ASMFC
# FISHERIES focus
Volume 18, Issue 6
August 2009
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 Summer Meeting
## August 17 - 20, 2009

## Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town
## 901 North Fairfax Street
## Alexandria, Virginia
## (703) 683-6000

## 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. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.

**August 17, 2009**

**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM** **American Lobster Management Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *B. Culhane*
- Public Comment
- Discussion of Management Response to Assessment Results - **POSSIBLE ACTION**
  - Review Technical Committee Memo, *K. McKown*
- Draft Addendum XV, *T. Kerns* - **ACTION**
  - LCMA 1 Limited Entry in Federal Waters
  - Review Draft Addendum to Consider Approval for Public Comment
- Discussion of Non-Trap Gear Landings, *T. Kerns*
  - Possible Effects of Non-Trap Gear Landings with Changes in Groundfish Sector Management
- Discussion of Federal Gear Restricted Areas, *T. Kerns*
  - MAFMC Requested Board Feedback on Gear-Restricted Areas in Federal Waters
- Update on LCMA 6 V-Notch Program, *D. Simpson*
- Update on the ALWTRP, *D. Borggaard*
  - Effects on the Lobster Fishery

**August 18, 2009**

**8:00 AM - 11:00 AM** **Atlantic Herring Section**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *T. Stockwell*
- Public Comment
- 2009 Fishing Season Report, *C. Vonderweidt*
- 2009 TRAC Assessment Summary, *M. Cieri*
- Update on NEFMC Amendments 4 & 5, *L. Steele*
- Discussion of Specification Process and Inconsistencies between Federal and ASMFC Plans, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Discussion of Small Mesh Trawl Fishery, *D. Grout*

*continued on page 6*

### Inside This Issue

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



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## Upcoming Meetings

***8/17 - 20:***
ASMFC Summer Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333 (see final agenda on page 1).

***8/23:***
ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Stock Assessment Subcommittee (Data Workshop), USFWS Northeast Fishery Center, 308 Washington Avenue, Lamar, PA.

***8/24 (begins at 1:00 PM) - 28 (ends at Noon):***
Red Drum SEDAR 18 Review Workshop, Doubletree Atlanta Buckhead, 3342 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, Georgia; (404) 231-1234 or (800) 222-TREE.

***9/14 - 18:***
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Charleston Marriott Hotel, 170 Lockwood Boulevard, Charleston, South Carolina; (800) 968-3569.

***9/14 - 18:***
ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

***9/22 - 24:***
New England Fishery Management Council, Radisson Hotel, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

***10/5 - 9:***
ASMFC Basic Stock Assessment Workshop (Part 1), Cavalier Oceanfront Hotel, Oceanfront at 42nd Street, Virginia Beach, Virginia. For more information, please contact Dr. Genevieve Nesslage at gnesslage@asmfc.org.

***10/13 - 15:***
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Princess Royale, 9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland; (410) 524-7777.

***11/2 - 5:***
ASMFC 68th Annual Meeting, Newport, Rhode Island.

***11/9 - 13:***
ASMFC Basic Stock Assessment Workshop (Part 2), Cavalier Oceanfront Hotel, Oceanfront at 42nd Street, Virginia Beach, Virginia. For more information, please contact Dr. Genevieve Nesslage at gnesslage@asmfc.org.

***11/17 - 19:***
New England Fishery Management Council, Hyatt Regency Goat Island, Newport, Rhode Island.

## Seeing Is Believing

Recently I attended an evening public listening session with some 75 fishermen who had gathered to express their concerns to fisheries managers and scientists about proposed fisheries management actions. Speakers were mostly recreational fishermen but included a number of charterboat owners. Although most said they were speaking as individuals their comments followed common themes illustrating the challenges of fisheries management.

Clearly, all felt strongly about the issues they had come to talk about. Some expressed deep concern about the impacts new regulations would have on their businesses and livelihoods. Others were worried that while their fishing expenses were going up more restrictive catch limits would mean less fish brought home to eat. Most stated they had been fishing for at least 10 years, some longer than that.

All of the speakers came from diverse backgrounds. Some charterboat operators started in the business while in high school, others entered after leaving careers in other fields. Recreational anglers included professionals from different fields, including doctors, lawyers, builders, trades people, and small business owners.

Most of the speakers referred to the complexity of the fishery management process and their lack of familiarity with it. They acknowledged that while the issue they had come to speak about had been under consideration for several years, it was only recently that they had become aware of the proposed regulations and their potential impact on the fishermen.

