



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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## ASMFC Summer Meeting

August 4-6, 2015

The Westin Alexandria  
400 Courthouse Square  
Alexandria, VA  
703.253.8600

### Preliminary Agenda

*Please note: The agenda is subject to change. Bulleted items represent the anticipated major issues to be discussed or acted upon at the meeting. The final agenda will include additional items and may revise the bulleted items provided below. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.*

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 4

8 - 10 AM

#### Executive Committee

- Executive Director's Annual Review (**Closed Session**)
- Review Performance and Recommended Changes to Appeal Process
- Review Recommended Changes to the Commission Guidance Documents
- Review Recommended Changes to Advisory Panel and Law Enforcement Participation at Board Meetings
- Review Conservation Equivalency Policy
- Future Annual Meetings Update

10:15 - 11:45 AM

#### Atlantic Herring Section

- Provide Guidance to Plan Development Team on Revising Proposed Spawning Protection Measures of Draft Amendment 3
- Update on New England Fishery Management Council Actions

12:45 - 5 PM

#### American Lobster Management Board

- Review and Consider Acceptance of the 2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Panel Reports
- Discuss Need for Management Response to the Benchmark Assessment
- Discuss Possible Addendum Initiation to Prohibit All Mobile Gear in Closed Area II from June 15 - October 31
- Update on Lobster Trap Transfer Database
- Review and Consider Final Approval of Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan
- Discuss New England Fishery Observer Program (Tentative)

*continued, see SUMMER MEETING AGENDA on page 6*

## Upcoming Meetings

*The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as the deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.*

### Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III (NC)  
Chair

Douglas E. Grout (NH)  
Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal  
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield  
Science Director

Toni Kerns  
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#### **July 15 (1 PM)**

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Allocation Working Group Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar> for more details.

#### **July 16 (2 PM)**

ASMFC Weakfish Technical Committee Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar> for more details.

#### **July 22 (3 - 6 PM)**

ASMFC Jonah Crab Advisory Panel, Renaissance Providence Downtown, 5 Avenue of the Arts, Providence, RI.

#### **July 27 - 30**

ASMFC Weakfish Assessment Workshop, ASMFC, 1050 North Highland Street, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA.

#### **July 30**

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section Days Out Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar> for more details.

#### **August 4 - 6**

ASMFC Summer Meeting, The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, VA.

#### **August 10 - 13**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Midtown, 440 West 57th Street, New York City, NY.

#### **August 14 (9 AM)**

ASMFC Ecosystem Management Objectives Workshop Conference Call; go to <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar> for more details.

#### **August 25 - 27**

SEDAR Red Drum Assessment Review Workshop, Frances Marion Hotel, 387 King Street, Charleston, SC.

#### **August 31 - September 1 (8:30 AM - 5 PM both days)**

ASMFC Ecosystem Management Objectives Workshop, The Hotel at Arundel Preserve, 7795 Arundel Mills Boulevard, Hanover, MD.

#### **September 14 - 18**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Beach House Resort, 1 South Forest Beach Drive, Hilton Head Island, SC.

#### **September 14 - 18**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, committees and location to be determined.

#### **September 29 - October 1**

New England Fishery Management Council, Radisson Hotel, Plymouth Harbor, Plymouth, MA.

#### **October 6 - 8**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree Philadelphia Center City 237 S Broad St Philadelphia, PA.

#### **November 2 - 5**

Joint Annual Meeting of the ASMFC & GSMFC, World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort, 500 South Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, FL.

#### **December 1 - 3**

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME.

#### **December 7 - 11**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree by Hilton Oceanfront Hotel, 2717 W. Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC.



### ASMFC Charts a New Course for Atlantic Menhaden Management

While Atlantic menhaden are not big fish, their historical, economic and ecological importance along the Atlantic coast is sizable. The commercial menhaden fishery can be traced as far back as colonial times when Native Americans, who called menhaden munnawhatteaug, taught colonists to use the fish as fertilizer for corn. The Commission became involved with menhaden in 1942 at its first Annual Meeting where Commissioners discussed how fisheries production could support the war effort. For menhaden, those discussions centered on the development of a menhaden cannery for wartime consumption. Over the next 40 years, Commissioners would continue to monitor the status of the resource and the fishery. However, it was not until 1981, with the adoption of the first Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Menhaden, that Commissioners began to truly manage this resource. (Interestingly, this plan and the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP were the first two FMPs adopted by the Commission). Thirty-one years later Amendment 2 was adopted and instituted the first total allowable catch limit for menhaden.

Now on the heels of the 2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment, we are once again heading into a new era of Atlantic menhaden management. Traditionally, the Commission has managed this fishery with a focus on mortality and reproductive capacity. However, this approach does not directly take into account the ecological role of a forage species, like menhaden. At our 2015 Spring Meeting, Commissioners initiated Draft Amendment 3 to establish reference points to address menhaden's vital ecological role.

To initiate discussions on ecosystem objectives and allocation, the Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board (Board) established two working groups to identify issues and options for Board discussion and consideration as part of the amendment process. The first working group, composed of Board members, stakeholder representatives, and technical experts, is tasked with identifying potential ecosystem goals and objectives to aid in the development of ecological reference points. This multi-disciplinary group will have a planning meeting via webinar in early August and an in-person workshop on August 31 and September 1. The webinar will review topics to be covered, expectations, and workshop goals, as well as provide participants an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions on the process. It will also feature an ecosystem management case study from the Great Lakes region. The workshop will be facilitated by Dr. Michael Jones, who chaired the Peer Review Panel for the 2015 Atlantic Menhaden Benchmark Stock Assessment. Dr. Jones is knowledgeable of Atlantic menhaden science and management, and has expertise in ecosystem management in the Great Lakes region.

