



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## 2016 Summer Meeting Summary

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

2016 Summer Meeting  
Alexandria, VA  
August 2-4, 2016

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### Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (AUGUST 2, 2016)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Executive Committee met to discuss several issues, including stock assessment leads, conservation equivalency, board member participation on Plan Development Teams (PDTs), Commission-specific meeting procedures, and Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) funding priorities. The Committee discussed the staff stock assessment capacity and supported having ASMFC Stock Assessment Scientists take the lead on assessments. Members also committed to encouraging their technical staff members to be fully engaged in the stock assessment process. The Executive Committee selected preferred options to update the conservation equivalency document to ensure the process reflects current practices. A final conservation equivalency document will be presented to the Executive Committee and Policy Board at the Annual Meeting in October.

The Committee discussed the practice of having Board members serve on PDTs and did not recommend any changes to PDT membership at this time. The Committee also initiated development of Commission-specific meeting procedures and will follow-up on this issue at the Annual Meeting. The Committee also discussed and identified S-K funding priorities given the reduced level of funding for 2016 projects. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at [lleach@asmfc.org](mailto:lleach@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to accept the S-K funding priorities as follows: SEAMAP-SA Coastal Trawl Survey; Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina Longline Surveys, with the remainder going to support the ME/NH portion of the NEAMAP Survey.**

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes unanimously.

## **SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 2, 2016)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

After discussing the merits of joint, complementary and exclusive management, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board recommended the Commission initiate a complementary fishery management plan for cobia under the purview of the South Atlantic Board. This action responds to a request by the Council for the Commission to consider joint or complementary management of the resource in light of the significant overage of the 2015 recreational annual catch limit (ACL), the impact of those overages to state management, and the observation that approximately 82% of reported recreational landings are harvested in state waters. A complementary Commission FMP for cobia will provide the states the flexibility to respond to changes in the fishery and stock that meet their state fisheries needs while staying within the ACL (see press release under ISFMP Policy Board for more details).

The 2016 red drum stock assessment and peer review was presented to the Board in May of 2016. The models, using stock synthesis framework, suggest overfishing is occurring in both the northern and southern regions. The northern model predicts low adult abundance (age 6+) since 1989. The southern

model shows increasing fishing mortality, resulting in low escapement of juveniles from the fishery. The Board had questions regarding the assessment inputs, reference points, and model types and tasked the Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Committee (TC/SAS) to investigate several issues. The TC/SAS has begun work on the tasks, which are scheduled to be completed for Board review in October.

The TC/SAC is investigating whether the current biological reference point for overfishing (SPR40% target, SPR30% threshold) is appropriate given the species' long life history. This task is two-fold in that the Board is interested in whether spawning potential ratio is an appropriate metric and whether the 30% threshold and 40% target are suitable goals. The Board also requests the development for an overfished reference point recommendation.

Given concerns regarding the appropriateness of the current reference point and the lack of data on adult red drum, the Board requested an investigation of the feasibility of a fishing mortality-based reference point that looks strictly at the harvest of juvenile red drum. The Board is looking for guidance on whether this type of reference point would provide an appropriate level of information for management.

The TC/SAS were tasked with conducting continuity runs of the statistical catch-at-age (SCAA) model used in SEDAR 18 for comparison to the new stock synthesis 3 (SS3) model used in SEDAR 44. The TC/SAS is updating the SCAA model inputs to correspond, as well as possible, with those used in SS3. Therefore, these are not true continuity runs (i.e. only updates to the data inputs used in SEDAR 18). This will allow for a comparison of the results between the two models, focusing on the effect of the change in models between the two assessments.

Given the sensitivity of the SS3 models to the tag return reporting rate, the Board has requested an evaluation of potential tag return rates for each region and determine if the tag return data should be incorporated into new model runs. The Board is specifically interested in a run which uses an 18% tag return rate, per the suggestion of the desk review report.

The Board is concerned that the lack of information on adult red drum, especially in the northern stock, may impact the ability of the SS3 models to accurately measure stock abundance. As a result, the Board requested an evaluation of how red drum life history and current regulations (namely the moratorium on fishing in federal waters) may limit the validity of an age-based model such as SS3. The lack of information on adult red drum has precluded prior assessments from providing reliable estimates of spawning stock biomass. Some noted sources of data gaps and assumptions impacting estimates for adult red drum include regulations, life history and management strategy and size distribution of recreational releases.

The Commission is undergoing a benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic croaker and spot. A data workshop for both species was held in September 2015. The first of two assessment workshops was held in February 2016 and a second workshop will be held the second week in August. It is expected that both assessments will be completed and peer reviewed this winter. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

**Motions**

**Move that the South Atlantic Board recommend to the Policy Board for development of a complementary Fishery Management Plan for Cobia.**

Motion made by Dr. Duval and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion passes.

**Move to recommend to the ISFMP policy board that the South Atlantic Board is the appropriate venue to develop the FMP for Cobia.**

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes unanimously.

