



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

79th Annual Meeting Webinar Summary

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

79th Annual Meeting Webinar
October 19-22, 2020

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2020)	3
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	3
<i>Motions</i>	3
WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2020)	4
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	4
<i>Motions</i>	4
AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2020)	5
<i>Press Release</i>	5
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	8
<i>Motions</i>	9
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2020)	10
<i>Press Release</i>	10
<i>Motions</i>	11
SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2020)	11
<i>Press Release</i>	11
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	12
<i>Motions</i>	13
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (OCTOBER 21, 2020)	14
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	14
<i>Motions</i>	14

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 21, 2020)	15
<i>Press Release</i>	15
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	15
<i>Motions</i>	16
SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2020)	16
<i>Press Release</i>	16
<i>Motions</i>	17
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2020)	17
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	17
<i>Motions</i>	19
ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL (OCTOBER 23, 2020)	19
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	19
<i>Motions</i>	20
BUISNESS SESSION (OCTOBER 23, 2020)	20
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	20
<i>Motions</i>	20
INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (ISFMP) POLICY BOARD (OCTOBER 23, 2020)	20
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	20
<i>Motions</i>	22

ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Herring Management Board reviewed the 2021-2023 fishery specifications package which was approved by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) through Framework 8. The Framework proposes a lower sub-annual catch limit (ACL) for Area 1A in 2021 (1,391 mt) and 2022/2023 (1,184 mt) based on results of the 2020 Management Track Assessment and following the acceptable biological catch ABC control rule proposed in Amendment 8. The Framework also proposes changes to the 2,000-pound incidental catch limit for Atlantic herring in Areas 2 and 3 to aid the mackerel fishery in better utilizing its available quota when the herring quota is low. This and other decision points in Framework 8, such as the management uncertainty buffer, transfers for at-sea processing, carryover of unused quota, and the research set aside, were informed by recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Herring Committee.

Framework 8 was submitted to NOAA Fisheries for review in September. Similar to previous years, the Board decided to wait until a final rule is released by NOAA Fisheries before it considers specifications for the Area 1A fishery in 2021 (and beyond). However, the Board did approve a seasonal quota allocation for the 2021 Area 1A fishery with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December, which is consistent with the seasonal allocation strategy set for the Area 1A fishery in 2020. Additionally, the fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota has been projected to be harvested and underages from June through September shall be rolled into the October through December period.

Lastly, the Board received an update regarding ongoing discussions between Commission and Council leadership on better coordinating state and federal herring management. A proposed list of shared management responsibilities, developed by a work group of Commission Plan Review Team and Council Fishery Management Action Team members, was reviewed by Commission and Council leadership. While no action was taken at their last meeting, leadership agreed to continue to discuss how best to cooperatively manage the herring resource and fishery. Another update will be provided to the Board in February.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to allocate the 2021 Area 1A sub-ACL seasonally with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota has been projected to be harvested and underages from June through September shall be rolled into the October through December period.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion approved by consent (Roll Call: in favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, NEFMC, NMFS)

WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Winter Flounder Management Board reviewed the 2020 assessment updates for the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Southern New England Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder stocks. The stock assessment reports were peer-reviewed in September as part of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's 2020 Management Track Stock Assessment process.

The GOM stock assessment indicates overfishing was not occurring in 2019. The assessment produces biomass estimates from three different fall surveys, but the area-swept methodology does not provide biomass reference points, resulting in an unknown stock biomass status. The GOM survey indices of abundance are relatively flat over the full time series with little change to the size structure. The Board expressed concern that these indices of winter flounder abundance have not demonstrated any response to the large declines in commercial and recreational removals since the 1980s. It was suggested that research is needed to better understand winter flounder abundance and distribution within different habitat types and especially estuaries for future stock assessments.

The SNE/MA assessment indicates the stock is overfished but overfishing did not occur in 2019. The spawning stock biomass estimate reached a time series low in 2019 of 64% of the biomass threshold despite sustained low levels of fishing mortality. Recruitment, an important indicator of the stock's ability to rebuild, has declined sharply since the 1980s and remains near the time series low. The Board expressed concern over the SNE/MA's depleted stock status and the low probability of rebuilding to the biomass target by 2023, the rebuilding plan target date. The Board emphasized the importance of incorporating environmental indicators into future stock assessments to better capture the influence of climate change on the stock's ability to rebuild.

In December, the New England Fishery Management Council will recommend specifications to NOAA Fisheries based on the 2020 assessment results and recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee. After reviewing the Council's recommendation to NOAA, the Board will set state water specifications in February.

For more information, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dleaning@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to nominate William Hyatt as the Vice-chair to the Winter Flounder Management Board.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion stands approved.

Press Release

**American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment Finds GOM/GBK Stock Not Overfished nor Experiencing Overfishing & SNE Stock Significantly Depleted
*Assessment Introduces Regime Shift Methodology to Address Changing Environmental Conditions***

The 2020 American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment presents contrasting results for the two American lobster stock units, with record high abundance and recruitment in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank stock (GOM/GBK) and record low abundance and recruitment in the Southern New England stock (SNE) in recent years. The GOM/GBK stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Conversely, the SNE stock is significantly depleted with poor prospects of recovery. Stock status was assessed using the University of Maine Stock Assessment Model for American Lobster (UMM, Chen et al. 2005), a statistical catch-at-length model that tracks the population of lobster by sex, size and season over time.

“On behalf of the American Lobster Board, I want to applaud the members of the Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee for their exceptional work on the 2020 Benchmark Stock Assessment Report,” stated Board Chair Dan McKiernan from Massachusetts. “This assessment made a notable advancement in considering the impact of changing environmental conditions on lobster population dynamics.”

