



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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ASMFC Hires Vince O'Shea as Executive Director

On January 25, 2002, Susan Shipman, Chair of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, announced the selection of Captain John Vincent O'Shea, U.S. Coast Guard, as the Commission's new Executive Director.

"Vince O'Shea is an outstanding and dynamic leader with a long history in fisheries issues," said Ms. Shipman. "We are extremely fortunate to have been able to recruit such a well-known and talented individual to lead us through the challenges ahead."

Captain O'Shea has spent over 30 years with the U. S. Coast Guard, much of it working on fisheries issues. During the early 1990s, he was in charge of fisheries law enforcement at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Washington, D.C. While

in Washington he had the opportunity to become familiar with many state marine fisheries programs, and worked with the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee. For the past five years, Captain O'Shea has been working in the Coast Guard's 12th District office in Juneau Alaska in various positions. He has been the Coast Guard's representative to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Currently, he is the Chief of Operations for the 12th District.

"We have lot to do to keep building the partnership among the states and with our colleagues in the federal government," said Ms. Shipman. "Vince has shown us that he can be a sensitive and effective team builder. He will also be an outstanding representative of the states to the Congress, federal agency partners, and to the larger commercial, recreational and environmental fisheries communities."

The position of Executive Director became vacant on January 28, 2002, when John H. Dunnigan left to become the Director of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries at the National Marine Fisheries Service. Mr. Dunnigan served the states for the past eleven years.

Captain O'Shea expressed his delight at having this opportunity. "Jack Dunnigan has done a terrific job at the Commission, and leaves very big shoes to fill," he said. "It is an honor for me to have this opportunity to fol-

low such a high caliber professional. I am humbled, thrilled, and excited!"

Captain O'Shea is expected to begin his new duties full-time on or before April 15, 2002. He will attend the Commission's February Meeting Week in Washington, D.C., on February 18-21, 2002.



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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

Susan Shipman (GA), Chair
John I. Nelson (NH), Vice-Chair
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Upcoming Meetings

2/13:

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; (410) 859-8400. For more information, please contact Joe Moran at Joe.Moran@accsp.org

2/18 - 21:

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

2/26:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Ferncroft, Danvers, Massachusetts.

2/28 (8:30 AM - 12:30 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section, Sheraton Ferncroft, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, Massachusetts; (978)777-2500. For more information, please contact Dr. Joseph Desfosse at jdesfosse@asmfc.org

2/28 - 3/2:

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

3/11 - 15:

ASMFC Stock Assessment Training, Providence Biltmore, Kennedy Plaza, Providence, Rhode Island; (800)294-7709. For more information, please contact Geoff White at gwhite@asmfc.org

3/12 - 14:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Ramada East End, Riverhead, New York.

3/19 & 21:

New England Fishery Management Council, Mystic Hilton, Mystic, Connecticut.

3/26 - 28:

ASMFC Artificial Reef Technical Committee, Key West Florida.

4/16 & 17:

ASMFC Habitat Committee, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Annapolis, Maryland.

4/21 - 24:

58th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine; <http://www.mefishwildlife.com>

4/30 - 5/2:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Omni Hotel, Newport News, Virginia.

The following column has been contributed by John H. Dunnigan, outgoing ASMFC Executive Director.

I was dreaming . . . Dreaming . . . All good things must come to an end . . .

Jack: Hello??? (Knock, knock) Hello? Anybody here? My these are big gates. And gold too. Hello there! Anybody...

St. Peter: Well, well, well. You again.

Jack: Again?

St. Peter: Welcome back. How nice to see you. Let's see. It has been . . . Almost eleven years! My, you've never stayed away that long before. This must have been something really special.

Jack: Again? What do you mean, "Again"?

St. Peter: Well, you don't remember. Most people don't remember a thing, until they come up here for good. But every time you make a really big decision in your life, you come here first and we talk it over. Just to see if you are ready for the really BIG TIME!! Only, if we send you back, we don't let you remember your trip here.

Jack: So, what's the agenda today?

St. Peter: Hmm. Funny you should mention agendas, since you have not been all that good lately at... Well, anyway. Let's move on. You have decided to leave the employ of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. I wonder why? They have been good to you, haven't they?

Jack: The best. They responded to every challenge. The states stuck to their commitment to each other and worked hard to make the program work, even when the going got tough. Even back in 1991, some of them were not too sure about this new Atlantic coastal fisheries law we were working on. But the results have been great. We have a broader program that is better able to meet the states' needs; and we have solid congressional support for funding. We've been able to keep a focus on all of the critical program elements, as the states use the Commission to coordinate and expand their research programs, and habitat and law enforcement activities.

