



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Habitat Committee Meeting Summary October 18-19, 2023

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Staff Present: Simen Kaalstad (Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, and ASMFC Habitat Committee Coordinator)

Guests Present: Dr. Bill Crowell, Dr. Dean Carpenter, and Dr. Judd Kenworthy (APNEP)

Habitat Committee (HC) Members Present: Russ Babb (NJDEP), Robert Atwood (NH Fish & Game), Cameron Brinton (GA DNR, proxy), Jessica Coakley (MAFMC), Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC), Jimmy Johnson (NCDEQ/APNEP), Rob LaFrance (CT), Wilson Laney (NC), Mark Rousseau (MA DMF), Eric Schneider (RI DEM), Kent Smith (FFWCC), Kate Wilke (TNC), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Zina Hense (DNREC)

Guests: Dr. Bill Crowell, Dr. Dean Carpenter, Dr. Jud Kenworthy (APNEP)

The ASMFC Habitat Committee met on October 18–19, 2023, in Beaufort, NC, to discuss key initiatives and updates. The meeting began with a review of past committee activities, including progress on the Habitat Hotline (HH) and the Habitat Management Series (HMS) on acoustics. Guest speakers Bill Crowell and Judd Kenworthy from the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership presented on educational initiatives, SAV monitoring, and the financial benefits of oyster restoration, highlighting the challenges faced by Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) in North Carolina.

Discussions focused on potential topics for the next HH, including wetlands, artificial reefs, and wind energy installations. The group also explored ways to enhance HH's relevance and reach, with suggestions to simplify content, target lower-level managers, and consider a hybrid model with concise articles linked to more in-depth resources.

The second day of the meeting focused on the review of the HMS document, citation management, and feedback from fishermen. The committee also explored future topics like shell recycling for upcoming HMS documents and demonstrated a national fishing effects database to aid in research and project organization. The importance of maintaining accessible archives for HH and HMS documents was emphasized, along with securing long-term funding for future projects.

Finally, the committee discussed species assignments and updates to habitat fact sheets, agreeing to use FHOC and other documents as key references. Planning for the spring 2024 meeting began, with a preference for May, and the committee was reminded to handle travel materials carefully due to security restrictions.