



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Shad & River Herring Technical Committee Call Summary

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Technical Committee Members: Brad Chase, Ken Sprankle, Mike Brown, Mike Dionne, Bryant Bowen, Brian Neilan, Genine Lipkey, Bill Post, Joe Swann, Jeremy McCargo, Eric Hilton, Holly White, Phil Edwards, Jacque Benway Roberts, Ruth Hass-Castro, Bob Adams, Johnny Moore, Reid Hyle, Chad Holbrook

ASMFC Staff: Jeff Kipp and Ashton Harp

The Shad and River Herring Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call to review sustainable fishery management plans (SFMP) from Florida (shad), Georgia (shad) and South Carolina (blueback herring). Each SFMP has been updated (from the original version that was implemented in 2010/2011) to include recent data and new sustainability benchmarks, if necessary.

The next SFMPs to be reviewed by the TC are Potomac River Fisheries Commission (shad) and South Carolina (shad). The states will submit the SFMP by **June 20, 2017** and the TC will convene via conference call in early July to review.

1. Review of the Florida SFMP for Shad

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) submitted an updated SFMP for recreational harvest of America shad in the St. Johns River. The plan includes recent data and requests to maintain the existing recreational management measures from the 2011 SFMP. There are no commercial fisheries operating in state waters that take shad deliberately or that are likely to take shad as bycatch.

The plan includes the existing sustainability benchmark of fishery independent spawning stock index biomass. The index is based on electrofishing response rate. The spawning stock index has been at the 25th percentile (i.e. the management trigger) for two consecutive years following several years with values above the median. This warrants caution but no action at this time.

The plan adds a new JAI-based benchmark. The JAI has the potential to capture recruitment issues stemming from habitat and water quality changes. Management action is triggered if there are three consecutive years below the 25th percentile.

Reid Hyle (FWC) reviewed the details of the plan with the TC and responded to TC questions, summary below:

- Current there are two spawning stock indices based on two different portion of the St. Johns River. Is it possible to combine the indices into one index to reduce variability or is it possible to standardize the indices with a GLM?
 - The river discharge is fairly stable from year-to-year. Although the very high water in 2015/16 shifted the spawning grounds and resulted in higher catches downstream. If the river is high then catches are low because shad transit the area very quickly, and then they stay in the estuary regardless of what is happening upstream.
 - For the adult indices, it could be combined into one index. However, the river stretch (278-298) was the primary index because that is where the fishery has traditionally been. However, the river in this stretch is wide and deep, which may be the reason for low catches via the electrofisher. A secondary sampling area (314-358) was added (hence the second index) and it has become the primary index.
- **If the index is standardized by discharge then there may be different trends. Would you consider for the next SFMP?**
 - **Yes, FWC will consider.**
- Can you summarize the sustainability benchmarks and associated management triggers into an overview table?
 - Yes.

The TC recommends the Board approve the Florida SFMP.

2. Review of the Georgia SFMP for Shad

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources submitted an updated SFMP for recreational harvest of America shad on the Altamaha and Savannah River. The plan includes a CPUE benchmark for the Altamaha River. The TC requested a secondary benchmark based on JAI or biological data.

The Savannah River did not include a sustainability benchmark—Georgia voiced that it would be included in the South Carolina Shad SFMP. The TC requested the measures that are in the SC plan be included in the GA plan for the Savannah River. In addition, it was noted that Georgia has an 8 fish creel limit which applies to all Georgia rivers. The TC requested all rivers that allow harvest be included in the SFMP. Alternatively, as required in Amendment 2, Georgia can restrict harvest for rivers that do not have a SFMP.

The TC requests Georgia modify the SFMP based on the TC recommendations.

3. Review of the South Carolina Blueback Herring SFMP

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources submitted an updated SFMP for commercial and recreational harvest of blueback herring. The plan includes recent data and requests to maintain the existing management measures from the 2010 SFMP.

Bill Post (SC DNR) reviewed the details of the plan with the TC and responded to TC questions, summary below:

- How is the Pee Dee oxbow lake regulated?
 - One can fish anywhere along the Pee Dee but most of the fishing takes place in the oxbow lake via gillnets.
- Is there age data for the Santee?
 - Yes, but it is not presented because the benchmark was not changed. They have age data from 2009-2015.
- The scaling value was derived from mark-recapture during 1986-90. The minimum population numbers were small, so how good was the passage data in that period and is there anything presently that could affect this?
 - There is not 100% passage at the St. Stevens fish lift so it represents a minimum population estimate for the Santee River System. SC DNR believes more fish can pass, but they don't have another estimate to use.
 - **TC recommends a second sustainability benchmark for the next SFMP, potentially based on biological triggers.**

The TC recommends the Board approve the South Carolina SFMP.