



ASMFC

Fisheries *focus*

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

Lobster Board Approves LCMTs Proposals for Egg Rebuilding

On July 17, 2001, the American Lobster Management Board met to review the proposals of the Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMTs) in meeting the revised egg rebuilding targets and schedules established by Addendum II to Amendment 3 to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan.

Seven LCMTs prepared proposals for Technical Committee and Board review in early June. Of the seven proposals, both the Technical Committee and Board found four proposals (Areas 2 - 6) to fully meet the F10% egg rebuilding target of Addendum II by 2008. The remaining two proposals for Area 1 and the Outer Cape were also approved by the Board with the proviso that the LCMTs for those areas meet to provide further measures to reach F10% by 2008. These additional measures are due to the Board by October 1, 2001. Following is a brief overview of the LCMT Area proposals.

Area 1 (Inshore Gulf of Maine)

- Zero Tolerance and Mandatory V-notching Provisions
Area 1 has agreed to revise the V-notching definition, as well as make the practice of V-notching all egg bearing females mandatory.

Area 2 (Inshore Southern New England)

- The Area 2 LCMT has met the F10% requirement through annual minimum gauge size increases implemented under Addendum II.

Area 3 (Offshore Waters)

- Overlap Area
An overlap area has been agreed to by both Area 3 and 5 LCMTs. The area will consist of a five-mile overlap, into Area 3 and extending the full length of Area 5.
- Choose and Use Provision
This provision will require federal permit holders to permanently designate Area 3.
- Mandatory V-notch Provision
Areas 1 and 3 have agreed to mandatory V-notching within the Gulf of Maine above the 42°30' latitude line.

Area 4 (Inshore Northern Mid-Atlantic)

- Minimum Gauge Size Increase
Area 4 has agreed to increase minimum gauge sizes by 1/32" annually from 2001-2004.
- Escape Vent Size Increase
Area 4 has agreed to increase the escape vent size concurrent with minimum gauge size increases in 2003.

Area 5 (Inshore Southern Mid-Atlantic)

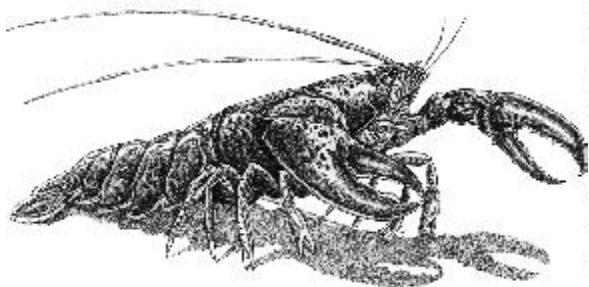
- Schedule Revisions to Minimum Size Increases
Area 5 has agreed to revise the schedule for minimum gauge size increases as outlined in Addendum II.
- Permit Category/Licensing Regulations
Area 5 has agreed to a series of permitting and licensing regulation revisions.
- Establish Maximum Gauge Size
Area 5 will establish a maximum gauge size, which prohibits possession of female lobster with a carapace length larger than 5 1/2".

Area 6 (NY & CT State Waters)

- Implement Trap Tag Buy Back Program
Area 6 has agreed to participate in a trap tag buy-back program, which seeks to provide lobster fishermen economic relief from the Long Island Sound mass lobster die-off.
- Minimum Gauge Size Increases
Area 6 has agreed to increase minimum gauge sizes by 1/32" annually from 2004-2005.
- Escape Vent Size Increase
Area 6 has agreed to implement an escape vent size increase in 2006.

Outer Cape

- Schedule Revisions for Minimum Gauge Size Increases
The LCMT for Outer Cape Cod has agreed to revise the schedule for minimum gauge size increases as outlined in Addendum II.



Establish Maximum Gauge Size
Area 4 will establish a maximum gauge size, which prohibits possession of female lobster with a carapace length larger than 5 1/4".

continued on page 4

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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Upcoming Meetings

8/19 - 23:

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Phoenix, Arizona.

8/20 & 21:

ASMFC Lobster Database Subcommittee, Urban Forestry Center, Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire; (603)271-6774.

8/21 & 22:

ASMFC Winter Flounder Ageing Workshop, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 122 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

8/24:

ASMFC Lobster Modelling Subcommittee, Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire; (603)431-6774.

