



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 Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Addendum VI Addendum Extends Current Provisions to 2013 while Development of ARM Framework Continues

At its August meeting, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum VI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab. The Addendum extends the provisions of Addendum V through April 30, 2013, while the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework is further developed and long-term funding is secured to support the horseshoe crab monitoring program that the ARM Framework is dependent upon.

Addendum VI's measures include a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware, prohibiting the harvest and landing of male and female

horseshoe crabs from January 1 through June 7 in the Delaware Bay, and restricting the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. As with all Commission plans, states can implement more conservative management measures. In the case of New Jersey, it currently maintains a moratorium on the harvest and landing of horseshoe crab.



Photo courtesy of Sheila Eyler, US Fish and Wildlife Service

The Addendum also requires a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 and prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from waters outside the Bay from January 1 through June 7. No more than forty percent of Virginia's quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1. Like New Jersey, Maryland has also implemented more conservative measures in 2009 to include a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1.

"I am pleased with the action taken by the Board," stated Tom O'Connell, Board Chair and Maryland DNR Fisheries Service Director. "We chose to adopt

provisions that are closely aligned with the optimal harvest package produced by the ARM models. The ARM Framework has the potential to be a valuable tool for the Board once it is further refined, funding is secured to support a biological survey to provide needed abundance estimates for the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population, and a methodology is developed to allocate the sustainable harvest among the effected states (NJ, DE, MD, and VA). The Board also agreed today to pursue strategies to secure this needed funding."

Starting November 1, 2010, the provisions of Addendum VI will come into effect and run through April 2013, unless they are replaced with provisions of another addendum before that time. The Board remains committed to development of the ARM Framework and will seek input from its advisors and the public before it is fully adopted as a management tool.

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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

9/13 - 17:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Charleston Marriot Hotel, 170 Lockwood Boulevard, Charleston, South Carolina.

9/28 (9 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC American Lobster Technical Committee, Providence Biltmore Hotel, 11 Dorrance Street, Providence, Rhode Island; 401/455-3022.

9/28 (9 AM - 5 PM) & 29 (8:30 AM - 12:30 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee, Providence Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island.

9/29 (8:30 AM - 5 PM) & 30 (8:30 AM - 12:30 PM):

ASMFC Multispecies Technical Committee, Providence Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island.

9/29 (1 PM - 5 PM) & 30 (8:30 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC Fish Passage Working Group, Providence Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island.

9/30 (1 PM - 5 PM) & 10/1 (8:30 AM - Noon):

ASMFC Assessment Science Committee, Providence Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island.

9/28 - 30:

New England Fishery Management Council, Hotel Viking, Newport, Rhode Island.

10/12 - 14:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Congress Hall, 251 Beach Avenue, Cape May, New Jersey; 609/884-8421.

11/7 - 11:

ASMFC 69th Annual Meeting, The Francis Marion Hotel, 387 King Street, Charleston, South Carolina; 843-722-0600.

11/16 - 18:

New England Fishery Management Council, Ocean Edge Resort, Brewster, Massachusetts.

12/5 - 10:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton New Bern, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, North Carolina.

12/14 - 16:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, 3001 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, VA; 757/213-3000.

Theodore Fulton Stevens: Fisheries Management Pioneer 1923 – 2010

U.S. fisheries lost a great champion and true friend on August 9, 2010 when former Senator Ted Stevens and four others died in a plane crash in South Central Alaska. Stevens was in the company of longtime friends bound for the Nushagak River to fish for silver salmon. There were four survivors.

Senator Stevens was the longest serving Republican Senator in history, representing Alaska for 41 years, and a man of remarkable accomplishments. He was a member of the Greatest Generation, becoming a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot when he was 20. He flew twin engine transports across the Himalayas carrying vital supplies from bases in India to Chinese forces resisting the Japanese. Lt. Stevens was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his dedication and heroism in flying “the Hump” and for other flights he made behind Japanese lines.

After the war, Stevens attended UCLA and then Harvard Law School. He practiced law in Alaska and later in DC, where he worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) in a number of capacities, including chief counsel. He returned to Alaska in 1961, mindful of the strong dissatisfaction Alaskans had over federal management of fisheries, specifically salmon. Regaining control of the management of natural resources was a primary driver for Alaskans’ pursuit of statehood.

When Alaska became a state in 1959, its Constitution specifically required natural resources be managed sustainably. Under state management based on scientific advice,

limited entry, and a consistent practice of closing fisheries when quotas were met, Alaskan salmon fisheries became eight times more productive than they were under federal territorial governance.

Since Alaska is responsible for more than half of the seafood produced in the U.S., the importance of fisheries to Alaska and value of sustainable management were not lost to Senator Stevens when he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1968. Stevens dedicated and defined himself as being a relentless and tenacious advocate for Alaska and its fisheries. His passionate interest in looking out for his own state meant doing good for all U.S. fisheries.

