



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Volume 13, Issue 6

June 2004

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.

Major Bruce Buckson Presented ASMFC Annual Award of Excellence in Law Enforcement

Major Bruce Buckson of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was presented the Commission's Annual Award of Excellence in Law Enforcement at the ASMFC's Spring Meeting in Alexandria, Virginia. He received the award in recognition of his career long contributions to fisheries conservation.

"Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence recognizes outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve Atlantic coastal fisheries," stated ASMFC Chair, John I. Nelson, Jr., of New Hampshire.

"Today, we honor Major Buckson for his numerous contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries."



From left: ASMFC Chair, John I. Nelson, Jr., ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea, Major Bruce Buckson and ASMFC Awards Chair, David Cupka

Inside This Issue

Upcoming Meetings	Page 2
Species Profile: Spiny Dogfish	Page 4
Northern Shrimp Amendment I Approved	Page 6
Addenda XII & XIII Approved for Public Comment	Page 7
Atlantic Menhaden Addendum I Approved for Public Comment	Page 8
Draft Winter Flounder Amendment Approved for Public Comment	Page 8
MSC Addresses Multispecies Assessments & More	Page 9
ASMFC Recognizes Dr. Lisa Kline & Mr. Paul Lenzini	Page 9
ACCSP to Participate on Panel on Bycatch Data and Monitoring	Page 10
ASMFC Comings & Goings	Page 11
Guide to Large Pelagics Now Available	Page 12

Throughout his career in law enforcement, Major Buckson has been a strong advocate for developing consistency in fisheries enforcement approaches and encouraging information sharing among state and federal agencies. He has consistently sought new ways to improve the effectiveness of fisheries regulations, working tirelessly with fishery managers and law enforcement representatives coastwide to ensure the enforceability of management measures. Major Buckson's expertise has been sought by Florida's congressional delegation regarding the state's marine fisheries enforcement needs, and he has assisted the state legislature in developing regulatory language during its rule making process. As Chair of the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee, he secured dedicated staff support for the Committee, enabling it to more fully and efficiently address regulatory compliance issues along the Atlantic coast.

The Commission established the Annual Awards of Excellence in 1998 to recognize the important contributions of individuals to the success of the organization. The awards are given in the areas of law enforcement, legislation, management & policy, and scientific, technical & advisory contributions. Each year, the Commission honors the very best contributions in those areas at its Spring Meeting.

T

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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

John I. Nelson, Jr. (NH), Chair
Preston Pate, Jr. (NC), Vice-Chair

John V. O'Shea, Executive Director
Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries
Management Program
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration

Tina L. Berger, Editor
tberger@asmfc.org

(202)289-6400 Phone • (202)289-6051 Fax
www.asmfc.org

Upcoming Meetings

6/21- 25:

CANCELLED: ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week.

6/21 (7:30 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Draft Addendum I to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Marine Resources, 205 North Belle Meade Road, East Setauket, New York.

6/22 (6:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Draft Addendum I to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan, Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife, URI Narragansett Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island.

6/23 (6:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Draft Addendum I to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Marine Headquarters, Boating Education Center, 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

6/29 (6:00 PM - 9:00 PM):

ASMFC Public Hearing on Draft Addendum I to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Center for Marine Sciences and Technology, 3505 Arendell Street, Third Floor Conference Room (#306), Morehead City, North Carolina.

6/29 - 7/1:

Northeast Regional Bycatch Workshop, Sheraton Colonial Conference Center, One Audubon Road, Wakefield, Massachusetts; (781) 245-9300.

6/30 (9:30 AM - 5:00 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee, Holiday Inn Brownstone, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

7/14-16:

ASMFC American Lobster Technical Committee, Model Development Subcommittee, and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Portland, Maine.

7/14 - 16:

ASMFC Multispecies VPA Review Panel, Radisson Hotel Norfolk, 700 Monticello Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia.

7/20 - 21:

ASMFC NEAMAP Trawl Technical Committee, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, Virginia.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, a distinguished group of governmental and scientific experts under the direction of Admiral James D. Watkins, has been working for the past two years on examining our present system of ocean governance. They have traveled extensively throughout the U.S., collecting many hours of public testimony about what is working and what is broken with the federal policies regarding management of our oceans and fisheries. Their findings and recommendations are contained in a Preliminary Report that has been made available for public comment (<http://oceancommission.gov/>). Here is the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's response to Admiral Watkins.

"The Governors' Draft of the Commission's Preliminary Report is an impressive document, reflecting a thoughtful analysis by you and your team. Clearly, it will serve to focus and guide the national debate that will precede changes to the public policy on how our country manages its oceans. Therefore, we offer the following macro comments.

We are opposed to broadening the application of national standards. It is important to respect the political interests and geographic differences between state and federal marine jurisdictions. National standards for management within the EEZ are appropriate to protect the broad interests of all citizens, especially in the offshore regions. However, individual states have a more direct interest and investment in the waters immediately adjacent to their coasts. On the Atlantic coast these interests have been successfully managed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Our process has produced results that align with the objectives of the national standards, while providing the states flexibility to address regional differences in an efficient manner.