9/6 (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM):

ASMFC American Lobster Amendment 4 Public Meeting, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Casco Bay Lines, Commercial Street, Portland, Maine.

9/10 (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM):

ASMFC American Lobster Amendment 4 Public Meeting, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Ellsworth City Hall Auditorium, 1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, Maine.

9/11 & 12:

ASMFC Power Plant Committee, Hampton Inn Crabtree, 6209 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh, North Carolina; (919)782-1112.

9/17 - 21:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town & Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, South Carolina; (800)334-6660.

9/25 - 27:

New England Fishery Management Council, Seaport Inn, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

10/9 - 11:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, New Bern River Front Convention Center, 406 Craven Street, New Bern, North Carolina; (252)637-1551.

10/13 - 17:

55th Annual Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Administrators Conference, Galt House, Louisville, Kentucky; <http://www.kfwis.state.ky.us/afs/SEAFWA.htm>

10/14 - 18:

ASMFC 60th Annual Meeting, Samoset Resort, 220 Warrenton Street, Rockport, Maine; (800)341-1650.

The other morning, while driving to the ASMFC July Meeting Week meetings in Arlington, Virginia, I heard an interesting story on NPR's *Morning Edition*. It seems that a group of European arts officials decided that they wanted to highlight modern European sculpture for American audiences. And so they decided that they would jointly put together an exhibit. And they decided that it would be in Washington, D.C., on the rooftop terrace of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Little did they expect what lay ahead.

To begin with, there were *fifteen* countries participating in the project. (Sound like a familiar number? I am sure that by now you can begin to see where this is going.) The arts organizations of the participating countries agreed on some basic rules, and immediately ran into troubles getting everybody to follow the rules. As an example, the countries had agreed to limit each of their exhibits to two pieces of sculpture. Some of the countries had difficulty limiting themselves to just two sculptures; and the arguments began about why some countries should not be able to have more than others. Some countries apparently believed that their works were so much better than the sculptures from other countries that, . . . well, you can guess.

And then there were problems with the environment – that is, the rooftop terrace of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. You see, the terrace is definitely outdoors. And because of the bend in the Potomac River at Georgetown, the hill that Georgetown University sits atop, and the rising cliffs just upstream on the Virginia side, this terrace happens to sit at the short end of a natural air funnel, and is just about the windiest place in the Washington, D.C. area. So some of the exhibits were not able to withstand the natural conditions of the environment. And because of the polished marble of the terrace, the exhibitors found once they got here that the sculptures could not be secured directly to the floor. In fact, they found that they had to be especially careful not to scratch that polished floor.

In the end, though, the exhibit was a huge success! Although it was not always easy, the fifteen countries worked out their differences. They made accommoda-

tions to adjust to the conditions that they found and to meet the needs of the environment. And it was great thing that they did, because the sculpture that was exhibited was culturally important, a valuable addition to Washington's summer arts scene. In other words, a meaningful presentation was made possible because different people with a common interest came together, resolved their differences and stepped forward with each other to achieve a mutual goal.

The parallel to what the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission tries to accomplish is obvious. But the thing that struck me most about this story was the realization that we are not alone. Sometimes, in the midst of one of our ongoing controversies with our sister states or with our federal and Council partners, it must seem as if we have a unique challenge – that we must be the only ones who have to face the difficulty of making mutual cooperation work in tenuous circumstances. The fact is though, in our ever-shrinking world, that the ability for disparate interests to find ways to work out their differences productively is a skill that is becoming increasingly important the world. And lets face it, in a lot of places folks are trying to work out their differences in situations where the stakes are a lot higher than those that we deal with. Their tales show up on the front pages of our newspapers; and are some of the most painful stories that occur in our world.

Frankly, I think we have a lot more success than we are often willing to give ourselves credit for; or at least a lot more than it seems when we are in the middle of some our most difficult times. We ought to read the newspapers and look at our troubles in the context of efforts all over the world to bring people together to common purpose. And then we should ask what works and what doesn't. There are lessons to be learned and applied.

Lobster Board Approves LCMTs Proposals for Egg Rebuilding

➤ Trap Reduction Schedule

The LCMT for Outer Cape Cod has agreed to reduce the total number of traps by 20% between the years of 2002 and 2008.

The approved measures will now be incorporated into draft Addendum III, which will go before the Board for review in October and then out for public comment in late fall. For more information, please contact Heather Stirratt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 301.

