

ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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Northern Shrimp 2002 Fishing Season Set at 25 Days Public Hearings on Draft Amendment to Begin in Early 2002

On November 13, 2001, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Northern Shrimp Section approved a 25-day fishing season for the 2002 northern shrimp fishery, a 59-day decrease from last year's season. This action was based upon the need to protect and rebuild shrimp stocks while attempting to preserve the northern shrimp commercial fishery.

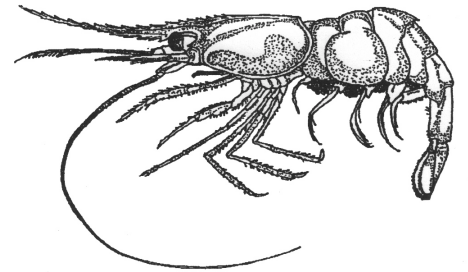
The season is a compromise between the recommendation of the Commission's Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel, which advocated a 44-day season during January, February, and March, and the North-

ern Shrimp Technical Committee, which recommended no fishing season in 2002. In addition to setting the season, the Section discussed public hearings for Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.

"The results of the most recent stock assessment show that all of the important indicators – abundance, recruitment and harvestable biomass – are very low," stated Section Chair, Paul Diodati from Massachusetts. "I am pleased that the Section was able to craft a season that has a good chance of protecting both the egg-bearing females and the smaller shrimp that represent the future of the fishery. Though the season is short, we hope that it will provide fishermen and processors with enough shrimp to maintain the commercial fishery infrastructure. The Section is very concerned about the very low shrimp biomass and hopes that harvesters and processors alike will do everything they can to protect small shrimp and egg-bearing females."

The fishing season will be in one period – February 15, 2002 through March 11, 2002. The Section also elected to allow fishing on every day of the week instead of requiring "no-fishing days" during the season. The season is the same for mobile and trap gear.

In other business, the Section anticipates public hearings for Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan to be held in early 2002. The public hearing draft of the amendment will include long-term goals for the fishery and a series of alternatives for management.



The primary goal of the amendment will be to provide more management options to regulate and guide the recovery of this species, while also taking into consideration the historical participation and importance of this fishery.

The northern shrimp fishery is jointly regulated by the States of Maine and New Hampshire, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Northern Shrimp Section. The cooperative management program has been in place since 1972 and is currently managed under the 1986 FMP.

For more information, please contact: Michael Lewis, Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400, ext. 330 or <mlewis@asmfc.org>.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Upcoming Meetings

12/18 (6:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Meeting on Draft Atlantic Herring Addendum II, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Campus. Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island. For more information, please contact Brian Murphy at (401)782-4713 or <BMURPHY@DEM.STATE.RI.US>.

Year 2002

1/8 & 9:

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee and Advisory Panel, Four Points Hotel Raleigh Crabtree, 4501 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, North Carolina; (919) 787-7111.

1/10 & 11:

ACCSP Outreach Workshop, Hilton St. Petersburg, 333 First Street, South, St. Petersburg, Florida; (727) 894-5000.

1/14 (9AM - 5 PM) & 15 (9AM - Noon):

ACCSP Biological Review Panel, Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida; (813) 877-6688.

1/15 (1 - 5 PM) & 16 (9AM - 4PM):

ACCSP Discard Prioritization Committee, Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida; (813) 877-6688.

1/15 (7:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Meeting Draft Tautog Addendum III, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Avenue, Fourth Floor, Newport News, Virginia. For more information, please contact Jack Travelstead at (757) 247-2247.

1/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Courtyard by Marriot, New Hampshire.

1/17:

American Lobster Technical Committee, location to be determined.

1/29 - 31:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Meadowlands Plaza, Secaucus, New Jersey.

2/19 - 21:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Watergate Swissotel, 2650 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington DC.

2/28 - 3/2:

Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockland, Maine.

For more of us than would be considered “usual,” writing our holiday greetings to friends and family is going to be quite a bit different this year. Somehow, Santa Claus and snowflakes and visions of sugarpplums dancing in our heads seem just a little bit out of place. Every year, many of us suffer tragedies and losses in our families and our personal lives. But this year it is more than individual. This year it is our whole national psyche that suffers from a lack of confidence and a healthy dose of uncertainty. I don’t know about you, but sometimes I still close my eyes and from nowhere I see the images of those planes flying into the towers. And even more disturbing, those towers come falling down. I remember the numbness of those days. Those weeks. Even now.

