

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Shad and River Herring Management Board

October 16, 2023

4:15 – 5:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

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 (*L. Fegley*) 4:15 p.m.
2. Board Consent 4:15 p.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Proceedings from August 2023
3. Public Comment 4:20 p.m.
4. Progress Update on the 2024 River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment 4:30 p.m.
(*K. Drew*)
5. Consider Approval of Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance 4:45 p.m.
for the 2022 Fishing Year (*J. Boyle*) **Action**
6. Other Business/Adjourn 5:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held at Beaufort Hotel (2440 Lennoxville Road, Beaufort, North Carolina; 252.728.3000) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

MEETING OVERVIEW

Shad and River Herring Management Board

October 16, 2023

4:15 – 5:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Lynn Fegley (MD) Assumed Chairmanship: 2/23	Technical Committee Chair: Wes Eakin (NY)	Law Enforcement Committee Representative: Thomas Burrell (PA)
Vice Chair: Phil Edwards (RI)	Advisory Panel Chair: Pam Lyons Gromen	Previous Board Meeting: August 1, 2023
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 August 1, 2023

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. Progress Update on the 2024 River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment (4:30-4:45 p.m.)

Background

- The river herring benchmark stock assessment was initiated in April 2022. The assessment workshop was conducted in August 2023.

Presentations

- Update on River Herring Stock Assessment Progress by K. Drew

5. Consider Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2022 Fishing Year (4:45-5:00 p.m.) Action

Background

- State Compliance Reports were due on July 1, 2022.
- The Plan Review Team reviewed each state report and compiled the annual FMP Review (Supplemental Materials).

Presentations

- Overview of the FMP Review Report by J. Boyle

Board Actions for Consideration

- Approve FMP Review for 2022 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests

6. Other Business/Adjourn

Shad and River Herring 2023 TC Tasks

Activity level: Medium

Committee Overlap Score: Medium (Multi-species committees for this Board)

Committee Task List

- 2024 River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Updates to state Shad SFMPs
- Annual state compliance reports due July 1

TC Members: Mike Brown (ME), Conor O'Donnell (NH), Brad Chase (MA), Patrick McGee (RI), Kevin Job (CT), Wes Eakin (Chair, NY), Brian Neilan (NJ), Brian Niewinski (PA), Johnny Moore (DE), Matthew Jargowsky (Vice-Chair, MD), Ingrid Braun (PRFC), Joseph Swann (DC), Patrick McGrath (VA), Holly White (NC), Jeremy McCargo (NC), Bill Post (SC), Jim Page (GA), Reid Hyle (FL), Ken Sprankle (MA), Ruth Hass-Castro (NOAA), John Ellis (USFWS), Ted Castro-Santos (USGS), C. Michael Bailey (USFWS)

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
SHAD AND RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting**

August 1, 2023

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INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of February 2, 2023** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to move to approve the Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan for Potomac River Fisheries Commission, as presented today** (Page 3). Motion by Justin Davis; second by Malcolm Rhodes. Motion approved by consent (Page 3).
4. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 7).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Pat Keliher, ME (AA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	John Clark, DE (AA)
Cheri Patterson, NH (AA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Lynn Fegley, MD (AA, Acting)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Allison Colden, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Mike Armstrong, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Pat Geer, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Chad Thomas, NC, proxy for Rep. Wray (LA)
Phil Edwards, RI, proxy for J. McNamee (AA)	Ross Self, SC, proxy for M. Bell (AA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Malcolm Rhodes, SC (GA)
Justin Davis, CT (AA)	Ben Dyar, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Craig Miner, CT, proxy for Rep. Gresko (LA)	Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
John Maniscalco, NY, proxy for B. Seggos (AA)	Erika Burgess FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Gary Jennings, FL (GA)
Heather Corbett, NJ, proxy for J. Cimino (AA)	Marty Gary, PRFC
Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)	Dan Ryan, DC, proxy for R. Cloyd
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)	Rick Jacobson, USFWS
Tim Schaeffer, PA (AA)	Max Appelman, NOAA

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

Ex-Officio Members

Wes Eakin, Technical Committee Chair

Staff

Bob Beal	Alex DiJohnson	Tracey Bauer
Toni Kerns	James Boyle	Kurt Blanchard
Madeline Musante	Chris Jacobs	Pat Campfield
Tina Berger	Jeff Kipp	
Katie Drew	Jainita Patel	