The use of technical committees to provide scientific advice is currently built into our Commission's management process. Since managers need to balance the uncertainties of scientific advice with the socioeconomic impacts of management decisions, we share the concerns others have expressed about the recommendation to make scientific advice binding on fisheries managers. Instead, we recommend a proportional approach: the higher the abundance of a stock, the more flexibility managers would have. Scientific advice would become more binding as stocks approach overfished or overfishing levels. This approach would allow a clear response to problems, and provide a strong

incentive to managers to rebuild depleted stocks and maintain healthy stocks.

We believe the proper role for Congress is to set broad standards and goals for the fisheries management process. The legislative branch obviously needs to identify and provide resources for such management and monitor the system for performance. These are tasks the Congress is uniquely empowered to perform. Lower level decisions, such as who should manage which species, are better left to the fisheries management community, including the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Councils, and Interstate Commissions.

We believe that any new ocean policy needs to recognize, support, and assist the states in implementing frontline fisheries and habitat management, beginning in the territorial sea running shoreward to the estuarine and upland areas within state jurisdiction. We recommend caution in establishing a National Ocean Council. The concept of improving coordination of ocean management has merit; however, there is significant risk of creating an additional level of bureaucracy that could make current management processes and agencies more cumbersome and less responsive.

We are pleased the Oceans Commission considered additional sources of funding for ocean management activities. While the report notes numerous important areas in need of funding, such as joint enforcement, we note that many fundamental programs were not listed or recognized as in need of adequate funding. We would hope that basic activities such as data collection and interjurisdictional management receive equal attention and are provided the needed dollars to conduct their important functions. As always, the best intentions and the ultimate results of governmental programs are directly proportional to the financial resources provided to carry them out.

Finally, we very much appreciate this opportunity to comment on your Preliminary Report. We look forward to working with you and the Commission on many of the important topics you have identified. Our member states will be providing you more detailed responses on items of regional interests. Obviously, the breadth of the issues you examined, the detail of your recommendations, and the sheer volume of your report reflect the enormous amount of thought and effort the Commission put forward. Congratulations on this accomplishment and thank you for your leadership in producing this important work."

Species Profile: Spiny Dogfish Once Abundant Species Slowly Moves Towards Recovery

Introduction

With the decline of groundfish and other commercially valuable Northeast stocks in the 1980s and 1990s, the fishing industry was encouraged to develop a market for the bountiful schools of spiny dogfish. As restaurant menus featured Cape Shark and belly flaps were shipped to Europe for fish and chips, dogfish landings spiked to levels where the stock could not replenish the removals at the same rate. The stock status precipitously declined in the late 1990s because industry targeted the larger mature females and dogfish are slow growing, late to mature, and have the longest pregnancy of any vertebrate. In 2000, management stepped in to implement stringent harvest restrictions, curtailing the newly developed dogfish markets in the hope that the stock would rebound. Fishermen expressed skepticism regarding the appropriateness of the new management measures given frequent catches of large schools of dogfish rendering the fishing gear useless. With hardly any pups and declining numbers of large mature females in federal and state trawl surveys, scientists believe fishermen encounter the preadolescents, which are the prospect for recovering the East Coast spiny dogfish population.

Life History

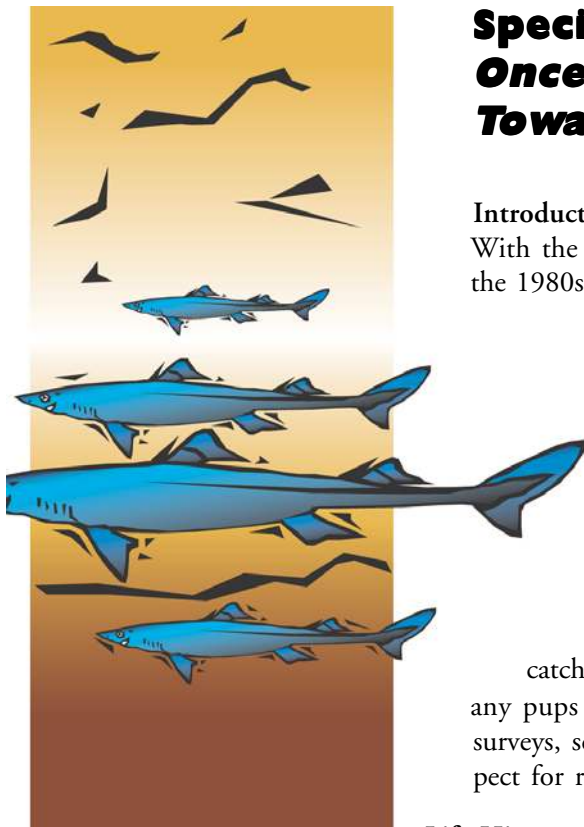
Dogfish can be found on both sides of the North Atlantic and North Pacific Ocean, mainly in the temperate and subarctic areas. In the Northwest Atlantic, the stock ranges from Labrador to Florida, but are most abundant from Nova Scotia to Cape Hatteras. Seasonal migrations occur northward in the spring and summer and southward in the fall and winter. In the winter and spring, spiny dogfish are located primarily in Mid-Atlantic waters but also extend onto the shelf break of southern Georges Bank. In the summer, they are located further 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 the autumn until water temperatures begin to cool and then return to the Mid-Atlantic.