Mindful of the large foreign factory trawlers working within sight of Alaskan ports, Senator Stevens was the first member of Congress to propose a 200 mile limit in 1971. He subsequently worked with Democrat Warren Magnuson in 1974 as an original cosponsor and floor manager of the 200 mile limit bill that became the Magnuson Act. It ended uncontrolled foreign fishing within 200 miles of Alaska as well as the entire coast of the U.S., its territories, and possessions. The Act also established the regional fishery management council form of governance.

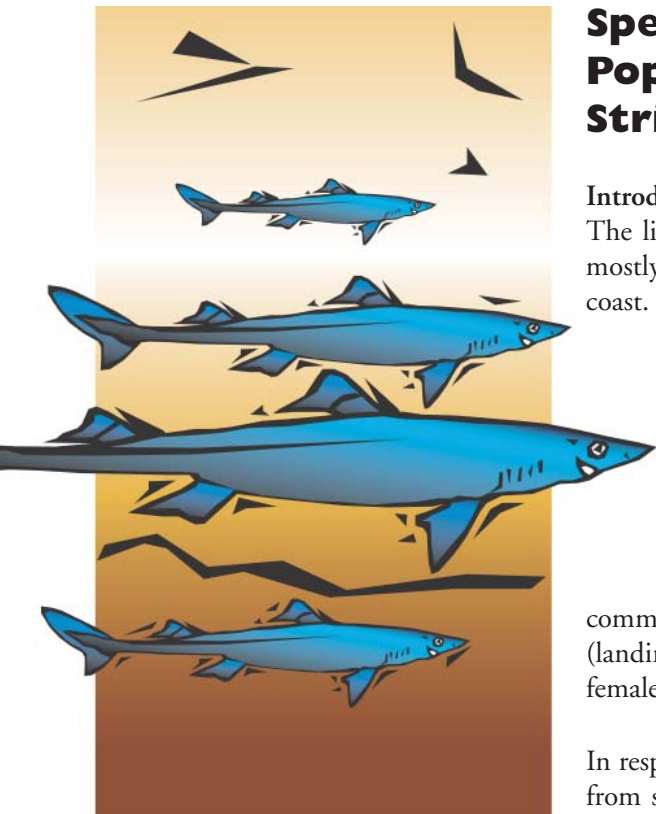
Senator Stevens’ collaboration with Senator Magnuson was just the start of his long career in working constructively across the aisle. He developed close working and personal relationships with a number of senators, including Senators Inouye and Hollings. As their collective



seniority grew, they became powerful allies in crafting fisheries policy legislation and directing federal dollars to fisheries science activities and facilities.

Senator Stevens was a strong believer in the regional fishery management councils, especially the North Pacific Council, which he viewed as a success. He was sensitive to criticism of the performance of some councils and responded with measures in the 1996 and 2006 reauthorizations to hold councils more accountable to follow scientific advice, end overfishing, and rebuild stocks. While some have bristled over the changes, Senator Stevens’ intent and result was to improve the council system and fishery management outcomes. In 1996, Congress added Senator Stevens’ name to the Act in recognition of his career long contributions to U.S. fisheries.

Through his life’s work, he left an indelible mark on U.S. fisheries. Ted Stevens was a patriot who stood up for his country, his state, the fish, and fishermen. He was a remarkable individual who will be sorely missed.



Species Profile: Spiny Dogfish Population Rebuilds Quickly Due to Stringent State/Federal Management

Introduction

The life history of spiny dogfish combined with a commercial fishery that targets mostly females has created one of the most polarizing fisheries issues on the Atlantic coast. For the last decade, commercial and recreational fishermen have often reported large schools of dogfish interfering with their fishing operations – from clogging their nets to eating their bait and targeting their catch before it can be reeled back to the boat. So why have past annual quotas been set at such low levels compared to historical catch amounts? The reason is that spiny dogfish quotas are set based on female spawning stock biomass (SSB), the necessary spawning component for rebuilding and sustaining the population. While fishermen encounter large schools of dogfish, scientists believe these fish are likely male or immature females. Further, substantial, unregulated commercial landings in the mid- to late 1990s, targeting the larger mature females (landings peaked at 60 million pounds in 1996), resulted in a precipitous decline in female SSB in the late 1990s.

In response to these stringent quotas, dogfish were declared rebuilt in 2009 -- going from severely depleted to a fisheries management success in under a decade. The science-based rebuilding quotas not only worked, but rebuilt the stock much quicker than expected. Because the stock has rebuilt, the spiny dogfish fishery can begin a new chapter under higher quotas based on the significantly higher target fishing mortality rate. Based on this new target, the 2010/2011 annual quota was set at 15 million pounds in both state and federal waters. The potential for higher quotas is great news for fishermen, many of whom increasingly use dogfish to supplement their incomes.