The second working group is comprised of a subset of Board members (see Board subgroup list below) and will focus on the issue of allocation. This working group is tasked with informing the Board as it develops options to be included in Draft Amendment 3. The first meeting of this working group, via webinar, is scheduled for July 15.

No management decisions will be formulated or acted upon by either working group. The meetings are a means to initiate discussions on ecosystem objectives and allocation, allowing for the identification of issues and options for Board discussion and consideration. All management actions must be approved by the Board at one of the Commission's four yearly meetings. In order to ensure transparency, the discussions of both working groups will be open to the public and interested stakeholders.

These workshops reflect the Commission's continued commitment to addressing the importance of Atlantic menhaden to the ecosystem and industry. To be successful, the process will require the involvement of all interested parties – managers, stakeholders, and scientists – who are committed to the sustainable management of this valuable resource. The Commission's commitment to developing ecological reference points represents an important step forward not only for menhaden, but for coastal fisheries management as a whole. Until recently, managers have not had the tools necessary to undertake a holistic view of fishery management. As with any major new initiative, Commissioners are going to allow adequate time to ensure they listen to their constituents and use the best available science to do what is right for the resource and the fisheries it supports.

#### Ecosystem Management Objectives Workshop Participants

##### Board Subgroup

Russ Allen (NJ)  
Bob Ballou (RI, Menhaden Board Vice Chair)  
Robert Boyles (SC, Menhaden Board Chair)  
Lynn Fegley (MD)  
Jim Gilmore (NY)  
Rob O'Reilly (VA)

##### Advisory Panel Subgroup

Ken Hinman (ecosystem)  
Jeff Kaelin (bait, AP Chair)  
Ron Lukens (reduction)  
David Sikorski (recreational)

##### Technical Representatives

Matt Cieri (ME, BERP Chair)  
Jason McNamee (RI, TC Chair)  
Amy Schueller (NMFS, SAS Chair)

##### Facilitator

Michael Jones (SEDAR 40 Review Panel Chair)

# Species Profile: Atlantic Sturgeon

## ASMFC Moves Forward on 2017 Benchmark Stock Assessment

### Introduction

For the past 25 years, the 15 Atlantic coast states, through the Commission, have sought to effectively manage Atlantic sturgeon throughout its range. With the approval of Amendment I to the Atlantic Sturgeon FMP in 1998, which implemented a 40-year coastwide moratorium on harvest, states committed to protecting this ancient species. Additionally, states have invested considerable resources to increase understanding of sturgeon biology and life history. Despite these efforts, in February 2012 NOAA Fisheries announced Atlantic sturgeon was added to the Endangered Species List. In response, the Commission has initiated a coastwide stock assessment to evaluate stock status, stock delineation, and bycatch.

### Life History

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) are ancient fish, dating back at least 150 million years. Historically, they have been found along the entire Atlantic coast from Labrador, Canada to St. Johns River, Florida. Atlantic sturgeon can reach lengths of over 14 feet, weigh over 800 pounds, and can live up to 60 years. They are also known to undergo extensive coastal migrations, which take them from the ocean into coastal estuaries and rivers to spawn once every two to five years.

Typically, sturgeon in the southern part of the species range mature faster and grow larger than those in the northern part of the range. Females reach sexual maturity between the ages of seven and 30, and males between the ages of five and 24. The number of eggs a female produces increases with age and size, which means older and larger females are more valuable to the population because they produce more eggs (up to eight millions eggs per spawning event) than younger, smaller females (estimated 400,000 eggs per spawning event). The oldest known sturgeon was estimated to be 60 years old.

Atlantic sturgeon are one of the largest and longest-lived anadromous fish in North America. Most juveniles remain in freshwater rivers from one to six years before migrating back out to the ocean. As mature adults, they return to their natal streams to spawn. Little is known about the movements of Atlantic sturgeon when they are at sea, and little is known about actual spawning locations. Sturgeon don't have teeth. Instead, they suck up prey using their downward projecting vacuum-like mouth. As juveniles, Atlantic sturgeon feed on flies, worms, shrimps, and small mollusks and crustaceans. As adults, they are opportunistic feeders and prey mainly on mollusks, snails, worms, shrimps and benthic fish. Very little is known about their natural predators.

### Commercial Fishery

Atlantic sturgeon have been taken for food by humans in North America for at least 3,000-4,000 years, and have supported commercial fisheries of varying magnitude since colonial times. The fishery was once considered second in value only to lobster. There are reports from Maine and Massachusetts from as early as the 1600s that cite sturgeon as an important fishery in those states. While sturgeon were primarily harvested for their flesh and eggs

### Species Snapshot

**Atlantic Sturgeon**  
*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*



#### Interesting Facts:

- Atlantic sturgeon fossils date back more than 150 million years. They were around throughout the Cretaceous period when dinosaurs roamed the earth.
- All 24 species of sturgeon can only be found in the Northern Hemisphere. Only Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon are found on the US East Coast.
- Sturgeon do not have teeth and swallow their prey whole.
- Rather than having true scales, the Atlantic sturgeon has five rows of bony plates known as scutes.
- Sturgeon are known to leap out of water and sometimes land in boats. It is not known why they do this. Always remember to wear your life jacket!
- Sturgeon are the largest and longest-lived anadromous fish native to North America

**Largest Recorded:** 14 feet long and 811 pounds, Canada

**Oldest Recorded:** 60 years old, captured from the St. Lawrence River

**Stock Status:** Overfished and not experiencing overfishing; listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2012



From Left: Matthew Breece and Dewayne Fox with a large female Atlantic sturgeon captured as part of Delaware State University's (DESU) Spring Sturgeon Sampling Program. The female measured 8.6 feet in total length and weighed 260 pounds. Photo (c) DESU.

