



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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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 Winter Meeting February 1-4, 2010

**Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town
901 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia**

Preliminary Agenda

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 (see guidelines for submission of public comment on page 8).

Monday, February 1, 2010

Noon - 2:30 p.m. American Lobster Management Board

2:45 - 5:45 p.m. Atlantic Herring Section

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

8:00 - 10:30 a.m. Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Weakfish Management Board

3:15 - 6:15 p.m. Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

8:30 - 11:30 a.m. Horseshoe Crab Management Board

12:30 - 2:00 p.m. South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

2:15 - 5:15 p.m. ISFMP Policy Board

Thursday, February 4, 2010

8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Bluefish Management Board

9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Shad and River Herring Management Board

1:15 - 2:00 p.m. ISFMP Policy Board (continued)

3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Business Session

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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 diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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Upcoming Meetings

1/26 - 28:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

2/1 - 4:

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333.

2/9 - 11:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort, 100 Heron Boulevard at Route 50, Cambridge, MD; 410/901-1234.

3/1 - 5:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Jekyll Island Club Hotel, 371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, Georgia.

3/22 - 26:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

4/13 - 15:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Sanderling Resort and Spa, 1461 Duck Road, Duck, North Carolina; 252/261-4111.

4/27 - 29:

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

5/3 - 6:

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333.

6/8 - 10:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Radisson Martinique on Broadway, 49 West 42nd Street, New York, New York; 212/736-3800.

6/6 - 11:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Renaissance Orlando Hotel Airpot, 5445 Forbes Place, Orlando, Florida.

6/21 - 25:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

6/22 - 24:

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

2009 at a Glance -- What's Next?

The approach of the New Year is a good time to review past accomplishments and look forward to challenges ahead. Just a quick glance on our website at our past meeting summaries, newsletters, and press releases will show the large number and wide range of issues the Commission has dealt with in 2009.

Our Commissioners continued to receive good news about a number of our stocks. Northern shrimp remain abundant, allowing for a 180 day season in 2010 to enable dealers to expand their markets. Depressed shrimp stocks outside the U.S. may boost market prices. The latest striped bass stock assessment update indicates the stock remains in good condition, with mortality rates below the target. While abundance has declined since 2004, total biomass has remained relatively stable since 1996.

Based on new models, scientists have concluded that scup and black sea bass have reached rebuilt levels. Since this is a new approach, scientists have recommended precaution in setting harvest limits for 2010 in case stocks are actually lower than estimated. Future updates should give scientists more confidence in these models and help ensure sustainable harvest quotas. Bluefish have also been rebuilt, having exceeded target biomass more than a year sooner than the rebuilding deadline of 2010. This is good news for commercial and recreational harvesters.

Summer flounder continues to rebuild with an increase in quotas for 2010. More importantly, scientists report that the 2008 year class is exceptionally strong, 40% above the long-term average. If these fish are protected and allowed to mature they could enable the stock to reach its rebuilding level by the congressionally-mandated deadline of 2013. The red drum assessment concluded that juveniles are surviving to join the offshore adult population, so overfishing is not occurring. However, there is uncertainty about the adult population, indicating the need for scientists to collect more data, especially through longline surveys conducted by the southern states.

The American lobster stock assessment contained good news for Georges Bank and most of the Gulf of Maine, showing high abundance and good recruitment. The exception was in Area 514, north of Cape Cod where abundance is low. High catches this year in Maine were offset by the low ex-vessel prices fishermen received. The 2005 assessment concluded the Southern New England stock was depleted. This year's as-

essment showed continued low abundance and recruitment, especially in Long Island Sound.

Our Commissioners also received sobering news indicating significant challenges ahead. They took action to reduce fishing on winter flounder stocks in the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England. Both stocks are overfished, with the Southern New England component estimated to be only 9% of its biomass target. Recovery of this stock is especially challenging given the level of at-sea discarding from other fisheries. This year scientists reported the weakfish spawning stock biomass has declined to 10.8 million pounds, 3% of an unfished stock. Current levels of removals are unsustainable under present stock conditions. Commissioners acted to implement coastwide regulations by May 2010 to reduce commercial and recreational harvests. Although there is evidence of juvenile fish being produced, it is not fully understood why they are not surviving to maturity.