Guests

Aaron Kornblult	Emily Bodell	Margaret Conroy, DNREC
Robert LaFrance	Rob Bourdon, NOAA	Caitlin Craig, NYSDEC
Debra Abercrombie, USFWS	Jeffrey Brust, NJ DFW	Wes Eakin
Katie Almeida	Danielle Carty, SC DNR	Sheila Eyler, USFWS
Ashley Ascii, NOAA GARFO	Nicole Caudell, SC DNR	Emily Farr
Pat Augustine	Mell Bell, SC (AA)	Ryan Franckowiak, Cornell
Meredith Bartron	Benson Chiles, Chiles Consulting	Alexa Galvan, VMRC
Jessica Best, NYSDEC	Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Stephen Gephard
Alan Bianchi, NC DMF	Haley Clinton	Lewis Gillingham, VMRC

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Shad and River Herring Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

Proceedings of the Shad and River Herring Management Board – Meeting August 2023

Melanie Griffin
Brendan Harrison
Kyle Hoffman, SCDNR
Yan Jiao, Virginia Tech
Blaik Keppler, SC DNR
Kris Kuhn, PA PFBC
William Lucey, Save the Sound
Pam Lyons Gromen
Jerry Mannen Jr.
Todd Mathes, NC DMF
Genine McClair
Steve Meyers

Steve Minkkinen, USFWS
Chris Moore, CBF
Brian Neilan, NJ DEP
Thomas Newman
Miluska Olivera-Hyde, USGS
Ian Park, DE DFW
Nicole Pitts
Bill Post, SC DNR
Will Poston, ASGA
Jill Ramsey, VMRC
Kathy Rawls, NC (AA)
Kirby Rootes-Murdy, USGS

David Seigerman
McLeanSeward, NCDMF
Somers Smott, VMRC
Renee St. Amand
Doug Nemety, USFWS
Michael Stangl, DE F&W
Elizabeth Streifeneder, NYSDEC
Kevin Sullivan
John Sweka, USFWS
Erik Zlokovitz, MD DNR
Renee Zobel
Steve Doctor, MD DNR

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Shad and River Herring Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

The Shad and River Herring Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, a hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Tuesday, August 1, 2023, and was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Lynn Fegley.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR LYNN FEGLEY: Welcome to the meeting of Shad and River Herring. We have a fairly quick agenda today, with just one action item. Before we go to the agenda though, I did want to make an announcement that we do have a new Legislative Appointee from Connecticut. I wanted to offer Justin Davis the chance to introduce him, since everybody is here for this meeting.

DR. JUSTIN DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we have a new member of the Connecticut delegation, Representative Joe Gresko; he is sitting over there. Joe is the representative in our Connecticut House from the 121st District, which is a coastal district down in southwestern Connecticut. Joe has also served as the Chair of the Environment Committee in the Connecticut General Assembly.

That's the Committee that has cognizance of all those matters relating to our Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. I had a chance to work with Joe in the past, mostly it's me sitting on Zoom meetings, telling Joe why we can't do something his constituents want, because of this group called the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission gets to make the rules.

Happy to have Joe here around the table with us. I also want to acknowledge that there is a familiar face sitting here at the table with Connecticut. It is my understanding Joe has appointed Craig Miner as his ongoing proxy, so Craig will also still be with us here on the Connecticut delegation.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, thank you, Justin and welcome, Joe. Buckle up. Let's get started, the first thing, well I just want to introduce as always, James Boyle is here, Dr. Drew and Kirby Rootes-Murdy here to my left who just couldn't stay away, is now from USGS.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR FEGLEY: First order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Is there anyone who would like to change or modify the agenda in any way? Okay, seeing none; we're going to consider that approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR FEGLEY: Does anybody have any edits, changes or modifications to the minutes from the last meeting? Okay, seeing none; we're going to consider that approved by consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: Next stop on the agenda is public comment. Does anybody have public comment for the Shad and River Herring Management Board? Anybody on line, Toni? Okay, we're going to consider no public comment.

CONSIDER UPDATE TO POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION AMERICAN SHAD SUSTAINABLE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

CHAIR FEGLEY: Coming up is this is our only action item for the meeting, and we are going to Consider an Update to the Potomac River Fisheries Commission American Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan. I believe Wes Eakin is on virtually from New York. Wes Eakin, take it away.