(caviar from sturgeon eggs was considered a delicacy in Europe), other parts had commercial value as well. Sturgeon skin was made into leather for clothes and bookbinding. The swim bladder was used to make a gelatin that served as a clarifying agent in jellies, wine, beer, and glue. Swim bladders were also fashioned into windows for carriages.

In 1888, the U.S. Fish Commission reported that there was 7.3 million pounds of sturgeon caught on the East Coast. From 1950 through the mid-1990s, annual landings declined to between 100,000 and 250,000 pounds. In 1998 the Commission implemented a coastwide moratorium on the harvest of wild Atlantic sturgeon stocks, although many states had already closed their fisheries.

### Status of the Stock

Very little is known about the stock status of Atlantic sturgeon. Reliable data is difficult to obtain because many river systems have so few fish, and rivers with more fish are often not easily sampled. In 1998, the Commission completed a peer-reviewed coastwide assessment of the population, examining each river system where Atlantic sturgeon were historically found.

The assessment concluded that all systems held significantly less sturgeon than they did in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and very few signs of recovery were detected. As a result of the assessment, the Commission established a 40+ year coastwide moratorium through Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Sturgeon Fishery Management Plan.

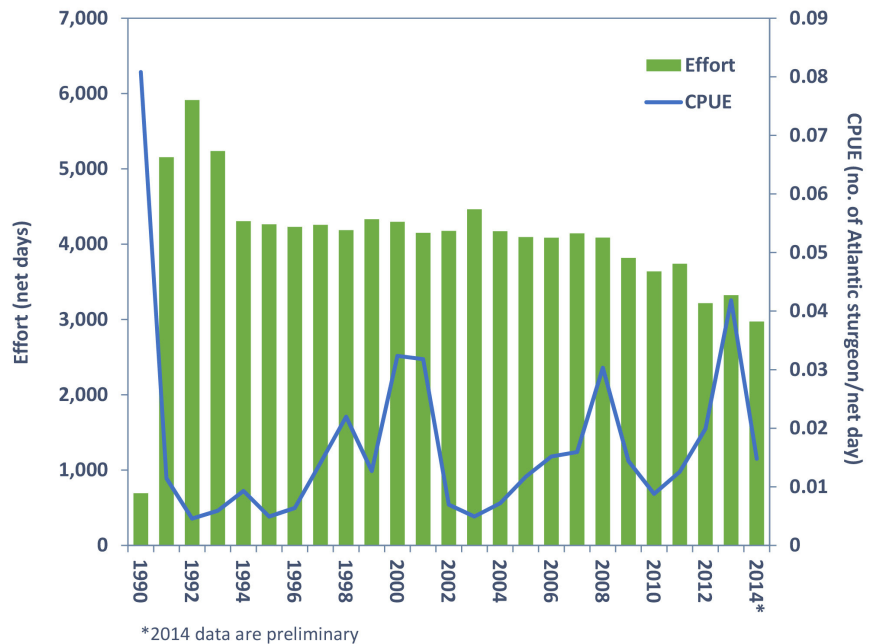
The accompanying graphs depict catch per unit effort (CPUE) for fishery-independent surveys conducted by North Carolina and New York. Both surveys have experienced significant fluctuations in recent years. However, in 2013, North Carolina's CPUE was the second highest value in the past twenty years. Further, the spike of juveniles seen in New York's survey are believed to be a direct result of New York's moratorium in 1997 and the concomitant increase of spawning fish in the Hudson River.

In 2014, the Sturgeon Board evaluated progress on the development of a coastwide benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic sturgeon to evaluate stock status, stock delineation, and bycatch. The assessment responds to the 2012 ESA listing of Atlantic sturgeon as threatened for the Gulf of Maine distinct population segment (DPS) and endangered for the remaining DPSs (New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina, and South Atlantic). In order to allow for the most comprehensive assessment, and based on the Atlantic Sturgeon Stock Assessment Subcommittee's (SAS) recommendation, the Board decided to set the completion date for 2017 so that the most recent data from studies currently underway can be incorporated. For example, several assessment approaches at the DPS or stock-level would become possible from the analysis of genetic samples currently underway at the US Geological Survey's

*continued, see ATLANTIC STURGEON on page 8*

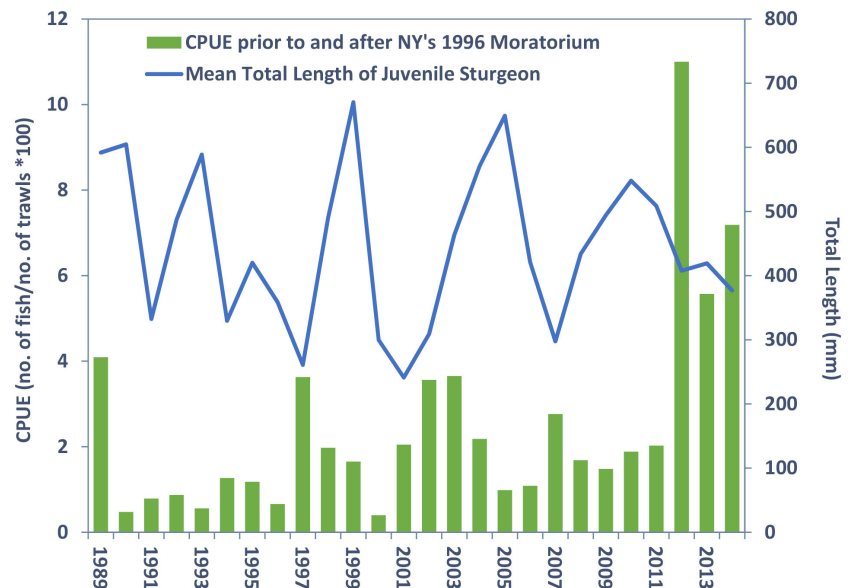
**Fishery-independent Catch Rates of Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon in Albemarle Sound**

