various interstate fishery management plans. LEC is comprised of law enforcement representatives from each member state, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, the U. S. Coast Guard, and US Department of Justice. LEC convenes a working meeting in the spring, meets in conjunction with the Commission's Annual Meeting, and convenes other meetings as needed. Among its ISFMP duties, the LEC shall:

(1) Provide advice to PDTs regarding the enforceability of measures contemplated for inclusion in FMPs, including enforcement information needed for the Source Document and Background Summary pursuant to Section Six (b)(1)(v)(E); analysis of the enforceability of the proposed measures; and if the FMP provides for conservation equivalency, enforcement procedures for alternative management measures;

(2) Provide advice to each PRT at least annually or as provided in a given FMP regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of states' enforcement of the measures implemented pursuant to the FMP;

(3) Coordinate, among law enforcement personnel, the preparation of reports concerning state law enforcement and compliance in order to ensure these analyses are comparable; and

(4) Upon request or on its own initiative, provide enforcement advice and information regarding any FMP to any committee, team, board/section, or advisory panel in order to carry out activities under this Section.

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(m) **Management and Science Committee**. The Management and Science Committee (MSC) is a standing committee appointed by the Commission. MSC carries out assignments at the specific request of the Commission, Executive Committee, or the ISFMP Policy Board, and generally provides advice to these bodies concerning fisheries management and the science of coastal marine fisheries. MSC is comprised of one representative from each member state, the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic and Southeast Regional Offices, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Regions 4 and 5 who possess scientific as well as management and administrative expertise. Among its duties for the Commission, MSC shall:

- (1) Serve as the senior review body of the Commission, Executive Committee, and ISFMP Policy Board;
- (2) Provide oversight to the Commission's Stock Assessment Peer Review Process;
- (3) Upon request of the ISFMP Policy Board for any management board/section, review and provide advice on species specific issues;
- (4) Evaluate the state of the science of species interactions and provide guidance to fisheries managers on multispecies and ecosystem issues. Evaluations and/or recommendations should focus on modifying the single-species approach in development of Commission FMPs and/or stock assessments;
- (5) Evaluate and provide advice on cross-species issues and including, but not limited to tagging, invasive species and exotics, fish health and protected species issues; and
- (6) Coordinate Commission technical and scientific workshops and seminars, when requested.

(n) **Committee on Economics and Social Sciences**. The Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) is a standing Commission committee appointed at the discretion of the Chair of the Commission. Committee membership should consist of a balance of economists and other social scientists knowledgeable about fisheries issues in their regions, preferably distributed geographically to provide coastwide representation. Members can be nominated in two ways: (1) by member states and (2) through a widespread solicitation issued by Commission staff. Membership can consist of up to twenty individuals.

The purpose of CESS is to provide socioeconomic technical oversight for both the ISFMP and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. Among its duties for the Commission, CESS shall:

- (1) Develop and implement mechanisms to make economic and social science analysis a functioning part of the Commission's decision making process;

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

- (2) Nominate economists and social scientists to serve on each species technical committee or socioeconomic subcommittee, and PDT, in order to provide technical support and development of socioeconomic sections of FMPs (including amendments and addenda);
 - (3) Upon request by species management boards or the Policy Board, provide social and economic advice, information, and policy recommendations to these respective boards;
 - (4) Upon request by the Policy Board, provide social and economic advice, information, and policy recommendations to the Policy Board;
 - (5) Provide technical recommendations to the social and economic data collection and data management programs of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program;
 - (6) Function as the technical review panel for social and economic analyses conducted by the Commission and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program; and
 - (7) Establish CESS subcommittees or other work groups as are necessary to research various social and economic issues;
- (o) **Other ASMFC Committees.** Other Commission committees, as appointed, shall upon request or on their own initiative provide advice and information to any other committee, in order to carry out activities under this Section.

Section Six. Standards and Procedures for Interstate Fishery Management Plans

(a) **Standards.** These standards are adopted pursuant to Section 805 of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (P.L. 103-206), and serve as the guiding principles for the conservation and management programs set forth in the Commission's FMPs. The Commission recognizes that an effective fishery management program must be carefully designed in order to fully reflect the varying values and other considerations that are important to the various interest groups involved in coastal fisheries. Social and economic impacts and benefits must be taken into account. Management measures should focus on conservation while allowing states to make allocation decisions. Fishery management programs must be practically enforceable, including as much as possible the support of those being regulated, in order to be effective. Above all, an FMP must include conservation and management measures that ensure the long-term biological health and productivity of fishery resources under management. To this end, the Commission has adopted the following standards:

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(1) Conservation programs and management measures shall be designed to prevent overfishing and maintain over time, abundant, self-sustaining stocks of coastal fishery resources. In cases where stocks have become depleted as a result of overfishing and/or other causes, such programs shall be designed to rebuild, restore, and subsequently maintain such stocks so as to assure their sustained availability in fishable abundance on a long-term basis.

(2) Conservation programs and management measures shall be based on the best scientific information available.

(3) Conservation programs and management measures shall be designed to achieve equivalent management results throughout the range of a stock or subgroups of that stock.

(4) Management measures shall be designed to minimize waste of fishery resources.

(5) Conservation programs and management measures shall be designed to protect fish habitats.

(6) Development and implementation of FMPs shall provide for public participation and comment, including public hearings when requested by the states.

(7) Fairness & equity.

(i) An FMP should allow internal flexibility within states to achieve its objectives while implemented and administered by the states; and

(ii) Fishery resources shall be fairly and equitably allocated or assigned among the states.

(b) **Contents.** An FMP should be a readily available, concise, and understandable document. It is designed to inform the Commission and the public of the need for and nature of management action, to provide for conservation of coastal fisheries, to allow the public to have effective participation in the management planning process, and to help Commissioners to make decisions on fishery management plans. Additionally, the FMP should facilitate implementation and enforcement of the fishery management program in the individual states. With this in mind, all FMPs of the Commission shall contain the following items:

(1) Management Program Elements:

(i) A statement of the problem being addressed by the FMP, and the objectives to be achieved through implementation, including the social and economic impacts.

(ii) The goals and objectives of the FMP, including a specification of the management unit, a plan-specific definition of overfishing when available, and, if a stock is determined to be depleted/overfished as a result of overfishing and/or other causes, a specific rebuilding program and schedule for the resource.

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

- (iii) A statement of management strategies, options, and alternatives.

- (iv) A complete statement of the management measures needed to conserve the fishery, including:
 - (A) A detailed statement on a state-by-state basis of each specific regulatory, monitoring, and research requirement that each state must implement in order to be in compliance with the plan; provided that the relative burden of the plan's conservation program and management measures may vary from state to state relative to the importance of the fishery in that state as compared to its importance in other states throughout its range; and provided that each FMP shall address the extent to which states meeting *de minimis* criteria may be exempted from specific management requirements of the FMP to the extent that action by the particular states to implement and enforce the plan is not necessary for attainment of the FMP's objectives and the conservation of the fishery;

 - (B) If the FMP so provides, procedures under which the states may implement and enforce alternative management measures that achieve conservation equivalency;

 - (C) A complete schedule by which states must take particular actions in order to be in compliance with the plan;

 - (D) A specification of the requirements for states' reports on compliance to be submitted to the PRT at least annually or as provided in a given FMP, including the requirement for submission within a specified time line of copies of relevant laws and regulations for the record; and

 - (E) A detailed description of penalties and repayments that will result if a state/jurisdiction does not implement any management measure consistent with the compliance schedule established in an FMP, amendment, or addendum.

 - (F) A statement of the minimum notification time that the Commission must provide a state/jurisdiction prior to requiring an in-season management adjustment; and establishment of a reporting and tracking system for management changes

 - (G) A statement of those recommendations which states should implement in order to conserve fishery resources.

- (v) Supporting Summary Information and Analyses:
 - (A) A review of the resource and its biological status;

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

(B) A review and status of fish habitat important to the stocks, and ecosystem considerations;

(C) A review of the fishery and its status, including commercial and recreational fisheries and non-consumptive considerations;

(D) A review of the social and economic characteristics of the fishery; and

(E) An analysis of the enforceability of the proposed measures.

(vi) Impacts: A summary evaluation of the biological, environmental, social, and economic impacts of the requirements and recommendations included in the FMP.

(vii) Source Document: In addition to the FMP, the PDT and the staff shall compile a Source Document that contains all of the scientific, management, and other analyses and references utilized in preparation of the FMP.

(2) A management board/section, by two-thirds vote, may extend, after giving the public one month's notice, the period of effectiveness for any FMP or provision that would otherwise expire for a period of up to six months, and may be extended for an additional six months, if the management board/section is actively working on an amendment or addendum to address the provisions that would otherwise expire. A two-thirds majority will be defined by the entire voting membership, however any abstentions from the federal services would not count when determining the total number of votes.

(3) Adaptive Management: Each FMP may provide for changes within the management program to adapt to changing circumstances. FMPs, which provide for adaptive management shall identify specifically the circumstances under which adaptive management changes may be made, the types of measures that may be changed, the schedule for state implementation of changes, and the procedural steps necessary to effect a change. Changes made under adaptive management shall be documented in writing through addenda to the FMP. Addenda to the FMP must provide for a minimum of 30 days for public comment in making adaptive management changes. The management board/section shall in coordination with each relevant state, utilizing that state's established public review process, ensure that the public has an opportunity to review and comment upon proposed adaptive management changes.

(4) Technical Addenda: The management board/section may make technical corrections to an approved FMP, amendment, or addendum without use of the public review process. This flexibility is for the correction of accidental omissions, erroneous inclusions, and/or to address non-substantive editorial issues.

(5) Habitat Addenda: The management board/section may utilize the Adaptive Management (Section Six (b)(3)) to modify/update a habitat section contained in an FMP or Amendment. The modifications to the habitat section will be documented in writing

Draft ISFMP Charter for ISFMP Policy Board Review

through addenda to the FMP. The adaptive management procedures detailed in the FMP will be used when developing and approving a habitat addendum.

(c) **Procedures.** All FMPs and amendments of the Commission shall be prepared according to the following procedures:

(1) Need for an FMP - Identification of priority species by the Policy Board will initiate the process to create an FMP. A management board or section will be created pursuant to Section Four. The management board or section will appoint a PDT to develop the FMP for a particular species according to the process described in Section Five (c)(1) through (4).

(2) Need for FMP Amendment - Each PRT shall evaluate the adequacy of each respective FMP at least annually and will submit to the management board/section a written report of its findings. The report will address, at a minimum, the following topics: adequacy and achievement of the FMP goals and objectives (including targets and schedules); status of the stocks; status of the fisheries; status of state implementation and enforcement; status of the habitat; research activities; and other information relevant to the FMP. The PRT shall also solicit and consider the input of the relevant advisory panel, in preparation of its report. The PRT may recommend to the management board or section that a PDT be reinstated or convened. Using this information, the management board/section will determine whether the FMP needs amendment, including issues to be addressed, such as updating data, including results of new research or a new stock assessment, needed changes in state rules and/or enforcement, and recommended options and strategies to address the concerns. All Draft FMP Amendments shall be subject to the public comment process described under Section Six (c)(8), and shall be approved by the process described in Section Six (c)(4) through (7).

(3) Public Information Document (PID) - The species PDT shall prepare a PID containing a preliminary review of biological information, fishery issues, and potential management options for the subject FMP or amendment being prepared. The PDT shall also solicit and consider the advisement of the relevant advisory panel, if any, under the Commission's Advisory Committee Charter, in preparation of the PID. The PDT Chair (Commission staff) shall also prepare appropriate audio-visual material to accompany the PID for presentation to the public. The PID, after approval by the management board/section, shall be made available to each state with an interest in the fishery and where applicable, Regional Fishery Management Councils, for the purpose of soliciting public comment as described in Section Six (c)(8).

(4) Preparation of Source Document and Background Summaries - During review and consideration of the PID, the PDT will begin to collate and prepare the Source Document as provided in Section Six (b)(1) (vii). After consideration of the reviews of the PID, the PDT shall prepare background summaries as provided in Section Six (b)(1)(v).

(5) Preparation of Draft FMP or Amendment - After consideration of comments and views developed in response to the PID, the PDT, at the direction of the management

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board/section, will prepare a Draft FMP or Amendment. Upon approval by the management board/section, the Draft FMP shall be referred to all relevant states and, where applicable, Regional Fishery Management Councils, for the purpose of conducting public hearings and soliciting other public comment as described in Section Six (c)(8).

(6) Preparation of the final FMP or Amendment - After consideration of the record developed in receiving comment on the Draft FMP or Amendment, the PDT shall, at the direction of the management board/section, prepare the final FMP or Amendment.

(7) Review and Approval - The management board/section shall approve the FMP or Amendment or refer it back to the PDT for revision. The management board/section will approve revisions to established FMPs (amendment or addendum). Final approval of FMPs and amendments shall be the decision of the Commission.

(8) Advisory Panel Participation – The advisory panel may provide feedback to the board/section on FMPs/Amendments as described below. The board/section may seek additional guidance outside of the below process if necessary.

- (i) **During the development of the PID.** Advisory panels provide guidance to the PDT before the Board reviews the document for public comment.
- (ii) **During the development of the Draft FMP.** After the Board gives the PDT guidance on issues to include in the draft, advisory panels provide feedback to the PDT on those issues.
- (iii) **During the public comment of the Draft FMP.** Advisory panels meet to give recommendations on the public comment draft of the FMP.

(9) Public Participation:

(i) The management board/section shall in coordination with each relevant state, utilizing that state's established public review process, ensure that the public has an opportunity to review and comment upon the problems and alternative solutions addressed by the PID (see Section Six [c][3]). Upon completion of a PID and its approval by the management board/section, the Commission shall again utilize the relevant states' established public review process to elicit public comment on the PID. The Commission shall ensure that a minimum of **four** public hearings are held, including at least one in each state that specifically requests a hearing. A hearing schedule will be published within 60 days following approval of the PID; hearings may be held in conjunction with state agencies. The hearing document will be made available to the public for review and comment at least 30 days prior to the date of the first public hearing; availability will be announced by a press release issued by the Commission. Written comments will be accepted for 14 days following the date of the last public hearing.

(ii) Upon completion of a draft FMP or amendment and its approval by the management board/section, the Commission shall again utilize the relevant states' established public review process to elicit public comment on the draft. The

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Commission shall ensure that a minimum of **four** public hearings are held, including at least one in each state that specifically requests a hearing. A hearing schedule will be published within 60 days following approval of the draft FMP or amendment; hearings may be held in conjunction with state agencies. The hearing document will be made available to the public for review and comment at least 30 days prior to the date of the first public hearing; availability will be announced by a press release issued by the Commission. Written comments will be accepted for 14 days following the date of the last public hearing. The Commission will make the draft FMP or amendment and the accompanying PID widely available to the public, including fishermen, consumers, government agencies and officials, environmental groups, and other interested parties throughout the geographic range of the draft FMP or amendment. Records of the public hearings and summaries of the written comments will be made available at cost to anyone requesting them. Summaries of verbal and written comments will be prepared by Commission staff and provided to Commissioners, the management board/section, and advisory panel members. Copies of the summaries will be made available to other parties at cost.

(iii) Agendas for meetings of the management board/section, the ISFMP Policy Board, or the Commission, as appropriate, will include an opportunity for public comment prior to the board, section, or Commission taking action on a fishery management issue consistent with the public comment guidelines.

(iv) Public comments will be evaluated and considered prior to deciding what modifications will be made to the draft FMP or amendment, or draft final FMP or amendment, and prior to approval of the FMP or amendment consistent with the public comment guidelines.

(10) Administrative Record - The Commission staff, with support from the PDT, shall be responsible for collating and maintaining the administrative record for all FMPs.

(11) Emergencies - A management board/section may, without regard to the other provisions of Section Six (c), authorize or require any emergency action that is not covered by an FMP or is an exception or change to any provision in an FMP. Such action shall, during the time it is in effect, be treated as an amendment to the FMP.

(i) Such action must be approved by two-thirds of all voting members (a two-thirds majority will be defined by the entire voting membership, however any abstentions from the federal services would not count when determining the total number of votes) of the management board/section prior to taking effect. The decision may be made by meeting, mail, or electronic ballot in the case of an emergency.

(ii) Within 30 days of taking emergency action, the states and the Commission shall hold at least four public hearings concerning the action, including at least one in each state that requests it.

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(iii) Any such action, with the exception of public health emergencies, shall originally be effective for a period not to exceed 180 days from the date of the management board/section's declaration of an emergency, but may be renewed by the management board/section for two additional periods of up to one year each, provided the board/section has initiated action to prepare an FMP, or initiated action to amend the FMP in accordance with Section Six(c). Emergency actions taken to address a public health emergency shall remain in effect until the public health concern ceases to exist (this determination to be made by the management board/section). The management board/section may terminate an emergency action at any time with approval of two-thirds of all voting members (i.e., entire membership).

(iv) Definition of Emergencies. The provisions of this subsection shall only apply in those circumstances under which public health or the conservation of coastal fishery resources or attainment of fishery management objectives has been placed substantially at risk by unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery.

(12) Joint FMPs with Regional Fishery Management Councils - The Commission recognizes that fish species and fisheries are transboundary across state and federal jurisdictions, and that proper and efficient fisheries conservation can only be achieved by close coordination between state and federal management systems. The Commission is committed to close cooperation with the Regional Fishery Management Councils in providing for coordinated and compatible fisheries management. To this end, each management board shall work closely with appropriate Council committees to develop coordinated approaches to management.

(i) A management board may decide with a Regional Fishery Management Council to prepare an FMP jointly with that Council, with the intent that the Council and the Commission will approve the same FMP document. In such instances the management board and the Council will establish the specific procedures and schedules to follow during FMP development, including assignments of staff responsibilities on PDTs, technical committees and other fishery management program staffing and support groups, including advisory panels.

(ii) A management board shall endeavor whether or not a joint FMP is being prepared, to coordinate its meetings, meetings of the relevant advisory panel, and public hearings with relevant Council meetings and hearings.

Section Seven. Compliance

(a) **Implementation and Enforcement** - All states are responsible for the full and effective implementation and enforcement of FMPs within areas subject to their jurisdiction. Each state shall submit a written report on compliance with required measures of a specific FMP in

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conformance with reporting requirements and schedules specified in the plan, which shall include submission of copies of relevant laws and regulations for the Commission's record. At any time, according to the procedures contained in this Section, the Commission may determine a state is not fully and effectively implementing and enforcing the required provisions of an FMP, and is therefore not in compliance with that plan. All evaluations, findings, and recommendations regarding compliance determinations shall be in writing.

(b) **Schedule for Reviews** - Implementation and compliance for FMPs will be reviewed according to the Commission's Action Plan. The schedule shall provide for review of each FMP at least annually, or more frequently as provided in a given FMP. In addition to the scheduled reviews, the PRT may conduct a review of the implementation and compliance of the FMP at any time at the request of the management board/section, Policy Board, or the Commission.

(c) **Role of the Management Board/Section** - Each management board/section shall, within 60 days of receipt of a state's compliance report, review the written findings of the PRT developed according to the previous subsection. Based upon that written review, as well as other information that it has or may receive, the management board/section may recommend to the Policy Board that a state be found out of compliance, including the rationale for the recommended finding of non-compliance. The recommendation shall specifically address the required measures of the FMP that the state has not implemented or enforced, a statement of how that failure to implement or enforce the required measures jeopardizes the conservation of the resource, and the actions a state must take in order to comply with requirements of the FMP.

(d) **Role of the Policy Board** - The Policy Board shall, within 30 days of receiving a recommendation of non-compliance from a management board/section, review that recommendation of non-compliance. If it concurs in the decision, it shall recommend at that time to the Commission that a state be found out of compliance. A recommendation regarding non-compliance from the Policy Board will be submitted to the Commission in writing provided there is sufficient time between meetings to develop such documentation.