St. Peter: Whoa! That's eclectic... And, maybe a bit confusing?

Jack: Not really. You see the Commissioners committed to an ongoing process of strategic planning. They have goals and strategies, and each year they set tasks to meet their goals. Why, we've even got them to the point of integrating their annual budget planning with their strategic planning.

St. Peter: Sounds fancy. What about staff support? You probably had to do all of this on your own.

Jack: Nah, that's the great thing. We put together a staff of the smartest, nicest, hardest working people in the business. And we got top-notch senior managers to put the program together and make it look right, even when I meddled too much. Yes, sir, they could sure make me look good!

St. Peter: And so you got everything fixed up right, hmmm?

Jack: Uh well, not exactly. I mean, there's this little thing about world peace that I wasn't able to solve. And, there are going to be some tight budgets in the next few years, and enforcement is going to have to set some difficult priorities. Sometimes the science gets asked to give answers when it really doesn't have them, and that creates confusion and consternation. We got the ACCSP off the ground, but now it has to prove itself. And, the state directors are always getting beat up over regulations, and they need constant support and backup. And, we are still trashing the environment, and we don't fully understand ecosystems. And...

St. Peter: Wait a minute here! Let me see. You mean to say that you've had some success; but that it was all because the Commissioners wanted it anyway, the staff did all the work, and you still have unsolved problems?

Jack: Well, sir... I guess that's right.

St. Peter: You go to hell!

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From the Executive Directors' Desk (continued from page 3)

Jack: No, no!! Wait a minute! That's not right! C'mon, Pete.

St. Peter: Careful, bucko! Look, the only alternative is to send you back to NMFS, and nobody...

Jack: I'll take it.

St. Peter: You're kidding. Everyone will blame me and think I don't have a heart. Really, I can send you to...

Jack: No really. Going back to NMFS is something I really want to do.

St. Peter: We do have doctors for this.

Jack: Wait. Look. The last eleven years have been a great run. Personally fulfilling. Professionally successful. I could not have wanted more. Period.

St. Peter: But...?

Jack: But, change happens. It has to. It is part of growth. It is time for me to move on. And let me tell you something else. I have found that I still care about NMFS. I care about the people there. I care about the issues. I've learned a lot in the last eleven years about how much fish-

eries agencies can accomplish when they work together, and I think we can make some of those lessons work in the federal government too.

St. Peter: Really, we do have very good doctors...

Jack: Oh come on. Look, the best part is the new director, Bill Hogarth. You remember him. He must have been up here about a year ago. And, he really wants to make NMFS more responsive, more effective, and a better place to work. I don't think I could sit on the sidelines and criticize if I have a chance to help make things better.

St. Peter: Well, when you put it that way... I guess we'll have to let you go. Just remember to keep praying. You're going to need it, and we'll be listening up here. It gives us something to laugh about. You know -- "Been there, done that!" It will probably be as interesting for us watching as it will be for you living... Oh, and one last thing.

Jack: Yes?

St. Peter: Next time you come by, think about staying for a while!

Jack: What? And miss my NEXT Great Adventure?

Robert E. Beal Named New ISFMP Director

On January 30, 2002, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission named Robert E. Beal as its new Director of the Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP). For the last six months, Mr. Beal has held the position of Acting Director, while continuing his responsibilities as Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan Coordinator.

"Bob has been with the Commission for nearly five years and during that time he has developed an impressive record of working hard to support cooperative state-federal management of coastal fisheries," said Laura Leach, Acting Executive Director for the Commission. "As Director, Bob will bring these energies to

bear on helping to manage the program of bringing the states together to identify and promote their mutual interests in the conservation and management of valuable fishery resources."

Over his five years at the Commission, Mr. Beal has addressed a number of important fisheries research and management issues. These include initiation of the Commission's Committee on Economics and Social Sciences; establishment of the Federal Investment Task Force to investigate overcapitalization in the U.S. fishing fleets; and coordination of fisheries management programs for striped bass, bluefish, tautog, summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass.

Prior to coming to the Commission, Mr. Beal received a Master's in Coastal Environmental Management, with a concentration in marine fisheries management. As Director of the ISFMP, Mr. Beal will be responsible for supporting the work of sixteen different species management boards, and their associated committees and subcommittees, that develop and monitor the implementation of policy among states on the Atlantic coast to conserve and manage valuable marine species.