In the important area of promoting habitat protection, the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership earned formal recognition this year. This will enable the Partnership to compete for federal funding for projects to enhance and protect habitat, an essential component of healthy fisheries.

Our states will face continued fiscal constraints, while the public's demand for more certain scientific advice will increase. Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements for catch limits and accountability measures will change the way councils do business, affecting Commission species where we have joint plans. NMFS' implementation of improvements to the recreational catch reporting system will affect our understanding of harvest levels. The Administration will pursue its policies to promote marine spatial planning and the use of catch shares to improve fisheries management. Both have the potential to impact our states and our stakeholders.

These are just some of the challenges Commissioners face. This is in addition to the significant workload related to their public trust responsibilities to manage fisheries that collectively generate more than a billion dollars of economic activity a year to our stakeholders and coastal communities. Addressing these challenges head on is critical to fishermen and to the next generation. Supporting our Commissioners in their difficult job of carrying out this important work is hopefully something we can all agree to do.

Species Profile: Red Drum

Benchmark Assessment Finds Resource Relatively Stable with Overfishing Not Occurring

Introduction

Attempts to regulate the Atlantic coast red drum fishery date back to the first annual meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in 1942 when a Delaware Commissioner urged that red drum be made a sport fish, or be protected by adequate size limits and daily catch limits, and that its use as fertilizer be prohibited. While this request and later management recommendations were unsuccessful in preventing the overexploitation of red drum, the 2009 stock assessment indicates that interstate management has made significant strides in improving the population's condition since 1990. At that time, the stability of the stock was uncertain, with an exploitation level that was jeopardizing future recruitment. Through the implementation of more stringent regulations in the 1990s and 2000s, the stock is now no longer subject to overfishing and sufficient numbers of young fish are surviving to become breeding adults.

Despite this achievement, managers still face challenges with red drum. Due to data deficiencies regarding the adult population, it cannot be determined whether the stock is still overfished or rebuilt. This is because there is limited information on fish older than age 4 as a result of the fish's life history and regulations that restrict the harvest of fish greater than 27 inches. Due to these unknowns, managers are holding the course on red drum management for the time being, while continuing research efforts seek to provide missing data for future stock assessments.

Life History

The historic distribution of red drum on the Atlantic coast is from Massachusetts through Florida, though few fish have been reported north of the Chesapeake Bay in recent years. Juveniles are most abundant in estuarine waters and inlets, while fish older than age four inhabit deeper waters. The adult fish migrate seasonally, moving offshore or south in the winter and inshore or north in the spring. Spawning occurs at night in the nearshore waters during the summer and fall. Prolific spawners, large females may produce up to two million eggs in a season. Eggs hatch within 24 to 36 hours of being spawned, and the larvae are carried by wind and tidal action into shallow, low salinity estuarine nursery areas. Juveniles and subadults stay in estuarine areas feeding on zooplankton and invertebrates such as small crabs and shrimp. Gradually, red drum expand their diet to include fish and larger invertebrates. Depending on the area, males mature between age one and four (20-28 inches in length), while females mature between age three and six (31-36 inches in length). Red drum may reach 60 years of age and 60 inches in length (corresponding to greater than 90 pounds in weight).

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Atlantic coast commercial landings of red drum have been reported



Red Drum

Sciaenops ocellatus

Management Unit: New Jersey - Florida

Interesting Facts:

* The name is derived from their color and the fact that during spawning time males produce a drum-like noise by vibrating a muscle in their swim bladder.

* Due to their unusual growth pattern, a 36" red drum may be anywhere from 6 - 50 years old.

* Red drum have been successfully reared in hatcheries and released into South Carolina, Georgia and Florida estuaries in stock enhancement programs.

Largest on Record: 94 lbs. and 2 oz., Hatteras Island, North Carolina

Stock Status: Overfishing not occurring

since the 1880s. Since 1960, landings have fluctuated around 220,000 pounds, with a high of 440,445 pounds in 1980 and a low of 54,748 pounds in 2004 (Figure 1). No directed commercial fishery currently exists for Atlantic red drum. Fish are landed as bycatch in several states, predominantly North Carolina where gillnets take the vast majority of the state's harvest. The catch in North Carolina is restricted by an annual quota and low daily fish limit. Commercial harvest and sale in New Jersey through Virginia and Georgia is restricted to recreational limits, and in South Carolina and Florida, commercial harvest is prohibited. In 1990, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council prohibited harvest in federal waters (3 – 200 miles offshore) to prevent any directed fishery for red drum from developing.