Summary of Approved Area Management Measures for Inclusion in Addendum III

Area	Approved Measures
1	➤ Zero Tolerance and Mandatory V-Notching
2	➤ Minimum Gauge Size Increases (implemented in Addendum II)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overlap Area ➤ Choose and Use Provision ➤ Mandatory V-Nothcing
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minimum Gauge Size Increases ➤ Escape Vent Size Increase ➤ Establish Maximum Gauge Size
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schedule Revisions to Minimum Size Increases ➤ Permit Category/Licensinfg Regulations ➤ Establish Maximum Gauge Size
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement Trap Tag Buyback Program ➤ Minimum Gauge Size Increases ➤ Escape Vent Size Increase
Outer Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schedule Revisions for Minimum Gauge Size Increases ➤ Trap Reduction Schedule

ASMFC Approves Draft Amendment 4 for Public Review & Comment: Amendment to Address Conservation Equivalency

On July 17, 2001, the Commission approved Draft Amendment 4 to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public review and comment. The States of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey will be scheduling public meetings in August and September 2001. Information on these meetings will be released once it becomes available (see page 2 for details on Maine's meetings).

The Draft Amendment, which was approved by the American Lobster Management Board, addresses options for

the use of conservation equivalency for the non-trap gear limits and v-notch possession restrictions of Amendment 3. The concept of conservation equivalency is not a new one to the Commission and has been used in many of its fishery management plans. It provides states with the flexibility to adopt alternative management approaches, given that these approaches have been found to be conservationally similar to the required management measures.

Copies of the Draft Amendment can be obtained by contacting either Vanessa

Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202) 289-6400, or via the Commission's web site under "Public Input" at www.asmfc.org. Public comment will be accepted until September 15 and should be forwarded to Heather Stirratt, American Lobster Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 Eye Street, N.W., Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax).

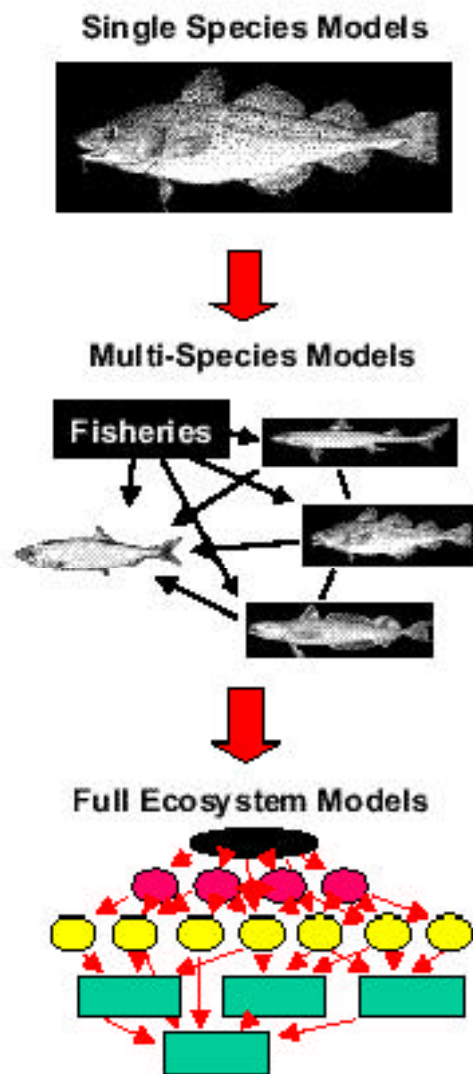
For more information, please contact Heather Stirratt at (202) 289-6400, ext. 301, or hstirratt@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Multispecies Assessment Nearing Completion

Over the past several years, many state and federal fisheries management agencies have initiated discussions involving multispecies or ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. These discussions have arisen out of the desire to more fully understand the interrelationships of fishery resources and the impact of species-specific regulations on other fish species. And, while we certainly have a long way to go before we move away from the standing practice of single species management, marine fishery agencies, such as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, will continue to explore the pros and cons of multispecies/ecosystem management approaches.

If one looks at single species, multispecies and ecosystem management approaches as on a gradient, one finds that multispecies approaches are intermediate in complexity and data requirements. Multispecies models focus on the interactions between species at intermediate trophic (feeding) levels, but ignore lower trophic levels (i.e., microscopic organisms and small fish). For example, multispecies approaches would attempt to model the relationship between predator species (striped bass and weakfish) and the species they feed on (silversides and menhaden), but would not attempt to model the relationship to smaller particles of food for menhaden (phytoplankton and zooplankton).

