



**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 Releases Report on Diadromous Fish Habitat**

In January 2009, the Commission published the ninth document in its Habitat Management Series entitled, *Atlantic Coast Diadromous Fish Habitat: A Review of Utilization, Threats, Recommendations for Conservation, and Research Needs*, by Karen Greene, Jennifer Zimmerman, Wilson Laney, and Jessie Thomas-Blate. The report is the most comprehensive compilation of habitat information to date on Commission-managed diadromous species, which include American eel, American and hickory shad, alewife and blueback herring, Atlantic sturgeon, and Atlantic striped bass. The report's primary focus is on inshore and nearshore habitats along the Atlantic coast for all life stages of the included species and was developed to serve as a resource for fisheries managers to use when amending existing fishery management plan (FMPs). Furthermore, maps that were developed using a GIS interface provide an all-inclusive source of spawning habitat information for Commission-managed diadromous species.



Throughout their life history, diadromous fish occupy a broad range of rivers, bays, and estuaries from Florida to Canada, as well as the Atlantic Ocean. They all share the common need for fresh, estuarine, and marine waters at various stages in their development. Consequently, they can also be the most vulnerable to threats to these environments. Poor water quality, altered habitat, blocked access, and invasive species are just a few of the conditions that jeopardize these fish.

According to the Commission's Five-Year Strategic Plan (2009-2013), the loss and degradation of nearshore marine and estuarine fish habitat is a significant factor affecting the long-term sustainability of the nation's fisheries. Since diadromous fish species occupy these habitats during critical periods in their life history, it is imperative that fisheries managers provide coordinated management of these areas. Historically, diadromous species have played a critical ecological role throughout the range of their habitats, and have provided a significant food source for human consumption.

Unfortunately, we still lack a complete understanding of what habitats are essential to a given species, what the effects of anthropogenic activities are on habitat, and what can be done to mitigate these impacts. This report attempts to address some of these concerns by identifying all known diadromous fish habitat, areas of particular concern to shad and river herring species, threats to diadromous species, conservation and restoration recommendations and/or requirements, and future habitat research information needs.

The report is available on-line at <http://www.asmfc.org/diadromousSpeciesDocument.htm>.



For more information or a copy of the full publication, including spawning areas DVD, please contact Jessie Thomas-Blate, Habitat Coordinator, at [JThomas@asmfc.org](mailto:JThomas@asmfc.org).

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**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.

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## Upcoming Meetings

**3/30 - 4/3:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

**4/7 - 9:**

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

**4/10 (10 AM - 3 PM):**

ASMFC Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel, Holiday Inn BWI Airport Conference Center, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, Maryland.

**4/14 - 16:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, The Sanderling, 1461 Duck Road, Duck, North Carolina; (252) 261-4111.

**4/26 - 29:**

65th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

**5/4 - 7:**

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (800) 333-3333 (see preliminary schedule on pages 7 & 12).

**6/1 - 5:**

Red Drum SEDAR 18 Assessment Workshop, Charleston, South Carolina.

**6/8 - 12:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hutchinson Island Marriott, 555 NE Ocean Boulevard, Stuart, Florida; (800) 775-5936.

**6/9 - 11:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Radisson Martinique on Broadway, New York City.

**6/23 - 25:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine.

**7/6 - 10:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

**8/4 - 6:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Embassy Suite Alexandria, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, Virginia; (703) 684-5900.

## Vision 2020: The Future of U.S. Marine Fisheries

Imagine a future with healthy, sustainable fish populations, strong fishing and offshore aquaculture industries, ample recreational fishing opportunities, vibrant coastal communities, as well as a safe and healthy seafood supply for the nation. That is the vision described in a report issued by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC). The report identifies current trends affecting living marine resources and suggests specific policies and actions that could help shape fisheries towards MAFAC's vision by 2020. Here is a brief summary.

Marine fisheries have national importance as a source of food and in providing employment and recreational opportunities. The combined value of economic activity generated by U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries is about \$185 billion in sales, supporting over two million jobs. Besides fishing, marine fish populations are impacted by habitat, water quality, climate change, and other uses of our natural resources. Seafood consumption can be expected to continue to rise. Together, these drivers increase the challenge of sustaining ecosystems and fish abundance.

Although global wild caught fish production has peaked, rebuilding depressed U.S. stocks through proper management can result in higher production from U.S. capture fisheries. Sustainable U.S. aquaculture will be needed to reduce dependence on foreign imports and ensure U.S. food security and economic growth.

Four themes will affect the future of U.S. fisheries.

**More timely and higher quality data are necessary for critical management decisions.** Although NOAA has tremendous capacity to conduct research and collect data, the current investment in data is disproportionately low relative to the value of our marine resources.