Life History

Spiny dogfish inhabit both sides of the North Atlantic and North Pacific Oceans, mostly in the temperate and subarctic areas. In the Northwest Atlantic, the stock ranges from Labrador to Florida, and is most abundant from Nova Scotia to Cape Hatteras. Spiny dogfish migrate north in the spring and summer and south in the fall and winter. In the winter and spring, they congregate primarily in Mid-Atlantic waters but also extend onto the shelf break of southern Georges Bank. In the summer, they are located farther north in Canadian waters and move inshore into bays and estuaries. By autumn, dogfish have migrated north with high concentrations in Southern New England, on Georges Bank, and in the Gulf of Maine. They remain in northern waters throughout autumn until water temperatures begin to cool and then return to the Mid-Atlantic.

Juvenile spiny dogfish school by size until sexually mature and then aggregate by both size and sex. Female dogfish reach sexual maturity at 12 years (~29.5 inches), while males reach sexual maturity at six years (~23.6 inches). Mating occurs in the winter months and the pups are delivered on the offshore wintering grounds. Females give birth every two years with litters ranging from two to 15 pups. While carrying one litter, the female will begin developing eggs for the fertilization of her next litter. After an 18 to 24 month gestation period, the longest of any vertebrate, pups are released live and fully formed at about 14 inches.

Whales, dolphins, silver hake, white hake, weakfish, goosefish, Atlantic cod, bluefish, striped bass and other large predatory species feed on dogfish. Spiny dogfish are op-

Spiny Dogfish *Squalus acanthias*

Common Names: spurdog, mud shark, piked dogfish. The common name “dogfish” originated from fishermen who described these fish as chasing smaller fish in large doglike packs.

Interesting Facts:

* **Longest gestation period of any vertebrate (18-24 months), gives birth to live young with litters from 2-15 pups (average 6 pups).**

* **Genus name *Squalus* is Latin for “a kind of sea-fish” while the species name *acanthias* translates as “a prickly thing,” describing the spines found on the dorsal fins.**

Oldest Recorded: 100 years

Age/Length at Maturity:

* **Females - 12 years/29.5 - 31.5”**

* **Males - 6 years/23.6”**

Age/Length at Recruitment:

* **Females - 10-13 years/32.3-34.3”**

* **Males - 15-18 years/29.1-30.7”**

Stock Status: Rebuilt; not overfished and overfishing not occurring

portunistic feeders, eating several commercially important species, such as Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, squid, and to a lesser extent cod and haddock.

Commercial Fisheries

Prior to the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (now known as the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act), foreign fleets caught the majority of dogfish in U.S. waters but U.S. fishermen have had uncontested access ever since the Act's passage. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) encouraged commercial fishermen to target the bountiful stocks of spiny dogfish in the 1980s and 1990s when stocks of other commercially valuable fish in the Northeast declined. Then in 1998, NMFS determined that spiny dogfish were overfished and implemented stringent harvest restrictions in federal waters to allow the stock to rebound. The states followed shortly after with complementary regulations for state waters.

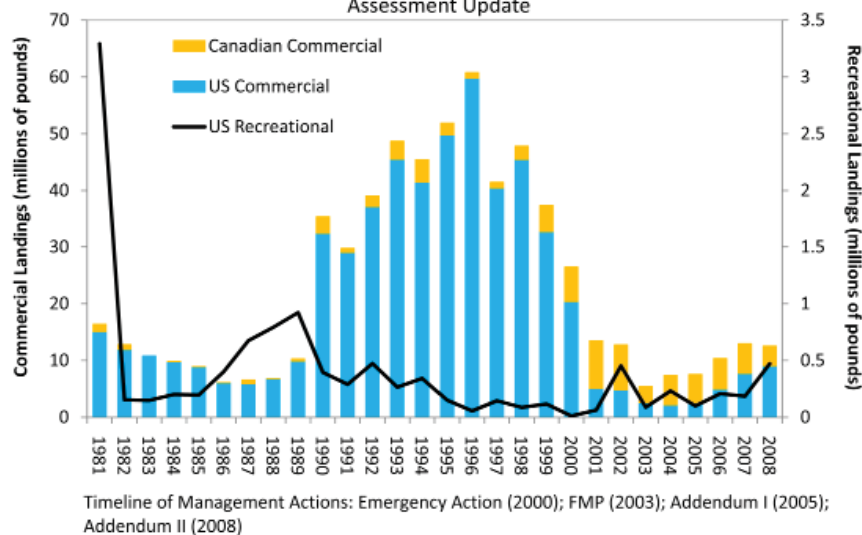


Photo courtesy of NEAMAP

Today, commercial fishermen catch spiny dogfish using longlines, trawls, and purse seines. Fishermen target female dogfish because the females grow larger than males and tend to school together. Processors prefer the larger dogfish because they are easier to hold and cut. The commercial fishery supplies the European food fish markets that use dogfish 'belly flaps' for fish and chips in England and as a popular beer garden snack called shillerlocken in Germany. There is also a small scientific fishery in Maine, which uses spiny dogfish to study several of the species' unique biological characteristics. Dogfish have an organ called a rectal gland whose study helps scientists better understand the function of human kidneys. They also secrete a molecule called squalamine, which has strong antibiotic characteristics and shows promise as an anticancer agent.