(e) **Review and Determination by the Commission** - The Commission shall consider any recommendation forwarded under Subsection(d), as quickly as possible and within 30 days of receiving a recommendation of non-compliance from the Policy Board. Any state which is the subject of a recommendation for a finding of non-compliance shall be given an opportunity to present written and/or oral testimony concerning whether it should be found out of compliance. The state may request that the Commission's consideration be held at a formal meeting by roll call vote. With the consent of the Commissioners from the state subject to the recommendation, the Commission's decision may be made by electronic ballot. If the Commission agrees with the recommendation of the Policy Board, it may determine that a state is not in compliance with the relevant FMP, and specify the actions the state must take to come into compliance. Upon a non-compliance determination, the Executive Director shall within ten working days notify the state, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of the Interior of the Commission's determination.

(f) **Withdrawal of Determination** - Any state subject to a moratorium that has revised its conservation program in response to a determination of non-compliance may request that the

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Commission rescind its findings of non-compliance.

(1) If the state provides written documentation to the Commission of implementation of every measure required of it, the withdrawal will be automatic upon issuance of a letter from the Commission Chair to the state, Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) If the measures implemented deviate from those required of the state, the state shall provide a written statement on its actions that justify a determination of compliance. The management board/section shall promptly conduct such re-evaluation and make a recommendation to the Policy Board that the recommendation or determination of non-compliance be withdrawn. Upon the recommendation of the Policy Board, the Commission may withdraw its determination of non-compliance, whereupon the Executive Director shall promptly notify the state, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of the Interior. The re-evaluation by the Management board/section, review by the Policy Board, and action by the Commission shall be made within 45 days of the receipt by the Commission of the request for reconsideration by the State. It may be made by electronic ballot with the consent of the Commissioners from the subject state.

(g) **Procedure to Address Management Program Implementation Delays** - Each species management board shall evaluate the current FMP, amendment, and/or addendum to determine if delays in implementation have impacted, or may negatively impact, the achievement of the goals and objectives of the management program. Each of the species management boards, with the assistance of the respective technical committee if necessary, will conduct this evaluation and provide, in writing, a summary of its findings to the ISFMP Policy Board. Each species management board that determines that there is a negative impact due to delayed implementation will provide the ISFMP Policy Board a proposed timeline to develop an amendment or addendum to address delayed implementation.

If the ISFMP Policy Board determines that an amendment or addendum should be developed to address delayed implementation, the amendment or addendum should, at a minimum, include any penalties and repayments for delays in implementation, the minimum notification time that Commission staff must provide a state/jurisdiction prior to requiring an in-season management adjustment; and establishment of a reporting and tracking system for management changes.

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Section Eight. Definitions

- (a) **Act** - The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, 1993. 16 U.S.C. Chapter 71, et seq.
- (b) **Action plan** - A document prepared annually by Commission staff and approved by the Policy Board to provide priorities and schedules for the specific activities of the ISFMP during a given year.
- (c) **Adaptive management** - An iterative process which includes evaluation of the response of the managed fishery and stock to specific management measures and adjusting such measures based on that evaluation.
- (d) **Advisory Panel (AP)** - A group of interested and knowledgeable persons convened under the Commission's Advisory Committee Charter to assist in development of an FMP or amendment.
- (e) **Assessment Science Committee (ASC)** - A group consisting of experts in fish population dynamics and appointed and convened by a Technical Committee, at the request of a Management Board, to prepare a stock assessment for a specified fish stock using the best scientific data available and established techniques.
- (f) **Best scientific information available** - Includes but is not limited to that body of biological, environmental, ecological, economic, and social data concerning the fish stock and fisheries which are the subject of an FMP or amendment, provided that the methods of collecting such information are clearly described and are generally accepted as scientifically valid. Data may come from state, federal, or private databases and from published and unpublished sources. Information that becomes available during preparation of an FMP or amendment should be incorporated to the extent practicable.
- (g) **Bycatch** - That portion of a catch taken in addition to the targeted species because of non-selectivity of gear to either species or size differences; may include non-directed, threatened, or endangered and protected species.
- (h) **Compliance** - Condition in which a state has implemented and is enforcing all measures required by an FMP. States are presumed to be in compliance unless determined to be out of compliance pursuant to Section Seven.
- (i) **Conservation** (from the Act, Section 803[4]) - The restoring, rebuilding, and maintaining of any coastal fishery resource and the marine environment, in order to assure the availability of coastal fishery resources on a long-term basis.
- (j) **Conservation equivalency** - Actions taken by a state which differ from the specific requirements of the FMP, but which achieve the same quantified level of conservation for the resource under management. For example, various combinations of size limits, gear restrictions, and season length can be demonstrated to achieve the same targeted level of fishing mortality. The appropriate Management Board/Section will determine conservation equivalency.

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(k) **Conservation program** - Enactment of rules or statutes, research, biological monitoring, collection of statistics, stock enhancement, and enforcement activities conducted by a state to maintain, restore, and/or rebuild a fish stock and its habitat.

(l) **De minimis** - A situation in which, under existing conditions of the stock and scope of the fishery, conservation, and enforcement actions taken by an individual state would be expected to contribute insignificantly to a coastwide conservation program required by an FMP or amendment.

(m) **Directed fishery** - Fishing for a stock using gear or strategies intended to catch a given target species, group of species, or size class.

(n) **Emergency** - Unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery which place public health, the conservation of coastal fishery resources, or attainment of fishery management objectives substantially at risk.

(o) **Endangered, threatened, or protected species** – Species that are regulated under the jurisdiction of the federal or a state’s endangered species act (threatened or endangered) or are provided other special protection.

(p) **Fish** (from the Act, Section 803[7]) - "Finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal life other than marine mammals and birds."

(q) **Fishable abundance** - Numbers of fish in a stock sufficient to provide continuing harvests in the range of historic average levels without overfishing the stock.

(r) **Fishery** (from the Act, Section 803[8])

(1) "One or more stocks of fish that can be treated as a unit for purposes of conservation and management and that are identified on the basis of geographical, scientific, technical, commercial, recreational, or economic characteristics; or

(2) Any fishing for such stocks."

(s) **Fish habitat** - The environment upon which a fish stock is dependent as it conducts its normal life history functions of spawning, feeding, and migration; including biological, physical, and chemical factors which influence the choices of such areas.

(t) **Fishery management** - All activities conducted by a government to improve, restore, rebuild, or maintain fish stocks and fisheries, including statutory action and rule-making, enforcement, research, monitoring, collection of statistics, enhancement, protection, development, and habitat conservation.

(u) **Habitat Committee (HC)** - The principal body, established by the Commission, which advises the Commission on issues of habitat, habitat management, habitat requirements by the

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managed species, enforceability of proposed habitat management measures.

(v) **Implementation of an FMP** - Conducting a state conservation program that meets all requirements for that state as provided in an FMP or amendment.

(w) **Law Enforcement Committee (LEC)** - The principal body, established by the Commission, which advises the Commission on issues of law enforcement and enforceability of potential management measures, comprised of representatives of each member state, Washington, D.C., NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

(x) **Management measure** - A statute or rule enacted by a state to conserve a fishery and/or protect its habitat.

(y) **Management and Science Committee (MSC)** - The principal scientific advisory body of the Commission, comprised of representatives from member states, NOAA Fisheries, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(z) **Minimize waste** - Process of taking specific actions, which reduce the effects of fishing activities on non-target resources (habitat and bycatch) and promote full, efficient utilization of the catch.

(aa) **Non-compliance** - A condition under which the Commission has determined that a state has failed to implement and enforce a conservation program as required in an FMP or amendment.

(bb) **Non-indigenous species** - A species of fish, plant or other organism that is not native to a particular geographic area.

(cc) **Overfishing** - In the context of the ISFMP, harvesting from a stock at a rate greater than the stock's reproductive capacity to replace the fish removed through harvest. Each FMP contains a plan-specific definition of overfishing.

(dd) **Plan Development Team (PDT)** - A group of individuals who are knowledgeable concerning the scientific facts and fishery management issues concerning a designated fish stock and who are appointed and convened by a Management Board to prepare an FMP or amendment and its supporting Source Document.

(ee) **Plan review** - An evaluation of an FMP, considering adequacy and relevance of the goals and objectives, stock status, fishery status, implementation status, research activities, and recommendations.

(ff) **Plan Review Team (PRT)** - A group of individuals who are knowledgeable concerning the scientific facts, stock and fishery condition, and fishery management issues concerning a designated fish stock and who are appointed and convened by a Management Board for the purpose of conducting an annual plan review for an FMP.

(gg) **Public Information Document (PID)** - A document of the Commission which contains preliminary discussions of biological, environmental, social, and economic information, fishery

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issues, and potential management options for a proposed FMP or amendment.

(hh) **Range (functional)** - The geographic area utilized by a fish stock and its dependent fishery as defined in an FMP.

(ii) **Recommendations** - Actions identified in an FMP which should be taken by the states, but are not required, such as enactment of rules, research, monitoring, collection of statistics, and enhancement, which collectively will promote restoration, rebuilding, or maintenance of a stock.

(jj) **Regulatory** - Of or pertaining to any administrative or legislative measure in a sense that requires compliance by individuals involved in the fishery.

(kk) **Requirements** - Actions set forth in an FMP which must be taken by the states specified in such FMP, such as enactment of rules, research, monitoring, collection of statistics, and enhancement, which collectively will promote attainment of the FMP's objectives for restoration, rebuilding, or maintenance of a stock, and are the measures against which compliance is judged. Failure of a specified state to implement a required action may result in a finding of non-compliance under the Act.

(ll) **Source document** - The comprehensive support document to an FMP which is compiled by the Plan Development Team and Commission staff and contains all the scientific, management, and other analyses and references utilized in preparation of the FMP; the Source Document is kept on file with the Commission.

(mm) **State** - (from the Act, Section 803[13]) For purposes of the Act, one of the following East Coast jurisdictional entities: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida; also includes the District of Columbia, or the Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

(nn) **Stock** - A group of fish of the same species which behave (spawn, migrate, feed) as a unit.

(oo) **Subgroup** - A group of fish from the same stock which consistently conducts itself as an identifiable unit.

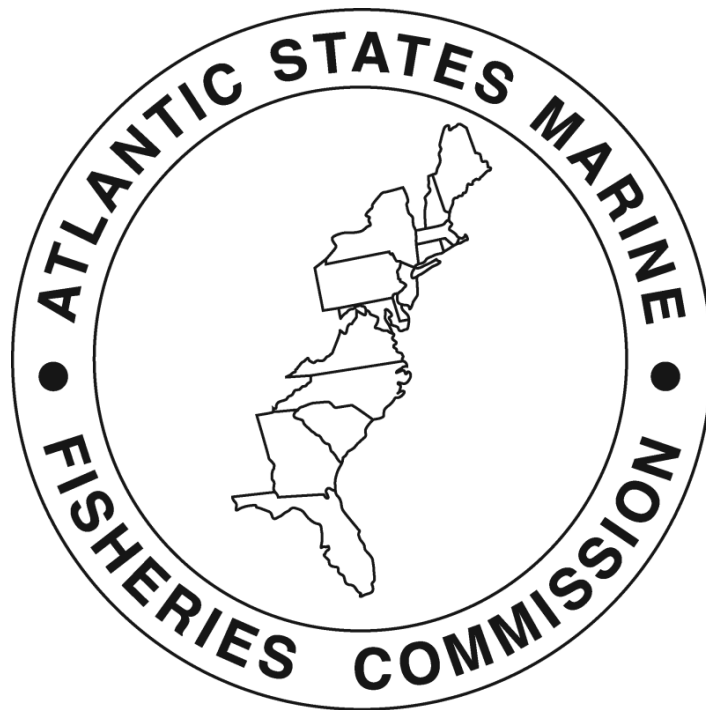
(pp) **Target species** - A species or group of species of fish which certain fishing gear or strategies are designed to catch.

(qq) **Technical Committee (TC)** - A group of persons who are expert in the scientific and technical matters relating to a specific fish stock and who are appointed and convened by a Management Board to provide scientific and technical advice in the process of developing and monitoring FMPs and amendments.

(rr) **Trigger** - A measure of a specific attribute of a fish stock or fishery for which values above or below an established level initiates a pre-specified management action.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process



**February 2016
(May 2019 Draft Edits included in **Yellow**)**

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Technical Support Group Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process

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This document was first approved in May 2015. February 2016 revisions include clarifying the role of ASMFC staff on species technical committees and stock assessment subcommittees; and modifying guidance on the participation of law enforcement representatives and technical committee Chairs at species management Board meetings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES	1
2.1 ISFMP Policy Board	2
2.2 Management Boards and Sections	3
2.3 Plan Development Teams.....	3
2.4 Plan Review Teams	3
2.5 Advisory Panels.....	4
2.6 Technical Committees.....	4
2.7 Stock Assessment Subcommittees	5
2.8 Management and Science Committee	5
2.9 Assessment Science Committee.....	5
2.10 Ecological Reference Point Working Group.....	6
2.11 Habitat Committee	6
2.12 Law Enforcement Committee	7
2.13 Committee on Economics and Social Sciences.....	7
2.14 Other Technical Support Subcommittees.....	7
2.15 Special Issue Technical Committees.....	7
2.16 Coordinating Council	8
2.17 Operations Committee.....	8
2.18 Advisory Committee	8
2.19 Biological Review Panel	8
2.20 Bycatch Prioritization Committee.....	8
2.21 Commercial Technical Committee.....	9
2.22 Information Systems Committee.....	9
2.23 Recreational Technical Committee.....	9
2.24 Standard Codes Committee.....	9
3.0 COMMITTEE TASKING.....	10
4.0 COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPECTATIONS	10
4.1 All Committee Members	10
4.2 Committee Chairs and Vice-chair	11
4.2 ASMFC Staff Roles and Responsibilities	12
4.2.1 ISFMP Staff.....	12
4.2.2 Science Staff.....	12
4.2.3 ACCSP Staff	13
5.0 MEETING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	13
5.1 Meeting Announcements.....	13
5.2 Materials Distribution	13
5.3 Roles of Chair and Vice-chair at Meetings	13
5.4 Meeting Records	14
5.5 Public Participation at Meetings	15
5.5.1 <i>General Submission of Materials</i>	15
5.5.2 <i>Benchmark Assessment Submissions</i>	15

5.6 Meeting etiquette.....	16
6.0 COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES.....	16
6.1 Email Policies.....	16
6.2 Recordings.....	16
6.3 Webinars.....	17
6.4 Reports	17
6.4.1 Non-Committee Member Reports.....	17
6.4.2 Distribution of Committee Reports	17
6.4.3 Corrections to Reports	18
6.4.4 Templates	18
6.4.5 Presentations.....	18
6.5 Board Meetings	19
7.0 STOCK ASSESSMENTS	19
7.1 Definitions.....	19
7.1.1 Stock Assessment Update	19
7.1.2 Benchmark Stock Assessment.....	19
7.1.3 Peer Review.....	19
7.2 The Assessment Process.....	19
7.3 Assessment Frequency and Benchmark Triggers	20
7.4 Data Confidentiality	22
7.5 Assessment Updates.....	23
7.6 Benchmark Assessments.....	23
7.6.1 Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities during a Stock Assessment	23
7.6.2 Data Workshop.....	26
7.6.3 Methods Workshop.....	27
7.6.4 Assessment Workshop	28
7.6.5 Peer Review Workshop.....	29
APPENDIX 1. GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR TRACKING PROGRESS OF COMMISSION BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENTS	33
APPENDIX 2. GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE	38
APPENDIX 3. EXAMPLE DATA AVAILABILITY SPREADSHEETS.....	41
APPENDIX 4. COMPONENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT rEPORT.....	49
APPENDIX 5. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEER REVIEWERS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT	53
APPENDIX 6. ADVISORY REPORT OUTLINE.....	58
APPENDIX 7. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTLINE.....	59
APPENDIX 8. FMP ADDENDUM OUTLINE	63
APPENDIX 9. FISHERY-INDEPENDENT DATA USE POLICY	64

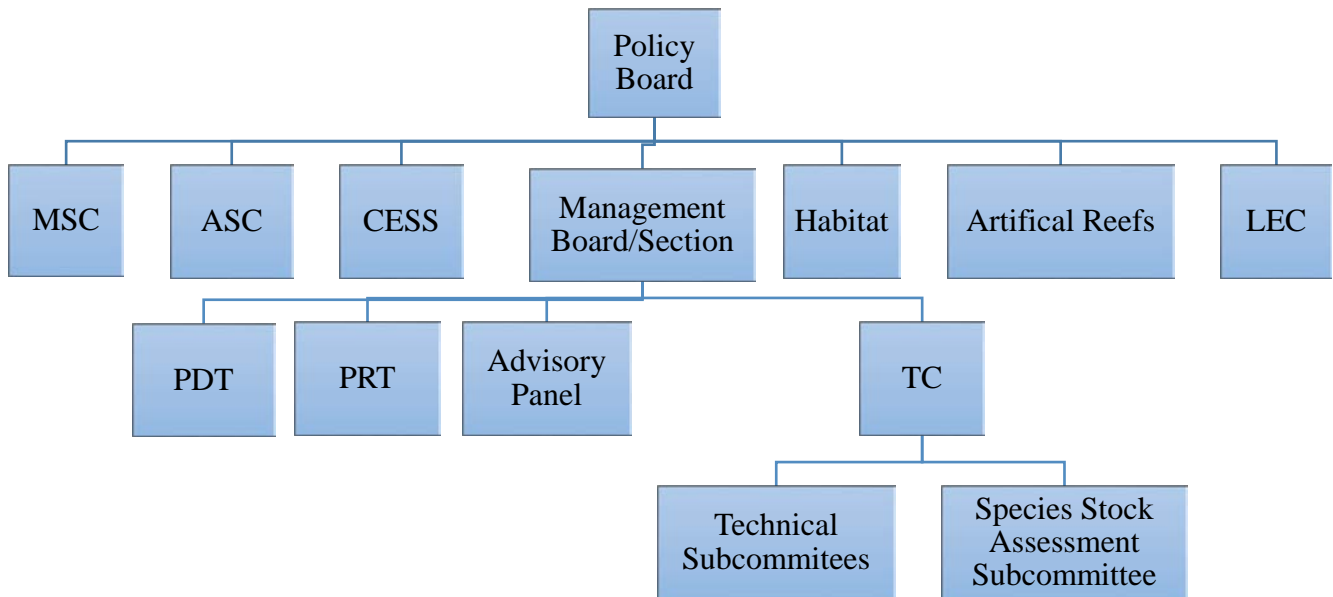
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to improve the functioning of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) by providing guidance to all Commission technical support groups on the structure, function, roles, and responsibilities of Commission committees and their members. This document also provides guidance on the Commission stock assessment process.

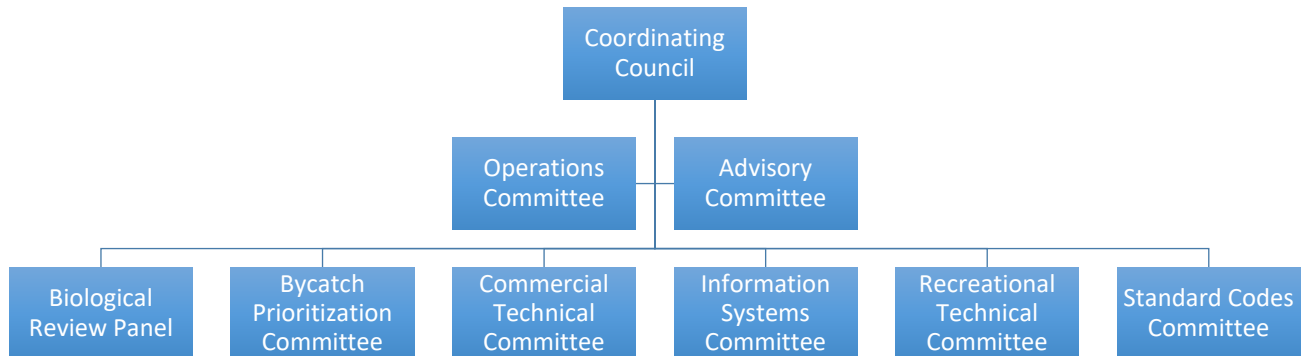
2.0 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

This section contains a brief outline of the structure, composition, and function of Commission committees. For additional details, please consult the [Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter](#).