They were not aware of the various steps that had been taken in the science process to gather data, nor were they aware of the opportunity to submit data to that process. Most had not read the resulting scientific reports and scientific reviews of those reports. Few expressed an understanding of the current requirements in federal law regarding fisheries management.

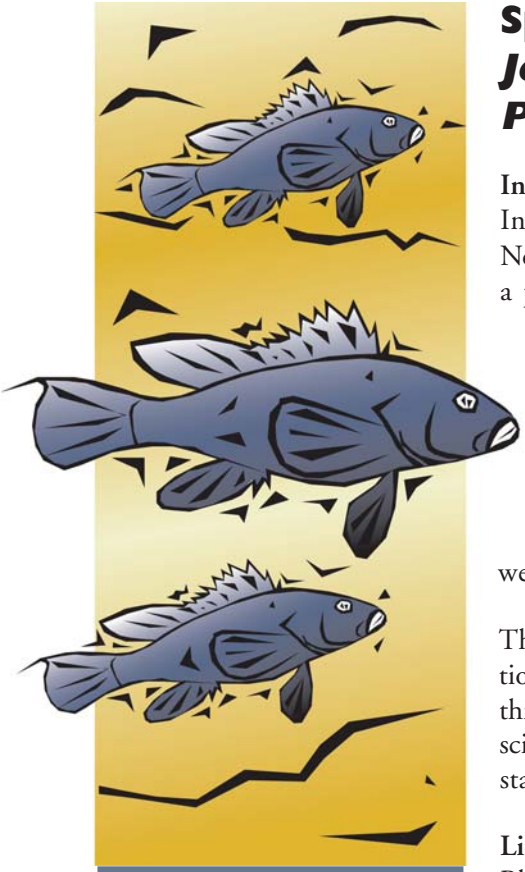
What people did know and talk about was their personal fishing experiences. They described ample supplies of fish. Several handed out pictures of their recent catches. It was clear to them, given what they had seen on the water, that the science estimates were dead wrong. Some pointed out that their cumulative fishing experience gave them a better understanding of fish populations and behavior than those of the fisheries scientists preparing the stock assessments.

In short, they collectively opposed any new restrictions because they felt the science did not support the need for action or because the economic harm to their business would be too great. This meeting and the comments that were made are in no way reflective of the views of all fishermen. It is simply a reflection of what happened on one evening in one place.

That place was Florida, the species in question was red snapper, and the action being considered by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council was extending the temporary closure of red snapper fishing in federal waters. In the 1950s the average red snapper weighed 19 pounds and was 12 years old. Today they average 1.8 pounds and are less than two years old. The biomass now is three percent of what the stock was in the mid-40s. This information was derived from scientific analysis of catch and survey data collected by state and federal fisheries scientists. Their conclusions have been reviewed and validated by a panel of world class independent scientists.

It is human nature to want to seek a second opinion when we receive bad news or are given information that does not comport with our own observations. Such skepticism is healthy and often useful. It is especially important to consider potential biases of individuals and gaps in the observations they are using to draw their conclusions. Are scientists providing answers they believe will protect their jobs? Are fishermen providing reports they believe will help keep their businesses open? Are scientists surveying the ocean through the full range of the species? Are fishermen basing their views on the grounds close to their home port?

The professionals who spoke that night no doubt went off to work the next day to pursue the careers they had trained for. They expected their patients and clients to respect their expertise and follow their advice…advice crafted from years of formal training and experience. While fisheries science is not always as exact as medicine and law, fisheries scientists are equally deserving of that consideration. When we decide not to follow their advice, just as when we decide not to follow other expert advice, we do so at our own great risk. Avoiding that should be something we can all agree on.



**Black Sea Bass**
***Centropristis striata***

**Common Names: black will, chub, pinbass, old humpback**

**Family: Serranidae (true sea bass)**

**Interesting Facts:**
*** Breeding males have vivid hues of flourescent blue and green around eyes and nape**
*** Larger males are commonly called "humpbacks" because of a pronounced lump on their foreheads - the lump is referred to as the nuchal hump (see photo to the right)**
*** An older female can produce up to 1 million pelagic eggs**

**Largest Recorded: 10 pounds, 4 ounces (Virginia Beach, VA)**

**Maximum Age: 20 years**

**Length at Maturity (female): 7.48"**

**Stock Status: Rebuilt**

# Species Profile: Black Sea Bass
## *Joint Management Yields Rebuilt Status for Popular Mid-Atlantic Fish*

### Introduction

In December 2008, the black sea bass benchmark stock assessment developed by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Data Poor Stocks Workgroup was peer reviewed by a panel of independent experts. The assessment was a significant departure from earlier assessments with the model changing from a simple index-based model to a complex statistical catch-at-length model (SCALE). Data used in the assessment included catch history, survey and recruitment indices, growth information, and survey and catch length frequencies. The data used have been collected annually since 1968 from fish caught (recreational (since 1981) and commercial) and fish sampled in the ocean (taken on research surveys.) A simpler assessment approach was used in the past because the analytical models did not work well when they were attempted previously.