A Gradient of Assessment Approaches and Complexity



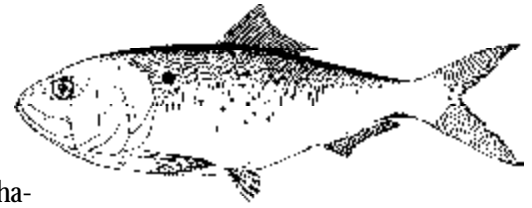
Multispecies modeling approaches are appealing because they can be implemented as a straightforward extension of the single species approach. They can also provide information on the interactions between different fisheries and can be used to manage for optimal "mixes" of species for long-term sustainability.

Ecosystem models are the most complex and require large amounts of very diverse data. These models provide the most holistic view of the ecosystem and typically include all trophic levels from algae to whales. These models focus on the overall behavior of the system and do not provide direct information on the dynamics of individual components, such as age structure of a fish population.

Earlier this year, the Commission received funding from the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) to develop a multispecies assessment. The Commission awarded a contract to Dr. Lance Garrison and Dr. Jason Link to develop a multispecies assessment model focused on the relationship between Atlantic menhaden and key predator species (in particular, striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish). This multispecies model is a modification of the traditional single species assessment method for Atlantic menhaden. The model includes age-specific natural mortality rates in order to examine the contribution of predation by the three key predator species included in the model. Simulations and projections can be conducted to examine the effects of predation on population abundance and overall mortality of Atlantic menhaden. Use of this multispecies modeling approach can improve management advice by providing better estimates of Atlantic menhaden stock size and productivity. Because

continued on page 6

Menhaden Recruitment Continues to be Poor Although Overall Stock Remains Healthy



Continued poor recruitment of Atlantic menhaden was one of the messages of the recent stock status report of the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee. The report was presented by Ellen Cosby, newly elected Chair of the Technical Committee, to the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board on July, 17, 2001 in Arlington, Virginia. This was the first meeting of the Management Board since the adoption of Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan, which among other things, changed the composition of the Board by removing industry representation from it. Amendment 1 also establishes separate technical and advisory committees as well as adopting a new overfishing definition. The new overfishing definition is based on both fishing mortality rate (F) and spawning stock biomass (SSB) targets. All of these actions were recommended by a panel

of scientists which reviewed the menhaden stock assessment in late 1999, prior to the development of Amendment 1.

The latest stock assessment estimated that fishing mortality in 2000 ($F = 0.6$) was below the target level of 1.04, and that spawning stock biomass was 90,100 metric tons (mt), well above the target level of 37,400 mt. Based on the biological reference points contained in the new overfishing definition, the Technical Committee concluded that the Atlantic menhaden population is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. However, the assessment indicated that recruitment to age-1 continued its recent trend of below average estimates with a preliminary estimate of 1.2 billion recruits in 2000. The Committee stated that spawning stock biomass has and will continue to decline due to the recent trend of poor recruitment to age-

1. The Committee believes that the poor recruitment is a result of poor survivorship (increased mortality) of age-0 menhaden prior to their entry into the fisheries. A recommendation by the Committee to revise the overfishing definition to include data from both the menhaden reduction and bait fisheries, was referred to the Advisory Panel along with a charge to both the Committee and Panel to discuss and recommend management measures that the Board may consider for future action in the event of a decline in the population.

For more information, please contact Dr. Joseph Desfosse, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 329, or at <jdesfosse@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Multispecies Assessment Nearing Completion (continued from page 5)

the model explicitly incorporates additional sources of mortality (in this case, mortality from predation) a better understanding of the role of Atlantic menhaden in the ecosystem and as a forage fish for key predator species will result.

This model is only the first step in the overall examination of multispecies interactions. Future model enhancements may include an examination of the effects of changes in Atlantic menhaden populations on the abundance of various predator species, inclusion of more predator and prey species to examine prey shifting, and inclusion of environmental effects on both predator and prey species (for example, changing water temperature patterns). The current model developed by Dr. Garrison and Dr. Link will provide fisheries managers for the Atlantic menhaden resource information on the balance between natural mortality, predation, and fishing mortality, and the overall effects on population abundance. Expansion of the model is required to more fully address other influences on the population.