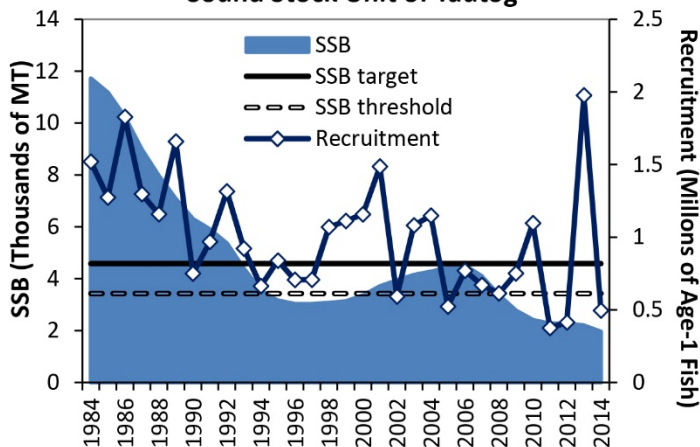
**TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 2, 2016)**

**Press Release**

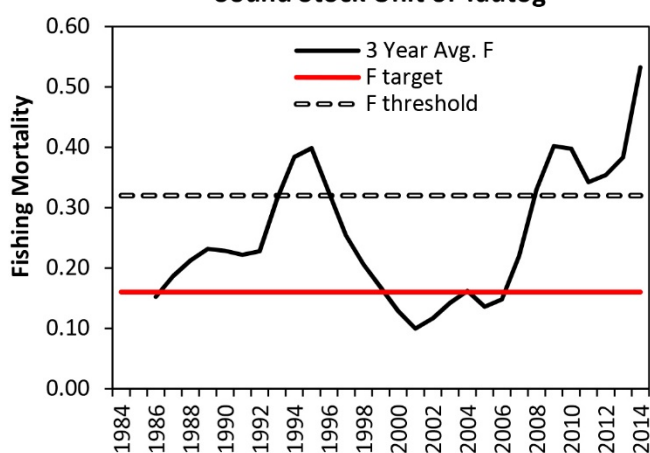
**ASMFC Tautog Board Accepts Regional Assessments for Long Island Sound and New Jersey/New York Bight Management Use**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board approved regional stock assessments for Long Island Sound (LIS) and New Jersey-New York Bight (NJ-NYB) for management use. Stock status for both regions was found to be overfished and experiencing overfishing. The assessments were initiated in response to the findings of the 2015 benchmark stock assessment which explored a number of regional breakdowns for management purposes, including the option of: (1) Massachusetts and Rhode Island; (2) Connecticut, New York and New Jersey; and (3) Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The Board had concerns about the biological implications of grouping LIS with New Jersey ocean waters. The Board requested a new assessment that would explore the population dynamics of the Connecticut, New York and New Jersey region in more detail. The regional assessments propose two additional stock unit boundaries for consideration at a finer regional scale: LIS, which consists of Connecticut and New York waters north of Long Island, and NJ-NYB, which consists of New Jersey and New York waters south of Long Island.

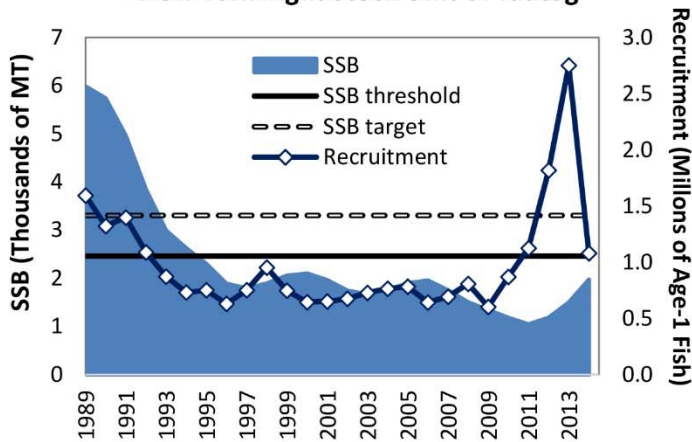
**Spawning Stock Biomass for the Long Island Sound Stock Unit of Tautog**



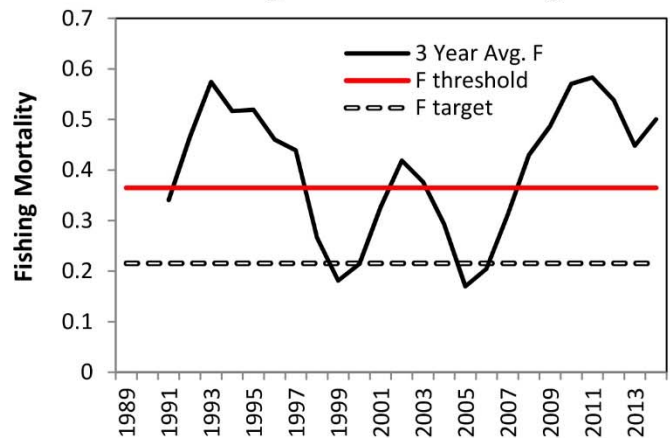
**Fishing Mortality for the Long Island Sound Stock Unit of Tautog**



**Spawning Stock Biomass for the New Jersey  
- New York Bight Stock Unit of Tautog**



**Fishing Mortality for the New Jersey - New  
York Bight Stock Unit of Tautog**



Given approval of the regional assessments by the peer review panel and Management Board, the Tautog Technical Committee will move forward with updating the benchmark stock assessment, including data through 2015 for all four regions for Board review and approval in October. Upon its completion, work on developing a new amendment to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan can begin. The draft amendment will propose a four region management approach: Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Long Island Sound; New Jersey/New York Bight; and Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. It is anticipated a draft for public comment will be presented to the Board for its review and approval in February 2017, with final amendment approval later in the year.

