



ASMFC

Volume 17, Issue 2
February/March 2008

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 5 - 8, 2008

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

Preliminary Schedule

The preliminary 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. A final agenda and meeting materials will be available and posted to the Commission's website (www.asmfc.org) two weeks prior to the meeting.

Monday, May 5, 2008

9:00 AM - Noon	American Lobster Management Board
1:15 - 2:45 PM	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
3:00 - 4:30 PM	Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Management Board
4:45 - 6:15 PM	Shad and River Herring Management Board

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

8:00 - 9:30 AM	South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Law Enforcement Committee
9:45 - 11:15 AM	American Eel Management Board
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Management and Science Committee
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Bluefish Management Board
1:45 - 5:15 PM	Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board

continued on page 8

Inside This Issue

Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass Page 4

ASMFC Finds New Jersey Out of Compliance with the Tautog FMP Page 7

States Schedule Hearings on Draft Lobster Addenda XII & XIII Page 7

Horseshoe Crab Board Initiates Draft Addendum V Page 8

Science Highlight: SEAMAP's 21st Winter Tagging Cruise Page 9

ACCSP Supports Partners by Providing Electronic Reporting and Socioeconomic Data Page 10

Summer Flounder Board Approves State Recreational Management Measures Page 11

ASMFC Comings & Goings Page 12

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.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Robert H. Boyles, Jr., (SC), Vice-Chair

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Upcoming Meetings

3/17:

ACCSP Advisory Committee, Courtyard by Marriott, 300 4th Street, North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

3/20 (1 PM start time):

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Days Out Meeting, New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, Marine Fisheries Division Building, 225 Main Street Durham, New Hampshire.

3/24 - 27:

ASMFC Technical Meeting Week, Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

3/27 (Noon - 5 PM) & 28 (8 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Sturgeon Research Protocol Workgroup, USFWS, Northeast Fishery Science Center, Lamar, Pennsylvania.

4/3 & 4:

ASMFC Fish Passage Workshop, Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront, 1201 Riverplace Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida.

4/4 - 6:

New England Saltwater Fishing Show, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, Rhode Island.

4/8 - 10:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Annapolis, 173 Jennifer Road, Annapolis, Maryland; 410-266-3131.

4/9 - 10:

Fish Expo Atlantic, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, Rhode Island.

4/10:

ASMFC Coastal Sharks Technical Committee, Holiday Inn BWI, Airport Conference Center, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, Maryland.

4/11 & 12:

ACCSP Operations Committee, Courtyard by Marriott, 300 4th Street, North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

4/14 - 18:

ASMFC Advanced Stock Assessment Workshop: An Introduction to Linear Models, Hotel Providence, 311 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

4/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Providence Biltmore, Providence, Rhode Island.

In Memoriam

Professor Doug Tolderlund – Teacher and Friend

Most people reading this have probably never met or even heard of Doug Tolderlund. His work was not widely published nor was he one to inject his views into the public discussion of high visibility ocean issues. Instead, he was a gifted teacher with a natural curiosity to learn about all manner of things and a drive to share that information with others.

Doug was skilled at translating complex scientific concepts into understandable lectures for his oceanography, geology, and fisheries classes. But he also recognized the power and value of using hands on experiences to reinforce classroom lessons and to demonstrate to his students the power of curiosity. He had a gift for finding ways to leverage ordinary exercises into broader and more memorable lessons.

Students who took his fisheries course received lectures on the use of standard keys to identify fish. A week later they were in the wet lab as Doug helped them work through a box of fresh groundfish from Point Judith, first to put the proper names to the fish, and then to dissect them and identify the organs inside. At exam time, the fish were back in the lab to be identified for part of the course grade.

Doug's ocean science majors spent part of their time on the water learning how to set and retrieve a small bottom survey trawl. He taught them standard field procedures for measuring, tagging, and releasing their catch of winter flounder. Whenever someone returned one of his tags, Doug would add the growth information to his database and place a pin on a nautical chart posted in his office showing the location where the fish was captured. As pins were added over the years students could see first hand the practical application of their efforts on the water to understanding more about the growth and migratory patterns of the fish they had read about in their books.

Doug was a strong believer in the value of field trips. One of his destinations was the Port of Point Judith, Rhode Island, with visits to the Fishermen's Co-op. Besides watching fish being unloaded and boxed for shipment, students met with the Co-op manager to learn about the challenges of getting fresh fish from the docks to the large city markets. Doug also took

them around the docks, pointing out different fishing vessels.

