



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015*

## John E. Frampton Receives Captain David H. Hart Award

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented John Frampton, Director of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission's 69th Annual Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Commission instituted the "Captain David H. Hart Award" in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The award is named for one of the Commission's longest serving members, who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

Throughout his long and distinguished career in natural resource management, Mr. Frampton has been an advocate and practitioner for building strong personal and professional relationships within the natural resource community. His actions reflect his fundamental belief that such relationships lead to cooperation among state and federal natural resource management agencies and conservation and industry stakeholders, resulting in more effective conservation and management. This spirit of cooperation is one of the founding principles of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

For over three decades, Mr. Frampton has been a tireless champion for legislation and funding benefiting state natural resource management activities, securing millions of dollars for the states to restore and sustainably manage their fish and wildlife resources. In his own state, he secured significant state funds to acquire tens of thousands of acres of land for conservation easements and habitat restoration. He was a guiding force in the development of the National Fish Habitat Initiative, directly benefiting Atlantic coastal states through the significant funding awarded to the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP). This coastwide collaborative partnership strives to accelerate the conservation of habitat for Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fish, and has great potential to restore Atlantic waterways and enhance productivity of many marine fisheries.

Mr. Frampton is a dedicated natural resource manager who has worked tirelessly and effectively for the greater good of fish and wildlife management and conservation along the Atlantic coast and throughout the entire nation. His efforts to elevate the importance of natural resource management have greatly benefitted Atlantic states and have contributed to the betterment of the marine fisheries of the Atlantic coast.



From left: Vince O'Shea, Michael McShane, Robert Boyles Jr., John Frampton, Caroline Rhodes and Malcolm Rhodes

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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 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.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**12/5 - 10:**

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

**12/8 (8:30 A.M. - Noon):**

NEAMAP Board, Holiday Inn Cape Cod-Falmouth Hotel, 291 Jones Road, Falmouth, MA; 508/540-2000.

**12/14 - 16:**

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

### 2011

**1/25 - 27:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harbor-side, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**2/8 - 10:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton New Bern Riverfront, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, North Carolina; 252/638-3585.

**3/3 - 5:**

Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockport, Maine.

**3/7 - 11:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sea Palms Resort & Conference Center, 5445 Frederica Road, St. Simons Island, Georgia; 800/841-6268.

**3/11 - 13:**

New England Saltwater Fishing Show, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, Rhode Island.

**3/20 - 22:**

Boston Seafood Show, Boston Convention Center, Boston, Massachusetts.

**3/21 - 24:**

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; (703) 683-6000.

**4/12 - 13:**

National Fish Habitat Board, Washington, DC.

**4/12 - 14:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Historic Inn of Annapolis, 58 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland.

**4/26 - 28:**

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

## The Chairman's Challenge

*The following remarks were delivered by Chairman Robert H. Boyles, Jr. to the full Commission following his re-election as Chair during the Commission's 69th Annual Meeting in Charleston.*

Thank you for your confidence in me. I look forward to working with you all to address the various challenges our Commission faces. In preparing my Chairman's report, I was struck by the reality that a year has gone by since our last annual meeting, and it has brought us one year closer to our self-selected deadline of 2015 for restoring the stocks under our stewardship.

The Action Plan report before you describes our activities over the past year; we need to be equally attentive to our results. If I were to describe four things I would like to see Commissioners accomplish in the coming year, they would be to:

- Collectively have a clear understanding and agreement on what our job is
- Take action that will move our yellow and red stocks towards green status
- Operate as a group where everyone buys into the mission
- Be consciously building a cadre of leaders prepared to take our place

Most folks around this table are proud of our collective decision to purchase new office space. It reflects the fact that Commissioners had a vision of where they wanted us to be in 10 years, and acted this year to make it happen.

This project originated with considerable uncertainty, a degree of risk, a

burden to the staff, and quite frankly, opposition from some. In the end, the majority came to the conclusion that this action would be in the long-term interest and benefit of our Commission. It was not an easy decision to make nor an easy action to execute. Compared to the value of the fisheries under our cognizance, this was a minor decision. However, it contains an important lesson: our actions and decisions, or lack thereof, will determine where we end up five or 10 years from now.

We face risks from our inaction in fisheries. Besides public criticism voiced at our meetings about this perceived trend, stakeholders are evolving, prepared to use litigation when we fail to meet their expectations regarding our responsibility to protect and restore fisheries. We will argue that there is no basis in law for such challenges, and will expect to prevail.

But in so doing, we run the risk of reinforcing the notion that we are an entity unwilling to act and immune to legal direction to do so. This will leave stakeholders to choose between accepting the status quo or changing the fundamental federal law by which we operate.