ISFMP Committee Organization



ACCSP Committee Organization



2.1 ISFMP Policy Board

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Policy Board is comprised of: all member states of the Commission, each state a voting members (The position of a state shall be determined by caucus of its Commissioners in attendance); one representative from NOAA Fisheries and one representative from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) each a voting member; one representative from the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and one representative from the government of the District of Columbia shall each be a member, eligible to vote, on any matter which may impose a regulatory requirement upon their respective jurisdictions; and one representative of the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) is a non-voting member.

The ISFMP Policy Board is responsible for the overall administration and management of the Commission's fishery management programs. The goal of the program is to promote the cooperative management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fisheries in state waters of the East Coast through interstate fishery management plans (FMPs). The major objectives of the ISFMP are to:

- Determine the priorities for interjurisdictional fisheries management in coastal state waters;
- Develop, monitor, and review FMPs;
- Recommend to states, regional fishery management councils, and the federal government management measures to benefit these fisheries;
- Provide an efficient structure for the timely, cooperative administration of the ISFMP; and
- Monitor compliance with approved FMPs.

2.2 Management Boards and Sections

Management Boards are established by and advise the ISFMP Policy Board. Each Board/Section is comprised of the states/jurisdictions with a declared interest in the fishery covered by that Board/Section. The Boards/Sections consider and approve the development and implementation of FMPs, including the integration of scientific information and proposed management measures. In this process, the Boards/Sections primarily rely on input from two main sources – species technical committees and advisory panels. Boards/Sections are responsible for tasking plan development teams (PDTs), plan review teams (PRTs), technical committees (TCs), advisory panels (APs) and stock assessment subcommittees (SAS). Each Management Board/Section shall select its own Chair and Vice-chair. Chairmanship will rotate among the voting members every two years.

2.3 Plan Development Teams

PDTs are appointed by Boards/Sections to draft FMPs. They are comprised of personnel from state and federal agencies who have scientific and management ability, knowledge of a species and its habitat, and an interest in the management of species under the jurisdiction of the relevant Board. Personnel from regional fishery management councils, academicians, and others as appropriate may be included on a PDT. The size of the PDT shall be based on specific need for expertise but should generally be kept to a maximum of six persons.

PDTs will be responsible for preparing all documentation necessary for the development of a FMP, amendment, or addendum, using the best scientific information available and the most current stock assessment information. Each FMP, amendment, or addendum will be developed by the PDT in conformance with Section Six of the ISFMP Charter. PDTs will be tasked directly by the Board/Section. In carrying out its activities, the PDT shall seek advisement from the appropriate TC, SAS, AP, LEC and the Habitat Committee. Following completion of its charge, the Board/Section will disband the PDT.

2.4 Plan Review Teams

PRTs are appointed by the Boards/Sections to review regulations and compliance. Members are knowledgeable concerning the scientific data, stock and fishery condition, and fishery management issues. PRTs are responsible for providing advice concerning the implementation, review, monitoring and enforcement of fishery management plans that have been adopted by the Commission, and as needed be charged by the Board/Sections. The PRT should generally be kept to a maximum of six persons.

PRTs will be responsible for providing advice concerning the implementation, review, monitoring, and enforcement of FMPs that have been adopted by the Commission, and as needed be charged by the Boards/Sections to draft plan addenda. PRTs will be tasked directly by the Board/Section. Each PRT shall at least annually or as provided in a given FMP, conduct a review of the stock status and Commission member states' compliance for which implementation requirements are defined in the

FMP. The PRT shall develop an annual plan review in order to evaluate the adequacy of the FMP. This report will address, at a minimum, the following topics: adequacy and achievement of the FMP goals and objectives (including targets and schedules), status of the stocks, status of the fisheries, status of state implementation and enforcement, status of the habitat, research activities, and other information relevant to the FMP. The PRT shall report all findings in writing to the Board/Section for appropriate action. Compliance review shall be consistent with the requirements of Sections Six and Seven of the ISFMP Charter and the respective FMP requirements. In addition to the scheduled compliance reviews, the PRT may conduct a review of the implementation and compliance of the FMP at any time at the request of the Board/Section, Policy Board, or the Commission. When a plan amendment process is initiated by the Management Board/Section, the PRT will continue its annual review function applicable to the existing plan. In carrying out its activities, the PRT shall seek advisement from the appropriate TC, SAS, AP, LEC, MSC and Habitat Committee.

2.5 Advisory Panels

AP members include stakeholders from a wide range of interests including the commercial, charter boat, and recreational fishing industries, conservation interests, as well as non-traditional stakeholders. Members are appointed by the three Commissioners from each state with a declared interest in a species because of their particular expertise within a given fishery. APs provide guidance about the fisheries that catch or land a particular species. The AP's role is to provide input throughout the entire fishery management process from plan initiation through development and into implementation.

2.6 Technical Committees

Management Boards/Sections appoint TCs to address specific technical or scientific needs requested periodically by the respective Board/Section, PDT, PRT, or the Management and Science Committee (MSC). A TC may be comprised of representatives from the states, federal fisheries agencies, Regional fishery management councils, Commission, academia, or other specialized personnel with scientific and technical expertise and knowledge of the fishery or issues pertaining to the fishery being managed. The TC should consist of only one representative from each state or agency with a declared interest in the fishery, unless otherwise directed by the Board/Section.

TCs are responsible for addressing specific technical or scientific needs of the Board/Section, PDT, PRT, or the MSC. Among its duties, the TC shall provide a range of management options, risk assessments, justifications, and probable outcomes of various management options. The TC will coordinate the process of developing stock assessments for Commission-managed species. TCs can be asked to provide a technical analysis of AP recommendations by the species Board or Policy Board. **It is not the responsibility of the TC to conduct a review, or provide recommendations, of Commission member states' compliance with the specified requirements of a species FMP. This is a responsibility of the species PRT.**

Although the TC may respond to requests from multiple committees, the Board/Section provides oversight of TC tasks and priorities. When tasked by multiple committees, it is the responsibility of

the ISFMP staff, in consultation with the TC and Board/Section Chairs, to prioritize these tasks. Although members have been appointed to the TC by their specific agency, each member's responsibility is to use the best science available in an objective manner, not to represent the policies and/or politics of that agency.

2.7 Stock Assessment Subcommittees

Upon the request of a Board/Section, the TC shall nominate individuals with appropriate expertise in stock assessment and fish population dynamics to a species stock assessment subcommittee (SAS), which will report to the TC. SAS nominations are approved by the Board/Section and shall continue in existence as long as the Board/Section requires. Membership of a species SAS will be comprised of TC members with appropriate knowledge and experience in stock assessment and biology of the species being assessed. Individuals from outside the TC with expertise in stock assessment or biology of the species may also be nominated and appointed, if necessary. The TC Chair will serve as an ex-officio member of the species SAS. Overall membership should be kept to a maximum of six persons unless additional analytical expertise is requested by the Board, TC or SAS.

SASs are responsible for conducting stock assessments for use by the PDT in the formulation of a FMP, amendment, or addendum and for conducting periodic stock assessment updates as requested by the Board/Section for use by the TC in reporting status of the stock. The SAS is responsible for data analysis and preparation of a stock assessment report. Initial input on available data and stock assessment methods should be provided by the TC and ASC. The SAS shall use the best scientific information available and established stock assessment techniques. Stock assessment techniques should be consistent with the current state of scientific knowledge. See Appendix 1 for information on specific roles and responsibilities in the stock assessment process.

2.8 Management and Science Committee

The MSC provides advice concerning fisheries management and the science of coastal marine fisheries to the ISFMP Policy Board. MSC's major duties are to provide oversight to the Commission's Stock Assessment Peer Review Process, review and provide advice on species-specific issues upon request of the ISFMP Policy Board, evaluate and provide guidance to fisheries managers on multispecies and ecosystem issues, and evaluate and provide advice on cross-species issues (e.g., tagging, invasive species and exotics, fish health and protected species issues). The MSC also assists in advising the Policy Board regarding stock assessment priorities and timelines in relation to current workloads. The MSC is comprised of one representative from each member state/jurisdiction, the NOAA Fisheries Northeast and Southeast Regions, and the USFWS Regions 4 and 5 who possess scientific as well as management and administrative expertise.

2.9 Assessment Science Committee

The Assessment Science Committee (ASC) is a stock assessment advisory committee that reports to the ISFMP Policy Board. ASC is comprised of one representative from each state/jurisdiction, the NOAA Fisheries Northeast and Southeast Regions, the 3 East Coast regional fishery management councils, and the USFWS. All agencies may nominate individuals for appointment to the ASC based

on stock assessment and population dynamics expertise. The ISFMP Policy Board should review all nominations and appoint members to the ASC based on expertise, as opposed to agency representation. The ASC membership should be kept to a maximum of 25 members and periodic rotation of membership should be considered. The ASC is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the update and benchmark stock assessment schedule, advising the Policy Board regarding priorities and timelines in relation to current workloads, providing stock assessment advice and guidance documents for TCs and Boards on technical issues as requested, and providing oversight to the Commission's Stock Assessment Training Program.

2.10 Ecological Reference Point Working Group

The Ecological Reference Point Working Group (ERP WG) is appointed by and advises the Atlantic Menhaden Board on multispecies modeling efforts with the goal of moving towards the use of multispecies model results in management decisions. The ERP WG is comprised of state, federal, and academic scientists from the Atlantic Menhaden TC with the expertise necessary to complete multispecies tasks on the species of interest and modeling approaches being employed. Individuals from outside the TC with expertise in stock assessment or biology of the species may also be appointed, if necessary.

2.11 Habitat Committee

The Habitat Committee is a standing Commission committee appointed at the discretion of the Commission Chair on an annual basis. The Committee advises the ISFMP Policy Board with the goal of enhancing and cooperatively managing vital fish habitat for conservation, restoration, and protection, and supporting the cooperative management of Commission managed species. The Habitat Committee is primarily responsible for developing habitat sections of FMPs and creating habitat management series publications as needed. Membership includes state representatives, the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, National Ocean Service, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Two seats are available on the Habitat Committee for members from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2.12 Law Enforcement Committee

The LEC is a unique body of professionals in marine fisheries enforcement. It is comprised of representatives from each of the Commission's participating states and the District of Columbia. Members also represent NOAA Fisheries, the U. S. Coast Guard and USFWS. The LEC carries out assignments at the specific request of the Commission, the ISFMP Policy Board, the Boards/Sections, the PDTs, and the PRTs. In general, the Committee provides information on law enforcement issues, brings resolutions addressing enforcement concerns before the Commission, coordinates enforcement efforts among states, exchanges data, identifies potential enforcement problems, and monitors enforcement of measures incorporated into the various FMPs.

2.13 Committee on Economics and Social Sciences

The purpose of the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) is to provide socioeconomic technical oversight for both the ISFMP and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). CESS's major duties are to develop and implement mechanisms to make economic and social science analysis a functioning part of the Commission's decision-making process; function as the technical review panel for social and economic analyses conducted by the Commission and the ACCSP; and nominate economists and social scientists to serve on each species TC, Socioeconomic Subcommittee, or PDT, in order to provide technical support and development of socioeconomic sections of FMPs (including amendments and addenda). The CESS is comprised of one representative from each member state, two representatives from NOAA Fisheries Headquarters (one economist and one social scientist), the NOAA Fisheries Northeast and Southeast Regions, and one representative from the USFWS who possess social science expertise and familiarity with fisheries management.

2.14 Other Technical Support Subcommittees

Upon the approval of a Board/Section, the TC shall appoint individuals with special expertise, as appropriate, to other technical support subcommittees (not including SASs) in order to support TC deliberations on specific issues. These kinds of subcommittees include species tagging and stocking subcommittees, but do not include ISFMP socioeconomic subcommittees. All technical support subcommittees shall report to the TC and shall continue in existence so long as the Management Board/Section requires. All technical support subcommittees should elect their own Chair and Vice-chair, who will be responsible for reporting to the TC and the management Board/Section as necessary. Overall membership should be kept to a maximum of six persons unless additional expertise is requested by the TC or Board.

2.15 Special Issue Technical Committees

The ISFMP Policy Board may form new TCs to address special issues (e.g., Interstate Tagging Committee, Fish Ageing Committee, Fishing Gear Technology Work Group, Fish Passage Working Group). Nominations are approved by the Policy Board. Special TCs meet as often as necessary (resources permitting) to address specific Policy Board tasks.

2.16 Coordinating Council

The ACCSP Coordinating Council is the governing body of the Program and oversees program design and implementation. The policies set by the Council guide the Program and each partner's participation in it. Membership is composed of one voting member from each of the ACCSP's 23 state and federal partners. Coordinating Council members represent the policy-level of their respective agencies. The Executive Committee, a subset of the Coordinating Council, meets bimonthly to ensure timely decisions are made about the Program.

2.17 Operations Committee

The Operations Committee serves as the steering committee to direct development of program standards and assimilate information from the various committees into cohesive recommendations to the Coordinating Council. By providing recommendations to the Coordinating Council, the Operations Committee guides the development of program standards and serves as the review body for annual project funding priorities. The Committee, along with the Advisory Committee, reviews and prioritizes project proposals with funding recommendations forwarded to the Coordinating Council.

2.18 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was established to ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that the fishing industry perspective is considered in the development and implementation of the Program. The Advisory Committee includes representatives from the commercial, recreational, for-hire, and academic sectors and serves an important role by providing recommendations to the Program. At least one member of this Committee also sits on each technical committee to provide industry feedback. The Committee also reviews and prioritizes project proposals with funding recommendations forwarded to the Coordinating Council.

2.19 Biological Review Panel

The Biological Review Panel is composed of stock assessment biologists, field supervisory personnel, and industry advisors appointed by partner agencies. The Panel develops ACCSP strategies and standards to obtain and manage biological data. Biological data includes length distributions, collection of aging structures, and tissue for basic life history research. The Panel biennially recommends target species, compiles sampling levels for biological sampling, and works with the Bycatch Prioritization Committee to integrate data collection protocols.

2.20 Bycatch Prioritization Committee

The Bycatch Prioritization Committee is composed of stock assessment biologists, observer personnel and protected species experts from partner agencies. The Committee develops ACCSP strategies and standards to collect and manage bycatch and protected species data. These data include at-sea and port discards and information on protected species interactions. The Bycatch Prioritization Committee biennially ranks fleets for funding priority based on fleet characteristics and stock assessment and management needs.

2.21 Commercial Technical Committee

The Commercial Technical Committee is composed of a variety of ACCSP partner personnel with hands-on experience implementing and conducting partner commercial fisheries statistics programs. The committee develops catch and effort data collection standards for all species commercially harvested on the Atlantic coast.

2.22 Information Systems Committee

The Information Systems Committee is composed of both developers and industry representatives implementing and using electronic data collection programs for commercial fisheries. The members identify software applications that can meet reporting needs and develop recommendations to improve SAFIS, a real-time web-based reporting system for seafood dealers.

2.23 Recreational Technical Committee

The Recreational Technical Committee is composed of partner personnel who specialize in survey design, statistical estimation of fishing effort, catch, participation, and operation of recreational sampling programs. The committee develops data collection standards for monitoring catch and effort of recreational and for-hire fisheries. They also serve as the coordination body for the partners to develop regional guidance on recreational projects, including the Atlantic Regional Implementation Plan and MRIP survey components.

2.24 Standard Codes Committee

The Standard Codes Committee works to develop and maintain standardized codes for Atlantic fisheries data.

3.0 COMMITTEE TASKING

Boards/Sections can task the appropriate Commission committee through Board/Section action or direction from the Board/Section Chair. Species-specific technical tasks should be directed to the appropriate ISFMP technical support group in writing by ISFMP staff or the Board/Section Chair. Boards/Sections may also consider referring broader scientific, law enforcement, habitat and social/economic issues to the MSC, the ASC, the LEC, the Habitat Committee, or the CESS. These committees may provide recommendations to Boards/Sections based on a more focused area of expertise.

Boards/Sections will develop specific and clear guidance whenever tasking committees for advice. ISFMP staff, in consultation with the Board/Section Chair and technical support group Chair, will develop the written charge. The charge will contain terms of reference to clearly detail all specific tasks, the deliverables expected, and a timeline for presentation of recommendations to the Board/Section. It is the responsibility of the ISFMP staff and any technical support group Chair present at Board/Section meetings to ensure the timeline can be met. Any problems or discrepancies encountered by the technical support group in meeting the charge will be discussed with the appropriate ISFMP staff and Board/Section Chair.

Any charge developed by a Board/Section to a technical subcommittee will be initially forwarded by ISFMP staff to the TC for review and input. It is not the responsibility of the TC to modify or approve a Board/Section charge, however, input on appropriate mechanisms to meet that charge should be provided. The TC will review products by a technical subcommittee before products are provided to a Board/Section to ensure the charge has been addressed.

The Boards/Sections are responsible for making decisions on allocation issues. However, they may task the TC with the development of technical options for addressing allocation. The Board/Section should develop specific guidelines and initial options for further development by the TC.

4.0 COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

4.1 All Committee Members

Committee members should expect to attend several (1-4) meetings each year, depending on the specific management or assessment activities being pursued. As many of these meetings as possible will be held during one of the three scheduled Technical Meeting Weeks. Committee members should save those dates in their calendars until the agendas for each meeting week are set (typically immediately following each quarterly Commission Meeting so TCs can respond to Board tasks).

It is important that all members of a Commission committee fully participate in all meetings and activities of the committee. The appropriate Administrative Commissioner should be informed if a committee member is unable to commit to the level of participation required. Commission staff

should be contacted by the committee member prior to the start of the meeting if he or she is unable to attend. The committee member should provide staff with the name of his/her proxy for that committee meeting in writing (email or letter). Proxies must be from the same state or jurisdiction or agency as the individual making the designation. Proxies shall abide by the rules of the committee.

Commission technical support groups are expected to provide scientific and technical advice to the Board/Section, PDT, and PRT in the development and monitoring of a FMP, amendment, or addendum. It is also important that each committee member provide periodic briefings to his/ her agency's Administrative Commissioner on the discussions and actions taken at all technical support group meetings. Specific activities conducted by TC and SAS members may include:

- Requesting, preparing, and objectively evaluating fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data,
- Conducting periodic stock assessments,
- Providing recommendations on the status of the stock and the fishery,
- Evaluating management options and harvest policies, conducting risk assessments, and assessing probable outcomes of various management options.

New TC members may wish to consult the Commission's Stock Assessment Training Program materials, manuals, and ASC working papers prior to participating in an assessment. Science staff may be contacted for a complete list of available training and guidance documents.

Even though all TC and SAS members have been appointed by a specific agency, it is not appropriate for TC members to represent the policies and/or politics of that agency. It is the responsibility of each committee member to use the best scientific information available and established stock assessment techniques consistent with the current state of scientific knowledge. All participants in the Commission process should act professionally and expect to be treated with respect. See Section 6.6 on meeting etiquette.

4.2 Committee Chairs and Vice-chair

Unless otherwise specified, all Commission committees and subcommittees will elect their own Chair and Vice-chair. Chairs serve two-year terms and chairmanship should rotate among members of the committee. The role of the Chair is demanding and only those willing and able to commit the time and energy required by the job should agree to serve. The Chair must be willing to perform the job and state/federal agencies must be willing to provide the Chair time to attend to Commission business. It is the responsibility of all officers to facilitate meetings in an objective manner and represent the viewpoints of all committee members, including opposing opinions and opinions in opposition to their own.

4.2 ASMFC Staff Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1 ISFMP Staff

ISFMP staff (i.e., FMP Coordinator) is responsible for organizing all PDT, PRT, AP, and TC activities. ISFMP and Science staff will coordinate SAS activities. ISFMP staff shall serve as ex-officio members of all TCs and will chair the PDTs and PRTs. As an ex-officio member of the TC, ISFMP staff may not vote on issues before the TC. ISFMP staff will provide liaison among the PDTs, PRTs, SAS, TCs, APs, and the Boards/Sections. ISFMP staff will also provide liaison on species-specific issues to the LEC, MSC, TC subcommittees, and Habitat Committee. In consultation with the TC Chair and Vice-chair, is responsible for scheduling committee meetings, drafting agendas, and distributing meeting materials. Either the Habitat Coordinator or the ISFMP Director will provide primary organizational support for the Habitat Committee.