Doug was also an avid recreational fisherman and would organize a yearly party boat trip for students, targeting bluefish in the turbulent area known as the Race, where Long Island Sound empties into Block Island Sound. He would enthusiastically throw in an anatomy lesson while the fish were being cleaned. He'd later have students over to his house for a bluefish dinner with him and his wife, Sandy.

Doug graduated from Brown University, served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, and went on to earn his Ph.D. from Columbia University. In 1970 he started what he often referred to as his "dream" job at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. During his 29 years there he became a full professor and taught a variety of courses related to marine science and fisheries. He served as head of the Science Department for eight years and upon the end of that assignment took satisfaction in returning to his teaching duties. But his most remarkable professional achievement was his influence on the more than 1,000 students who passed through his classrooms and labs to become Coast Guard officers. He encouraged, in a gentle and low-key way, a lifetime curiosity for learning and a liking for the sea and its lore.

In retirement Doug continued to learn and teach even as he dealt with the cancer that eventually took his life. He was active in the New England Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and was helping a high school student develop techniques for how to spawn alewives in captivity. This past summer he caught the largest fish of his life, a 42 pound striped bass; news that he

shared with many, including a picture, with information about the length, weight, date, time, location, and lure -- always the teacher.

Doug Tolderlund died at his home in Connecticut this past January. He was a great teacher.





Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass

New Stock Assessment Indicates a Healthy Stock and Continued Management Success

Introduction

Since being declared rebuilt in 1995, Atlantic striped bass has served as a poster child for successful fisheries management, and a new assessment indicates that this designation remains true. The 2007 benchmark stock assessment concluded that striped bass are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. After numbering less than five million fish in 1982, the resource remains plentiful with nearly 56 million fish of all ages. Given the thriving striper population, it is not surprising that recreational anglers and commercial fishermen landed an unprecedented 3.8 million fish in 2006. Certainly the years of restricted harvest have paid off with high catch rates for recreational anglers and increased quotas for commercial fishermen. Now the Commission's focus is to manage a restored stock and address existing and emerging challenges such as allocation, discard mortality, disease, and species interactions.

Life History

The Commission's striped bass management program centers on the migratory population and spawning stocks from Maine through North Carolina, although the species can be found as far north as the St. Lawrence River in Canada and as far south as the St. John's River in Florida. A long-lived species (at least up to 30 years of age), striped bass typically spend the majority of their adult life in coastal estuaries or the ocean, migrating north and south seasonally and ascending to rivers to spawn in the spring. Mature females (age four and older) produce large quantities of eggs, which are fertilized by mature males (age two and older) as they are released into riverine spawning areas. The number of eggs produced by females is a factor of age and size. For example, an average six-year old female from Chesapeake Bay produces 500,000 eggs, while a 15-year old produces three million eggs. While developing, the fertilized eggs drift downstream and eventually hatch into larvae which begin feeding on microscopic animals. After their arrival in the nursery areas, located in river deltas and the inland portions of coastal sounds and estuaries, they mature into juveniles. The juveniles remain in coastal sounds and estuaries for two to four years and then join the coastal migratory population in the Atlantic Ocean. In the ocean, fish tend to move north during the summer and south during the winter. Important wintering grounds for the mixed stocks are located from offshore New Jersey to North Carolina. With warming water temperatures in the spring, the mature adult fish migrate to riverine spawning areas to complete their life cycle. The majority of the coastal migratory stock originates in the Chesapeake Bay spawning areas, with significant contributions from the spawning grounds of the Hudson and Delaware Rivers.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Striped bass has been one of the most important fisheries on the Atlantic coast for centuries. Cur-



Frederick Barnes of Chesapeake with new Virginia state record striped bass (73 pounds). Photo courtesy of VMRC.

Striped Bass *Morone saxatilis*

Interesting Fish Facts:

- Striped bass do most of their growing between April and October.
- Striped bass tagged and released in Chesapeake Bay have been recaptured as far away as the Bay of Fundy.
- Striped bass regulations in the U.S. date to pre-Colonial times, when striped bass were prohibited from being used as fertilizer (c. 1640).