The recreational fishery for red drum is a nearshore fishery, targeting small, "puppy drum" in shallow estuarine waters and large trophy fish along the Mid- and South Atlantic barrier islands. Harvest is restricted by minimum and maximum size limits and a daily trip limit. Due to strict commercial restrictions and the great popularity of red drum by anglers, recreational fishing has accounted

for over 87% of all Atlantic coast red drum landings (by pounds) since 1982. Annual harvest has generally ranged between 300,000 and 550,000 fish per year, with the exception of some larger harvests in the mid-1980s. Meanwhile recreational catch has increased over-time, meaning that the percentage of fish that are caught and released has in-

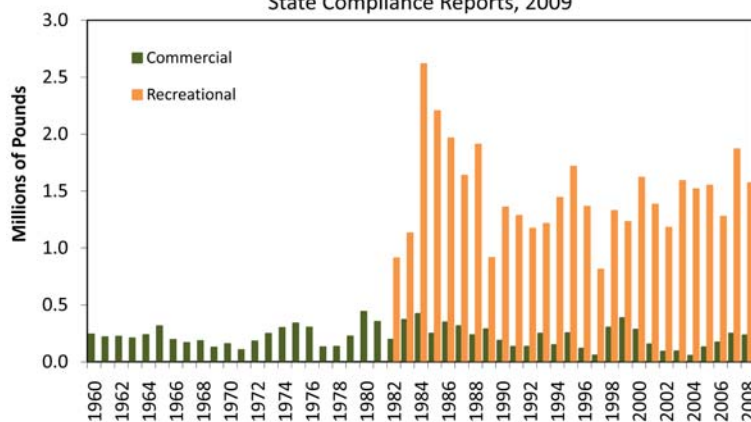
creased from about 4% in 1982 to more than 83% in 2008. Anglers from the four most southern Atlantic states tend to take about 90% of the coastwide recreational harvest.

Stock Status

The 2009 peer-reviewed stock assessment indicates that abundance of young fish for both the northern (NJ – NC) and southern (SC – FL) stock complexes have remained relatively stable since 2000. The stock assessment concluded that sufficient numbers of young fish are surviving to move offshore and join the adult spawning population, indicating that overfishing is likely not occurring.

Data limitations resulting from red drum's life history characteristics and management regime present unique challenges to scientists as they try to assess the status of the stock. Relatively little is known about the adult (spawning) population of red drum (ages 4 and older) as these fish are primarily found in offshore waters where fishing for red

Figure 1. Atlantic Coast Red Drum Landings
Sources: Personal communication with NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2009; State Compliance Reports, 2009



drum is prohibited under federal law. As such, there is little fishery-dependent information on the larger, reproductive fish and limited fishery-independent data. Existing data are largely for the juvenile component of the resource (ages 1 – 3) found in inshore waters. Fishery-

Red Drum Assessment Q&A

Why 2 Stock Components?

Red drum are divided into two management areas along the Atlantic coast, a northern region (from New Jersey to North Carolina) and a southern region (from South Carolina to Florida). This division is based on differences in life history traits (such as growth rates and maximum observed ages) between the two regions, and information from tagging studies, which show that red drum rarely move between regions. Separate stock assessments were performed for each region.

What Data Were Used?

The red drum stock assessment used both fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data, including information on red drum biology and life history.

Specific fishery-dependent data included:

- **Commercial harvest** data from Massachusetts through the east coast of Florida.
- **Biological samples from the commercial catch** in Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia. Samples were used to calculate the number of fish of each age in the commercial catch (the catch-at-age). The model used data from 1989 – 2007 since the biological sampling was only adequate to describe the catch-at-age from 1989 onwards.
- **On-board observer data** from North Carolina's commercial gillnet fishery to estimate discard mortality.
- **Recreational catch** and effort data from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) for 1989 – 2007. Recreational catches are divided into Type A catch (fish that are landed and able to be measured), Type B1 catch (fish that are killed but unavailable to be measured – filleted, discarded dead, etc.), and Type B2

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Species Profile Red Drum (continued from page 5)

dependent data are constrained by the fisheries slot limit, which ranges anywhere from 14 to 27 inches (again limiting the amount of information about larger fish) and fishery-independent data are supplied by multiple state inshore surveys.