The stock assessments and peer review report, which are combined into one document, will be available on the Commission website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), on the Tautog page by the end of August. For more information on the stock assessments, please contact Katie Drew, Senior Stock Assessment Scientist, at [kdrew@asmfc.org](mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org); and for more information on tautog management, please contact Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator, at [aharp@asmfc.org](mailto:aharp@asmfc.org).

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PR16-19

**Motions**

**Move to approve the Long Island Sound and New Jersey-New York Bight stock assessment and peer review report for management use.**

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries.

**Move to approve four region management approach for Tautog Draft Amendment 1.**

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries (7 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions).

## **HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (MAY 3, 2016)**

### ***Press Release***

### **ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Management Board Initiates Draft Addendum to Modify Adaptive Resource Management Framework for the Delaware Bay Region**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Board approved development of Draft Addendum VIII to the Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Draft Addendum will propose changes to the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, which is used annually to set harvest specifications for the Delaware Bay states, taking into consideration horseshoe crab abundance and red knot forage needs.

This action is in response to a recent technical review, which suggested changes to the ARM Framework, including the incorporation of mortality associated with biomedical bleeding activities into the Framework, and the exploration of options that allow for the harvest of female horseshoe crab in the Delaware Bay Region. In its review, the ARM Subcommittee suggested mortality associated with biomedical activities due to capture, handling, or post-bleeding stress and could be considered to be a form of harvest and recommended its inclusion in the Framework. This source of mortality had not been included in the ARM Framework as initially established in 2012.

The ARM Framework currently presents five harvest packages to ensure the sustainable annual harvest of horseshoe crab in the Delaware Bay Region. While the Framework can produce harvest packages that include female crab harvest, the threshold for horseshoe crab abundance precludes allowing for female harvest at this time. However, the Board expressed interest in exploring alternatives that allow for female harvest without compromising the integrity of the ARM Framework. As a result, the Draft Addendum will present alternative harvest packages which allow for female harvest. Further, the Draft Addendum will propose incorporating mortality associated with biomedical bleeding activities into the ARM Framework. The Draft Addendum will be presented to the Board for its consideration and possible approval for public comment at the Commission’s Annual Meeting in October 2016.

The ARM Framework was developed by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the relationship between horseshoe crab eggs and shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region. The ARM predicts the optimal strategy for horseshoe crab bait harvest in the Delaware Bay Region while accounting for the need for successful red knot stopover feeding during migrations through the region.

Additionally, the Board tasked the Technical Committee with developing a proposal to test the use of alternative bait in the whelk and eel fisheries. The Board will review the proposal in October 2016. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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PR16-21

### ***Motions***

#### **Main Motion**

**Move to approve all Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Subcommittee and Technical Committee recommendations except for the biomedical data incorporation.**

Motion made by Mr. Muffley and seconded by Mr. Boyles.

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to initiate an addendum to the HSC management plan to address the ARM Subcommittee’s recommendation to the ARM framework regarding 1) mortality associated with the biomedical industry; and 2) bait harvest packages which allow female horseshoe crab harvest as presented in Appendix C of the framework review.**

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Pugh. Motion carries (10 in favor, 5 opposed).

### **Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to initiate an addendum to the HSC management plan to address the ARM Subcommittee’s recommendation to the ARM framework regarding 1) mortality associated with the biomedical industry; and 2) bait harvest packages which allow female horseshoe crab harvest as presented in Appendix C of the framework review.**

Motion carries (13 in favor, 2 opposed).

**Move to task the Technical Committee with designing bait experiments to be completed in 2017 for those states that opt to participate—involving reduced amounts of horseshoe crab, relative to status quo, in the whelk and eel fisheries—to be developed for Board review and approval by October 2016.**

Motion made by Mr. Ballou and seconded by Mr. Muffley. Motion carries unanimously.

## **COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 2, 2016)**

### ***Press Release***

#### **ASMFC Coastal Sharks Board Approves Addendum IV to the FMP**

Alexandria, VA – The Coastal Sharks Management Board approved Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The Addendum amends the FMP to allow smooth dogfish carcasses to be landed with corresponding fins removed from the carcass as long as the total retained catch on board at the time of landing is composed of at least 25 percent smooth dogfish. Trips that do not meet the 25 percent catch composition requirement can land smooth dogfish, but the fins must remain naturally attached to the carcass. Naturally attached is defined as attached to the corresponding shark through some portion of uncut skin.

Through the Board’s action, the Addendum maintains consistency between federal and state shark FMPs and better incorporates the intent of the smooth dogfish limited exception in the Shark Conservation Act of 2010 (SCA) into state regulations. States are required to implement the Addendum’s management measure by January 1, 2017.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), on the Coastal Sharks page by mid-August. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [aharp@asmfc.org](mailto:aharp@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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PR16-20



### ***Motions***

#### **Move to approve Addendum IV with the following option: Issue 1, Option B.**

Motion made by Mr. Muffley and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries (7 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention).

#### **Move to approve Addendum IV, with an implementation date of January 1, 2017, with the options selected here today.**

Motion made by Mr. Muffley and seconded by Dr. Laney. Motion carries (Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, MA, NY, NJ, DE, SC, GA, FL, USFWS, NMFS; Opposed – RI, CT, MD, VA, NC).

#### **Motion to approve the FMP Review and compliance reports submitted.**

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Heins. Motion carries.

#### **Move to approve Katie Westfall as a member of the Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel.**

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Michels. Motion carries without objection.

#### **Move to nominate Roy Miller as vice chair of Coastal Sharks Management Board.**

Motion made by Mr. Michels and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion carries without objection.