So what of Nat King Cole roasting chestnuts on an open fire? What of Bing Crosby promising to be home for a white Christmas, if only in his dreams? What of the silent night, the holy night, the tannenbaum? When will it be OK to have fun again? Well, to tell the truth, now would not be a bad time to start. Holidays are truly a time to count our blessings. The terrible events of three months ago serve, by stark contrast, to remind us of the many wonderful things actually going on in our lives. It reminds us that just getting up in the morning is a blessing. Most of us are fortunate enough to have many of the basic necessities of life. Many of us have much more, and too often take a lot of it for granted. We can all count ourselves fortunate to live in the greatest country in the world.

It is times like these that give true meaning to the phrase, “Things are never as bad as they seem – nor as good!” It is part of our nature to look upon the extremes, the worst-case or the best-case scenarios. As difficult as it might seem, there is a lot that has happened over the last three months that we ought to be proud of. We are hurt by the loss of so many innocent lives, but we must be thankful for the many more thousands who found their way out, found their way back to their families. We are also inspired by

the many stories of heroism and selflessness. We are thankful for the generous outpouring of assistance from our fellow citizens. We draw strength from the solidarity of determined peoples around the world. The measure of our souls is not the evil that exists in the world, but rather how we respond to it. And by that measure there is much in the aftermath of September 11 that ought to reassure us.

These have also been times for us to reexamine what is really important to each of us. The uncertainty of tomorrow reminds us just how important today actually is. This realization ought to be especially significant to those of us whose careers and livelihoods are so intertwined with natural resources. It would be so easy to focus exclusively on issues of war and security; but we must not forget, and must not let our leaders forget, how important it is to maintain our commitment to stewardship of the public trust over this country’s natural resources, including its marine fisheries. After all, isn’t this part of what we are really fighting for? We are trying to defend a way of life – we certainly do not want to lose such an important facet of it, simply because we failed to pay attention while our focus turned elsewhere.

When you think about it, the events of the past three months, and our reaction to them, really have a lot to do with the holidays and Christmas. The central message of this season of joy is all about peace and hope. Peace comes only when we all work and pray for it. It starts in our hearts, and ultimately comes back there. Hope is the unwavering belief that, whatever the circumstances, the better side of our nature will win out. Joy will triumph. Peace will reign.

So write those holiday greetings, and let us remember how thankful we really are for the many blessings of our lives. Merry Christmas everybody!



Finding Solutions for Summer Flounder Regulatory Discards

Fishery managers, scientists and fishermen involved in Atlantic coastal fisheries met on November 29 & 30, 2001, to take part in a Commission sponsored workshop on summer flounder regulatory discards. The Commission has chosen this species and its directed and non-directed fisheries as a case study with which to evaluate how well a detailed plan for reducing regulatory discards can be identified, developed, and integrated into a fishery management plan.

The workshop was just the first step in the process, with the goal of providing a solution-driven forum to develop realistic options for either reducing discards or utilizing bycatch. The directed and non-directed summer flounder fisheries that were addressed at the workshop included recreational hook and line, and commercial fisheries for squid (trawl), multispecies (otter trawl) and scallop dredge.

At the workshop, participants identified eight topics with which to focus their discussions: (1) reducing fishery overcapitalization, (2) reducing derby fishing, (3) establishing a national gear research laboratory, (4) implementing harvest rewards for utilizing bycatch-reducing gear, (5) involving industry in data collection and monitoring, (6) reallocating quotas from

directed fisheries to multispecies and bycatch fisheries, (7) economic market considerations, and (8) recreational fisheries.

Participants then formed breakout groups to address each of these topics and develop solutions with plans for implementation. A workshop proceedings, containing the recommendations and implementation strategies, should be available in early 2002. The proceedings will also be forwarded to the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, & Black Sea Bass Management Board and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council their consideration. For more information, please contact Darren Benjamin, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 309 or <dbenjamin@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC & MAFMC Set 2002 Recreational Specifications for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council met in a joint session in Philadelphia on December 12 to set the summer flounder, scup and black sea bass recreational specifications for 2002. In setting the specifications, discussions included an analysis of the recreational landings, regulations and harvest limits over the last few years, with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of 2001 state recreational regulations in meeting harvest targets.

Summer Flounder

The summer flounder recreational harvest limit increased from 7.16 million pounds in 2001 to 9.72 million pounds for 2002. However, significant overages in recreational landings in 2001 will require some states to reduce their landings in 2002. The Management Board voted

to adopt conservation equivalency for the summer flounder fishery, as provided for in Framework II to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Conservation equivalency allows each state to devise a management program, including minimum size limits, bag limits and seasons, to achieve their target harvest limit. These proposals will be sent to the Commission by January 15 for review by the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee and approval by the Management Board prior to being instituted.