The end result of these limitations is a stock assessment that adequately describes abundance and exploitation rates for the preadult component of the population (ages 1 – 3), particularly for the northern region, but provides no reliable information on the adult component. Additionally, the stock assessment model was considered to be informative only about the relative, not absolute, trends in age 1 – 3 abundance and exploitation for the southern region. Therefore, only general conclusions about trends in stock status could be provided for the southern region.

In the northern region, abundance of age 1 – 3 red drum increased during 1990 – 2000 after which it widely fluctuated (Figure 2). The initial increase in abundance of these age groups can be explained by the reduction in exploitation rates in the early part of the time series with relative stability since then. Fishing pressure appears to be stable, and there is a high probability that the stock is not subject to overfishing.

In the southern region, the relative trend

in abundance of age 1 – 3 red drum increased during 1989 – 1992, declined during 1992 – 1998 and has fluctuated thereafter (Figure 3). As with the northern stock, the initial increase in abundance of these age groups can be explained by the reduction in exploitation rates in the early part of the time series. There appears to have been a slight increase in exploitation rates since 1990. It is likely that the stock is not subject to overfishing.

Atlantic Coastal Management

For close to two decades, red drum were jointly managed in state and federal waters by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the South Atlan-

tic Fishery Management Council. The first interstate plan was developed in 1984. In 1990, the Council's plan closed federal waters to red drum harvest, and a 1998 amendment revised definitions for optimum yield and overfishing. Amendments to the interstate plan occurred in 1991 and 2002, partly in response to the Council plan and amendment. Following the implementation of Amendment 2 in 2003, the Council recommended transferring the authority for managing red drum in federal waters to the Commission. Two reasons for this decision were that all harvest is taken in state waters and that, due to data deficiencies, a rebuilding schedule for the federal plan could not be set as required by law. The transfer of authority became effective in late 2008. It does not affect the red drum harvest prohibition in federal waters.

The primary management goal of Amendment 2 is to achieve and maintain the stock's spawning potential at a level capable of sustaining the population. To achieve this goal, the plan further restricted the recreational fishery and maintained existing commercial regulations. The management regime is intended to increase the escapement of inshore juvenile fish to the offshore adult population, and protect the adult population from exploitation. Atlantic coast states from Florida through

Figure 2. Estimates of Abundance and Exploitation for the Northern Stock Component of Red Drum, Ages 1 - 3

Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009

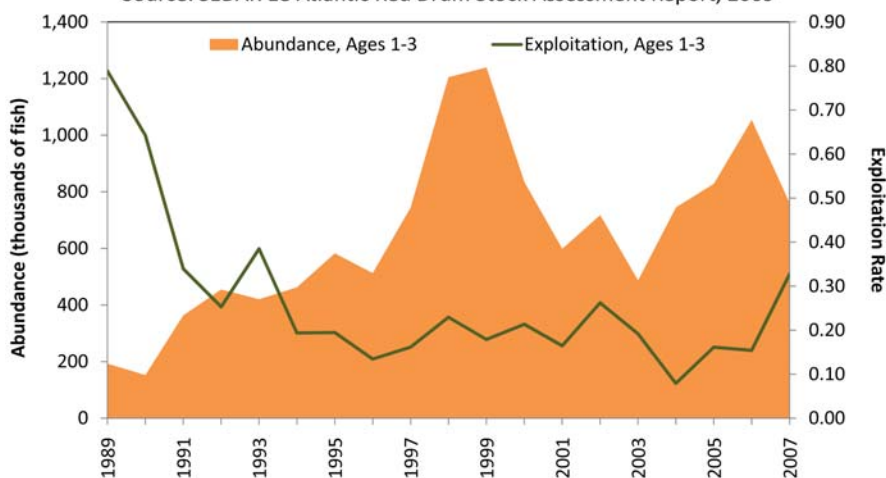
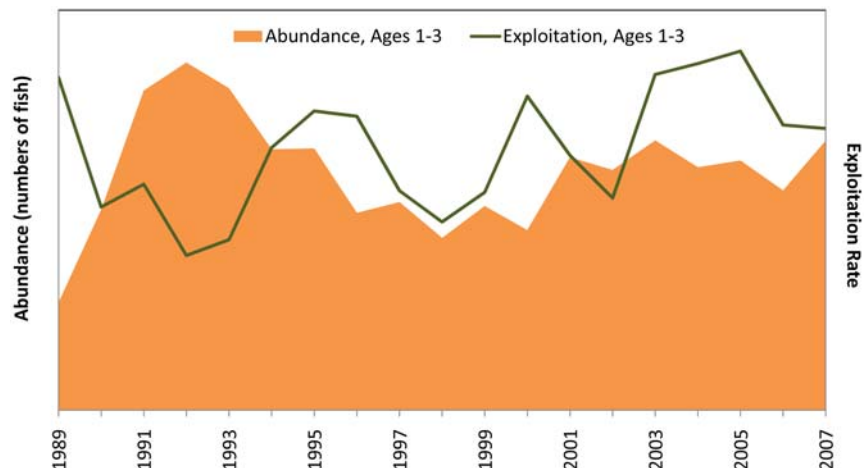


Figure 3. Trends in Abundance and Exploitation for the Southern Stock Component of Red Drum, Ages 1 - 3

Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009



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Red Drum Assessment Q&A (continued from page 5)

catch (fish that are released alive). MRFSS surveyors measure the Type A fish they encounter to develop a length-frequency of the recreational catch which can then be used to make recreational catch-at-age.

- Estimates of number of angler-trips were used to calculate yearly **catch-per-unit-effort** (CPUE), which provided information on trends of relative abundance in each region.
- Several studies were used to estimate **survival rates of recreationally caught and released red drum**; the assessment assumed that 8% of all fish released alive die as a result of being caught.

The red drum assessment used a number of different fishery-independent datasets that provide information on trends of relative abundance for different age classes. Specific fishery-independent data included:

- **2 North Carolina surveys** – a gillnet survey that caught age 1 and 2 fish, and a seine survey that caught fish that were less than 1 year old.
- **3 South Carolina surveys** – an electrofishing survey that caught age 1 fish, a trammel net survey that caught age 2 and 3 fish, and a longline survey that caught adult red drum age 6 and older.
- **1 Georgia survey** – a trammel net survey that caught age 1 fish.
- **2 Florida surveys** – a small seine survey that caught age 1 fish, and a haul seine survey that caught age 2 and 3 fish.
- **North Carolina's extensive tagging program** provided important information about fishing mortality and the age composition of the fish released alive by recreational anglers. These data proved essential to the assessment, helping to reduce uncertainty in the northern region. Although tagging data exist for the southern region, the necessary analyses were not available to provide similar information for the south.

What Model Was Used?

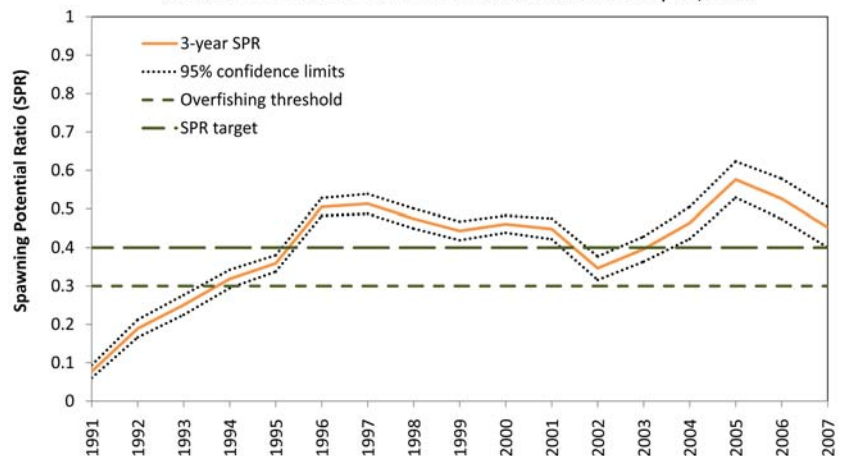
A statistical catch-at-age (SCA) model was used to assess the red drum stocks. An SCA model combines the catch-at-age data from the commercial and recreational fisheries with information from fishery-independent surveys and biological information such as growth rates and natural mortality rates to estimate the size of each age class and the exploitation rate on the population. The model also provides information used to calculate spawning potential ratio (SPR); the 3-year average of the SPR was used to determine the status of the stock. Because of the limited data on adults, the model groups all fish age seven and older into a single "plus group."

