ASMFC
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Atlantic Herring Section Approves Addendum II: *Splits Area 1A TAC on a Seasonal Basis*

The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section has approved a split season allocation of the annual total allowable catch (TAC) for the inshore Gulf of Maine or Management Area 1A. The Section met in Danvers, Massachusetts, on February 28, 2002, to review the public comments received for draft Addendum II and give its final approval of the addendum. This action mirrors that taken by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) in its Framework 1 which was implemented for federal waters earlier this year.

The Section took this action in an attempt to avoid early closures to the herring fishery in Area 1A, as has been the case for the last two years. The early closures have been attributed to two factors: (1) the harvest capacity (number of vessels in the fishery) exceeds the Area 1A TAC; and (2) the lower cost of harvesting herring from near shore areas during the peak demand period creates a "derby-style" fishery.

The overall 2002 Area 1A TAC of 60,000 metric tons (mt) will be divided into two parts with 6,000 mt available from January 1 through May 31, 2002. The remaining 54,000 mt will be available for the rest of the 2002 season, plus any amount left from the first season. Addendum II requires the annual review of the seasonal allocation, including the actual amounts for each season determined at the same time the annual specifications are set by the Section in conjunction the Council's process.

Map of Atlantic Herring Management Areas

Addendum II also provides guidelines for Internal Waters Processing (IWP) applications and deadlines for their submission to the states and to the Commission. Applications will be due to the states by May 1 of each year and the states will submit them to the Commission by May 15. Following a review by the Section, the Commission will provide recommendations to the governors of the individual states on or before August 15. Copies of Addendum II are available by contacting Laura Huggins, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400 or <lhuggins@asmfc.org> or via the Commission's webpage at www.asmfc.org.

For more information, please contact Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, or jdesfosse@asmfc.org.

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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 a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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John I. Nelson (NH), Vice-Chair
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Upcoming Meetings

4/16 & 17:
ASMFC Habitat Committee, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Annapolis, Maryland.

4/18 (10:00 AM - 5:00 PM):
ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; 800/465-4329.

4/19 (9:00 AM - 4:00 PM):
ASMFC American Lobster Technical Subcommittee, Durham, New Hampshire.

4/21 - 24:
58th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine; http://www.mefishwildlife.com

4/22 - 26:
ASMFC Advanced Stock Assessment Training, Holiday Inn Brownstone, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina; (919) 828-0811.

4/23 - 25:
National Marine Fishereies Service Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team, Holiday Inn - Inner Harbor, 301West Lombard Street, Baltimore, Maryland; (410)685-3500.

4/30 (10:00 AM - 4:00 PM):
ASMFC Tautog Technical Committee, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; (800) 465-4329.

4/30 - 5/2:
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Omni Hotel, Newport News, Virginia.

5/7 (9:30 AM - 5:00 PM):
ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Techincal Committee, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; (800) 465-4329.

5/14 & 16:
New England Fishery Management Council, Samoset Resort, Rockland, Maine.

5/20 - 23:
ASMFC Meeting Week, Watergate Swissotel, 2650 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington DC. (see pages 4, 6 & 7).

From the Executive Director's Desk

Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better. -- King Whitney, Jr.

By now we all know that change is about the only thing that is constant in life; it sometimes causes sadness and yet it always brings new opportunities and challenges.

So now we must say farewell to the venerable Richard H. Schaefer. On April 3rd the last of the folks that I came in with is wisely retiring while he can still enjoy the freedom that comes from casting off the constraints of a 9-5 job. Dick spent ten years with the New York State Conservation Department (working with Irwin Alperin!) and then 30 years at the National Marine Fisheries Service. Over that time, he consistently worked with the Commission and the states to insure the conservation and sound management of our interjurisdictional fisheries. Congratulations on a well-deserved retirement, Dick. We are honored to have partnered with you over the years, and wish you fair winds and following seas. You will be missed.