Extensive research has highlighted the influence of the environment on American lobster life history and population dynamics. Among the critical environmental variables, temperature stands out as the primary influence. Further, its range is experiencing changing environmental conditions at some of the fastest rates in the world. Therefore, considering these environmental influences is vital when assessing the lobster stocks and was a focal point of this stock assessment. Environmental data time series included water temperatures at several fixed monitoring stations throughout the lobster’s range, average water temperatures over large areas such as those sampled by fishery-independent surveys, oceanographic processes affecting the environment, and other environmental indicators such as lobster prey abundance.

Environmental time series were analyzed for regime shifts, which indicate a significant difference in the lobster’s environment and population dynamics from one time period to another. Regime shifts can change a stock’s productivity, impacting the stock’s level of recruitment and its ability to support different levels of catch. Temperature time series were also analyzed to quantify the effect of temperature on survey catchability of lobster and correct trends in abundance estimated from surveys by accounting for temperature-driven changes in catchability through time.

Model-estimated abundance time series were also analyzed for shifts that may be attributed to changing environmental conditions and new baselines for stock productivity. Shifts were detected for the GOM/GBK stock in 1996 and 2009 and one shift was detected for the SNE stock in 2003. The GOM/GBK stock shifted from a low abundance regime during the early 1980s through 1995 to a moderate abundance regime during 1996-2008, and shifted once again to a high abundance regime during 2009-2018 (Figure 1). Conversely, the SNE stock shifted from a high abundance regime during

the early 1980s through 2002 to a low abundance regime during 2003-2018 (Figure 2). New reference points were developed to account for the changing regimes.

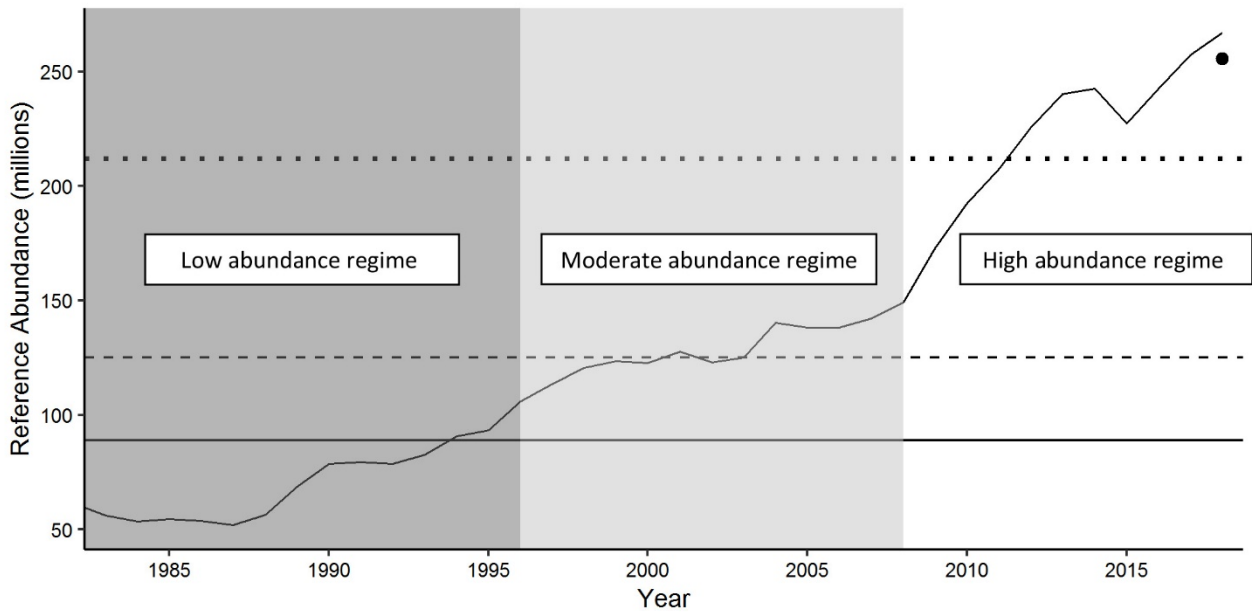


Figure 1. GOM/GBK stock abundance compared to the fishery/industry target (dotted black line), abundance limit (dashed black line), and abundance threshold (solid black line) reference points based on detected low (dark grey period), moderate (light grey period), and high (white period) abundance regimes. The circle is the three-year (2016-2018) average reference abundance.

