



ASMFC

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# FISHERIES *focus*

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 7 - 10, 2007**  
**Radisson Hotel**  
**901 N. Fairfax Street**  
**Alexandria, Virginia**

### Final Agenda

**Please note:** The final agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of meetings. Interested parties should anticipate meetings 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.

#### Monday, May 7, 2007

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Atlantic Herring Section

- Welcome/Call to Order, *E. Smith*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *E. Smith*
  - Approval of Agenda
- Public Comment
- 2006 FMP Review -- ACTION, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Discuss Inconsistencies between Federal Amendment I and ASMFC Amendment II
  - East of Cutler Fixed Gear Provision, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Discuss Inconsistencies between State and Federal TAC Specifications for 2008 – 2009, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Days-out Specifications 2007, *M. Cieri*
- Election of Vice-Chair, *E. Smith*
- Other Business/Adjourn

2:45 PM - 5:45 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program  
Coordinating Council

- Welcome/Introductions, *B. Mahood*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *B. Mahood*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of October 2006 Meeting Minutes
- Public Comment, *B. Mahood*
- ACCSP Status Report, *M. Cahall*
- Advisory Compensation Request -- ACTION
- Approve Funding Decision Process -- ACTION
- Proposed Strategic Planning Process -- ACTION
- Proposed Data Flow Changes -- ACTION
- Other Business/Adjourn

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**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.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**5/7 - 10:**

ASMFC Spring Meeting Week, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333.

**5/14 - 17:**

ASMFC American Shad Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Clarion Downtown Raleigh, 320 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

**5/15 - 18:**

5th International Fisheries Observer Conference, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

**5/16 - 17:**

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Coastwide Workshop, Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

**5/24:**

ASMFC Red Drum Technical Committee, South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division Offices, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina.

**5/25:**

ASMFC Red Drum Enhancement Subcommittee, South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division Offices, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina.

**5/29 - 6/1:**

ASMFC American Shad Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Holiday Inn – Inner Harbor, 301 W. Lombard Street, Baltimore, Maryland; (410) 685-3500.

**6/11 - 15:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree Grand Key Resort, 3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd., Key West, Florida; 800-222-8733.

**6/12 - 14:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Embassy Suites, 1700 Coliseum Drive, Hampton, Virginia; 757-827-8200.

**6/19 - 21:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Eastland Park Hotel, Portland, Maine.

**6/25 - 29:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

Most would agree, if not insist, that responsible management of public resources should involve some form of public participation, both to provide input to decision makers and to provide transparency to the decision making process itself. That's why the Commission provides the opportunity for public hearings before taking major actions, and why all meetings of the Commission and its management boards are open to the public. In addition, members of the public have the opportunity to provide input through the members of our advisory panels as well as through written comments.

For some time now the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board has been discussing our procedures for public participation with the intent of developing policies that result in a fair opportunity for public input, while ensuring efficient use of limited board meeting time. The discussions have identified the following strengths of our public process:

- Multiple in-state hearings reduce the travel burden to stakeholders.
- Written comment periods before major actions allow stakeholders to provide input.
- Stakeholders can directly contact Commissioners from their states.
- Stakeholder advisory panels are established to provide advice to management boards.

By holding in-state hearings and setting deadlines for the receipt of public comments the current Commission process strives to provide Commissioners with summaries of those hearings and copies of public comments prior to board meetings. This enables them to carefully consider the information before they begin debating proposed courses of action. Fundamental questions of fairness and efficiency are raised when deciding how to treat members of the public who travel to Commission meetings expecting to testify before a board after public hearings have been held.

Does the timing of their appearance give them an advantage over those who testified at state hearings or submitted letters before the comment period closed? How much board time should be devoted to listening to public comment and at the expense of what other board business? Who decides who gets to speak, for

how long, and by what criteria? If those speakers are perceived as getting their way on an issue, what implications does that have about the need for others to travel to Washington next time?

In considering all of this, the Policy Board has identified three types of agenda items and is in the process of establishing guidelines to address some of the above questions.