Largest Recorded: 125 pound female, NC, 1891

Age at Maturity:

- Females - 50% mature at age 6 (25 - 26"); 100% mature at age 9 (32")
- Males - 100% mature at age 3 (18")

Age at Recruitment:

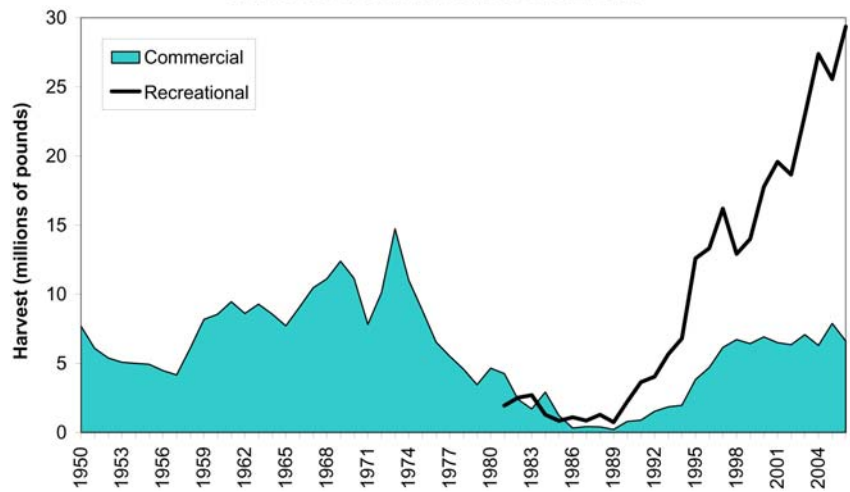
- Chesapeake Bay Fishery = age 4 (18")
- Coastal Fishery = age 8 (28")

Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing is not occurring

rently, commercial fisheries operate in eight jurisdictions regulated by the Commission, while recreational fisheries operate in 14. Commercial fishermen harvest striped bass with a variety of gears including gill nets, pound nets, haul seines, trawls, and hook-and-line, while recreational fishermen use hook and line almost exclusively.

Commercial harvest peaked at almost 15 million pounds in 1973 and then declined to 3.5 million pounds in 1983, a 77 percent decrease (Figure 1). During the mid-to-late 1980s, a number of states closed their striped bass fisheries in order to initiate rebuilding of the stocks. The commercial fishery grew slowly under a partial reopening of state waters in the early 1990s, with coastwide harvest rising from about 800,000 pounds in 1990 to 1.97 million pounds in 1994. Under Amendment 5, striped bass harvest grew from 3.8 million pounds in 1995 to 6.3 million pounds in 2002. Under Amendment 6, commercial harvest has averaged nearly seven million pounds (2003-2006). Commercial harvest in 2006 (1.05 million fish) was dominated by Maryland's commercial fisheries, which made up 62 percent of the total commercial landings.

Figure 1. Annual Coastwide Atlantic Striped Bass Harvest
Source: NOAA Fisheries Statistics Division, 2008

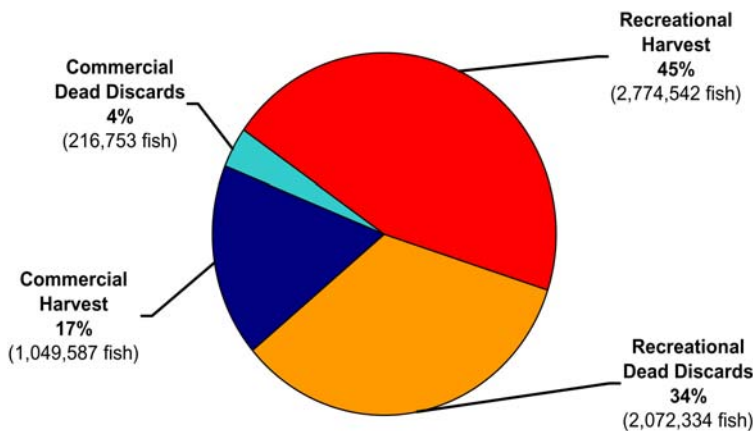


During the 1980s, recreational anglers landed an annual average of 1.8 million pounds due to a combination of low stock size and strict regulations (Figure 1). Under Amendment 4, recreational harvest grew from 2.2 million pounds in 1990 to 6.8 million pounds in 1994. With the declaration of restored status, harvest increased from 12.6 million pounds in 1995

to a record 29.3 million pounds in 2006. The growing popularity of saltwater recreational fishing and the lack of recreational harvest caps in most states have allowed this large increase. Of the 2.77 million fish harvested recreationally in 2006, Maryland anglers took 24 percent, followed by Virginia (22 percent), New Jersey (18 percent), Massachusetts (12 percent), and New York (11 percent).