### **ATLANTIC STURGEON MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 2, 2016)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board (Board) received an overview from NOAA Fisheries on [two proposed rules](#), one for each of NOAA Fisheries Regional Offices (i.e., GARFO and SERO), designating critical habitat for Atlantic sturgeon per the requirements of Section 4(b)(2) of the Endangered Species Act. Specific areas (e.g., rivers) within each distinct population segment (DPS) were proposed as critical habitat based on the presence of physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species. Public comment on the proposed rules is due September 1, 2016. The Board will consider submitting comment to NOAA on the proposed rules emphasizing issues applicable to both rules (e.g., the importance of research and sampling programs that occur in the proposed areas, and timing and process of Section 7 consultations), while states will submit their input on the proposed areas within their respective jurisdictions.

The benchmark stock assessment is on schedule for review in mid-2017. During the stock assessment workshop (held July 12-15, in Hanover, Maryland), the Stock Assessment Subcommittee continued to evaluate usable data for the stock assessment (e.g., bycatch, survey, genetic, and tag data) and made considerable progress on model development and potential biological reference points. A second assessment workshop will be held in early 2017 to rigorously evaluate the methods and stock assessment models developed, ensure appropriate use of the data in the models, and determine the status of Atlantic sturgeon populations where possible.

Lastly, the Board elected Adam Nowalsky (NJ) as Board Chair and Ross Self (SC) as Vice-Chair to the Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org) or 703-842-0740.

***Motions***

**Move to elect Adam Nowalsky as Chair and Ross Self as Vice Chair of the Atlantic Sturgeon Management Board.**

Motion made by Dr. Duval and seconded by Mr. Allen. Motion carries without objection.

**ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2016)**

***Press Release***

**ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Approves Addendum I**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The Addendum modifies the bycatch provision of Amendment 2 by allowing two permitted commercial fishermen working together from the same vessel using stationary multi-species gear to land up to 12,000 pounds of menhaden per trip per day. In this case, stationary multi-species gears are defined as pound nets, anchored/staked gillnets, and fyke nets. Interested states may implement the new bycatch provision as their regulatory processes allow, but no earlier than August 15.

The practice of two permitted fishermen working together from the same vessel to harvest Atlantic menhaden primarily occurs in the Chesapeake Bay pound net fishery. This practice enables the fishermen to pool resources for fuel and crew. However, the practice was constrained under Amendment 2’s bycatch allowance provision, which stipulated a 6,000 pound/vessel/day limit.

Board members also discussed 2017 specifications but postponed final action on these measures until the Commission’s Annual Meeting in late October. Addendum I will be available on the Commission website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), on the Atlantic Menhaden page by mid-August. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mware@asmfc.org](mailto:mware@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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PR16-22

***Meeting Summary***

In addition to the Atlantic Menhaden Board’s discussion on Addendum I and the 2017 fishery specifications, the Board provided feedback on a draft of the Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 3. The PID, which focuses on ecological reference points and allocation, will be considered for approval for public comment in October 2016, with a potential public comment period between November 2016 and January 2017. The Board also reviewed the timeline for draft Amendment 3 which currently has the Board taking final action on the document in November 2017. Finally, the Board received an update on the ongoing socioeconomic study in the commercial menhaden fishery and discussed the need to revitalize Advisory Panel membership in preparation for the Amendment 3 process.

For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mware@asmfc.org](mailto:mware@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### **Motions**

#### **Move to approve Addendum I with the following option: Option B.**

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion carries unanimously.

#### **Move to approve Addendum I, with an implementation date of August 15, 2016, with the options selected here today.**

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion carries unanimously.

#### **Move to approve Addendum I as modified today.**

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries unanimously. Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS.

### **Main Motion**

#### **Move to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at 225,456 metric tons (20% increase).**

Motion made by Mr. Gary and seconded by Mr. Schill.

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to maintain status quo (187,880 metric tons) for the 2017 fishing year.** Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. White. Motion fails (9 in favor, 9 opposed). Roll Call Vote: In favor – NH, MA, RI, CT, PA, SC, GA, FL, USFWS; Opposed – ME, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS.

### **Motion to Amend**

#### **Move to amend to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at 206,668 metric tons (10% increase).**

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Motion fails. Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – NH, MA, CT, PA, PRFC, NC, SC, GA, FL; Null – RI.

### **Motion to Amend**

#### **Move to amend to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery by a 5% increase (197,274 metric tons).**

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion fails. Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, CT, NY, DE, MD, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – NH, MA, RI, NJ, PA, PRFC, SC, GA, FL.

### **Motion to Amend**

#### **Move to amend to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery to a 1% increase (20,666 metric tons).**

Motion made by Ms. Peake and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion fails. Roll Call Vote: In favor – NH, MA, RI, CT, PA, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – ME, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL.

**Motion to Reconsider an Amended Motion**

**Move to reconsider the amended motion for a 10% increase (206,668 metric tons) to the Atlantic menhaden 2017 coastal TAC.**

Motion made by Mr. Gary and seconded by Mr. Nowalsky. Motion passes. Roll Call Vote: (In favor – ME, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS; Opposed – NH, MA, CT, PA, SC, GA, FL, USFWS; Null – RI.

**Amended Motion**

**Move to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at a 10% increase (206,668 metric tons).**

Motion fails. Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NMFS; Opposed – NH, MA, CT, PA, NC, SC, GA, FL, USFWS; Null – RI.