The month of April also brings to Washington, in addition to the spectacular cherry blossoms bursting out all around town, the Commission's fourth Executive Director, Vince O'Shea. Vince spent 10 days in Washington in February, getting to know the staff, Commissioners and observing the Commission's February meeting week. And, he's still really enthusiastic about his new job!! Seriously, it was a very productive ten days – We had all heard Vince's name since the middle of January so it was good to put a face with a name and begin the process of getting to know each other. Vince spent two very full days in the office meeting with the entire staff. The staff agreed that it was time well spent and we now have an idea of what to expect from Vince O'Shea.

While here, Vince also had the opportunity to see ASMFC in action during the Commission's February meeting week. He came to meeting week to observe, and by the end of the week he had concluded that he had made the right choice in accepting the position of Executive Director. He wanted to work with a relevant organization and found out that, indeed, ASMFC is in the forefront of Atlantic coastal fisheries management. He is looking forward to the challenge of heading up an organization that does not need to be fixed, and he was impressed with the competence and expertise of the staff. Vince will seem like a veteran when the spring meeting rolls around in May! Welcome aboard Vince! We are looking forward to working with you.

Speaking of the Spring Meeting, which is right around the corner (May 20-23), we have a pretty packed agenda. Beginning with the Lobster Board Monday morning and ending with the Striped Bass Board on Thursday, we will cover a lot of ground in between! The Management & Science, Law Enforcement and Advisory Committees will conduct their semi-annual meetings, several Advisory Panels will be meeting, and there will be an important workshop discussing the pros and cons, from a coastwide perspective, of introducing Asian oysters into the Chesapeake Bay. We will also be honoring this year's recipients at the Commission's Fourth Annual Awards of Excellence Reception. In addition to several Awards of Excellence, we will be presenting a Chair's Special Award and are not certain which night the honoree will be available, so please reserve Monday and Tuesday nights for this reception.

I am pleased to report that our new Law Enforcement Coordinator, Mike Howard, is on board and has hit the ground running. He is very enthusiastic about this challenge and has many great ideas. Mike can be reached at <mhoward@asmfc.org>, and will be attending all of May meeting week. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Tom Meyer for his outstanding work with the Law Enforcement Committee over the past several years. You did a great job, Tom.

Additionally, I'd like to say welcome aboard to Maury Osborn, the new director of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). She started work on April Fool's Day ☺ and she too is very enthusiastic about her new responsibilities. We are confident that Maury will do great things with the ACCSP.

Finally, congratulations to Susan Shipman, who began her new job as Director of the Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources on Monday, April 1. We are all very happy for and proud of you, Susan.

It's quite clear that change is inevitable and from the examples of change here, it's not really a bad thing!

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
May 2002 Meeting Week

May 20 - 23, 2002

The Watergate Swissotel
2650 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC
(202)965-2300

Preliminary Agenda*

*Dates and times are subject to change up to the times meetings are held

Monday, May 20, 2002

10:00 AM – Noon **Management and Science Committee/Habitat Aquaculture Subcommittee**

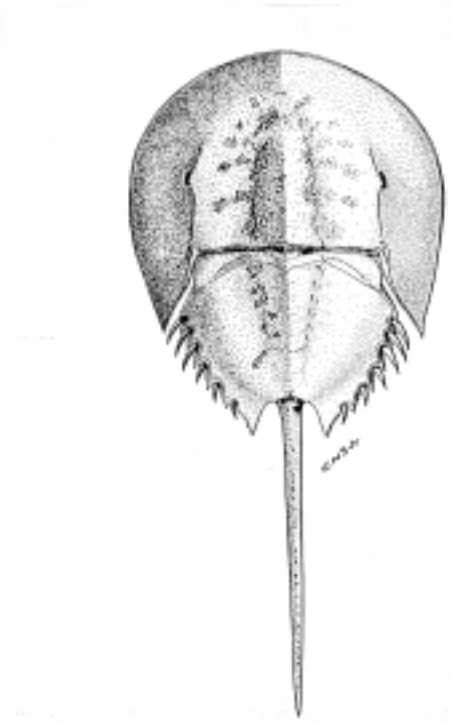
- Review comments submitted during public comment period
- Develop recommendation to Management and Science Committee