**There are widespread opportunities to utilize technology to achieve the outcomes desired for 2020.** Reducing bycatch, improving aquaculture production, and resolving important research, observation, and monitoring needs will rely on engineered innovations.

**Achieving the articulated vision by 2020 will require collaboration and partnerships across all levels of government, sectors, and disciplines.** The interests of present and future generations must be equally considered through a vigorous exchange of science, engineering, technology, and policy expertise both domestically and internationally.

**The additional fiscal resources needed to obtain these predicted benefits are a sound investment.** By sustaining healthy stocks and rebuilding others, marine fisheries and aquaculture can grow in economic importance for coastal communities and the nation.

The report identifies 24 specific recommendations under five broad categories.

**Demand, Supply, and Quality of Seafood** – Action should be taken to educate consumers about the health benefits of seafood as well as conservation concerns. Seafood safety programs should be strengthened. Efforts should be made to establish NOAA as an unequivocal source of unbiased, peer-reviewed scientific information.

**Commercial Fisheries** – Achieve and maintain sustainable levels of stocks. Match fleet capacity with sustainable harvests. Use limited access privilege programs where appropriate for commercial and recreational sectors. Seek ways to integrate aquaculture and wild production to maximize the value of U.S. seafood production.

**Recreational Fisheries** – Achieve and maintain sustainable levels of stocks. Prohibit sale of recreationally caught fish. Incorporate quota transfer between commercial and recreational fisheries where appropriate. Enhance a conservation ethic with anglers.

**Aquaculture** – Develop an environmentally sound aquaculture industry to produce safe seafood, rebuild stocks, and provide jobs to coastal communities. Pass and implement national offshore aquaculture legislation.

**Fisheries Management** – Protect ocean and coastal habitat. Expand the use of ecosystem-based management. Enhance cooperative management among states, regional authorities, and federal managers. Improve accessibility to stock status and catch data to all stakeholders to support informed management actions. Demonstrate strong leadership at international forums to better manage high seas stocks.

While some readers will take issue with what MAFAC has said, this report serves the very useful purpose of identifying a desired end state for U.S. fisheries, along with suggestions on how to get there. No doubt others will have different and, hopefully, better ideas. The fact that this report may generate additional thinking on a clearer vision for the future speaks directly to its value. Hopefully, a vision for healthy stocks and prosperous fisheries, and a commitment to work together to achieve it, is something we can all agree to work towards.

The complete 28-page report can be found at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafac/index.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafac/index.htm). MAFAC was established in 1970 to advise the Secretary of Commerce on living marine resource matters. Members are appointed by the Secretary and have expertise in commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing, seafood marketing, consumer interests, coastal communities, and environmental advocacy.



**Winter Flounder**  
*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*

**ASMFC Management Area:**  
Maine - New Jersey

**Interesting Facts:**

\* Name derived from tendency to move to shallower inshore waters during the winter months

\* Newly hatched larvae have one eye on each side of its head; after several months of adapting to bottom dwelling lifestyle, one eye migrates to other side of head.

\* Referred to as a right handed flounder because eyes are located on its upper surface when the fish is pointing to the right.

**Largest Recorded:** 25", 8 lbs

**Oldest Recorded:** 14 years

**Stock Status**

**GOM:** Likely to be overfished with overfishing occurring

**SNE/MA:** Overfished and overfishing occurring

## Species Profile: Winter Flounder

### Record Biomass Prompts Action by ASMFC and NMFS to Rebuild Depleted Stocks

#### Introduction

The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder stock is at an all time low comparable to the state of striped bass biomass in the early 1980s. Retrospective patterns from the previous two winter flounder assessments significantly underestimated biomass and led managers to believe that the stock was healthier than it was. The latest assessment, conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM III) in 2008 addressed this retrospective pattern for the first time and estimated the SNE/MA biomass to be at only 9% of its target. Management efforts are now focused on developing regulations that will achieve the lowest possible fishing mortality rate while minimizing economic and social impacts as well as dead discards.

#### Life History

Winter flounder is a common estuarine flatfish found in almost all shoal water habitats along the northwest Atlantic coast. The geographic distribution ranges from nearshore habitats to offshore fishing banks along the Atlantic coast of North America.

The name 'winter' flounder refers to its annual spawning migrations into nearshore waters in winter. Adult winter flounder migrations consist of two phases; an autumn estuarine immigration prior to spawning, and a late spring/summer movement to either deeper, cooler portions of estuaries or to offshore areas after spawning. This pattern of seasonal distribution may change in the colder waters of the northern extent of the flounder's range where it migrates to shallow water in the summer and deeper waters in the winter. The annual spawning period for winter flounder varies over its geographic range. Although spawning periods overlap considerably, peak spawning times are earlier in southern locations.