A workshop will be conducted during the Commission's Annual Meeting in order to present this model to the full Commission. All interested parties are also welcome to attend. The workshop will focus on an overview of the model and its potential use in Atlantic menhaden management, as opposed to the technical details of the model. The Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee will be more fully trained in the use of this model so that simulations and projections can be conducted to address specific management issues related to the Atlantic menhaden fishery.

For more information, please contact Geoff White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at 202-289-6400 or <gwhite@asmfc.org>.



Staffing and Committee Changes Coming for the ACCSP

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is moving beyond developing data standards for Atlantic coastal fisheries statistics to active implementation of those standards and on-line availability of data.

At its July 16, 2001 meeting, the Coordinating Council decided to facilitate the implementation phase by altering some staff and committee structures. The Council decided unanimously to hire a Director to lead the ACCSP staff and guide the Program's future. The ACCSP Director will be the focal point for leadership and management, and the public face of ACCSP.

"The continued growth and maturity of the Program is best served with a single, strong program leader," said Gordon Colvin, Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council.

Additionally, to achieve coastwide participation, the Council voted to expand the Operations Committee to include a representative from each of its 23 partner agencies. The expanded Committee will be responsible for recommending program priorities, funding criteria and other items requested by the Coordinating Council, the Executive Committee and/or the ACCSP Director.

"To have a successful cooperative program, it is crucial to have coastwide involvement in the implementation phase," said Lisa Kline, veteran member of the Operations Committee.

The Council is also developing a three to five year strategic plan to guide the program through the implementation phase. Charlie Treat of Tricorn Inc. led the later half of the meeting on July 16th to discuss the content of the ACCSP Strategic Plan. The Council reviewed responses to surveys sent prior to the meeting and discussed additional ideas during the meeting.

Changes Coming This Year

All of these changes discussed at the Coordinating Council meeting will be initiated in the next few months. Another facilitated session to discuss the ACCSP Strategic Plan is scheduled for October. The Council hopes to complete the Strategic Plan by the end of the year. A search committee will soon convene to coordinate recruitment of the new Director. Also, the ACCSP Program Manager will be contacting members of the Coordinating Council to identify each partner agency's appointee to the Operations Committee.

The ACCSP's data management efforts will also accelerate. The information systems are managed by Mike Cahall, the ACCSP Information Systems Program Manager, who is now uploading commercial and recreational catch and effort data to the data management system. Limited non-confidential test data are currently available to named users who submit an application for "non-confidential" access. Applications can be downloaded at <http://www.accsp.org/documents/ACCSPAccessRequest.pdf>. Cahall expects to have a complete coastal data set for commercial and recreational catch and effort on-line later this year.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a state and federal coastal marine fisheries data collection and data management Program. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the three regional fisheries management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Atlantic States Marine 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 please contact Abbey Hafner, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or abbey.hafner@accsp.org.

Upcoming ACCSP Meetings

8/14 - 16:

ACCSP Operations Committee, Hilton, Alexandria, Virginia.

8/21 & 22:

ACCSP Computer Technical Committee, Highlander Inn, 2 Highlander Way, Manchester, New Hampshire; (800) 548-9248.

8/23 - 24:

ACCSP Advisory Committee, Highlander Inn, 2 Highlander Way, Manchester, New Hampshire; (800) 548-9248.

9/4 & 5:

ACCSP Operations Committee, Hilton, Alexandria, Virginia.

ASMFC & NMFS Join Forces on Ecosystem Management

The Commission has joined with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to look at new ways to apply ecosystems principles to fisheries conservation and management. For a long time, fishery managers have recognized the interrelationships among species, and the critical role that healthy habitat plays in productive fisheries. Congress has recently indicated an increased interest in ecosystems issues, building on concepts contained in the Sustainable Fisheries Act, and recent reports on ecosystems principles.

It is expected that the "ecosystem approach to management" effort will require a pre-planning workshop to be held late in the fall of this year. This workshop will focus on organizing the conceptual thinking, summarizing and communicating the state of the art, and identifying the goals and objectives of the second workshop. The second workshop, to be held late in the spring of next year, will focus on preparing material that could be used to implement the process such as explanations, instructions, draft technical guidelines, and draft policy. Preliminary planning also includes a third activity, a special symposium on this topic during the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, August 2002, in Baltimore, Maryland. This symposium would allow review and discussion with a wider audience from the scientific and non-governmental communities.