**Main Motion**

**Move to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at 225,456 metric tons (20% increase).**

Motion made by Mr. Gary and seconded by Mr. Schill.

**Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend the main motion to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at 19% increase of 2016 TAC.**

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion fails. Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NJ, PRFC, VA, NMFS; Opposed – NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA, DE, NC, GA, FL, USFWS; Null – MD, SC.

**Motion to Postpone Main Motion**

**Move to postpone until the next meeting of the Menhaden Board.**

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries. Roll Call Voter: In favor – NH, MA, NY, PA, DE, MD, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – RI, CT, NJ, PRFC, SC, GA, FL; Null – ME.

**Main Motion**

**Move to set the 2017 coastal TAC for the Atlantic menhaden fishery at 225,456 metric tons (20% increase).**

Motion made by Mr. Gary and seconded by Mr. Schill. Motion postponed until next meeting.

**LEGISLATORS AND GOVERNORS' APPOINTEES (AUGUST 3, 2016)**

***Meeting Summary***

The Legislative and Governor Appointee Commissioners (LGA) received a report from their Co-chairs on the proceedings of the Executive Committee, which occurred earlier in the week. The LGAs discussed renaming the Hart Award to honor former Commissioner Patten White, ultimately deciding the Hart Award should not be renamed. However, there was consensus that a new award should be created to honor Mr. White. Ideas for the new award included honoring a marine educator or fellow Commissioners and individuals with unusual skills sets similar to Mr. White's (consensus building, close working relationships with fellow Commissioners, and willingness to volunteer for extra duties, just to name a few of Pat's many good qualities). The LGAs received a federal legislative update from Deke Tompkins concerning bills of relevance to the Commission and discussed the importance of building

relationships with federally-elected officials and staff. The meeting was successful in building and strengthening relationships of new and long-standing LGAs. The group agreed to meet again as early as the Commission's 2017 Winter Meeting.

For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, at [dtompkins@asmfc.org](mailto:dtompkins@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### **ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2016)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board reviewed the Advisory Panel (AP) meeting summary. The AP met via conference call to discuss two striped bass fishery issues that are not currently being discussed at the Board-level; the EEZ Transit Zone Clarification and Access Act and potential impacts from the above-average harvest of squid on the availability of striped bass in Nantucket Sound. The meeting was held at the request of the AP, and was not Board directed. In the future, if a similar request is made by the AP, the Board Chair will be consulted to maintain transparency between the Board, the AP, and the public.

The Board approved the 2016 Fishery Management Plan Review for Atlantic Striped Bass. The Review included a preliminary evaluation of the performance of Addendum IV in 2015 by comparing 2015 harvest estimates via the Marine Recreational Information Program to those predicted by the Technical Committee last year. Although insightful, the ultimate goal of the addendum is to reduce fishing mortality to a level at or below the target, and this evaluation does not consider fishing mortality. The 2016 assessment update utilizing data through 2015 will be available for Board review in October. The Technical Committee will also conduct a formal evaluation of the mechanisms affecting harvest in 2015, and will provide recommendations to the Board at its October meeting.

Lastly, the Board approved Patrick Paquette's (MA) membership to the Striped Bass Advisory Panel. For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org) or 703-842-0740.

#### ***Motions***

**Move to approve the 2016 Atlantic Striped Bass FMP Review and state compliance reports.**

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion carries.

**Move to approve Patrick Paquette membership to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel.**

Motion made by Dr. Duval and seconded by Mr. Nowalsky. Motion carries.

### **INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (AUGUST 3, 2016)**

#### ***Press Release***

#### **ASMFC Initiates Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Cobia**

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved the initiation of a new Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Atlantic Migratory Group of Cobia to complement fishery management efforts of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). This action

responds to a request by the Council for the Commission to consider joint or complementary management of the resource in light of the significant overage of the 2015 recreational annual catch limit (ACL), the impact of those overages to state management, and the observation that approximately 82% of reported recreational landings are harvested in state waters.

Widely distributed throughout the western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, cobia are managed as two distinct groups – the Gulf Migratory Group and the Atlantic Migratory Group. The Atlantic Migratory Group, which ranges from New York to Georgia, is managed by the Council. Recreational landings of the Atlantic Migratory Group in 2015 were approximately 1.5 million pounds, 145% over the ACL, resulting in a June 20, 2016 closure of the fishery by NOAA Fisheries. Commercial cobia landings in 2015 were 83,148 pounds, 38% over the ACL. Late landings reports in 2015 precluded a timely closure of the commercial fishery.

Concerns were expressed by individual states whose recreational seasons were significantly reduced by the closure due to the overage of the 2015 quota. North Carolina and Virginia developed alternate management strategies to avoid the June 20, 2016 closure enacted by NOAA Fisheries for federal waters. South Carolina has recently implemented more restrictive measures that are consistent with the actions of NOAA Fisheries in some areas. A complementary Commission FMP for cobia will provide the states the flexibility to respond to changes in the fishery and stock that meet their state fisheries needs while staying within the ACL.

A Draft Public Information Document, the first step in the development of a Commission FMP, will be presented to the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board for its review and possible approval in October at the Commission's Annual Meeting. For more information, please contact Louis Daniel at [ldaniel@asmfc.org](mailto:ldaniel@asmfc.org) or 252.342.1478.