For issues that are not on the agenda, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

For topics that are on the agenda, but have not gone out for public comment, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Recognizing that these procedures are a change to previous practices and are still evolving, the Policy Board has committed to a gradual implementation. Initially, it is the Policy Board's intent that board chairs will exercise discretion in deciding what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

The implication to our stakeholders of the Policy Board's deliberations is that your attendance at Commission and management board meetings is for the primary and important purpose of providing transparency to the decision making process. It is not an assurance that everyone (or, in some cases, anyone) will have an opportunity to speak. However, it is a guarantee that all stakeholders will have a fair and reasonable opportunity to provide their input. Hopefully that is an outcome we can all agree with.



**Atlantic Croaker**  
*Micropogonias undulatus*

**Common Names:** croaker, hardhead, King Billy, grumbler

**Family:** Sciaenidae (along with weakfish, spot, spotted seatrout & red drum)

**Interesting Fish Facts:**  
•The characteristic croaking sound is produced by the vibrating of the swim bladder and special muscles

**Food for Thought:**  
Croaker have a lean white and slightly sweet meat, good baked or pan fried

**Largest Recorded:** 7 lbs., 1 oz (caught in commercial pound net in VA)

**Age/Mean Length at Maturity:** 6.8" for females and 7.2" for males

**Stock Status:** Mid-Atlantic component is not overfished & over-fishing is not occurring; status is unknown for South Atlantic component

## Species Profile: Atlantic Croaker Amendment Seeks to Maintain Healthy Mid-Atlantic Stock Component

### Introduction

Atlantic croaker, *Micropogonias undulatus*, occur in coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to Argentina. One of the most abundant inshore bottom dwelling fish along the U.S. Atlantic coast, croaker are sought by recreational anglers and commercial fishermen from New York to North Carolina. While highly valuable, there is still much that fisheries managers do not know about this resource. Amendment 1 to the original fishery management plan (FMP), approved in 2005, addresses these data needs and focuses on management to ensure long-term conservation of this important fishery resource.

### Life History

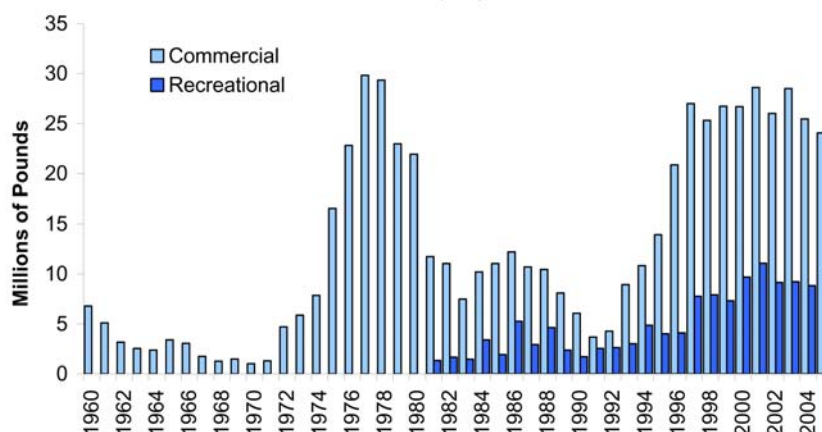
Atlantic croaker occur in U.S. coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to Florida. Seasonal migrations of croaker have not been well defined, but the fish appear to move northward and inshore during the warmer months and southward into the ocean during the winter. Spawning occurs from July through December with fish located in both the lower Chesapeake Bay and in coastal oceanic waters. The larvae move into estuaries and develop into juveniles in low salinity waters before moving into higher salinity waters in the summer and fall. Croaker mature between the ages of one and two, at a mean length of 6.8 inches for females and 7.2 inches for males. Size at age varies throughout the species' range, although all are mature by 10 inches in length regardless of sex. The oldest croaker caught was aged at 12 years; however, croaker fossils from archeological excavations near St. Augustine, Florida indicate that coastal Indians from the First Spanish period captured fish as old as 15 years. Very young croaker eat small planktonic organisms, while juveniles and adults feed on bottom organisms such as marine worms, mollusks, crustaceans, and occasionally fish. In turn, they are eaten by many species, including striped bass, flounder, weakfish, and spotted seatrout.

### Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Atlantic croaker support important commercial and recreational fisheries along the Atlantic coast, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina. The fish has been part of a mixed-stock commercial fishery since the 1880s. The commercial landings of croaker exhibit a cyclical trend -- in some years the catch is almost 30 million pounds, while in others it is less than two million pounds (Figure 1). Since 1996, the croaker fishery has been at the high end of the cycle with commercial landings in 2005 over 22 million pounds. The dominant commercial fishing gears include haul seines, pound nets, gillnets, and trawls.