Although the ecosystem approach to managing natural resources has been discussed in the scientific literature for a number of decades, its use in marine fisheries management has not made as much progress as in the terrestrial arena. However, advances in technology and in understanding the interrelationships of dependent species is forcing movement from single species management towards multispecies/community levels, and on towards ecosystem considerations.

It is anticipated that progress in moving towards ecosystem management

will, by necessity, include the reliance on the use of hierarchical approaches in both the geographical and ecological scales. In addition, some anthropogenic stresses (especially those in the highly altered nearshore areas) may initially only be addressed by determining and presenting their trends. Although, the ecosystem approach is by definition holistic, it will still require improvements in the accuracy of the understanding of the population dynamics of single species. However, as additional information is obtained, management efforts will need to include information on the interdependent species and make progress towards a holistic management approach that includes long-term environmental, ecological, economic, and social goals and objectives.

At this time, Dieter Busch and Dr. Garry Mayer (Deputy Director, Office of Habitat Conservation) have been consulting members of the NMFS's directorate. They are also working to identify potential members for a "small" steering committee to guide the process. Meanwhile, a review of various definitions for an "ecosystem approach to management" resulted in finding one proposed by the Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force (1995) that could provide a starting point. This definition is all-inclusive and would have to be stepped down to apply to fishery management. The definition is as follows.

An ecosystem is an interconnected community of living things, including humans, and the physical and chemical environment within which they interact.

The ecosystem approach is a method for sustaining or restoring natural systems and their functions and values. It is goal driven, and it is based on a collaboratively developed vision of desired future conditions that integrates ecological, economic, and social factors. It is applied within a geographic framework defined primarily by ecological boundaries.

The desired outcome of the ecosystem approach is to restore and sustain the health, productivity, and biological diversity of ecosystems and the overall quality of life through a natural resource management approach that is fully integrated with social and economic goals.

For more information, please contact Dieter at (301)713-2325, ext. 174 or by email at <dieter.busch@noaa.gov>.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners

Senator C. Louis Bassano -- With his retirement from the New Jersey legislature, Senator Bassano's nine year term as New Jersey's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC has also come to a close. During his tenure with the Commission, Senator Bassano has been a staunch advocate of marine resources and the rights of New Jersey fishermen. Stateside he was a driving force behind the passage of many state laws that were necessary to implement interjurisdictional fisheries regulations. With Senator Bassano's departure the Commission will also be losing another familiar and active participant in the Commission fisheries management program -- Tom Fote. Well, maybe not losing because we are sure that Tom will continue to remain actively involved in Atlantic coastal fisheries management issues. He will just not be serving in a Commissioner capacity. And, Tom will remain active in habitat and fisheries issues, having recently been appointed to the ASMFC Habitat Committee and the species advisory panels for Atlantic menhaden and red drum. We here at the Commission wish Senator Bassano the very best!

Assemblyman John C. Gibson -- This past June, Assemblyman John "Jack" Gibson was appointed by the New Jer-

continued on page 9

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 8)

sey Legislature as its representative to the Commission. Assemblyman Gibson comes to the Commission with a strong commitment to resource conservation, as well as being a powerful advocate for science-based decision-making. In the New Jersey Legislature, Assemblyman Gibson chairs the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, and has done so for the past four years. He is also a member of the Appropriations Committee and Chair of the State Beach Erosion Commission. During his nine year tenure with the legislature, Assemblyman Gibson has also been a strong advocate for marine aquaculture. He sponsored the 1997 New Jersey Aquaculture development Act, as well as legislation appropriating two million dollars for Multispecies Aquaculture Demonstration Facility in Cape May.

Having already attended his first ASMFC meeting week just weeks after his appointment, it appears that Assemblyman Gibson is going to be a very active participant in the Commission's programs. The Commission staff welcomes Assemblyman Gibson and looks forward to working with him!

Senator John Laurent -- In mid-July, Senator Laurent became Florida's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Senator Laurent is not new to natural resource management issues, with his lifelong interests in both agriculture and aquaculture. In fact, he owns and operates Jurassic Fish Farms, an aquaculture operation which rears and sells fish for aquaria display. Senator Laurent has been a member of the Florida Legislature since 1990, serving in the House for eight years and for the last three years in the Senate. He has chaired the House Water & Resource Management Committee and is currently a member of the Senate Natural Resources Committee. The Commission staff welcomes Senator Laurent and looks forward to working with him!

