



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Shad and River Herring Management Board  
Cc: Shad and River Herring Technical Committee

**FROM:** Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel

**DATE:** October 26, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Summary of Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel Conference Call

The Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel (AP) met via conference call and webinar on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to review the results of the 2020 American Shad Benchmark Assessment and the preliminary Technical Committee (TC) recommendations for improving shad stocks.

**AP Members in attendance:** Pam Lyons Gromen (Chair), Alison Bowden (MA), Byron Young (NY), Jeff Kaelin (NJ), Edward Hale (DE)

**ASMFC Staff:** Caitlin Starks, Jeff Kipp

**Other:** Brian Neilan (TC Chair), Allison Colden

Jeff Kipp presented an overview of the 2020 American Shad Benchmark Stock Assessment, including a description of methods and results for each system. The focus was on systems identified as having unfavorable stock status determinations, and systems with known fisheries where stock status was unable to be determined.

Next, Caitlin Starks presented a summary of the preliminary TC recommendations to address the Board task assigned in August 2020: identifying potential paths forward to improve shad stocks given the results of the stock assessment. At their last meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>, the TC agreed that each TC member should submit a written response to the stock assessment findings for systems within their jurisdiction, including suggestions for management, monitoring, and/or restoration efforts that would improve those stocks. The TC will meet to review these responses and develop consensus recommendations in December, 2020.

### AP Discussion

The AP provided several comments related to the assessment. First, Jeff Kaelin expressed concern that shad mortality in the ocean intercept fishery is likely overestimated. He suggested incorporating data from the shoreside monitoring program performed by the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries in the next assessment to improve information on ocean bycatch.

Ed Hale inquired about the availability of genetic data to characterize stock composition in the Delaware Bay mixed-stock fishery and coastwide. Staff acknowledged that while there have been more efforts to collect genetic data in the Delaware system, historical data is not available to assess how the stock proportions in the Delaware Bay fishery have changed over time, and that the US Geological Survey is starting a project to establish a genetic repository for alosines along the Atlantic coast.

In addition to genetic data, AP members noted several other data gaps they feel are creating big sources of uncertainty for the stock assessment: recreational landings information, bycatch in inshore and coastal fisheries, and environmental information like climate, streamflow, and water quality. For example, Allison Bowden commented that in New England significant droughts have caused water in a number of productive systems to be held back for water supply, which in turn means the fish are unable to emigrate from the systems. Streamflow has a big effect on shad and should be considered as a factor contributing to depletion.

Specific to the Delaware Bay, Ed Hale commented that he thinks the surveys used to estimate mortality in Delaware Bay had some serious issues. The Smithfield Beach Gill Net Survey is used to harvest broodstock for a Pennsylvania stocking effort that has inconsistent levels of effort and targets females, and the Lewis Haul Seine Fishery is more of an ecotourism effort than a scientific mission. The Lehigh River Electrofishing Survey occurs on a dammed river at two locations > 2.5 miles upriver on a single day in mid-June. Therefore he felt that these surveys did not do an effective job in providing information worthy of assessing mortality or stock status.

Related to the TC recommendations, the AP members on the call supported the TC approach to developing system-specific recommendations, but noted that some recommendations at the coastwide level should also be considered such as genetic sampling of ocean bycatch. The AP also supported the TC's ongoing efforts to identify monitoring gaps and recommend changes to the monitoring requirements under Amendment 3. They highlighted the need for better information on inshore bycatch and juvenile mortality, which could be impacting the stocks.

Pam Lyons Gromen noted that in the assessment report shad were classified as highly vulnerable to climate change, and she would like to see recommendations on how management can address this issue.

Finally, the AP requested to convene for another meeting to review the final TC recommendations related to the Board task before the next Board meeting.