Over the past 20 years, the recreational catch of croaker along the Atlantic coast from

**Figure 1. Atlantic Croaker Commercial and Recreational Landings**  
Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2007



New Jersey through Florida has risen from about two million pounds to a high of more than 11 million pounds in 2001 (Figure 1). Recreational landings were near that high in 2005, at 10.6 million pounds. Atlantic croaker are harvested in waters from a few feet deep to depths of 45 feet or more over all bottom types. They are caught by bottom fishing or jigging from anchored or drifting boats, ocean beaches and the banks of bays and rivers, as well as from structures such as piers, bridges, jetties, and causeways. They are taken in estuarine and nearshore oceanic waters by anglers fishing from party, charter, and private boats.

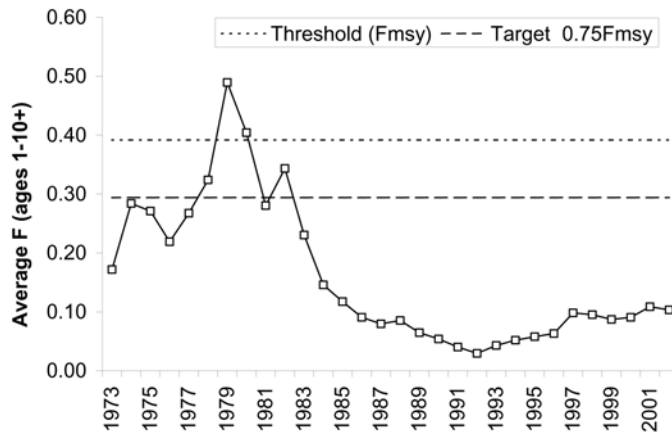
### Stock Status

The latest stock assessment was completed in 2004 and the results were endorsed by the Peer Review Panel of the Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR). The assessment only accounts for the Mid-Atlantic region (North Carolina and north); there is not yet enough data to assess the South Atlantic region (Florida through South Carolina). Fishing mortality (F) rates for Atlantic croaker have changed greatly over the last thirty years (Figure 2). In the late 1970s, F rose rapidly reaching a maximum of 0.5 in 1979. In the next year, F reversed this trend and reached its lowest level in 1992. Since then, F has gradually increased and remained relatively stable around 0.10 between 1997 and 2002.



Photo courtesy of VMRC

**Figure 2. Average Fishing Mortality Rates (Ages 1–10) for Atlantic Croaker in the Mid-Atlantic** (Source: ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Report for Peer Review, 2004)



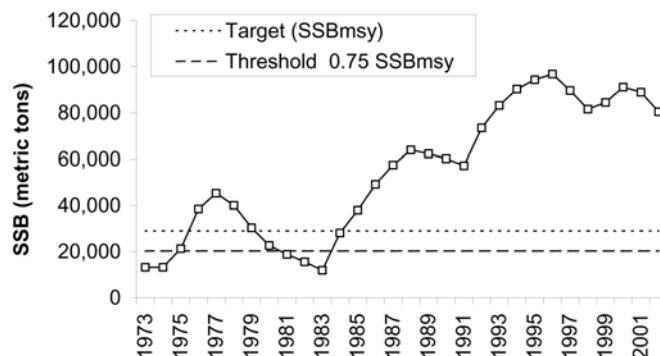
Spawning stock biomass (SSB) estimates exhibit a cyclical trend over the time series (Figure 3). From the early 1970s to 1983, SSB declined to its lowest level. Since 1984, SSB has increased in three distinct phases, reaching a maximum in 1996. Between 1999 and 2002, SSB estimates have ranged between 80,000 to 91,000 metric tons. Annual recruitment (of age 0 fish) is highly variable and appears to be dependent on natural environmental conditions.

The target and threshold SSBs, 28,932 metric tons and 20,252 metric tons respectively, are used to determine if croaker is in an overfished state. Under these reference points, croaker are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing in the Mid-Atlantic region. However, the estimates of F and SSB do not include bycatch from the shrimp fishery, a potentially significant source of mortality. The next stock assessment is scheduled for the fall of 2009, again through the SEDAR process.

### Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

The original FMP for Atlantic croaker was approved in 1987, with the states of Maryland through Florida participating. In the mid-1990s, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board and the ISFMP Policy Board reviewed the FMP and found it to be vague, no longer valid, and without any management measures that states are required to enforce. Thus, they recommended that an amendment to the FMP be prepared to define a new management program.

**Figure 3. Estimates of Spawning Stock Biomass for Atlantic Croaker in the Mid-Atlantic** (Source: ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Report for Peer Review, 2004)



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## Species Profile (continued from page 5)

Developing an appropriate management program, complete with biological reference points, required a new stock assessment to be completed. After the SEDAR Peer Review Panel approved the 2004 assessment's findings for use in management decisions, the Board initiated the development of an amendment to come into compliance with the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act and per-

petuate a sustainable resource to generate the greatest economic and social benefit.

The Commission approved Amendment 1 to the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Croaker in November 2005. Among other things, the Amendment revises the plan's management goals and objectives, expands the management unit to include the resource off of Delaware and New Jersey, establishes biological reference points (i.e., spawning stock biomass and fishing mortality targets and

thresholds) to manage the croaker resource, allows for management on a regional basis (Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic component), and requires states to submit annual compliance reports to the Commission. Amendment 1 was fully implemented January 2006.

For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, Atlantic Croaker FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [nmeserve@asmfc.org](mailto:nmeserve@asmfc.org).

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## Eelways Proposed for Dams 4 & 5 on the Potomac River

The National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in cooperation with Allegheny Energy, are proposing the installation of eelways at Dams 4 and 5 on the Potomac River. The dams are located in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park.

The impetus for this project is the USFWS's goal to open up the entire Potomac River for eel migration. "The Potomac will be the first river reopened to American eel passage on the East Coast," claims David Sutherland, a USFWS representative.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has called for restoration and improvement to American eel habitat. Estimates indicate that American eel have been removed from 88% of their historic habitat, largely due to obstructions created by dams. Barriers to upstream and downstream passage in freshwater has been cited by experts in the United States and Canada as one explanation for the current suppression of the American eel population.

Dams 4 and 5 were built in 1834 by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company to supply water for canal

operations. The dams were replaced with their present-day masonry structures in 1860 and 1857, respectively. They are currently maintained and owned by NPS, and Allegheny Energy operates a small power-generating facility at each dam.

The construction of eelways at both dams will open up at least 120 miles of river habitat to American eel. Allegheny Energy provides downstream passage to the eel by shutting down their turbines at night between September 15 and December 15 at both dams, when eel are known to out-migrate to the Atlantic Ocean for spawning.

"Allegheny has been a wonderful partner and has been providing eel passage inside and outside of the licensing process," says Sutherland.

The Department of the Interior, USFWS, National Park Service, the State of Maryland, and Allegheny Energy will conduct a yearlong evaluation study to confirm eel passage at both eelways. In the three to five years following, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources -- the party with authority over fish species in this section of the Potomac -- will continue to monitor

the eelways with the other project partners.

While this project falls in line with the Commission's goals to continue to improve habitat access and quality for diadromous species, it also shows that government agencies with seemingly contrary missions can work together to improve fisheries resources.



Photo credit: Rutgers University Marine Field Station

Before the project can be implemented, the Department of the Interior must conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment. For more information, please contact Scott Bell, Natural Resources Program Manager, NPS C&O Canal NHP, at (301) 714-2224, or David Sutherland, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Chesapeake Bay Field Office, at (410) 573-4535.

## Science Highlight: Understanding Fishing Mortality Rates and Their Use in Fisheries Management

A fundamental component of fisheries stock assessments is understanding how a fish stock will respond to a given level of harvest. The removal of fish due to fishing is called **fishing mortality**. An intuitive way to think of fishing mortality is to think in terms of exploitation or the fraction of the stock harvested in a year (i.e., the total harvest in a year divided by the stock size in that year).

Another way to look at fishing mortality is in terms of the instantaneous rate of fishing mortality (F) that describes the fraction of a fish stock killed due to fishing within an extremely small amount of time. The instantaneous rate F is more commonly used in the equations and models used by fishery scientists to describe stock status, which is then used by managers to determine stock status.

One way to better understand F is to look at how it relates to annual exploitation (see table below). For example, an F of .05 translates into a five percent annual exploitation, meaning that fishing related activity removed five percent of the total population in a given year. Following this example, an F of 0.3 means that 26 percent of the population is removed by fishing.