During spawning, females release demersal (negatively or neutrally buoyant) adhesive eggs whose properties facilitate retention within spawning grounds. A number of factors influence larval and juvenile growth and survival, including temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and food availability. Nursery habitat for winter flounder larvae and juveniles is typically littoral and sublittoral saltwater coves, coastal salt ponds, estuaries, and protected embayments although larvae and juveniles have also been found in open ocean areas such as Georges Bank and Nantucket shoals. Larvae are predominantly found in the upper reaches of natal estuaries in early spring, moving into the lower estuary later in the season.

Adult growth rates vary between stock units. Fish from the offshore Georges Bank stock typically grow faster and larger than fish from the inshore areas. Maximum age appears to decrease from north to south over the winter flounder's range as well.

Winter flounder are an essential component of estuarine assemblages throughout most of their geographic range. Estuarine habitats provide spawning areas for adults, juvenile nursery habitat, and juvenile and adult foraging area. Young of the year (YOY) and juveniles reside permanently in the estuaries while adults may leave the estuary during warm sum-



mer months. While estuaries provide good habitat for spawning, predatory and competitive interactions may occur frequently in these areas due to the high number of organisms found there.

Sources of natural mortality for winter flounder include predation, parasites, disease, and competition. Predatory fish such as striped bass, bluefish, toadfish, and summer flounder, as well as birds, invertebrates, and marine mammals prey on larvae and juveniles. Atlantic cod, spiny dogfish, goosefish, and winter skate are the main predators of adult winter flounder. Little skate, smooth dogfish, hakes, sea raven, striped sea robin, striped bass, bluefish, and wrymouth also consume adult winter flounder in smaller amounts.

Winter flounder diet is limited by their small mouth size. Adults feed mostly on small invertebrates, shrimp, clams, and worms. Feeding occurs solely during the day because winter flounder depend on sight to locate prey (a behavior called sight feeding), and intensifies during ebbing and flooding tides. At night, winter flounder lie flat with their eye turrets retracted until sunrise.

### Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Winter flounder are valuable to commercial and recreational fishermen throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic. The majority of the recreational harvest and roughly half of the commercial harvest is taken from state waters. Commercial harvest averages around 90% of total fishing mortality while recreational accounts for roughly 10% over the last few years. The vast majority of commercial harvest (~98%) is taken by fishermen who possess a federal groundfish permit. Both the Commission and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) use stock-area-specific management measures for both the recreational and commercial sectors of the winter flounder fishery. The two management units found within state waters are the Gulf of Maine (GOM), which extends from Cape Cod north, and the SNE/MA,

which extends from Cape Cod south through Delaware. The Council manages winter flounder as part of the large-mesh Northeast multispecies group which includes several highly valuable commercial species such as cod and yellowtail flounder.

### GOM

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, commercial landings from the GOM stock fluctuated around 2.2 million pounds. In 1982, landings peaked at six million pounds and then declined steadily to a time series low of 557,770 pounds in 1999. This decline may be attributed to extended spring closures in the GOM. Since 1999, landings have averaged around 1.1 million pounds, with a maximum catch of 1.5 million pounds in 2003 and minimum of 500,000 pounds in 1999 and 2006. Otter trawls (~75%) and gillnets (~25%) are the primary commercial gear types used by commercial fishermen to catch GOM winter flounder.

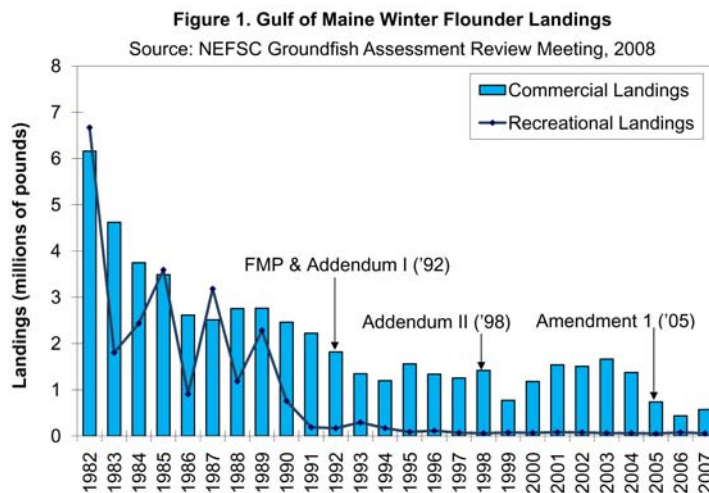
Recreational landings from the GOM stock fluctuated around 4.4 million pounds in the early 1980s before declining to under 200,621 pounds in 1991. Recreational landings have remained below 220,000 pounds since 1994. On average, recreational landings comprised 40 percent of the total catch from 1979-1990. Since then, recreational

landings have comprised between five and 19 percent of the total landings, averaging roughly 10% of total catch.

