



**ASMFC**

# **FISHERIES** *focus*

Volume 15, Issue 3

April 2006

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015*

## **ASMFC Spring Meeting**

**May 8 - 11, 2006**

**Doubletree Hotel Crystal City**

**300 Army Navy Drive**

**Arlington, Virginia**

**(703) 416-4100**

### **Final Agenda**

The final agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Please note that the dates and times of the Horseshoe Crab and Weakfish Boards have changed from the preliminary agenda. The Horseshoe Crab Board will now be meeting on May 9 from 1:30 PM - 5:00 PM, while the Weakfish Board will be meeting on May 10 from 2:15 PM - 5:45 PM. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein. If you intend to bring any meeting materials for use by a board or committee not included in the Commission's Spring Meeting Briefing Materials CD-ROM, please bring 50 copies to the meeting.

#### Monday, May 8, 2006

2:00 – 6:00 PM                      American Lobster Management Board

- Public Comment
- Advisory Panel Report
- Review & Consider Approval of Draft Addendum VIII
  - Review Public Comment and Consider Management Options for Reference Points, Monitoring, and Reporting
- Technical Committee Report - Recommendations for SNE stock

#### Tuesday, May 9, 2006

8:00 – 10:00 AM                      Atlantic Herring Section

- Public Comment
- Update on Progress of 2005 Compliance Reports and FMP Review
- Update on 2006 Days Out
- Review January 2006 Section Action Regarding Bycatch Information/Monitoring and Discuss Potential Action(s) for Addressing Framework 43 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP
- Review January 2006 Section Action Regarding Spawning Restrictions and Discuss/Clarify Spawning Language and Amendment 2 Implementation
- Review & Consider Approval of State Implementation Proposals

10:15 AM – 12:15 PM                      Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review & Consider Approval of Draft Addendum XVI                      *continued on page 9*

### **Inside This Issue**

**Species Profile: Northern Shrimp**                      **Page 4**

**The Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey**                      **Page 5**

**On the Legislative Front**                      **Page 7**

**ASMFC Comings & Goings**                      **Page 7**

**New Federal Lobster Regulations Scheduled for May 1 Implementation**                      **Page 8**

**FMP Coordinator Responsibilities Revised**                      **Page 8**

**New ACCSP Data Queries Expected This Spring/Early Summer**                      **Page 9**

**T**he 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, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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## Upcoming Meetings

**5/2 - 4:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

**5/2- 5:**

Atlantic Herring TRAC Assessment Workshop, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Aquarium Building, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

**5/3 & 4:**

ACCSP Advisory Committee, Omni Hotel, Jacksonville, Florida.

**5/8 - 11:**

ASMFC Meeting Week, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia; 703/416-4100 (see final agenda on pages 1, 9 & 10).

**5/8 - 12:**

NEFSC Stock Assessment Workgroup, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Aquarium Building, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

**5/16 - 18:**

Southeast Bycatch Workshop, Hilton, St. Petersburg, Florida. For more information, please contact Mark Godcharles at 727/551-5727.

**5/23 - 25:**

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Florida Research Institute, St. Petersburg, Florida.

**6/6 - 12:**

43rd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Aquarium Building, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

**6/12 - 16:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Grand Bay Hotel, 2669 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove Florida; 800/996-3426.

**6/13 - 15:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hyatt Regency, Newport, Rhode Island.

**6/19 - 23:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

**6/20 - 22:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Select, Claymont, Delaware.

Few would disagree that the harvest from recreational fishing is an important component of marine fisheries management. The growing popularity of recreational fishing has brought increased impacts to both healthy and recovering stocks. However, the methods used by the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) and state agencies to measure recreational harvest have been an issue of disagreement among various groups for several years. Critics have been particularly vocal when the information is used to set lower quotas or implement more restrictive fishing regulations.

In 2004 in response to anglers' concerns, NMFS commissioned the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate and suggest improvements to the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) and state systems. The NRC's team consisted of experts in survey design and statistics, biological statistics, fisheries management, and the economics and sociology of recreational fishing. The team conducted workshops on all three coasts, listening to dozens of representatives of the recreational fishing and the fisheries management and scientific community. The Study findings were recently released and should be of great interest to those involved with recreational fisheries policies.