A non-preferred, coastwide alternative was also developed for recommendation to the Secretary of Commerce, as required by Framework II. This alternative allows for a 17-inch minimum size and an eight fish bag limit. In addition, a "precautionary default" measure of an 18-inch minimum size and a one fish bag limit was approved

in the event that a state did not develop an acceptable proposal under conservation equivalency.

Scup

The scup stock has shown significant increases in recent years, allowing for a 2.77 million pound harvest limit in 2002, up from 1.76 million pounds in 2001. However, significant overages in recreational landings in 2001 (projected to be 4.97 million pounds) will require the states to reduce their landings in 2002. The Management Board decided to move forward with the development of a new addendum to the Scup Fishery Management Plan, which will allow for the use of conservation equivalency in the recreational fishery. Commission staff will draft this document in early 2002 and, once approved by the Management Board, will

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ASMFC to Develop American Lobster Stock Assessment Database

Imagine having to start from scratch every time you wanted to conduct a stock assessment. Each time, you must begin to gather the data from wide and sometimes disparate sources, with very little documentation from one assessment to another. Sometimes just the process of compiling and assimilating the data takes months on its own. This has been the situation with American lobster, and a growing frustration of fisheries managers, stock assessment scientists and fishermen alike.

This year the Commission has embarked on a project to address many of these issues through the development of a centralized database of summarized fisheries-independent and dependent data to support conducting the American lobster stock assessment. Specific information to be included in the database:

- commercial catch and effort data
- biological sampling data (i.e., length and weight)
- at-sea observer data
- trawl survey data
- biological data parameters (i.e., fecundity & growth parameters)

The project involves several components: (1) moving historical American lobster fisheries-dependent data to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), (2) developing a centralized repository to house fisheries-independent data on American lobster, and (3) developing a database which will provide easy access to summary reports of both datasets (fisheries-dependent and -independent data). It is hoped that central repository for the American lobster fisheries-inde-

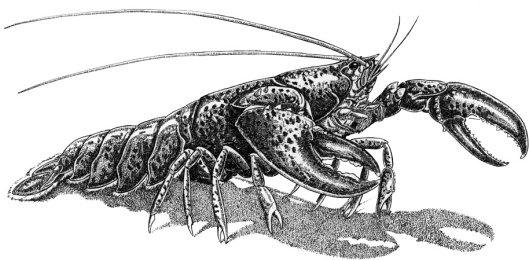
pendent data will be housed by the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP).

The third component of the database -- summary reports -- will be used primarily by the Commission's American Lobster Stock Assessment Subcommittee to interpret the data and manually fill-in all data gaps. The database will also be used periodically by the American Lobster Technical Committee to compile data as the starting point for a full stock assessment. Data will be updated and reviewed annually as a basis for detecting trends in stock status at an early stage.

The lobster database and the data contained therein are essential in the calculation of biological reference points, fishing mortality rates, and spawning stock biomass for the American lobster fishery. The assessment provides the basic information on stock status and effectiveness of fishing regulations to allow state and federal fisheries managers to make informed decisions regarding this resource. Through development and maintenance of the database, the Commission hopes to provide its Stock Assessment Subcommittee with the ability to conduct updated lobster stock assessments within a few months, as opposed to a few years with manual data compilation.

Funding for this project have been provided by the Commission and the ACCSP. One objective of project is to provide a demonstration project to show the utility of the ACCSP and NEAMAP in assisting partner agencies with more effective and timely stock assessments and fisheries management.

For more information, please contact either Dr. Lisa Kline, Director of Research & Statistics, at (202) 289-6400 or <lcline@asmfc.org>, or Geoffrey White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at <gwhite@asmfc.org>.



Habitat Program Continues Progress on Several Projects

Beach nourishment, marine managed areas, molluscan shell substrate, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and habitat information in the fishery management plans (FMPs) are just a few of the projects the Habitat Program at the Commission are working on.

The Commission continues its efforts in SAV protection and education. This month the states will be asked to write SAV state plans on a voluntary basis. These plans simply outline the state's mapping efforts, interstate coordination on SAV, and how they are addressing gear impacts on SAV.

The Habitat Committee has also begun work on a new habitat type termed molluscan shell substrate. Currently a paper is being developed which outlines the importance of this habitat to Commission species.