Spiny dogfish school by size until they mature and then they school by both size and sex. Female dogfish reach sexual maturity at about 29.5 inches or twelve years, while males reach sexual maturity at 23.6 inches or six years. Mating occurs in the winter months and the pups are delivered on the offshore wintering grounds. Dogfish carry 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 22 month gestation period, the pups are released live and fully formed at about 14 inches.

Dogfish predators are whales, dolphins, silver hake, white hake, weakfish, goosfish, Atlantic cod, bluefish, striped bass and other large predatory species. The diet of the spiny dogfish consists of several commercially important species, such as Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, *Loligo* and *Illex* squid, and to a lesser extent cod and haddock.

Stock Status

The spiny dogfish stock assessment was peer reviewed during the 36th Stock Assessment Workshop in 2003. The assessment included data through 2002. At that time, spiny dogfish were overfished, but overfishing was not occurring. During 2002, the fishing mortality rate was estimated to be about 0.09, which exceeds the rebuilding target by a factor of about three, but is below the threshold of 0.11. The spawning stock biomass



Spiny Dogfish *Squalus acanthias*

Uses: fish & chips, fertilizer, hide for leather, pet food, liver oil for lighting and vitamin A, specimens for dissection, cancer research (squalamine)

Interesting Fact: Longest gestation period of any vertebrate (18-24 months), give birth every 2 years with litters from 2 - 15 pups, but on average 6 pups

Oldest Recorded: 100 years

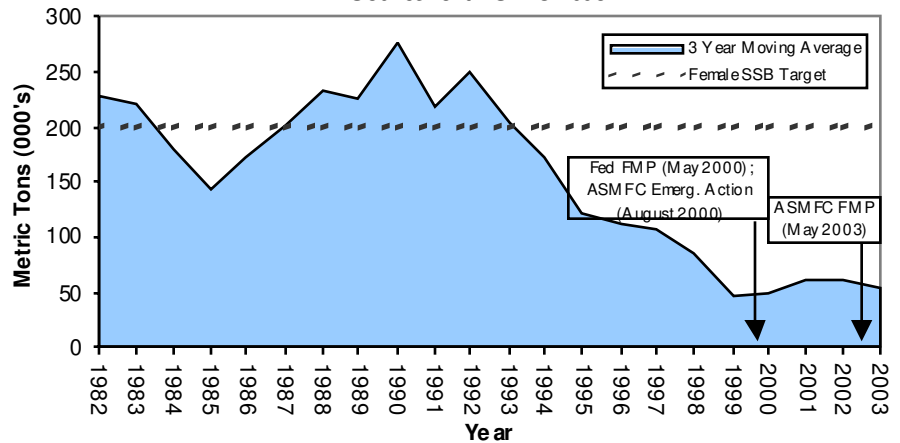
Age/Length at Maturity:
Females = 12 years/29.5 - 31.5"
Males = 6 years/23.6"

Age/Length at Full Recruitment:
Females = 10 - 13 years/32.3 - 34.3"
Males = 15 - 18 years/29.1 - 30.7"

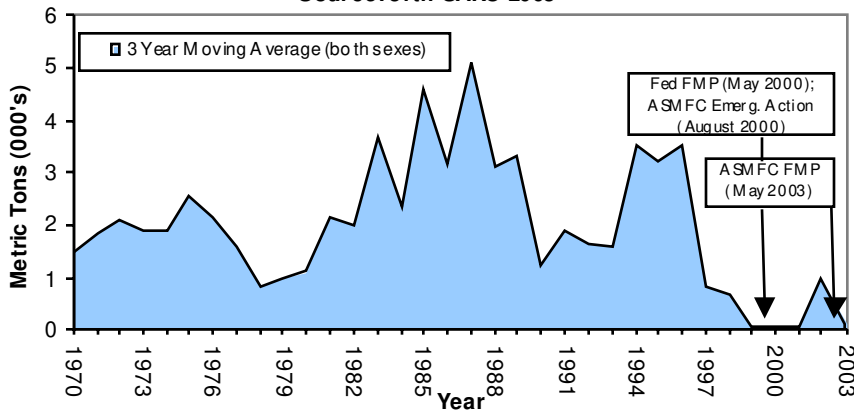
Stock Status: Overfished, but overfishing is not occurring

declined by about 75 percent since 1988 and is currently 29 percent of the biomass target (SSB_{target} = 200,000 mt). Recent reductions in spawning stock biomass cannot be replaced quickly due to the reproductive biology of spiny dogfish, and the current low level of SSB is expected to result in low recruitment for the next several years. Recruitment estimates from 1997 to 2003 represent the seven lowest values in the entire series. The Commission will review the most recent information on the status of the stock in the fall when it decides on the annual quota and trip limits for the 2005-2006 fishing year.