Since the report describes weaknesses with both MRFSS and state systems it will be tempting for some to select the portions of the report that comport with their views. So, my first observation is to urge caution in what you read from others and consider going directly to the NRC website for a free copy of the Executive Summary (<http://fermat.nap.edu/catalog/11616.html>). That having been said, here are a few highlights to give you a sense of what the NRC found:

- **MRFSS and its component surveys conducted by state agencies should be redesigned**, with greater standardization among state surveys and between state surveys and MRFSS. In addition, the for-hire sector should be considered part of the commercial sector.
- **A universal sampling frame should be established** through national registration of all saltwater anglers or new or existing state saltwater license programs with no exemptions. This would increase the accuracy and reliability of the survey program.
- **New analysis procedures based on current sampling theory should be designed and imple-**

**mented** to account for activities such as nighttime fishing and fishing from boats that land their catch on private property (not directly sampled with current surveys).

- MRFSS surveys are focused on biological factors (numbers, sizes, and kinds of fish landed) and not human dimension factors (social, behavioral, and economic data). Therefore, the **collection of human dimensions should be enhanced** through an independent national trip and expenditure survey, add-on surveys, and an updated national database on marine recreational fishing sites.
- **MRFSS is understaffed and requires additional funding** to improve marine recreational surveys, including coordination between state and federal surveys.
- **Outreach and communication requires improvement and institutionalization** as part of an ongoing program. If anglers have confidence in the data, then their willingness to participate may improve.
- A permanent and independent research group should be established and funded to **continuously evaluate the statistical design and oversee improvements**.

While there is a lot more -- the Executive Summary includes more than 40 conclusions and recommendations -- it is important to note what the report did not say. The NRC provided no recommendation to managers regarding what other data system should be used until improvements are made to the current system. In addition, while the NRC made it clear that improvements were in order, the study did not specifically indicate whether the current flaws are collectively underestimating or overestimating catch.

**Bottom line:** With a lot more money and increased legislative authority for saltwater fishing licenses and mandatory reporting by for-hire vessels, a better job can be done in accounting for recreational harvests. For many people that is not new news. Now that we have a long list of what needs to be done, the real news would be to hear a commitment from all sides to roll up their sleeves and work cooperatively to seek the funding and legislative changes needed to implement the improvements recommended by the NRC study. Timely and accurate harvest accounting is an essential element of successful fisheries management. The NRC study finally offers us all the opportunity to work together, something we should all be able to agree to do.



**Northern Shrimp  
*Pandalus borealis***

**Interesting Fish Facts:**

- Begin life cycle as males and metamorphose into females in the third year of life
- It is believed that most shrimp don't live past 5 years of age.
- Appendages on the tail (abdomen), called pleopods, act like paddles, enabling the shrimp to move with remarkable agility and over considerable distances.

**Age at Maturity:**

- 2.5 years for males
- 3.5 years for females

**Amendment 1 Biological Reference Points:**

- F target = F50 = 0.22
- Biomass threshold = 19.8 million lbs
- Biomass Limit = 13.2 million lbs

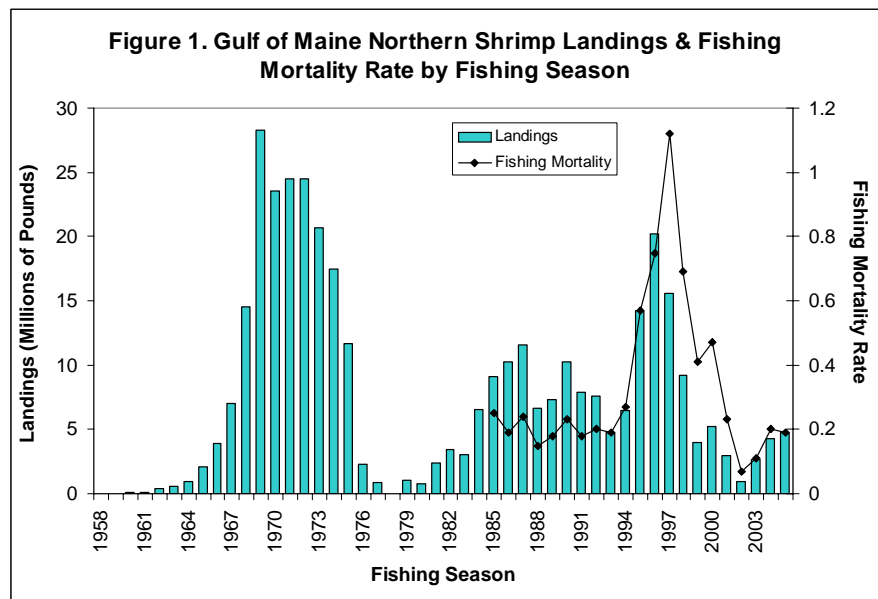
**Stock Status: Not overfished, overfishing is not occurring**