Striped bass discard mortality for 2006 was estimated in the most recent assessment, allowing the total removals per year to be broken down into four fishery components: recreational harvest and discards, and commercial harvest and discards. Harvest accounted for 62% of the overall fishery removals in 2006, while dead discards accounted for the remaining 38%. Figure 2 shows the breakdown in more detail.

Figure 2. Atlantic Striped Bass Removals by Fishery Component, 2006
Source: ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee, 2007



Stock Status

The Striped Bass Technical Committee completed the most recent stock assessment in 2007. The assessment presented a new age-based model to estimate spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality, in addition to tag-based analyses to estimate fishing mortality. An independent panel of fisheries experts approved the assessment and endorsed the results of the age-based model for comparison to the biological reference points used to determine stock status. This model, a statistical catch at age (SCA) model, is a significant departure from the virtual population analysis that has been used to assess striped bass stock status since 1997. It is an aged-based model that projects the population numbers-at-age forward through time, rather than backwards, given model estimates of recruitment and age-specific total mortality. The Technical Committee has future plans to use a SCA model that directly incorporates the tagging data as an input into the model. In addition, a multispecies model has been developed by another Commission-lead group that incorporates predator-prey and competitor

continued on page 6

Species Profile: Atlantic Striped Bass (continued from page 5)

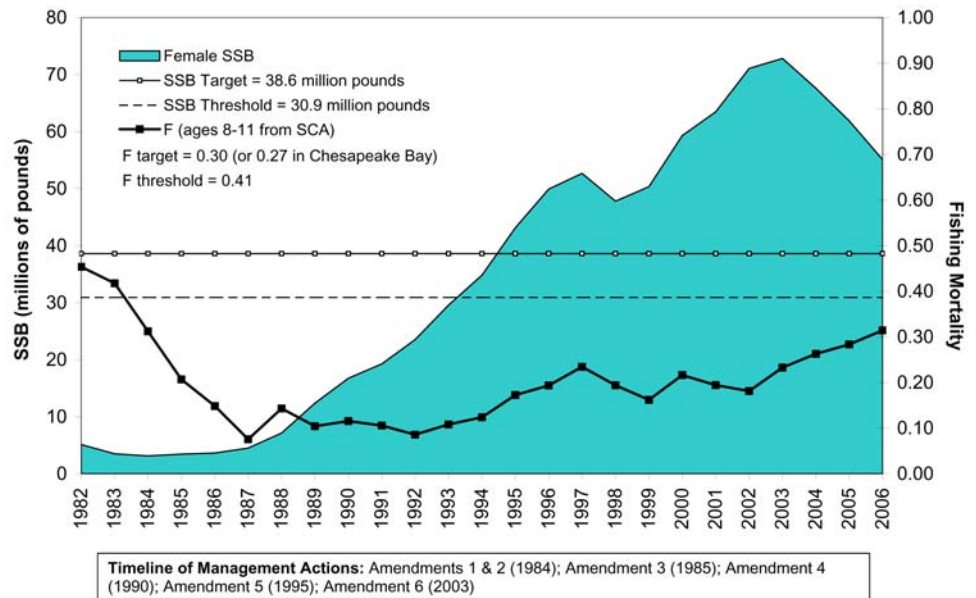
interactions between striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, Atlantic menhaden, and other important forage fishes. A result of increasing interest in ecosystem management, this model will be used to help determine interspecies relationships and help forecast multiple species abundance trends.

Based on the results of the 2007 stock assessment Atlantic coast striped bass are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring (Figure 3). The SCA model estimates that the resource remains at a high level with SSB at 55 million pounds, well above the SSB target and threshold levels of 38.6 and 30.9 million pounds, respectively. Estimates of juvenile abundance showed several years of strong recruitment, with the 2003 cohort being the strongest in the time series. The SCA model estimated the 2006 fishing mortality rate on age 8-11 fish to be $F=0.31$, which is below the Amendment 6 fishing mortality threshold of 0.41. Retrospective analysis of the model, as well as tag-based estimates of fishing mortality presented in the assessment, indicate that the 2006 fishing mortality is also below the Amendment 6 target of 0.30. Overall, the Atlantic stocks of striped bass appear to be abundant in number, capable of producing strong incoming year classes, and are being fished at levels within the bounds of the current fishery management plan (FMP). The population is considered fully exploited.



