



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmf.org

MEMORANDUM

July 6, 2020

Tautog Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS)

Meeting Summary

Attendees: Coly Ares (RI; Chair), Craig Weedon (MD; Vice-Chair), Lindy Barry (NJ), Sandy Dumais (NY), Dave Ellis (CT), Alexa Kretsch (VA), Sam Truesdell (MA), Scott Newlin (DE); Jacob Kasper (SAS, LIS) and Alexei Sharov (SAS, DMV)

Staff: Katie Drew and Kirby Rootes-Murdy

The Commission's Tautog Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call on Wednesday, July 1 to discuss the following items:

- 1) Review Stock Assessment Update Schedule
- 2) Review SAS membership
- 3) Review of Data Submitted; Objective: Review Data; Ask questions of states (as needed); Assign tasks/analysis
- 4) Update on Commercial Tagging Program; Objective: Get feedback from states on implementation of tagging program
- 5) Any other business

Call Summary and Recommendations:

1. Review Stock Assessment Update Schedule

The schedule was briefed in detail by Dr. Drew with the milestones and projected due dates (Table 1). The current goal is to complete the the Stock Assessment Update in time to be presented to the Board by the 2021 Annual Meeting. There will be multiple check-in calls to track progress throughout the year. The group agreed that only regional assessments would be conducted this year (MARI, Long Island Sound, etc), unless the Board requests the coastwide assessment to completed as well. The main argument for not completing the coastwide assessment is that it is not used in managing tautog currently. Staff will follow up with Board Chair. If the MRIP 2020 data is delayed, the group discussed the potential need to push the due date to February 2022 to ensure a complete assessment. The 2020 data is anticipated to be problematic due to the lack of MRIP field sampling this spring. Sampling was suspended by the states due to COVID19. There will be waves without field sampling, and MRIP is waiting for the final situation to convert effort into catch, not sure how extensive the gap filling of missing catch data will be in 2020. States also closed recreational fishing and had subsistence fishing

exemptions that will affect the effort survey. States will need to contribute towards a 2020 template for updated COVID regulations.

Table 1.

| Milestone | Date |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ✓ TC planning call | January 13, 2020 |
| ✓ TC COVID-related planning call | April 7, 2020 |
| ✓ State data through 2019 submitted | June 15, 2020 |
| ✓ SAS call to review data submission, assign tasks | End of June/early July 2020 |
| New MRIP estimates incorporated into ASAP inputs through 2019 (2017?) | Mid-September 2020 |
| Continuity run through 2017 completed (i.e., with uncalibrated MRIP data) | Late October 2020 |
| Preliminary ASAP runs with new MRIP data through 2019 to identify model performance issues | January 2021 |
| 2020 data submitted | May 1, 2021 |
| ASAP runs with final data completed | July 1, 2021 |
| Rough draft of assessment report to SAS | August 3, 2021 |
| SAS call to review/approve draft assessment report | Week of August 17, 2021 |
| Draft assessment report distributed to TC | September 7, 2021 |
| TC call to review/approve draft assessment report | Week of September 21, 2021 |
| Final assessment report to Board materials | October 5, 2021 |
| Assessment update presented to Board | Week of October 19, 2021 |

3. Review SAS membership

SAS membership by region is listed in Table 2. The TC members must be ready and available to assist the SAS modeling leaders.

Table 2.

| Region | SAS Members |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| MA-RI | Coly Ares, Sam Truesdell |
| LIS | Jacob Kasper |
| NJ-NYB | Lindy Barry |
| DMV | Alexei Sharvo |
| Staff | Katie Drew and Kirby Rootes-Murdy |

4. Review of Data Submitted; Objective: Review Data; Ask questions of states (as needed); Assign tasks/analysis

Dr. Drew discussed what was received, what is missing and any caveats about the data (Tables 3 and 4). The primary focus for relevant data for completing the stock assessment update are

fishery independent indices, separate sampling from MRIP commercial sampling and the age length data. Everything was submitted for the MARI Region, we are missing the CT data for the LIS Region, and we have the NY data for LIS and NJ-NYB Regions. MD and VA submitted the age length data; DE has not. CT, DE and some NJ ages for 2018 and 2019 have not been completed. The NY Head Boat Data was submitted but not updated. NY will no longer conduct this separately as they have a robust MRIP sampling team covering head boats, shore side and ramp locations. DE collected but has not aged their samples and will move up the priority, hopefully complete within two weeks. CT has a backlog of ageing samples and envision completion in less than two weeks. The SAS can focus on the MRIP transition and place the catch-at-age on the back burner for now. We have to recognize this is a crazy year on what we can physically do yet need to keep ageing on our radar. MRIP ALS data has been received through 2019, which is used to characterize the B2 size distribution. We have the TC commercial data to make sure we and ACCSP are on the same page in regards to commercial landings. NY has other weight data to submit. People did a good job flagging data on spreadsheets. Dr. Drew will create a master spreadsheet with all the biological data for developing the age length keys for the most recent years and the coast to allow for borrow across regions to fill sampling gaps. This data will be given to the regional leads and the coast wide data will be available to all regions to build their own regional age length keys. The remainder of the data prep tasks were discussed and volunteers were appointed (Table 5). The SAS will be looking for TC help for regional analysis. The Maryland SAV Seine Survey and the Delaware Ventless Trap Survey were discussed and identified to be listed in the research priorities and be considered for inclusion in the next stock assessment. A group call will be scheduled this August to check on progress of task 1 (Recreate catch-at-age with new MRIP numbers (1982-2015)) and give us the ability to do a continuity run. The remaining tasks (2-5) are due in Mid-Dec at the latest (Table 5).