At the Annual Meeting, the Habitat Committee began discussing two papers, one on beach nourishment and one on marine managed areas. Each of these papers outline background on the issues and steps the Habitat Committee may take if they choose to. Further discussion will take place throughout 2002.

The Habitat Program is also continuing to ensure that quality habitat information is in each of the Commission FMPs. Authors of these sections come from states all along the coast, graduate schools, and the federal government. The Habitat and FMP Committee has recently reviewed work for northern shrimp, red drum, menhaden, and tautog.

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



The ACCSP Announces Funding Decisions for 2002

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) will contribute \$3.5 million to its state and federal partners for coastal fishery data collection and data management in 2002.

The ACCSP Coordinating Council decided its funding priorities for 2002 at its meeting in November of this year. When Congress finalized the budget in late November, the ACCSP's 2002 funds were granted to the highest priority projects. Eight Atlantic states will receive funding to complete and begin new data collection and data management projects.

Maine

The ACCSP has allocated \$67,168 to the State of Maine to continue biological sampling of Atlantic herring in the Northeast. The state is regularly collecting data from all ports with significant landings, providing more complete data on Atlantic herring stocks.

Massachusetts

In the spring of 2001, the ACCSP provided the first round of funding to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to develop an implementation plan to make its ongoing data collection and data management projects meet the ACCSP's standards. The DMF has since incorporated the ACCSP's data model into its new licensing database, FISH2000. This second round of funding, in the amount of \$36,691, will allow continuance of necessary changes to facilitate collection of commercial catch and effort data, and biological sampling data.

Rhode Island

The ACCSP has allocated \$133,084 to the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife to expand mandatory trip-level reporting and biological sampling in its commercial fisheries. These funds will allow Rhode Island to continue commercial trip reporting for its lobster fishery and expand collection of biological data to include several commercial species.

New York

The ACCSP has allocated \$256,800 to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to expand mandatory trip-level reporting and biological sampling in its commercial fisheries. These funds will continue commercial trip reporting of New York's shellfish and finfish catches and collection of biological data on finfish and squid.

Maryland

The ACCSP has allocated \$108,000 to the Maryland Fisheries Service to expand mandatory commercial fisheries trip-level reporting and to assess requirements for electronic data collection from seafood dealers. \$46,500 for trip-level reporting will increase the amount of data available on the blue crab and finfish fisheries in that state. The ACCSP will also contribute \$61,500 to Maryland to investigate possible electronic reporting in the striped bass fishery.

North Carolina

The ACCSP will contribute \$127,351 to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to establish procedures for managing metadata¹ and estimating catch resulting from commercial gear-use in recreational fisheries. \$112,250 provided by the ACCSP will finance the DMF's development of a catch and effort data collection survey for recreational fishermen who utilize commercial fishing gear, such as gill nets, crab pots and small trawls. With the additional \$15,101 the state will continue a pilot study to develop a methodology for managing metadata and linking it to the state's commercial trip reports.

Georgia

The ACCSP will provide the Georgia Department of Coastal Resources with a total of \$107,637 in 2002. \$76,755 will be for analysis of data from its socioeconomic pilot study of blue crab harvesters. An additional \$30,882 will finance development of aging standards for several marine species in the South Atlantic. Resource managers from Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will create digital images of the structures used to age fish as a reference collection. They will also write an aging manual detailing the procedures from collection to interpretation of those structures.

Virginia

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission and NMFS will share \$86,349 from the ACCSP for collection of biological data on horseshoe crab and Spanish mackerel. This data collection effort will help to fill gaps in data on these two species.

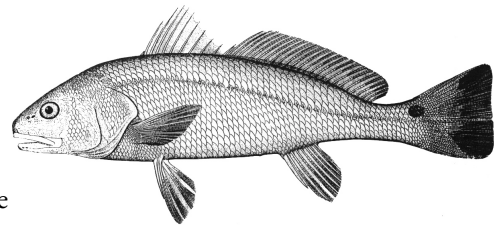
National Marine Fisheries Service

With funding from the ACCSP, NMFS will also conduct some other important work. One major project is for at-sea observer coverage in the New England groundfish fishery. Currently, there

¹ Corollary or descriptive information, both numeric and non-numeric, that may qualify or explain primary data.

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South Atlantic Board Approves Red Drum Draft Amendment 2 for Public Hearing



The Commission's South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board met in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina on December 3, 2001 to review and approve the draft Amendment 2 for Red Drum for public hearing.