ISFMP staff, in consultation with the Board/Section Chair, will refer any relevant AP recommendations to the appropriate technical support group for evaluation. ISFMP staff, in consultation with the TC and Board/Section chairs, will assist in prioritizing tasks assigned to technical support groups. Staff should track committee meeting attendance and provide records upon request. ISFMP staff and the TC Chair should assist in clarifying the details of any tasks assigned to the TC by the Board/Section. The Board/Section Chair should provide assist in the development of the written charge, including all specific tasks, the deliverable expected, and a timeline for presentation of recommendations to the Board/Section.

4.2.2 Science Staff

The Scientific Committee Coordinator (Science Coordinator) is responsible for organizing all MSC, ASC, CESS, and special issue committee activities. The Science Director, with the assistance of Science staff, is responsible for coordinating Commission peer reviews. The Fisheries Science Coordinator is responsible for providing support to the MSC, ASC, and CESS with assistance on technical matters from other Science staff.

Stock Assessment Scientists' primary responsibility is to provide quantitative technical support to SASs, TCs, and special issue committee activities. For carrying out stock assessments, the Stock Assessment Scientist, in consultation with ISFMP staff, will be the default Commission staff responsible for maintaining the assessment timeline and identifying stock assessment meeting needs. Stock Assessment Scientists may serve as members of SASs, specifically as Chair, Lead Analyst, or as supporting member, as well as on other technical support groups (e.g., tagging and stocking subcommittees). Science staff may serve as Chair on other technical support groups. If a consensus cannot be reached, Science staff may vote on an issue before the SAS, however Science Staff may not vote on issues before the TC. Stock Assessment Scientists are also responsible for providing support to special issue committees (Fish Passage, Interstate Tagging, Gear Technology, Fish Ageing).

Science staff are not members of TCs but may provide technical support to TCs and also assist ISFMP staff with organizing TC and SAS activities, as needed. ISFMP staff are responsible for providing

primary support to TCs and SASs. Primary support includes scheduling, coordinating, and working with the TC and SAS Chairs to facilitate calls and meetings. The ISFMP staff and assigned Science staff will discuss technical needs for each committee as they arise and coordinate roles and responsibilities based on schedules. The ISFMP and Science Directors will resolve workload and responsibility conflicts that may arise.

4.2.3 ACCSP Staff

The ACCSP Data Coordinator prepares, compares, and provides fishery-dependent data from state and federal sources for the TC. Data Coordinators are not members of TC's, but may provide technical support during calls and meetings. They also facilitate TC members request for confidential data access, and provide updates in coordination with FMP staff.

5.0 MEETING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For the purposes of Sections 6 and 7, a meeting can be an in-person, conference call or webinar unless specified.

5.1 Meeting Announcements

A public notice, via the Commission website (www.asmf.org), will be provided at least two weeks prior to all in-person meetings of the Commission and its various committees, and at least 48 hours notice will be provided for any meetings held by conference call ; provided exceptions to these notice requirements may be granted by the Commission Chair. A non-committee member can request, through Commission staff, to be notified of committee meetings via email (Note: the public notice of the Commission website is the official notification of a scheduled meeting). Non-committee members may attend any in-person or conference call committee meeting, unless confidential data is being discussed.

If a non-committee member would like to attend a webinar he/she should contact Commission staff 24 hours prior to the webinar in order for staff to determine if space is available. If Commission staff is not contacted, priority for available webinar space will be given to committee members.

5.2 Materials Distribution

Meeting materials will be distributed to committee members prior to committee meetings via email or FTP site, if necessary. Agendas and documents for public review will be available via the Commission website. Draft materials with preliminary content and/or with confidential data will not be distributed outside of the committee. The Chair will explain at the outset of meetings that all data and analyses are preliminary and not to be shared until they have been finalized and distributed to the appropriate Board/Section.

5.3 Roles of Chair and Vice-chair at Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the technical support group to conduct and facilitate meetings. Chairs will lead committees through agenda items in consultation with staff, including items requiring specific action. The TC Chair should assist in clarifying the details of any tasks assigned to the TC by the Board/Section. Assistance should also be provided in the development of the written charge, including all specific tasks, the deliverable expected, and a timeline for presentation of results and/or recommendations to the Board/Section. The Chair should attend all Board/Section meetings and should be in frequent contact with the appropriate ISFMP staff. It is also the responsibility of the Chair of the technical support group to provide presentations to the relevant oversight committee on all findings and advice. All formal presentations should be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidance provided in 7.4.5.

The committee Chair is also responsible for clarifying the majority and/or minority opinions, where possible. **The overall goal of all technical support groups is to develop recommendations through consensus.** The Chair is responsible for facilitating committee discussion toward reaching a consensus recommendation for Board/Section consideration. If a consensus cannot be reached the committee shall vote on the issue. The majority opinion shall be presented to the Board/Section as the recommendation, defined as a simple majority, including a record number of votes in favor, against, and abstentions. The committee will also present the minority opinion prepared by a committee member(s) that voted in the minority, to the Board/Section. **Voting should be used only as a last resort when full consensus cannot be reached.** The Commission will periodically conduct meetings management and consensus-building seminars for all Chairs and Vice-chairs of technical support groups, and others as appropriate. Chairs and Vice-chairs should attend these seminars in order to improve your ability to conduct efficient meetings, objectively facilitate discussions and development of consensus recommendations, and objectively represent opposing viewpoints.

The vice-chair will act as Chair when the Chair is unable to attend a meeting or conference call. It is the role of the vice Chair of committees to take meeting minutes that will be used to develop meeting summaries and committee reports. A member of the committee will be appointed by the Vice-chair to take minutes when the Vice-chair is acting as Chair.

5.4 Meeting Records

Meeting summaries are provided for all Commission committee meetings (a committee report or meeting minutes can serve as the meeting summary). If the Vice-chair is unable to take minutes or there is no Vice-chair, another committee member will be appointed to take minutes. Meeting summaries will be distributed by ISFMP staff to all committee members for review and modification. Meeting summaries should be finalized and approved by the committee no later than 60 days following the meeting. Draft meeting summaries will only be distributed to committee members for review. The Chair should ensure that all committee member comments are addressed prior to approval and public distribution of meeting summaries and committee reports.

Commission staff should ensure that meeting summaries of all Commission technical support groups are distributed to other appropriate support groups, including APs, TCs, LEC, and MSC. All

Board/Section meeting summaries, and appropriate documentation, should also be provided to technical support groups. Upon approval, these documents will also be posted to the Commission website.

5.5 Public Participation at Meetings

Public comment or questions at committee meetings may be taken at designated periods at the discretion of the committee Chair. In order for the committee to complete its agenda, the Chair, taking into account the number of speakers and available time, may limit the number of comments or the time allowed for public comment. The Chair may choose to allow public comment only at the end of the meeting after the committee has addressed all its agenda items and tasks. Where constrained by the available time, the Chair may limit public comment in a reasonable manner by: (1) requesting individuals avoid duplication of prior comments/questions; (2) requiring persons with similar comments to select a spokesperson; and/or (3) setting a time limit on individual comments. The Commission's public participation policy is intended to fairly balance input from various stakeholders and interest groups. Members of the public are expected to respect guidelines outlined in Section 6.6, meeting etiquette.

Members of the public may be invited to give presentations at committee meetings if the Board/Section has tasked the committee with reviewing their materials, or if members of the public have been invited in advance by the committee Chair to respond to a request from the committee for more information on a topic. Invitations will be offered in advance of the meeting. Public presentations will not be allowed without these invitations. See Section 8 for additional details regarding public participation in stock assessment data, assessment, and peer review workshops.

5.5.1 General Submission of Materials

Public submissions of materials for committee review outside of the benchmark assessment process must be done through the Board/Section Chair (see Section 4.0). The Chair will prioritize the review of submitted materials in relation to the existing task list. Materials provided by the public should be submitted to the Chair at least one month in advance of the meeting. A committee is not required to review or provide advice to the Board/Section on materials provided by the public unless it is specifically tasked to do so by the Chair in writing or from Board/Section. Materials will be distributed to committees by Commission staff.

5.5.2 Benchmark Assessment Submissions

The Commission welcomes the submission of data sets, models, and analyses that will improve its stock assessments. For materials to be considered at data or assessment workshops, the materials must be sent in the required format with accompanying methods description to the designated Commission Stock Assessment Scientist at least one month prior to the specific workshop at which the data will be reviewed; see Section 8.6.1. The Commission will issue a press release requesting submissions at the start of the assessment process. The press release will contain specific deadlines

and submission requirements for materials to be considered in the benchmark stock assessment process.

5.6 Meeting etiquette

It is the role of the Chair to ensure participants (committee members and members of the public) are respectful of the following meeting guidelines. The Chair should stop a meeting if a participant is not following the guidelines. Commission staff should note when these guidelines are not being followed if the Chair does not do so. If a participant is being disruptive the Chair may ask the individual to leave the meeting.

- **Come prepared.** Read the past meeting summary prior to the meeting. Bring something to write on and with. All presenters should ensure their handouts, presentations, etc., are organized and complete.
- **Be respectful of others.** Hold your comments until the Chair asks for comments, unless open discourse throughout the meeting is encouraged. Do not interrupt other attendees. Wait to speak until the Chair recognizes you. Hold your side comments to others until a meeting break or after the meeting is adjourned. Side conversations are disruptive to other participants and inconsiderate of the group.
- **Mute electronics.** Turn all cell phones on vibrate or turn off completely. Do not answer your phone while in the meeting.
- **Attend the entire meeting.** Make travel arrangements to allow participation in the entire meeting. Early departure by committee members disrupts the meeting and impacts the development of consensus recommendations and decisions.

If complaints arise they can be brought to the Chair of the committee, Commission staff, or the Commission's Executive Director.

6.0 COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

6.1 Email Policies

For the purposes of distributing draft committee documents, distribution will be limited to committee members. Non-committee members may request to receive notices of committee meetings, agendas, approved meeting summaries and final committee reports.

6.2 Recordings

Committee meetings are open for the public to attend and as such may be recorded (audio or video) by any participant (public or committee member) with notification to the Chair and staff prior to the start meeting, and so long as those recordings are not disruptive to the meeting. The Chair and/or staff will notify committee members prior to the start of the meeting that they will be recorded. Staff may record meetings for note taking purposes, but the official meeting record is the meeting summary or committee report. Staff recordings will not be distributed.

6.3 Webinars

While committee members are encouraged to attend all technical meetings in person, the Commission acknowledges occasional travel constraints or other impediments to attendance in person. If a committee member cannot attend a technical meeting in person, that member may request that a webinar be arranged to accommodate them. However, the Commission cannot guarantee that the audio or visual quality of the webinar will be sufficient to allow complete participation in the meeting by remote committee members. Committee members should contact Commission staff at least twenty-four hours in advance if they require a webinar, and those requests may be accommodated as feasible.

If a committee meeting is held via webinar (i.e., there is no in-person meeting), it shall be open to the public. As with in-person meetings, public comment or questions at committee webinars may be taken at designated periods at the discretion of the committee Chair (see Section 6.5 for more detailed guidance on public participation in committee meetings). Certain agenda items may not be open to the public; these include discussion of confidential data and preliminary model results. Non-committee members will be asked to leave before confidential issues are discussed. To ensure that enough bandwidth is reserved for the meeting, members of the public who wish to attend the webinar must contact staff 24 hours prior to the webinar to ensure there is available space.

Commission policy on meeting etiquette (Section 6.6) applies to webinars as well as in-person meetings. In addition, participants are asked to mute their phone lines when not speaking to reduce background noise that may disrupt the call.

Quarterly Commission Board Meetings are broadcast via webinar and information on listening to those meetings will be available via the Commission's website.

6.4 Reports

All reports developed by an Commission committee should include, at a minimum, the following components (1) the specific charge to the committee, (2) the process used by the committee to develop recommendations and/or advice, (3) a summary of all committee discussions, and (4) committee recommendations and all minority opinions. All committee reports are a consensus product of the committee, not an individual member.

6.4.1 Non-Committee Member Reports

Outside of the benchmark stock assessment process, a non-committee member may submit reports for committee review through the Board/Section Chair (see Section 6.5.1). The Board/Section Chair will determine if the report should be reviewed by the appropriate committee and specify tasks to be completed in the review. Non-committee reports will follow the same formatting guidelines and distribution procedures as Commission committee reports.

6.4.2 Distribution of Committee Reports

Draft committee reports will only be distributed to committee members. All committee member

comments should be addressed prior to approval and distribution of committee reports. Stock assessment and peer review reports will not be distributed publicly until the Board/Section receives and approves the reports for management use. Results of a stock assessment may not be cited or distributed beyond the committee before the assessment has gone through peer review and been provided to the Board/Section. Commission staff will distribute reports to the appropriate Boards/Sections and post committee reports on the website following Board approval.

6.4.3 Corrections to Reports

Corrections to published stock assessment reports can be made on rare occasions when mistakes are found after Board/Section approval. All corrections will be highlighted in yellow within the report. A new publication date will be added below the original publication date on the cover of the report, e.g., *Corrected on March 29, 2012*. An explanation of the correction will be included in the introduction or executive summary and highlighted.

6.4.4 Templates

Appendices 4, 6, 7, and 8 contain outlines for FMPs, addenda, amendments, FMP Reviews, and stock assessment and peer review advisory reports.

6.4.5 Presentations

Chairs and committee members will be responsible for presenting technical reports to Boards/Sections, APs, and other committees who may have a limited technical background. It is important to effectively present technical information to fishery managers and stakeholders in a straightforward and understandable manner.

All presentations should be developed using a Power Point template provided by Commission staff. Staff can assist in the development of presentations. A copy of the presentation should be provided to staff prior to the meeting. Presentations should be developed consistent with guidelines for other professional presentations, such as the American Fisheries Society. Some general guidelines include:

- Keep visuals simple, limit one idea per slide.
- Prepare figures and tables specifically for your presentation. Copies from manuscripts or papers usually contain too much detail for a presentation.
- When working with words, think brevity. Use a maximum of 6 words per line with 5 or 6 lines per slide. Use key phrases to emphasize important points.
- Tables should be simple with a maximum of 3 columns and 5 rows or vice versa.
- Graph/table values should be in a large enough font to be clearly viewed.
- Visuals appear confusing when too many colors are used; limit to 2 to 4 contrasting colors.

6.5 Board Meetings

Committee Chairs should present the committee report and answer any specific questions relevant to the report at Board/Section meetings. Committee Chairs may ask clarifying questions of the Board. They should not present their own viewpoints during Board/Section deliberations.

7.0 STOCK ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Definitions

7.1.1 Stock Assessment Update

A **stock assessment update** consists of adding the most recent years of data to an existing, peer-reviewed, and Board-accepted stock assessment model without changing the model type or structure. Correction of mistakes in existing, peer-reviewed, and Board-accepted stock assessment models are permitted during an assessment update.

7.1.2 Benchmark Stock Assessment

The term **benchmark stock assessment** refers to either a new stock assessment or a stock assessment for which existing data inputs and model structure are modified and must therefore be subject to an external peer review. Benchmark changes to data, parameterization, and model type or structure are often made in response to previous peer review recommendations.

7.1.3 Peer Review

Peer review is the critical evaluation by independent (i.e., unbiased) experts of scientific and technical work products. In fisheries science, the periodic review of a stock assessment evaluates the validity of the assessment data, model, and assumptions used, and determines if the science conducted is adequate for informing management. A peer review by independent assessment peers that have had no involvement, stake or input into the assessment provides a judgment on the quality and completeness of the science used in a stock assessment. Peer reviewers are selected who have no conflict of interest with regard to the technical committee members or the fishery being assessed (see Appendix 5).

7.2 The Assessment Process

The ASC provides oversight for the benchmark data and assessment workshop process (see below), and the MSC provides oversight for the peer review workshop process. All changes to the assessment process are reviewed and approved by the ISFMP Policy Board.

The Commission plans and monitors stock assessments of all managed species via the long-term benchmark stock assessment and peer review schedule. The ASC reviews the schedule biannually to assist the ISFMP Policy Board in setting overall priorities and timelines for conducting all Commission stock assessments in relation to scientist workloads. The Policy Board is responsible for reviewing

the schedule, prioritizing stock assessments, and approving the finalized schedule. The schedule is based on a recommendation by the ASC to conduct a benchmark stock assessment and peer review for all species every five years. The ASC and the ISFMP Policy Board should prioritize benchmark stock assessments and associated peer reviews based on the following criteria:

- Assessments for fisheries with unknown stock status
- Assessments for fisheries with new fishery management plans (FMPs)
- Assessments with a major change in the stock assessment data or model
- Assessments for existing FMPs undergoing amendments
- Assessment reviews for species that have not undergone an external review in at least five years

Using the approved schedule, Boards/Sections task TCs to conduct assessments. Once a stock assessment has been peer reviewed, the Chairs of the SAS and peer review panel will draft reports on the results of the stock assessment and peer review panel those reports will be sent to the Board/Section. The Board/Section considers acceptance of the reports for management use. If accepted, the Board may task the TC and AP to review the reports, perform follow-up tasks, and report back within a specified timeframe.

An alternative stock assessment for a Commission-managed species developed by external groups must be brought to the attention of the Board/Section Chair during a benchmark stock assessment process if the group would like their assessment to be considered for management use. Alternative assessments are subject to the same standards, documentation, and process as assessments developed by the Commission, including SAS, TC, and independent peer review. External groups must notify the Commission one month in advance of an assessment workshop regarding their interest in presenting an alternative assessment at the workshop. Any analyses submitted outside the benchmark process may not be considered for management until the next Commission benchmark assessment. For more details, see Section 8.6.2 below.

7.3 Assessment Frequency and Benchmark Triggers

Assessment frequency for a given species is recommended by the TC, keeping in mind FMP requirements and the biology of the species (especially the number of years necessary to begin to detect the anticipated effects of new management actions). Update assessments are conducted for a select group of Commission species and are performed on a regular schedule, typically every 1-3 years between benchmark assessments. Annual updates are generally not needed for species that are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Requests for additional update assessments may be made by the Board/Section to the Policy Board and are granted based on prioritization of the existing stock assessment schedule, relative workloads of assessment scientists, and available funding. Changes in stock indicators may trigger an update or benchmark assessment to be completed as outlined in the FMP, with TC consultation.

Before requesting an additional assessment, the Board/Section should task the SAS with determining if an update or benchmark assessment is warranted. If the SAS is unsure, the ASC may be consulted. In the case of multispecies models (MSVPA), MSTC, recommends the timing of a benchmark assessment for approval by the Policy Board, and updates of the model are performed before each menhaden assessment.

An assessment update will need to be converted to a benchmark assessment if a benchmark trigger occurs (see trigger examples below). The Policy Board must approve the scheduling of new benchmark assessments, including when new methods or data streams are presented. If scheduling a benchmark is not approved, the update will continue and will only use the previous methods and data streams. The Commission has employed a default five-year benchmark frequency to prevent excessive time from elapsing between peer reviews of each species assessment used by management. More or less time may be scheduled between benchmarks depending on the biology and management needs of the species. The following are examples actions that would trigger a benchmark (not inclusive):

- Change in stock unit definitions or boundaries.
- Change in model type
- Change in input data sources used (additions, deletions, major modifications)
- Change in input parameters (e.g., natural mortality, selectivity, steepness, etc.)
- Change in model configuration (e.g., estimation vs. specification of parameters, changes in stock-recruitment or selectivity parameterization, etc.)
- Appearance in update assessment of severe retrospective pattern or other diagnostics indicating a significant problem with the model that was not identified during the last peer review.
- Changes to reference point model or type

Requests for additional benchmark assessments and associated peer reviews may be made by the Board/Section to the Policy Board and are granted based on prioritization of the existing stock assessment and peer review schedule, relative workloads of assessment scientists, and available funding.