Spiny Dogfish Female Spawning Stock Biomass (>=80 cm)
Source: 37th SARC 2003



Spiny Dogfish Pup Biomass (>36 cm)
Source: 37th SARC 2003



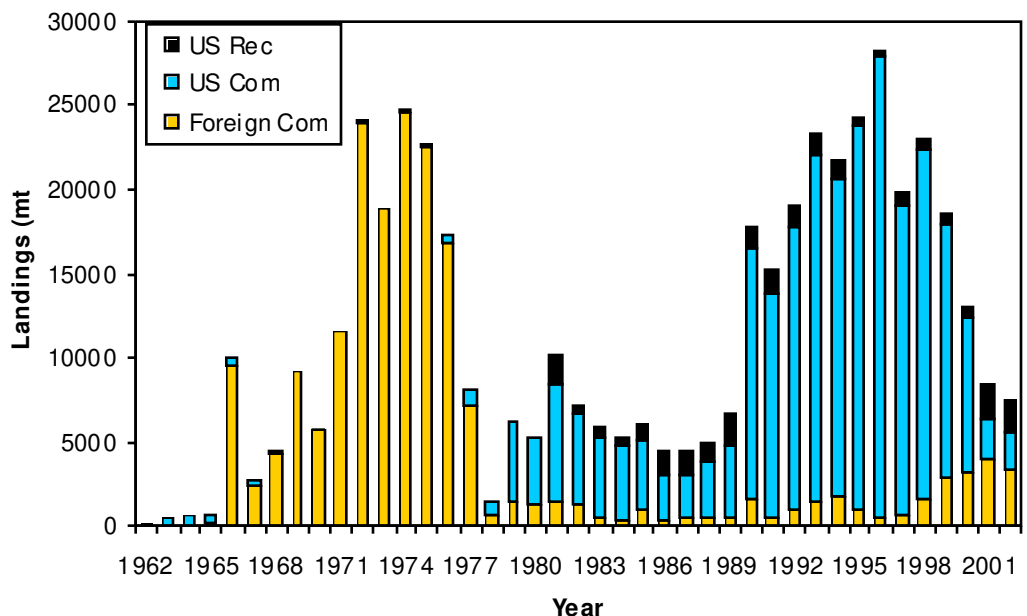
Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Throughout the 19th and most of the 20th century, spiny dogfish did not hold significant value to commercial fishermen. Small quantities were consistently landed until 1960 (just over 200,000 pounds) to supply the European food fish markets; in England, fish and chips and in Germany, a popular beer garden snack called shillerlocken. Foreign fleets dominated dogfish catches in US waters prior to the passage of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976. From 1978 to 2000, the US dominated commercial catches along the East Coast using longlines, trawls and gillnets to harvest spiny dogfish. In 1992, landings were about seven million pounds,

but gradually increased to a peak of about 60 million pounds in 1996. Landings declined to an average of about 40 million pounds in the late 1990s. After federal and state regulations were implemented, landings declined even further to about five million pounds in 2001 and 2002.

As the commercial fishery has declined in the US, other issues have become more significant. While discards have decreased in parallel with commercial landings, it is still a significant source of mortality on a stock that is trying to recover. As the US commercial landings were cutback, Canada's dogfish landings have increased and exceeded US landings with about 7.5 million pounds in 2002. Canada has capped landings around this level for the past couple of years. Until recently, there was never much of a recreational fishery for spiny dogfish,

Spiny Dogfish Commercial Landings and Recreational Catch, 1962 - 2002
Source: 36th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop



continued on page 6

Species Profile: Spiny Dogfish (continued from page 5)

but recreational landings were almost equivalent to the commercial landings at about 4.4 million pounds in 2002.

Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

In 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service declared spiny dogfish overfished, initiating the development of a joint fishery management plan (FMP) between the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils. Under the federal FMP, a quota is established annually based on maintaining a fishing mortality rate of 0.03 and allocated between two seasonal periods. From May to October, there is a trip limit of 600 pounds and an allocation of 57.9% of the quota; from November to April, a trip limit of 300 pounds is available with 42.1% of the quota open

for harvest. With the new federal regulations in place for the 2000 - 2001 fishing year, the Commission approved an emergency rule to close the state waters fishery when the federal quota was harvested. Until the closure, trip limits and harvest from state waters remained unrestricted. To eliminate the loophole in state waters, the Commission began development of an interstate FMP that complemented the federal plan. The Interstate FMP was approved in late 2003 and implemented with the 2003-2004 fishing year. While the Commission's plan matches the federal plan in many ways, it differs in that the state must payback any sea-

sonal quota overages and provides a separate allocation for biomedical research.