Figure 1. Spiny Dogfish Landings

Sources: 2010 TRAC Status Update and 2009 NEFSC Spiny Dogfish Stock Assessment Update



Landings were approximately 37.2 million pounds in 1992, gradually increasing to a peak of about 60 million pounds in 1996. In the late 1990s, landings declined to an average of around 40 million. After federal and state regulations were implemented in the early 2000s, landings declined to less than five million pounds in 2001 and 2002. They then ranged between two and eight million pounds between 2003 and 2009. As the stock began to improve, landings were increased to 12 million pounds in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Commercial landings continue to be mostly female dogfish, with female landings comprising about 98% of the total commercial catch. The 2010/2011 quota is 15 million pounds in state and federal waters.

Stock Status

The current composition of the dogfish population has created challenges for both fishermen and managers. Fishermen often encounter large numbers of dogfish but these fish are usually not the large spawning females necessary to ensure stock rebuilding. The life history of the spiny dogfish requires a large female spawning stock for the population to be sustainable—a large biomass of males or immature females does not equate to a sustainable stock.

The most recent stock assessment documents are the 2010 Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) assessment and 2010 Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Biological Reference Points for Spiny Dogfish (BRP) report. The BRP report updated the selectivity pattern (what size dogfish are being caught) in the fishery which strongly influences the length-based life history model used to set the fishing mortality target and threshold rates. The updated fishing mortality target is 0.207 and the threshold is 0.325. The updated SSB target and threshold are 159,288 and 79,644 metric tons (mt), respectively.

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ASMFC & Mid-Atlantic Council Approve 2011 TALs for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Bluefish

The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have established the 2011 total allowable landings (TAL) limits for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. The Commission's actions are final and apply to state waters. The Council will be forwarding its recommendations to NOAA's Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval. The table below summarizes those actions/recommendations (TALs and recreational harvest limits are in millions of pounds):

Species	TAL	Commercial Quota	Commercial Minimum Fish Size (TL)	Commercial Mesh Size	Recreational Harvest Limit
Summer Flounder	29.48	17.69	14"	5.5"	11.79
Scup	20	15.6	9"	5"	4.4
Black Sea Bass	3.6	1.76	11"	4.5"	1.84
Bluefish	27.29	4.64	---	---	22.65

The Commission and Council approved an increase in the 2011 summer flounder TAL by 7.35 million pounds when compared to the 2010 quota level. This results in a commercial quota of 17.69 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 11.79 million pounds for the 2011 fishing year. This action was consistent with the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) regarding acceptable biological catch (ABC). The Monitoring Committee (MC) recommend a slightly lower TAL of 28.93 million pounds to reduce the risk of overfishing in 2011 due to a strong retrospective pattern in recruitment in the past 3 years (meaning the model overestimates the number of age 0 fish coming into the population). The 2010 stock assessment update indicates a projected stock biomass for 2009 at approximately 89% of its rebuilding target.

For the 2011 scup fishery, both the Commission and Council set a TAL of 20 million pounds, an increase of 6.5 million pounds compared to 2010. Based on the

recommendations of the SSC and MC, the Commission took a precautionary approach in setting the scup TAL in light of the scientific uncertainty surrounding the scup assessment model. Specifically, the uncertainty about the dynamics of older fish in the stock (current surveys do not do a good job of capturing fish older than age 2), and poorly estimated discards, which are a significant component of fishing mortality. Both committees recommend a continued stepwise increase in the quota. The Board adopted

(January 1-April 30), previously it was a two-week landing limit.

Following the SSC's ABC recommendation and advice from the MC, both the Commission and Council adopted a 3.6 million pound TAL for 2011 black sea bass fishery, this is 100,000 pounds less than 2010. As with scup, the Commission took a precautionary approach in setting the black sea bass TAL due to concerns regarding scientific uncertainty in the assessment model. These include the sensitivity and reliability of the model, the uncertainty inherent in assessing a species with an unusual life history (some females change sex to become males), the presence of a retrospective pattern which tends to overestimate stock size, and the adequacy of fishery-independent surveys in sampling this species.