MR. WES EAKIN: Good morning, everyone. For those of you that are unfamiliar, I'm Wes Eakin. I'm the TC representative from New York, and recently became Chair of the Shad and River Herring TC. I would just like to take a second to thank Brian Newman from New Jersey, the previous Chair, for his leadership over the past two plus years.

I'm looking forward to continuing working with Brian and the rest of the TC members. Yes, jumping in for your consideration today, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission American Shad SFMP Update. Just a little background as a refresher on what is required of the SFMPs and FMP definition of sustainability.

Amendments 2 and 3 of the Shad and River Herring FMP requires states wishing to have a fishery submit a sustainable fisheries management plan that will demonstrate their stock could support a commercial and/or recreational fishery that will not diminish the future stock reproduction and recruitment.

The plans are updated and reviewed by the TC every five years, to reassess stock status and sustainability. Back in May the TC met, and reevaluated the PRFC SFMP update. The TC recommended approval of the plan as it was presented, with the recommendation of exploring additional sustainability metrics in future plans.

The PRFC is requesting continuation of their limited commercial bycatch allowance in the portion of the Potomac under the PRFC jurisdiction. As I mentioned, shad are encountered as bycatch in both the pound and gillnet fisheries that are cooperatively managed by the states of Maryland and Virginia.

This plan remains unchanged from the previous Board approved plan back in 2017. The management measures, the seasons for the pound net fishery is February 15 to December 15, and the gillnet is from November 7 to March 25. There is a two-bushel limit per day per licensee, and there is mandatory daily reporting that includes discards, as well as live releases.

This year is essentially the mechanics of the plan. The SFMP has a river-specific management unit, the Potomac River from Washington D.C to the Chesapeake Bay. The sustainability measure this is timeseries geometric mean CPUE of pound net landings.

The catch plus discards. The sustainability target is a fishery dependent target, and there was a restoration target that was set in the 2007 stock assessment, which is 31.1 pounds per net-day.

The management action threshold would be three consecutive years with a geometric mean CPUE below the restoration target, and some potential management actions would be the reduction or elimination of the two-bushel bycatch allowance and/or limiting or restricting the take of broodstock egg collections by other agencies. The PRFC currently allows some take of broodstock for hatchery propagation. To wrap things up, this graph here just shows the American shad pound net indices. The blue line there indicates the restoration target, and the more recent time series here in green shows the CPUE of bycatch and the discards in the pound net fishery. They have been above their restoration target since 2011. That is about it for this update. I will gladly take any questions from the Board.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, Wes, any questions for Wes on this report? Dr. Rhodes.

DR. MALCOLM RHODES: I believe this was the correction, but they're talking about the stocking program and the amount of viable eggs, you know as around 30 percent that they would get. Is that about normal for a stocking program, or a little higher or lower? I just didn't know the answer, but I was kind of surprised by that.

MR. EAKIN: Yes, I am not sure. I am not that familiar with stocking hatchery operations. We don't operate any in New York. I defer to maybe any other Board members that have better understanding of hatchery production.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Marty Gary, do you want to address that?

MR. MARTIN GARY: Thanks, Madam Chair, I'll try. Malcolm, I'm not 100 percent sure. What we've been doing is working cooperatively with groups that have been coming down over the years to collect broodstock. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

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Virginia Wildlife Resources, D.C Fisheries, some NGOs, and asking for some of those fish to be stretch spawned and put back.

In terms of quantifying, I'm not 100 percent sure on the contribution, and it varies from year to year quite a bit as to how many of those groups participate. They are all collecting those broodstock around Mount Vernon, that part of the river. But we have had consistency, I think with Fish and Wildlife Service in Virginia, a lot of those fish going to the Van Dyke Hatchery up in Pennsylvania. Probably not as detailed an answer as you were seeking.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, Marty, any other questions on the sustainable management plan from Potomac River? Marty.

MR. GARY: Just for a little more context for the Board. The Potomac River Fisheries Commission implemented a moratorium in 1982. Simultaneously, we initiated this bycatch program, so it's been in place for over four decades. This is working with, specifically our pound net and gillnet fisheries in the spring.

About 95 percent of the bycatch is captured in the pound net fishery, which starts a little bit later, like April into May. That catch in recent years, to give you an idea, was about a little less than 8,000 pounds for both roe and buck shad. The number of participants varies, but it's a low level of participants.