For more information, please contact Megan Gamble, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <mgamble@asmfc.org>.



ASMFC Approves Amendment 1 to the Northern Shrimp Plan

On May 27, 2004, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp. The first plan revision in nearly 20 years, the Amendment establishes biological reference points and provides new tools for management of the northern shrimp fishery. The Amendment was undertaken for several reasons: to capitalize on new information on northern shrimp life history and population dynamics; provide managers with greater flexibility in managing the resource; and update the management plan to comply with the mandates of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act.

The Northern Shrimp Section approved Amendment 1 in January 2004. The Amendment establishes formal biological reference points. They include a fishing mortality target of 0.22 and limit of 0.6, and a biomass threshold of 19.8 million pounds and limit of 13.2 mil-

lion pounds. These reference points provide benchmarks for Section consideration when establishing management regulations. When either limit is exceeded, the Section must take action to initiate stock rebuilding. The Amendment also provides a broader suite of management options to allow for greater flexibility in regulating the fishery. Adjustment of the northern shrimp fishing season occurs at the Section's annual specification setting meeting each fall. All other changes to the current management program must be developed and approved through the Commission's addendum process. Member states of the Section are required to implement the Amendment no later than July 1, 2004.

Based on the 2003 northern shrimp stock assessment, fishing mortality is below the target and overfishing is not occurring. However, because biomass is below the threshold, the stock is de-

finied as overfished. Exploitable biomass generally declined from approximately 49 million pounds in 1987 to a time series low of 12.4 million pounds in 2000. Since then the biomass estimate has risen to nearly 17 million pounds in 2003, as a result of the appearance of the moderate 1999 year class and the strong 2001 year class. This estimate is still below the time-series average of 28.2 million pounds, and well below the average of the relatively stable 1985-1994 period of 37.9 million pounds. The estimate of spawning stock biomass for 2004 is also well below the time-series mean.

Copies of Amendment 1 can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org or by contacting the Commission office at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-400 ext. 301, or bspear@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Board Approves Addenda XII and XIII for Public Comment: State Hearings to be Held in June & July

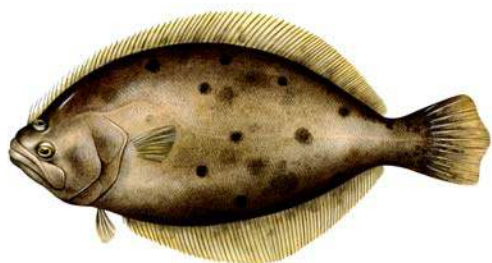
The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved two addenda for public comment. Addendum XII addresses the black sea bass commercial fishery for 2005, 2006 and possibly 2007, while Addendum XIII proposes the establishment of a multi-year total allowable landings (TAL) specification process for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass.

Addendum XII proposes to extend the current state-by-state black sea bass allocation system for the 2005 and 2006 fishing years. State-specific shares are as follows: Maine – 0.5%, New York – 7%, New Hampshire – 0.5%, New Jersey – 20%, Massachusetts – 13%, Delaware – 5%, Rhode Island – 11%, Maryland – 11%, Connecticut – 1%, Virginia – 20%, and North Carolina – 11%. The Addendum also has an option to extend the shares through 2007.

Addendum XIII proposes modifications to the TAL specification process for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries to allow for the establishment of multi-year specifications. The Addendum presents three options for review: (1) maintain status quo, with the TALs set annually, (2) set the TAL for up to three years with no review of the stock condition until the end of the period, (3) set the TAL for up to three years, with an annual review of the stock condition and the ability to adjust the specifications if necessary. These options are intended to provide greater regulatory consistency and predictability to the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council jointly manage summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, meeting annually to establish commercial quotas and recreation harvest limits. The Commission's actions regarding Addendum XII are taken exclusively under the states' management authority, while Addendum XIII has been initiated to complement Council action. Final Board action on both Addenda is slated for August.

Both Addenda can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission office at (202) 289-6400. **Public comment will be accepted until July 9, 2004** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or comments@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202) 289-6400, ext. 330 or tkerns@asmfc.org.



Pending Compliance Actions

During its Spring Meeting, the Commission found several states out of compliance with its interstate fisheries management plans. If any of the states do not implement the required measures by the dates provided below, the Commission will forward its non-compliance recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior.

The States of New York and Connecticut, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were determined to be out of compliance for not implementing the recreational seasonal closures required as part of the annual specifications for black sea bass. All states in the management program (Massachusetts through North Carolina) were required to implement recreational fishery closures from September 8 through September 21 (inclusive) and the entire month of December. Each of these states has implemented a season that is inconsistent with this requirement but have indicated that they will implement the appropriate season prior to July 15, 2004.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts was found out of compliance with the Scup Fishery Management Plan. The Commonwealth has not implemented a Board-approved recreational management program that achieves a 40% reduction in landings relative to 2003. Also, the current management program includes recreational management measures that vary by sector, which is prohibited by Addendum XI. The Commonwealth has indicated that it will update its management program to be consistent with the FMP by July 1, 2004.