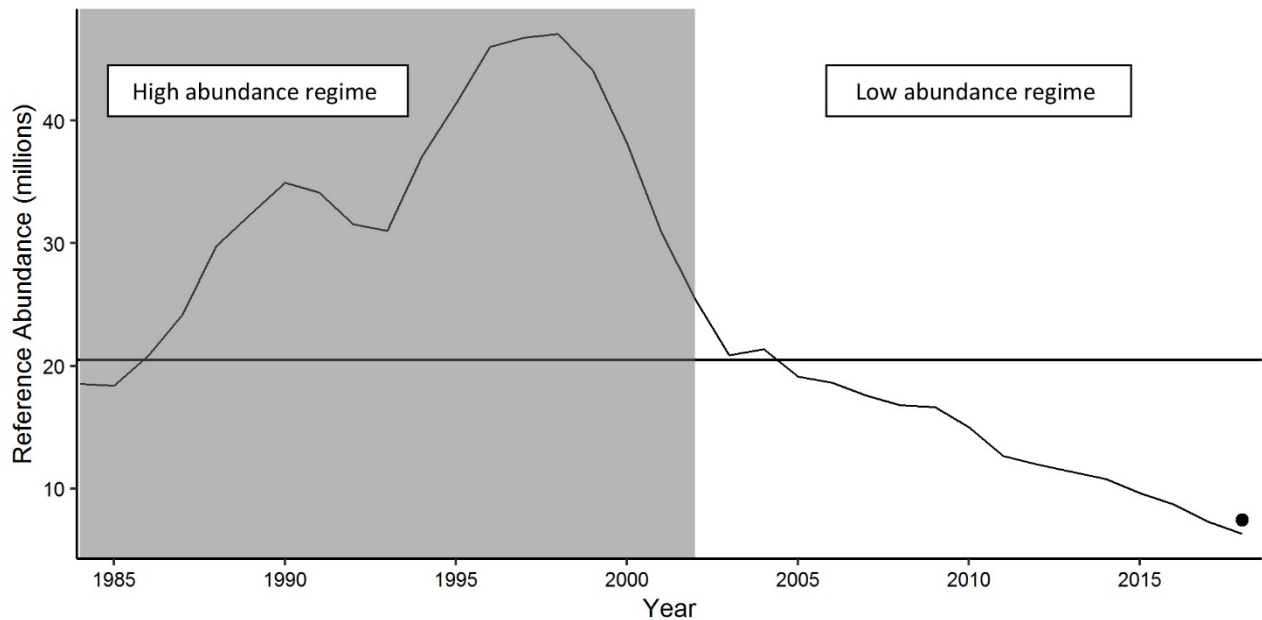


Figure 2. SNE stock abundance compared to the abundance threshold (solid black line) reference point based on detected high (grey period) and low (white period) abundance regimes. The circle is the three-year (2016-2018) average reference abundance.

In this assessment, three reference points are used to characterize stock abundance. The **abundance threshold** is calculated as the average of the three highest abundance years during the low abundance regime. A stock abundance level below this threshold is considered significantly depleted and in danger of stock collapse. This was the only abundance reference point recommended for the SNE stock due to

its record low abundance and low likelihood of reaching this threshold in the near future. The **abundance limit** is calculated as the median abundance during the moderate abundance regime. Stock abundance that falls below this limit is considered depleted because the stock's ability to replenish itself is diminished. The **fishery/industry target** is calculated as the 25th percentile of the abundance during the high abundance regime. In this case, when abundance falls below this target, the stock's ability to replenish itself is not jeopardized, but it may indicate a degrading of economic conditions for the lobster fishery.

Two reference points are used to evaluate the fishing mortality condition of the stocks. The **exploitation threshold** is calculated as the 75th percentile of exploitation during the current abundance regime. The stock is considered to be experiencing overfishing if exploitation exceeds the exploitation threshold. The **exploitation target** is calculated as the 25th percentile of exploitation during the current abundance regime.

Based on these reference points, the GOM/GBK stock is not depleted and overfishing is not occurring. The average abundance from 2016-2018 was 256 million lobster which is greater than the fishery/industry target of 212 million lobster. The average exploitation from 2016-2018 was 0.459, below the exploitation target of 0.461.

The SNE stock is significantly depleted and overfishing is not occurring. The average abundance from 2016-2018 was 7 million lobster, well below the abundance threshold of 20 million lobster. The average exploitation from 2016-2018 was 0.274, falling between the exploitation threshold of 0.290 and the exploitation target of 0.257.

Stock indicators were also used as an independent, model-free assessment of the lobster stocks. These indicators are based strictly on observed data and are free from inherent assumptions in the population dynamics models. GOM/GBK stock indicators showed similar results to the assessment model, with increasing abundance and distribution of recruits and larger-sized lobster over time. However, abundances of young-of-year (YOY) lobster have been negative or neutral since the 2015 stock assessment and YOY abundance appears particularly poor in the southwestern areas of the stock. Recent research has indicated lobster larvae may be settling in habitat outside that covered by current surveys, but these trends are concerning and need to be further researched. Exploitation generally declined through time to its lowest levels in recent years. Fishery performance indicators were generally positive in recent years with several shifting into positive conditions around 2010. New stress indicators were developed for this assessment, including shell disease prevalence and the number of annual days with temperature equal to or above 20° C. These indicators show relatively low stress, but indicate some increasingly stressful conditions through time, particularly in the southwest portion of the stock.

Indicators for the SNE stock also showed similar results to the assessment model, with decreasing abundance and distribution of all life stages to low levels in recent years. All indicators averaged below their time series medians since the 2015 assessment and many have averaged below the 25th percentile. Mortality indicators based on exploitation rates were variable across surveys, and fishery performance indicators have generally shown deteriorating performance in recent years. The stress indicators point toward similar negative conditions in the stock's environment, including unfavorably warm waters and the manifestation of a stressful environment through high shell disease prevalence.

Combined, these indicators reflect the SNE stock's very poor condition and continuing recruitment failure.

The American Lobster Board accepted the Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use, adopted the new reference points as recommended by the assessment, and committed to considering management responses to the assessment findings at its next meeting in February 2021. In addition, the Board intends to continue development of Addendum XXVII, which was initiated in 2017 to proactively increase resilience of the GOM/GBK stock but stalled due to the prioritization of Atlantic right whale issues.

A more detailed overview of the stock assessment, as well as the Benchmark Stock Assessment will be available on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org, on the American Lobster webpage under stock assessment reports. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR20-22

Meeting Summary

After reviewing and accepting the 2020 American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review for management use, the American Lobster Management Board considered several additional items: a report on data collection requirements for 2021, a report on the electronic tracking pilot program, and the annual Fishery Management Reviews (FMP) for Lobster and Jonah crab.

Staff provided a report on the data collection requirements under Addendum XXVI for which implementation had been delayed from January 1, 2019 to January 1, 2021 in order to incorporate the elements into all reporting platforms. Over the past several months, a Lobster Data Elements Work Group has met weekly to develop definitions for the remaining data elements to ensure consistency in state and federal lobster-only reporting. Specifically, the Work Group recommended changes to federal collection of five effort level and gear characterization data points after the lobster-only permit holders begin reporting via federal VTRs. These include number of trap hauls, number of traps in the water by area, traps per trawl hauled, number of buoy lines by area, and total number of buoy lines. The Board forwarded a recommendation to the Interstate Fishery Management Program Policy Board to send a letter to NOAA Fisheries requesting these changes to VTRs; if accepted, it may be one to two years until implementation.