The Commission and Council adopted a bluefish TAL of 27.29 million pounds for 2011, which is a small decrease from the 2010 TAL of 29.26 million pounds. The 2010 stock assessment update indi-

cates a projected stock biomass for 2009 at approximately 106% of its rebuilding target, which is a slight decline from 2008. The stock was declared rebuilt in 2009, which was a year ahead of the original stock rebuilding deadline. Under the current fishery management plan, the commercial fishery will be allocated 4.64 million pounds and the recreational sector will be allocated 22.65 million pounds. Later this year when recreational landings are available, the commercial sector could receive a transfer from the recreational sector of up to 4.77 million pounds in quota. The recreational possession limit remained at a 15 fish limit, which is consistent with 2010. In recent years recreational landings have increased, but the overall TAL for the fishery has not been exceeded. These actions were consistent with the recommendations of the SSC and MC.

The Commission and Council maintained the 2010 commercial management measures for all four species for 2011, with the exception of the Winter I landing limit, and approved a Research Set-Aside (RSA) quota of up to three percent for each fishery. Prior to the start of the new fishing year, RSA quota allocations will reduce the above TALs and related allocations.

The Commission and Council will meet in the fall/early winter to set the recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. For more information on summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org. For more information on bluefish, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org.

On the Legislative Front: *President Signs Executive Order to Implement National Ocean Policy*

On July 19th, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes. The Executive Order adopts the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* that were the product of a yearlong process of fact-finding and soliciting public comment. Some of the recommendations that will be implemented are similar to provisions laid out in Representative Sam Farr's (CA – D) Oceans 21 Act (H.R. 21) currently in Congress.

The Executive Order paves the way for creating a National Ocean Council (NOC) to strengthen ocean governance and coordination of ocean activities. Membership of the NOC will include high-ranking officials from many of the cabinet departments and agencies across the federal government. The group will

be responsible for implementing the National Policy and guiding principles for ocean management. Also, the NOC is responsible for carrying out coastal and marine spatial planning using a framework designed to address conservation, economic activity, user conflict, and sustainable use of resources.

The Executive Order also establishes a Governance Coordinating Committee (GCC) to engage with state, tribal, and local authorities. The GCC will consist of 18 members including one state representative from each of the major coastal regions of the U.S. (e.g., Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic). The body will allow “representatives to deliberate and coordinate with the NOC on issues of inter-jurisdictional collaboration and cooperation on the National Policy and related matters.”



The Executive Order does not specify a timeline for implementation. However, it is reasonable to expect it will take over a year for the committees to form and complete their strategic plans. The *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force* can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf.

For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at 202/289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners

Senator Brian X. Foley -- This July, Senator Foley became New York's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Senator Foley replaces Senator Owen Johnson who served as New York's legislative representative to the Commission since 1981.



Senator Foley represents the 3rd District, which generally covers the eastern half of Nassau County and the south shore of western Suffolk County. He serves as Chair of the Senate Banking Committee and is a member of the Environmental Conservation Committee and Commerce Committee. Having grown up on the Great South Bay, Senator Foley is committed to preserving the waterways and coastal environment of Long Island. Senator Foley has a B.A. in

American Studies from St. Michael's College in Vermont. Welcome aboard, Senator Foley!

Senator Owen Johnson -- For nearly 30 years, Senator Johnson has served as New York's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. In 2003, he received the Commission's most prestigious award, the Chairman's Award for Distinguished Meritorious Service in recognition for his long-standing service to the Commission and the State of New York. Throughout his distinguished career of public service, Senator Johnson maintained a steadfast commitment to interstate marine fisheries conservation and management, working tirelessly to promote the mutual efforts of the states in the Commission process.



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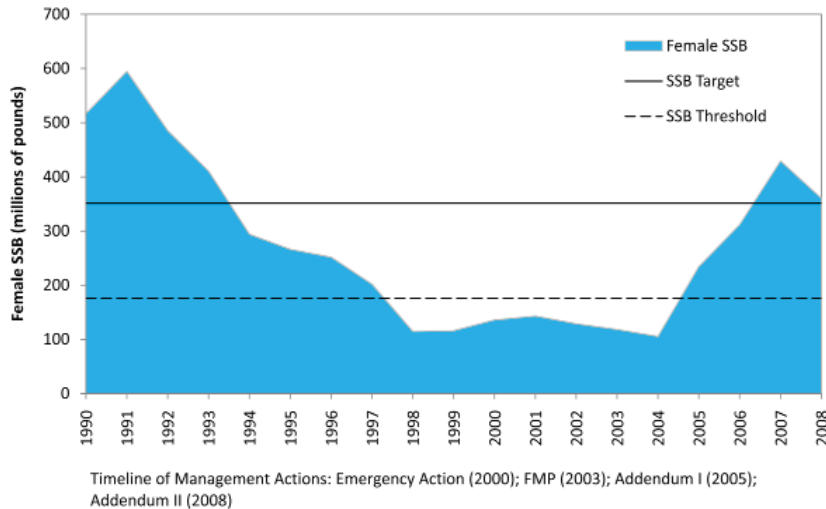
Species Profile: Spiny Dogfish (continued from page 5)