Over the last five years the average was 22. That gives you a little bit more detail on how that bycatch fishery is operating. The tools that we're working with, with the TC, to develop and integrate. We're looking at both the Maryland JAI on the Potomac River, and also the Maryland DNR Gillnet Striped Bass Spawning Survey, which captures shad when they are out in April and May, working that survey. The idea would be to integrate that into the plan and use those as potential trigger mechanisms for management responses. Hopefully, that adds a little bit of context to our SFMP.

MS. FEGLEY: Yes, thank you for that, Marty. Any other questions on this report? If not, I'm going to be looking for a motion to approve. Justin Davis.

DR. DAVIS: I'll wait and see if staff has a motion prepared.

MS. FEGLEY: Does staff have a motion prepared? Okay, we have a motion on the board, **move to approve the Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan for Potomac River Fisheries Commission, as presented today.** By Dr. Davis, do I have a second? Malcolm Rhodes. **Is there any discussion on this motion?**

All right, is there any opposition to the motion? Okay, great, motion carries by consent. I guess I'll read it into the record one more time. Move to approve the Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan from Potomac River Fisheries Commission, as presented today. Great.

UPDATE ON US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ALOSINE GENETIC REPOSITORY AND EXPANDING COLLECTION EFFORTS

CHAIR FEGLEY: The next agenda item, we're going to talk about the U.S. Geological Survey alosine genetic repository. We've had some conversations about this, over past meetings. Kirby, looking forward to the update.

MR. KIRBY ROOTES-MURDY: It's nice to look around this morning and see a lot of familiar faces. As mentioned, I work for the U.S. Geological Surveys Eastern Ecological Science Center, and today I'm here to provide a short overview of the alosine genetic tissue repository that has been shepherd by the Eastern Ecological Science Center over the last few years.

To start, as many of you are aware, the efforts to restore American shad and river herring populations are presented with multiple challenges across the coast, from habitat fragmentation to water quality challenges, to climate change. In particular, the bycatch of alosines and marine and

estuarine commercial fisheries presents challenges to recovering spawning populations.

Extinguishing stock composition can support efforts to better assess the status in the trends of specific populations. Today I'll provide an overview of work that the USGS has led to support stock assessment efforts for all three of the alosine species managed by ASMFC. To start, just a little bit more about EESC.

We provide a unique role in housing and processing alosine tissue samples from across the Atlantic coast, for across political boundaries and species. We provide an important service, not only in storing these samples, but cataloguing them, conducting analyses to better understand the population dynamics of these species.

Specific to alosines, then objectives guiding our work is to really create a genomic marker, single nucleotide polymorphisms, or SNPs, to build and expand our information on American shad, blueback herring, and alewife. For river herring species in particular, we're working to characterize populations using SNP baselines augmented with additional samples. For American shad, we are centering our work on developing new SNP panels, which should provide greater resolution of the stock structure, greater repeatability, and also cost savings when compared against other techniques, such as microsatellite markers. What we've done so far is sent out collection samples across the coast from Canada down through Georgia. In these kits we've requested data, such as species, sampling location, GPS coordinates, as well as size class, so total length, fork-length information.

To highlight some of the work to date, I'm going to start off with American shad. Really, this is what we've received the most of our samples. We've collected approximately 2,280 fin samples. As you can see, we have a good distribution across the coast, all the way up

through the Gulf of St. Lawrence, down through the Atlantic coast of Florida.

We've been provided these samples from a variety of state agencies, universities, as well as NGOs. To hopefully give you a little bit more resolution of understanding which river species in particular, you can see here for American shad we just have, I think, a very good collection across a lot of these important systems that you all are familiar with.

Now moving into more the river herring species, we have inherently less samples. But starting with alewife we've received about 981 fin clips. As you can see, the distribution of these fin clips we've collected really are centered a lot more in the northeast so far, in terms of what we've received, again, a mix of the variety of state, university and NGOs.

Last, on blueback herring. This is where we've received probably the least amount of samples, so about 218. You know, a greater distance across the coast of samples collected, but a smaller number of river systems. In doing some analysis on the American shad samples that we've collected, there has been an effort to do genotype paneling.

What you can see on the screen right now, really are, in going through and sequencing, you know individuals from 12 baseline populations and two mixed stock fisheries, one in the Bay of Fundy and one in the Delaware Bay. We've been able to identify 107 microhaplotypes. For American shad in particular, you can see we've got a good collection of samples that are registering a unique or distinct population marker for the Miramichi, which is up in Canada.