Figure 3. Atlantic Striped Bass Female Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) and Fully-Recruited Fishing Mortality Rate (F ages 8-11)

Source: ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee, 2007



Atlantic Coastal Management

Before the Interstate FMP for Striped Bass (1981), states independently promulgated regulations (i.e. minimum size limits) to constrain the fishing mortality on the Atlantic coast striped bass population. However, it was not until the 1984 Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, the precursor to the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, that the Atlantic coastal states gained the necessary tools to cooperatively and more effectively conserve and manage striped bass stocks. Through a stringent management program begun in 1985, the population began to rebuild, such that in 1995 the Commission declared Atlantic coastal striped bass stocks fully recovered.

Since Amendment 4, the foundation of the striped bass management program has been to maintain harvest below a target fishing mortality rate (F). Amendment 6, approved in 2003, modi-

fied the F targets and thresholds, and also introduced a new set of biological reference points based on female SSB. On a regular basis, SSB is estimated and compared to target and threshold levels. These reference points, as well as new management triggers, have enabled the Management Board to be more responsive to changes in the stock.

In addition to the control rule, Amendment 6 phased in new regulations for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. In 2003, the coastal commercial quota for striped bass was restored to the states' historical average landings during the 1972-1979 base period, a 43 percent increase from the 2002 coastal commercial quotas. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay fisheries, Albemarle-Roanoke fisheries, and states with approved conservation equivalency proposals. The Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle-Roanoke regulatory programs differ from the coastal migratory stock because these programs are predicated

continued on page 12

ASMFC Finds New Jersey Out of Compliance with the Tautog FMP

On February 7, 2008, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission found the State of New Jersey out of compliance with the mandatory management measures contained in Addenda IV and V of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog. The Commission has notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior of its finding. This action was taken pursuant to the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993.

The State of New Jersey has not imple-

mented Addenda IV and V's mandatory harvest reductions, which require the state to implement a management program that will achieve a 25.6 percent reduction in exploitation by January 1, 2008. This reduction is necessary to initiate rebuilding of the overfished tautog stock and to maintain effective cooperative management of the tautog resource. According to the 2006 peer-reviewed stock assessment, the tautog resource continues to be at low biomass levels. Since the mid-1980s tautog has undergone a substantial decrease in total and spawning stock biomass, with

both currently at levels about one-third of their historical averages.

To come back into compliance, New Jersey must implement management measures that reduce fishing exploitation by 25.6 percent. Upon notification by the Commission, the Secretary of Commerce has 30 days to review the recommendation and determine appropriate action, which may include a federal moratorium on fishing for tautog in New Jersey's state waters. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202) 289-6400.

States Schedule Hearings on Draft Lobster Addenda XII & XIII

States from Maine through New York have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on two draft addenda to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. Draft Addendum XII proposes the establishment of protocols for the consistent application of trap transferability programs for the plan's lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs), while Draft Addendum XIII proposes the formalization of the Outer Cape Cod's effort control plan as adopted and implemented by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled meetings follow:

Maine Department of Marine Resources

March 31, 2008; 6:00 PM

Rockland City Hall Council Chambers
Pleasant Street
Rockland, Maine

April 1, 2008; 6:00 PM

University of Maine at Machias
9 O'Brien Avenue
Machias, Maine

April 7, 2008; 6:00 PM

Ellsworth City Hall
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, Maine

April 8, 2008; 6:00 PM

Portland High School, Room 304
284 Cumberland Ave
Portland, Maine

Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207) 624-6562

New Hampshire Fish & Game Department

April 1, 2008; 7:00 PM

Urban Forestry Center
45 Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Contact: Doug Grout at (603) 868-1096

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

April 2, 2008; 6:00 PM

Courtyard by Marriot
Rte. 44 Paramount Dr. 37
Raynham, Massachusetts

(This hearing will focus on Draft Addendum XII issues only)

April 7, 2008; 6:00 PM

Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station
Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts

(This hearing will focus on Draft Addendum XII issues only)

April 8, 2008; 6:00 PM

Chatham Community Center
702 Main Street
Chatham, Massachusetts

(This will focus on Addenda XII and XIII issues)

Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617) 626-1528

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

March 19, 2008; 7:00 PM

DEP Marine Fisheries Office
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut

Contact: Eric Smith at (860) 434-6043

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

April 3, 2008; 6:00 PM

URI Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Tom Angell at (401) 423-1931

New York Department of Environmental Conservation

March 18, 2008; 7:00 PM

Bureau of Marine Resources Headquarters
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, New York

Contact: Steve Heins at (631) 444-0433

In order to ensure that the various LCMA-specific effort control plans remain cohesive and viable, and that one

continued on page 11

ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

Tuesday, May 7, 2008 (continued)