ASMFC Approves Black Sea Bass Addendum VI & Scup Addenda V & VII: RI, NY, NJ & MD to Hold Hearings in February

The Atlantic coastal states of Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and Maryland have scheduled the dates and times of their meetings in order to gather public comment and input on the three addenda – Addendum VI to the Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Addenda V and VII to the Scup FMP. Following are the details of those meetings.

February 11, 2002; 7:00 PM

New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Marine Resources
205 Belle Meade Road
East Setauket, New York
Contact: Byron Young at (631) 444-0436

February 12, 2002; 5:00 PM

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
University of Rhode Island Bay Campus
Coastal Institute Conference and Visitors Center
Large Conference Room
220 South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Brian Murphy at (401) 782-4713

February 13, 2002; 7:00 PM

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Ocean City Administration Building
101 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, New Jersey
Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609) 292-2083

February 13, 2002; 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Service
Worcester County Public Library
11107 Cathell Road
Ocean Pines, Maryland
Contact: Bill Outten at (410) 260-8266

This past December, the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved an Emergency Rule for Quarter I of the 2002 black sea bass fishery. This action sets the daily possession limit for black sea bass at 7,000 pounds for the duration of Quarter I, which extends from January 1 through March 31.

In setting regulations for Quarter I, the Emergency Rule also allowed for the final development of Addendum VI to the Black Sea Bass FMP. The purpose of Addendum VI is to provide the Management Board with a mechanism to establish trip limits and, if necessary, triggers and adjusted weekly or daily trip limits for each quarter through the normal specification setting process. Creating a more permanent system of this kind will afford the Board flexibility in setting trip limits, while eliminating the administrative burden of implementing an emergency rule each year.

Two addenda have also been approved for the scup fishery. Addendum V to the Scup FMP seeks to establish state-specific allocations for the commercial summer period quota and provides series of options for public comment. The summer quota period extends from the beginning of May through the end of October each year. From 1999 to 2001, the Management Board approved three separate emergency rules to establish state quota shares that differ from Addendum I to the Scup FMP. The emergency rule that was in effect for the summer 2001 fishery expired on October 6, 2001. In the absence of a new addendum or emergency rule, the summer period scup management program will revert back to that detailed in Addendum I to the Scup FMP.

The second scup addendum, Addendum VII, is designed to provide the states with a set of management options for the 2002 recreational scup fishery. Over the last couple of years scup recreational landings have substantially exceeded the harvest limit. The Board is developing Addendum VII with the intent of designing and implementing a program that will limit recreational harvest to the targets established by the FMP. In the Draft Addendum for public comment, the Board is considering the development of a coastwide management measure, the separation of the coast into regions, and the development of a state-specific management program for the recreational scup fishery. In addition, states may be given the option of developing a separate management program for the charter and party boat sector. While summer flounder, scup and black sea bass are managed jointly by the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, these recent actions have been taken by the states for state water management only.

Copies of the Emergency Rule and the addenda 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 13, 2002 for Addenda V & VI, and February 18, 2002 for Addendum VII. Comments should be forwarded to Michael Lewis, FMP Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or <mlewis@asmfc.org>.

15th Annual SEAMAP Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise

The 2002 Southeast Area Monitoring Assessment Program's (SEAMAP) Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise proved to be not just another scientific research cruise. In addition to expanding the amount of data collected, this year's participants managed to haul up a World War II US Naval Aerial bomb. But even an extraordinary catch such as this did not deter the crew's ambition to continue the cruise's tag and release efforts.



Photo courtesy of Roger Rulifson.

While cruising the offshore waters of North Carolina and Virginia, a total of

4,136 striped bass were captured, tagged and released. In addition to tagging the fish, scale samples, length and weight measurements were obtained. Over 75 striped bass were sacrificed for otolith, gonad, and stomach samples. 1,998 spiny dogfish were tagged and even more were measured and sexed. A record 21 Atlantic sturgeon were caught and tagged this year. During the eight-day cruise, lengths were also obtained from horseshoe crabs, monkfish, smooth dogfish, summer flounder and weakfish.

All of the information collected during the Cooperative Tagging Cruise will aid in the development and implementation of fisheries regulations by state and federal fishery 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



Tagging crew members, Roger Rulifson of East Carolina University and Eric Gowdy of North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, with a definite keeper. Photo courtesy of Roger Rulifson.

and Wildlife Service, Maryland Fisheries Resource Office, as part of the coast wide tagging program for these two species. East Carolina University distribute rewards for spiny dogfish tag returns.