Next, the Board received a presentation on the results of the electronic tracking pilot program, which was initiated through Addendum XXVI. The project assessed tracking devices from Succorfish, Rock7, and Pelagic Data Systems by placing them on volunteer lobster vessels from Maine and Massachusetts with federal lobster permits from June 2019 to May 2020. Though the devices differed somewhat in features and performance, they all were able to deliver vessel positions and detect individual trap hauls. Cellular based systems were both lower in cost and permitted faster ping rates than satellite systems. Recognizing the critical need for electronic tracking to characterize spatial and temporal effort of the lobster fishery, the Board supported an expanded pilot project and future work on data integration and hardware testing. The Board Chair and several other members volunteered to produce a white paper describing the need for this information, which will be presented at the next meeting.

Finally, the Board considered the American Lobster FMP Review for the 2019 fishing year, and the Jonah Crab FMP Reviews for the 2018 and 2019 fishing years. No management concerns were raised for lobster, however, for the past three years New York has been unable to implement two required measures for Jonah crab: regulations to limit the directed trap fishery to lobster permit holders only, and the 1,000 crab bycatch limit for non-trap and non-lobster trap gear. The Board approved the FMP Reviews, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests for both species, and also made a recommendation to the ISFMP Policy Board to send a letter to New York regarding its implementation of Jonah crab measures.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to accept the 2020 American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review for management use.

Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to adopt the following reference points as recommended in the 2020 benchmark assessment for the GOM/GBK stock:

- **Abundance reference points: Fishery/industry Target, Abundance Limit, and Abundance Threshold (212 million lobsters, 125 million lobsters, and 89 million lobsters, respectively)**
- **Exploitation Reference Points: exploitation threshold and exploitation target (75th and 25th percentiles of annual exploitation estimates during the current abundance regime)**
- **And for the SNE stock:**
- **Abundance Threshold for the SNE stock (20 million lobsters)**
- **Exploitation Reference Points: exploitation threshold and exploitation target (75th and 25th percentiles of annual exploitation estimates during the current abundance regime)**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion adopted by unanimous consent.

Move to recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board a letter be sent to New York regarding the implementation of Jonah crab measures.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes by unanimous consent, with one abstention from New York.

Move to approve the Lobster FMP Review for the 2019 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for DE, MD, and VA.

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the Jonah Crab FMP Reviews for the 2018 and 2019 fishing years, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for DE, MD, and VA.

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion adopted by consent.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2020)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Approves TAC for 2021-2022

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board (Board) approved a total allowable catch (TAC) of 194,400 metric tons (mt) for the 2021 and 2022 fishing seasons, which represents a 10% reduction from the 2018-2020 TAC level. The 2021-2022 TAC was set based on the ecological reference points (ERPs) approved by the Board in August, and reaffirms the Board’s commitment to manage the fishery in a way that accounts for the species role as a forage fish.

“This TAC represents a measured and deliberate way for this Board to move into the realm of ecosystem-based management,” said Chair Spud Woodward of Georgia. “The TAC strikes a balance between stakeholder interests to maintain harvest on menhaden at recent levels, while also allowing the ERP models to do what they are intended to do.”

Based on projections, the TAC is estimated to have a 58.5% and 52.5% probability of exceeding the ERP fishing mortality (*F*) target in the first and second year, respectively. The TAC will be made available to the states based on the state-by-state allocation established by Amendment 3 (see accompanying table for 2021 and 2022 based on a TAC of 194,400 mt).

In determining which level to set the TAC, the Board also considered recent updates to the fecundity (*FEC*) reference points, and current stock condition. According to the latest assessment results, the 2017 estimate of fecundity, a measure of reproductive potential, was above both the ERP *FEC* target and threshold, indicating the stock was not overfished. A stock assessment update is scheduled for 2022 which will inform the TAC for 2023 and beyond.

2021-2022 ATLANTIC MENHADEN QUOTAS			
		Metric Tons	Pounds
TAC		194,400	428,578,637
1% Set Aside*		1,944	4,285,786
TAC After Set Aside		192,456	424,292,851
STATE	ALLOCATION	QUOTA (MT)	QUOTA (LBS)
ME	0.52%	995	2,194,080
NH	0.50%	962	2,121,582
MA	1.27%	2,453	5,407,708
RI	0.52%	996	2,196,488
CT	0.52%	993	2,188,342
NY	0.69%	1,330	2,931,091
NJ	10.87%	20,925	46,131,966
PA	0.50%	962	2,121,464
DE	0.51%	986	2,174,821
MD	1.89%	3,634	8,011,402
PRFC	1.07%	2,066	4,554,267
VA	78.66%	151,392	333,761,875
NC	0.96%	1,840	4,056,588
SC	0.50%	962	2,121,464
GA	0.50%	962	2,121,464
FL	0.52%	997	2,198,250
TOTAL	100%	192,456	424,292,851

*1% of the TAC is set aside for episodic events, the remaining TAC is allocated to the states per the provisions of Amendment 3. Quotas may be adjusted pending final 2020 landings and the redistribution of any relinquished quota.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, or Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at mappelman@asmfc.org or tkerns@asmfc.org, respectively.

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PR20-23

Motions

Move to approve the Ecological Reference Point (ERP) fecundity target and threshold, which correspond with the fishing mortality (*F*) ERPs approved in August 2020, for the management of Atlantic menhaden. The ERP fecundity target and threshold are to be defined as the equilibrium fecundity that results when the Atlantic menhaden population is fished at the ERP *F* target and threshold respectively.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Mr. Rhodes. Motion carries without objection.