6:30 - 8:00 PM Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

Wednesday May 7, 2008

8:00 AM - Noon Strategic Planning Workshop
1:15 - 2:15 PM Strategic Planning Workshop (continued)
2:30 - 4:00 PM ISFMP Policy Board
4:15 - 6:15 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

Thursday May 8, 2008

8:00 - 8:30 AM Executive Committee
8:45 - 10:15 AM ISFMP Policy Board (continued)
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM ACCSP/ASMFC Session on Marine Recreational Information Program
12:30 - 12:45 PM Buffet Lunch for Commissioners
1:00 - 1:30 PM Business Session
1:45 - 4:45 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

Horseshoe Crab Board Initiates Development of Addendum V

With management measures under Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crabs due to expire by September 30, 2008, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board has approved the initiation of Draft Addendum V. The Draft Addendum will include all the current provisions of Addendum IV as well as an option for a harvest moratorium in New Jersey and Delaware.

Based on the most recent surveys of horseshoe crabs, it appears that management measures in Addendum IV and previous management plans are resulting in increased horseshoe crab abundance. A horseshoe crab trawl survey administered by Virginia Tech shows increases over the past four to five years in all demographic groups of horseshoe crabs in ocean waters near the Delaware

Bay. A survey of spawning crabs on the beaches of Delaware Bay indicate stable female spawning activity and increased male spawning over the past nine years.

However, horseshoe crab management is a multi-species issue. Despite the positive signs in population growth of horseshoe crabs around Delaware Bay, red knots, one of many shorebird species that feed upon horseshoe crab eggs, show no sign of recovery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Technical Committee is expected to take a closer look this spring at the most recent shorebird survey data.

The Draft Addendum will be prepared for Management Board review in May 2008. Upon its approval, it will be released for pub-

lic review and comment in early summer. The Board will meet in August 2008 to review input from the Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel and the public, and consider final approval of the addendum. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202) 289-6400.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Rob Robinson, British Trust for Ornithology

Science Highlight: Over 1,000 Striped Bass Tagged on SEAMAP's 21st Winter Tagging Cruise

The 21th Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise took place in January 2008 aboard the NOAA Ship OREGON II. The 13 person scientific party included representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey, East Carolina State University, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The primary goal of the research cruise is to catch, tag, and release as many migratory Atlantic striped bass as possible. Tagging data are used to learn about striped bass life history (e.g., migration, growth) and also estimate fishing mortality. The cruise takes place off the coasts of North Carolina and Virginia because a large portion of the striped bass population congregates there during the winter. To fish the area, the OREGON II, a 170-foot side trawler from Pascagoula, Mississippi, was commissioned for a twelve-day cruise. Setting out from Morehead City, North Carolina on January 14, the scientific party and crew were able to begin their day-and-night trawling operations on January 15. The Oregon II started off pulling two 65-foot bottom trawl nets, but was forced to op-

erate with one net for the last five days of the cruise due to a mechanical problem involving the trawl winch's gearbox. Despite this difficulty, 1,033 striped bass were caught and tagged, and an additional six previously tagged fish were caught, recorded, and re-released. Fish ranged from 22 to 47 inches in length. The 2008 cruise ranks fourteenth for the number of stripers caught, though the catch rate was on track to approach the 20-year average of 2,124 stripers had both nets been operational. The recaptured fish were originally tagged one to three years previously on the ocean off New Jersey, the Hudson River, and previous winter tagging cruises.

In addition to tagging striped bass, the cruise objectives included work for numerous other projects. Scientific party members tagged and released three other species; collected genetic, reproductive, diet, scale, and otolith samples from a variety of species; and measured, counted, and/or sexed several additional species. A record number of Atlantic sturgeon (73) were tagged, and among them was the largest Atlantic sturgeon caught in the cruise's history (5.8 feet long!). There were also four Atlantic sturgeon recaptures, which were originally tagged on the James River (VA), the Edisto River (SC), the Atlantic Ocean off New York, and the Eastern Bay (Chesapeake Bay, MD). Eight horseshoe crabs were tagged, although many more were caught (only sexually mature individuals can be tagged). For the first year, equipment to tag thresher sharks was brought on the cruise. One thresher shark, a ju-



venile female, was tagged and released. Also in the catch were weakfish, Atlantic croaker, butterfish, squid, kingfish, silver perch, spiny dogfish, summer and windowpane flounder, clearnose, little, and winter skate, American and hickory shad, alewife, blueback herring, hake, and Atlantic menhaden.