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM **American Lobster Management Board**

- Plan Review Team Report on state compliance
- Review & approve 2002 FMP Review
- Review reports of the Technical Committee, Advisory Panel Report, and Law Enforcement Committee (enforceability of current management measures for Amendment 3 through Addendum III)
- Review & discuss Draft Amendment 4 status
- Discuss issues for inclusion in Addendum IV
- Review Areas 2 and 3 LCMT Proposals
- Board directive to staff/PRT
- Discuss LCMT concerns and review LCMT Subcommittee Report
- Election of Vice-Chair

12:30 PM – 4:00 PM **Management and Science Committee**

- Reports of the Peer Review Process Subcommittee, Technical Committee Evaluation Subcommittee, Aquaculture Subcommittee, Interstate Tagging Committee, Power Plant Subcommittee, Multispecies Subcommittee, Regulatory Discards Subcommittee, and Protected Species Subcommittee.
- Recommended priorities for Commission peer reviews
- Discussion of invasive species issues



1:00 PM – 5:00 PM **Weakfish Advisory Panel**

- Review public comment on Amendment 4 Public Information Document

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM **Asian Oyster Workshop**

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM **Horseshoe Crab Management Board**

- Reports of the Technical Committee, Benthic Trawl Survey Pilot Project, and the Plan Review Team (state compliance and FMP Review)

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM **Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel**

- Review the Draft Interstate FMP

8:30 AM – 1:00 PM **Management and Science Committee (continued)**

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ASMFC Evaluates Technical Support Structure and Functionality

The Commission's Management and Science Committee was tasked with evaluating the size and functioning of the Interstate Fishery Management Program's (ISFMP) technical support groups and developing recommendations for improving this process for the management boards under the ISFMP. Technical support groups are defined as Technical Committees, Plan Development Teams, Plan Review Teams, Stock Assessment Committees and other technical subcommittees.

A subcommittee of the MSC, composed of members of the MSC, ISFMP technical committees and stock assessment subcommittees, and the ISFMP Policy Board, has developed several recommendations to address this issue. The subcommittee has also developed operational guidelines for functioning and administration of ISFMP technical support groups.

The majority of recommendations apply to activities required of the Commission, either through procedural and operational changes, modification and clarification of information contained in the ISFMP Charter, or structural changes that may require changes to the Charter. The recommendations are focused on several issues, including communication, workload, training and policy.

The subcommittee will finalize recommendations in the next several weeks for presentation to the MSC and ISFMP Policy Board at the Commission's May Spring Meeting. For more information, on this activity please contact Dr. Lisa Kline at <lkline@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC to Hold Asian Oyster Workshop in May

The Commission will be conducting a workshop on May 20, 2002 to review information concerning the potential introduction of the Asian oyster in Virginia and Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay. This workshop will also assess the ecological risks over a broader geographical region since an introduced species could potentially spread throughout the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

With the major decline in Chesapeake Bay oysters due to both MSX and Dermo, researchers at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) began exploring the potential of introducing a non-indigenous species, the Asian oyster, *Crassostrea ariakensis*. Between June 1998 and September 1999, VIMS conducted field comparisons between infertile (i.e., triploid) *C. ariakensis* and *C. virginica*. These studies focused on survival, growth, and disease susceptibility. The results indicated that *C. ariakensis* was faster growing, reaching market size in about a year (as compared to two to four years for *C. virginica*), and tolerated MSX and Dermo. Taste tests indicated that *C. ariakensis* is almost indistinguishable in taste from the native oyster.