What is the Status of the Stock?

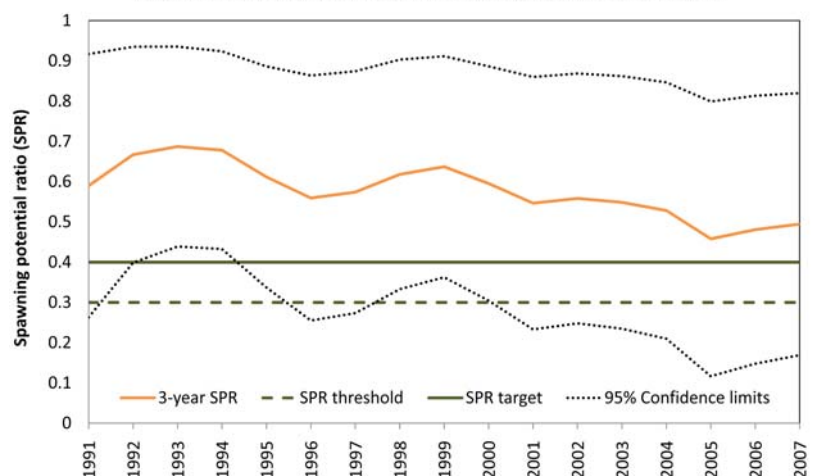
The Commission assesses red drum relative to SPR benchmarks. SPR measures the reproductive potential of a fished stock relative to that of an unfished stock. The overfishing threshold is an SPR of 30%; an SPR below 30% indicates that overfishing is occurring, because not enough fish are surviving to reproduce and contribute to the population. The target SPR is 40%.

The assessment determined that overfishing was not occurring in either the northern or the southern stock. The 3-year average of the SPR was above the overfishing threshold of 30% SPR in both regions, indicating sufficient numbers of young fish are surviving to join the adult spawning population. The 3-year average of SPR in the north was 45.3%, above both the overfishing threshold and the target SPR. The 3-year average of the SPR in the south was 49.5%, but due to a higher degree of uncertainty in that estimate, it could not be determined whether that stock was above the target as well. This uncertainty can be seen in the width of the confidence intervals around the SPR estimates.

Spawning Potential Ratio for the Northern Stock Component
Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009



Spawning Potential Ratio for the Southern Stock Component
Source: SEDAR 18 Atlantic Red Drum Stock Assessment Report, 2009



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ASMFC American Lobster Board Releases Draft Addendum XVI for Public Comment and Review

The Commission's American Lobster Board Management Board has approved Draft Addendum XVI to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes options for new reference points for each of the three lobster stocks. It also proposes changes in the procedures for adopting and implementing new reference points. The Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. It is anticipated that Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut will be conducting public meetings on the Draft Addendum; information on those meetings will be released once they become finalized.

The reference points first established in Addendum VIII require revision. The reference point estimates are based on the 2006 assessment covering 1982-

2003. They are not compatible with the 2009 assessment which covers data from 1982-2007. The Lobster Technical Committee and the Review Panel for the 2009 American lobster stock assessment recommended developing new reference points for future management.

Currently, to incorporate new stock status determination criteria (overfishing/depleted status) that may result from updated, peer-reviewed science, the Board must enact an addendum adjustment or amendment to the American Lobster FMP. The stock status determination criteria are defined under Section 2.3.1 of Addendum VIII to the FMP. Though these criteria may be modified or replaced through an addendum or amendment, the timing of updated survey information, subsequent analysis and peer-review, and the addendum or amendment process means that the availability of the best available sci-

entific information may be significantly delayed from entering the management process and responding to poor stock health.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XVI, by either attending public hearings or providing written comments. The Draft Addendum can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on January 20, 2010** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at tkerns@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum XVI).