In addition, for each stock that moves from yellow to red, each time a board defers action, and each time an ineffective measure is adopted, we lose credibility. It casts doubt on our abilities as fisheries managers and our commitment to our public trust responsibilities.

We now have stocks that are at such low levels that many of us believe they are not capable of recovery. In most cases, these levels have resulted from

decisions made by others not to act. Today, we have stocks that are important to our Commission and our states trending down. Our actions over the next year will determine where those stocks will be in 10 years.

I think we can all agree that we have a great staff at the Commission and, with the Atlantic Coastal Statistics Program on line, better data than our predecessors. We also have a proven governance and compliance process, as well as various stakeholder groups willing to support us. The tools are all in place if we chose to use them. But all of these things, including our new office, mean nothing if we fail to act.

I believe that we have a duty to collectively work together to make the difficult decisions that will enable us to hand off to our successors healthy and abundant stocks; not a longer list of depleted species. If we are not, as a Commission, committed to doing that, then I wonder what it is that we should tell the public, our congressional overseers, and our children when they ask what happened to the fish?

As Chair, I would ask you all to reflect on these words, and in the remaining time we are in Charleston, talk among yourselves about how you can help me and our Administrative Oversight Committee leadership team move forward to address this important challenge.



**Atlantic Herring**  
*Clupea harengus*

**Common Names:** sea herring, sardine, herring

**Species Range:** Virginia to Labrador

**Interesting Facts:**

\* Atlantic sea herring are often confused with river herring. Sea herring spend their entire life at sea, while river herring migrate annually to freshwater to spawn.

\* Atlantic and Pacific herring have been found to produce a burst of sound, called a Fast Repetitive Tick, at night. It is believed that this high-pitched click-like sound is used by herring to signal their location, thereby making it easier to form schools at night. (Source: <http://biologybiozine.com>)

\* After 100 years of operation, the Stinson Cannery of Gouldsboro, Maine, closed its doors in April 2010. It was the last sardine cannery left in the US.

**Age/length at Maturity:** Age 3/9.1”

**Stock Status:** Not overfished and overfishing is not occurring

## Species Profile: Atlantic Herring

### Fishery Ratchets Down as Biomass Declines

#### Introduction

Atlantic herring may be the most important fish in the northeastern United States because of its importance as both prey to a wide array of predator species and product to the fishing industry. Herring form the base of the food web as a forage fish for marine mammals, seabirds, and many fish throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. They are an effective and affordable bait source for lobster, blue crab, and tuna fishermen, and were historically sold by fish canneries as sardines. Whale watching/ecotourism and salt processors are indirectly dependent on a steady supply of herring because whales migrate inshore in pursuit of schooling herring and fishermen buy salt to preserve their fish. Overseas, frozen and salted herring are a valued commodity.

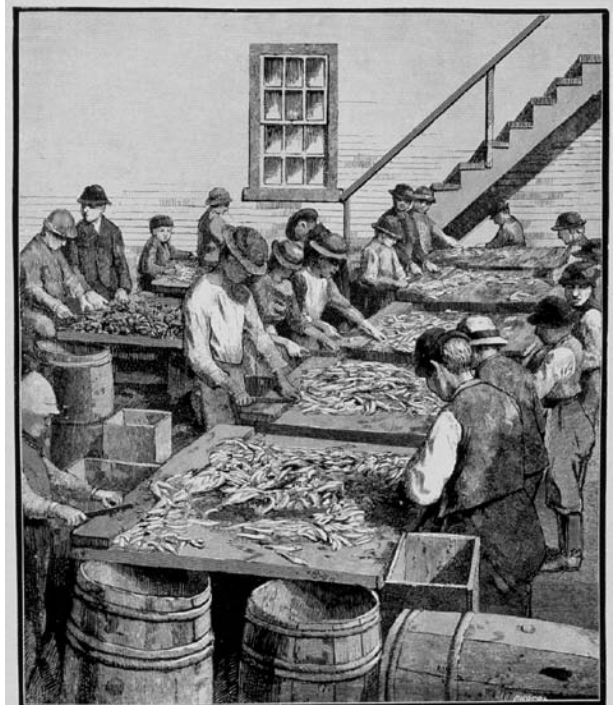
The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section (Section) manages herring in state waters (0 - 3 miles from shore), while the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) regulates federal waters (3 - 200 miles from shore). Complementary state and federal herring management began in 1999 and has continued through subsequent amendments as the fishery management plans (FMP) required adjustments. Both the Commission and Council seek to maintain the resource's high abundance level while also maintaining traditional use patterns in the fishery, allowing for an expanded bait fishery, and protecting herring's role as forage in the Northwest Atlantic ecosystem.