These findings suggest that hatchery-reared *C. ariakensis* holds promise for rebuilding the commercial oyster industry in Virginia and Maryland through aquaculture production. Furthermore, use of sterile triploids in aquaculture activities could reduce reproductive potential. At the same time, strong concerns have been expressed with the use of a non-native species for this purpose, as well as the lack of scientific knowledge concerning the life history of *C. ariakensis* even in its native range. It has also been suggested that the ecological risks of introducing diploids must be assessed over a broader geographical region than just the Chesapeake Bay because an introduced species could potentially spread throughout the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

Position papers have been released by VIMS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Chesapeake Bay Program Federal Agencies Committee, and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. It is the general position of these organizations that the intentional introduction of reproductively capable Asian oyster into the waters of the Chesapeake Bay would not be prudent at this time. The ecological consequences of introducing this oyster to the Chesapeake Bay are too uncertain to support such an introduction. The position Until there is substantial scientifically validated information about the ecological risks and benefits associated with the use of sterile Asian oysters for aquaculture, a public policy decision to sanction large-scale aquaculture or outright introduction cannot be made responsibly.

Specific workshop objectives are to:

- Review VIMS research results of field comparisons between the Asian oyster and the Eastern oyster.
- Review current position papers on this issue and results of introductions in other regions of the U.S.
- Evaluate potential habitat impacts of introducing the Asian oyster in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Develop viewpoints from other state and federal agencies on potential impacts beyond the Chesapeake Bay.
- Develop a comprehensive list of potential benefits and hazards of introduction of the Asian oyster.
- Develop a coastwide consensus on this issue for presentation to the ISFMP Policy Board.

Commissioners and meeting week participants are all encouraged to participate in this workshop. For more information, please contact Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research & Statistics, at (202)289-6400 or <lkline@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC May 2002 Meeting Week Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 4)

Tuesday, May 21, 2002 (continued)

9:30 AM – 1:00 PM **Weakfish Management Board**

- Reports of the Technical Committee and Advisory Panel
- Review public comment on Amendment 4 Public Information Document
- Provide direction to PDT for Draft Amendment 4 development

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM **Law Enforcement Committee**

- Nominations for LEC Vice-Chair
- Issues, letters and requests for the LEC members assigned to species management boards
- Update listing of the LEC representatives on species management boards
- Discuss issues of current management plans
- Request to review new Spiny Dogfish Plan
- Federal Agency Reports: National Marine Fisheries Service (Joint Enforcement Agreement issues); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (law enforcement issues); U.S. Coast Guard (training opportunities, law enforcement issues)
- Discuss proposed changes in "Guidelines For Resource Managers"
- LEC development of a short range plan: standardizing the reporting system to management boards, funding law enforcement databases that assist FMPs, creating action oriented meeting agendas, use of LEC Coordinator to meet needs of Committee

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM **Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board**

- Review Draft Spiny Dogfish FMP
- Reports of the Technical Committee and Advisory Panel
- Scientific Research and Public Display Permits for Sharks
- Elect Vice-Chair

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

7:30 AM – 10:00 AM **South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board**

- SEAMAP Update
- Review & approve final draft Red Drum Amendment 2
- Review & approve draft 2001 FMP Reviews for Red Drum, Atlantic Croaker, Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout
- Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee Report: Review of assessment, update on stock status

8:00 AM - Noon **Law Enforcement Committee (continued)**

8:00 AM – Noon **Joint Meeting: NEAMAP Management Board and NEAMAP Operations Committee**

- Review draft Program Design and draft 2002 Operations Plan
- Discuss long-term funding options
- Discuss Operations Committee priorities for 2002

10:00 AM – Noon **Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council**

- Review & approve for-hire data collection program, ACCSP Strategic Plan, Outreach Strategic Plan, 2003 funding priorities

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM **ISFMP Policy Board**

- Review & approve documents on Technical Committee Guidance, Aquaculture, Peer Review
- Discuss Compliance Efficiency White Paper
- Review reports from the Management and Science Committee; Law Enforcement Committee, Habitat Committee, Committee on Economics and Social Sciences and the Advisory Committee

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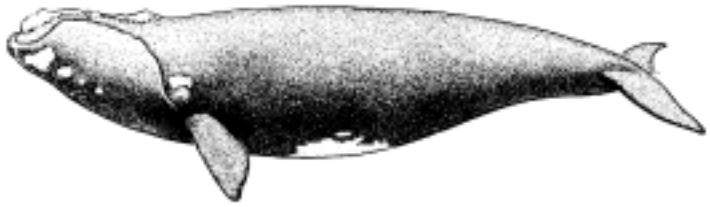
Large Whale TRP Regulations Revised



From January through March 2002, the National Marine Fisheries Service released a series of new regulations which effect lobster trap/pot and gillnet fishermen throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. These regulations are aimed at providing further protection for large whales, particularly North Atlantic right whales, in these areas and amends previous rules implemented under the Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.

