



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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

Law Enforcement Committee Meeting Summary

April 30-May 1, 2024

Committee Members: Jason Snellbaker, Chair, NJ; Scott Pearce, Vice Chair, FL; Rob Beal, ME; Delayne Brown, NH; Chris Baker, MA; Jeff Mercer, RI; Keith Williams, CT; Jeffrey Sabo, PA; Nicholas Couch, DE; Matthew Corbin, MD; Jason Walker, NC; Tom Bleifuss, USCG; John LaCorte, USFW; Robert Hogan, NOAA GC; and Wayne Hettenbach, DOJ.

Webinar Committee Attendees: Sean Reilly, NY; Matthew Rogers, VA; Michael Paul Thomas, SC.

ASMFC Staff: Kurt Blanchard, Toni Kerns, Caitlin Starks, Emilie Franke, James Boyle

Other Participants: Colonel John Cobb, Captain Rob Ham III, Captain Linda Quirk, SA Eric Holmes, Patrick Keliher, Jamie Green, and Chip Lynch

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) conducted a hybrid meeting during the 2024 Spring meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in Arlington, VA. The committee welcomed Captain Brian Scott of the NJ Fish and Wildlife as the new LEC representative from New Jersey. Captain Scott Pearce of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission transitioned into the role of the Chair of the LEC and Lt. Delayne Brown from the NH Fish and Game Department was elected to the position of Vice -Chair.

Motions

1. Motion to approve the revised edition of the Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures for approval by the ISFMP Board.
Motion by: Scott Pearce (FL), Seconded by: Keith Williams (CT) – Approved by consensus.
2. Motion to elect Lt. Delayne Brown of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department as vice-chair of the Law Enforcement Committee.
Motion by: Keith Williams (CT), Second by: Rob Beal (ME) – Approved by consensus.

Species Discussion

Atlantic Striped Bass –Staff updated the LEC on the implementation of Addendum II of Amendment 7 of the Atlantic Striped Bass plan. Specific discussion was of the adopted compliance measures found in Section 3.0 of the plan. With special attention given to the public comments on the fillet requirement. The LEC appreciated the opportunity to participate in this addendum development.

Atlantic Cobia – Staff updated the LEC on the Cobia draft Addendum II of Amendment 1 in consideration of Recreational Allocation, Harvest Target Evaluation, and Measures Setting. The LEC will monitor this addendum development and provide comments when appropriate.

Spiny Dogfish – Staff provided an update of actions taken by the MAFMC and NEFMC to reduce sturgeon bycatch in the Federal Large Mesh Gillnet fisheries. The LEC discussed the compliance measures considered by the councils and will support and advise the ASMFC in their deliberations on this issue.

American Lobster – The LEC discussed the status of Addendum XXX of Amendment 3 of the Lobster FMP with staff. Specifically, discussion centered around the “Mitchell Provision” and how this addendum will interface with Addendum XXVII. The LEC will continue to follow the development of Addendum XXX and offer comments as appropriate.

Business Discussion

The LEC members approved the final draft document of the Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures (July 2024). Over the past year a sub-committee of six LEC members reviewed this document and made recommendations to the LEC for consideration. With the always evolving strategies to address the development of fishery management plans, the LEC wished to keep this document relevant for the fishery managers of today. The document was updated with the following:

- A new section identifying regulatory language for “Enforcement Tools.”
- The addition of a new management measure addressing the tagging, labeling, or marking of marine species.
- An updated survey by committee members on enforceability ratings of defined management measures.
- Clarifying language updates to Section 5, Enforcement Strategies and Recommendations.

This document was presented to the ISFMP Board for approval in the Spring of 2024.

North American Wildlife Law Enforcement Accreditation (NAWLEA) - Colonel John Cobb and Captain Rob Ham III of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources provided a presentation on the new wildlife law enforcement accreditation process being implemented through the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA). Created in 2022 NAWLEA offers a comprehensive accreditation program for wildlife law enforcement agencies. Their team is composed of experts in the field who are dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of professionalism among member agencies. Assessors work with agencies to ensure that they meet rigorous standards for professionalism and effectiveness in protecting our natural resources. They are a credentialing entity that is recognized by the United States, Department of Justice for law enforcement accreditation.

Elver Fishery Enforcement – Representatives from the Maine Marine Patrol and the USFW Service, Office of Law Enforcement presented on the current state of the Elver fishery. Information was shared about the Canadian elver fishery closure and its impacts on our domestic fishery. Success stories were discussed as a deterrent to the illegal trade of this high values resource.

Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact (IWVC) - The committee continued discussions on how best to implement and use the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact. Specifically, State agencies shared best practices among each state on how to model their respective state programs.

A closed session of our meeting was afforded to openly discuss new and emerging law enforcement issues.

Respective agencies were provided with time to highlight their agencies and offer current enforcement efforts.