The stock assessment update, which occurred in June 2009, estimates current population size at about 103% of the biomass goal, indicating that the stock is rebuilt. While this offers good news for the stock, the Data Poor Stocks Review Panel recommended that scientists and managers should "recognize and allow for the sizable uncertainty in stock status when establishing catch limits."

### Life History

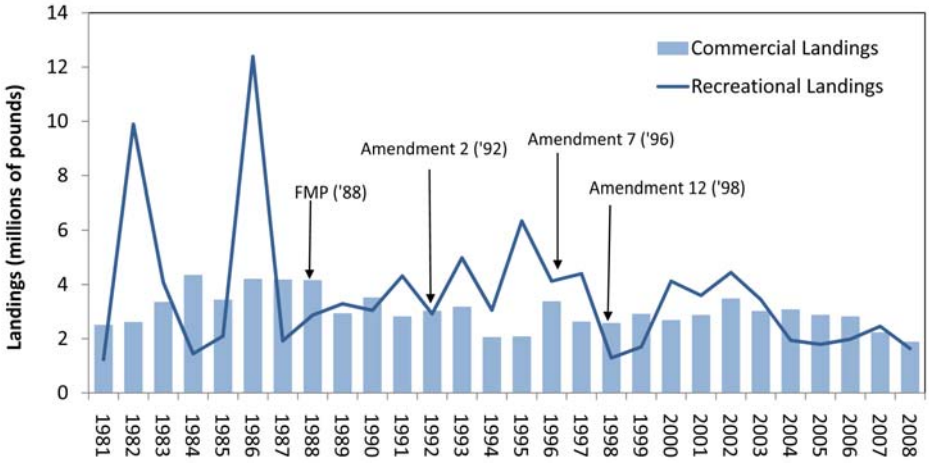
Black sea bass inhabit Atlantic coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to the Florida Keys, concentrating in areas from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Canaveral, Florida. Two distinct stocks of black sea bass exist along the Atlantic coast with overlapping ranges. The northern stock migrates seasonally and spawns off of New England in the late summer. The southern stock spawns off of Chesapeake Bay in the early summer. A temperate reef fish, black sea bass commonly inhabit rock bottoms near pilings, wrecks, and jetties. Black sea bass rely on their large mouth and swift ocean currents to catch prey, which include fish, crabs, mussels, and razor clams. Black sea bass summer in northern inshore waters at depths of less than 120 feet and winter in southern offshore waters at depths of 240 to 540 feet.

Black sea bass are protogynous hermaphrodites, which mean they start life as a female and when they reach 9-13 inches (2 - 5 years of age) they change sex to become males. Thirty-eight percent of the females in the Mid-Atlantic demonstrate sex reversal between August and April, after most fish have spawned. Even though some fish are males when they reach sexual maturity, most produce eggs when they first mature. Following transition, a sea bass will either become a dominant male, characterized by a larger size and a bright blue nuchal hump during spawning season, or a subordinate male that has few distinguishing features. Black sea bass reproduce from February to

Photo: NEAMAP. Black sea bass with nuchal hump anterior to the dorsal fin.

July; the spawning season starts earliest in the southern portion of their range and progresses northward through spring. An average size black sea bass (ages 2 - 5) produces 280,000 eggs. Eggs float in the water column until they hatch within a few days after fertilization. Larvae drift in coastal water 2 to 50 miles offshore until they reach about a half an inch. Young sea bass migrate into estuaries, bays, and sounds. They seek shelter in a variety of habitats such as submerged aquatic vegetation, oyster reefs, and man-made structures.