Main Motion

Move to set the total allowable catch (TAC) at 176,800 metric tons for 2021 and 187,400 metric tons for 2022 which are the levels associated with a 50% probability of exceeding the ERP fishing mortality target, respectively.

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Estes.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to set a TAC of 194,400 metric tons for 2021 and 2022.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Ms. Ware.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend the substitute motion to set a TAC of 194,400 metric tons for 2021 and 187,400 metric tons for 2022.

Motion made by Dr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion fails (6 in favor, 12 opposed).

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to set a TAC of 194,400 metric tons for 2021 and 2022.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Ms. Ware. Motion carries (12 in favor, 6 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to set a TAC of 194,400 metric tons for 2021 and 2022.

Motion carries (13 in favor, 5 opposed). Roll Call: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA, PRFC, SC, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS; Opposed – RI, CT, NC, GA, FL.

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2020)

Press Release

ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Atlantic Cobia Addendum I

The Commission's South Atlantic States/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia. The Addendum modifies: (1) the allocation of the resource between the commercial and recreational sectors, (2) the methodology to calculate the commercial trigger for in-season closures; and (3) and commercial and recreational *de minimis* measures.

The Addendum changes the allocation of the resource between the recreational and commercial fisheries from 92% and 8% respectively to and 96% and 4% respectively. The change was primarily based on new recreational catch estimates that resulted from changes in survey methodology by

the Marine Recreational Information Program. The new catch estimates were, on average, about two times higher than previously estimated, impacting the allocation between the two sectors. In considering the new allocation percentages, the Board took into account the increase in the recreational catch and the harvest levels of the commercial fishery in recent years. The new commercial allocation allows the fishery to operate at its current level with some room for landings to increase as the stock range expands further north.

The Addendum also modifies the calculation of the commercial trigger, which determines when an in-season coastwide commercial closure occurs. The approved trigger is set up to provide states with enough time to close the fishery via their administrative processes without exceeding the quota.

Changes to *de minimis* measures, which are applied to states with relatively small commercial or recreational harvest, include adjusting the commercial allocation set aside and recreational regulations. For *de minimis* measures, the Addendum establishes a commercial *de minimis* set aside of 4% of the commercial quota with a maximum cap of 5,000 pounds to account for potential landings in *de minimis* states not tracked in-season against the quota. States that are *de minimis* for their recreational fisheries may choose to match the recreational management measures implemented by an adjacent non-*de minimis* state (or the nearest non-*de minimis* state if none are adjacent), or limit its recreational fishery to 1 fish per vessel per trip with a minimum size of 33 inches fork length (or an equivalent total length of 37 inches).

States are required to implement the new measures by January 1, 2021. For more information, please contact Savannah Lewis, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at slewis@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board met to consider approval of Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum I (see above press release); review the spot and Atlantic croaker traffic light analyses (TLA) and resulting management triggers; and review and approve annual FMP Reviews, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests for red drum, Atlantic croaker, and Atlantic cobia.

Spot and Atlantic Croaker Traffic Light Analyses

The Chairs of the Spot and Atlantic Croaker Technical Committees (TC) presented the results of the annual TLAs for spot and Atlantic croaker. The TLA assigns a color (red, yellow, or green) to categorize relative levels of indicators on the condition of the fish population (abundance metric) or fishery (harvest metric). For example, as harvest or abundance increased relative to its long term mean, the proportion green in a given year will increase. The Board annually evaluates amounts of red against threshold levels to potentially trigger management action. In 2019, the TLA triggered for both spot and Atlantic croaker at the 30% level, or a moderate level of concern. Staff presented the resulting management responses outlined in Addenda III for Spot and Atlantic croaker. For both species, non *de minimis* states are required to institute a 50 fish bag limit for their recreational fishery, and non *de minimis* states must reduce commercial harvest by 1% of the average state commercial harvest from the previous 10 years. States with more restrictive measures in place are encouraged to keep them. The Board discussed the implementation timeline for states to make the required management changes. State implementation plans are due to the TC by February 12, 2021, with the Board meeting to occur by webinar the week of March 15, 2021, to approve the plans.

Annual Fishery Management Plan Reviews

Staff presented annual FMP Reviews for red drum, Atlantic croaker, and Atlantic cobia. The Board considered *de minimis* requests from states for the three species, and approved all annual FMP reviews, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests. *De minimis* requests were approved for the red drum fisheries in New Jersey and Delaware. For Atlantic croaker, *de minimis* requests were approved for the recreational and commercial fisheries of New Jersey, and the commercial fisheries for Delaware, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. For Atlantic cobia, *de minimis* requests were approved New Jersey, Delaware, PRFC, and Maryland, and the commercial fishery for Georgia.

For more information, please contact Savannah Lewis, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at slewis@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

For Issue 1 recreational and commercial allocation, move to approve option C, 96% recreational and 4% commercial allocation.

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

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to approve option B, 97% recreational and 3% commercial allocation.

Motion by Mr. Haymans and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion fails (3 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Main Motion

For Issue 1 recreational and commercial allocation, move to approve option C, 96% recreational and 4% commercial allocation.

Motion made by Mr. Gary and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion carries (8 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions).

For Issue 2 commercial trigger, move to approve option B, the new commercial trigger recommended by the Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Geer and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries by consent.

For Issue 3 commercial *de minimis* set aside move to approve option F, to account for potential landings in *de minimis* states not tracked in-season against the quota, 4% of the commercial quota or 5,000 pounds cap, whichever is less, would be set aside and not accessible to non-*de minimis* states.