The State of New York was found out of compliance with the Summer Flounder FMP for not implementing the necessary measures to achieve a 48.5% reduction in recreational landings. The measures that were implemented by New York are estimated to achieve a 20% reduction in landings. If New York has not implemented the required measures by June 15, 2004, notification of this non-compliance finding will be forwarded to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior.

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Approves Addendum I for Public Comment

The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved Addendum 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for public comment. The Addendum proposes modifications to the plan's biological reference points, schedule for stock assessments and habitat section.

This action is based in part on the recommendations of the Menhaden Technical Committee in its 2003 stock assessment, which found that menhaden are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring on a coastwide basis. Peer-reviewed this past October by the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review Panel, the assessment uses a new modeling approach (Forward Projection Model) and fecundity-based biological reference points to determine stock status. These reference points are more accurate and take into account the number of mature ova (eggs). This is a significant de-

parture from the way menhaden assessments have been conducted in the past.

The Addendum also proposes changes to the plan's fishing mortality target and threshold levels as recommended by the Menhaden Technical Committee and supported by the peer review. Rather than conducting a full-scale annual assessment, the Addendum proposes a three-year assessment cycle to allow for the increased complexity and data requirements of the new model. The Technical Committee will continue to meet annually to review the current year's landings and indices. A new assessment may be initiated if there are indications of a significant change in stock status.

In addition, the Board approved two workshops to address concerns regarding the possible localized depletion of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. One workshop will examine menhaden's ecological role, especially as a forage fish,

and identify management options with respect to this role. The second workshop will focus on developing a long-range research and monitoring program for menhaden in both the Chesapeake Bay and along the Atlantic coast.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum, which can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org. It is anticipated that most states from Rhode Island through North Carolina will be holding public hearings in June and July (see page 3 for currently scheduled hearings). **Public comment will be accepted until July 14, 2004** and should be forwarded to Nancy Wallace, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 Eye Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or comments@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Nancy Wallace at (202)289-6400.

Draft Winter Flounder Amendment Approved for Public Comment

The Commission's Winter Flounder Management Board has approved the Draft Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder for public comment. It is anticipated that most of the states from Maine through Delaware will be conducting hearings in June and July.

The draft Amendment outlines several issues for public comment, including updating plan goals and objectives; redefining plan targets, thresholds, and rebuilding goals; a description of habitat needs; and recreational and commercial management measures. Updated overfishing definitions and fishing mor-

tality targets are needed based on the results of the most recent stock assessments for the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) and Gulf of Maine (GOM) winter flounder stocks. Specifically, the SNE/MA stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring, and a reduction in fishing mortality is needed to rebuild the stock to sustainable levels of biomass. While the GOM stock was determined to be not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, limited data and a lack of observed fish from the northern part of the species range raises concern about the possibility of localized depletion in inshore areas north of Massachusetts.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment, either through attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Amendment can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org. Public comment will be gathered throughout the summer, and should be forwarded to Lydia Munger, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at [<comments@asmfc.org>](mailto:comments@asmfc.org). For more information, please contact Lydia Munger at (202) 289-6400.

MSC Addresses Multispecies Assessments, Offshore Windmill Farms and More...

In May, the Management and Science Committee (MSC) met to discuss a number of issues, including multispecies assessments and a draft implementation plan, a proposal for offshore windmill farms, and status of Asian oyster issues. Following is a summary of those discussions.

Multispecies Assessments

The Commission has developed a prototype multispecies virtual population analysis (MSVPA) model for Atlantic menhaden, bluefish, striped bass, and weakfish. The MSVPA will undergo an internal review July 14-16, 2004, and a full peer review through the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SAW/SARC) process in 2005. The in-

ternal review panel will focus on the input data, model functionality, and results presentation. However, the model will not be used to evaluate management options until successful completion of SAW/SARC review in 2005.

While the tools to perform a multispecies assessment are in development, the MSC is also working on a multispecies implementation plan for the Commission. This plan will provide guidance for Commission activities to integrate multispecies information in the existing single species management structure. The plan recognizes that (1) multispecies models should be used as additional information to single species assessments, (2) the Commission should work on multispecies issues in a stepwise pro-

gression, and (3) future modifications to committee structures and information flow may be necessary to address multispecies issues.