That is in orange in the top kind of right corner. Next the Annapolis West, which is in Nova Scotia, and then followed by the Santee-Cooper and the St. Johns River, so that is yellow for the Santee-Cooper and brown for the St. Johns River. Again, so these are showing us more of a distinct marker, in doing the analysis across where these samples have been collected.

I would say one of the really interesting findings so far, and keep in mind these are preliminary results, in terms of our analysis, is that in looking at these two in particular water bodies, where there has been mixed stock sampling. In the Bay of Fundy, what you can see is that fish that originate from the Miramichi River, which empties into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, are being picked up and found a distinct marker in the Bay of Fundy.

If you're familiar with some of the geography around there, that means they are going up and around. You would maybe expect to see more samples popping up from the Annapolis West River, which is emptying directly into the Bay of Fundy there. Moving over to the Delaware Bay, kind of a more traditional understanding of, you know you're seeing fish that are coming out of the Delaware Bay, but also those that are originating from the Hudson, as well as the Potomac. Again, these are preliminary analysis we've been able to do on American shad, in large part because of the volume of samples we've received, and you know the emphasis we've been directed to focus on for that species, given I believe, a former TOGS guidance.

In summary, a lot of this work with American shad samples have been done, in terms of the analysis, in coordination with Cornell University colleagues. On the river herring side of things, we are really looking for more fin clips that we could get from across the coast, to further pursue more analysis, and hopefully get a better ability to evaluate some of these mixed stock fisheries, and the origin of some of those fish that are being found in them. If you have samples, please send them to my colleague Miluska.

She was not able to be here today, but I wanted to highlight her as well as Dave Kazyak. Those are our two principal investigators at USGS EESC, who are spearheading this alosine genetic tissue repository work. Last slide, just if you are interested in learning more about this research,

please, you can look at this QR code, take a picture of it. It will direct you directly to our website, and you can get some more detailed information. With that I will try to answer any questions you have to the best of my ability, so thanks.

CHAIR FEGLEY: That is fascinating. I opened that stuff and the telemetry array of work, I just find that completely fascinating, so thank you. John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: I'm just curious on the shad, being that there have been stocking programs going on for a bunch of years, and some of them have been between watersheds. Is that affecting the genetic samples in any way?

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: I don't know. But I can ask my colleagues and we can see if we can get some more information on that.

CHAIR FEGLEY: John Maniscalco.

MR. JOHN MANISCALCO: If I could just answer that a little bit. A lot of the shad work was done by academics at Cornell University. Not that I can understand the real specifics, but the genetic techniques they are using are aimed at identifying recent changes. The reason why they went with this was specifically because, trying to disentangle stocking, and being able to identify stock from different river systems. Without having a definite, I would say yes. It can deal with the stocking issues.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Any other questions. Sir.

MR. RICK JACOBSON: Kirby that was a wonderful presentation, thank you. Is there a target number of samples per water body you are shooting for? I mean that might help inform how the members of the Commission can work with their staffs to assist you?

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Thanks for the question, Rick. I don't know, it's a great question. Hopefully, I can get some more information on it. I will say that again, from what I'm aware of, we need to get more samples from across the coast. I think trying to time up when these kits are sent out.

Hopefully used for spring surveys, it might allow us to kind of get through a plethora hopefully of samples to pull from. This year timing wise we just didn't quite match up as well as I would hope. But I will ask my colleagues about a specific target number per river systems, unless ASMFC staff have any suggestions, no, all right.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, any other questions? Mr. Lustig, sorry.

MR. LOREN W. LUSTIG: Thank you, Kirby, for that interesting report. A number of years ago I personally did a lot of fishing down below the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River, and I've always wondered about the status of the hickory shad, which precedes in migration the American shad. You mentioned the congenital work on river herring. Is there any work anticipated on the status of the hickory shad?

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Thanks for the question, Loren. I am not aware of any specific work on hickory shad. Again, my understanding is former TOG kind of help direct where some of the efforts have been between these three species. I'm not sure if they have discussed hickory shad as one to further evaluate.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, Justin Davis, I see you. I'm going to go to Wes quickly online, because I think he's got some commentary to add.

MR. EAKIN: Yes, thank you. I was just going to provide some information on the sample size and what was being requested. At our last TC meeting we discussed this topic, and I think the request was 50, ideally, a minimum of 30 USGS staff had offered to provide those kits, and it was well received by TC members, as far as collecting those samples.