Motion made by Mr. Cimino and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries (11 in favor, 1 abstention).

For Issue 4 recreational *de minimis* size limit, move to approve option C, a recreational *de minimis* state may choose to match the recreational management measures implemented by an adjacent non-*de minimis* state (or the nearest non-*de minimis* state if none are adjacent) or limit its recreational fishery to 1 fish per vessel per trip with a minimum size of 33 inches fork length (or the total length equivalent, 37 inches).

Motion made by Mr. Geer and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion carries.

Move to approve Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Cobia FMP as amended today.

Motion made by Mr. Bell and second by Mr. Geer. Motion carries without opposition.

Move to approve the 2020 FMP Reviews, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests for red drum, Atlantic croaker, and Atlantic cobia.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion carries by consent.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (OCTOBER 21, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee met to discuss a number of issues, including the FY20 Audit; Management & Science Committee (MSC) recommendations regarding improvements to Advisory Panel (AP) and public input process and Pennsylvania's participation on the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board. The following action items resulted from the Committee's discussions:

- FY20 Audit – The Audit was reviewed by the Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) and forwarded to the Executive Committee with a recommendation for approval. The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- Staff provided an update on future Annual Meetings, with plans to hold the 80th Annual Meeting in Long Branch, NJ in mid-October of 2021. Future Annual Meetings will be conducted in North Carolina (2022), Maryland (2023), and Delaware (2024).
- The Executive Committee received a progress report on the MSC recommendations regarding AP and the public input process. Staff has made progress on the public input portion of those recommendations, including posting presentations on documents currently out for public comment on the Commission's YouTube channel and webpage (e.g. Black Sea Bass Draft Addendum XXXIII) to increase the opportunities available to stakeholders to understand the issues and submit public comment. Staff will be working on an example survey of a draft management document to further facilitate public input and will consider possible improvements to the AP process early next year.
- Mr. Beal provided an update on the status of the Pennsylvania's membership on the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board. The Commission's guiding documents limit Pennsylvania's participation to diadromous species management activities. However, with the Atlantic Menhaden Board's recent adoption of ecological reference points formalizing the management linkages between striped bass and menhaden, there may be a sound argument for allowing Pennsylvania to remain on the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board. Staff will continue working with the Commission's Executive Committee to flesh out the details on Menhaden Board membership.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

On behalf of the Administrative Oversight Committee, move acceptance of the FY20 Audit.

Motion made by Spud Woodward. Motion passed unanimously.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 21, 2020)

Press Release

**ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2021 Specifications
for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin**

The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2021 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the States of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin:

	2021 Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	2021 Total Quota**
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia*	34,615	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

** Total male harvest includes crabs which are not of Delaware Bay origin.

The Board chose a harvest package based on the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee’s and ARM Subcommittee’s recommendation. The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. The horseshoe crab abundance estimate was based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). This survey, which is the primary data source for assessing Delaware Bay horseshoe crab abundance, does not have a consistent funding source. Members of the Delaware and New Jersey U.S. Congressional Delegations, with the support of NOAA Fisheries, have provided annual funding for the survey since 2016.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or cstarks@asmfc.org.

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PR20-25

Meeting Summary

The Horseshoe Crab Management Board met to set specifications for the 2021 fishing season for horseshoe crab of Delaware Bay origin (see above press release); receive a progress update on revisions to the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework; consider approval of the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review and state compliance for 2019; and consider a nomination to the Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel.

During the discussion on the 2021 specifications, the Board recognized a decline in the abundance estimate resulting from the 2019 Virginia Tech Trawl Survey. The Board requested further investigation into potential causes of the decline, and comparison to the composite abundance index that was

developed from other available surveys when there was insufficient funding to run the Virginia Tech Trawl Survey.

Additionally, the Board considered a progress update on ongoing revisions to the ARM Framework. At the Board's direction, the ARM Subcommittee has been working on incorporating horseshoe crab population estimates from the Catch Multiple Survey Analysis (CMSA) model used in the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment into the ARM Framework, updating scientific information for horseshoe crab and red knots, moving the model to a new software platform, improving model structure, and updating the red knot population model. The ARM Subcommittee will meet for a second Assessment Workshop in early 2021, and is expected to present the complete ARM Framework to the Board in August or October 2021 after peer review.

The Board also reviewed the FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2019 fishing year. All states' regulations were found to be consistent with the FMP and *de minimis* requests were granted to the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The Board noted some concern related to increased biomedical mortality in 2019, and tasked the Technical Committee with evaluating the impact of recent biomedical mortality levels on the stocks.

Finally, the Board appointed a new member to the Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel: Christina Lecker, a biomedical representative from Virginia. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to select harvest package 3 (500,000 male-only crabs) for 2021 horseshoe crab bait harvest in Delaware Bay.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion approved by consent.

Move to approve the FMP Review for the 2019 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for Potomac River Fisheries Commission, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Move to appoint Christina Lecker to the Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Geer and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion approved by consent.

SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2020)

Press Release

ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Board Sets Quotas for 2021-2023 Fishing Seasons

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish Management Board approved a commercial quota of 29.6 million pounds for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 fishing years (May 1–April 30). The quotas are consistent with the measures recommended to NOAA Fisheries by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). State-specific allocations are provided in table below.

Spiny Dogfish State Allocations (in pounds) for the 2021-2023 Fishing Seasons

	Northern Region (ME-CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	6,000	To be specified by the individual southern region states					
Allocation	58%	2.707%	7.644%	0.896%	5.92%	10.795%	14.036%
2021/22	17,144,556	800,413	2,259,728	264,866	1,749,935	3,191,020	4,149,062
2022/23	17,144,556	800,413	2,259,728	264,866	1,749,935	3,191,020	4,149,062

* Any overages in the above quotas will be deducted from that region’s or state’s quota allocation in the subsequent year. Similarly, any eligible rollovers from one season can be applied to that region’s or state’s quota allocation the following year.