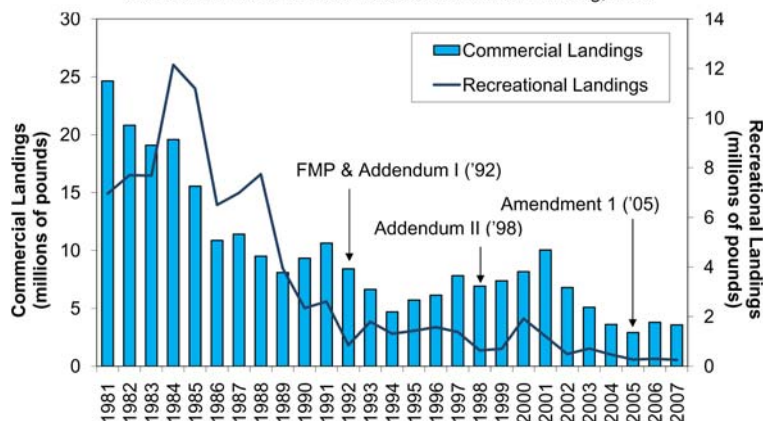
### SNE/MA

Commercial landings from the SNE/MA stock averaged 18.7 million pounds from 1964 to 1972 before declining to around 10.6 million pounds throughout the mid- to late 1970s. Landings increased in the early 1980s to a record high of 24.6 million pounds, but then declined to 4.7 million pounds in 1994. From 1995 to 2003, landings ranged between 10.3 and 5.4 million pounds and then declined to below 3.7 million pounds from 2005 to the present. Otter trawls are the primary gear type (~98%) used by commercial fishermen to catch winter flounder in the SNE/MA area.

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**Figure 2. Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder Landings**  
Source: NEFSC Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting, 2008



## Species Profile: Winter Flounder (continued from page 5)

Recreational landings from the SNE/MA stock peaked at 12.7 million pounds in 1984 before declining to a low of 866,417 pounds in 1992. Landings have ranged between 270,000 and 1.8 million pounds in recent years, with the lowest landings occurring in 2005, 2006, and 2007. Most recreational landings occur from January to June.

### Stock Status

#### GOM

GARM III concluded that GOM winter flounder is *likely overfished and overfishing is probably occurring*. The change in status determination from previous GARM assessments is due to the large retrospective pattern in the assessment methodology (in this case, the virtual population analysis or VPA). There was a lack of fit to the survey indices in the VPA model which created a high degree of uncertainty. Biological reference points were generated but the GARM III biological reference point review panel recommended not using stock recruit reference points due to uncertainty surrounding estimated recruitment. Despite this uncertainty, all models (VPA and SCALE) suggest spawning stock biomass is below  $SSB_{MSY}$  and there is a substantial probability that it is below  $\frac{1}{2} SSB_{MSY}$ .

#### SNE/MA

GARM III estimated that the SNE/MA winter flounder stock is overfished with

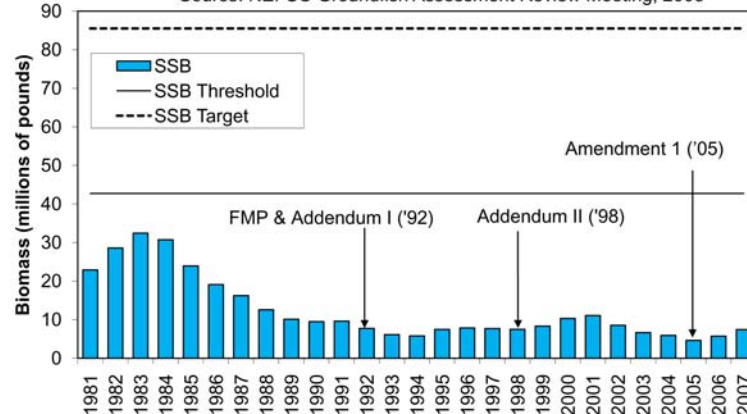
overfishing occurring. The stock is significantly overfished with spawning stock biomass (SSB) in 2007 estimated at 3,368 mt or only 9% of  $SSB_{MSY} = 38,761$  mt. Fishing mortality in 2007 was 0.649 which is 262% higher than target of  $F_{MSY} = 0.248$ .

tion and habitat loss. Recent tagging studies have shown spawning-site fidelity in winter flounder, meaning that individuals will often return to the location where they were hatched, or close by. What this suggests is that subpopulations of winter flounder may be vul-

nerable to localized depletion. Flounder are available to offshore commercial fishermen from June through December when they are found in federal waters where the majority of the catch takes place.