Instantaneous Rate	Percent Annual Exploitation
0.05	0.05
0.1	0.10
0.2	0.18
0.3	0.26
0.5	0.39
0.7	0.50
1.0	0.63
2.0	0.86

Mortality, or all deaths that occur to a fish stock, is usually divided into two components — fishing mortality and natural mortality. **Natural mortality (M)** refers to removal of fish from a population due to natural causes - that is death incurred from all causes other than from fishing. Fishing mortality encompasses all deaths from fishing activities, whether from direct removals (those fish which are caught and kept) or indirect removals (those fish which are not kept but nonetheless die from fishing activities – like bycatch or discards). The sum of fishing mortality and natural mortality is termed **total mortality** (i.e.,  $Z = F + M$ ).

Estimating F is usually done using stock assessment models. No single method will provide the best answer for all stocks, and for that reason different types of stock assessment models have been developed to provide estimates of stock size and exploitation rates. Each type of model has its own data requirements, different statistical assumptions, and its own advantages and disadvantages. For simplicity's sake, we'll leave detailed descriptions of stock assessment models until another time, and note that these models usually estimate F directly or subtract an assumed or estimated value of M from a Z estimate to get F.

It is relevant to briefly discuss the various factors that are inherent to F. The total yield from a fishery is defined as F multiplied by the current stock biomass. Thus, for a given stock biomass, changes in F will produce correspond-

ing changes in yield. But what factors affect the magnitude of F? Fishing mortality rate depends on fishing effort, catchability, and selectivity. **Effort** is the amount of time and fishing gear used to harvest a fish stock. **Catchability** is defined as the portion of a stock caught by a defined unit of effort. Changes in fishing gear or technology can affect how much is caught per unit effort. Improvements to gear and fishing technology tend to increase the amount of fish that are caught with a given unit of effort (if availability remains the same) and such serial changes in catchability will result in biased estimates of F if they are not taken into account. Another concept related to understanding fishing mortality is **selectivity**, which refers to the ability of a fishing gear to catch fish of a certain size compared with its ability to catch fish of other sizes. Effort, catchability, and selectivity all influence the estimation of F and, therefore, the results of a given stock assessment model.

The goal of most fisheries management plans is to conserve the resource while providing the greatest benefit to the users. There are two types of overfishing that management attempts to prevent: growth and recruitment. **Growth overfishing** occurs when fish are removed from the population while they are relatively small or when they are removed at such a high rate that they cannot reach a large size. **Recruitment overfishing** occurs when fish are removed at a rate that jeopardizes the ability of the population to replace itself.

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

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee

- Welcome/Introduction, *J. Marston*
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from October 23 & 24, 2006
- Review LEC Species Board Representation
- Review Outstanding Items from Annual Meeting
- Species Board Reports
- National Association of Law Enforcement Chiefs, *B. Buckson*
- Federal Agency Reports
- Discuss CALEA - National Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies
- Discuss Strategic Plan and LEC Involvement
- Discuss Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact
- Vessel Monitoring Systems Presentation, *B. Semrau*
- Other Business/Adjourn

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Management & Science Committee

- Welcome/Introductions, *D. Grout*
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes from October 23-24, 2006
- Public Comment
- Discuss Creation of an American Eel Working Group, *W. Laney*
- Addressing Retrospective Bias in the Commission's Process, *M. Paine*
- Review Stock Assessment Schedule, *M. Paine*
- Review Benchmark Stock Assessment Peer Review "Report Card" Project Questions and Provide Suggestions, *P. Kilduff*
- Discuss Development of Striped Bass Winter Tagging Cruise 20-year Report, *W. Laney*
- Updates on: Up-river Creel Survey, *M. Caldwell*; Energy Workshop, *M. Caldwell*; ACFCMA Plus-up Funds, *T. Miller*; Assessment Science Committee, *M. Paine*; Multispecies Technical Committee, *M. Paine*; NEAMAP, *M. Caldwell*; Habitat Committee, *J. Thomas*
- Election of Vice-Chair
- Other Business/Adjourn

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Tautog Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *D. Pierce*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *D. Pierce*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from January 30, 2007
- Public Comment
- Discussion of Addendum IV Implementation, *C. Vonderweidt*
  - Technical Committee Recommendation, *J. McNamee*
  - Board Discussion
- Review State Proposals to Achieve  $F = 0.20$  -- ACTION, *J. McNamee*
- Other Business/Adjourn