**Figure 1. Black Sea Bass Landings**
Source: Personal communication from NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2009



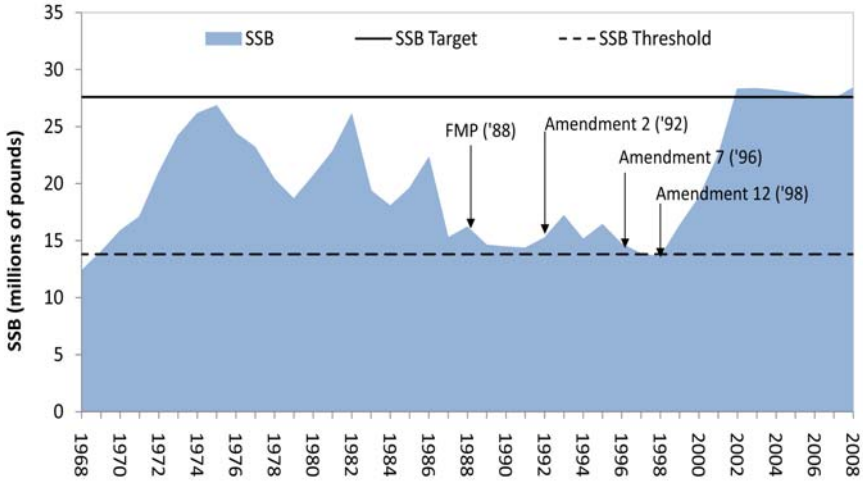

**Commercial and Recreational Fisheries**

Black sea bass are highly sought by both commercial and recreational fishermen throughout the Mid-Atlantic. Fisheries change seasonally with changes in fish distribution. Inshore and more southern commercial fisheries are prosecuted primarily with fish pots and handlines. When fish move offshore in the winter, they are primarily caught in trawl fisheries targeting summer flounder, scup and *Loligo* squid. Recreational fisheries generally occur during the period that sea bass are inshore. Since the fishery management plan's approval in 1997, the black sea bass fishery has operated under a quota. Landing levels for both the commercial and recreational fisheries are restricted by annual total allowable landings.

Commercial landings of black sea bass have been recorded since the late 1800s. From 1887 through 1948, commercial landings north of Cape Hatteras fluctuated around six million pounds and then peaked at 22 million pounds in 1952. Fish were primarily harvested by handlines during the 1900s. The 1950s marked the development of the trap fishery. By 1971, landings declined to 1.3 million pounds. Since the late 1970s, landings ranged from 2 million pounds (1994) to 4.3 million pounds (1984). 2008 landings were estimated to be 1.8 million pounds. Otter trawls and fish pots/traps have accounted for the majority of the black sea bass landings in most states. Other important gear includes hand lines and lobster pots. Commercial fishery discards, although poorly estimated, appear to be a minor part of the total fishery removals from the stock, generally less than 441,000 pounds per year.

Black sea bass are also an important recreational species in the Mid-Atlantic, commonly caught using squid and natural bait. In 1965, over half of the total catch of black sea bass was credited to recreational fishing. Angling pressure increased markedly in the mid-1980s. In 1998 and 1999, recreational landings decreased substantially relative to levels in the early to mid-1990s. The decrease in recreational landings may be partially attributed to an increase in minimum size limits. Landings started to increase in 2000 and averaged 4 million pounds from 2000 to 2004. Recreational landings in 2008 were estimated at 1.6 million pounds. Recreational discards are somewhat higher than commercial ranging from 0.2 to 1.7 million pounds per year.

**Figure 2. Black Sea Bass Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)**
NEFSC Black Sea Bass Assessment Update, 2009




**Status of the Stock**

The assessment model for black sea bass changed in 2008 from a simple index-based model to a complex statistical catch at length model incorporating a broad range of fishery and survey data. The fishery catch is modeled as a single fleet with indices of stock abundance from the North-

*continued on page 8*

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

**8:00 AM - 11:00 AM** **Atlantic Herring Section (continued)**
- Advisory Panel Non-Traditional Stakeholder Call Summary, *T. Berger*

**11:15 AM - 1:00 PM** **Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *A.C. Carpenter*
- Public Comment
- Election of Vice-Chair
- Discussion of Quota Transfer Regulatory Language within the Fishery Management Plan, *T. Kerns* - **ACTION**
  - Scup Summer Period (State-by-State Quotas)
  - Black Sea Bass (State-by-State Quotas)
  - Consider Approval of Draft Addendum XX for Public Comment
- Update of MAFMC Progress on Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, *T. Kerns*
- Discussion of Future Monitoring Committee Role, *T. Kerns*
- Consider Plan Review Team Membership, *T. Kerns* - **ACTION**
  - Review and Populate Membership for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan Review Teams