Offshore Windmill Farms

The MSC has served as a forum for interstate discussion of major offshore projects to provide feedback on possible impacts to fisheries issues. In May, Winergy Corp. (WinergyLLC.com) presented a proposal for offshore windmill generation of electricity at 28 sites from Massachusetts to Virginia. The MSC discussed impacts relative to habitat alteration, access by recreational and commercial fisheries, and incidental mortality of fish and birds.

continued on page 11

ASMFC Recognizes Dr. Lisa Kline & Mr. Paul Lenzini

As part of its Annual Awards of Excellence ceremony, the Commission took the opportunity to also recognize the long-standing contributions of Dr. Lisa Kline and Mr. Paul Lenzini to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Dr. Kline received an award in appreciation for her 11 years of service to the Commission as its first Director of Research and Statistics. As the program's primary architect, Dr. Kline built a first rate science program in support of the Commission's fisheries management process. She was also instrumental in the development of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. She recently left the Commission to head up the development of NOAA Fisheries' Cooperative Research Program. Widely respected by managers and scientists alike, the Commission will miss her foresight and dedication but knows that her expertise will be put to good work engineering the nation's cooperative research agenda.

As the Commission's legal counsel for over a quarter of a century, Paul Lenzini has both witnessed and been a part of the great many changes that have occurred to the Commission over that time. Most significantly, he has helped to guide the Commission through the development, passage

and implementation of the Atlantic Coastal Fishery Cooperative Management Act, shepherding in a new era of fisheries management for the 15 Atlantic coastal states. The Commission presented him an award of appreciation for his passionate commitment and sound counsel over the many years. While his hard work and dedication will be missed, we wish him a healthy and rewarding retirement.



From left: Mr. Paul Lenzini, Dr. Lisa Kline and AAE Recipient Major Bruce Buckson



ACCSP to Participate in a Panel on Bycatch Data and Monitoring in June

Ms. Maury Osborn, Director of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), is set to moderate the Bycatch Data and Monitoring Panel from June 29 – July 1 in Wakefield, Massachusetts.

The panel is being held as part of the NOAA Fisheries workshop *Bycatch in Northeast Fisheries: Moving Forward* and is open to the public. The first day will consist of speeches by leadership from several partner agencies and an overview of regional issues. The second day, attendees will divide into four working groups, including

- Science and Research
- Data and Monitoring
- Gear Engineering
- Management

The third day, all attendees will reconvene to hear each panel's report on discussions.

Panelists participating in the Bycatch Data and Monitoring Panel include: Greg Power of the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office; Bill Lee of Massachusetts; Tony Bogan of New Jersey; and a representative from the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

"I am delighted that NOAA Fisheries is providing this opportunity for the public to discuss bycatch and understand the complex process of measuring and monitoring it," says Ms. Osborn. "This workshop will be an important step in updating the Northeast Region Bycatch Implementation Plan."

The Bycatch workshop will be held at the Sheraton Colonial Conference Center, 1 Audubon Road, in Wakefield,

Massachusetts. To register, visit www.nero.noaa.gov/bycatchconf. The workshop will include a reception sponsored by the Northeast Consortium and a poster session from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, Tuesday, June 29.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data manage-

ment system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three 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 and Wildlife Service. For more information please visit www.accsp.org or call Abbey Compton at (202)216-5690, ext. 314.

ACCSP Welcomes its New IS Developer

Karen Holmes joined the ACCSP Information Systems staff in March 2004 to continue the development of SAFIS and other Oracle-based systems. She is working with state and federal partners in the Northeast to customize SAFIS for each of their unique needs. Ms. Holmes also will complete, maintain, and improve Bio Target, the ACCSP's biological sampling tracking system, and other in-house databases.

Ms. Holmes has served as a programmer and developer for various government contract and non-profit organizations. Just prior to joining the ACCSP staff, Ms. Holmes worked for the Peace Corps in Washington DC as Senior Programmer Analyst/Team Leader. In that position she implemented numerous new data management systems for international tracking of volunteers, employees, donations, and health-related information. One of her more impressive accomplishments

was establishing a network for Peace Corps workers in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. She previously served in programming, analytical, and software engineering positions; supporting clients in the armed forces and the National Archives.

Ms. Holmes earned a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Information Systems from Western New England College. She is an active volunteer with the DC Association of Retarded Citizens and the DC Special Olympics.



MSC Addresses Multispecies Assessments & More (continued from page 9)

Asian Oysters

In January, a notice of intent to introduce the Asian oyster to the Chesapeake Bay was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers by the state of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Commission was asked to be involved in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and has reconstituted the Interstate Shellfish Transport Committee to provide technical input to the process. Research on economic and ecological risks has begun, and a draft EIS should be available for comment in early 2005.

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

ASMFC Comings & Goings



Staff:

Erin Flannery -- The Commission is pleased to welcome Erin Flannery as its summer intern. Erin will be assisting the Executive Director on legislative issues, including the Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and review of the Reports by the Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Com-

mission. Erin comes to us from Wellesley where she is majoring in English. She also has an interest in pursuing a legal career, so testing the waters on national fisheries legislation should be a good experience. Welcome aboard, Erin!