Amendment 2 is a complete rewrite of the 1990 Fishery Management Plan for Red Drum (FMP), bringing the management program up-to-date with other Commission FMPs developed following passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act in 1993. The goal of Amendment 2 is to achieve and maintain a static spawning potential ratio (SPR) of the Atlantic coast red drum population at or above 40 percent. SPR is a measure of the reproductive potential of an exploited fish population compared to an unexploited one.

In order to attain this goal, Amendment 2 proposes to achieve and maintain an escapement rate of juvenile fish to the adult population of 40% or greater. Escapement rates have been used as a proxy measure for SPR since the exact size of the adult population is unknown at this time. Amendment 2 proposes to accomplish

this primarily through revised bag and size limits for the recreational and for-hire fisheries, and a maximum size limit of 27 inches total length or less for all fisheries. The majority of the coastwide harvest of red drum is from the recreational fishery, however there is some commercial harvest, primarily in North Carolina. Other management objectives include restoring the age and size structure of the Atlantic coast red drum population, providing a flexible management system, and promoting cooperative collection of biological, economic and sociological data.

Amendment 2 would allow each state to determine and propose an appropriate bag and size limit to attain the 40 percent SPR target based on what is best to meet the needs of its fishermen. Any state that allows some commercial harvest of red drum will be required to maintain its current trip or possession limits. States that have a commercial cap or quota would be required to implement a payback regulation in the event that the cap is exceeded. Other measures included in the draft amendment include a recommendation that the federal waters remain closed to the harvest and possession of red drum

and that states outside the range of this species implement a no-sale regulation for red drum.

Public hearings will be held in a number of states during January and will be announced through a press release from the Commission. The public comment period will close on February 8, 2002. The South Atlantic Board will meet in mid-February to review the public comments and choose the final measures to be included in the Amendment. Also, a meeting of the Red Drum Plan Development Team/Technical Committee and the Red Drum Advisory Panel is being planned for early February 2002 to review the draft amendment and provide advice to the Board. Copies of the draft amendment can be obtained by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202)289-6400 or via the Commission's webpage at <www.asmf.org>.

For more information, please contact Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Red Drum FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <jdesfosse@asmfc.org>.

State & Federal Waters Closed to Spiny Dogfish Harvest, Landings & Possession through April 30, 2002

Beginning at 12:01 AM on November 21, 2001, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Atlantic coastal states closed their waters to the harvest, landings and possession of spiny dogfish until April 30, 2002.

Under the terms of the Emergency Action approved by the Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board on August 21, 2000 and extended by the Board on October 15, 2001 through January 31, 2003, all states are required to close their fisheries when the federal fishery is closed.

Specifically, all states are required to prohibit the commercial harvest, landings and possession of spiny dogfish in state waters upon notification of the closure of federal waters due to the spiny dogfish fishery attaining the total allowable catch for that period.

The spiny dogfish fishery should reopen on May 1, 2002, the start of the new fishing year. For more information, please contact Megan Gamble, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <mgamble@asmfc.org>.

The ACCSP Announces Funding Decisions for 2002 (continued from page 6)

is no base funding for such sampling, and gaps in data collection are problematic for fishermen, processors and resource managers. The ACCSP is funding \$300,000 for 400 days of sampling to improve both the precision of discard estimates and the assessments of these stocks.

“The hard-hit New England groundfishermen and processors will view the increase in finfish observers as a positive step towards improving the information needed for stock assessments,” said Paul Diodati, Director of the Massachusetts DMF.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a state and federal coastal fisheries data collection and data management Program. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three regional fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NMFS and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Together these resource managers have developed a plan to cooperatively collect, manage and disseminate fishery statistical data for the Atlantic coast and to support the development and operation of a national program.

For more information, please contact Abbey Compton, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <abbey.compton@accsp.org>.

ASMFC Seeks Nominations for 2002 AAE Awards

Nominations are requested for the 2002 ASMFC Annual Awards of Excellence (AAE). In an effort to recognize more of the folks who contribute to the success of the Commission, the Awards of Excellence Program was established by the Commission at its 57th Annual Meeting in Jekyll Island, Georgia. Awards will be presented in four categories, and the criteria for the AAE are as follows:

An individual or individuals who has (have) made highly significant contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coastal fisheries in the following areas:

- Scientific/Technical/Advisory
- Congressional/Legislative
- Law Enforcement
- Management/Policy

Such contributions must be for work on conservation issues of interstate, i.e. regional or Atlantic coastwide importance. Receipt of an AAE does not preclude the recipient from receiving the David H. Hart Award at another time.

