



*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful
restoration well in progress by 2015*

Episodic Events Set Aside Subcommittee Report

Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
October 28, 2013



Overview

- Board approved a 1% TAC set aside for episodic events through Amendment 2 (December 2012)
- Board tasked Subcommittee of New England states to further develop episodic events program (February 2013).
- Board approved an episodic events set aside pilot program for 2013 (May 2013)
- Review of pilot program at Annual meeting 2013



Eligibility

- Only the New England states (Maine through Connecticut) are eligible to participate in the set aside program
- Interested states must implement the following mandatory provisions as part of the eligibility requirements



Mandatory Provisions

- Must implement daily trip level harvester reporting submitted weekly to ASMFC
- Episodic event harvest must be restricted to state waters only.
- States must implement a maximum daily trip limit no greater than 120,000 pounds/vessel.



Qualification Process

- To qualify a state must demonstrate implementation of the mandatory provisions
- In August ASMFC issued a letter to the Board identifying Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island met the mandatory provisions and qualified to participate in the program.



Declaring Participation

- Once a state qualifies they must monitor their state landings to determine if an episodic event occurs.
- Episodic events shall be defined as any instances when a qualified state has reached its individual state quota, prior to September 1, and has information indicating the presence of unusually large amounts of menhaden in its state waters.
- If an episodic event is triggered, the state must declare to ASMFC by September 1 that it plans to begin harvesting from the set aside.
- States declaring participation in the episodic event program will not be eligible for *de minimis* status.



2013 Episodic Event Participants

- In August, Rhode Island declared participation in the program.
- Spotter pilot program showed large biomass levels beginning in May 2013 and continuing through July 2013, peaking at approximately 5 million pounds.
- Usually when menhaden occur in large abundance in spring and early summer they return in late summer and early fall



2013 Episodic Event Participants

- In August and September biomass has been averaging 800,000 to 1 million pounds in NB.
- However, with a 2 million pound biomass threshold, NB has remained closed to commercial harvest.
- In summary, RI observed high biomass in the spring and early summer, but that biomass did not return to NB in the late summer and fall as expected.
- As a result no directed landings from set aside.



Procedure for Unused Set Aside

- If an episodic event is not triggered by September 1
 - quota will immediately be rolled into the overall quota and redistributed to the states based on the historical allocation from 2009-2011.
- If an episodic event is triggered,
 - any unused set aside at the end of the calendar year will remain unused and will not be rolled over into the coastwide quota.
 - The justification for this measure is that Amendment 2 does not currently allow for quota rollovers because Atlantic menhaden is experiencing overfishing.



Set Aside Payback Provision


- Require that if the set aside is exceeded, any overages are reduced from the next season's episodic events set-aside.



Set Aside Pilot Program Review

- Board may change episodic events program through Board action or the adaptive management addendum process
- Consider postponed motion to initiate an addendum to fully develop the Episodic Event Program for 2014 and beyond
- Subcommittee recommends extending the pilot program as is because it was difficult to evaluate the effectiveness after only one year.



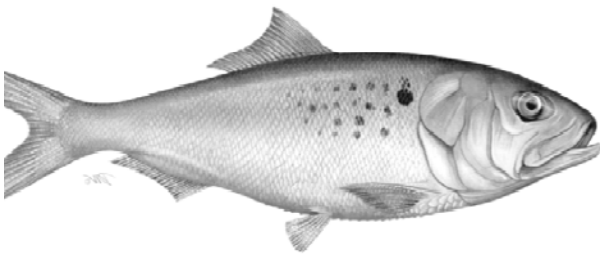


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Atlantic Menhaden

Stock Assessment Progress Report

October 28, 2013





Stock Assessment Progress Report

- Benchmark assessment scheduled for 2014 (SEDAR)
- 7 meetings so far (4 webinars; 3 in-person):
 - Established TORs
 - Preliminary discussion of alternative models
 - Preliminary review of datasets
 - Fishery dependent
 - Fishery independent
 - Life history parameters
 - Historical tagging project



Stock Assessment Progress Report

- Sept 17-18th meeting - life history parameters
 - Reviewed all age, length & weight data for evaluating growth and selectivity
 - Reviewed maturity and fecundity-at-age data
 - Discussed multiple methods for estimating natural mortality
 - Reviewed progress toward building tagging database and discussed potential analyses
 - Assigned task list for data workshop



Stock Assessment Progress Report

- Next steps:
 - 2014
 - January 13-16 – data workshop, location TBD
 - June – assessment workshop
 - December – peer review workshop (SEDAR)
 - 2015
 - February – Assessment results presented to Board



Stock Assessment Progress Report: BERP WG

- Ongoing task: Quantify the amount of Atl. menhaden biomass necessary to sustain the forage needs of striped bass, bluefish, and weakfish predators at their threshold biomass levels
- Reviewed Biological Reference Points for the Nutritional Status of Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass (Jacobs et al.).



Stock Assessment Progress Report: BERP WG

- Concluded that the science has the potential to evaluate multispecies or ecosystem-based management performance through establishing thresholds nutritional status of predators
- Nutrition reference points for striped bass have been developed for Chesapeake Bay.



Stock Assessment Progress Report: BERP WG

- The BERP WG and striped bass TC should outline a sampling to measure nutritional status on a broader scale.
- Consider measuring nutrition status as part of current fishery-independent monitoring as another indicator for management evaluation.
- This approach will be further examined at upcoming meetings in preparation for the 2014 menhaden benchmark assessment.