Staff

Kia Jones -- For over one and a half years, Kia has provided administrative support to the Commission, from managing our membership database to coordinating the mailings for Fisheries Focus and Habitat Hotline Atlantic. She left the Commission the beginning of August

to assist her mother in the care of her father. All of us here wish her and her family the very best.

Megan Gamble -- In late July, Megan Gamble joined the Commission staff as our newest Fishery Management Plan Coordinator. Since then, Megan has jumped in with both feet on the ground taking over the coordination of shad & river herring, spiny dogfish and winter flounder. Megan comes to us with a strong background in marine fisheries management and conservation, having performed her undergraduate work at the Boston University Marine Program, receiving degrees in biology and environmental science. This past May, Megan received her M.A. in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island, where she focused on ways to improve the quantity and quality of social science information contained in regional fishery management plans. Her thesis work, which included an internship with the New England Fishery Management Council, was on "An Assessment of Social Impact Analyses in U.S. Regional Fishery Management Plans." Welcome aboard, Megan!

ISFMP Staffing Changes

Over the last couple of months there have been several staffing changes made to the Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP). Probably the most significant change has been the assignment of **Dieter Busch**, Director, ISFMP as visiting scientist to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Office of Habitat Conservation in Silver Spring, Maryland. As visiting scientist, Dieter will focus on organizing an interagency team to guide the evaluation of the state of knowledge dealing with implementing an ecosystem approach to marine resource management (see article on opposite page for more details).

Robert Beal has been appointed as the Acting Director, ISFMP and will continue to coordinate striped bass management activities.

As far as the other ISFMP folks, **Megan Gamble** has just joined the staff and will be taking over the coordinating

responsibilities for shad & river herring, spiny dogfish and winter flounder. **Carrie Selberg**, Habitat Specialist, will devote half of her time to fishery management activities and will be taking over the coordination of weakfish.

Joseph Desfosse will continue coordinating the management activities for Atlantic croaker, Atlantic herring, Atlantic menhaden, red drum, Spanish mackerel, spot, and spotted seatrout. **Michael Lewis** will be focusing on black sea bass, bluefish, northern shrimp, scup, and summer flounder, and **Heather Stirratt** will continue to work on American eel, American lobster, Atlantic sturgeon, and tautog. **Thomas O'Connell** with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, will also continue coordinating horseshoe crab management activities at least until the end of the year. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Acting Director, ISFMP, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 318.

Habitat Committee Begins Looking at a New Habitat Type: Molluscan Shell Substrate

When the Habitat Program began examining the connections between submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and ASMFC managed species several years ago, it was intended to be the first of many habitat types the Committee studied. While the Habitat Committee is still continuing its efforts with SAV, it is starting to look at another habitat type: molluscan shell substrate. This habitat type is defined for the purpose of this project as "intertidal and /or subtidal substrate composed of live molluscan shellfish or shell in contiguous beds."

Currently a paper is being prepared outlining the scientific literature which indicates the importance of this habitat in general and its specific importance to ASMFC managed species. Once this paper is completed, the Habitat Committee will discuss its next step. For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, (202)289-6400, <cselberg@asmfc.org>.

Winter Flounder Ageing Workshop To Be Held

The Commission will sponsor a workshop on winter flounder ageing methods, August 22-23, 2001, in Woods Hole, Massachusetts at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The purpose of the workshop is to develop standard methods and protocols for ageing winter flounder throughout its range. Workshop participants include state and federal scientists from New Jersey to Maine who age winter flounder for their respective agency.

Results of the workshop will enable the Winter Flounder Technical Committee to update the stock assessments for both the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic stock complexes. Once the assessments are complete they will undergo a peer review which will be essential for developing an amendment to the current fishery management plan. The assessments are scheduled to be reviewed by the Spring 2002 SARC with development of the amendment to follow later that year. For more information on the workshop please contact Geoff White, Fisheries Research Specialist, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 319, or <gwhite@asmfc.org>. For more information on winter flounder management, please contact Megan Gamble, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400, ext. 317, or <mgamble@asmfc.org>.

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