Source: NC Division of Marine Fisheries, 2014



**Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) of Hudson River Juvenile Atlantic Sturgeon**

Source: Source: NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation with data from Hudson River Power Generating Companies Hudson River Monitoring Program, 2014



Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('90); Amendment 1 ('98); Addendum I ('01); Addendum II ('05); Addendum III ('06); Addendum IV ('12)

# Summer Meeting Agenda (continued)

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

- 8 - 8:45 AM **American Eel Management Board**
- Review and Consider Approval of Maine Eel Life Cycle Survey
- 9 - 10:30 AM **Tautog Management Board**
- Review and Consider Approval of the Draft PID for Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan
- 9 - 10:30 AM **Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Executive Committee**
- Status Report (Program and Committee Updates)
  - Independent Program Review Progress
  - APAIS Update
  - Governance Update
  - Executive Committee Membership SOPs
- 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM **ACCSP Coordinating Council**
- Status Report (Program and Committee Updates)
  - Independent Program Review Progress
  - Executive Committee Membership SOPs
- 1:15 - 2:45 PM **Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**
- Review Technical Committee Report on Likelihood of Achieving Fishing Mortality (F) Target with Final Implemented Regulations
  - Review Technical Committee Report on F Reference Points for the Coastal and Discard Fleets Consistent with Chesapeake Bay Specific F Reference Points
  - Review Progress on Management-level Projections Using the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Fleet Reference Points
  - Review and Consider Approval of the 2015 FMP Review and State Compliance Reports
- 3 - 4:30 PM **Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**
- Update on Atlantic Menhaden Working Group Progress on Ecosystem-based Management Goals and Objectives
  - Update on Atlantic Menhaden Working Group Progress on Allocation
  - Discuss Quota Rollover Provisions of Amendment 2

## THURSDAY, MAY 6

- 8 - 10 AM **Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board**
- Executive Committee Report
  - Review and Discuss Annual Performance of the Stocks
  - Review Management and Science Committee Report on Results of Forage Fish Management Provisions Survey
  - Review and Approve Revised LEC Report on Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Management Measures
  - Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Report
  - Review of Non-compliance Findings (if necessary)
- 10 - 10:30 AM **Business Session**
- Consider Approval of Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan
  - Review Non-compliance Findings (if necessary)
- 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM **South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board**
- Review and Consider Approval of the Draft Terms of Reference for the 2016 Benchmark Stock Assessments for Atlantic Croaker and Spot
  - Review the 2015 Traffic Light Analyses for Atlantic Croaker and Spot
  - Review and Consider Approval of the 2015 FMP Review and State Compliance Reports for Atlantic Croaker, Black Drum, and Red Drum
  - Discuss Extending the Provisions of Spanish Mackerel Addendum I for the 2015 Fishing Season and Possibly Beyond

## Public Comment Guidelines

With the intent of developing policies in the Commission's procedures for public participation that result in a fair opportunity for public input, the ISFMP Policy Board has approved the following guidelines for use at management board meetings:

For issues that are not on the agenda, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

For topics that are on the agenda, but have not gone out for public comment, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

1. Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of a meeting week will be included with the main meeting materials.
2. Comments received by **5 PM Tuesday, July 28, 2015** will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.
3. Following the Tuesday, July 28, 2015 5 PM deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for the management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, it will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

## Science Highlight: The Ins and Outs of Fish Passage

The Commission manages a number of diadromous species, including American eel, American shad, Atlantic sturgeon, Atlantic striped bass, and river herring (alewife and blueback herring). These species spend part of their lives in freshwater streams and rivers, and part in the ocean. They must migrate between these areas to complete their life cycles and maintain healthy populations. Migrating adults and the offspring they produce are forage for a variety of predators; many ecosystems depend on the seasonal influx of these fish. Aside from serving an integral role in various food webs, diadromous fish are culturally, recreationally, and commercially important.

The ability of migrating fish to pass man-made stream and river barriers is essential to the protection and restoration of these species and the habitats in which they live. Hundreds of thousands of artificial barriers have been constructed along the Atlantic coast to impound and redirect water for irrigation, flood control, electricity, recreation, drinking water, and transportation—all altering the natural features of rivers and streams. Fisheries managers, scientists, stakeholders, and the public at large have become increasingly concerned about the effects of barriers on fish and other aquatic species. Many barriers are obsolete and no longer serve their original purpose. These barriers often create impediments to fish migration, which is fundamental to the life history of diadromous species. As a result, some fish populations have significantly declined over their historical range.

### Elements of Fish Passage: Factors to Consider

The first known fishway was built in 17<sup>th</sup> century France, when bundles of branches were used to create steps in otherwise impassible channels. A few other reports of constructed fishways are sprinkled



Furnace Brook Fishway. Photo (c) CT DEEP

throughout European history, though by no means was fish passage implementation a common practice. Though the dilemma of fish passage along the Atlantic coast dates back to the construction of the earliest barriers built in our river systems, and escalated considerably during the Industrial Revolution, the issue went largely unrecognized until the mid-1900s when it attracted the attention of environmental activists. Since then, considerable work has been done to evaluate rivers and determine which barriers cause the most significant impediment to migrating fish. Funding is focused either on removing these barriers entirely, or on constructing passage technology to allow fish to traverse the barrier.