**2:00 PM - 4:30 PM** **Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *M. Gibson*
- Public Comment
- Fishery Management Plan Review- **ACTION**
- Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) Report
  - Overview of CESS Work Plan, *J. Ward*
  - Discuss and Provide Direction to CESS
- Draft Addendum II - **ACTION**
  - Overview, *N. Meserve*
  - Advisory Panel and Technical Committee Comment, *K. Place & D. Kahn*
  - Discuss and Consider Approval for Public Comment - **ACTION**
- Discussion of EEZ Closure and Gamefish Executive Order, *M. Duval*

**4:45 PM - 6:15 PM** **Horseshoe Crab Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Boyles, Jr.*
- Public Comment
- Technical Updates
  - Horseshoe Crab Stock Assessment Update, *B. Spear*
  - ARM (Horseshoe Crab/Red Knot) Model Update, *C. McGowan*
  - Shorebird Surveys Update, *G. Breese*
- Consider Approval of Extension of Addendum V Commercial Measures - **ACTION**

**August 19, 2009**

**8:00 AM - 10:30 AM** **Weakfish Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Miller*
- Public Comment
- 2009 Weakfish Stock Assessment – **POSSIBLE ACTION**
  - Presentation of Stock Assessment Report, *J. Brust & R. Allen*
  - Presentation of Peer Review Report, *P. Sullivan*
  - Technical Committee Recommendations, *R. Allen*
  - Response Options, *R. Beal*
  - Board Discussion
- 2009 Weakfish Sampling Plans, *N. Meserve* - **ACTION**

**10:45 AM - 1:15 PM** **Atlantic Menhaden Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *P. White*
- Public Comment

- Center for Independent Experts Program Review Findings/Recommendations Summary, *B. Spear*
  - Research and Science
  - Management and Localized Depletion
- Consider Approval of Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment - **ACTION**
- Stock Assessment Update, *R. Latour* - **ACTION**
  - Progress and Timeline
  - Review and Consider Approval of Terms of Reference
- Review of Ecologic Reference Points Examples, *B. Spear*

**2:15 PM - 6:00 PM ISFMP Policy Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Review of Stock Rebuilding Performance
- Reports of the Fishing Gear Technology Workgroup, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, Habitat Committee, and Fish Passage Working Group
- NMFS Presentation on the Protected Species Grant Program
- Review and Consider Editorial Changes and Updates to ISFMP Charter
- Review Next Steps for Ecosystem-based Fishery Management by the Commission

**August 20, 2009**

**8:00 AM - 9:30 AM South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *R. Boyles, Jr.*
- Public Comment
- Potential Omnibus Amendment - **POSSIBLE ACTION**
  - Review White Paper, *N. Meserve*
  - Board Discussion
- Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment, *H. Rickabaugh* - **ACTION**
  - Review and Consider Approval of Terms of Reference
- Fishery Management Plan Reviews, *N. Meserve* - **ACTION**
  - Review and Consider Approval of *de minimis* Requests
  - Review and Consider Approval of FMP Reviews
- SEAMAP Update, *M. Paine*

**9:45 AM - 11:45 AM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Shark Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *L. Daniel*
- Public Comment
- Review and Consider Approval of Draft Addendum I - **ACTION**
  - Public Hearing and Written Comment Summary, *C. Vonderweidt*
  - Technical Committee Recommendations, *G. Skomal*
  - Advisory Panel and Law Enforcement Committee Recommendations, *L. Gillingham & M. Howard*
- Plan Review Team and Technical Committee Review of Maine & New Hampshire *de minimis* Sharks Proposals, *C. Vonderweidt & G. Skomal* - **ACTION**
- Spiny Dogfish CITES Consideration Update, *C. Vonderweidt*
- Draft Amendment 3 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly-Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan Update, *K. Brewster-Geisz*
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Spiny Dogfish Amendment 3 Scoping Document Update, *J. Armstrong*

**12:15 PM - 2:45 PM Shad & River Herring Management Board**
- Welcome/Call to Order, *P. Diodati*
- Public Comment
- Draft Amendment 3 (American Shad) - **ACTION**
  - Review of Amendment 3, *K. Taylor*
  - Review Technical Committee and Advisory Panel Comments, *R. Sadzinski & B. Young*
  - Discuss and Consider Approval of Draft Amendment 3 for Public Comment

*continued on page 11*

## Species Profile: Black Sea Bass (continued from page 5)

east Fisheries Science Center's winter, spring, and autumn surveys. A model averaging approach was adopted using the average of results from ten candidate models. Recruitment at age 1 averaged 26.4 million fish during 1968-1999. The 2000 and 2002 year classes are estimated to be the largest of the time series, at 56 and 39.3 million age 1 fish, respectively. With greatly improved recruitment and declining fishing mortality rates since 2000, spawning stock biomass (SSB) has steadily increased to about 28.4 million pounds in 2008.