Figure 4. Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder Spawning Stock Biomass

Source: NEFSC Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting, 2008



### Atlantic Coastal Management

The Commission and Council have had complementary management plans for winter flounder since 2005. Cooperative management between state and federal waters is necessary because of the unique migration patterns and spawning site fidelity of this species. When winter flounder migrate to inshore state water spawning grounds, they become concentrated in certain areas, making it easy for anglers to locate and remove a substantial portion of the stock. Concentrated fishing effort on spawning females, which

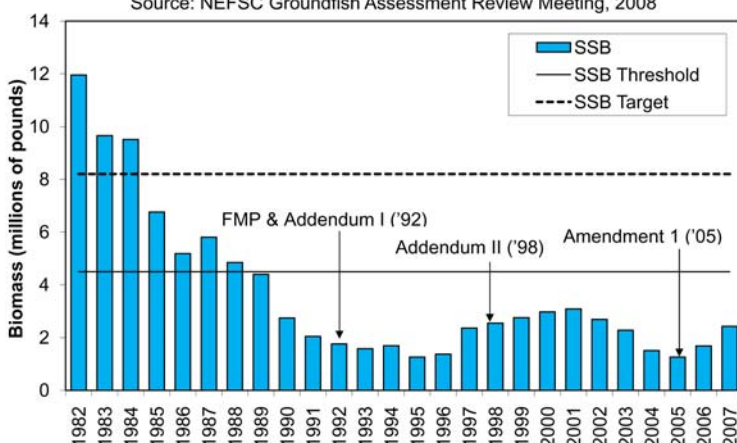
Amendment 13 and Framework 42 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan focus on offshore commercial fisheries (3 – 200 miles) and aim to rebuild overfished fisheries by reducing fishing mortality and minimizing adverse effects on all essential fish habitat. Winter flounder is managed as part of the large-mesh northeast multispecies group employing seasonal closures, gear restrictions, minimum size limits, trip limits, limited access, and days-at-sea restrictions to reduce fishing pressure on the stocks.

are the most productive part of the population, can result in a larger net loss to the population than the landings may suggest. These near shore grounds are also vulnerable to water pollu-

The Commission's Amendment 1, passed in November 2005, focuses on joint management between the Commission and the Council. It is intended to rebuild and then maintain spawning stock biomass at or near target biomass levels by controlling fishing pressure on spawning fish. In addition, Amendment 1 emphasizes the importance of restoring and maintaining essential winter flounder habitat. Specific provisions of Amendment 1 include

Figure 3. Gulf of Maine Winter Flounder Spawning Stock Biomass

Source: NEFSC Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting, 2008



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# ASMFC Spring Meeting May 4 - 7, 2009

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

## Preliminary Schedule

### Monday, May 4, 2009

9:00 AM - Noon Winter Flounder Management Board

1:15 - 3:15 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

3:30 - 6:00 PM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

### Tuesday, May 5, 2009

8:00 - 9:30 AM South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board

9:45 - 10:45 AM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

Noon - 5:00 PM

1:45 - 2:45 PM

3:00 - 6:00 PM

6:30 - 8:00 PM

### Wednesday, May 6, 2009

8:30 - 11:30 AM

Law Enforcement Committee

Commissioner Workshop: Length-Based Stock-Assessment Models 101

American Lobster Management Board

Annual Awards of Excellence Reception

Shad & River Herring Management Board

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## Atlantic Herring Addendum I Approved

The Atlantic Herring Section approved Addendum I to Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sea Herring. Addendum I aims to control fishing effort within the Area 1A by allowing the Section to employ bimonthly, trimester, or seasonal quotas with the flexibility to prohibit landings before June 1. The Addendum also restricts vessels from landing more than once per calendar day.

Quota allocations will be based on the average vessel trip reports from 2000 – 2007. In order to prevent quota overages, the fishery will close when 90 or 95% of a quota has been harvested as is most appropriate for the quota season chosen by the Section. The Addendum provides the Section the ability to dis-

tribute quota underages equally among all remaining periods. Addendum I also requires fishermen to report through a weekly system in order to properly monitor and manage the quotas.

A seasonal quota allocation will be employed for 2009 with no landings before June 1. Nearly three quarters of the Area 1A total allowable catch will be available from June – September with the remainder available from October – December. Seasons will close when 95% of the quota is projected to be harvested.

Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts will set Area 1A quota allocation provisions for 2010, and possibly future years, during a 2009 days out meeting (date to be determined).

Copies of the Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).