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PR16-22

### ***Meeting Summary***

Chairman Grout updated the ISFMP Policy Board on the actions of the Executive Committee (see Executive Committee meeting summary) and the State Directors Meeting. As a part of the Commission's 2016 Action Plan, the Policy Board conducted a review of stock rebuilding performance to determine if rebuilding for each species is consistent with the Commission Vision and Goals. The Board reviewed the rebuilding progress for each of the species under Commission management. This review was intended to determine if the progress toward each species rebuilding goals was occurring at an appropriate rate. The Board focused on the species in the categories of "concern," "depleted," and "unknown" in its discussions, as well as the species boards' response to scientific advice.

The Executive Committee tasked staff to update the Conservation Equivalency Guidance Document to reflect the current practices of the Commission. The Management and Science Committee (MSC) and Assessment and Science Committee (ASC) reviewed proposed revisions and made recommendations to the Executive Committee for its review. The Executive Committee discussed the proposed revisions and tasked staff to make changes to the guidance document. The revised document will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting in October.

The Risk and Uncertainty Policy Workgroup, comprised of representatives from the MSC, ASC and the Policy Board, updated the ISFMP Policy Board on its progress thus far. The Workgroup was created to

develop a Commission policy to account for both scientific and management uncertainty in the Commission's decision making process. For its first task, the Workgroup developed an overarching purpose statement for the policy that was reviewed and approved by the Policy Board. The Workgroup will continue to develop the full policy for Board review during Annual Meeting.

The Habitat Committee met and received a presentation from Dr. Ken Able of Rutgers University, reviewed the process for making recommendations to the Policy Board, reviewed the 2016 Action Plan progress, finalized topics and articles for the 2016 issue of *Habitat Hotline Atlantic*, and discussed seismic testing effects on fish habitat. Regarding seismic testing, the Committee requested the Policy Board consider adopting positions similar to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and South Carolina Wildlife Federation, and convey that position to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and other entities. The Policy Board directed the Committee to draft a letter to BOEM, similar to those from the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, and present it to the Policy Board at the Annual Meeting for further discussion and/or approval.

The Artificial Reef Committee had a joint meeting with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission this spring. ASMFC and NOAA Fisheries co-hosted a two-day National Artificial Reef Workshop June 9-10 in Alexandria, VA. It was attended by federal, state, non-profit, commercial, and recreational fishing entities. The objectives were to provide an overview of the current science, explore using artificial reefs as management tools, identify management challenges and associated research needs, and discuss the potential for future partnerships. The workshop summary will be released in August.

The Science and Data and Steering Committees of the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) recently met and began development of the 2017-2021 Conservation Strategic Plan. Recently, the manuscript describing the Species-Habitat Matrix results was published in *BioScience*, and ACFHP is currently working on a website for users to query those data. ACFHP's grant to support habitat research in the Mid-Atlantic from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council was awarded to Dr. Bradley Stevens of University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The project is titled 'Hab in the MAB: Characterizing Black Sea Bass Habitat in the Mid-Atlantic Bight.' ACFHP also recently received funding from NOAA to spatially prioritize fish habitat protection and restoration sites using GIS mapping and analysis from North Carolina to Florida. ACFHP will be using FY2016 NFHAP-USFWS funding to support ACFHP operations, a complimentary mapping project from Maine to Virginia, and to partially fund the Bradford Dam removal in Westerly, Rhode Island. The FY2017 habitat restoration funding announcement will be released August 11<sup>th</sup>, with a September 22<sup>nd</sup> deadline to submit proposals.

In October the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will consider whether to develop an Amendment that could add species of river herring and shad as Council-managed species. The Council's River Herring and Shad Committee will meet in early August to review a white paper and draft decision document related to the need for Council management of blueback herring, alewife, American shad, and hickory shad. Depending on the outcome of the Council Shad and River Herring Committee's recommendation, the Commission will consider sending a letter to the Council regarding future Council action on shad and river herring.

Lastly, the Board discussed the concept of managing a resource for the benefit of another fishery but specifically referencing the Atlantic herring fishery. One of the objectives in managing the Area 1A quota

is to provide a constant supply of bait to the lobster fishery. Some Board members expressed concern that managing the herring fishery for the benefit of the lobster fishery may not be the appropriate role of the Commission. They suggested that perhaps this issue should be considered outside of the Commission process by the involved states. It was acknowledged that the Commission's management actions can benefit a sector, gear type or other species, but these actions are fully vetted through a public input process. No final actions or recommendations on this issue were made at this time.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**On behalf of the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board, move to recommend that the ISFMP Policy Board develop a complementary Fishery Management Plan for Cobia.**

Motion made by Mr. Estes. Motion carries without objection.

**On behalf of the South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board, move to recommend to the Policy Board that the South Atlantic Board is the appropriate venue to develop the FMP for Cobia.**

Motion made by Mr. Estes. Motion carries without objection.

**Move to task the Habitat Committee to draft a base letter to express the Commission's concerns regarding seismic testing and its possible impacts on fisheries and fish habitat, for review by the Policy Board at the Annual Meeting.**

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion carries without objection.

## **ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL (AUGUST 3, 2016)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The ACCSP Coordinating Council met to receive Program and Committee Updates as well to discuss the first draft of the Governance Transition Plan and the ACCSP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Addendum provided by the Governance Transition Workgroup. It was reported that the FY17 proposals were initially reviewed during a joint webinar/conference call by the Operations and Advisory Committees. During that webinar/conference call it was brought to the committees' attention that the Recreational Technical Committee Headboat Add-on Maintenance Proposal had not been drafted or submitted. Members of the Recreational Technical Committee requested that the committee be given the opportunity to make a late submission for this proposal. This maintenance proposal has been submitted for the past 14 years and is a vital source of recreational data along the Atlantic coast. Due to the vital nature of this long-standing time series for recreational data, the Operations and Advisory Committee unanimously agreed to make a recommendation to the Coordinating Council in support of the request. The Coordinating Council voted via email to accede to this request. During the Council meeting, there were some concerns that this might have set a bad precedent. The Council discussed this issue and determined that this was a singular event that was reluctantly approved due to concern over the potential data loss. The Recreational Technical Committee has already taken action to ensure this does not occur again.