All the information collected during the Cooperative Tagging Cruise will aid in the development and implementation of fisheries regulations by state and federal fisheries management agencies, the three East Coast Fishery Management Councils, and the Commission. Rewards for striped bass and Atlantic sturgeon tag returns are offered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maryland Fisheries Resource Office, as part of the coastwide tagging program for these two species. East Carolina University distributes rewards for spiny dogfish tag returns.

For more information, please contact Wilson Laney, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at (919) 515-5019 or wilson_laney@fws.gov.



ACCSP Supports Partners by Providing Electronic Reporting and Socioeconomic Data



Striped Bass Anglers in New Jersey are the First to Report Recreational Data to ACCSP Online

Anglers participating in New Jersey's Volunteer striped bass bonus fish program are now able to register and report their daily landings data online. They may do so using the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS), a web-based reporting application originally developed for commercial fishermen and dealers on the Atlantic coast. This automated reporting capability is new to New Jersey anglers, who have only been able to register and report volunteer data to ACCSP using paper applications and logbooks.

"This system is an exciting addition to SAFIS because it can be easily replicated for other natural resource management agencies that are interested in automating their recreational volunteer logbooks" said ACCSP Director Mike Cahall.

In addition to providing anglers access to their catch records so that they can view their logbook history, the electronic system provides real-time monitoring of the bonus program quota. This enables biologists with the New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) to analyze catch data more quickly and accurately. It also frees NJDFW staff to devote more time toward collecting and analyzing harvest data for striped bass and other species.

Under current striped bass recreational size limits set by the New Jersey Legislature, anglers can harvest two fish at 28 inches or greater daily. The New Jersey striped bass bonus fish program enables anglers with a bonus permit to keep an extra striped bass each day.

The application was developed and integrated into SAFIS by ACCSP, a state and federal partnership for Atlantic coastal fisheries data collection and data management, at the request of the NJDFW.

For more details on New Jersey's striped bass bonus program, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/bonusbass.htm or contact Tom Baum, NJDFW Principal Biologist, at (609) 748-2020 or tom.baum@dep.state.nj.us.

ACCSP Provides Data to Economic Assessment of Horseshoe Crab Fishery

ACCSP provided the Atlantic State's Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) with data that will help decide the next round of Atlantic coast horseshoe crab fishery regulations. Current regulations are set to expire September 30, 2008. ACCSP was the primary source of data for the *Economic Assessment of Mid-Atlantic Horseshoe Crab and Dependent Fisheries Including a Qualitative Discussion of the Potential Effects of Addendum IV*, performed by Industrial Economics,

Inc. (IEc), and presented to the Horseshoe Crab Management Board on February 7, 2008.

ACCSP Director, Mike Cahall, said "Providing this kind of data is fundamental to the mission of the ACCSP. We were pleased to be able to supply the needed data for this study and look forward to future collaborations with the Commission."

ACCSP provided available trip ticket and dealer data, which helped IEc describe landings and ex-vessel revenue for the states of interest in this study (Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York).

The study illustrates the value of good data to fisheries managers when they are faced with making quota and moratorium decisions. The economic assessment found that the total regional economic impact of the horseshoe crab fishery ranges from 2.7 million to 4.7 million dollars across the five-state region. After reviewing this study and hearing a status report on the red knot, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum V. The Board is scheduled to consider approving the Draft Addendum for public comment at its May meeting. The Draft Addendum will contain current regulatory provisions, as well as additional management options, including a one-year moratorium on the horseshoe crab fishery.

Under Addendum IV, only 100,000 male horseshoe crabs may be harvested annually in New Jersey and Delaware, there is no allowable horseshoe crab harvest in Maryland for the months of January through early June, and only 40 percent of the harvest in Virginia may come from state waters beyond the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. If no action is taken, regulations will revert back to those outlined in Addendum III, which allows 150,000 annual harvest in Delaware and New Jersey, and Maryland may allow a harvest from January 1 to June 7 each year.

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 coastwide, including the Commission, the three East Coast 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.

ASMFC Summer Flounder Board Approves State Recreational Management Measures

On February 7, 2008, the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved state management proposals for the 2008 recreational fishery for summer flounder. In developing measures to stay within the coastwide recreational harvest target of 2.05 million fish, states used state-specific performance factors developed by the Summer Flounder Technical Committee. The performance factors account for states' past performance in achieving their quota target, as well as increased effort, increased stock size, and percent standard error considerations in state-specific estimates generated by the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey. States that fail to implement the approved management measures (or measures developed through the approved methodology) will be required to implement a precautionary default measure of a two fish possession limit at a 20-inch minimum size with an open season from July 4 to September 1, 2008.