The 2010 TRAC found SSB to exceed the target in 2008 and 2009 at 195,000 and 163,000 mt, respectively. Fishing mortality ranged from 0.09 and 0.13 between 2005 and 2009 and has been consistently below the fishing mortality target. As such, spiny dogfish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Other positive trends include increases in pup biomass over the last few years and recruitment in 2009 that was the fifth highest in the 42-year NEFSC Spring

Figure 2. Spiny Dogfish Female Spawning Stock Biomass (>=80 cm)

Source: NEFSC Spiny Dogfish Stock Assessment Update, 2009



Survey. Unfortunately, record low pup production from 1997 to 2003 has left a recruitment deficit that will cause SSB to drop around 2012. The amplitude of this drop increases as fishing mortality increases and still occurs when fishing mortality is hypothetically zero.

Atlantic Coastal Management

In 1998, NMFS declared spiny dogfish overfished and initiated the development of a joint fishery management plan (FMP) between the Mid-Atlantic (MAFMC) and New England Fishery Management Councils (NEFMC) in 1999. The Commission began development of an interstate FMP to complement the federal plan in 1999. The Interstate FMP was approved in late 2003 and implemented for the 2003-2004 fishing year.

Both the Commission and federal plans use a fishing mortality rate to set annual quotas and trip limits but there are a few differences between the federal and interstate management programs. The federal plan allocates the annual quota seasonally between two periods; 57.9% of the quota is available from May 1 to October 31 and 42.1% is available from November 1 to April 30.

Addendum II to the Commission FMP replaced the seasonal allocation with a regional allocation. Under Addendum II, 58% of the quota is allocated to the states of Maine to Connecticut, 26% is allocated to the states of New York to Virginia, and the remaining 16% is allocated to North Carolina. North Carolina received its own percentage because the seasonal migrations of spiny dogfish make dogfish unavailable to their fishermen until late into the fishing season when most, or all,

Spiny Dogfish: Reflections from the Past

Fishermen frequently talk about an overabundance of spiny dogfish impacting their fishing experiences and their ability to catch other fish species. According to Bigelow and Schroeder's *Fishes of the Gulf of Maine*, first published in 1925 and later revised in the 1950s, today's fishermen are not the only ones who had issues with dogfish population levels. The seminal guide to fishes found in the Gulf of Maine contains observations about the gregarious and ubiquitous nature of spiny dogfish beginning as far back as the early 1900s. Read below for a couple of excerpts:

Habits

"Voracious almost beyond belief, the dogfish entirely deserves its bad reputation. Not only does it harry and drive off mackerel, herring, and even fish as large as cod and haddock, but it destroys vast numbers of them. Again and again fishermen have described packs of dogs dashing among schools of mackerel, and even attacking them within the seines, biting through the net, and releasing such of the catch as escapes them. At one time or another they prey on practically all species of Gulf of Maine fish smaller than themselves, and squid are also a regular article of diet whenever they are found..... Often, too, they bite groundfish from the hooks of long lines, or take the baits and make it futile to fish with hook and line where they abound."

Occurrence in the Gulf of Maine

"The spiny dogfish ("dogfish" or "dog" in common parlance) makes up for the comparative rarity of other sharks in the Gulf of Maine by its obnoxious abundance. To mention all the localities from which it has been reported there would be simply to list every seaside village and fishing ground from Cape Cod to Cape Sable."

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Science Highlight: Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Funds Two Habitat Restoration Projects and Launches New Website

This spring, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) projects approved to receive USFWS-NFHAP FY2010 funding. Two projects submitted to the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership were approved for funding:

Alewife Brook/Scoy Pond and Staudinger's Pond Alewife Access and Habitat Enhancement (New York)

This project, located in the Town of East Hampton, New York is situated within the Peconic Estuary, an "Estuary of National Significance" on the easternmost tip of Long Island. Access to diadromous fish habitat in two creeks within the Peconic watershed have long been cut off by undersized and collapsed culverts. Insufficient tidal flushing through those culverts allowed for an overgrowth of invasive *Phragmites* and other vegetation to devalue the surrounding fish habitat that remains.

ACFHP funds will allow project partners to remove two structural impediments to migrating fish by installing a rock weir in Northwest Creek to allow passage into Staudinger's Pond, and installing a larger culvert in Alewife Brook to allow passage into Scoy Pond. Additionally, overgrown vegetation and invasive *Phragmites* will be cleared from channels previously not maintained channels. Proper tidal flow through the rock weir and new culvert will aid in restoring two pristine habitat complexes. This project will ultimately restore access to approximately 18 acres of diadromous fish spawning and maturation habitat, and enhance the ecological function of nearly 1000 acres of estuarine habitat.