The new reference points are an SSB target of 27.6 million pounds and a fishing mortality (F) target of 0.42. With current SSB at 28.4 million pounds and F at 0.28, the stock is considered rebuilt and overfishing is not occurring.

With the new model, the technical advice to managers has been to proceed with caution due to a number of variables. These include uncertainty in the natural mortality estimate, model input parameters, residual patterns in model fit, and significant uncertainty associated with managing a protogynous species (i.e. individuals change sex from female to male). Additionally, there appears to be a slight retrospective bias in the model which overestimates SSB and underestimates F.

**Atlantic Coastal Management**

In an effort to coordinate management actions in both state and federal waters, the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council have established a joint management program for black sea bass. The program divides an annual quota between the recreational fishery (51 percent) and the commercial fishery (49 percent). Recreational fishery management measures are developed annually to achieve a target harvest limit, and usually include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits, and fishing seasons.

Each year the Commission and Council establish a coastwide commercial quota for the following. Under the Commission process, this quota is divided among the states based on historic landings. State-specific shares are as follows: Maine and New Hampshire - 0.5%; Connecticut - 1%; Delaware - 5%; New York - 7%, Rhode Island, North Carolina, and Maryland - 11%; Massachusetts - 13%; and New Jersey and Virginia – 20%. A variety of management measures including minimum size and mesh requirements, limited entry, and closed seasons regulate the commercial fishery. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org.

Photo: John Chisholm, MA DMF

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

**Commissioners**

Representative Sarah K. Peake -- In July, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, with approval from both the state's Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate President, appointed State Representative Sarah K. Peake, 4th Barnstable District (consisting of seven towns on Cape Cod), as the Massachusetts' new legislative appointee to the Commission. Representative Peake has been in public office since 2002, having served on the Provincetown Board of Selectmen and Charter Enforcement Commission. She was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 2007 and currently serves on the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development (Vice-Chair), the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight, and the House Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets. Representative Peake received her J.D. from Pace University and her A.B from Colgate University. She is a member of the American Bar Association, as well as the Massachusetts and Barnstable County Bar Associations. Representative Peake was raised in Bronxville, NY. She is a member of Elder Services of Cape Cod & the Islands, Advisory Council; Lower Cape Outreach Council, Honorary Board Member; and the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce. She spent her summers on Cape Cod, learning to sail and developing a love of nature and Cape Cod that endures today. Welcome aboard Representative Peake!

*continued on page 12*

# Science Highlight: Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships (ACFHP) is a candidate partnership under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). ACFHP consists of 30 partners including the ASMFC, the 16 state natural resource agencies managing Atlantic coastal river drainage systems (ME - FL, including PA and VT), federal natural resource agencies (NOAA, USFWS, USGS), the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and several environmental non-governmental organizations (American Littoral Society, American Rivers, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, Oyster Recovery Partnership, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, and The Nature Conservancy). Through its partners, ACFHP aims to accelerate the conservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish.

Presently, ACFHP is working to meet the needs of its partners as well as the requirements for recognition as a fish habitat partnership under the NFHAP. Specific science projects include: (1) development of an innovative coastwide analysis of species-habitat relationships for coastal fish species and (2) a web-based assessment of existing coastal fish habitat information.

**Science Project 1: Species-Habitat Matrix**

Developed and reviewed by a diversity of habitat specialists, the primary purpose of the ACFHP Species-Habitat Matrix is to provide a starting point for prioritizing habitats (on both a coastwide and regional basis) to focus ACFHP's conservation efforts. It is a tool to evaluate the importance of 25 habitats to the major life stages of over 100 fish species. Figure 1 provides a snapshot of the species-habitat matrix; each box is marked with a value indicating the importance of a habitat type to a given life stage, for each fish species considered. The goal is to provide an index of habitat value through one specific lens. While ACFHP designed this matrix specifically to help the partnership prioritize habitats, there are many other potential uses for this work in the future.