Assessments rejected at a peer-review should not undergo projections, updates, or benchmark assessment and peer review until the deficiencies identified by the review are addressed or a different model is used that is appropriate for the existing data. This is intended to: 1) match the assessment technique to the available data, rather than management requirements that exceed the available data, and 2) ensure that the necessary research/work is done to improve data for a species before conducting an assessment using a method that is appropriate with the available data. Species TCS should review and evaluate whether or not the assessment deficiencies identified in previously rejected assessments have been addressed. When making recommendations for the benchmark

assessment and peer review schedule, the ASC will consider whether or not those deficiencies have been addressed.

On rare occasions an analytical error in a stock assessment is discovered after either peer review or management Board acceptance. Corrections to the assessment will be added to the previous versions of the accepted assessment report and highlighted in order to document the development of assessment results, including stock status (see Section 7.3.3 above). Simple errors in calculations that do not change the peer-reviewed structure of the data or model will not require additional review. Errors in model structure and primary inputs (e.g., survey indices, catch-at-age tables) will require review in the form of written correspondence from the original reviewers. The SAS and TC Chairs, Management Board Chair, and Commission Science Director will determine the need for and means of subsequent peer review.

Commission-managed species display numerous life history strategies and have data sets that vary greatly in quantity and quality. To reflect this variability, specific time lines should be set by each TC and Board/Section to account for the specific requirements of each species assessment. Planning should begin at least 24 months in advance of the expected peer review date. For species with no accepted benchmark stock assessment, the assessment process might need to begin as early as 36 months in advance of a scheduled peer review.

Should a SAS determine that an assessment is unable to meet its stock assessment timeline; the SAS Chair will present a revised time line and an explanation for the revised time line to the TC for review and possible approval. If the new time line is accepted by the TC then the TC Chair will go before the Board and explain the need for a new time line. The TC Chair, in consultation with the SAS Chair, will explain to the Board the TC's reasons for requesting a new time line. The Board will then vote to approve the new time line or continue with the established time line.

7.4 Data Confidentiality

State and federal laws requires all those who view or receive copies of confidential data have up-to-date clearance with the agency that provided the data. Confidential data access for each state and federal partners can be applied to through the ACCSP, for more information please visit [public Data Warehouse section on confidentiality](#). All TC and SAS members and other workshop participants who wish to view confidential data should be prepared to prove their confidential data clearance status and explain the nature of the agreement before viewing or receiving confidential data. Data providers are responsible for identifying confidential data submitted to the Commission and fellow committee members or workshop participants. Confidential data should only be handled and viewed by those with the required clearance. Data presented to those who do not have appropriate clearance must be compiled so that confidentiality is maintained; if sharing or display of non-confidential data is not adequate for the TC or SAS to complete their tasks, portions of data and assessment workshops will be closed to the public.

7.5 Assessment Updates

Assessments updates typically consist of one or two SAS workshops to review updated data and modeling results, troubleshoot any problems that arise, and organize the report and presentation to the Board/Section. Once the update is complete, the TC holds a meeting or conference call to review the update report results, conclusions, and recommendations. All update SAS workshops are facilitated by the SAS Chair and all TC meetings are facilitated by TC Chair. The SAS will prepare the update assessment which is to be approved by the species TC prior to distribution to the Board/Section. For species managed cooperatively by the Commission and the regional councils, a stock assessment report may be developed by NOAA Fisheries Northeast or Southeast Fisheries Science Centers (NEFSC and SEFSC).

7.6 Benchmark Assessments

The SAS will prepare the benchmark assessment, which is to be approved by the species TC prior to peer review. For species managed cooperatively by the Commission and the regional councils, a stock assessment report will be developed by the NEFSC or SEFSC. Prior to the start of the benchmark assessment process, a meeting or conference call with the TC Chair, SAS Chair, and Commission staff will be conducted to initiate assessment planning, review the stock assessment checklist (Appendix 1), and develop a draft time line for subsequent assessment-related meetings and milestones. The TC, in consultation with the SAS, will draft the terms of reference for the assessment. Both the draft time line and draft terms of reference will be approved by the TC and presented to the Board/Section for approval. The Board/Section may modify the timeline, if necessary. Generic terms of reference for Commission benchmark assessment and peer review are provided in Appendix 2.

Prior to the start of a benchmark assessment, the species TC in consultation with the MSC and ASC, will determine the appropriate assessments needs including SAS membership, potential modeling approaches, and data needs. Integrated reviews will be considered for assessments that did not pass previous review, or passed with major recommendations for improvement. The integrated reviewer's recommendations will serve as supplementary expert guidance for the SAS to consider, and decide on whether alternative approaches should be pursued, or not. Further guidelines for the use of integrated reviewers can be found in the Commission's *Protocol for Integrated Peer Review*. The benchmark assessment process involves a minimum of three workshops, namely the data workshop, assessment workshop, and peer review workshop. Additional intermediate workshops, such as a Methods Workshop, may be conducted if necessary to complete the assessment. The Data Workshop is facilitated by the TC Chair, and the Methods and Assessment Workshops are facilitated by the SAS Chair.

7.6.1 Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities during a Stock Assessment

Technical Committee (TC)

TC Chair: Facilitate planning calls/webinars leading up to the Data Workshop and the Data Workshop

itself. This includes keeping the TC on track and moving through the agenda during workshops and calls, facilitating committee discussion toward reaching consensus, and making sure decisions and action items are clearly stated. Consult with Commission Staff and SAS Chair to formulate an agendas for all workshops and calls/webinars. The TC chair also serves as a Stock Assessment Subcommittee member.

TC Vice-chair: Take meeting minutes that will be used to develop meeting summaries and committee reports; serve as chair during calls and meetings when the chair cannot attend (task another TC member with taking minutes in this event).

FMP Coordinator: Coordinate meeting and call/webinar logistics; in consultation with Stock Assessment Scientist, TC Chair and SAS Chair (as relevant) to develop meeting and call/webinar agendas.

Commission Stock Assessment Scientist: Provide technical support to TC and SAS; assist FMP Coordinators with organizing TC and SAS activities as needed; maintain and update stock assessment timeline as work progresses; serve as SAS member; coordinate data submissions and maintain all data submitted for the assessment; consult with FMP Coordinator and TC and SAS Chairs to formulate agendas for all workshops and calls/webinars; identify materials to be included with the agenda for review ahead of workshops and call/webinars.

ACCSP Data Lead: Work with TC members and agency data contacts to provide comprehensive landings time-series and special-use tools such as biosampling databases; assist TC and SAS members with acquiring access to confidential data and confirm all necessary members have access.

Technical Committee Members:

- Provide data from their jurisdiction (including universities) in the format requested by Staff. This includes but is not limited to fishery independent data (raw, tow-by-tow or haul-by-haul data and the state-calculated index, raw bio-sampling data including lengths and ages) and fishery dependent data (raw age and length data).
- Provide a description of the sampling programs that generated these data and the jurisdiction's opinion on the utility of each dataset and any caveats associated with its use.
- Attend planning calls/webinars leading up to the Data Workshop and participate in the Data Workshop. This includes presenting agency data and contributing to data decisions such as the inclusion or elimination of datasets and the treatment of all datasets considered for inclusion in the stock assessment.
- Provide additional data support throughout the assessment process, as needed by the SAS.
- Review the completed draft assessment report prepared by the SAS and provide feedback. Participate in the discussion about whether to accept the report and forward to the peer-review panel.

- Staff will work with the TC chair to develop a timeline for data submission to ensure that the assessment stays on track. During the planning process, TC members will have an opportunity to comment on the timeline and the data submission template to make sure that the necessary data are available by the proposed deadline (e.g., if the deadline is May 1, but age data for that year won't be available until June, let Staff know during the process). If data are not submitted in a timely manner, Staff will work with TC members and possibly Administrative Commissioners to find a solution.
- TC Members may also volunteer to conduct supporting analyses such as standardizing indices, developing catch-at-age, developing life history inputs, etc., as necessary to support the assessment, and would be responsible for providing the text, tables, and figures describing methods and results of those analyses, even if they are not members of the SAS.

Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS)

SAS Chair: Facilitate and lead SAS planning calls/webinars occurring after Data Workshop; facilitate the Method and Assessment Workshop(s); participate in the Data and Peer-Review Workshops as well as intermediary calls; consult with Commission Staff to formulate agendas for all workshops and calls/webinars; work with Science Staff to finalize the Stock Assessment Report; present the stock assessment to the TC and the Board for their approval

Lead Analyst: Take responsibility for developing and running the preferred model, if one has been identified; provide guidance on data needs and formats to facilitate data submission; provide the text, tables, and figures describing model structure and results, including characterizing uncertainty; participate in the Data, Methods, Assessment, and Peer-Review Workshops as well as intermediary calls.

Supporting Modelers: Take responsibility for developing and running complementary/supporting model(s); provide the text, tables, and figures describing model structure and results, including characterizing uncertainty; participate in the Data and Assessment Workshops as well as intermediary calls; participate at the Peer-Review Workshop if necessary.

Supporting Analysts: Conduct supporting analyses such as standardizing indices, developing catch-at-age, developing life history inputs, etc., as necessary to support the assessment; provide the text, tables, and figures describing methods and results of those analyses; update or develop other Stock Assessment Report sections as necessary; participate in the Data and Assessment Workshops as well as intermediary calls; participate at the Peer Review Workshop if necessary.

FMP Coordinator: Coordinate meeting and call/webinar logistics.

Commission Stock Assessment Scientist: Provide technical support to SAS by serving in one of the above positions; assist FMP Coordinators with organizing TC and SAS activities as needed; maintain

and update stock assessment timeline as work progresses; coordinate data submissions and maintain all data submitted for the assessment

→ The SAS is a small group of individuals and everyone involved needs to contribute to the roles above in order to complete the assessment on time. One individual taking on multiple roles (e.g., Lead Analyst and SAS Chair) is discouraged; however, if that is necessary, some responsibilities of those roles will be shifted to other SAS members to reduce the burden on that person. For assessments where a single preferred model has not been identified, and/or where multiple stocks are being assessed, the role of Lead Analyst will be shared by the SAS members responsible for the various models considered, and Supporting Modelers may not be necessary. If a SAS member is unable to complete their work in a timely fashion, Staff will reach out to the appropriate Administrative Commissioner to find a solution.

7.6.2 Data Workshop

The objectives of data workshops are to coordinate the collection, preparation, and review of available data. TC members are responsible for gathering and submitting data from their jurisdiction for stock assessments. This includes data from other agencies or institutions within their jurisdiction (e.g., inland divisions, academic institutions) as well as participating in commercial data review with ACCSP and the appropriate data contacts within their jurisdiction. Data workshop participants will include the TC, SAS, ISFMP staff, Science staff and ACCSP staff, and other interested or invited parties. For species with significant recreational harvest, staff from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) will be invited to attend the data workshop to present and review recreational fishing estimates and their PSEs. MRIP staff will also be asked to compare historical and current data collection and estimation procedures and to describe data caveats that may affect the assessment.

Stakeholders will be encouraged to attend Commission data workshops and share any information or data sets that might improve the stock assessment. A public announcement will be made prior to the data workshop to call for data and analyses of which the TC may not already be aware. Commission staff will send notifications to known interested parties soliciting data and inviting participation from a wide range of stakeholders, agencies, and academics to attend at their own expense. For data sets to be considered at the data workshop, the data must be sent in the required format, with accompanying methods description, to the designated Stock Assessment Scientist by the specified submission deadline.

Prior to the data workshop, data availability spreadsheets (Appendix 3) will be distributed by the Stock Assessment Scientist to all new data holders to obtain detailed descriptions of available data. For each data set identified, the Stock Assessment Scientist will distribute data submission instructions to data holders. All data holders should follow the requested formatting and metadata requirements and meet the data submission deadline for their data to be considered. Data workshop products include a comprehensive database of acquired data sets, a table of data

sets and reasons for inclusion or exclusion, a timeline and task list with assignments, and a summary report documenting data decisions. After the data workshop, the drafting of the first five sections of the stock assessment report should begin (see Appendix 4). All decisions and recommendations will be documented by the TC Vice-chair or dedicated note taker. At the conclusion of the data workshop, if time permits, participants will initiate a discussion of the possible approaches for conducting the assessment based on available data; if the data are not finalized and/or there is not enough time to complete this discussion, a methods workshop (see Section 8.6.2) may be conducted to review potential stock assessment approaches in more depth. Participants will also assign tasks and due dates to prepare for the next workshop (methods or assessment workshop). If follow-up tasks are identified, participants will consider the necessity and timing of conference calls and webinars prior to the next workshop to provide input and feedback on work in progress. Commission staff will maintain all stock assessment data files, final reports, working papers and additional materials on a secure server at the Commission as well as an FTP site.

7.6.3 Methods Workshop

The objectives of the methods workshop (sometimes called Assessment Workshop I) are to finalize the data sets to be used in the assessment, to determine which methods make the best use of the available data to assess the stock, and to determine what metrics or reference points should be used to determine the status of the stock. The methods workshop is optional; species with well-established assessments may not need a methods workshop before the assessment workshop. Methods workshop participants shall include the SAS, TC Chair, and ISFMP and Science staff; TC members who are responsible for completing additional analyses assigned at the data workshop may also be invited to attend. All Commission meetings are open to the public. However, all participants will be responsible for abiding by confidentiality agreements for data used at the methods workshop and those without confidential access to data being presented will be asked to temporarily leave the room.

Additional data preparation and analysis tasks identified at the data workshop should be completed prior to the methods workshop so that the SAS may review the results and make a final determination on the inclusion and treatment of those datasets in the assessment. If additional relevant data are identified during or within two weeks after the data workshop, then the new data should be reviewed and approved at the methods workshop by the SAS. As a rule, data identified more than two weeks after the data workshop may not be considered, unless the SAS ascertains the addition of such data may have a significant impact on the assessment outcome. These data must meet the same quality standards as those provided on a timely basis through the data workshop. Late, missing, or unavailable data that are identified should be discussed to determine the impact on SAS's ability to conduct a comprehensive stock assessment, and may result in the delays in the completing the stock assessment.

Once the datasets for the assessment have been finalized, the SAS will discuss potential stock assessment approaches and select the method(s) or model(s) that make the best use of the available

data. The SAS will identify a preliminary base case for each method or model, as well as sensitivity run configurations.

In addition to the assessment approach, the SAS will also discuss reference points and make a recommendation on the best metrics to evaluate stock status based on the available data and the output of the methods and models being considered.

At the conclusion of the methods workshop, a Lead Analyst will be assigned for the preferred model; if multiple stocks are being assessed, or a preferred method or model has not been identified, a Lead Analyst will be assigned for each stock or candidate method/model. Supporting analysts will also be assigned for supporting models and any additional follow-up work. Due dates for model runs will be established; initial model runs should be completed in advance of the assessment workshop so that the results can be reviewed at that workshop. Participants will consider the necessity and timing of conference calls and webinars prior to the assessment workshop to provide input and feedback on work in progress.

7.6.4 Assessment Workshop

The objectives of the assessment workshop are to rigorously evaluate the methods and stock assessment models developed, to ensure appropriate use of the data in models, and to determine the status of the fishery examined. Assessment workshop participants shall include the SAS and ISFMP and Science staff. All Commission meetings are open to the public. However, all participants will be responsible for abiding by confidentiality agreements for data used at the assessment workshop and those without confidential access to data being presented will be asked to temporarily leave the room.

Preliminary model runs should be performed before the assessment workshop to ensure proper model function and to minimize the time spent at workshops correcting computer issues. Conducting and reviewing model runs are the focal points of the assessment workshop.

SAS members will present on the stock assessment methods and models that have been developed. Data use, model formulation, results, diagnostics, and conclusions should be presented. Each analysis will be critically evaluated, a table of strengths and weaknesses of each approach will be constructed, and the SAS will select the best approach(es) for assessing the stock. It is recommended that other peer-reviewed models be explored in addition to the model(s) currently used in an assessment. The Commission encourages development of new models (ones that have not been peer reviewed). These exploratory models should be compared with existing peer-reviewed models and submitted as part of the peer-reviewed benchmark assessment. If the new model passes peer review, it can be used as the primary model.

Stakeholders will be encouraged to attend Commission assessment workshops and share any analyses that might improve the stock assessment. A public announcement may be made prior to the

assessment workshop to call for analyses of which the SAS may not already be aware. For analyses to be considered for the assessment, the analyses must be sent in the required format, with accompanying methods description, to the Stock Assessment Scientist by the specified submission deadline. Anyone participating in the assessment workshop and presenting results from an analysis or assessment model is expected to supply all source code, executables, and input files used in the generation of those analyses or models along with a detailed methods description to ISFMP or Science staff by the specified submission deadline. These measures allow transparency and a fair evaluation of differences between models being considered.

7.6.5 Peer Review Workshop

The purpose of an external peer review is to obtain judgment of the value and appropriateness of the stock assessment for use in management and to provide recommendations for future research and assessment improvements. The peer review will not provide specific management recommendations.

The Commission may choose among 6 venues for conducting a peer review:

1. Commission Review Process
2. NEFSC's SAW/SARC or "research and operational assessment" process
3. SAFMC's SEDAR process
4. TRAC process
5. CIE desk review
6. Other formal review process using the structure of existing organizations (i.e., American Fisheries Society, International Council for Exploration of the Seas, National Academy of Sciences).

The SAW/SARC (Northeast) and the SEDAR (Southeast) processes will be utilized as fully as possible. The Commission staff will serve on the Northeast Coordinating Council (formerly the SAW Steering Committee) and the SEDAR Steering Committee.

The procedures and logistics for planning a stock assessment peer review are dependent on the type of review to be conducted. For information on options 2-6 above, consult the coordinating agency. For the Commission Review Process, the Science Director will initiate selection of the peer review panel. The ASC and SAS should provide suggestions on peer reviewers as soon as the final assessment workshop is complete. A small group of rotating MSC members (2-3 people) is to assist the Science Director in making the final decision on review panel membership. When possible, the MSC group should consist of representation by states outside the management range of the species. Criteria for selection of peer review panel members include:

- Knowledge of the life history and population biology of the species under review;
- Proficiency in utilizing quantitative population dynamics and stock assessment models;

- Knowledge of broader scientific issues as outlined in the terms of reference, and;
- Professional objectivity and credibility.

All peer reviewers participating on a Commission review panel must sign a conflict of interest statement in addition to the peer review panelist contract (Appendix 5). Panel members involved with the Commission's peer review must not have been involved with the Commission stock assessment and management process for the species under review. In addition, at least one panel member should be from outside the range of the species. Once reviewers are under contract to serve on the peer review panel, their names can be released upon request, but will not be posted on the website. Commission Science staff will advise that no contact be made between the panelists and SAS before the peer review workshop.

Terms of reference for the peer review will be developed by the TC and SAS at the initiation of the assessment. The terms of reference will be approved by the Board/Section. The approved stock assessment report for peer review and supporting documentation will be distributed by the Commission's Science Director to the peer review panel approximately four weeks prior to the review workshop. The Commission's Science staff will coordinate all review workshop logistics in consultation with panel members. Workshop information will be distributed by the Commission's Science Director.

The Commission peer review involves a multi-day meeting of the panel to review the stock assessment for a single species. Commission peer reviews will be coordinated by the Commission's Science Director. For Commission review workshops, the full SAS, Board/Section Chair, and AP Chair will be invited to attend the review. At review workshops, stakeholders may attend as observers and provide comment at the discretion of the Review Panel Chair. Only members of the TC, SAS, the review panel, and Commission staff will be invited to engage in discussions regarding the assessment.

The panel should select one member to serve as Chair of the review. Duties of the Panel Chair include focusing discussion on the issues of the review, developing consensus within the review panel, taking the lead role in writing the advisory report, and presenting the finalized advisory report to Commission Boards/Sections.

Panel members may request specific presentations of other issues, including minority opinions. Requests for presentations should be made to the Science Director prior to the review Workshop to allow the presenter ample preparation time.