Public Comment Guidelines for Winter Meeting

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

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

comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

1. Comments received on January 11 will be included on the briefing CD.

2. Comments received by 5:00 PM on January 26 will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.

3. Following January 26, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for the management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, they will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

On The Legislative Front: *Interim Framework for National Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Released*

On December 14, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force released its Interim Framework for National Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning for public review and comment. The comment period is open for 60 days through February 20, 2010. The Interim Framework is the Administration's response to questions about how to deal with expanding uses of our nation's oceans, coastal waters, and Great Lakes.

This overhaul of the federal government's approach to coastal and marine planning is designed to be comprehensive and integrative. The Interim Framework incorporates various important aspects, including:

- **A new approach to using and protecting our oceans and coasts.** Goals include decreasing user conflicts, and improving regulatory efficiencies and decreasing their costs. The Interim Framework gives more details about how the plans would be developed and implemented.
- **Move away from piecemeal decision-making.** Marine spatial planning presents a more holistic approach to managing the suite of activities in our ocean and coastal waters.
- **Bring into the planning process a broader range of stake-**



- holders.** The new approach will be regionally-based (through the establishment of nine regional planning bodies) and developed with representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal authorities, in addition to existing regional governance structures.
- **Base regional decision-making on science.**
- **Encourage stakeholder and public participation throughout all steps of a transparent process.**

The Interim Framework can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/091209-Interim-CMSP-Framework-Task-Force.pdf>. Once the 60-day comment period closes, the Task Force will finalize its recommendations in a report to the President in early 2010.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Senator Thad Altman -- In November, Senator Thad Altman was appointed to serve as Florida's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Senator Altman replaces Senator Andy Gardiner, who served since February 2009.



Senator Altman began his political career as a Brevard County Commissioner from 1984-1992. He was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2003 in a special election and then elected to the Senate in 2008, representing District 24 (Brevard, Orange and Seminole counties). He serves on the following committees: Health Regulation Community Affairs, Transportation, Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means, Policy & Steering Committee on Energy Environment and

Land Use and serves as Chairman of the Senate Finance & Tax Committee.

Senator Altman has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences from Rollins College and an Associates of Arts in Social Sciences from Brevard Community College.

Senator Altman is a strong believer in community service. As a State Representative he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Brevard Community College and was President of the American Lung Association. Welcome board, Senator Altman!

Robert Ballou -- In November, Robert Ballou became Rhode Island's Administrative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Mr. Ballou replaces Mark Gibson, who served in that position since 2004. Mr. Gibson will continue to serve on most of the Commission's species management boards as Mr. Ballou's

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We Are Ready for the Redesigned SAFIS!

On January 4, 2010, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) will be proceeding with the rollout of the redesigned Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS). SAFIS is a real-time, web-based reporting system for catch and effort landings on the Atlantic coast. SAFIS is comprised of four applications:

1. **Electronic Dealer Reports (eDR)** – collects dealers landings (including condition and price).
2. **Electronic Trip Reports (eTRIPS)** – collects catch data from fishers (including gears used, fishing areas, and catch disposition).
3. **Recreational Logbooks (eREC)** – collects data from recreational anglers.
4. **SAFIS Management System (SMS)** – provides administrative tools to state and federal SAFIS administrators for management.

It is important to recognize that while these applications stand alone, all are kept within the same database and therefore can be linked together.

Some of the major enhancements to the applications include: 1) integrating a price board to automatically generate pricing information, 2) added flexibility in creating favorites, and 3) improved reporting capabilities.

It has been a priority of the staff to work with partners to ensure that the new system is approachable and easily understood. In October, Paul Philip, Programmer with ACCSP, sent time training dealers in New York. Also, Mike Cahall, Director of ACCSP, and Karen

Holmes, Software Team Lead with ACCSP, were on hand at the NOAA Fisheries Service's Annual Port Agents Meeting held in Gloucester, MA. Both events were well received.