Passage technology is difficult to design, owing to differences between species' natural swimming styles and abilities. Conditions and flow types that encourage and aid movement differ depending on the target species; not all species are able to use the same passage design. Target species must be studied and considered in order to construct an effective fishway.

This fact comprises the center of the argument for additional fish passage research and more informed management: not all fish passage is created equal. The fact that fish passage is built to accommodate a barrier does not mean that fish are actually traversing that barrier. And the fact

that one species utilizes the passage technology does not necessarily mean that other species will be able to. Additionally, the implementation of fish passage over a barrier will not be useful if fish aren't encountering that barrier; there may be an obstruction further downstream or a degradation of water quality that is preventing species from even reaching that portion of the waterway.

The last point to consider is timeliness of passage.

Fish must not only cross the barrier, they must reach their spawning habitat without undue delay. Mating success depends on a variety of factors, including prey, predators, competitors, and environmental conditions. If fish are delayed by the passage technology, conditions may no longer be suitable to support spawning adults or new offspring, negatively impacting recruitment and sustainability.

### Current Technology

Passage technology takes many forms. Passage over a barrier is predominantly comprised of fish ladders and lifts. However, fish passing upstream often have difficulty finding the entrance of the passage structure. Conversely, fish passing downstream can get pulled into turbines by following the current before they find safe passage; for this reason fish screens are often implemented to redirect the path of migrating fish. Additional technologies must be developed to direct fish away from turbine intakes and toward passage structure entrances.

Additional information on upstream technology can be found in the Commission's Guidance Document on Upstream Fish Passage Technologies for Managed Species at <http://www.asmfc.org/habitat/fish-passage>.

*continued, see SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTS on page 10*

## Species Profile (continued)

Leetown Science Center in West Virginia. This past May, the SAS identified each task of the assessment from data needs to modeling approaches, and the time it will take to complete each task to ensure the benchmark assessment is completed on schedule. Currently, the Bycatch and Tagging Working Groups are developing methodologies for their respective parts of the assessment, while each state actively updates its data through the terminal year of the assessment.

### Atlantic Coastal Management

Atlantic sturgeon is managed through Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon (July 1998) and its subsequent addenda (Addendum I - IV). The primary measure of Amendment 1 was the implementation of a coastwide moratorium, as well as a prohibition on take, harvest, harassment and/or other actions that may cause the species harm.

### Endangered Species Listing

NOAA Fisheries has investigated the status of Atlantic sturgeon with regard to its listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) three times since the Commission's implementation of Amendment 1 in 1998. The first two status reviews, conducted in 1998 and 2005, concluded that listing was not warranted. The last status review, initiated in 2009 and finalized in 2012, declared the Gulf of Maine DPS as threatened and the remaining four DPSs (New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina and South Atlantic) as endangered (effective April 2012). The Status Review determined the most significant threats to the DPSs are bycatch mortality, poor water quality, lack of adequate state and/or federal regulatory mechanisms, and dredging activities. Additional stressors include habitat impediments and ship strikes. In December 2013, NOAA Fisheries published an Interim Final 4(d) Rule for the threatened Gulf of Maine DPS, which essentially provides the same protection as an endangered listing.

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, FMP Coordinator, at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org).

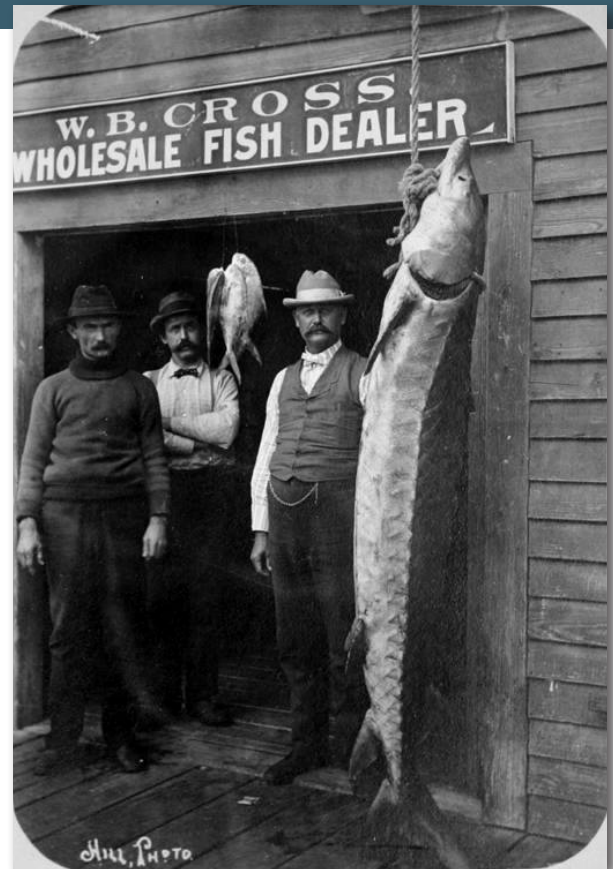


Image (c) NOAA Fisheries

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

### COMMISSIONERS



#### Thomas O'Connell

In late May, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan elected to make a number of changes to the leadership at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). One of those changes was the appointment of David Goshorn as the Acting Director for the Fisheries Service. David replaced Thomas O'Connell who served in that capacity since 2008. Tom began with DNR in 1993 as a fisheries biologist working on striped bass monitoring and management. Over his 22-year tenure, he served as the Fisheries Service's Legislative and Policy Program Administrator, Coastal Bays

Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, Oyster Restoration Program Manager, and Assistant Director for the Estuarine and Marine Fisheries Division. Tom became active in the Commission process in the mid-1990s, when he became the first Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for horseshoe crab. Working with the Management Board, Technical Committee and Advisory Panel, he oversaw the development and implementation of the FMP and Addenda I and II, which established the first state quotas for horseshoe crab. For the past seven years, Tom served as the state's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC, bringing his passion for and commitment to sustainable management of marine resources to all his interactions.