10:15 AM - Noon Weakfish Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *P. Augustine*
- Board Consent, *P. Augustine*
  - Approve Agenda
  - Approve Proceedings from February 1, 2007
- Public Comment
- Update from the Technical Committee, *R. Allen*
- Review Massachusetts Request for *De Minimis* Status – ACTION, *N. Meserve*
- State Sampling Plans for 2007 per Addendum I Requirements – ACTION





- Review Sampling Plans and PRT Comments, *N. Meserve*
- Consider Approval of State Sampling Plans
- State Implementation Plans for Addendum II – **ACTION**
  - Review State Plans to Implement Addendum II, *N. Meserve*
  - Review Technical Committee Comments, *R. Allen*
  - Consider Approval of State Implementation Plans
- Addendum III: BRD Consistency – **FINAL ACTION**
  - Review Public Comment, *N. Meserve*
  - Review Technical Committee Comments, *R. Allen*
  - Consider Final Approval of Addendum III
- Other Business/Adjourn



**1:15 PM - 5:00 PM American Lobster Management Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *J. Nelson*
- Board Consent -- **ACTION**, *J. Nelson*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from January and April 2007
- Public Comment
- Review & Approve Draft Amendment 5 for Public Comment -- **ACTION**, *T. Kerns*
  - PDT/Working Group Update
  - Review of Trap Transfer White Paper
- Consider Approval of Addendum XI -- **FINAL ACTION**, *T. Kerns*
  - Review Public Comment on SNE Rebuilding Timeframe and Management Measures, as well as Delayed Implementation Measures for American Lobster
- Review of Data Reporting Addenda, *T. Kerns*
  - Technical Committee Report to the Board, *P. Howell*
- Compliance Review, *T. Kerns*
  - Annual Compliance Review
  - Update on Addendum VII Implementation
- 2008 Lobster Stock Assessment -- **ACTION**, *P. Howell*
  - Approve Terms of Reference
- Other Business/Adjourn

**6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Awards Reception**

**Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

**8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *J. Travelstead*
- Board Consent -- **ACTION**, *J. Travelstead*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from January 31, 2007
- Public Comment
- Consider Approval of Amendment 14 -- **FINAL ACTION**, *T. Kerns*
- Review Public Information Document for Amendment 15, *T. Kerns*
  - Review Advisory Panel Comment, *T. Kerns*
  - Provide Guidance to PDT on Issues to be Developed for Draft Amendment 15
- Review & Approve Draft Addendum XIX for Public Comment (black sea bass allocation, summer flounder recreational shares, and reference point setting) -- **ACTION**, *T. Kerns*
- Assessment Science Committee, *M. Caldwell*
  - Response to the Board Charge of Reviewing the Summer Flounder Assessment Process
- Review 2007 Compliance of Recreational Measures, *T. Kerns*
- Consider Approval of Advisory Panel Nominations -- **ACTION**, *T. Berger*
- Other Business/Adjourn

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## ACCSP Presents at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference

### ACCSP Presents at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference

Look for ACCSP at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference in Mystic, Connecticut on April 22 – April 25, 2007. The conference theme, “Putting the Pieces Together,” will focus on the “ecosystem approach to habitat conservation and multispecies management, and the importance of partnerships.”

ACCSP staff will be giving a presentation titled “Data Standardization and Availability: Impacts on Resource Management.” This presentation will illustrate how the ACCSP aims to improve data quality, completeness, and availability by performing data standardization and centralizing data management. The ACCSP contributes to the restoration and sustainability of marine fisheries by reducing the time scientists and managers spend obtaining and formatting data. Therefore, resource assessments and fisheries management actions can be taken on more current data.

ACCSP staff will also be available to provide more information or answer questions about the program in the exhibit hall. We look forward to seeing you at our booth!

For more information on the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference, please visit <http://www.neafwa.org/>.

### ACCSP Update

ACCSP staff and committees continue to push program initiatives forward in the wake of previous ACCSP Director Maury Osborn’s retirement. Major milestones expected to be achieved in the next year include the roll-out of the electronic vessel trip reporting application, and the data load of important historical fisheries data from the National Marine Fisheries Services to the ACCSP data warehouse. The availability of this Atlantic coastwide historical data via the data warehouse will be a turning point for ACCSP, as it will mark the first time that end-users can access a full time-series of landings data for stock assessments.