The Council was presented with the first draft of the Governance Transition Document and the Addendum to the ACCSP MOU. Within the Governance Transition Document a short term, mid-term and long-term plan is presented along with the changes that would need to occur to the MOU. Final action will occur at the Commission's Annual Meeting in October. For more information, please contact Mike Cahall, ACCSP Director, at [mike.cahall@accsp.org](mailto:mike.cahall@accsp.org).

### ***Motions***

No motions made.

## **AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 4, 2016)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The American Eel Management Board met to consider changes to the Addendum IV commercial yellow eel allocations and consider North Carolina's revised Glass Eel Aquaculture Plan for 2017.

In considering changes to the Addendum IV commercial yellow eel allocation, staff presented New York's proposal to adjust the commercial yellow eel fishery quota as stipulated in Addendum IV. In follow up to the May 2016 Board Meeting, New York submitted a proposal outlining the state's efforts to improve accuracy in landings data, options for adjusting the current commercial yellow eel allocation, and options for revisiting the allocation moving forward. The American Eel Technical Committee reviewed the proposal via conference call in July and recommended that any consideration of changing the current allocations should be taken up after the 2017 stock assessment update. During the update process, all states will have the opportunity to provide the most up-to-date and accurate landings for consideration in the stock assessment model. After discussing the tabled motion from the May 2016 Meeting to initiate a draft addendum, the Board moved to postpone the decision to initiate an addendum to address yellow eel allocation until after the 2017 stock assessment update is completed.

The Board was presented the North Carolina revised aquaculture plan for 2017. In February 2016, the Board approved North Carolina's initial aquaculture plan to harvest up to 200 pounds of glass eels for domestic aquaculture purposes. Due to delays in the issuance of permits, the aquaculture facility was not able to catch glass eels in 2016. North Carolina developed a revised aquaculture plan for 2017 that outlined a number of changes including: fishing from January through April, reporting out harvest in actual weight (not estimated), reduction in the number of individuals fishing under the permit, calculating monthly catch per unit effort (CPUE), changes to the permit conditions regarding warrantless searches, and the addition of new primary harvest site in the White Oak River. The Technical Committee reviewed the revised aquaculture plan and provided two recommendations: 1) a young-of-the-year survey should be developed at one of the harvest sites in conjunction with the aquaculture plan in year 3 of the plan (2018); and 2) fyke net mortality should be addressed during the months of January and February when the 24 hour soak times are allowed. The Board considered these recommendations and discussed the revisions of plan; in particular, the change in conditions of the permit that now require a warrant for searches of any gear, vessels, equipment, vehicles, and persons. North Carolina clarified that this change to the permit was caused by a recent change in North Carolina Statutory Law that was enacted from a recent legislative session. The Board requested that the Law Enforcement Committee review the new North Carolina statute and consider how it may affect enforcement of American eel regulations as well as other species managed through the Commission. The Board approved the revised

North Carolina aquaculture plan for 2017 including the Technical Committee's recommendations, with the understanding the Board would be presented the results of revised aquaculture plan in late 2017.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to initiate an addendum to reconsider the coastal cap and the state by state yellow eel allocation.**

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion postponed indefinitely.

**Move to postpone until the August meeting.**

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion carries without objection

**Move to postpone indefinitely.**

Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes.

**Move to approve the proposed North Carolina Glass Eel Aquaculture Plan for 2017 and the Technical Committee recommendations.**

Motion made by Mr. Ballou and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes unanimously.

## **BUSINESS SESSION (AUGUST 4, 2016)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

As part of the integration of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) into the Commission's governance structure, the Commission was presented the first draft of the Governance Transition Document and the Addendum to the ACCSP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Within the Governance Transition Document a short term, mid-term and long-term plan is presented along with the changes that would need to occur to the MOU. Final action on both documents will occur at the Commission's Annual Meeting in October.

### ***Motions***

No motions made.

## **AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 4, 2016)**

### ***Press Release***

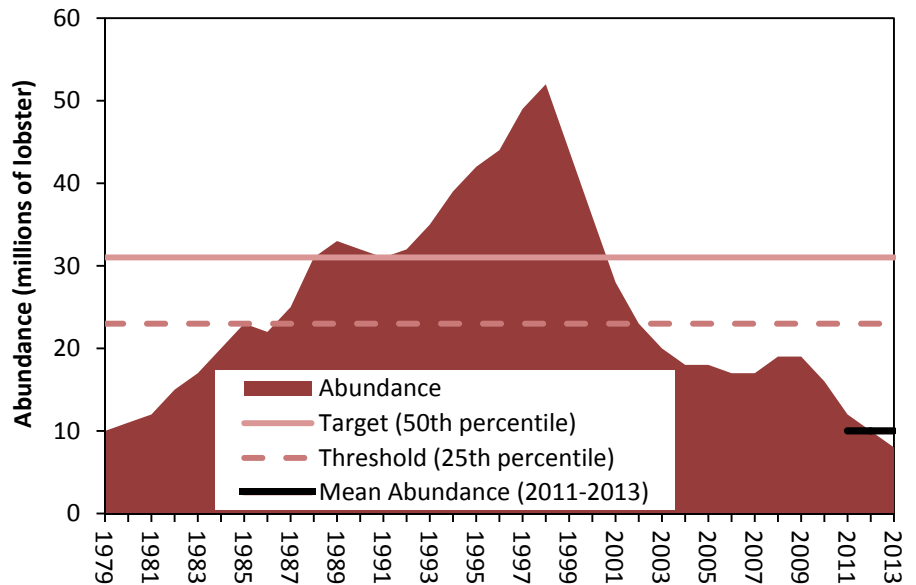
#### **ASMFC American Lobster Board Identifies Management Goal and Options for Draft Addendum XXV to Address Southern New England Stock Declines**