We are grateful for Tom's longstanding support of the Commission and wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

#### David Goshorn

Since 2013, David Goshorn has served as Maryland's DNR's Assistant Secretary for Aquatic Resources. In this role, he is responsible for monitoring and assessment of water and geological resources; policy and management of the recreational and commercial fisheries; restoration of the Chesapeake and coastal bays; boating services; and the Department's Integrated Policy and Review Unit.



*continued, see COMINGS & GOINGS on page 12*



### Research and Development

While there have been significant advancements in fish passage technologies over the past decade, more research is needed to increase efficiency and effectiveness of passage technologies. Several federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Biological Survey, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Energy are involved in research, development, and evaluation of new technologies. The U.S. Geological Survey studies population dynamics, ecohydraulics, physiology, and toxicology factors of fish passage, and has even constructed an indoor simulated river to conduct research. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service takes an application-focused approach, developing partnerships to implement individual passage projects.

To date, most efficiency studies rely on tagging methods, but only a small minority of fishways have been evaluated for efficiency. Diadromous fish are often collected by biologists below barriers during their annual migrations. The fish are fitted with tags and released to continue their upstream migration. Fish above the stream are detected or captured later and the number of tagged fish passing the barrier is compared to the number of fish initially tagged to estimate passage structure efficiency. Efficiency evaluations are of the utmost importance, not only to be sure that implemented passage technologies are meeting goals at a particular site, but also to gather more information on how to focus funding in ways that will make a maximum impact on fish population restoration.

### Commission Involvement

The Commission is particularly concerned about the migrations of Atlantic sturgeon, American shad, alewife, blueback herring, and striped bass to their spawning habitat, as well as access to long-term riverine growth areas for American eel. Without access to these habitats, it will be very difficult to restore populations of these very important diadromous species.

The primary objective of the Commission's Policy on Passage Efficiency for Diadromous Species is "to pass as many upstream migrants as needed to support natural

reproduction of anadromous species. The most effective method of improving fish passage is barrier removal, but when removal is not feasible, parties must work together to develop and implement fish passage technologies that will support restoration plans based on upstream habitat."

It is recognized that the percentage of migrants passed at each site will vary based on watershed-specific factors, including: location within the watershed, species, stream discharge, population size, and distribution of required habitat. It is also recognized that technical knowledge on effective passage design is more advanced for some species than others, and also that all parties should commit to continued improvement of passage efficiency as technology advances and as site-specific information improves the understanding of restoration in the watershed.

Working to restore both upstream and downstream fish passage is an evolving field that requires continued collaboration. In response to the growing concern about barrier impacts on diadromous species, the Commission created a Fish Passage Working Group, which continues to convene as needed to discuss developments and mitigate the negative effects of fish passage. Major accomplishments of this group include policy development on diadromous fish passage efficiency, a guidance document identifying effective approaches to upstream fish passage, and a guidance document to promote state involvement in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing projects. The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), endorses many projects, including dam removal, culvert replacement, and habitat restoration. Details can be found on the ACFHP Projects webpage at <http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/endorsedprojects/>.

### How You Can Help

Waterways along the Atlantic coast are littered with old dams, road culverts, and debris; keep your eye out for these obstructions. Observe local bridge culverts in particular, these should be positioned to allow fish to swim through a stream uninterrupted by an impassible

### What's in a Name?

Finding it hard to tell the difference between anadromous, catadromous and diadromous? Here's a breakdown of their word origins with some examples of species that fall under the categories.

**Anadromous**, derived from Latinized form of Greek 'ana' meaning 'up or back' and 'dramein' meaning 'to run,' is running upward or ascending up-river. It describes species that spend most of their adult lives at sea and return to freshwater to spawn. American shad, Atlantic striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, and river herring (alewife and blueback) are examples of Commission managed anadromous species.

**Catadromous**, derived from the Greek 'cata' meaning 'down, against, or back,' is running down river. It describes species that spend most of their adult lives in freshwater and return to the sea to spawn. American eel are the only catadromous species managed by the Commission.

**Diadromous**, derived from Greek 'dia' meaning 'through or passing through' is migrating between saltwater and freshwater. The category encompasses both anadromous and catadromous species.

"waterfall." If an impassible obstruction is encountered, report it to your state's wildlife service for remediation. Remember:

1. Removal of an unnecessary structure is the most effective option.
2. The construction of a fish passageway is a viable option for structures still in use. Often small, low-cost changes can be made to barriers to allow for fish passage, like adding spat rope to perched culverts.
3. Be sure that any new barriers scheduled for construction in waterways are designed to allow fish passage, and provide natural stream channel features where possible.

Finally, mark your calendars! The next Annual World Fish Migration Day is May 21, 2016; [www.worldfishmigrationday.com](http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com). Check for events near you, or hold your own.