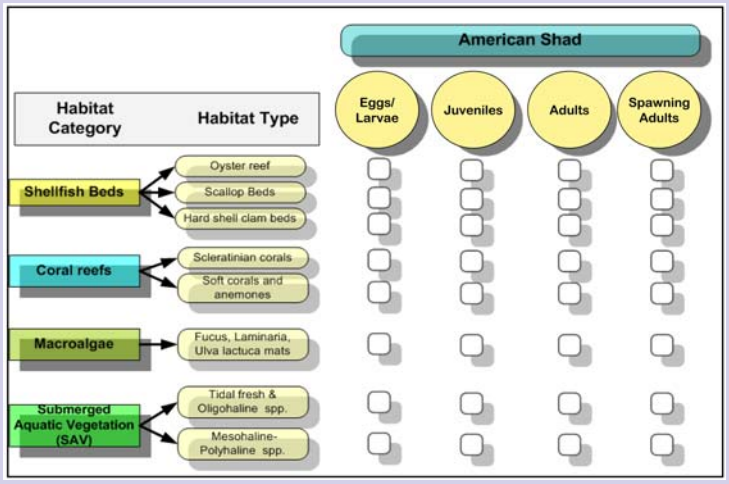


Figure 1. ACFHP Species-Habitat Matrix Snapshot

**Science Project 2: Assessment of Existing Coastal Fish Habitat Information**

The primary objective of the Assessment of Existing Information (AEI) is to inform and enable ACFHP conservation planning. This project will be completed through a contract with the NOAA National Ocean Service's Biogeography Branch of the Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment. AEI is a comprehensive bibliography of over 500 selected documents, data sets, and information portals on Atlantic coastal fish species and habitats. An assessment of this information has yielded indicator, threat, and action information from approximately half of these documents for water bodies along the entire Atlantic coast. Knowledge and information gaps have also been identified through this process. Additionally, water bodies and drainage areas addressed in these documents and datasets will be linked to a spatial footprint, developed in a GIS framework. Products from this project will allow ACFHP partners to consider assessment information at a water body, regional, or coastwide scale. A set of web-based tools will enable users to query information and view spatial formats, making AEI a tool available to all resource managers.

As part of its development, ACFHP will develop a coastwide Conservation Strategic Plan that sets priorities for habitat management, conservation, and outreach. The results of the Species-Habitat Matrix and AEI will help guide and verify the development and implementation of this plan. Ultimately, ACFHP will focus its efforts on supporting on-the-ground projects, implemented cooperatively by its partners, through endorsement, funding, coordination, and other opportunities. Through collaborative effort ACFHP will generate conservation outcomes exceeding those that partners could accomplish independently.

For more information, please contact Emily Greene, ACFHP Coordinator, at egreene@asmfc.org or (202) 289-6400.

# ACCSP Says Good-bye to Rhode Island State Coordinator

## Status of Available Data: Summer 2009

**ACCSP Says Good-bye to Rhode Island State Coordinator**

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) bids a fond farewell to John Lake as he leaves his position as the Rhode Island State Coordinator to take a position with the State of Rhode Island. John was a key player in the building and deployment of electronic trip level reporting in Rhode Island. This system, originally known as the Rhode Island Fisheries Information System (RIFIS) became the prototype for the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS*), which is now in use by virtually all of the Northeast partners. SAFIS gathers trip level data from all fisheries, tracks fishing license activity, and monitors quotas. Prior to RIFIS, the state was collecting data as dealers were calling in landings. John took an active role in the original design and deployment, providing an invaluable service to the Program.

Another of John's major accomplishment was the implementation of a statewide fishermen logbook. Prior to his taking the position the state only had a lobster fishermen logbook. Now fishermen logbooks capture all finfish and crustaceans. Coupled with the use of SAFIS, this brings Rhode Island into compliance with the ACCSP two-ticket standard.

John will still remain involved in the Program as Rhode Island's representative on the Operations Committee. ACCSP thanks Mr. Lake for all of his hard work, dedication and unwavering positive attitude. Best of luck, John!

**The Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information Systems (SAFIS) is a program designed by the ACCSP.*

**Updates of Available Data in Data Warehouse**

The Data Warehouse is an on-line database populated with fisheries-dependant data supplied by the program partners. It is available 24 hours a day with the exception of an eight hour hiatus from Friday at 10:00 PM until Saturday at 6:00 AM when the system is brought down for backups.

What makes the Data Warehouse unique is:
1. It harmonizes data received from all program partners into one integrated set of codes for variables such as species, gear, and fishing area, and
2. It gives users flexible, intuitive data queries to and retrieves and download data.