The review workshop will include a period for the presentation of the stock assessment report and any additional presentations, a period of open discussion among the review panel and SAS, a period for the review panel to ask specific questions of the assessment and supplemental reports, and a closed session for the development of the advisory report. During a review workshop, minor edits to the stock assessment report can be made with the concurrence of the SAS Chair, Review Panel Chair,

and Science Director, if edits do not change the intent of the report. If major edits are made, notification of the modified report will be sent to the TC for their approval. The final assessment report, made publicly available on the Commission website, will include highlighted changes and a description of how and why the document was changed from the version presented at the review workshop.

The review panel will develop an advisory report during the review workshop, or shortly thereafter. The report will address each term of reference individually as well as the advisory report requirements outlined in Appendix 6. The advice included in the report should be a consensus opinion of all review panel members. It is the Review Panel Chair's responsibility to ensure the contents of the advisory report provide an accurate and complete summary of all views on issues covered by the review. In the event consensus cannot be reached on an issue, the Chair will incorporate all reviewers' opinions in the report. Development of the advisory report will be coordinated by the Science Director or a designated Commission Stock Assessment Scientist.

If the review panel has questions or needs clarification on the stock assessment report, the questions should be directed to the Science Director, who will work with the SAS Chair to provide the panel with an answer. In certain situations, the panel may wish to communicate with the SAS before completing the advisory report, or before the Board/Section meeting. Post-review communication will be limited to Chair-to-Chair interaction, and the Science Director will be involved in those conversations.

The advisory report will be distributed to all relevant species committees (Board/Section, TC, SAS, AP) upon completion and approximately two weeks prior to presentation of the results. Advisory reports will not be distributed publicly, except for the meeting week briefing materials, until accepted by the Board/Section. Following distribution of the advisory report, the TC will review the advisory report findings and to evaluate the feasibility for each research recommendation made in the stock assessment and advisory reports. The TC shall provide the Board/Section with a timeline outlining the expected delivery of each item, ranging from 'ASAP to 'pending funding,' where applicable. The TC shall also indicate whether each item, once addressed, can be used in a future assessment update, or whether incorporating that item would trigger a benchmark assessment (see Section 8.3).

If the TC/SAS and the review panel cannot reach agreement, the following process for reconciling the differences between the review panel and the TC will be followed:

- Results of the peer review will be presented by the Review Panel Chair to the Board/Section.
- The Board/Section will refer the peer review results to the TC and SAS for review and action.
- The TC and SAS will revise the stock assessment report based upon the peer review advice. If the SAS and TC do not agree with the peer review advice, they will provide justification for not incorporating the advice, and provide alternate analyses.

- The final assessment, including the peer review and post-review actions, will be presented to the Board/Section by the TC.
- The Board/Section will make the final determination on status of stock and reference points.

For all reviews, after the Board/Section has received the presentation of the peer review results, the Board should indicate that it 'accepts' or 'does not accept' the stock assessment report and peer review advisory report for management use.

APPENDIX 1. GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR TRACKING PROGRESS OF COMMISSION BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENTS

Pre-Assessment Leadership Webinar

Who: TC Chair and SAS Chair, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist, and ACCSP Data Lead

When: Two years before scheduled peer-review

- Stock Assessment Scientist drafts timeline with milestones (Data, Methods and Assessment Workshops, related TC meetings, the peer review and report to Boards/Sections). The timeline will be presented to the TC and to the Board/Section for approval.
- Stock Assessment Scientist develops draft terms of reference to be distributed prior to the TC webinar.
- Review and discuss stock assessment process and policies. All should have read this document before meeting.
- Review and discuss the roles and responsibilities for participants of the benchmark workshops (Data, Methods, Assessment, and Peer Review).
- After the webinar, the FMP Coordinator will distribute draft terms of reference, draft timeline, and other relevant stock assessment materials to the TC and SAS.

Pre-Data Workshop Technical Committee Webinar

Who: TC and SAS, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist, and ACCSP Data Lead

When: Timing is determined during pre-assessment webinar and will be several months in advance of data workshop

Facilitator: TC Chair

- TC Chair and Commission staff develop and distribute draft data workshop agenda, terms of reference and timeline prior to webinar
- Commission staff review goals and objectives of the benchmark stock assessment and peer-review process.
- Review SAS membership, edit, and forward to Board/Section for approval.
- Review draft terms of reference, edit, and forward to Board/Section for approval.
- Review draft assessment timeline, edit, and forward to Board/Section.
- Review draft Data Workshop agenda.
- Review data submission templates and distribute to the TC and SAS members. Set deadline for TC and SAS members to return data submission templates based on timing of data availability.
- Determine additional data sources to contact, as needed, including other state and federal agencies, universities, consulting agencies, utility companies, etc.
- Develop assignments and due dates for TC and SAS members and Commission staff for the Data Workshop. Each task should be assigned to a specific person with the date initially assigned and due date noted. Some specific tasks include:
 - For each data set, prepare data set for submission in proper format, provide a written

- description of the methods, preliminary analyses, and metadata, and prepare a short presentation.
 - SAS chair should prepare a short presentation reviewing the previous stock assessments as a working paper, conduct or update the literature review (life history/habitat and other relevant work).
- ACCSP Data Lead identifies members of TC and SAS who may need to obtain confidential data clearance, remind all members of confidentiality rules, and provide instructions on how to obtain confidential access, if needed.
- Finalize date and location for Data Workshop.

Data Workshop Preparation

When: Between pre-assessment TC webinar and Data Workshop

- Stock Assessment Scientist sends data submission template and Data Workshop announcement to newly identified data holders. Staff also requests that these data holders submit data, working paper and presentations prior to data workshop. Commission staff will provide data submission instructions to additional data holders that respond to initial inquiry.
- Stock Assessment Scientist compiles data submitted by TC and SAS members, as well as other identified data holders.
- Stock Assessment Scientist sends data workshop FTP instructions to TC and SAS.
- Stock Assessment Scientist makes data submissions available to TC members (with proper confidential access, as appropriate).
- FMP Coordinator forwards recommended SAS membership, and draft assessment time line and terms of reference to board/section.
- Stock Assessment Scientist and SAS Chair track data submission and assignment progress.
- Commission staff work with TC Chair to develop and distribute data workshop agenda.
- ACCSP Data Lead monitors progress of data confidential access requests.

Data Workshop

Who: TC and SAS, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist, ACCSP Data Lead, invited data holders and interested stakeholders.

When: Timing determined at pre-assessment meeting, about 3-6 months after TC webinar.

Facilitator: TC Chair

- Review goals and objectives of data workshop and terms or reference.
- Review summary of previous stock assessments.
- Review summary of literature review (life history/habitat and other relevant work).
- Review all data sets.
- Develop preliminary list of included and excluded data sets.
- Develop list of data analysis and report-writing assignments and due dates; form working groups if necessary to complete additional analyses.
- Determine SAS assignments and due dates for methods workshop and/or assessment workshop if applicable (additional data analyses, modeling approaches); determine timing for follow-up webinars, if necessary.

- Finalize date and location of methods and assessment workshops.

Post-Data Workshop Follow-Up Webinar(s)

Who: TC and SAS and/or working group members, FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist, ACCSP Data Lead as necessary, invited data holders as necessary

When: Timing determined at data workshop

Facilitator: SAS Chair

- Review progress on additional data analyses requested at the Data Workshop.
- Provide feedback to analysts and address questions or issues that have arisen.

Methods Workshop Preparation

- TC chair, SAS chair, and Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist compile data components of assessment report.
- FMP Coordinator sends assignments and due date reminders to SAS.
- SAS and TC members complete assigned tasks and submit results by the due date.

Methods Workshop

Who: SAS, FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist

When: Timing determined during pre-assessment workshop meeting

Facilitator: SAS Chair

- Review goals and objectives of methods workshop and terms of reference.
- Review any additional data analyses, and conduct final evaluation of each data set for use in assessment and list reasons data sets were included or not.
- Determine best approach or approaches for assessing stock.
- Determine most appropriate reference points for establishing stock status.
- Determine SAS assignments and due dates for assessment workshop.
- Determine timing for follow-up webinars, if necessary.

Post-Methods Workshop Follow-Up Webinar(s)

Who: SAS, FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist

When: Timing determined at methods workshop

Facilitator: SAS Chair

- Review progress on modeling analyses determined at the methods workshop
- Provide feedback to analysts and address questions or issues that have arisen

Assessment Workshop Preparation

- Stock Assessment Scientist ensures finalized datasets are available to SAS on FTP site.
- TC chair, SAS chair, and Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist finalize data components of assessment report. FMP Coordinator sends draft report to SAS.
- FMP Coordinator sends assignments and due date reminders to SAS.
- SAS and TC members complete assigned tasks and submit results by the due date.
- Fisheries Science Director and Stock Assessment Scientist begin identifying review panel

members if Commission peer review is the selected venue.

Assessment Workshop

Who: SAS, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist

When: Timing determined during pre-assessment workshop meeting

Facilitator: SAS Chair

- Review goals and objectives of assessment workshop and terms of reference.
- Review continuity run of previously accepted assessment model, if available.
- Review model runs, sensitivity analyses, model diagnostics, and uncertainty estimates, as appropriate.
- Decide on base case of preferred and supporting model(s), and any additional sensitivity runs.
- Develop consensus recommendation of stock status.
- Develop prioritized research recommendations.
- Develop list of follow-up analyses to complete base case model runs and sensitivity runs.
- Assign tasks for writing up final sections of draft stock assessment report.

Post-Assessment Workshop Follow-up

- SAS members complete final writing assignments for stock assessment report.
- Stock Assessment Scientist works with FMP Coordinator to assemble the first draft of the full assessment report.
- SAS chair and FMP Coordinator make final edits to full report; this draft report is sent to the SAS for review.
- SAS approves the report for TC review via a call/webinar.
- FMP Coordinator plans full TC meeting to review and approve stock assessment report.
- FMP Coordinator sends stock assessment report to TC two to four weeks prior to meeting.
- Fisheries Science Director finalizes peer review panel and Review Workshop logistics for ASMFC External Reviews.

Technical Committee Review of Stock Assessment Report

Who: TC, SAS Chair, Lead Analyst, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist

Facilitator: TC Chair

- SAS chair and lead analyst(s) presents terms of reference and final stock assessment report.
- TC reviews assessment and either approves the stock assessment report for peer review or returns it to the SAS to address TC concerns.
- If the stock assessment report is approved by the TC, it will be distributed to the appropriate peer review venue.
- If the stock assessment report is not approved by the TC, then the TC will return the report with comments to the SAS. The SAS will address the comments and re-submit the report to the TC for its approval.

Preparation for Peer Review

- Stock assessment report and supporting materials submitted to review panel one month

before review meeting.

- SAS chair and other SAS members prepare presentations for the review workshop.

Pre-Review Workshop Webinar

Who: SAS, Commission FMP Coordinator, Stock Assessment Scientist, Fisheries Science Director, and Review Panel

When: 1-2 weeks before Review Workshop

Facilitator: Science Director

- SAS chair or Stock Assessment Scientist provides a brief overview of the assessment.
- Review Panel identify questions or areas they would like more details on during the Review Workshop.
- Review agenda for Review Workshop.

Review Workshop

Who: SAS Chair, 1-3 SAS members as necessary, Commission FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist and Science Director, Review Panel, Board Chair

- SAS chair and other SAS members present assessment to peer review panel and conduct additional analyses from panel's prioritized list as time allows.

Post-Review Workshop

- SAS and panel chairs prepare presentations for board
- FMP Coordinator and Stock Assessment Scientist finalize stock assessment report and Science Director finalizes peer-review report for Commission Meeting Materials.
- Follow-up TC webinar held if issues arise that need to be addressed before board/section meeting.
- Stock Assessment Scientist drafts layman's stock assessment overview to accompany board/section meeting press releases.

Board/Section Meeting

- SAS chair and/or Lead Analyst, and panel chair presents to board/section.
- Board/section accepts or does not accept assessment and review for management; additional tasking of SAS or TC may occur in response to assessment and review.

Post-Board/Section Meeting

- Final edits to assessment and peer-review reports and stock assessment overviews conducted and all relevant documents placed on website.
- Stock Assessment Scientist files final draft of stock assessment report, all working papers, all data sets and other stock assessment materials on secure server.
- TC evaluates the feasibility and timeline for each research recommendation made in the stock assessment report and peer-review report; determines whether each item, once addressed, can be used in a future assessment update, or whether it will require a benchmark assessment.

APPENDIX 2. GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

Generic ASMFC Terms of Reference for Stock Assessment Process

1. Characterize precision and accuracy of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data used in the assessment, including the following but not limited to:
 - i. Provide descriptions of each data source (e.g., geographic location, sampling methodology, potential explanation for outlying or anomalous data)
 - ii. Describe calculation and potential standardization of abundance indices.
 - iii. Discuss trends and associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g., standard errors)
 - iv. Justify inclusion or elimination of available data sources.
2. Discuss the effects of data strengths and weaknesses (e.g., temporal and spatial scale, gear selectivities, aging accuracy, sample size) on model inputs and outputs.
3. Review estimates and PSEs of MRIP recreational fishing estimates. Request participation of MRIP staff in the data workshop process to compare historical and current data collection and estimation procedures and to describe data caveats that may affect the assessment.
4. Develop models used to estimate population parameters (e.g., F , biomass, abundance) and biological reference points, and analyze model performance.
 - a. Describe stability of model (e.g., ability to find a stable solution, invert Hessian)
 - b. Justify choice of CVs, effective sample sizes, or likelihood weighting schemes.
 - c. Perform sensitivity analyses for starting parameter values, priors, etc. and conduct other model diagnostics as necessary.
 - d. Clearly and thoroughly explain model strengths and limitations.
 - e. Briefly describe history of model usage, its theory and framework, and document associated peer-reviewed literature. If using a new model, test using simulated data.
 - f. If multiple models were considered, justify the choice of preferred model and the explanation of any differences in results among models.
5. State assumptions made for all models and explain the likely effects of assumption violations on synthesis of input data and model outputs. Examples of assumptions may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Choice of stock-recruitment function.
 - b. No error in the catch-at-age or catch-at-length matrix.
 - c. Calculation of M . Choice to use (or estimate) constant or time-varying M and catchability.
 - d. Choice of equilibrium reference points or proxies for MSY -based reference points.
 - e. Choice of a plus group for age-structured species.
 - f. Constant ecosystem (abiotic and trophic) conditions.
6. Characterize uncertainty of model estimates and biological or empirical reference points.

7. Perform retrospective analyses, assess magnitude and direction of retrospective patterns detected, and discuss implications of any observed retrospective pattern for uncertainty in population parameters (e.g., F, SSB), reference points, and/or management measures.
8. Recommend stock status as related to reference points (if available). For example:
 - a. Is the stock below the biomass threshold?
 - b. Is F above the threshold?
9. Other potential scientific issues:
 - a. Compare trends in population parameters and reference points with current and proposed modeling approaches. If outcomes differ, discuss potential causes of observed discrepancies.
 - b. Compare reference points derived in this assessment with what is known about the general life history of the exploited stock. Explain any inconsistencies.
10. If a minority report has been filed, explain majority reasoning against adopting approach suggested in that report. The minority report should explain reasoning against adopting approach suggested by the majority.
11. Develop detailed short and long-term prioritized lists of recommendations for future research, data collection, and assessment methodology. Highlight improvements to be made by next benchmark review.
12. Recommend timing of next benchmark assessment and intermediate updates, if necessary relative to biology and current management of the species.

Generic ASMFC Terms of Reference for External Peer Review

1. Evaluate the thoroughness of data collection and the presentation and treatment of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data in the assessment, including the following but not limited to:
 - a. Presentation of data source variance (e.g., standard errors).
 - b. Justification for inclusion or elimination of available data sources,
 - c. Consideration of data strengths and weaknesses (e.g., temporal and spatial scale, gear selectivities, aging accuracy, sample size),
 - d. Calculation and/or standardization of abundance indices.
2. Evaluate the methods and models used to estimate population parameters (e.g., F, biomass, abundance) and biological reference points, including but not limited to:
 - a. Evaluate the choice and justification of the preferred model(s). Was the most appropriate model (or model averaging approach) chosen given available data and life history of the species?

- b. If multiple models were considered, evaluate the analysts' explanation of any differences in results.
 - c. Evaluate model parameterization and specification (e.g., choice of CVs, effective sample sizes, likelihood weighting schemes, calculation/specification of M, stock-recruitment relationship, choice of time-varying parameters, plus group treatment).
- 3. Evaluate the diagnostic analyses performed, including but not limited to:
 - a. Sensitivity analyses to determine model stability and potential consequences of major model assumptions
 - b. Retrospective analysis
- 4. Evaluate the methods used to characterize uncertainty in estimated parameters. Ensure that the implications of uncertainty in technical conclusions are clearly stated.
- 5. If a minority report has been filed, review minority opinion and any associated analyses. If possible, make recommendation on current or future use of alternative assessment approach presented in minority report.
- 6. Recommend best estimates of stock biomass, abundance, and exploitation from the assessment for use in management, if possible, or specify alternative estimation methods.
- 7. Evaluate the choice of reference points and the methods used to estimate them. Recommend stock status determination from the assessment, or, if appropriate, specify alternative methods/measures.
- 8. Review the research, data collection, and assessment methodology recommendations provided by the TC and make any additional recommendations warranted. Clearly prioritize the activities needed to inform and maintain the current assessment, and provide recommendations to improve the reliability of future assessments.
- 9. Recommend timing of the next benchmark assessment and updates, if necessary, relative to the life history and current management of the species.
- 10. Prepare a peer review panel terms of reference and advisory report summarizing the panel's evaluation of the stock assessment and addressing each peer review term of reference. Develop a list of tasks to be completed following the workshop. Complete and submit the report within 4 weeks of workshop conclusion.

APPENDIX 3. EXAMPLE DATA AVAILABILITY SPREADSHEETS

Introduction

Overview

- * The purpose of this request is to develop a catalog of the types of fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data available on SPECIES X. An evaluation of the available data will serve as a starting point for the selection of stock assessment methods. Prior to the Data Workshop, the Stock Assessment Subcommittee will put forth a request for the necessary data, including the preferred format for data submission.

Directions

- * For *each* source of data available from your state/jurisdiction (including historical data sets), please fill-in the appropriate sheet as described below.
- * The forms on the following sheets are intended to assist with the stock assessment process. The data sources described in the 'Key' sheet represent the types of information typically collected by the states/jurisdictions.

Additional Information

- * Please review the 'Additional Info' sheet and provide responses where appropriate. For each item, provide contact information for individuals who manage each data set.

Please submit a completed data availability file for your state to Pat Campfield at pcampfield@asmfc.org

Key

Species X Data Availability by State

Years Available - include the range of years in which data are available; if there are breaks in a time series, please describe missing years in **Notes**

if Gear Type, Units Effort, or other data became available after the time series started, identify the first year this information is available (e.g., counts, lengths taken throughout the time series; started collecting ages later)

Temporal Resolution - check a box describing level of detail (select one only)

date - check if full date known

season - check if only season (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) and year are known

year - check if only the year landed, caught in survey, etc. is known

Spatial Resolution - check a box describing level of detail (select one only)

latitude and longitude - check if detailed coordinates known

NMFS statistical area - check if area known, but greater detail (lat/long) unknown

state waters - check if only the state in which fish were landed, caught, etc. is known

Gear Type - check if fishery or survey gear (trawl, pound net, etc.) is known

Units Effort - check if some measure of effort (tow duration, hours net set, catch per day, etc.) is known and can be used to calculate CPUE

Counts - check if number of individuals in each sample

known **Weight** - check if individual or aggregate

sample weights known **CPUE** - check if pre-calculated

CPUE is available

Sex - check if sex was determined for some or all of sampled fish (i.e., mature individuals)

Subsample - check if sub-sample size used to estimate landings, discards, survey tow total catch, etc. is known

Variance - check if pre-calculated measure of variance is available

File Type - are the data in SAS, xls, Access, ascii, field sheets, etc?