## ACCSP Announces 2015 Funding Awards

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has allocated nearly two million dollars to its state and federal partners for new and ongoing projects to improve data collection for coastal fisheries in 2015. The following projects will be awarded funding.

- **Maine Department of Marine Resources** will receive (1) \$176,373 to continue the state's management of dealer and harvester reporting and (2) \$136,306 to continue portside commercial catch sampling and comparative bycatch sampling for Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, and Atlantic menhaden.
- **New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game** will receive \$74,423 to improve the American lobster biological and catch/effort data for Georges Bank and characterize seasonal egg aggregation in Closed Area II.
- **Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife** will receive \$79,719 to maintain and coordinate its fishery-dependent data feeds to ACCSP.
- **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** will receive \$62,928 to improve trip-level reporting and quota monitoring for state license participants in New York's marine fisheries.
- **New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife** will receive \$155,126 to continue electronic reporting and biological characterization of its commercial fisheries and process and age summer flounder and black sea bass otoliths.
- **North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries** will receive \$75,620 to update and enhance the data transmission methods to ACCSP.
- **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources** will receive \$165,824 to continue instituting a collection method for ACCSP commercial module in South Carolina.
- **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council** will receive \$183,200 to continue carrying out an observer program for the Mid-Atlantic and Rhode Island small mesh otter trawl fishery.
- **NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center** will receive \$250,831 to continue processing and ageing biological samples collected from U.S. South Atlantic commercial and recreational fisheries.
- **ACCSP Recreational Technical** will receive \$168,738 to increase at-sea sampling levels for the recreational headboat fishery on the Atlantic coast (New Hampshire through Florida).

For more information, please contact Ann McElhatton, Program Manager with ACCSP, at [info@accsp.org](mailto:info@accsp.org).

## ACCSP Promotes Julie Defilippi and Welcomes Heather Konell

In recognition of her many accomplishments and longstanding commitment to the ACCSP as Data Coordinator, **Julie Defilippi** was promoted to Data Team Leader this June. As Team Leader, Julie provides guidance for all ACCSP data-related activities, including oversight of commercial and biological data, data collection and warehousing projects, user interface projects, and data dissemination activities. She staffs the Biological Review Panel and the Bycatch Prioritization Committee, and works closely with Ed Martino, Information Systems Manager, on database development and maintenance. Julie has a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Biology from Boston University. Congratulations, Julie!



This July, ACCSP welcomed **Heather Konell** as its new Fisheries Data Coordinator. Heather's primary responsibilities include providing programming capabilities and system support required to develop and fine tune the data management system. She also assists users as they access the system and supports customer-related data intensive activities (e.g., stock assessment data workshop).



From 2012 to 2015, Heather worked with the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Bureau managing its Saltwater Recreational Registry Program database, which contains over 500,000 participants, and providing angler support and outreach. She also worked on various field surveys including the Delaware River Recruitment Survey, Ocean Trawl Survey, Delaware Bay Tagging Survey, and American Eel Survey giving her experience with identifying, measuring, and sexing many species. Heather has also worked with the Adventure Aquarium, Stockton University, Rutgers University Marine Field Station, and the Marine Mammal Stranding Center through various internships and positions, gaining experience with a variety of marine fauna and flora. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Marine Science with a concentration in Marine Biology and minor in General Biology from Stockton University in December 2014. Welcome, Heather!



*ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program focused on the design, implementation, and conduct of marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and the integration of those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org).*

# On the Legislative Front: FY2016 Appropriations Update

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the House of Representatives passed 2016 appropriations legislation for the Department of Commerce, including NOAA Fisheries. The legislation includes \$32 million for the “Councils & Commissions” line item, which provides funding for state fishery management programs and the Commission. The figure represents a decrease of \$738,000 from 2015. The legislation also eliminates funding for “Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act Grants,” which match state funding for fishery management programs. These grants received \$2.5 million in funding in 2014.

Meanwhile, on June 11<sup>th</sup> the Senate Appropriations Committee approved 2016 appropriations legislation for the Department of Commerce, including NOAA Fisheries. The “Councils & Commissions” line item would be increased by \$732,000 and “Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act Grants” would receive a \$500 increase under Senate funding levels. The Senate legislation is now awaiting approval of the full Senate.

Looking forward, Senate Democrats have vowed to filibuster all Republican spending bills until a budget deal is reached. Democrats are opposing any appropriations bill that adheres to the Republican budget framework, and are pushing for a multi-year agreement to increase sequester spending caps for defense and nondefense discretionary programs. The deadline to enact 2016 appropriations bills or a temporary extension is September 30, 2015.

Both the House and Senate appropriations bills contain policy riders that reference the Mid-Atlantic trawl survey for horseshoe crabs. While the specific language differs slightly, both lay the groundwork for resuming the survey. Since 2002, estimates of horseshoe crab abundance in the region were obtained from a trawl survey conducted through Virginia Tech aboard privately-owned commercial fishing vessels. From 2011 to 2013 the biomedical and fishing industries provided limited funding for increasingly smaller scale surveys. In 2014, the survey did not occur and barring further action no survey will be conducted in 2015. For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins at dtompkins@asmfc.org.