The project is a cooperative undertaking between the Peconic Estuary Program, New York State Department of Environmental

Conservation, the Town of East Hampton Department of Natural Resources, volunteers, and the Suffolk County Department of Public Works.

Goose Creek Dam Eel Passage Restoration (South Carolina)

Funds will be used to construct an eel passage facility at the Goose Creek Dam, which will include an eel ramp, a collection box, and a gated security fence.

The 2400-foot Goose Creek Dam was constructed in 1906 to provide a water supply reservoir for the City of Charleston, South Carolina. The dam has been blocking diadromous fish migrations in Goose Creek, a major tributary of the Cooper River, and the Charleston Harbor estuary. Construction of the planned eel passage facility will restore passage to the entire Goose Creek watershed (including over 40 stream miles) and adjacent freshwater wetlands that serve as important eel maturation habitat.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Charleston Water System (dam owner), will oversee the construction, operation and maintenance of the facil-



Biologist checks fyke net for elvers (juvenile eels). Photo courtesy of P. Brownell, National Marine Fisheries Service.

ity with assistance from USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Website

The ACFHP website was launched in May 2010. The website contains a variety of information about the Partnership including links to aquatic conservation publications and planning tools, fish habitat funding opportunities and conferences, a sign up to receive breaking news, and a mechanism through which partners and other stakeholders can share their own fish habitat conservation news with the Partnership. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org>.

For more information, please contact Emily Greene, ACFHP Coordinator, at egreene@asmfc.org.



Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Working together to conserve coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish habitat

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BREAKING NEWS



ACFHP Opportunity for Project Applications
August 2010

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ACFHP Funds First Habitat Conservation Projects
July 2010

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Winter Flounder, Photo Credit : C. LoBue



Portside Bycatch Data Collection Makes Impact on Stock Assessments

In terms of volume, the Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*), Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) and Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) fisheries are the three largest commercial fisheries on the East Coast. These plankton feeding fish occur in large schools from the Labrador Bay of Canada to the Florida Keys and are utilized for bait, reduction, and human consumption. They are also a significant forage species for other prized fish, marine mammals and birds. As forage species these fisheries have become more of a point of interest, particularly with the increasing trend towards ecosystem-based management.

Since 2003, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has provided funding to the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to coordinate portside sampling of the incidental catch (landed bycatch) of these important forage fish. DMR began looking at the bycatch of the herring fishery in 2001, adding mackerel in 2005 and menhaden in 2009.

Bycatch must be considered when fisheries scientists are exploring acceptable harvest levels. Monitoring and documenting bycatch is crucial for the future of all fisheries. Primarily the project aims to identify if, when, and where bycatch problems may be occurring in these fisheries. Even though this project can gather and observe a frenzy of portside information it is only done to supplement what observers on boats may routinely note as discards at sea. Since these species are often caught at-sea with mass handling techniques there is often limited opportunity for observers to sample bycatch at-sea. The portside bycatch intercept sampling is a low cost option to enhance the observer data and to accurately sample the commercial catch of these three fisheries.

Samplers are stationed near the 12 participating sites along the New England and Mid-Atlantic coast with the project based out of Boothbay, Maine. As soon as the fish are delivered to the site, they are sorted; bycatch is removed and set aside on a lot-by-lot basis. Lot amount, gear type, general location and month of capture are recorded.

Once the bycatch is sorted, the species is identified. Weight and length are recorded of the bycatch sample or sub-sample.

Data collected from these commercial surveys have been incorporated into various stock assessment models. Most recently NOAA Fisheries Service biologists used the catch-at-age data for a Atlantic mackerel stock assessment. Also, the results of this study have been and will

“Without these herring samples, age-based assessments could not be completed and an important forage species for striped bass, bluefish and other ASMFC managed species would slip to data-poor assessment methodology.”

Dr. Matthew Cieri, Project Investigator, Maine Department of Marine Resources

continue to be presented to state and federal fisheries managers assist them in determining if current spawning closures contribute to an increase in juvenile catch and fishing mortality.

Upcoming Meetings

October 5-6, 2010:

ACCSP Operations and Advisory Committees, Providence, Rhode Island.

November 2010:

ACCSP Coordinating Council, Charleston, South Carolina.



About ACCSP

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. For more information about the Program please contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at info@accsp.org.