Notes - provide more details to clarify available data

(e.g., length measurements in FL; scale or otolith age samples)

Commercial Data

Source: Commercial Fishery		YEARS AVAILABLE		TEMPORAL RESOLUTION			SPATIAL RESOLUTION			GEAR TYPE	UNITS EFFORT	DATA							File Type
TYPE	INFO	From	To	date	season, Yr	year only	lat / long	NMFS stat area	state waters			Counts	Lengths	Weights	Ages	Sex	CPUE	Subsample	
Landings	ME																		
	NH																		
	MA																		
	RI																		
	CT																		
	NY																		
	NJ																		
	DE																		
	PA																		
	MD																		
	VA																		
	NC																		
	SC																		
	GA																		
FL																			
NMFS																			
Discards	ME																		
	NH																		
	MA																		
	RI																		
	CT																		
	NY																		
	NJ																		
	DE																		
	PA																		
	MD																		
	VA																		
	NC																		
	SC																		
	GA																		
FL																			
NMFS																			

NOTES

Recreational Data

Source: Recreational Fishery		YEARS AVAILABLE		TEMPORAL RESOLUTION			SPATIAL RESOLUTION			GEAR TYPE		UNITS EFFORT		DATA							File Type						
TYPE	INFO	From	To	date	season.yr	year only	lat / long	NMFS	stat area	state	waters			Counts	Lengths	Weights	Ages	Sex	CPUE	Subsampl e	Variance						
Landings	ME																										
	NH																										
	MA																										
	RI																										
	CT																										
	NY																										
	NJ																										
	DE																										
	PA																										
	MD																										
	VA																										
	NC																										
	SC																										
	GA																										
FL																											
NMFS																											
Discards	ME																										
	NH																										
	MA																										
	RI																										
	CT																										
	NY																										
	NJ																										
	DE																										
	PA																										
	MD																										
	VA																										
	NC																										
	SC																										
	GA																										
FL																											
NMFS																											
released Alive	ME																										
	NH																										
	MA																										
	RI																										
	CT																										
	NY																										
	NJ																										
	DE																										
	PA																										
	MD																										
	VA																										
	NC																										
	SC																										
	GA																										
FL																											
NMFS																											
Total Catch	ME																										
	NH																										
	MA																										
	RI																										
	CT																										
	NY																										
	NJ																										
	DE																										
	PA																										
	MD																										
	VA																										
	NC																										
	SC																										
	GA																										
FL																											

NOTES

Fisheries-Independent Survey Data

Source: Fishery-Independent Surveys		YEARS AVAILABLE		TEMPORAL RESOLUTION			SPATIAL RESOLUTION			GEAR TYPE	UNITS EFFORT	DATA								File Type
TYPE	INFO	From	To	date	season, yr	year only	lat / long	NMFS stat area	state waters			Counts	Lengths	Weights	Ages	Sex	CPUE	Subsample	Variance	
Catch	ME																			
	NH																			
	MA																			
	RI																			
	CT																			
	NY																			
	NJ																			
	DE																			
	PA																			
	MD																			
	VA																			
	NC																			
	SC																			
	GA																			
	FL																			
	NMFS																			

NOTES

Example

Source: EXAMPLE Fishery-Independent Surveys		YEARS AVAILABLE		TEMPORAL RESOLUTION			SPATIAL RESOLUTION			GEAR TYPE	UNITS EFFORT	DATA								File Type
TYPE	INFO	From	To	date	season, yr	year only	lat / long	NMFS stat area	state waters			Counts	Lengths	Weights	Ages	Sex	CPUE	Subsample	Variance	
Catch	ME	1985	present															Excel		
	NH	1990	present	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	99	X		Excel		
	MA	1985	present	X					X									SAS		
	RI	2000	present	X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Excel		
	CT	1990	2002	X			X			X	X							SAS		
	NY	1990	2002		X			X		X	X	X	X	01				Excel		
	NJ	1995	present		X			X		X	X	X						Excel		
	DE	2002	2005			X		X		X	X	X	X					ascii		
	PA	1990	present			X			X	X	X	X						Access		
	MD	1980	present	X			X			X	X	X	X	X				Access, SAS		
	VA	1980	present	X			X			X	X	X						Access		
	NC	1980	present	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	SAS		
	SC	1995	present	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	95	X	X	Excel		
	GA	1995	present			X		X		X	X	X						Excel		
	FL	1980	present			X		X		X	X	X						Access, SAS		
	NMFS	1980	present	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Excel		
				X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			

NOTES

lengths in TL

relative inde

Age-0 index

late summe

lengths in FL

movement,

Additional Information

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Is your state's **SPECIES X** regulatory history available? Please provide contact information for the best source of this information.

Contact Info

AGENCY

CONTACT

ADDRESS

PHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

NOTES

2. Are there additional sources of information or data sets from your state that would be useful for stock assessment? This could include discard mortality studies, natural mortality studies, stock identification studies, tagging studies, citation program data.

Data

SOURCE:

TYPE:

INFO:

Contact Info

3. Does your state engage in **SPECIES X** stock enhancement? If yes, please provide the types of data collected in enhancement efforts and/or information for the appropriate contact.

Data

SOURCE:

TYPE:

INFO:

4. Are individual fish lengths-weights available for any data sources from your state?

Data

SOURCE:

TYPE:

INFO:

Contact Info

AGENCY

CONTACT

ADDRESS

PHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

NOTES

5. If age data are available for one or more of your state's data sources, are the age-length keys used to generate those data available?

Data

SOURCE:

TYPE:

INFO:

6. Are you aware of any SPECIES X socio-economic publications or data that would be useful for stock assessment or projections?

Data

SOURCE:

TYPE:
INFO:

Contact Info

AGENCY
CONTACT
ADDRESS

PHONE
FAX
E-MAIL
NOTES

APPENDIX 4. COMPONENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Terms of Reference

(written by SAS and approved by species technical committee and management Board)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brief Overview and History of Fisheries

1.2 Management Unit Definition

1.3 Regulatory History

1.4 Assessment History

1.4.1 History of stock assessments

1.4.2 Historical retrospective patterns

2.0 Life History

2.1 Stock Definitions (include tagging, genetic information, if available)

2.2 Migration Patterns

2.3 Age

2.4 Growth

2.5 Reproduction

2.6 Natural Mortality

3.0 Habitat Description

3.1 Overview – brief review of habitat requirements relevant to assessment results (e.g., temperature, depth, salinity, DO, pH, flow, substrate, vegetation)

3.1.1 Spawning, egg, and larval habitat

3.1.2 Juvenile and adult habitats

4.0 Fishery-Dependent Data Sources

4.1 Commercial (include all appropriate subsections - subsections may be removed or added as necessary)

4.1.1 Data Collection and Treatment

4.1.1.1 Survey Methods (including coverage, intensity)

4.1.1.2 Biological Sampling Methods (including coverage, intensity)

4.1.1.3 Ageing Methods

- 4.1.1.4 Catch Estimation Methods (e.g., catch-at-age)
 - 4.1.2 Trends
 - 4.1.2.1 Commercial Catch Rates (CPUE)
 - 4.1.2.2 Commercial Landings
 - 4.1.2.3 Commercial Length/Weight/Catch-at-Age
 - 4.1.2.4 Commercial Discards/Bycatch
 - 4.1.3 Potential Biases, Uncertainty, and Measures of Precision
- 4.2 Recreational (include all appropriate subsections - subsections may be removed or added as necessary)
 - 4.2.1 Data Collection and Treatment
 - 4.2.1.1 Survey Methods (including coverage, intensity)
 - 4.2.1.2 Biological Sampling Methods (including coverage, intensity)
 - 4.2.1.3 Ageing Methods
 - 4.2.1.4 Catch Estimation Methods (e.g., catch-at-age or -length)
 - 4.2.2 Trends
 - 4.2.2.1 Recreational Catch Rates (CPUE)
 - 4.2.2.2 Recreational Landings
 - 4.2.2.3 Recreational Length/Weight/Catch-at-Age
 - 4.2.2.4 Recreational Discards/Bycatch
 - 4.2.3 Potential Biases, Uncertainty, and Measures of Precision
- 5.0 Fishery-Independent Data
 - 5.1 Surveys (include all appropriate subsections - subsections may be removed or added as necessary)
 - 5.1.1 Data Collection and Treatment
 - 5.1.1.1 Survey Methods (including coverage, intensity)
 - 5.1.1.2 Biological Sampling Methods (including coverage, intensity)
 - 5.1.1.3 Ageing Methods
 - 5.1.1.4 Catch Estimation Methods (e.g., catch-at-age or -length)
 - 5.1.2 Trends
 - 5.1.2.1 Catch Rates (Numbers)
 - 5.1.2.2 Length/Weight/Catch-at-Age
 - 5.1.2.3 Abundance and Biomass Indices (-per-unit effort)
 - 5.1.3 Potential Biases, Uncertainty, and Measures of Precision
- 6.0 Methods
 - 6.1 Background (on models and software used)
 - 6.1.1 Assessment Model Description (discuss assumptions and any differences from previously published applications)
 - 6.1.2 Reference Point Model Description (discuss assumptions any differences from previously published applications)
 - 6.2 Configuration (include all appropriate subsections - subsections may be removed or added as necessary)

- 6.2.1 Assessment Model(s)
 - 6.2.1.1 Spatial and Temporal Coverage
 - 6.2.1.2 Selection and Treatment of Indices
 - 6.2.1.3 Parameterization
 - 6.2.1.4 Weighting of Likelihoods
 - 6.2.1.5 Estimating Precision (e.g., ASEs, Likelihood profiling, MCMC)
 - 6.2.1.6 Sensitivity Analyses
 - 6.2.1.6.1 Sensitivity to Input Data
 - 6.2.1.6.1 Sensitivity to Model Configuration
 - 6.2.1.7 Retrospective Analyses
 - 6.2.1.8 Projections
 - 6.2.2 Reference Point Model(s)
 - 6.2.2.1 Parameterization
 - 6.2.2.2 Estimating Uncertainty
 - 6.2.2.3 Sensitivity Analyses
- 7.0 Results (include all appropriate subsections - subsections may be removed or added as necessary)
- 7.1 Assessment Model(s)
 - 7.1.1 Goodness of Fit
 - 7.1.2 Parameter Estimates (include precision of estimates)
 - 7.1.2.1 Selectivities and Catchability
 - 7.1.2.2 Exploitation Rates
 - 7.1.2.2 Abundance or Biomass Estimates
 - 7.1.3 Sensitivity Analyses
 - 7.1.3.1 Sensitivity to Input Data
 - 7.1.3.2 Sensitivity to Model Configuration
 - 7.1.4 Retrospective Analyses
 - 7.1.5 Projection Estimates
 - 7.2 Reference Point Model(s)
 - 7.2.1 Parameter Estimates
 - 7.2.2 Sensitivity Analyses (e.g., to M, selectivities)
 - 7.3 Results Uncertainty (e.g., interpretation of alternate model results)
- 8.0 Stock Status (discuss current BRPs & any new proposed BRPs separately, if applicable)
- 8.1 Current Overfishing, Overfished/Depleted Definitions (define targets, thresholds, and control rules)
 - 8.3 Stock Status Determination
 - 8.3.1 Overfishing Status
 - 8.3.2 Overfished Status
 - 8.3.3 Control Rules
 - 8.3.4 Uncertainty
- 9.0 Research Recommendations

- 10.0 Minority Opinion (if applicable)
 - 10.1 Description of Minority Opinion
 - 10.2 Justification from Majority (on why not adopted)

- 11.0 Literature Cited

- 12.0 Tables - suggested tables include the following:
 - Landings (numbers and weights)
 - Catch-at-Age
 - Lengths/Weights-at-Age
 - Fecundity/Maturation Schedule
 - Natural Mortality Schedule
 - Age-Length Keys
 - Survey or Index Values
 - Model Configuration and Inputs
 - Model Outputs, Parameter Estimates and Precision
 - Results (e.g., Abundance, Biomass, SSB, and Fishing Mortality)

- 13.0 Figures - suggested figures include the following:
 - Landings by Year, all states
 - Landings by Year, by state
 - Length/Weight-at-Age
 - Observed Survey Values by year
 - Observed and Predicted Survey Values by year
 - Residuals
 - Results (Abundance, Biomass, SSB) by year
 - Stock Abundance and Catch by year
 - Sensitivity Plots
 - Retrospective Plots

Appendices 1-X (if applicable)

APPENDIX 5. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEER REVIEWERS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Overview

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) Benchmark Peer Review Process provides a framework for the critical evaluation by independent experts of fish population models upon which fishery management decisions are based. For full details, see the Commission document “Technical Support Groups Guidance and Benchmark Stock Assessment Process”. The term benchmark stock assessment refers to an assessment that goes through an independent peer review. Benchmark assessments are prompted by new fishery management actions, a major change in stock assessment model or data, or a Commission or regional fishery management council time-trigger. Stock assessment reviews evaluate the validity of the models used, the input data, parameters, and model results, alternative assessment methods, and additional research needs. A review by independent assessment scientists that have no involvement, stake, or input into the assessment provides a judgment on the quality and completeness of the science used in a stock assessment. Peer review panel decisions are based on science; discussions and deliberations shall not consider possible future management actions, agency financial concerns, or social and economic consequences.

Preparation for the Review Workshop

In general, peer reviews are conducted within 6 to 8 weeks of the completion of the stock assessment report. A Commission stock assessment review panel is composed of 3-5 scientists (state, federal, university, or private). Review panel members should possess:

- Knowledge of the life history and population biology of the species under review
- Proficiency in utilizing quantitative population dynamics and stock assessment models
- Knowledge of broader scientific issues as outlined in the terms of reference, and
- Professional objectivity and credibility.

Panel members involved with a Commission peer review **must not** have involvement with the Commission stock assessment and management process for the species under review. In addition, at least one panel member should be from outside the range of the species.

The stock assessment report, all supporting materials, and instructions for peer reviewers will be distributed to the review panel by the Commission’s Science Director one month before the review meeting. Reviewers shall read the documents to gain an in-depth understanding of the stock assessment, the resources and information considered in the assessment, and their responsibilities as reviewers. The Science Director will organize the review workshop in coordination with panel members and the SAS.

The Review Workshop

A Commission peer review involves a multi-day meeting of the review panel to evaluate the stock assessment for a single species. The full SAS, TC Chair and Vice-chair, Board/Section Chair and Vice-chair, and Chair and Vice-chair of the advisory committee should be invited to attend the review. Stakeholders shall be invited to attend Commission peer reviews, but not as panel members, and the review panel Chair will encourage public comment.

The workshop will begin with introductions and a short overview of the review workshop objectives presented by the Science Director. Panelists should then select one member to serve as panel Chair. Duties of the panel Chair include focusing discussion on the issues of the peer review, developing consensus within the review panel, taking the leading role in development of the advisory report, and presenting the finalized advisory report to appropriate Commission Boards/Sections.

The review workshop will include a period for the presentation of the stock assessment report and any additional presentations, a period of open discussion for all attendees, a period for the review panel to ask specific questions of the SAS, a closed door session for the review panel to reach consensus on the review, a period for the panel to review the major points of their consensus opinion on each term of reference with the SAS, and a closed door session for development of the advisory report. Presentation of the stock assessment report and any minority reports will occur on the first day(s) of the meeting. Panel members may request specific presentations on other issues. Requests for presentations should be made to the Science Director prior to the workshop to allow the presenter ample preparation time. During a review workshop, minor changes to the stock assessment report can be made with the concurrence of the Science Director, SAS Chair, and review panel Chair. Minor changes/results will appear as an appendix to the stock assessment report, and an explanation for the change will be referenced in the advisory report. Only clarifications will be allowed during the review workshop.

The review panel will develop and author an advisory report during the review workshop, or shortly thereafter. The findings and advice included in the advisory report will be a consensus opinion of all peer review panel members. Panels are expected to reach conclusions that all participants can accept, which may include agreeing to acknowledge multiple possibilities. It is the review panel Chair's responsibility to ensure the contents of the advisory report provide an accurate and complete summary of all views on issues covered by the review. In the event consensus cannot be reached on an issue, the Chair will incorporate all reviewers' opinions in the report.

Development of the advisory report will be coordinated by the Science Director or designated Fisheries Science staff. The report will include all content outlined in Appendix 1. Each term of reference will be addressed individually by number in Section II, including discussion of majority versus minority reports when present. A clear statement will be made indicating whether or not the task(s) outlined in each term of reference was satisfactorily completed by the SAS using the best available data and stock assessment methodology; specifically, is the assessment suitable for use by managers in exploring management options? The advisory

report also includes advice on the issues listed in Appendix 1, Section III. Comments on topics not listed in Appendix 1 are encouraged and will be included in the Other Comments section.

If the review panel finds a term of reference deficient to the extent that SAS members present cannot correct the deficiencies during the course of the review workshop, or the SAS Chair deems that desired modifications would result in an alternative assessment, then the review panel shall reject that term of reference. If a term of reference is rejected, the panel should include in the advisory report 1) a justification for rejection (i.e., a complete description of the deficiency) and 2) specific, constructive suggestions for remedial measures or alternate approaches to correct the assessment.

Presentation of Peer Review Results

Results of the peer review will be presented within 4 weeks of the completion of the peer review. The advisory report will be distributed to all relevant committees (Board/Section, TC, SAS, AP) upon completion and approximately two weeks prior to presentation of the results. The results of the peer review will be presented by the Chair of the review panel to a meeting of the Board/Section.

The advisory report and presentation will not include specific management advice. The stock assessment report and the advisory report will be posted on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) after acceptance by the Board/Section.

Commission Peer Review Code of Conduct

- Review panel decisions shall be based on science. Discussions and deliberations shall not consider possible future management actions, agency financial concerns, or social and economic consequences.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated. Advancement in science is based on disagreement and healthy, spirited discourse is encouraged. However, professionalism must be upheld and those who descend into personal attacks will be asked to leave by Commission staff.
- Review panelists are expected to support their discussions with appropriate text and analytical contributions. Each panelist is individually responsible for ensuring their points and recommendations are addressed in workshop reports; they should not rely on others to address their concerns.
- Panelists are expected to provide constructive suggestions and alternative solutions; criticisms should be followed with recommendations and solutions.

Expectations of the Peer Review Process

The peer review WILL:

- Provide a judgment of the value and appropriateness of the science and scientific methods which produced the assessment
- Provide recommendations for future research and improvements of future assessments

- Evaluate all input parameters and biological characteristics incorporated into the model
- Evaluate the stock assessment methods
- Evaluate status of stocks relative to current FMP goals

The peer review WILL NOT:

- Resolve all issues
- Answer all questions
- Provide specific management recommendations
- Provide options to reach management targets

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION PEER REVIEWER CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The Commission stock assessment peer review process involves establishing a peer review panel composed of 3-5 scientists (state, federal, university, or private) who will provide judgment on the quality and completeness of the science used in the stock assessment. It is of the utmost importance that input provided by peer reviewers be unbiased.

Potential reviewers should declare themselves not eligible to serve on the review panel for the species under review if they have a relationship with persons involved in the assessment under review that might be construed as creating a conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest may include (but is not limited to):

- Involvement, stake, or input to the Commission stock assessment or with the management process for the species under review.
- Involvement with state, federal, or international management, the fishing industry, or any other interest group regarding the species under review.
- A well-formed position or history of advocacy for a specific viewpoint on a subject relevant to the stock assessment under review.
- Current association as a thesis or postdoctoral advisor or student of scientists involved in the stock assessment.
- Collaboration (within the last 3 years, currently, or planned) on a project, book, or paper with scientists involved in the stock assessment under review.
- Financial partnerships (consulting, business, or other financial connection) with the persons involved in the stock assessment under review.
- Spouse, child, or general partner relationship with scientists involved in the stock assessment under review.

I _____ hereby certify, to the best of my knowledge, I do not have a conflict of interest and am not likely to give appearance of a conflict of interest, impropriety, or impairment of objectivity with respect to the stock assessment I am asked to review.