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NOAA Fisheries Operations, Research, and Facilities (in \$ thousands)		
	House	Senate
<b>Protected Resources Science and Management</b>		
Marine Mammals, Sea Turtles and Other Species	113,200	110,246
ESA Salmon	67,000	-
Species Recovery Grants	-	6,000
Atlantic Salmon	-	6,163
Pacific Salmon	-	60,000
<b>Protected Resources Science and Management Total</b>	<b>180,200</b>	<b>182,409</b>
<b>Fisheries Science and Management</b>		
Fisheries and Ecosystem Science Programs and Services	132,189	134,489
Fisheries Data Collections, Surveys and Assessments	168,000	163,271
Observers and Training	43,000	43,655
Fisheries Management Programs and Services	119,000	114,545
Aquaculture	-	7,000
Salmon Management Activities	35,500	30,200
Regional Councils and Fisheries Commissions	32,000	33,470
Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act Grants	0	3,000
<b>Fisheries Science and Management Total</b>	<b>529,689</b>	<b>529,630</b>
<b>Enforcement</b>		
	65,000	67,049
<b>Habitat Conservation and Restoration</b>		
	53,854	51,484
<b>Total, NMFS, Operations, Research, and Facilities</b>	<b>828,743</b>	<b>830,572</b>

## Preparations Begin for Atlantic Croaker and Spot Benchmark Stock Assessments

The Commission has begun work on the joint benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic croaker and spot. The spot assessment will be the first coastwide assessment for these species, while the Atlantic croaker assessment will build upon the last benchmark assessment conducted in 2010. The assessments will evaluate the health of Atlantic croaker and spot populations and inform future management of the species. The Commission’s stock assessment process and meetings are open to the public (with the exception of discussion of confidential data).

The Commission welcomes the submission of data sets that will improve the accuracy of the assessments. These include, but are not limited to data on growth, maturation, migration, genetics, tagging, recruitment, natural mortality, abundance/biomass, and fishery removals. An essential need is data to inform the stock

assessments of discards and bycatch in other directed fisheries (e.g., the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery). For data sets to be considered at the Data Workshop, the data must be sent in the required format, with accompanying methods description, to the Commission by August 1, 2015. All available data will be reviewed and vetted by the Atlantic Croaker and Spot Stock Assessment Subcommittee for possible use in the assessments. For those interested in submitting data, please contact Jeff Kipp, Stock Assessment Scientist, at jkipp@asmfc.org.

The Data Workshop will take place September 21-25, 2015 with the location to be determined. The assessment workshop and peer review will be conducted in 2016. For more information on the Atlantic croaker and spot stock assessment process, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org.

# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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*COMINGS & GOINGS continued from page 8*

David has worked at DNR since 1992, serving initially as a member of the Fisheries Service Striped Bass Project, and later as Chief of the Living Resource Assessment Program, where he was responsible for submerged aquatic vegetation restoration, fish community assessments, coastal bays monitoring, and harmful algal bloom response.

From 2007 through 2013, David directed the agency's Office for a Sustainable Future, with responsibility for moving DNR in particular and Maryland in general toward a sustainable future. A Towson native, David received his Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Bucknell University and his Ph.D. in Marine Biology from the University of Delaware. Welcome aboard, David!

## STAFF



### Ashton Harp

In late June, Ashton Harp joined the Commission as its new Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, coordinating management programs for

Atlantic herring, coastal sharks, tautog and winter flounder. Ashton comes to us having recently completed a Master of Public Policy/Environmental Policy *and* a Master of Science, Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology from the University of Maryland. Prior to pursuing her dual masters, Ashton worked at Conservation International as the Senior Seascapes Coordinator, where she focused on multiple projects including the evaluation of the supply chain of yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tuna

in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Ashton earned her Bachelor of Science, Business and Marketing Management from Virginia Tech. Welcome aboard, Ashton!

### Lead and Back-up Coordinators for Commission Managed Species

Species back-ups are available to help answer questions when the lead coordinator is out of the office or provide additional support during times of high activity.

Species	Lead Coordinator	Species Back-ups
American Eel	Mike Waine, <a href="mailto:mwaine@asmfc.org">mwaine@asmfc.org</a>	Megan Ware
American Lobster & Jonah Crab	Megan Ware, <a href="mailto:mware@asmfc.org">mware@asmfc.org</a>	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Atlantic Herring	Ashton Harp, <a href="mailto:aharp@asmfc.org">aharp@asmfc.org</a>	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Atlantic Menhaden	Mike Waine, <a href="mailto:mwaine@asmfc.org">mwaine@asmfc.org</a>	Ashton Harp
Atlantic Striped Bass	Max Appelman, <a href="mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org">mappelman@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Waine
Bluefish	Kirby Rootes-Murdy, <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Ashton Harp
Coastal Sharks	Ashton Harp, <a href="mailto:aharp@asmfc.org">aharp@asmfc.org</a>	Max Appelman
Horseshoe Crab	Kirby Rootes-Murdy, <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Megan Ware
Northern Shrimp	Max Appelman, <a href="mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org">mappelman@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Waine
Shad & River Herring	Kirby Rootes-Murdy, <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Ashton Harp
South Atlantic Species	Megan Ware, <a href="mailto:mware@asmfc.org">mware@asmfc.org</a>	Max Appelman
Spiny Dogfish	Ashton Harp, <a href="mailto:aharp@asmfc.org">aharp@asmfc.org</a>	Max Appelman
Sturgeon	Max Appelman, <a href="mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org">mappelman@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Waine
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	Kirby Rootes-Murdy, <a href="mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org">krootes-murdy@asmfc.org</a>	Megan Ware
Tautog	Ashton Harp, <a href="mailto:aharp@asmfc.org">aharp@asmfc.org</a>	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Weakfish	Megan Ware, <a href="mailto:mware@asmfc.org">mware@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Waine
Winter Flounder	Ashton Harp, <a href="mailto:aharp@asmfc.org">aharp@asmfc.org</a>	Mike Waine