**Species Profile: Northern Shrimp**  
**Recent Increase in Biomass Allows Section to Expand Season Length**

**Introduction**

With annual landings valued at an average of six million dollars a year, northern shrimp, *Pandalus borealis*, support a small but important fishery in the Gulf of Maine. Throughout the early part of this century, there was concern for the status of the stock and the ability of the resource to sustain high harvest levels. This resulted in severe harvest reductions in the 2001 through 2005 fishing seasons (Figure 1 below). These reductions appear to have paid off with increasing biomass levels over the last couple of years (Figure 2 next page).

Since May 2004, the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts have managed northern shrimp under Amendment 1. The Amendment provides managers and fishermen the opportunity to use additional tools, such as a biomass threshold and limit, to manage this valuable resource in a sustainable way.



Sources: Landings data prior to 2001 from National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics and Economics Division, 2003; 2001 and after from State Vessel Trip Reports. Fishing Mortality derived from Collie-Sissenwine Analysis, ASMFC Northern Shrimp Technical Committee, 2005

**Life History**

Northern shrimp are located in the cold waters of the Northern Hemisphere. The species is found in Canadian waters and in the northern most waters of the U.S. On the U.S. Atlantic coast, it primarily inhabits waters off of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Northern shrimp are hermaphroditic, maturing first as males at roughly 2 ½ years of age and then transforming to females at about 3 ½ years. Female shrimp may live up to five years old and attain a size of up to three to four inches in length. Mating takes place in offshore waters during the late summer. Females carry the eggs on their abdomen and hatching takes place during the winter when the shrimp are in inshore waters. Northern shrimp are an important link in marine food chains, preying on both plankton and benthic invertebrates, and, in turn, being consumed by many important fish species, such as cod, redfish, and silver and white hake.

**Commercial Fishery**

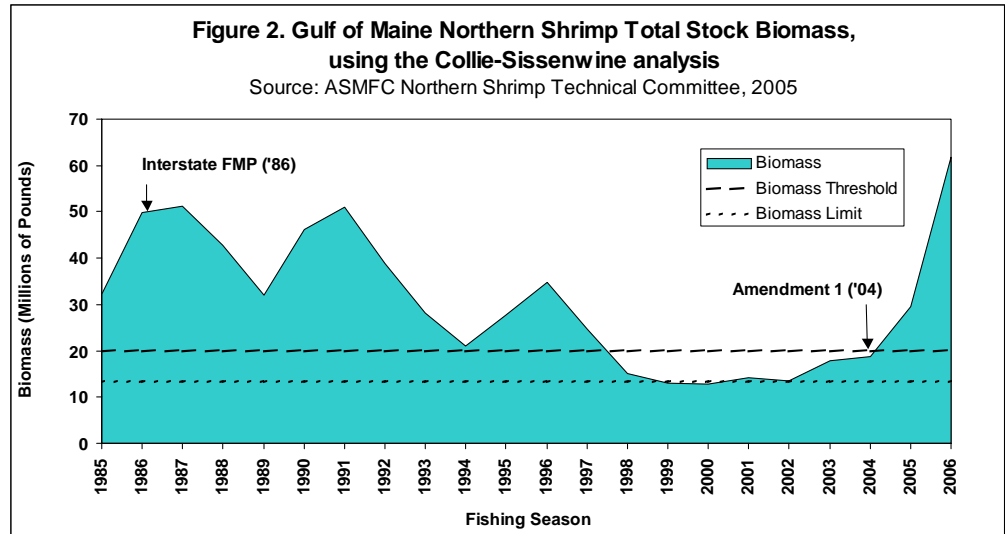
Northern shrimp provide a small but valuable fishery to the New England states. The



fishery is seasonal in nature, peaking in late winter when egg-bearing females move into inshore waters and ending in the spring under regulatory closure. The commercial fishery began in earnest in the late 1950s/early 1960s and experienced an incredible expansion in landings, peaking in 1969 at an historic high of 28.3 million pounds (Figure 1). Over the next eight years, landings dropped precipitously to a low of less than 85,000 pounds in 1977. The fishery was closed in 1978 due to a stock collapse and slowly reopened in 1979 at very low levels of harvest. The early 1980s showed a modest increase in landings and over the next ten years landings ranged from 4.7 to 11.6 million pounds. From 1995 to 1997, landings approached record highs ranging from 14 to 20 million pounds. Since 1996, there has been a general decline in landings. The preliminary landings for 2005 are estimated at 4.7 million pounds.