Meanwhile, the Coordinating Council Search Committee has begun the search for a new director. The director will play an integral role in providing leadership and guidance to the program as ACCSP moves forward. The position description was posted in mid-March and will close May 1, 2007. The full description may be accessed at <http://www.accsp.org/vacancies.htm>.

For more information, please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org) or call (202) 216-5690.

## ASMFC Releases Draft Lobster Addendum XI for Public Comment

The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board has approved sending forward for public comment and review Draft Addendum XI to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum responds to the findings of the 2005 peer-reviewed stock assessment which called for additional harvest restrictions given the Southern New England (SNE) stock’s depleted stock abundance, low recruitment, and high fishing mortality rates over the past few years.

The Draft Addendum presents options for a rebuilding time frame for the SNE stock and proposes management options for Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2 (inshore SNE), 3 (offshore waters), 4 (inshore Northern Mid-Atlantic), 5 (inshore Southern Mid-Atlantic), and 6 (New York and Connecticut State Waters) to aid in the stock’s rebuilding. The Addendum also proposes a mechanism of ensuring that a state meets its obligations under the plan in a way that minimizes the probability that a state’s delay in complying does not adversely affect other states’ fisheries or conservation of the resource.



Photo courtesy of OAR/National Undersea Research Program (NURP)

The States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey will conduct their public hearings on the Draft Addendum from mid-April to early May; please visit <http://www.asmfc.org/meetings.htm> for more details.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission’s website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. **Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM on May 4, 2007** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at 1444 ‘Eye’ Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Addendum XI). For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202) 289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).

## Cynthia Robertson Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

In just a year, Cindy Robertson has become an important part of the Commission, providing vital administrative support to the Commission's staff. Her efforts have contributed to the Commission's vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." In recognition of her contributions, Cindy was named Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2007. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

Over the last year, Cindy's work has reflected her commitment to excellence, timeliness, initiative and teamwork. She consistently produces high quality work, often delivering projects well in advance of their deadlines. She anticipates staff needs, improving staff efficiency and productivity. She is a resource to staff, taking routine tasks off their plates so that they can concentrate on tasks requiring their technical expertise. Cindy's attention to detail, positive attitude, and willingness to contribute in all that she does has earned her the respect of the entire staff.

Prior to coming to the Commission, Cindy worked in the private sector for 25 years. The Commission has certainly benefited from the skills and work experience she gained over that time and is grateful for her many contributions. A native New Yorker, Cindy moved to the DC area in 2001. She has three grown daughters and one adorable grandchild! As an Employee of the Quarter, she received a \$500 cash award, an engraved pewter pencil cup, and a letter of appreciation for her personnel record. In addition, her name has been engraved on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Cindy!



### **Science Highlight: *Understanding Fishing Mortality Rates and Their Use in Fisheries Management (continued from page 7)***

Fishery reference points are tools used to measure the status of a fish population or stock relative to management objectives. Reference points, in conjunction with current estimates of  $F$  and stock abundance or biomass, are used to determine if a stock is overfished or if overfishing is occurring. When the users remove fish from the population faster than they can be replaced, we say that overfishing is occurring. Overfished is defined as the case where biomass is below a level that ensures a stock can successfully replenish itself.

In general, reference points can be based on several different management goals: maximizing yield, maintaining the parent stock, and maximizing sustained yield (which strives to address both yield and maintenance of spawning stock). If other explanations exist for the low abundance of a stock, such as loss of essential habitat or predation, then the term depleted may be used instead of overfished.  $F$  is the only factor affecting the dynamics of a fish stock that resource managers can influence directly; therefore, adjusting fishing mortality

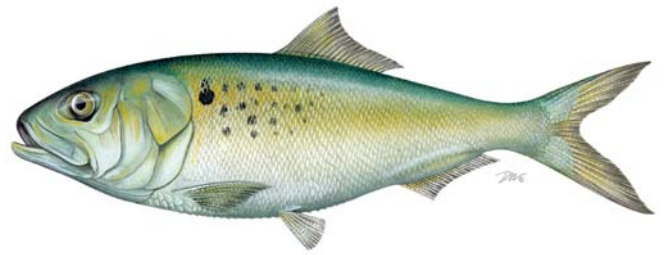
rates is the only tool available for managers to use in order to manipulate fish stocks toward the desired state. Managers depend on scientists to provide reliable estimates of both current stock size and  $F$ , in order to make effective decisions on how to regulate fishing mortality.