Specifically, these regulations establish Dynamic Area Management (DAM) and Seasonal Area Management (SAM) programs, expand gear modifications to the Mid-Atlantic and offshore lobster waters, and modify requirements for gillnet gear in the Mid-Atlantic region. Following is a brief overview of these regulations. A detailed summary of the regulations can be obtained by contacting Diane Borggaard, Large Whale Coordinator, at (978)281-9145 or <diane.borggaard@noaa.gov> or via the Atlantic Large Whale TRP website at www.nero.nmfs.gov/whaletrp/.

Dynamic Area Management (DAM) Program: ***Effective February 8, 2002***
The DAM program clarifies NMFS' authority to temporarily restrict the use of lobster trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear within defined areas to protect North Atlantic right whales, and establishes criteria and procedures for implementing the DAM program in areas north of 40° N. latitude. A DAM zone will be triggered by a single reliable report from a qualified individual of 3 or more right whales within an area (75 nm^2) such that right whale density is equal to or greater than 0.04 right whales per nm^2.

Once a DAM zone has been triggered, lobster trap/pot and gillnet fishermen fishing in the zone will be required to (1) remove all lobster trap and anchored gillnet gear, and refrain from setting additional gear within the triggered DAM zone; or (2) modify fishing gear in order to continue to fish in the DAM zone. NMFS will notify fishermen that a voluntary DAM zone or DAM zone with gear restrictions will be established for a minimum of 15 days, identifying the location of the DAM zone and the number of right whales sighted within it. Once established, the DAM zone restrictions will be effective for 15 days and will begin 2 days after publication of a notice in the *Federal Register*. The 15-day period may also be extended by additional 15-day periods, if right whales are still sighted in the area.

Seasonal Area Management (SAM) Program: ***Effective March 1, 2002***
The SAM program defines two areas based on the annual predictable presence of North Atlantic right whales and covers approximately 5,000 nm^2 (9265 km^2) from Cape Cod eastward to the Hague Line in which gear restrictions for lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear will be required. Lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear set within each SAM area are restricted to those designated as Level II or Low Risk Gear, which is defined as gear where death or serious injury resulting from entanglement would be highly unlikely.

The SAM rule applies to lobster trap/pot and gillnet fishermen fishing off Cape Cod and points north and out to the Exclusive Economic Zone line from March 1 through April 30 in SAM West, and May 1 through July 31 in SAM East. The dividing line between SAM West and SAM East is at the 69°24′ W. longitude line.

In order to comply with the SAM rule, fishermen using lobster trap gear within the portion of the **Northern Nearshore and Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters** that overlap with a SAM area must utilize all the following gear modifications when a SAM area is in effect:

1. Ground lines and buoy lines must be made entirely of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating ground lines and buoy lines are prohibited;
2. A weak link must be placed at all buoys with a maximum breaking strength of 600 lb (272.2 kg). Each weak link must be installed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible; and
3. No more than one buoy line per trawl may be used. This buoy line must be at the northern or western end of the trawl string depending on the direction of the set.

Fishermen using lobster trap/pot gear within the portion of the **Offshore Lobster Waters Area** that overlap with a SAM area must use all the following gear modifications when a SAM area is in effect:

1. Ground lines and buoy lines must be made entirely of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating ground lines and buoy lines are prohibited;
2. A weak link must be placed at all buoys with a maximum breaking strength of 1,500 lbs (680.4 kg). Each weak link must be installed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible;
3. No more than one buoy line per trawl may be used. This buoy line must be at the northern or western end of the trawl string depending on the direction of the set.