### Stock Status

Exploitable biomass based on the Collie-Sissenwine analysis generally declined from approximately 35 million pounds in 1996 to a time series low of 12.7 million pounds in 2000 (Figure 2). Since then the biomass estimate has risen to 29.5 million pounds in 2005, as a result of the appearance of the strong 2001 year class. This estimate is slightly below the time-series average of 30.9 million pounds, and well below the average of the relatively stable 1985-1994 period of 39.2 million pounds. Stock status is determined to be not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.



## The Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey The Cornerstone of Northern Shrimp Stock Assessments

In existence for nearly a quarter century, the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey represents one of the longest running cooperative state/federal research surveys along the Atlantic coast. Established in 1983 and designed to replace the State of Maine Shrimp Survey, which had been conducted since the mid-70s, the survey is dedicated to monitor the relative abundance (number of shrimp), biomass (pounds of shrimp), size structure (year class strength) and demographics (sex) of the northern shrimp stock throughout the Gulf of Maine. The survey focuses its efforts in offshore waters (in depths greater than 50 fathoms) and is timed to sample both males and females during the summer when they are expected to be offshore. The data it collects forms the basis of the annual northern shrimp assessment, which in turn, is used by fishery managers from Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts to set each year's fishing regulations.



The survey is conducted aboard the *R/V Gloria Michelle*, a 65-foot, 96 gross ton stern trawler. In addition to the four vessel crew members, the survey is staffed by six scientists for a total crew of ten persons. Scientific staff are provided by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the states of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

*continued on page 6*



## Species Profile: Northern Shrimp (continued from page 5)

Northern shrimp populations are tracked by year class. The table below provides a comparison of year class strength as determined by prior assessments and the 2005 assessment. It shows how fishing pressure and environmental conditions can affect the stock over time. Changes in the 2001 and 2003 year classes are indicators of a recovering stock. This, combined with increase in biomass, were the basis for the Section increasing the fishing season to 140 days for the 2006 season.

**Table 1. Year Class Strength of the U.S. Northern Shrimp Stock for the 2006 Season**

Year Class	Initial Year Class Strength (based on prior assessments)	Current Year Class Strength (based on 2005 assessment)
2000	<i>Virtually absent</i>	Have passed out of 2006 fishery
2001	<i>Moderate</i>	<b>Strong</b> Assumed to be 5-year old females
2002	<i>Virtually absent</i>	<b>Very weak</b> Assumed to be 4-year old females
2003	<i>Weak to moderate</i>	<b>Strong</b> Assumed to be 3-year old males and transitionals
2004	<i>Not available</i>	<b>Strong</b> Juveniles

### Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

Following the collapse of the stock in the early 1970s, management for northern shrimp began in 1973 through an interstate agreement among Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The northern shrimp fishery boasts the longest running interstate management program on the Atlantic coast of the U.S. The Commission adopted the first Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp in 1986. Under this plan, the fishery was managed through the establishment of fishing seasons, which are set each fall. The plan allowed for the use of gear limitations. This plan was subsequently replaced by Amendment 1 in May 2004.

Amendment 1 establishes formal biological reference points for the first time. These include a fishing mortality target of 0.22, a biomass threshold of 19.8 million pounds, and a biomass limit of 13.2 million pounds. Both points provide benchmarks for Section consideration when establishing annual specifications. The limit is the point below which the management action should be taken to avoid stock collapse. The Amendment also provides a broader suite of management options to allow for greater flexibility in regulating the fishery and conserving the resource.

For the first time in northern shrimp management, the Section conditionally set two consecutive open fishing seasons at 140 days per season. The 2006-2007 fishing season will be contingent on certain parameters of the 2005-2006 fishery. Specifically, the Section will reconsider the 2006-2007 fishing season length, if the number of fishing trips exceeds 5,600, landings exceed 11.5 million pounds, or fishing mortality exceeds 0.20 during the 2005-2006 fishing season. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <bspear@asmfc.org.