Table 3.

| Region | State | Additional Data Sets | Submitted |
|--------|-------|--|-----------|
| MARI | MA | MA DMF Spring Trawl Survey | Yes |
| | RI | RI Fall Trawl Survey | Yes |
| | | RI Narraganset Bay Seine Survey | Yes |
| LIS | CT | Long Island Sound Trawl Survey | No |
| | | Volunteer Angler Survey Length Frequency | No |
| | NY | Peconic Bay Trawl Survey | Yes |
| | | Western Long Island Sound Seine Survey | Yes |
| | | NY Head Boat Sampling Length Frequency | No |
| NJ-NYB | NY | Western Long Island Seine Survey | Yes |
| | | NY Head Boat Sampling Length Frequency | No |
| | NJ | NJ Ocean Trawl Survey | Yes |
| DMV | DE | NA | NA |
| | MD | | |
| | VA | | |

Table 4.

| Region | State | Age Length Data Submitted |
|--------|-------|---------------------------|
| MA-RI | MA | Yes |
| | RI | Yes |
| LIS | CT | No |
| | NY | Yes |
| NJ-NYB | NY | Yes |
| | NJ | Yes** |
| DMV | DE | No |
| | MD | Yes |
| | VA | Yes |

Table 5.

| Analysis Required | MA-RI | LIS | NJ-NYB | DMV | Due date |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------|
| Recreate catch-at-age with new MRIP numbers (1982-2015) | Coly Ares, Sam Truesdell | Jacob Kasper | Lindy Barry | Alexei Sharov | Mid-Sep |
| Develop regional ALK for 2016-2019 | | | | | Early Dec |
| Develop catch-at-age for 2016-2019 | | | | | |
| Standardize FI indices through 2019 | | | | | |
| Standardize MRIP indices through 2019 | Katie Drew | | | | |

5. Update on Commercial Tagging Program; Objective: Get feedback from states on implementation of tagging program

A state-by-state roll call update was conducted by Kirby Rootes-Murdy, starting in the south (Table 6). The next Board meeting will likely be end of August or beginning of September. The Board will discuss implementation of the commercial tagging program in 2020, gather feedback, and identify the best approaches to implement the program coastwide in 2021. In planning for 2021, the Commission is looking to the states to coordinate and order new tags from National Band and Tag; Kirby will coordinate with National Band and Tag to ensure a uniform tag is used again in 2021. Staff reiterated the need for state agencies to be the points of contact with National Band and tag and not allow individual fishermen to make the tag order with supplier. The feedback received was a suggestion for a hole in the handle in the applicator to tie it down. Going forward we are looking at lessons learned and full implementation in 2021.

Table 6.

| Region | State | Commercial Tagging Update |
|--------|-------|--|
| MA-RI | MA | Season does not open until Sep 1, tags in New Bedford, will distribute about July 1. |
| | RI | Tagging was planned to commence on Apr 1, delayed and commenced May 1, need more tags than the planned buffer limit, would like to order directly with supplier rather than bulk order through ASMFC |
| LIS | CT | Plan to implement Apr 1, suspended program, falling in line with NY, still questionable how to implement, probably push to 2021 |
| | NY | No tags distributed, plan to use 2020 tags in fishing year 2021 |
| NJ-NYB | NJ | Tagging commenced on Jan 1, season ended May 1, reduced market and low activity in mid-Mar, season closed until Sep 19, some fishing may need additional tags, no issues |
| | VA | Tagging commenced on Jan 1, no issues |
| DMV | DE | Tagging commenced on Jan 1, no issues |
| | MD | Tagging will commence 16 July onward as planned, no issues |
| | VA | Tagging commenced Jan 1. During the COVID19 shutdown, the tagging / permit requirement was waived through the open season. The requirement will be in effect again this Oct. Currently mailing and making appointments for tags, no issues |

6. Any other business

Discussed the attendance of the next meeting, regarding SAS members only or SAS and TC members. Planning including the TC on next call to address any outstanding data issues before we switch to SAS only, however, any TC member is allowed to listen in on future SAS calls. A poll will be coming for a date in August. State-by-state fishery independent survey progress in 2020 was mentioned, and the Commission has been tracking this issue. Definitely something, we need to deal with down the road.