Although the Board had previously set multi-year specifications for 2019-2021, in December 2019 the Council approved a new Risk Policy with the intent that 2021/2022 specifications would be revised to reflect the new policy. As such, the Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended increasing the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for 2021 from 35.4 million pounds to 38.6 million pounds. Based on this revised ABC recommendation, the Council approved a commercial quota of 29,559,580 pounds, which is an 8% increase compared to the previously set 2021/2022 quota. The Council also voted to extend these same specifications to the 2022 fishing year to align with the timing of the 2022 research track assessment. The Board works cooperatively with the Council in managing the spiny dogfish fishery in order to have consistency in state and federal waters. Neither the Board nor the Council recommended trip limit changes but the Council has plans in 2021 to conduct socioeconomic analyses of potential trip limit changes.

The Commission’s actions are final and apply to state waters (0-3 miles from shore). The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils will forward their recommendations for federal waters (3 –200 miles from shore) to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Administrator for final approval.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR20-26

Motions

Move to revise the 2021/2022 fishing year spiny dogfish commercial quota to 29,559,580 pounds and to set the 2022/2023 fishing year quota at 29,559,580 pounds.

Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to nominate Ms. Meserve as Vice-chair of the Spiny Dogfish Board.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to consider approving state implementation plans for circle hook measures, which are required by Addendum VI; receive a Technical Committee (TC)

report on release mortality in the recreational fishery; and review the first draft of the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 7.

The intent of the circle hook provision is to reduce release mortality when fishing with bait in recreational striped bass fisheries. All state proposals included final (or proposed) regulatory language and a definition for 'circle hook' comparable to that cited in Addendum VI. The Plan Review Team (PRT) noted a lot of variation in regulatory language among states, although all the regulations essentially say the same thing. The PRT reiterated concerns previously raised by the Law Enforcement Committee, stressing the importance of all jurisdictions agreeing on standardized regulatory language to improve compliance and enforcement, especially where states share common borders and fishing areas. Addendum VI also provides states flexibility to propose exemptions to mandatory circle hook requirements to address specific needs of the state fishery. Two states (Maine and Massachusetts) proposed exemptions, but the PRT was unable to make a definitive recommendation to the Board regarding exemptions due to limited guidance on what constitutes an acceptable level of flexibility. The Board discussed whether the proposed exemptions would lead to other 'niche' exemptions across state fisheries, further weakening enforceability and undermining the intent of the provision. In order to achieve the greatest level of conservation for the resource, the Board approved the state implementation plans, with the caveat that no exemptions to Addendum VI mandatory circle hook requirements will be permitted. Maine and Massachusetts will begin their rulemaking processes to remove exemptions to circle hook measures from state regulation.

The Board reviewed a TC report on release mortality in the recreational fishery, which constitutes a significant proportion of total fishing mortality on the stock. The report highlighted how recreational release mortality is calculated for stock assessments, the factors (data and modeling) limiting the accuracy of those estimates now and in the future, as well as potential management actions the Board could pursue to reduce release mortality in the fishery. Following review, the Board tasked the TC to explore the relative impact of different release mortality rate estimates on stock status, with the TC reporting back to the Board in February. The Board also reiterated the importance of hearing from the public on this issue as part of the adaptive management process within Amendment 7.

Lastly, the Board reviewed the first draft of the PID for Amendment 7. The PID is the first step in the amendment process; it is a broad scoping document intended to solicit stakeholder feedback on any issues concerning the management of the striped bass resource and fishery, and to inform development of the Draft Amendment. The PID highlights nine issues that have already been identified by the Board for consideration in Draft Amendment 7, including fishery goals and objectives, biological reference points, management triggers, stock rebuilding, regional management, conservation equivalency, recreational release mortality, recreational accountability, and the coastal commercial quota allocation. The Board offered a number of changes to the PID, including additions to the 'statement of the problem' and questions to the public to help focus stakeholder feedback. The Board will consider approving the PID for public comment in February 2021 at the Winter Meeting after these changes and additions have been addressed.

Finally, the Board appointed Bob Danielson, a recreational angler from New York, to the Striped Bass Advisory Panel. For more information, please contact Max Appelman mappelman@asmfc.org, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, or Toni Kerns tkerns@asmfc.org, ISFMP Director, or at 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Motion to not exempt any state from putting in place the circle hook rules for bait fishing as specified in Addendum VI.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Abbott.

Motion to Substitute

Motion to substitute to approve the Addendum VI state implementation plans for circle hooks with the exception of the Massachusetts for hire exemption

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion fails (5 in favor, 8 opposed, 2 abstentions, 1 null).

Main Motion

Motion to not exempt any state from putting in place the circle hook rules for bait fishing as specified in Addendum VI.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion passes (15 in favor, 1 opposed). Roll Call: In Favor – MA, NY, MA, RI, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA, NC, DC, PRFC, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – CT.

Move to nominate to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel Bob Danielson from New York.

Motion made by Ms. Davidson and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion adopted by consent.

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL (OCTOBER 23, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The ACCSP Coordinating Council met to elect a new chair and vice-chair and take action on ranked proposals to allocate funding for FY2021. The Council elected John Carmichael (SAFMC) as Chair, and Jason McNamee (RI) as Vice-chair. The Council and staff extended appreciation to Lynn Fegley (MD) for three years of leadership as Chair.