Katie Drew Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter



During her 16 months with the Commission, Katie Drew has made important strides in improving the science upon which the Commission bases its management decisions. Her accomplishments include the successful completion and peer review of the benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic croaker, the development of standardized fish aging protocols, and the coordination of a certification process for state tagging programs. These efforts have clearly established Katie as an important contributor to the Commission's Vision of

“healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015.” In recognition of her accomplishments, Katie was named Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2010. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

Over the last year and a half, Katie worked closely with the Atlantic Croaker Stock Assessment Subcommittee to conduct the benchmark assessment for peer review. The Peer Review Panel had several issues with the assessment which precluded it from supporting some of the assessment's findings and from making a more certain stock status determination. Based on direction by the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board, Katie was able to work with the Subcommittee to address the outstanding issues and ultimately provide a stock assessment that was accepted by the Board for management use. Katie has also been working with the Management and Science Committee to develop a manual of fish aging protocols to standardize aging efforts across states, and to develop forage fish indices as part of a larger effort to explore ecosystem-based fishery management. Her coordination of the Interstate Tagging Committee has led to the certification of state tagging programs and a new fish tagging website.

Katie's dedication to productive teamwork, creativity, strong work ethic, and depth of knowledge make her a true asset to the Commission's Fisheries Science Program and the management programs it supports. Katie has a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. As an Employee of the Quarter, she received a \$500 cash award, a small gift, and a letter of appreciation to be placed in her personnel record. In addition, her name is on the Employee of Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Katie!

Spiny Dogfish Species Profile (continued from page 8)

of the quota has already been harvested. The interstate plan also includes paybacks for quota overages, allows for a five percent rollover once the stock is rebuilt, and allows for up to 1,000 spiny dogfish to be harvested for biomedical supply.

In February 2010, the Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board (Board) approved a 15 million pound quota with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds for the 2010/2011 fishing year (May 1 – April 30). Upon having declared the resource rebuilt this summer, the federal government adopted a 15 million pound quota for the 2010/2011 fishery as well.

MAFMC is currently drafting Amendment 3 to the Spiny Dogfish FMP which will include options to replace the seasonal quota with a regional, state share, or annual quota allocation. MAFMC may also include research set-aside provisions, specifying spiny dogfish quota by sex, limiting access to spiny dogfish permits, recreational measures, essential fish habitat, and a management measure rollover provision. The Amendment 3 is scheduled to be implemented in summer/fall of 2011 at the earliest.

At its May and August meetings, the Commission's Board discussed the concept of further allocating state water spiny dogfish quota by state shares. The issue was raised because states under a regional quota allocation scheme are unable to effectively increase or decrease possession limits to maximize the value of landed dogfish. To prevent a state under a regional quota agreement from losing out on quota while other states continue harvesting under higher possession limits, all states within a region would have to lower their possession limit. Establishing state shares would provide states greater flexibility in managing their possession limits to best meets their needs. However, given the contentious nature of this issue (who gets what percentage), it's unclear whether the Board will ultimately move forward on a draft addendum.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt at <cvonderweidt@asmfc.org>.

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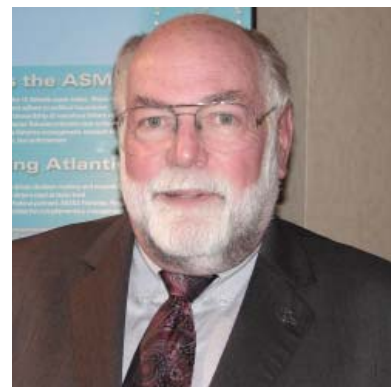
ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 7)

As Chair of the Legislative Commissioners for many years, Senator Johnson was a strong advocate of a greater role for the Legislative and Governors' Appointee Commissioners on Commission's species management boards. His vision and efforts resulted in the full participation that is today afforded to all Commissioners. We are very grateful for Senator Johnson's long-standing presence and support of the Commission and its programs.

We are also indebted to the contributions and commitment of Brian Culhane, who served as Senator Johnson's proxy to the Commission for more than 10 years. In addition to participating on all species management boards for which New York has a declared interest, Mr. Culhane was a member of the Commission's Administrative Oversight Committee, Executive Committee, Legislative Committee and Legislators Committee. His participation on these committees included his chairmanship of the American Lobster Management Board and the Legislators Committee. We wish Senator Johnson and Mr. Culhane the very best in all future endeavors.

Representative Peter F. Martin -- This July, Representative Martin became Rhode Island's Legislative Commissioner to the ASMFC. Representative Martin

replaces Senator Susan Sosnowski who served as Rhode Island's legislative appointee since 2008. Representative Martin has served the state's 75th District since 2009. He is a member of the Judiciary, Municipal Government, Separation of Powers and Oversight, Small Business, and Veterans Affairs Committees.



Representative Martin is a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, America's oldest Irish Catholic Fraternal Organization. He is also involved in the Old Colony & Newport Railway, the Broadway Improvement Organization, and the Friends of the Waterfront. Representative Martin received his B.A. from Providence College and his M.B.A. from Bryant College. Welcome aboard, Representative Martin!