## Species Profile: Winter Flounder (continued from page 5)

a maximum 60-day recreational fishing season with 12" minimum size limit and a 10-fish creel limit for the SNE/MA stock; and an 8-fish creel limit and 12" minimum size limit for the GOM recreational fishery. State commercial regulations in both the GOM and SNE/MA specify a 12" minimum size and 6.5" minimum mesh size.

The GARM III results have prompted both the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Commission to initiate measures intended to stop overfishing and rebuild depleted winter flounder stocks. NMFS released a Multispecies Interim Action Proposed Rule (proposed rule) to begin May 1, 2009 and last for one year. The proposed rule includes a large closed area south of Cape Cod, zero possession limits for all SNE/MA winter flounder, and an 18% reduction in days at sea for vessels that catch GOM winter flounder. This one year interim action is designed to stop overfishing on winter flounder and other groundfish species while the

Council finishes developing Amendment 16. Amendment 16 will include permanent measures to address overfishing under the GARM III results and is scheduled to be implemented May 1, 2010.

On February 3, 2009, the Commission's Winter Flounder Management Board initiated the development of an addendum to address overfishing. The Winter Flounder Plan Development Team is developing a draft addendum with options to reduce the fishing mortality as low as possible, including options for zero possession limits, trip limits, size limits, seasons, and measures to prevent an influx of effort into state waters. Draft Addendum I is scheduled to be released for public comment in March/April, with Board review and

### Reflections from the Past

According to Bigelow and Schroeder's "Fishes of the Gulf of Maine," winter flounder was so pervasive in the Gulf of Maine that it was characterized as:

"...the commonest shoal water flounder, and perhaps the most familiar of all the ground fishes of the Gulf of Maine. There is no bay or harbor from Cape Cod to Cape Sable, no inter-island passage, and no stretch of open coast where it is not to be caught, unless the bottom be too smooth and hard, except, perhaps in the very turbid waters at the head of the Bay of Fundy."

consideration of final approval in early May.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).

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## Scup Board Increases TAL to 11.18 Million Pounds for 2009 Fishery

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved an increase to the 2009 scup total allowable landings limit from 7.34 million pounds to 11.18 million pounds, with the commercial quota revised to 8.4 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit revised to 2.6 million pounds (after the research set aside was deducted). This increase is consistent with that taken by the National Marine Fisheries Service for federal waters.

The Board's action is based on the results of a recent review of the scup stock assessment which indicates that the scup resource is rebuilt (population estimated to be 130% of its target biomass) and overfishing is not occurring. The newly estimated allowable harvest, or maximum sustainable yield (MSY), is also significantly higher than previously estimated and represents a potential for greater harvest levels in the future.

While the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Data Poor Workshop, which conducted the review of the scup assessment, found the new long-term estimate of maximum

MSY to be reasonable given the historical evidence from the fishery, it recommended that managers consider a cautious approach in setting quotas. The peer review panel advised that "rapid increases in quota to meet the revised MSY would be unwarranted given uncertainties in recruitment. A more gradual increase in quotas is the preferred approach given the uncertainty in the model estimates and stock status".

Given this advice, the states chose to maintain their recreational management measures for the 2009 fishery. For specific state measures, please contact your state marine fishery agency. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at (202) 289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).



Photo: John Chisholm, MA DMF



## **American Lobster Board Adopts Addendum XII: Addendum Addresses Individual Trap Transferability Programs**

The Commission's American Lobster Board approved Addendum XII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes protocols for the consistent application of individual trap transferability (ITT) programs for the plan's lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs) that implement an ITT program. The measures allow for flexibility to the fishery, meet the conservation objectives of the plan, and ensure that effort does not increase as a result of trap allocation transfers.

"The Addendum has been a long time in coming, having been initiated in late 2005 as a result of Addendum VII, and reflects the hard work of the Management Board, technical representatives, stakeholders, and ASMFC staff," stated Board Chair Brian Culhane of New York. "It will ensure fair and consistent implementation of ITT programs, which were a critical element brought forward by several Lobster Conservation Management Teams during the development their respective effort control plans."

The Addendum addresses four issues, in order to ensure that the various LCMA-specific effort control plans remain cohesive and viable, and that one jurisdiction's interpretation of its effort control plan does not undermine the implementation of another jurisdiction's plan. First, it requires that any trap allocation transfers among state-waters licensed permit holders must occur within the same state. This is to ensure that trap numbers do not increase in a particular state's waters, eliminating any potential problems associated with increasing trap numbers, such as interactions with marine mammals and other fisheries, as well as increases to fishing effort.