Fishermen using anchored gillnet gear within the portion of the **Other Northeast Waters Area** that overlap with a SAM area must use all the following gear modifications when a SAM area is in effect:

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The ACCSP Data Management System Tours the Coast

The seafood industry got its first taste of user-friendly fisheries data for the Atlantic coast when the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's (ACCSP) online data management system took to the road in February and March.

Mike Cahall, the ACCSP's Information Systems Program Manager, built a special network for remote demonstration of the data management system at trade shows and other industry and management meetings. "You can't always trust that you will have an adequate internet connection at special events, particularly in large convention centers," said Cahall. "This portable version of the system ensures that potential new users will see how simple and flexible the actual system really is."

Abbey Compton, the ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, took the remote system and the Program's other promotional material to trade shows in Maryland, North Carolina, Maine and Massachusetts. A total of 68 new users registered for free named-user access.

The East Coast Commercial Fishing and Aquaculture Trade Exposition took place a few weeks before the data management system officially launched, so its participants got a sneak preview. The Maryland Watermen's Association sponsors the annual show, and a number of commercial fishermen from all over the mid-Atlantic made the drive to Ocean City for it. The ACCSP registered 23 new users there who helped to test the system before the February 19 launch.

The North Carolina Commercial Fishing Show was held in New Bern Riverfront Convention Center for the first time this year. 3500 attendees turned out for the two-day event. This was the first show following the launch of the data management system, and 10 new named users registered.

The Maine Fishermen's Forum was held at the Samoset Resort in Rockland. The lobstermen and shellfish harvesters at the show took particular interest in the system's data for those species. 15 new users registered at the forum.

The International Boston Seafood Show is different from the three smaller nonprofit shows. It is larger and caters to seafood industry professional, particularly international dealers and processors. This three-day show that took place at the Hynes Convention Center in downtown Boston brought the ACCSP 20 new named users.

Thanks to Partner Volunteers
State partners coordinated with the ACCSP staff to plan displays in their areas. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) was particularly helpful, sending volunteers Jim Fair, Eileen Feeney and Dan McKiernan to help staff the ACCSP display. Nancy Fish of the North Carolina DMF, and cable access celebrity, also gave the data management system some airtime on her television show.

About the ACCSP
The ACCSP's partners are the 15 Atlantic states' natural resource management agencies, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Together these resource managers have developed a plan to cooperatively collect, manage and disseminate fishery statistical data for the Atlantic coast, and to support the development and operation of a national program.

For more information on the ACCSP, contact Abbey Compton at abbey.compton@accsp.org or 202.289.6400, or visit www.accsp.org.

ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee Update

The Commission's Artificial Reef Committee met in March to discuss several issues concerning artificial reefs, including large navy ships, subway cars, monitoring, socioeconomics, and their role within the ASMFC habitat program.

During a joint session with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Artificial Reef Committee, the groups heard presentations on the National Artificial Reef Plan, a socioeconomic study of reefs in Southeast Florida, a NOAA monitoring study in the a National Marine Sactuary, the progress of a Navy PCB study, and using the Vandenburg as an artificial reef in the Florida Keys.

The joint group is also working on updating the "Guidelines For Marine Artificial Reef Materials," which was released in 1997. These guidelines outline many of the materials used for artificial reefs including a general overview of each material, as well as benefits, drawbacks and considerations for each material. The joint committees expect to complete this revision by the end of the year.

For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or <cselberg@asmfc.org>.

Large Whale TRP Regulations Revised (continued from page 7)

1. Ground lines (the lines between the net bridle and the anchors) and buoy lines must be made entirely of sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating ground lines and buoy lines are prohibited;
2. Each net panel must have a total of 5 weak links with a maximum breaking strength of 1,100 lbs (498.9 kg). Net panels are typically 50 fathoms in length, but the weak link requirements would apply to all variations in panel size. These weak links must include 3 floatline weak links. The placement of the weak links on the floatline must be one at the center of the net panel, and one each as close as possible to each of the bridle ends of the net panel. The remaining 2 weak links must be placed in the center of each of the up and down lines at the panel ends;
3. No more than one buoy line per net string may be used. This buoy line must be at the northern or western end of the gillnet string depending on the direction of the set; and
4. All anchored gillnets, regardless of the number of net panels, must be securely anchored with the holding power of at least a 22 lb (9.9 kg) Danforth style anchor at the each end of the net string.

