

# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel Conference Call

*Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

*1:00 – 3:00 p.m.*

### Meeting Summary

#### 1) Welcome/Introductions

**Advisory Panel (AP):** Allen Burgenson, Benjie Swan, Brett Hoffmeister, George Topping, Jay Harrington, John Turner, Nora Blair

**ASMFC Staff:** Dr. Kristen Anstead, Dr. Mike Schmidtke

**Guests:** Dr. James Cooper

- M.Schmidtke assisted with introductions.
- A.Burgenson provided the agenda for the meeting.

#### 2) Update from Previous Board Meeting

- M.Schmidtke provided a review of the last Horseshoe Crab Management Board (Board) meeting.
- Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Subcommittee and Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee will meet in September in Arlington will discuss how to incorporate Catch Multiple Survey Analysis population estimates into the ARM model.
- Next Board Meeting: Summer Meeting, Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>, Arlington, VA

#### 3) Presentation of 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment

- Dr. Anstead provided an overview of the 2019 Horseshoe Crab Benchmark Stock Assessment.
  - (a) History
  - (b) Regional assessments
  - (c) Tagging data analysis
  - (d) Coast wide bait landings
  - (e) Biomedical mortality

(f) Next assessment

- Discards are believed to be a much bigger factor than previously thought.
- There were comments regarding the 15% mortality estimate and how some believed this was still very/too high.
- G. Topping thought the data was not robust as it did not record many juveniles, nor was it done at the times most crabs were available to be caught. Gear used does not catch crabs well.
- G. Topping asked if anyone had considered the impact of windmills on areas like the Carl Schuster reservation or crabs in general.
- J. Harrington made the suggestion of sending video to regulators. He had hours of video of crabs on the beach.
- J. Harrington also mentioned HSC as predators of shellfish.
- B. Swan made mention about wanting to make comments about Stock Assessment, K. Anstead stated that B. Swan's letter was included in the appendix of the Stock Assessment.

**4) Potential Management Responses and Outstanding Items Postponed until Stock Assessment Completion**

- Discussion regarding J. Cooper's memo to the biomedical group.
- General discussion regarding biomedical mortality data.
- B. Hoffmeister questions methods for reporting biomedical data within ARM. M. Schmidtke answers that data would be reported as an aggregate.
- Regarding addendum 8 the group unanimously agreed to keep status quo. Biomedical data should not be included in the ARM and if it were it should be reported as an added source of mortality.
- ARM review. M. Schmidtke presented some options for discussion including "double loop" and a shorter term option. No recommendation was made.

**5) Panel Discussion of Stock Assessment and Potential Management Responses**

- NY and CT have declining trends, but not harvesting near ASMFC quota. Overharvesting is not yet defined. Declining trends are evident.
- The group agreed that action including possible quota reduction, enforcement, lunar closures, and discards be discussed at the Summer Meeting.

- J. Turner asked if ASMFC should reduce NY's HSC quota.
- M. Schmidtke mentioned that that would be a discussion for the Board, one perspective would be that if NY is not overfishing so a reduction would potentially negatively affect the fishery. If already fishing at state quota (about half of ASMFC quota), would a harvest reduction really affect population?
- A. Burgenson stated that the decline may be an effect of crabs not being reported or of poaching.
- M. Schmidtke agreed that poaching would be a problem, suggested if that is the case to communicate with local law enforcement, suggested that environmental impacts may be a factor.
- N. Blair mentioned that bycatch could also be a significant factor, per assessment results.

#### **6) Panel Discussion of Rich Wong's Request for Use of Biomedical Data**

- There was a brief discussion regarding Richard Wong's desire to publish a paper outlining the Delaware Bay HSC population estimation methodology to include biomedical data.
- M. Schmidtke pointed out that the Rich still needs permission from many sources including all biomedical companies and fishery-independent data sources (Virginia Tech, New Jersey, and Delaware).
- A. Burgenson pointed out it was great to have good news for a change.
- B. Swan suggested that this was a discussion to be held privately among the companies and not an AP call. Most agreed and the discussion ended.

#### **7) Other Business/Adjourn**

- No other business was discussed.
- Adjourned approx. 3:30pm