Second, the Addendum clarifies certain principles present in the Commission's overall history-based trap allocation effort control plan. These are: (1) A lob-

ster permit and its history cannot be separated. When a permit holder transfers a permit, the fishing history is also transferred; (2) A single fishing entity is considered to have established a single lobster fishing history even if that person was a dual permit fishing holder fishing under state and federal fishing permit; (3) Lobster history accumulated under the dual state/federal permits cannot be divided and apportioned between the permits. If a dual permit holder splits his state and federal permits, the history shall be considered to have gone entirely with one permit or the other but not portions of both; and (4) When any individual transfers (sells) trap allocations from any LCMA, his trap al-

location in all LCMAs (with history based allocations) will be reduced by that same number.

Third, the Addendum modifies the Commission's most restrictive rule first established in Addendum IV. As approved, fishermen will be allowed to place traps in multiple areas but must comply with the most restrictive management measures of all areas fished, including the smallest number of traps for the areas selected.

Lastly, the Addendum establishes additional programs that address issues associated with ITT programs, such as

*continued on page 12*

### **American Lobster Draft Addendum XIV Released for Public Comment: MA/RI, NY and NJ Schedule Hearings for March**

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum XIV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comments. The states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey will be conducting their hearings in late March; visit [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) for more information on those hearings.

Draft Addendum XIV proposes modifications to the Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) 3 trap transfer program, including changes to the conservation tax and trap cap. Specifically, it proposes applying a single conservation tax for partial trap transfers within LCMA 3 (versus a two tiered conservation tax based on the number of traps transferred) and another conservation tax for the sale of a complete fishing operation. It also proposes lowering the trap cap under the transfer program for Area 3 to 2000 (currently set at 2200 traps) in order to prevent permit holders from maximizing their trap allocations through trap allocation transfers and thereby nullifying any potential conservation benefits associated with trap transfers and conservation taxes.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XIV, either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum are available at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM on April 6, 2009 (EST) and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Addendum XIV).



## ACCSP Expands Data Warehouse

### Director Celebrates Milestone

#### ACCSP Expands Data Warehouse

For awhile now, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has been able to provide users with flexible and intuitive queries of recent catch and effort data from the Data Warehouse. Now the Data Warehouse includes historical data reaching as far back as 1950. Previously, the data went as far back as 1980.

The available catch and effort data can be summarized into four categories, with the first three being **annual summaries**, **annual summary by statistical area**, and **monthly summaries by statistical area**. These three categories were supplied by NOAA Fisheries and entered in the Data Warehouse after an “error checking” process by ACCSP. The last category – **Program Partner provided trip-level data and monthly summaries** – is the most recent data and will form the foundation for available data in the years to come.

The winter 2009 status for available catch and effort data in the ACCSP Data Warehouse is as follows:

**From 1950 through 1961** - Annual summaries for Maine (ME), New Hampshire (NH), Massachusetts (MA), Rhode Island (RI), Connecticut (CT), New York (NY), New Jersey (NJ), Delaware (DE), Maryland (MD), Virginia (VA), North Carolina (NC), South Carolina (SC), Georgia (GA), and Florida (FL).

**From 1962 through 1977** - Annual summaries by statistical area for ME through FL.

**From 1978 through 1987** - Annual summaries by statistical area for ME through VA; Monthly summaries by statistical area for NC through FL.

**For 1988** - Annual summaries by statistical area for ME through VA; Monthly summaries by statistical area for NC through GA; Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for FL.

**For 1989** - Annual summaries by statistical area for ME through VA; Monthly summaries by statistical area for NC and SC; Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for GA and FL.

**From 1990 through 1993** - Monthly summaries by statistical area for ME through SC; Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for GA and FL.

**From 1994 through 2003** - Monthly summaries by statistical area for ME through VA and SC; Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for NC, GA, and FL.

**From 2003 through 2006** - Monthly summaries by statistical area for ME through VA; Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for NC through FL.

**From 2007 through 2008** - Program Partner provided trip level data and monthly summaries for ME through FL.

The longer time series of data is currently available to access and ACCSP looks forward to assisting stock assessment scientists and fisheries managers in utilizing the program’s data to make for good decisions.

**Director Celebrates Milestone**  
Michael S. Cahall, Director of ACCSP, was presented a Certificate of Appreciation at

the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Winter Meeting for his ten years of service with ACCSP. Spud Woodward, Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council, presented the award to Mike.

As the Program’s first Information Technology Manager, Mike was instrumental in the development of the Data Warehouse and supporting data collection tools, providing the foundation for the entire program. His successful oversight of the Program’s information technology infrastructure led to his promotion to ACCSP Director in 2007, reflecting the fundamental nature of the program: data collection and management. The staff at ACCSP expresses its sincere appreciation to Mike for all of his hard work and dedication.

#### 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, please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org) or call (202) 216-5690.