## The Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey (cont'd)

Currently, the survey is carried out about 14 days each summer, divided up into three legs, from the end of July to early August. The western Gulf of Maine is divided into 12 strata and each stratum is sampled in proportion to its area, except that sampling intensity is doubled in the strata that have had the highest abundances of shrimp historically. Eighty-two sites are chosen. Of those, 58 are chosen at random, and 24 are fixed sites – about a dozen fixed sites from the original Maine survey and another dozen that were added in 1995.

In recent years the survey has faced a number of challenges, including an overly ambitious survey schedule, a lack of funding, poor weather, possible changes in shrimp migrating behavior that may require expansion in monitoring efforts, and a lack of industry confidence. The Commission's Northern Shrimp Section and Technical Committee have developed a set of recommendations to address many of these issues. These include expanding survey days from 14 to 20; obtaining full funding for the survey each year (approximately \$80,000/year); expanding monitoring into shallower waters; and increasing industry participation in the survey. The Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl Survey is such a valuable tool not only for monitoring the status of northern shrimp but for groundfish species as well. Hopefully, the survey will receive the support and long-term funding it desperately needs to remain a viable and useful assessment tool for years to come.

## On the Legislative Front 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

### Offshore Aquaculture

Last summer, Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Senator Inouye (D-Hawaii) introduced, at the request of the Bush Administration, the National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2005 (S. 1195). The bill directs the Secretary of Commerce to establish a site permit and operating permit process for offshore aquaculture activities in federal waters. The Senate Commerce Committee's National Ocean Policy Study Subcommittee held a hearing this month to explore the potential economic and environmental impacts of domestic offshore aquaculture. Senator Stevens spoke on behalf his amendment to the bill S. 1195, which would provide states with the option to opt out from provisions of the Act, by stating that "while it may be the amendment needs some clarification, clearly it should be the right of a state that has wild fish to protect its fish without an economic analysis, just on the basis of the sheer right to protect it." For copies of the testimony for the hearing held on April 6<sup>th</sup>, please visit the Senate Commerce Committee website at <http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/index.cfm>. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has

further detailed information on the proposed legislation and other news at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/aquaculture/>.

### Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization

House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-California) and House Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries Chairman Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-Maryland) each introduced their own bills to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Representative Gilchrest based his bill (H.R. 5051) on Senator Stevens' reauthorization bill (S. 2012), introduced in November 2005. Representative Pombo has established a website with information on his bill (H.R. 5018) at [http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/Oceans\\_Website/Index.htm](http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/Oceans_Website/Index.htm).

### H.R. 4686

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the House Resources Committee held a markup session on several bills, including the Multi-State and International Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 2006 (H.R.



4686). The bill was introduced by Representative Wayne T. Gilchrest, and co-sponsored by Representative Richard Pombo. The bill reauthorizes the following laws through fiscal year 2012.

- Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act
- Anadromous Fish Conservation Act
- Dungeness Crab Fishery Management Act
- Atlantic Tunas Convention Act
- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act

The House Resources Committee ordered H.R. 4686 to be reported to the House by unanimous consent. For more information on this bill, please visit the House Resources Committee website at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/full/index.htm>.

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## ASMFC Comings & Goings

### Staff:

**Lindsay Fullenkamp** -- This April Lindsay accepted the position of Program Analyst in the Formulation and Analysis Division, Budget Office, Office of Finance and Administration for NOAA. Lindsay joined the Commission in June 2004 to work on a report characterizing sea turtle and fisheries interactions in state waters along the Atlantic coast. The purpose of the report is to better understand what fisheries in state waters are interacting with sea turtles and to provide information that can be used to prioritize fishery interaction concerns.

The report will be used by the National Marine Fisheries Service to assist it in fully implementing its National Sea Turtle Strategy. We wish Lindsay the very best in her new position.

**Lena Kofas** -- This April, after 16 months with the Commission as its Executive Assistant, Lena will be moving on to work as a Program Analyst in the Environment Program of the U.S. General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service, a public real estate organization. She will be responsible for interpreting environmental laws, regula-

tions and policies as they apply to real estate acquisition, development, operation, and disposal. She will be working at the GSA's central office in Washington, D.C. in coordination with regional offices. While at the Commission, Lena supported the Executive Director on legislative activities, including the annual federal appropriations process. Lena will be sorely missed. We wish her the very best in her new job.