The state-approved management measures fall under the Commission's summer flounder management program, which allows for the use of conservation equivalency. Conservation equivalency provides states the option of crafting state-specific management measures that best meet the needs of their fishermen while also meeting the conservation requirements of the resource program. All conservationally-equivalent management measures must be reviewed and approved by the Summer Flounder Technical Committee and the Management Board before they can be implemented. Since conservation equivalency was initiated in the summer flounder management program in 2001, the states have had mixed success in limiting coastwide recreational harvest to within the specified harvest target. The inclusion of the performance factor in developing state-specific measures this year is intended to help the states constrain their recreational harvest to meet both the overall

recreational harvest target as well as state-specific harvest targets.

States will now have to go through their own individual regulatory processes to finalize their summer flounder recreational measures. For more information on those measures, contact your state marine fishery agency. The Board also approved scup recreational management measures for the northern region (Massachusetts through New York). The private and shore-based fishery will have a 10.5 inch minimum size, 10 fish bag limit, and an open season of May 24 through September 25. The for-hire fishery (party and charterboat) will have an 11-inch minimum size and a 10 fish bag limit for 81 consecutive days (each state will determine their own season, to fall anytime between May 15 and October 15). The for-hire fishery will also have a bonus season for 45 consecutive days (also selected by the states) with a 45 fish bag limit.

States Schedule Hearings on Draft Lobster Addenda XII & XIII (continued from page 7)

jurisdiction's interpretation of its effort control plan does not undermine the implementation of another jurisdiction's plan, Draft Addendum XII proposes to do three things. First, it would seek to clarify certain principles present in the Commission's overall history-based trap allocation effort control plan. Second, it would reconsider the Commission's most restrictive rule as stated in Addendum IV. Third, it would establish further management measures to ensure that history-based trap allocation effort control plans in the various LCMAs would be implemented without undermining resource conservation efforts of neighboring jurisdictions or LCMAs. The goal of the Draft Addendum is to provide for fair and consistent implementation of individual trap transferable

(ITT) programs that allow for flexibility to the fishery, meet the conservation objectives of the plan, and ensure that effort does not increase as a result of trap transfers. Addendum VII specified that an ITT program would be established. Transferability was a critical element brought forward by the Area 2 Lobster Conservation Management Team in developing the Area 2 effort control plan outlined in Addendum VII.

Draft Addendum XIII proposes to formalize, through the Commission's lobster management program, the Outer Cape Cod's effort control plan as adopted and implemented by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Draft Addendum proposes to eliminate further trap reductions currently scheduled

for Outer Cape Cod in 2008, given improved stock conditions in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addenda, either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addenda can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. **Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM on April 11, 2008**, and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at tkerns@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Lobster Addenda).

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

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ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners:

John I. Nelson, Jr. -- On February 29, John Nelson stepped down as Chief of New Hampshire's Marine Fisheries Division. With his retirement, John brings to a close a 28 year career in managing New Hampshire's marine fisheries resources. Active at both the regional and federal levels for more than a dozen years, John served as New Hampshire's Administrative Commissioner to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and state agency representative on the New England Fishery Management Council. From 2002 to 2004 he chaired the Commission leading his fellow Commissioners in accomplishing his specific goals of improving consistency in the Commission's decision-making, increasing transparency in all Commission processes and activities, and strengthening the Commission's strategic plan. During his tenure as ASMFC Commissioner, he demonstrated the highest skills of diplomacy in working closely with his sister states to resolve complex issues. Through his actions, he earned the deep respect of his fellow Commissioners as a strong thinker and effective problem solver. We wish John and his wife Susan a long, healthy, and happy retirement!



Species Profile: Striped Bass (continued from page 6)

on a more conservative F target than the coastal migratory stock. The independent F target allows these jurisdictions to implement separate seasons, harvest caps, and size and bag limits as long as they remain under that target.

In 2007, the Striped Bass Management Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 6. The Addendum establishes a bycatch monitoring and research program to increase the accuracy of data on striped bass discards, as required by Amendment 6. The bycatch program establishes a suite of mandatory and voluntary data collection standards, discard mortality studies, and technical committee analyses for commercial, recreational, and for-hire fisheries. The Addendum also recommends that states, through the Commission if possible, develop a web-based angler education program on fishing techniques known to reduce post-release hooking mortality. For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, FMP Coordinator, at nmeserve@asmfc.org.