Alissa Wilson, a NOAA Port Agent from Cape May, NJ, had this to say about the presentation in Gloucester, MA, "The presentation given by Mike Cahall and Karen Holmes was fantastic. They explained everything in a manner that was easy to understand for those of us who are not up on the computer language. They literally showed us the ins and outs of the new SAFIS and what the program can do. It was great to see that ACCSP really listened to the industry and tried to address the issues users found when reporting with SAFIS. Overall, it was very informative and they took our suggestions, questions and comments back with them and addressed them as well."

For further information about SAFIS, please contact Karen Holmes, Program Team Lead for ACCSP, at karen.holmes@accsp.org.

About ACCSP

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coast wide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information, please visit www.accsp.org or call (202) 216-5690.



Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System

The latest version of SAFIS has been available in a test mode since July. ACCSP is very thankful to all of the dealers and staff that have taken the time to test the program and provide feedback. To date there have been approximately 210 users that have tested. Each of these comments has been addressed and it is the expectation that the rollout will go smoothly.

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 9)



ongoing proxy. Mr. Ballou is Acting Chief of the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife. He is responsible for all programs and activities pertaining to marine fisheries in Rhode Island. He also serves as Chair of the state's Marine Fisheries Council. He has worked for the

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) in various positions since 1989, including twelve years in the Director's Office where he served as both Assistant to the Director and Chief-of-Staff.

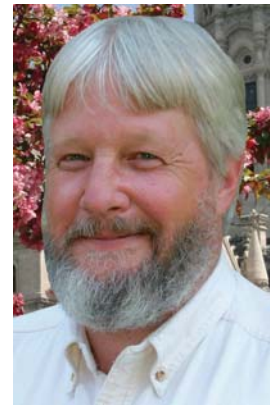
Mr. Ballou received RIDEM's Distinguished Service Award in 1997. He has been active in several community organizations including the Narragansett Conservation Commission, the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, the Narragansett Harbor Management Commission, and Common Cause of Rhode Island.

Mr. Ballou has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychobiology from Hamilton College and an Master of Arts in Marine Affairs

from the University of Rhode Island, with focus on fisheries law and management, environmental law and coastal zone management. Welcome aboard, Mr. Ballou!

Representative Craig A. Miner -- In December, Representative Miner was appointed Connecticut's new Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Representative Miner is serving his fifth term representing the constituents of Connecticut's 66th District, which includes Bethlehem, Litchfield, Morris and Woodbury. He is the Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the General Assembly's Appropriations Committee. He is also a member of the Planning and Development Committee and Environment Committee.

Representative Miner served as First Selectman to the Town of Litchfield from 1991-2001. He resigned when he assumed his new legislative duties. His administration has successfully promoted open government and maintained a stable tax base throughout the 1990s. Representative Miner attended Upsala College in New Jersey. Welcome aboard, Representative Miner!



Species Profile: Red Drum (continued from page 6)

New Jersey implemented appropriate bag and size limits as required, including a maximum size limit of 27 inches total length or less. The Amendment also encourages those states outside the management unit (i.e., New York through Maine) to implement supportive measures to protect the red drum resource.

Further action to revise the interstate management plan was not initiated in response to the 2009 stock assessment. Although the stock is no longer subject to overfishing, managers were hesitant to liberalize any regulations without knowing if the stock is rebuilt. In fact, the southern states have expressed concern regarding the trend of increasing exploitation on the southern stock component, and it is possible that some states may elect to implement more conservative management measures as a result. In the interim, all involved states agreed to maintain the current management regime and continue to support data collections efforts to improve future stock assessments. To this end, a new research survey using long line vessels to capture older red drum was initiated in 2006. This survey is providing data on the sizes and ages of red drum for which there is not information from the fisheries or other research surveys.

Red Drum Assessment Q&A (continued from page 7)

Why Greater Uncertainty for the Southern Region?

The northern stock assessment had a lower degree of uncertainty because the tagging data provided important external information on fishing mortality. Similar information was not available for the southern stock. The southern model was more sensitive to changes in the assumptions and input data, making the results more uncertain.

A more thorough overview of the red drum stock assessment results can be found on the Commission website www.asmfc.org under Breaking News.

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Return Service Requested



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