Due to Lydia Munger's departure last month, there has been a shift in FMP

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## New Federal Lobster Regulations Scheduled for May 1, 2006 Implementation

This March, NOAA Fisheries Service announced the release of new regulations applicable to the federal American lobster fishery. The action is in response to recommendations by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) in Addenda

II and III to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The lobster management measures are intended to increase protection to American lobster broodstock throughout the stock's range, and will apply to lobsters harvested in one or more of seven Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMA). In addition, NOAA Fisheries Service will clarify existing federal lobster regulations. To allow adequate time to modify lobster trap gear to meet new gear configuration requirements, the effective date of actions identified in the final rule is May 1, 2006.

The final lobster broodstock management measures:

- Revise the Egg Per Recruit overfishing target timeline of F10 from the year 2005 to the year 2008
- Increase the lobster minimum legal carapace size limit from 3 1/4 inches (8.26 centimeters (cm)) to 3 3/8 inches (8.57 cm) in LCMA 2 (inshore Southern New England), LCMA 3 (offshore waters), LCMA 4 (inshore Northern Mid-Atlantic), LCMA 5 (inshore Southern Mid-Atlantic), and the Outer Cape Management Area
- Increase the rectangular lobster trap escape vent size from 1 15/16 inches x 5 3/4 inches (4.92 cm x 14.61 cm) to 2 inches x 5 3/4 inches (5.08 cm x 14.61 cm) in LCMA 2 - 5, and the Outer Cape
- Increase the circular lobster trap escape vent size from

- 2 7/16 inches (6.19 cm) to 2 5/8 inches (6.67 cm) in LCMA 2 - 5, and the Outer Cape
- Implement a 5 1/4 inch (13.34 cm) maximum legal carapace size on possession of female lobsters in LCMA 4, and 5 1/2 inches (13.97 cm) in LCMA 5 with an allowance for individuals engaged in recreational fishing to possess one female lobster per fishing trip in excess of the maximum carapace length
- Require mandatory V-notching of female lobsters carrying eggs in LCMA 1 (Gulf of Maine) and in LCMA 3 above the 42°30' North latitude line
- Require a zero tolerance definition of V-notched female lobsters in LCMA 1
- Implement a 5 mile (8 kilometer) overlap boundary area between LCMA 3 and 5.
- Changes from the proposed rule allow recreational fishing vessels & recreational divers to possess "one female lobster" per fishing trip that is larger than the new maximum carapace size in LCMA Areas 4 and 5 [5 1/4 inch (13.34 cm) maximum legal carapace size in Area 4, and 5 1/2 inches (13.97 cm) in Area 5]

To clarify existing regulations, the final measures:

- Allow a change in the LMCA designations of a fishing vessel with a Federal lobster permit upon sale, transfer, or within 45 days of the permit's effective date
- Clearly reference other laws and regulations applicable to Federal lobster permit holders
- Clearly prohibit hauling or possession of lobster trap gear belonging to another vessel,
- Exempt lobster trap gear retrieval from provisions of the exempted fishing regulations by a substitute vessel if a Federally permitted vessel is inoperable or mechanically impaired.

For more information, go to <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/lobsterfr/index.html> or contact Robert Ross at (978) 281-9234 or [Bob.Ross@noaa.gov](mailto:Bob.Ross@noaa.gov).

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## ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 7)

Coordinator responsibilities. The updated staff responsibilities are provided in the table below. Changes in staff responsibilities may be made in the future to reflect workload priorities. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at [rbeal@asmfc.org](mailto:rbeal@asmfc.org)

FMP Coordinator	Staff Responsibilities
Ruth Christiansen	Atlantic herring, spiny dogfish & coastal sharks, tautog, winter flounder,
Toni Kerns	American lobster, black sea bass, scup, summer flounder
Julie Nygard	American eel, bluefish, shad & river herring
Braddock Spear	Atlantic sturgeon, horseshoe crab, northern shrimp, weakfish,
Nancy Wallace	Atlantic striped bass, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic menhaden, red drum, Spanish mackerel, spot, spotted seatrout



## New Data Queries Expected this Spring and Early Summer

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) staff has been working this winter and spring to change our data warehouse query system from Business Objects to ORACLE Discoverer. This change will provide a better tool set to allow access to both confidential and non-confidential data through our website, and save approximately \$30,000 per year in support fees.