**Updates of Available Data in Data Warehouse**

| Data Category | Available |
|---|---|
| **Commercial Catch and Effort** | 1950-2008; Program Partners submitted data to various degrees of collection throughout that time frame. For more detailed information visit http://www.accsp.org |
| **Recreational** | 1981 – 2008; MRFSS data |
| **Biological** | American lobster (1981-2006) and Atlantic herring (2002 - 2006) *available via custom data request* |

*Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey

**About the ACCSP**

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 coast wide, 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. For more information, please visit www.accsp.org or call (202) 216-5690.

### Upcoming Meetings

***October 6 & 7, 2009:***
Operations and Advisory Committees Joint Meeting, location to be determined.

## Dr. Genny Nesslage Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

In her two and a half years with the Commission as Senior Stock Assessment Scientist, Dr. Genevieve Nesslage has firmly established herself as an essential part of the Commission staff and a vital contributor 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 accomplishments, Genny was named Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2009. 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, Genny has continued to play a significant role in advancing the states stock assessment expertise through her involvement in various stock assessments, database development, and stock assessment training. She provided critical support to the American Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee as it completed and successfully passed through peer review the benchmark stock assessment for American lobster. This included updating the lobster database, which was a fundamental component of the assessment. Genny worked closely with the Multispecies Stock Assessment Subcommittee to complete the 2008 update of the multispecies virtual population analysis, an assessment methodology that looks at the interrelationships of several key predator/prey species, such as striped bass, weakfish, bluefish, and Atlantic menhaden. Her work on both assessments clearly exemplify her commitment to teamwork and producing high quality products for the Commission.

Genny has also continued to perform and prepare stock assessment training workshops. In May, she conducted a workshop on length-based stock assessment models for Commissioners and interested stakeholders. She is now working with Dr. Joseph DeAlteris to prepare the next round of the Commission's Basic Stock Assessment Workshop Series to be held this October and November. Both activities have enhanced our Commissioners understanding of fisheries stock assessment concepts and models and increased the stock assessment expertise of state technical committee members.

Genny's easygoing personality, strong intellect, and unwavering work ethic has earned her the respect of state and federal scientists, Commissioners, and staff, and has been an inspiration to everyone she has worked with. She has a Ph.D. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University, an M.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management from SUNY-ESF at Syracuse, and a B.S. in Biology from Cornell University. As an Employee of the Quarter, she received a $500 cash award, a small gift, and a letter of appreciation to be placed in her personnel record. In addition, her name is on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Genny!

## ASMFC Summer Meeting Final Agenda (continued from page 7)

**3:00 PM - 4:00 PM** **ISFMP Policy Board**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Review of Noncompliance Findings (if applicable)

**4:00 PM - 4:30 PM** **Business Session**

- Welcome/Call to Order, *G. Lapointe*
- Public Comment
- Review of Noncompliance Recommendations (if applicable)
- Review and Consider Approval of Fishery Management Plans or Amendments (if applicable)
- ASMFC Election Process Update

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**
**1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor**
**Washington D.C. 20005**

***Return Service Requested***

## ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 8)

**Everett A. Petronio, Jr**. -- In July, Everett Petronio stepped down as Rhode Island's Governor Appointee to the Commission. Everett served on the Commission since 2004. We appreciate Everett's participation on the Commission and wish him the very best!

<u>Staff</u>

**Bess Gulliver** -- In June, Bess Gulliver left her Executive Assistant position at the Commission to pursue a career in the culinary arts from the Le Academie de Cuisine in Washington, DC. Bess was with the Commission for a year and served the important role of facilitating coordination and communication between the Executive Director, Commissioners, Hill staff, and ASMFC stakeholders, partners and staff. We wish Bess great success with her new career path!

**Kyle Raab** -- In August, the Commission said good-bye to its summer intern Kyle Raab. For the past two months, Kyle worked on a wide range of fisheries projects. These included: updating state-specific factsheets with catch and related costs/revenues of ASMFC species; conducting a literature/FMP review of shark bycatch in large mesh gillnet fisheries; assisting in the compilation of state horseshoe crab data for the upcoming benchmark stock assessment; organizing the ASMFC photo library by category to enhance searchability and ease of use; developing a youth-based brochure on anadromous species; and identifying state needs regarding lobster trap tags.


Kyle (left) with intern coordinator Brad Spear

Kyle is completing the requirements for a bachelor's degree in economics from University of Maryland. Following his graduation in December 2010, Kyle plans to apply for the Teach for America Program for a Masters of Arts in Teaching. Kyle received an ASMFC travel bag in appreciation of his efforts. We wish Kyle the very best in all his endeavors!