Expanded Gear Modifications: ***Effective February 11, 2002*** (except for one exception noted below)

This rule expands gear modifications to the Mid-Atlantic and Offshore lobster waters and modifies requirements for gillnet gear in the Mid-Atlantic coastal waters. Additionally, the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List and the Gillnet Take Reduction Technology List are amended.

The rule applies to fishermen who use either lobster trap/pot gear in the Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area, Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area, or Offshore Lobster Waters Area; or gillnet gear in the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters Area. It is important to note that this rule does not replace or amend the previous universal gear requirements for lobster trap and gillnet gear, such as no wet storage of gear, and gear marking requirements, which still apply.

Lobster Trap Gear

Fishermen with lobster trap gear in the **Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area** must still be in compliance with one option from the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List. This list has been amended and is summarized below:

1. All buoy lines must be composed entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.
2. All ground lines must be composed entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.
3. All buoys must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link have a breaking strength no greater than 600 lbs (272.4 kg). Each weak link must be installed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible.
4. All buoy lines must be 7/16 in (1.11 cm) or less in diameter. **Effective January 1, 2003,** the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List will be amended to remove this option. Removing this option from the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List does not prevent a fisherman from continuing to use buoy line with a diameter of 7/16 in (1.11 cm) or less. However, it cannot be counted as an option from the list.

Fishermen with lobster trap gear in the **Southern Nearshore Waters Area** will now have mandatory gear modifications applicable year-round rather than the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List. Fishermen must now:

1. Install a weak link with a maximum breaking strength of 600 lb (272.2 kg) on the buoy line. Each weak link must be installed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible; and
2. Install weak links in such a way that produces knotless ends if the weak link breaks.

Fishermen with lobster trap gear in the **Offshore Lobster Waters Area** are required to reduce the breaking strength of weak link at all buoys from 3,780 lb (1,714.3 kg) to 2,000 lb (906.9 kg), and install weak links in such a way that produces knotless ends if the weak link breaks. The weak links must be placed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible.

Anchored Gillnet Gear

Fishermen with gillnet gear in **Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters** now have mandatory gear requirements rather than the Gillnet Take Reduction Technology List. These fishermen are required to abide by the below gear modifications from December 1 through March 31:

1. Install weak links at the buoy, and in the center of the floatline on each 50-fathom net panel or every 25 fathoms on the floatline for longer panels. The maximum breaking strength of these weak links is 1,100 lbs (498.8 kg) for both the buoy and floatline weak links. The weak links must be placed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible.
2. Return all gillnet gear to port with their vessels, or, if the gillnets are left at sea to continue fishing, to secure the nets on each end with anchors that have the holding power of at least a 22 lb (9.9 kg) Danforth-style anchor.

For more information, please contact Diane Borggaard, Large Whale Coordinator, at (978)281-9145.

ASMFC May 2002 Meeting Week Preliminary Agenda
(continued from page 6)

Wednesday, May 22, 2002

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM **Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel**

- Review Public Hearing Draft of Amendment 6

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM **Advisory Committee**

- Review and discuss recommendations of the joint Legislators and Governors' Appointees/Advisory Committee Workgroup on improving the Commission's advisory panel process.

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM **Executive Committee**

- Presentation of FY 2003 budget & Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM **Full Commission**

Thursday, May 23, 2002

8:00 AM – Noon **CESS Fishing Communities Subcommittee**

- Continue development of fishing community standards

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM **Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**

- Review & approve Public Hearing Draft of Amendment 6
- Review & approve District of Columbia's proposed management changes
- Discuss Virginia commercial striped bass management program

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor
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Return Service Requested