If you know of a worthy candidate who should be nominated, please forward that nomination to Laura Leach at the Commission no later than February 8, 2002. The nomination letter should include the following information:

- Name of nominee
- Name of nominator
- Award category for which they are being nominated
- Narrative description of their contribution (not to exceed 2 pages)

The Annual Awards of Excellence will be presented at the Commission's Spring Meeting in May. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at (202)289-6400 or <lleach@asmfc.org>.





Menhaden Advisory Panel to Meet: Multispecies Assessment Presentation on Tap

The Commission's newly constituted Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel (AP) is scheduled to meet on January 9, 2002, in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Panel will be given a presentation of the Commission's multispecies assessment project conducted by Drs. Lance Garrison and Jason Link. This project investigates the interactions between a forage species such as menhaden, and three of its principal predators, striped bass, weakfish and bluefish.

This will be the first meeting of the Menhaden AP, and the Management Board has

tasked both the AP and the Technical Committee with a number of questions regarding the status and management of the resource. Specifically, the Board wants the Technical Committee to provide a clear rationale for recommending a change in the overfishing definition in Amendment 1, and to review current fishing practices to see if there are any problem areas, including the harvest of juvenile fish. Both the Technical Committee and AP will review the list of options for future management contained in Amendment 1 should the population decline and the Board may need to take further ac-

tion. They will also evaluate potential management measures to attain the desired coastwide age structure outlined by the plan.

The Technical Committee will meet on January 8, 2002, immediately prior to the AP meeting the following day. The meeting will be held at the Four Points Hotel Raleigh Crabtree in Raleigh, North Carolina and will start at 9 AM both days. For more information, please contact: Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Menhaden FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, or jdesfosse@asmfc.org.

2002 Summer Flounder, Scup & Black Sea Bass Recreational Specifications (continued from page 4)

hold hearings to obtain public input. As specified in the Scup FMP, the Mid-Atlantic Council was required to make a coastwide recommendation to the Secretary of Commerce. The recommended alternative was 50 fish possession limit, a 10-inch minimum size, and a season of January 1- February 28 and July 1 – October 31 in 2002.

Black Sea Bass

Black sea bass have a 2002 recreational harvest limit of 3.468 million pounds, up from 3.148 in 2001. There were modest landings overages, but not as much as seen in the summer flounder or scup recreational fisheries. The Management Board and Council jointly approved a coastwide management program including a minimum size limit of 11.5 inches, a 25 fish bag limit with no seasonal closure.

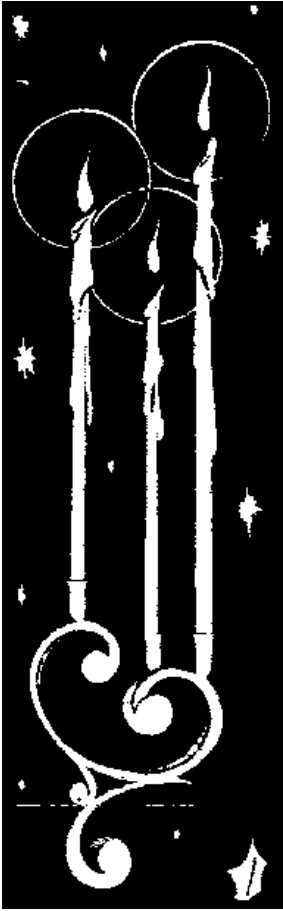
For more information, please contact Michael Lewis, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or mlewis@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Finalizes Draft Tautog Addendum III for Public Comment

By the end of December, the Commission will be releasing the Draft Addendum III to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan for public review and comment. It is anticipated that most of the states from Massachusetts through Virginia will be conducting meetings to gather public input throughout January.

The Draft Addendum proposes a number of changes to the current management program for tautog. These include changes to the overfishing definition, stock rebuilding program, and stock assessment methodologies. It also seeks comment on how the necessary reductions in fishing mortality should be made -- either through reductions in the recreational fishery alone or through reductions to both commercial and recreational fisheries. Lastly, it presents three options for the implementation of complementary management measures in the federal waters of the exclusive economic zone.

Once available, copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400 or vjones@asmfc.org, or via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org. Written public comment will be accepted until February 15, 2002 and should be forwarded to Heather Stirratt, FMP Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or hstirratt@asmfc.org.



**The Staff of the Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries Commission
joins in wishing you the
happiest of holidays and
a healthy and prosperous
New Year!**

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

Return Service Requested