For more information, please contact Bill Cole, USFWS at (252) 726-7021 or Wilson Laney, USFWS at (919) 515-5019.

ASMFC Stock Assessment Training Activities

The Commission will conclude its series of Commissioner stock assessment training seminars at the February 2002 Meeting Week. Dr. Joseph DeAlteris, from the University of Rhode Island, will present a seminar on biological reference points and control rules used in fisheries stock assessment. The presentation will be a summary of the various stock assessment models, their associated biological reference points, and how these reference points can be used to develop appropriate conservation strategies. Copies of all Dr. DeAlteris' PowerPoint presentations will be available from the Commission following meeting week.

In December 2001, the Commission conducted the first half of a technical stock assessment training course for state biologists. This course provides an introduction to common stock assessment principles and techniques, and is intended for biologists who have an understanding of population biology but little experience with stock assessment methods. The course reference material is the Commission's Stock Assessment User's Manual. Topics are first presented in a classroom session, followed by a computer session to give the participants hands on experience solving real world examples. Part 2 of the training course is scheduled for March 2002.

In November 2001, the Commission held the first of two advanced level stock assessment courses. Participants in the advanced courses were state and federal biologists who have a strong background in stock assessment methods. The week-long course focused on the stock assessment programs contained in the National Marine Fisheries Service Toolbox. The second advanced course is being planned for late spring 2002.

For more information on Commission stock assessment training activities, please contact Jeff Brust, Statistics Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 308, or jbrust@asmfc.org.

ACCSP Increases Angler Surveys in the Northeast

To increase the precision of marine recreational fishery catch estimates, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a state and federal coastal fisheries data collection and data management program, is continuing funding in 2002 for increased Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) interviews from Maine to Virginia.

With these increases in sampling, the ACCSP intends to bring the Northeast states closer to current MRFSS sampling levels in the Southeast, which are funded by federal budget allocations. Increased sample sizes in the Southeast result in more precise estimates, with significant improvements for commonly managed species at the state level.

Some states in the Northeast Region have increased sampling and improved their MRFSS estimates through other funding sources; however, consistent financing has not historically been available to the entire region. Improved levels of precision

for all states in the Northeast are crucial for adequate interstate fishery management decisions, allocations, and stock assessments. Enhanced MRFSS angler intercept and telephone sampling in the Northeast began in March of 2001 with a 50 percent increase.

Some increases in precision are expected, but the amount of improvement will not be known until the end of the sampling year. In general, estimates that are already very precise will not see much practical difference, while estimates that are considerably higher than the ACCSP goal of 20 percent proportional standard error should see improvement. For some fisheries there may be little improvement due to other factors that may influence the variability of the estimates, including low abundance of a species, pulse-type fishing activity and seasonal or regulatory changes.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP's partners are the ASMFC,



the 15 Atlantic states' natural resource management agencies, the three East Coast regional fishery management councils, the District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service 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 further information on the ACCSP, contact Abbey Compton at (202) 289-6400 or visit www.accsp.org.

Two New ASMFC Publications Now Available

The Commission has recently released two new special reports. The first report entitled, "Proceedings of the Workshop on Aging and Sexing American Eel," summarizes currently available techniques to sex and age American eel and their direct applicability to better understanding American eel populations along the Atlantic coast. It is a technical document aimed at state and federal fishery scientists responsible for aging and sexing American eel. The proceedings includes descriptive information on the various techniques, including workshop participant discussion. It also includes a CD-ROM of the workshop presentations which provide a visual guide to the techniques as well. Copies of the proceedings will be sent to the Commission's American Eel Technical Committee and workshop participants. If you are also interested in receiving a copy, please contact Heather Stirratt, American Eel Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <hstirratt@asmfc.org>.

The second report entitled, "Proceedings of the Cooperative State/Federal Workshop on Regulatory Discards," summarizes the issues addressed at a February 2001 workshop convened by the Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The goal of the workshop was to identify and discuss potential methods to reduce the amount of regulatory discards taken and/or increase the utilization of discards taken. The report includes copies of the presentations provided at the workshop, participant discussion and a detailed discussion of the recommendations. To receive a copy of the report, please contact Jeffrey Brust, Statistics Specialist, at (202) 289-6400 or <jbrust@asmfc.org>.

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