The Council opted to fund the FY2020 proposals as presented by the Advisory and Operations Committees. The Council discussed the increase in the ACCSP administrative grant and tradeoffs for funding across the areas of Partner projects vs. administrative costs, staff vs. contractor approach, and short-term vs. long-term benefits of program and project priorities. The Leadership Team will meet in the coming month to evaluate the administrative grant and carryover funds, and approaches to support coastal initiatives such as the SAFIS Helpdesk. The ACCSP Leadership Team will finalize the administrative grant budget and recommend alternatives for using any carry-over or additional funds to the Coordinating Council for consideration in February.

The Council will address the Operations Committee recommendations on future funding of maintenance projects under the step-down plan at the February Meeting.

The Council received brief highlights on committee and program updates, including completion of the Biological Resilience Project, partner coordination, and meaningful accomplishments in cybersecurity, data collection tools, Data Warehouse, and outreach. For more information, please contact Geoff White, ACCSP Director, at geoff.white@accsp.org.

Motions

Move to elect Mr. Carmichael as Coordinating Council Chair.

Motion made by Ms. Fegley and seconded by Ms. Lupton. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to elect Mr. Jason McNamee as Vice-chair.

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and second by Ms. Ware. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to fund the submitted ACCSP proposals as ranked in Average Ranking table of proposals with the exception of the Administrative Grant proposal. That the Leadership Team evaluate a detailed ACCSP Administrative Grant before approving the Administrative Grant. That the funds from savings be brought to the Leadership Team for ranking of priority then back to the Coordinating Council.

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion approved (18 in favor).

Move to adjourn.

Motion made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

BUSINESS SESSION (OCTOBER 23, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Business Session reviewed and approved the 2021 Action Plan, which outlines the Commission’s administrative and programmatic activities for next year. The Plan, which is guided by the Commission’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, will be available on the Commission’s website, www.asmf.org, under Guiding Documents early next week. By unanimous acclamation, the Business Session re-elected Patrick C. Keliher of Maine and A.G. “Spud” Woodward of Georgia the Commission Chair and Vice-chair, respectively. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Executive Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Motion to approve the 2021 Action Plan.

Motion by made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion passes.

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, move to nominate Mr. Keliher as Chair of ASMFC effective until the end of the next Annual Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore. Motion passes.

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, move to nominate Mr. Woodward as vice-chair of ASMFC effective at the end of the meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore. Motion passes.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (ISFMP) POLICY BOARD (OCTOBER 23, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The ISFMP Policy Board met to receive the Report from the Chair and an update from Executive Committee; consider dividing the species managed by the South Atlantic State/Federal Management Board into two new boards; determine the process for setting the 2021 coastal sharks specifications;

discuss a whelk workshop; consider letters from the American Lobster Board and the Atlantic Striped Bass Board; and receive an update on the Horseshoe Crab FMP Review.

Commission Chair Patrick C. Keliher from Maine opened up the Policy Board meeting with his Annual Report to the Commission. The Report will be included in the next issue of *Fisheries Focus* for those interested in reading the report in full. The Chair also presented the Executive Committee Report to the Board (see Executive Committee meeting summary earlier in this document).

Based on the growing number of species under the purview of the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board, the Policy Board agreed to divide its species among two newly created boards: a Coastal Pelagics Board, which will oversee the management of Atlantic cobia and Spanish mackerel, and a Sciaenids Board, which will oversee the management of spot, red drum, black drum, Atlantic croaker, and spotted sea trout. This division will allow each Board to provide the appropriate amount of time and attention to its respective species, without compromising its focus on other species due to time limitations. Additionally, given the expanding ranges of some species, the new Board configuration will allow more northern states to effectively engage on species management programs for which they have a declared interest. As part of the new board structure, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council be invited to join both Boards to ensure continued collaboration between state and federal management.

The Policy Board agreed to set the 2021 coastal sharks specification via an email vote after NOAA Fisheries has published a final rule. NOAA Fisheries is proposing a January 1 start date for all shark management groups, as well as an initial 36 shark possession limit for large coastal and hammerhead management groups with the possibility of in season adjustments.

Dan McKiernan updated the Board about recent efforts to reinstate a symposium to allow states to share information about whelk science and management. Virginia Sea Grant has offered to fund and facilitate a workshop for the states. While the pandemic significantly slowed planning for the workshop, progress is now being made to host a webinar with the states.

The Policy Board agreed to send two letters on behalf of the American Lobster Board. The first letter is to NOAA Fisheries and will request changes to how data is collected by NOAA for five of the lobster data elements, including (1) number of trap hauls in effort, (2) number of traps in water in effort, (3) traps per trawl in effort, (4) buoy lines in effort, and (5) number of buoy lines in the water (see the Lobster Board meeting summary for details). The second letter is to New York requesting the state implement all of the necessary regulations of the Jonah Crab FMP (see the Lobster Board meeting summary for details). The Chair of the Atlantic Striped Bass Board requested letters be sent to both Maine and Massachusetts detailing required changes with regards to each state's Addendum VI implementation plans given both states' circle hook exemptions were not approved by the Board. Both states agreed it was clear the actions they need to take and a letter was not necessary. The states will update the Atlantic Striped Bass Board at its next meeting of the changes made to their measures to meet the requirements of the FMP.

Lastly, the Board was informed a revised version of the Fishery Management Plan Review for the 2019 Fishing Year will be emailed to the Horseshoe Crab Board, Advisory Panel, and Technical Committees. One of the state compliance reports misreported biomedical collections for the 2019 fishing year. As a result, the total biomedical collections will decrease relative to what was presented to the Board

earlier in the week. An updated version of the FMP Review will be posted to the Commission's website on the Horseshoe Crab webpage.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to split the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board into a Pelagic Board and a Sciaenid Board.

Motion made by Mr. Cimino and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes by consensus.

Move to approve the 2021 coastal sharks specifications via an email vote after NOAA Fisheries publishes the final rule for the 2021 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishing season.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion passes by consensus.

Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Bell. Motion passes.