Signature Date

APPENDIX 6. ADVISORY REPORT OUTLINE

The advisory report will be developed by the review panel, with assistance from the Commission's Science staff. The report will provide an evaluation of each term of reference and be followed by an advisory section providing general scientific advice on the topics outlined. The advice included in the report should be a consensus opinion of all review panel members.

Standard Contents

- I. Introduction*
- II. Terms of Reference (addressed individually by number)*
- III. Advisory Section*
 - Status of Stocks: Current and projected
 - Stock Identification and Distribution
 - Management Unit
 - Landings
 - Data and Assessment
 - Biological Reference Points
 - Fishing Mortality
 - Recruitment
 - Spawning Stock Biomass
 - Bycatch
 - Other Comments
- IV. Sources of Information*
- V. Tables*
- VI. Figures*

* for all sections, "information not available" should be indicated where appropriate

APPENDIX 7. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTLINE

DRAFT FMP OUTLINE

(approved by ISFMP Policy Board - May 1999)

This document outlines the contents of Commission FMPs developed by the ISFMP. It contains FMP elements required by the ISFMP Charter as well as suggestions on other sections, should information on these elements be available.

It is intended that this outline be a working document for use by PDTs, PRTs, and others in drafting, compiling, and reviewing FMPs as guidance in FMP development and implementation. The ISFMP Charter, Section Six, lists the required elements of a FMP.

This outline was adopted by the ISFMP Policy Board during the Spring Meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina on May 20, 1999. Suggestions for additional changes to the FMP outline are welcomed and should be forwarded to ISFMP Staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/ FOREWORD TABLE

OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES LIST

OF FIGURES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background Information

1.2.1 Statement of the Problem

1.2.2 Benefits of Implementation

1.2.2.1 Social and Economic Benefits

1.2.2.2 Ecological Benefits

1.3 Description of the Resource

1.3.1 Species Life History

1.3.2 Stock Assessment Summary

1.3.3 Abundance and Present Condition

1.4 Description of the Fishery

1.4.1 Commercial Fishery

1.4.2 Recreational Fishery

1.4.3 Subsistence Fishing

1.4.4 Non-Consumptive Factors

1.4.5 Interactions with Other Fisheries, Species, or Users

1.5 Habitat Considerations

1.5.1 Habitat Important to the Stocks

1.5.1.1 Description of the Habitat

1.5.1.2 Identification and Distribution of Habitat and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

1.5.1.3 Present Condition of Habitats and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

1.5.1.4 Ecosystem Considerations

- 1.6 Impacts of the Fishery Management Program
 - 1.6.1 Biological and Environmental Impacts
 - 1.6.2 Social Impacts
 - 1.6.2.1 Recreational Fishery
 - 1.6.2.2 Commercial Fishery
 - 1.6.2.3 Subsistence Fishery
 - 1.6.2.4 Non-consumptive Factors
 - 1.6.3 Economic Impacts
 - 1.6.3.1 Recreational Fishery
 - 1.6.3.2 Commercial Fishery
 - 1.6.3.3 Subsistence Fishery
 - 1.6.3.4 Non-Consumptive Factors
 - 1.6.4 Other Resource Management Efforts
 - 1.6.4.1 Artificial Reef Development/Management
 - 1.6.4.2 Bycatch
 - 1.6.4.3 Land/Seabed Use Permitting
- 1.7 Location of Technical Documentation for FMP (*refers reader to citations only*)
 - 1.7.1 Review of Resource Life History and Biological Relationships
 - 1.7.2 Stock Assessment Document
 - 1.7.3 Social Assessment Document (*if available*)
 - 1.7.4 Economic Assessment Document (*if available*)
 - 1.7.5 Law Enforcement Assessment Document (*if available*)
 - 1.7.6 Habitat Background Document (*if available*)

2.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.2 History and Purpose of the Plan
 - 2.2.1 History of Prior Management Actions
 - 2.2.2 Purpose and Need for Action
- 2.3 Goals
- 2.4 Objectives
- 2.5 Specification of Management Unit
 - 2.5.1 Management Areas
- 2.6 Definition of Overfishing
- 2.7 Stock Rebuilding Program (*if appropriate*)
 - 2.7.1 Stock Rebuilding Targets
 - 2.7.2 Stock Rebuilding Schedules
 - 2.7.3 Maintenance of Stock Structure
- 2.8 Resource Community Aspects
- 2.9 Implementation Schedule

3.1 MONITORING PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS/ELEMENTS

- 3.2 Assessment of Annual Recruitment
- 3.3 Assessment of Spawning Stock Biomass
- 3.4 Assessment of Fishing Mortality Target and Measurement
- 3.5 Summary of Monitoring Programs
 - 3.5.1 Catch and Landings Information
 - 3.5.2 Biological Information
 - 3.5.3 Social Information
 - 3.5.4 Economic Information
 - 3.5.5 Observer Programs
- 3.6 Stocking Program (*if appropriate*)

- 3.7 Bycatch Reduction Program
- 3.8 Habitat Program
- 4.1 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
 - 4.2 Recreational Fisheries Management Measures
 - 4.3 Commercial Fisheries Management Measures
 - 4.4 For-Hire Fisheries Management Measures
 - 4.5 Habitat Conservation and Restoration
 - 4.5.1 Preservation of Existing Habitat
 - 4.5.2 Habitat Restoration, Improvement, and Enhancement
 - 4.5.3 Avoidance of Incompatible Activities (*see sturgeon FMP*)
 - 4.5.4 Fisheries Practices (*see sturgeon FMP*)
 - 4.6 Alternative State Management Regimes
 - 4.6.1 General Procedures
 - 4.6.2 Management Program Equivalency
 - 4.6.3 *De minimis* Fishery Guidelines
 - 4.7 Adaptive Management
 - 4.7.1 General Procedures
 - 4.6.1.1 Procedural Steps
 - 4.7.2 Circumstances Under Which Change May Occur
 - 4.7.3 Measures Subject to Change
 - 4.7.4 Schedule for State Implementation
 - 4.8 Emergency Procedures
 - 4.9 Management Institutions (*Policy Bd, Mgmt Bd, TC, AP, etc.*)
 - 4.10 Recommendations to the Secretaries for Complementary Actions in Federal Jurisdictions
 - 4.11 Cooperation with Other Management Institutions (*i.e., for Atl. herring - Cooperation with Canada*)
- 5.1 COMPLIANCE
 - 5.2 Mandatory Compliance Elements for States
 - 5.2.1 Mandatory Elements of State Programs (*as applicable*)
 - 5.2.1.1 Regulatory Requirements
 - 5.2.1.2 Monitoring Requirements
 - 5.2.1.3 Research Requirements
 - 5.2.1.4 Law Enforcement Requirements
 - 5.2.1.5 Habitat Requirements
 - 5.2.2 Compliance Schedule
 - 5.2.3 Compliance Report Content
 - 5.3 Procedures for Determining Compliance
 - 5.4 Recommended (Non-Mandatory) Management Measures
 - 5.5 Analysis of Enforceability of Proposed Measures
- 6.1 MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH NEEDS
 - 6.2 Stock Assessment and Population Dynamics
 - 6.2.1 Biology/Community Ecology
 - 6.3 Research and Data Needs
 - 6.3.1 Biological
 - 6.3.2 Social
 - 6.3.3 Economic
 - 6.3.4 Habitat

7.1 PROTECTED SPECIES

7.2 Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Requirements

7.3 Endangered Species Act (ESA) Requirements

7.4 Protected Species with Potential Fishery Interactions

7.5 Protected Species Interactions with Existing Fisheries

7.5.1 Marine Mammals

7.5.2 Sea Turtles

7.5.3 Seabirds

7.6 Population Status Review of Relevant Protected Species

7.6.1 Marine Mammals

7.6.2 Sea Turtles

7.6.3 Seabirds

7.7 Existing and Proposed Federal Regulations/Actions Pertaining to Relevant Protected Species

7.8 Potential Impacts to Atlantic Coastal State and Interstate Fisheries

7.9 Identification of Current Data Gaps and Research Needs

8.0 REFERENCES

9.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 8. FMP ADDENDUM OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction

- Management authority (state/federal waters)
- Management unit
- Amendment the document is working under
- Purpose/goal of the document (list out issues if there is more than one being considered in the document)

2.1 Overview

2.2 Statement of the problem

- Why the Board is considering a change in management
- This paragraph should be short, simple, and to the point

2.3 Background

- Events leading to the consideration for a change in management

3.1 Management Options

- If the management options are replacing a previous management action be sure to state upfront that this section will replace section X of Amendment/Addendum Y
- Almost always include status quo as first option
- Committee Recommendations/Comments (if necessary)

If there is more than one issue being considered you would repeat the three sections above **(3.1-3.2)**

4.1 Compliance

- Due dates for proposals, plan reviews, implementation dates

4.2 Recommendation for Federal Waters

- Not all plans will have this section

APPENDIX 9. FISHERY-INDEPENDENT DATA USE POLICY

(Approved by ISFMP Policy Board - May 2015)

Introduction

Data collected by fishery-independent sampling programs are commonly used in Commission stock assessments and provided to Stock Assessment Subcommittee and/or Technical Committee members. Providing raw data for Commission stock assessments is one purpose for which sampling information is used for the benefit of the public and Atlantic coast fisheries. Fishery-independent data also often support analyses outside of stock assessments, including analyses described in journal manuscripts with the intent of enhancing the scientific understanding of a species or ecosystem. Data used for both purposes may be collected by state agencies, federal agencies, or academic institutions. Because the Commission does not own fishery-independent datasets, the Data Use Policy defines how fishery-independent data are to be treated within and outside of Commission stock assessments. The objective of the Commission's Data Use Policy is to achieve the fullest potential for application of data to stock assessments in order to inform fisheries management decisions, while protecting the rights of data providers.

In Stock Assessments

In many cases, public dollars in the form of federal or state agency funding are used to support fishery-independent data collection. Therefore, raw data are to be made available to the Commission staff and SAS committee members for stock assessment purposes by any agency or institution whose sampling programs are publicly funded. For stock assessments and other technical analyses used to provide scientific advice to fisheries managers, Principal Investigators (PIs) are asked to provide raw catch, biological, tagging and other data to the lead assessment analyst for a given species, along with metadata detailing current and past sampling methodology. Expert assessment scientists on committees will consider methods and account for changes when developing new indices or other inputs to assessment models, a procedure required and regularly conducted in all stock assessments. Analysts will also communicate with the sampling program leads to ensure data are being applied, or excluded, appropriately. Fishery-independent summary data, metadata, and resulting analyses will be included in Commission Stock Assessment Reports. Principal Investigators and their institutions will be acknowledged in Reports and other presentations of assessment results for Commission purposes. The Reports are considered grey literature and do not violate duplicative publishing rules of scientific journals.

Outside of Stock Assessments

Committee members who have received copies of fishery-independent data as part of a Commission assessment may also be interested in using the data for non-assessment purposes. In such cases, authors of journal manuscripts or other analyses must communicate directly with all Principal Investigators/data collectors to obtain permission to use their data in journal publications or other non-assessment uses. Data requests from non-committee members to the Commission will be handled in the same manner; the requestor will be directed to the PIs to

obtain raw data. The Commission is obligated to and will provide summary level data that are already included in assessment reports (e.g., index values, but not raw data). The Commission Stock Assessment Scientist or Fishery Management Plan Coordinator involved in the stock assessment at hand should be contacted to obtain lists of data collectors and their contact information, or if there are questions about the Data Use Policy in general. Responsibility for contacting PIs will be with the authors of manuscripts or non-assessment analyses.

Policy Relevance

Failure to adhere to the Commission's Data Use Policy jeopardizes the quality of stock assessments, in the event that PIs discontinue data sharing when their permission or rights in publishing have been violated. The Commission encourages open communication among committee members and scientists collecting fishery-independent data in order to both use data for fisheries assessment and management applications, and to promote the quality of research being conducted at fisheries science institutions.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Draft Work Group Meeting SOPPS

As Modified by the Executive Committee

In recent years, Commission management boards have established Work Groups (WG) to efficiently further explore complex management issues. The process and procedures in which individual WG and boards follow have varied by issue and/or board. As the practice to use WG to address issues by boards becomes more frequent, it is important standard policies and procedures are established so there is consistency and transparency in the process. Below are draft SOPPS for Executive Committee review.

Establishment

- WGs can be established by a Species Management Board or the ISFMP Policy Board.
- Membership should be a limited subset of Board members approved by the Chair of the Board or the Board itself. Ideally, members will represent diverse perspectives on the issue at hand. WGs can request non-Board members to provide information to the WG but will not be members of the WG itself.
- Each WG should have a designated Chair, to the extent possible Commission staff should not be the Chair of the WG. Chairs of the WG do not have to be the Board Chairs. The Board Chair will appoint the chair of the WG.
- The WG Chair will facilitate and lead all WG meetings and conference calls.
- The Board should fully describe the task or issue the work group is to address. There should be a clear directive of deliverables and established timeline to bring issues back for Board for review.
- Membership of a WG should be limited to ensure efficiency.

Purpose

- WGs are established when the Board needs extra time outside of quarterly meetings to work through an issue.
- WGs are not deliberative nor decision-making bodies of the Board. They are intended to explore and present a range of strategies that have the potential to address an issue the Board is trying to address.
- WGs are intended to deliver strategies to address issues for Board deliberation. Approaches the full Board believes have merit would then be fleshed out and analyzed by a technical committee or plan development team for further consideration.

Function

- At the start of each WG meeting the Chair should remind the WG of the task assigned by the Board.
- WG meetings and calls will be posted on the Commission web page at least 48 hours before each call. All meetings and calls are open to the public unless addressing confidential data.
- WG should be used to present ideas and engage in constructive discussion.
- WG members should reach out to other Board members for ideas, and the Board should reach out to WG members if they have ideas or are interested in an update on the progress of the WG.
- WG progress reports will be given to the Board at the mid-point between quarterly meetings when possible (via email) and at quarterly meetings by the WG Chair or Commission staff.
- All ideas from the WG should be presented to the Board, as well as key considerations for the Board to take into account.

DRAFT

National Fish Habitat Action Plan
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership
FY2020 PROJECT APPLICATION FORM

Please see application instructions located on the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) website at: <https://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/fy2020-atlantic-coastal-fish-habitat-partnership-application-cycle/> to ensure that you correctly complete the application form.

Cover Page:

- A. Project Title
- B. Project Location (State, County, City, Congressional District)
- C. ACFHP Subregion
- D. Applicant Information
 - i. Name of Organization
 - ii. Executive Director
 - iii. Address of Organization
 - iv. Phone
 - v. Fax
 - vi. E-mail
 - vii. Congressional district of applicant
 - viii. DUNS Number and TIN
- E. Project Contact
 - i. Lead Project Officer and Title (if different from above)
 - ii. Alternate contacts (if appropriate)
 - iii. Address (if different from above)
 - iv. Phone (if different from above)
 - v. Fax (if different from above)
 - vi. Email (if different from above)
- F. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coordination Information
 - i. Date coordination began and Service involvement
 - process grant/coop agreement assist with permit applications
 - assist with project design provide heavy equipment operators
 - provide engineer plans pre- and post- project monitoring
 - ii. FIS Database Activity Number (obtained from Service contact)
 - iii. Service Sponsoring Office
 - iv. Name of Service contact
 - v. Address
 - vi. Phone
 - vii. Email
 - viii. Letter or email of support from Service contact
- G. Funding Information

- i. Funding being sought for: __ Construction, __ Design, __ Planning, __ Monitoring, __ Outreach
- ii. Funding amount requested
- iii. Total cost of the project
- iv. Total Federal Matching
- v. Total Non-Federal Matching

I. Project Eligibility (please answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following):

- A. Are the actions proposed mandated by a regulatory program, court order or decree?
- B. Will any amount of the requested funds be applied to previous expenditures?
- C. Will the requested funds be used for realty costs associated with the project?
- D. Will the requested funds be used for operation or maintenance of facilities?
- E. Is the project primarily a research study?
- F. Will the requested funds be used for incentive payments (Annual payments to encourage participation (e.g. some NRCS Farm Bill programs))?

II. Project Description and Scope of Work:

- A. Project description (max characters: 500)
- B. Project footprint (if applicable) and affected area (max characters: 100)
- C. For fish passage projects, provide the number of barriers between this project and the ocean.
- D. Importance of the project to the resource (max characters: 350)
- E. Problem and specific cause of the problem (max characters: 350)
- F. The objective of the project with reference to the problem (max characters: 350)
- G. Proposed methods (max characters: 350)
- H. Additional Information (no character limits)
 - a. Technical Design
 - b. Permits
 - c. Pre- and post-project monitoring
 - d. Outreach

III. Landscape Description of the Project:

- A. Provide **one** map of the project area
- B. Provide the GPS coordinates for the project using UTM NAD 83
- C. Provide digital pictures of the project area (up to five)
- D. If applicable, describe how this project will reduce the impacts of climate change on fish or aquatic wildlife habitat.

IV. Evaluation Questions:

- A. Does the project support or address an ACFHP Subregional Priority Habitat?
- B. Does the project support or address an ACFHP fish habitat but not one that is a Priority for the Subregion in which this project resides?

- C. Does the project address one or more of the ACFHP Habitat Conservation Objectives?
Please note that if you are applying for funding to enhance fish passage, you must submit separate proposals for each barrier (e.g. if you are removing a dam and fixing a culvert in the same river, you must submit two separate proposals).
- D. Is the project located in a priority area identified in an approved state or federal management plan?
- E. How will the project address a root cause and contribute to a long-term, self-sustaining solution to the problem(s) described above?
- F. Does the project address the habitat needs of trust species?
- G. Using the [Species-Habitat Matrix Tool](#), which life stages and fish species ranked high or very high in the habitat you are restoring, and will benefit from this project? (the table below is an example, please add/change line items as needed):

Habitat Type	Species	Life Stage	Rank
Coastal Headwater Pond	Alewife	Egg & Larva	Very High
Coastal Headwater Pond	Alewife	Juvenile & YOY	Very High
Moderate Gradient Tributary	Alewife	Juvenile & YOY	Very High
Moderate Gradient Tributary	Alewife	Spawning Adult	Very High

- H. Are there direct social or economic benefits of the project? If so, please describe those benefits.
- I. If applicable, what is the project’s rank in the following location-appropriate decision support tool (for fish passage projects): Southeast Aquatic Connectivity Assessment Program (SEACAP), Northeast Aquatic Connectivity Project, or Chesapeake Fish Passage Prioritization (see page 1 in the application instructions for more details)?

V. Qualifications (not to exceed 1 page total):

VI. Budget Table (the budget table below is an example, please add/change line items as needed):

Item	Total Cost	ACFHP Requested Funds	Partner Funding
Coordination			
Travel	\$1,500		\$1,500
Project Coordinator Salary to Monitor Contracts	\$3,000		\$3,000
Outreach/Education	\$1,000		\$1,000
Contracted Services			
Heavy Equipment Rental and Operation	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$10,000

Contractual Labor	\$30,000	\$17,000	\$13,000
Design and Permitting	\$1,000		\$1,000
Monitoring			
Pre- and post- project physical and biological monitoring	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Total Costs	\$56,500	\$27,000	\$29,500

VII. Partners (the partner table below is an example, please add/change line items as needed (e.g. Maryland DNR instead of State Agency)):

Project Partner	Amount	Cash/In-Kind	Federal or Non-Federal	Pending/Received
State Agency	\$10,000	Cash	Non-Federal	received
XYZ Foundation	\$1,500	In-Kind	Non-Federal	pending
Federal Agency	\$15,000	Cash	Federal	received
Watershed Association	\$3,000	In-kind	Non-Federal	pending
Total	\$29,500			

VIII. Timeline of Project Activities (the table below is an example, please add/change line items as needed):

Project Activity	Anticipated Dates of Implementation
Project design	January 15-March 30, 20xx
Permitting process	February 25-June 1, 20xx
Pre-project monitoring	5 events, March 15-May15, 20xx
Construction	July 1-July 15, 20xx
ACFHP/Service Annual Report	January 15, 20xx
Post-project monitoring	1 year, beginning January 20xx