Much of this article was excerpted from the forthcoming ASMFC publication "A Layman's Guide to Stock Assessments" by John Carmichael, Robert Latour, Patrick Kilduff, and Tina Berger.

# ASMFC Spring Meeting Final Agenda (continued from page 9)

## 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *P. White*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *P. White*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from January 30, 2007
- Public Comment
- Plan Review Team Reports, *B. Spear*
  - State Compliance
  - FMP Review
- Technical Committee Report, *A. Sharov*
- Other Business/Adjourn



## 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM ISFMP Policy Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *G. Lapointe*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from February 2007
- Public Comment
- NEAMAP Funding Subcommittee Update
- Committee on Economics and Social Sciences Report, *M Hall-Arber*
- Assessment Science Committee Report, *M. Paine*
  - Approval of 2008 Stock Assessment Schedule
  - Retrospective Pattern Recommendations
- Management and Science Committee Report, *D. Grout*
- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities, *M. Caldwell*
- Multispecies Technical Committee – Report on Initial Meeting
- Discussion on Updating the ASMFC Strategic Plan
- Discussion of ASMFC Involvement in Cunner Management
- Feedback on Meeting Overview Document
- Other Business/Adjourn

## 4:15 PM - 6:15 PM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Welcome/Call to Order, *S. Woodward*
- Board Consent -- ACTION, *S. Woodward*
  - Approve Agenda
  - Approve Proceedings from October 24, 2006
- Public Comment
- Southern Kingfish Presentation, *L. Daniel*
- Spot PRT: Follow-Up Report to the FMP Review, *J. Grist*
- Spotted Seatrout PRT: Follow-Up Report to the FMP Review, *N. Meserve*
- Red Drum Stock Assessment and Enhancement Updates, *N. Meserve*
  - Finalize Stock Assessment Subcommittee Membership -- ACTION
  - Review Stock Enhancement Subcommittee Progress
- Other Business
  - Consolidation of South Atlantic Advisory Panels
  - Board Chair Rotation
- Adjourn

## Thursday, May 10, 2007

### 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Executive Committee

- Welcome /Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Board Consent – ACTION, *G. Lapointe*
  - Approval of Agenda

- Approval of Proceedings from October 2006
- Public Comment, *G. Lapointe*
- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee, *R. Boyles*
  - Presentation of the FY08 Budget - **ACTION**
  - Discussion on FY07 ACFCMA Plus-up Allocation
  - Interim Review of 2007 Action Plan Accomplishments
- Future Annual Meetings Update, *L. Leach*
  - October 28 - November 1, 2007 - Annapolis, Maryland
  - 2008 - Rhode Island
  - 2009 - Delaware
  - 2010 - South Carolina
- Other Business/Adjourn

**9:15 AM - 10:15 AM                      Horseshoe Crab Management Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Miller*
- Board Consent – **ACTION**, *R. Miller*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from August 15, 2006
- Public Comment
- Plan Review Team Reports, *B. Spear*
  - State Compliance
  - FMP Review
- Update on Joint Meetings with the USFWS Shorebird Technical Committee, *B. Spear*
- Other Business/Adjourn

**10:30 AM - 1:00 PM                      Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *E. Smith*
- Board Consent -- **ACTION**, *E. Smith*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from January 30, 2007
- Public Comment
- Management Options for Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Sharks, *C. Vonderweidt*
- 2006/2007 Spiny Dogfish Quota Overage Payback, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Other Business/Adjourn

**1:00 PM - 1:15 PM                      Buffet Lunch for Commissioners and Proxies**

**1:30 PM - 2:00 PM                      ISFMP Policy Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Board Consent -- **ACTION**, *G. Lapointe*
  - Approval of Agenda
- Public Comment
- Review Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)
- Other Business/Adjourn

**2:00 PM - 2:30 PM                      Business Session**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Board Consent -- **ACTION**, *G. Lapointe*
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from October 2006
- Public Comment
- Review of Noncompliance Findings (if necessary)
- Review and Consider Approval of FMPs or Amendments (if necessary)
- Other Business/Adjourn



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
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*Return Service Requested*