There was also a request to get either multiple year's, to try to get that stability of the genetic signals, and then effort to collect more mixed stock samples, where those might be available. One such place was a fishery in Virginia, I believe had encountered a lot of American shad

bycatch last year. There is going to be an effort this coming spring to work with the fishers from that fishery that collect some samples there.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thanks, Wes, and Kirby has a follow up to that.

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Yes, thank you, Wes, for that insight. I will note if you go back to Slide 4. In terms of these kits, we've sent out, they have 50 vials, so sending up to 50 samples with each of these kits would be great, if you can get up to that.

CHAIR FEGLEY: I think I'm going to go to the AP Chair also online, Pam, and then I'll go back to you.

MS. PAM LYONS GROMEN: Thank you, Kirby, for this presentation. It's a very interesting project, and one I've been trying to stay up to speed on. I was looking at where you've requested samples, and I'm wondering, have you requested samples from the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program for the bycatch that occurs at sea in the federal fisheries? I didn't see it listed.

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Yes, thanks for the question. I believe we have received some samples, and they have gone into some of the analysis. I shouldn't have omitted that from the presentation, but yes, we've been getting some samples from them as well.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Dr. Davis.

DR. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and Pam kind of got to what I was going to ask, is to what degree is USGS planning on participating in any efforts to sort of better characterize the genetic composition of bycatch occurring in the offshore commercial fisheries.

MR. ROOTES-MURDY: I would say it's an area of interest of ours. We, like so many projects that we're somewhat limited, just frankly based on funding. If we can find the ability to allocate and pursue more funding around that, we will absolutely be able to, and be interested in doing

that kind of work, but that is the prohibiting factor right now.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Any other, oh and I'm going to turn back to you, Wes Eakin.

MR. EAKIN: I was just going to add to that, to the bycatch question. That is the impetus of the work with Cornell University, specifically with American shad. That is the goal there is to quantify the species or the stock composition of that bycatch. One of the challenges that we've been encountering, getting the mixed stock samples from the federal fisheries.

It is that there is such low observer coverage in some of the high-volume fisheries, the herring and the mackerel fisheries. There has been a little bit of a hurdle for us. We do have samples in hand, I don't know the total amount to date. We just got some samples last week, I do believe. That is an effort, but there is a little bit of a hurdle there, with low observer coverage.

CHAIR FEGLEY: I guess I have one question about that. Do the samples need to be taken by observers, or would industry cooperate to provide samples on their own?

MR. EAKIN: That is a good question. We haven't explored that option, but that is something that we would definitely pursue, if we feel that that is a viable option.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Yes, it seems like that might be worth an ask. Pat Keliher.

MR. PATRICK C. KELIHER: Kirby, the sampling kits are \$65.00. The state of Maine could certainly provide samples for at least 18 distinct runs for river herring, blueback herring, as well as expand some of your shad work in a few of the smaller rivers. We should talk about that. Just for the record, so our Canadian friends are not upset, it's Miramichi. Just to put you on the spot.

CHAIR EAKIN: Thank you, Commissioner Keliher.

CHAIR FEGLEY: I'm glad we got that straight. Any other questions on this topic? Is there anybody online?

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE 2024 RIVER HERRING BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, last up, we're going to Dr. Katie Drew to get a progress update on the 2024 River Herring Benchmark Assessment. Take it away, Katie.

DR. KATIE DREW: I'll keep this brief. This was brought to the Policy Board at our last meeting, because the Shad and River Herring Board did not meet, but I am informing you all again, in case there was not enough overlap, that the assessment has been delayed by one meeting cycle.

Our original goal was to have this peer reviewed essentially now, and presented at our annual meeting. We will be aiming now to have this peer reviewed in late November, early December, to present at the winter meeting of next year. We just needed some additional time to continue work on this assessment.

We'll be having our assessment workshop in person, actually in this very hotel, the week of August 21, to kind of hopefully step back and reevaluate our progress on the assessment work itself, and hopefully be able to start transitioning into finalizing those analyses, and writing this up, in order to meet our current peer review goal. That is just an update on the schedule, and what is happening next. I'm happy to take any questions about the assessment.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, thank you, any questions for Dr. Drew? Okay, seeing none; thank you, Katie.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: Our final agenda item is Other Business. Does anybody have anything else to bring before the Board? With that I will submit a Chair

motion to adjourn, and if anybody objects, please say so now. Otherwise, we're adjourned.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 1, 2023)