Alexandria, VA – The American Lobster Management Board approved development of Draft Addendum XXV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum seeks to respond to the depleted condition of the SNE stock while preserving a

functional portion of the lobster fishery in this area. The document will present a suite of management measures to increase egg production and lower fishing mortality through a combination of management tools including lobster size and escape vent changes, season closures, and trap limits and reductions.

The Draft Addendum responds to the results of the 2015 American lobster benchmark stock assessment which found the SNE stock severely depleted and undergoing recruitment failure with poor prospects of recovery. Declines in population abundance were most pronounced in the inshore portion of the stock where environmental conditions have remained unfavorable to lobsters since the late 1990s. Despite fleet attrition, stock declines have continued. These declines are largely in response to adverse environmental conditions including increasing water temperatures over the last 15 years combined with continued fishing mortality.

**SNE American Lobster Abundance and Reference Points**



Declines in in the offshore portion of the fishery were evident as well though not as severe. However, the offshore portion of the SNE stock likely depends on nearshore larval settlement and offshore migration as the source of recruits (e.g., young of the year lobsters). Therefore, the offshore component is expected to see eventual declines as well.

The Draft Addendum will include a suite of management options aimed to increase egg production from zero to 60%. In its discussion of the stock, the Board agreed the addendum is an initial response to the 2015 stock assessment and stock status will continue to be reviewed. The Draft Addendum will be presented for Board review and possible approval for public comment at the Commission’s Annual Meeting in late October. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mware@asmfc.org](mailto:mware@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

###

PR16-24

**Meeting Summary**

At its August 2016 meeting, the American Lobster Management Board discussed reporting in the lobster fishery, reviewed a conservation equivalency proposal from Maine, and considered approval of Jonah Crab Draft Addendum II for public comment. Following a recommendation from the Technical Committee for increased and improved reporting in the lobster fishery, the Board established a Lobster

Reporting Working Group to outline data deficiencies in the fishery and potential solutions. The Working Group will report back to the Board in October 2016 with its recommendations. The Board also approved Maine's conservation equivalency proposal, which allows lobster fishermen to attach trap tags via hog rings as they move gear in and out of the water. The proposal eliminates the need for exchange tags in the state and improves enforcement in the fishery.

The Board also reviewed Draft Addendum II to the Jonah Crab FMP, which considers a coastwide standard for claw harvest. Given the Board's request that an additional option be added to the document and that the definition of bycatch in the fishery be reviewed, the Board postponed action on the Addendum to allow for further review and development. The Board will consider approving Draft Addendum II for public comment in October.

Finally, the Board received an update on the New England Fishery Management Council and tasked the Technical Committee with creating a map of lobster and Jonah crab harvest in the Gulf of Maine. The Board recommended to the ISFMP Policy Board that a letter be sent to NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement requesting lobster become a higher priority through its Joint Enforcement Agreements Program.

The Board also initiated Draft Addendum XXV to address the poor condition of the Southern New England lobster stock (see above press release for more details). For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mware@asmfc.org](mailto:mware@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Recognizing the impact of climate change on the stock, move to make the goal of Addendum XXV to respond to the decline of the SNE stock and its decline in recruitment while preserving a functional portion of the lobster fishery in this area. This Addendum is intended to be an initial response to the most recent stock assessment. Options for the PDT to develop include:**

- **Status quo (0% increase in egg production)**
- **20% increase in egg production**
- **40% increase in egg production**
- **60% increase in egg production**

**The PDT is tasked with developing specific management options that meet these goals. These options should be phased in over 2 years and reviewed periodically to determine progress.**

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. McNamee. Motion carries unanimously.

**Move to add an alternative to Draft Addendum II, including a delineation line at 41 degrees north latitude for a Jonah crab claw-only fishery.**

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Muffley. Motion fails.

**Move to approve Draft Addendum II to the Jonah Crab FMP for public comment.**

Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion postponed until next meeting.

**Move to include in Option C a range of small volumetric claw harvest from 5 gallons to the bycatch limit of 2,000 claws.**

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion postponed until next meeting.

**Move to postpone approval of Draft Addendum II and consideration of above motion regarding option C until the next meeting.**

Motion made by Mr. Train and seconded by Mr. Heins. Motion carries without objection.

**Move to approve Maine's conservation equivalency proposal on trap tags.**

Motion made Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion carries without objection.

**Move to recommend that the ISFMP Policy Board have the ASMFC send a letter to NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement asking for lobster to become a higher priority through their Joint Enforcement Agreements Program.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. McKiernan. Motion carries without objection and an abstention from NOAA Fisheries.