Commissioners:

William Goldsborough -- May 2004 marked the end of a 9-year run for Bill Goldsborough as Maryland's Governor's Appointee to the Commission. Best known for his commitment to the Commission's Habitat Program, Bill has also been an active member on many of the Commission's species management boards, bringing to the table an important conservation perspective. Ever vigilant to the conservation needs of the Chesapeake Bay, Bill also spoke to the broader interests of the entire Atlantic seaboard. As long-standing Chair of the Habitat Committee, Bill helped the program evolve from information and education dissemination to include policy development and advocacy. Under his leadership, the Commission established a Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Policy, evaluated gear impacts to SAV, reviewed the impacts of beach nourishment on nearshore coastal habitat and fishery resources, and broadened its fishery management

plans to include detailed habitat sections. While no longer a Commissioner, we are pleased that Bill will remain Chair of the Habitat Committee and an active participant in the Commission's other programs.

Bruno M. Vasta -- In June, Bruno Vasta became Maryland's Governor's Appointee to the Commission. Dedicated to the health and vitality of the Chesapeake Bay and its resources, Bruno brings his scientific background and knowledge to bear in addressing the problems facing the Bay. Most recently, he served on a series of special task forces addressing the blue crab situation in concert with the Department of Natural Resources.

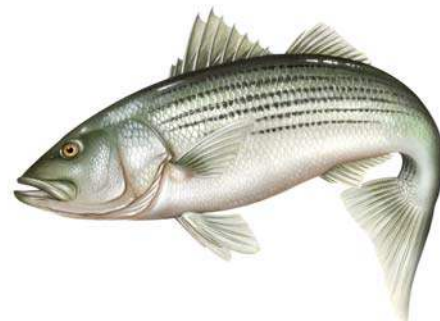


At home, he and his wife Dorothy actively participate in Maryland's oyster restoration project by raising oysters on their own pier. He is an active member of both the Maryland and Solomon's Island Charterboat Captain's Associations and is past-president of the Maryland Saltwater Sportman's Association. Welcome aboard, Bruno!



Senator Robert L. Venables, Sr. --

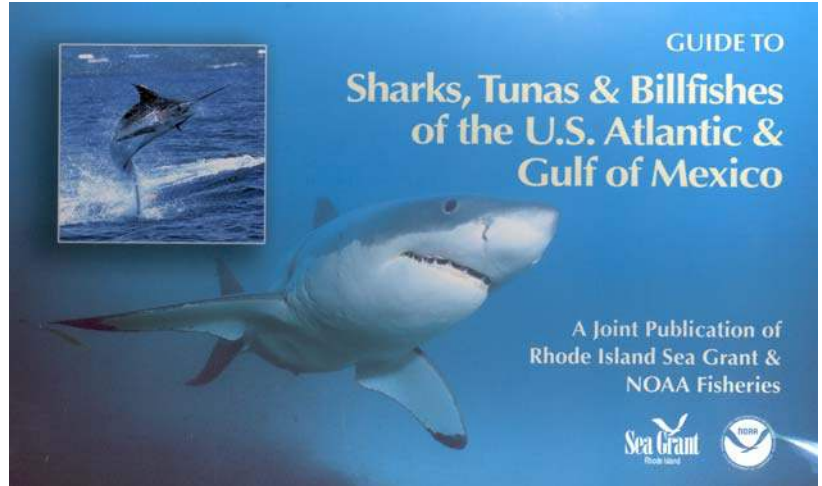
In May, Senator Robert L. Venables, Sr. joined the Commission as Delaware's legislative representative. Senator Venables has served in the State Senate since 1988. He is currently Chair of the Bond Bill Committee and the Senate Small Business Committee. Senator Venables also presently serves on the Senate Agriculture, Community/County Affairs, Energy & Transit and Natural Resources & Environmental Control Committees. An avid sport fisherman, Senator Venables is also known for his passionate pursuit of stripers and large mouth bass in the Nanticoke River. Welcome aboard, Senator!



Guide to Sharks, Tunas & Billfishes of the Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico Now Available

This joint publication of Rhode Island Sea Grant & NOAA Fisheries is a concise, richly visual guide to 44 highly migratory species, offering at-a-glance physical descriptions, habitat and distribution information, and diagnostic and field photographs, including side-by-side comparisons of many similar species. The guide is not a definitive key but offers a quick reference for identification by commercial and recreational fishermen, scientists and others that frequently come in contact with these fish. Careful identification is the first step toward appropriate management and conservation.

It also includes information about reducing the risk of shark attack as well as procedures for the protection, handling, and release of entangled marine mammals and turtles. The content has been reviewed by species-specific experts for accuracy. Printed on waterproof paper with spiral binding for durability in field use. 124 pages. Guides are available for \$25 (plus \$3 for shipping and handling) from the Rhode Island Sea Grant, with discounts offered for multiple purchases by calling (401)874-6842. You may also order via the Rhode Island Sea Grant website at <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/bookstore/>



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

Return Service Requested