Discoverer provides a number of improvements for the use and display of data. It allows complete labeling of the results with the information the user uses to select their data of interest. Business Objects provided very limited labeling, which could cause confusion about the actual data being viewed. It also allows for outputting reports to Excel, text files, or PDF files, with retention of all of the labeling.

Discoverer allows calculations to occur as the query is being generated. It will allow us to provide new suites of queries, which could not be generated with Business Objects, especially those for recreational data, such as bag limit analyses. This ability to calculate "on the fly" also allows us to generate more queries for display to non-confidential users, while completely protecting the con-

fidentiality of the data. Previously, only a limited number of canned queries were available for non-confidential data.

Finally, Discoverer allows the display of conditional formatting. For example, colors can be used to highlight the precision of estimates, so estimates with proportional standard errors (PSE) of 20 percent or less are displayed in green; those with PSEs of greater than 20 and less than 30 are shown in yellow; and those with greater than 30 percent are displayed as red.

The new queries for commercial catch and effort data are expected to be available in May. Recreational queries for catch, effort, and participation have been created and currently are being tested against the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey website. They should also be available in May. Programming is underway on the long-awaited queries for catch per person distributions, which are used for bag limit analyses, and directed trips, and those are expected in early summer.

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate

those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

### A note about the NRC Study on the review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods:

The study agreed with many of the research areas that the ACCSP has recommended since 1999 for improving data from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey. Hopefully, the results of this study will result in a coordinated and successful effort to obtain the additional resources that are needed for recreational fisheries data that fully support fisheries management on the Atlantic coast and that have the confidence of the fishermen.

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## ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

- Review Decision Document by Delayed Implementation Working Group
  - Consider Management Options for Delayed Implementation Management Measures
  - Review Amendment 14 & 15 Draft PID Public Comment
    - Review Public Comment for Amendment 14 only
    - Update on Analysis to Support Rebuilding Schedule
    - Provide guidance to PDT on Draft Amendment 14
  - Draft Addendum IV Public Comment and Hearing Summary
  - Select Options for Addendum IV to the Horseshoe Crab FMP
- 6:30 PM                      **Annual Awards of Excellence Reception**
- Wednesday, May 10, 2006**
- 8:00 AM – Noon            **MSC Observer Program Workshop**
- 8:30 – 9:30 AM            **Bluefish Management Board**
- Public Comment
  - Elect Chair & Vice-Chair
  - Discuss 2006 Quota
- 1:30 – 5:00 PM            **Horseshoe Crab Management Board**
- Public comment
  - PRT Reports: State Compliance & FMP Review
  - Reports of the Technical Committee & Advisory Panel

*continued on page 10*

## **ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 9)**

- Review Plan Review Team Membership

### **9:45 – 11:45 AM American Eel Management Board**

- Technical Committee Follow-up on Peer Review Report
- Update on the Federal Status Review and ESA Petition

### **1:00 – 2:00 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**

- Public comment
- Update on Addendum II Implementation Plans
- Update on 2006 Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment

### **1:00 – 5:00 PM Management & Science Committee**

- Approve 2006 & Long-term Peer Review Schedule
- Discuss Implementation of MRAG response
- Discuss Creel Survey ACFCMA Add-on: Pilot Study
- Receive Updates on: ACCSP; Asian Oysters; Alternative Energy Workshop; Multispecies Activities; Habitat; Fisheries Characterization Project; CESS; SEAMAP; NEAMAP; and Protected Species

### **2:15 – 5:45 PM Weakfish Management Board**

- Public Comment
- Review and Discuss Stock Assessment and Peer Review Panel Reports
- Revisit Discussion of Management Options

### **Thursday, May 11, 2006**

#### **8:00 – 10:00 AM Executive Committee**

- Public comment
- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee
  - Presentation of the FY07 Budget
  - Interim Review of '06 Action Plan Accomplishments
- Proxy Conflict of Interest Petition
- Future Annual Meetings Update

#### **10:15 AM – 12:15 PM Multispecies Workshop**

#### **12:30 – 3:30 PM ISFMP Policy Board**

- Public comment
- Review Suggested Changes to ASMFC Guidance Documents to Improve Stock Assessment Process
- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities Reports from the Management and Science Committee and Multispecies Workshop Report
- Update on Review of Charter, and Rules & Regulations
- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)

#### **3:30 – 4:00 PM Business Session**

- Public comment
- Review Noncompliance Recommendations (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of FMPs or Amendments (if necessary)

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**  
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*Return Service Requested*