#### Upcoming Meetings

*April 7 - 9, 2009:*

Commercial Technical & Information Systems Committees, Four Points by Sheraton, 1201 K Sreet, NW, Washington, DC.

*April 13 & 14, 2009:*

Advisory Committee, Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel, 200 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa, Florida

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

**Erling Berg** -- Erling Berg has stepped down as New Jersey's Governor Appointee to the Commission, having served in that capacity since 2005. Mr. Berg participated on numerous species management boards. He brought to the table a diverse fisheries expertise, having been a commercial fisherman for a good part of his life, as well as a commitment to look out for the interests of the people of New Jersey whether they were recreational or commercial. We thank Mr. Berg for



his service to the Commission and wish him the very best!

**Thomas Fote** -- This winter, New Jersey Governor John Corzine appointed Thomas Fote as the state's Governor Appointee to the Commission. Mr. Fote

has been passionate about fisheries conservation for most of his life. He has been involved with the Commission since the 1980s and was one of the founding members and first Chair of the ASMFC Habitat Committee.

Mr. Fote serves as on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Environmental Federation, Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the Marine Fish Conservation Network, Board of Director for the New Jersey Coast Anglers Association and numerous other organizations. Mr. Fote has a B.A. in Business from Hofstra University as well as an M.B.A. in Marketing and Management from Hofstra University. Welcome aboard, Mr. Fote!

**Senator Andy Gardiner** -- In February, Senator Gardiner was appointed Florida's legislative representative to the Commission. He has been in the State Legislature since 2000, serving in the House of Representatives from 2000-2008 and as House Majority Leader from 2004-2006. He was elected to the Senate in 2008 and serves as Majority Whip for 2008 - 2010. Senator Gardiner received his B.S. in Political Science and Psychology from Stetson University, Florida.



Senator Gardiner's interests include fishing, baseball, and reading. He has been chosen as one of the 50 Most Powerful People for the last four years by *Orlando Magazine*. He is a member or has been recognized by several professional organizations including Central Florida Cooperative Library, Christian Coalition of Florida, Coastal Conservation Association of Florida, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Medical Association, and Florida Outdoor Advertising Association. Welcome aboard, Senator Gardiner!

**Representative. Mitch Needelman** -- This winter, Representative Mitch Needelman stepped down as Florida's legislative representative to the Commission. Representative Needelman served in this capacity since 2003. Representative Needelman brought to the Commission's proceedings over 30 years experience in marine resource conservation and management, having worked for three decades with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as a specialist in law enforcement/media and public relations, as well as serving on the Florida marine patrol. We thank Representative Needelman for his service to the Commission and wish him the very best!

## Spiny Dogfish Board Initiates Smooth Dogfish Addendum

The Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board approved the initiation of Draft Addendum I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. Draft Addendum I will propose measures to allow commercial fishermen to remove smooth dogfish fins at sea and eliminate smooth dogfish recreational possession limits. Finning, the act of cutting off the fins and discarding the carcass at sea, will remain prohibited under all options of Addendum I.

In October 2008, the Management Board eliminated a previously established 1,000 pound commercial trip limit for smooth dogfish due to concerns about the impacts of the trip limit to the commercial fishery. Since that time, commercial smooth dogfish fishermen have indicated that requiring all fins to remain naturally attached to the carcass through landing is impractical for such a high volume fishery. Historically, participants have removed fins at sea in order to keep the meat fresh, maximize hold capacity, and increase processing efficiency. Draft Addendum I will also include measures to eliminate recreational possession limits for smooth dogfish. The Management Board is scheduled to meet in May to review and consider approval of the Draft Addendum for public comment. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, FMP Coordinator, at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).

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

*Return Service Requested*

## **ASMFC Spring Meeting Preliminary Schedule (continued from page 7)**

1:00 - 3:00 PM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Shark Management Board

3:15 - 5:45 PM ISFMP Policy Board

### **Thursday, May 7, 2009**

8:00 - 10:30 AM Executive Committee

10:45 - 11:15 AM ISFMP Policy Board (continued)

11:30 AM - Noon Business Session

Noon Lunch for Commissioners & Proxies

12:30 - 2:30 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

## **American Lobster Board Adopts Addendum XII (continued from page 9)**

management measures to ensure that history-based trap allocation effort control plans in the various LCMAs would be implemented without undermining resource conservation efforts of neighboring jurisdictions or LCMAs. Conservation taxes will be applied to both partial transfers of trap allocations and full business sales once all jurisdictions have allocated traps and implemented the provisions of the Addendum. A database will be developed to track all lobster allocation and trap transfers.

Addendum XII can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at [www.asmfmc.org](http://www.asmfmc.org) under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at [<tkerns@asmfc.org>](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).