



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Habitat Committee Meeting Summary

November 7, 2022

Long Branch, NJ

Staff present: Lisa Havel, Toni Kerns, Lindsey Aubart

Members present: Russ Babb (NJDEP, Vice Chair), Wilson Laney (NCCF), Kate Wilke (TNC), Eric Schneider (RI DEM), Mark Rousseau (MA DMF), Kent Smith (FL FWC), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Julia Socrates (NYSDEC), Josh Carolina (NH F&G), Robert LaFrance (CT/Quinnipiac University), Marek Topolski (MD DNR), Claire Enterline (ME DMR), Cameron Brinton (GA DNR), Robert Atwood (NH F&G), Zina Hense (DE DNREC), Forrest Vanderbilt (USGS), Paul Medders (GA DNR)

Others present: Kevin Madley (NOAA GARFO)

Lisa provided an update on ACFHP. They have been spending the majority of their time strategic and action planning. ACFHP's goal is to have both the strategic and action plans published by the end of the calendar year. The announcement for the ACFHP Director vacancy is open and will close in a few weeks. Lisa encouraged the Habitat Committee to share the opportunity widely. The FY2024 National Fish Habitat Partnership funding opportunity is now open and will close on January 20th. The RFP is similar to the previous year, and the 1:1 match requirement for operational funding is likely to still present a challenge to ACFHP. Finally, there are big updates being made to the NFHP project database, which should make it easier to query in the future.

Michelle and Jessica updated the committee on the major outputs of the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA). The NRHA Data Explorer is now live, and can be accessed at [Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment \(shinyapps.io\)](http://shinyapps.io/NortheastRegionalHabitatAssessment).

Lisa and Kate provide an update to the Committee on the new habitat section of the bluefish benchmark stock assessment, and Claire and Michelle provided an update on the Acoustic Impacts to Fish Habitat *Habitat Management Series* publication. The Committee agreed to review this draft by early February, with a goal of presenting it to the Policy Board at the spring 2023 meeting. Lisa and Kent reviewed the status of the 2022 *Habitat Hotline* publication, which will focus on promoting resilience in vegetated coastal habitats. Lisa gave an update on the Fish Habitats of Concern designations, which will be presented to the Policy Board on Thursday.

Toni provided the Committee with an East Coast Scenario Planning progress report, and highlighted the major actions that will taking place at the Commission in 2023. Finally, Kevin and Michelle provided aquaculture updates and shared new resources from NOAA GARFO and the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils.

Russ Babb was unanimously voted in as the new chair, and Kate Wilke was unanimously voted in as the new vice chair.