The precipitous decline of river herring stocks in recent years has elevated concern regarding the bycatch of river herring in federal water fisheries for Atlantic sea herring. Both the Commission and Council will be working together to develop a comprehensive monitoring program to assess the extent of bycatch, as well as seek ways to reduce it.

#### Life History

Atlantic herring are oceanic, plankton-feeding fish that occur in large schools and inhabit coastal and continental shelf waters from Labrador to Virginia. Juveniles (called sardines) undergo seasonal inshore-offshore migrations. Sardines are abundant in shallow, inshore waters during the warmer months of the year. Adults (age three and older) migrate south from summer/fall spawning grounds in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank to spend the winter in Southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic.

Herring spawn as early as August in Nova Scotia and eastern Maine, and during October and November in the southern Gulf of Maine,



THE SARDINE INDUSTRY: Children at sardine cannery cutting off the heads and tails, and cleaning small herring for canning. From a photograph by T.W. Smillie. Image courtesy of NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service Historic Fisheries Collection.



and pickled herring for use both as bait and food.

The herring fishery in New England developed in the late 19th century, spurred by the development of the canning industry. The lobster fishery developed about the same time, creating a market for herring as bait. Landings averaged 60,000 metric tons (mt) throughout the late 1890s and early 1900s, and again in the late 1940s

Georges Bank, and Nantucket Shoals. Spawning habitat consists of rock, gravel, or sand bottoms, ranging in depth from 50 to 150 feet. Females produce 30,000 to 200,000 eggs each. Schools can produce so many eggs the ocean bottom is covered in a dense carpet of eggs several centimeters thick. Eggs hatch in 10 to 12 days depending on water temperature. Hatchlings are about 1/4 inch long. In the spring, surviving larvae transform into juveniles, about 1 1/2 inches long. The fish grow to three to five inches in the fall, 10 inches by the fourth year, and may eventually grow to about 15 inches (1 1/2 pounds) at ages 15 to 18 years.

Herring are filter feeders preying entirely on plankton. They usually feed at night following the massive vertical migrations of zooplankton that inhabit deep waters by day and surface waters by night. In turn, they are a very important food source for many species of fish, birds, and marine mammals throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

### Commercial Fisheries

Herring fisheries have existed in Europe for over 1,000 years and in the Northwest Atlantic for about 450 years. Along the coast, aboriginal fisheries were practiced prior to the arrival of 16th century fishermen. During the colonial period, a sizeable herring fishery developed which supplied bait for the cod fisheries that were expanding off the coasts of the U.S. and Canada. By the end of the 18th century, as the U.S. cod fishery extended its range as far as the Labrador coast, the demand for herring as bait increased and by the early 19th century the U.S. was importing salt

and 1950s. An aggressive foreign fishery developed on Georges Bank in the early 1960s, with landings peaking at 470,000 mt in 1968. This excessive harvest led to a collapse of the offshore herring stock. Today, the stock is fully rebuilt with landings having averaged just below 90,000 mt from 2000 - 2009. The majority of these landings are taken from the Gulf of Maine.

Herring are caught commercially using trawls, purse seines, weirs, and stop seines. The weir, a fixed net used in shallow water with strong currents, was the predominant gear until the 1940s. From the 1940s to the early 1960s, weirs and stop seines were the gears of choice, after which time purse seines began to predominate in the fishery. Today, U.S. fishermen almost exclusively use purse seines and mid-water trawls to catch herring. Herring are used as canned sardines, steaks and kippers, and bait in the blue crab, lobster, and tuna fisher-

ies. In addition, some are processed as frozen or salted fish by foreign ships that purchase herring from U.S. fishermen and shore-based domestic plants. Since 2000, the ex-vessel value of commercial herring landings has averaged about \$15 million/year.

Commercial quotas (previously called total allowable catch or TAC) were reduced an average of 40% in 2010. Despite the heavily reduced quotas, preliminary landings indicate that 2010 Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) catch rates were around 15 - 20% of previous years levels. The lower catch rates in Area 1A are puzzling given that management measures remained constant from 2008 - 2010 with the exception of fewer days out (increased landing days) in 2010. Under 2008 - 2009 catch rates, the lower quota should have required fewer landing days to stretch out the supply of herring, but fishermen had trouble catching the entire quota in 2010, even with the additional landing days. There are several theories to explain the low catch rates but no definitive reason has emerged. Managers and scientists will watch 2011 catch rates very closely to see whether the low landings are indicative of a declining stock or an anomaly.

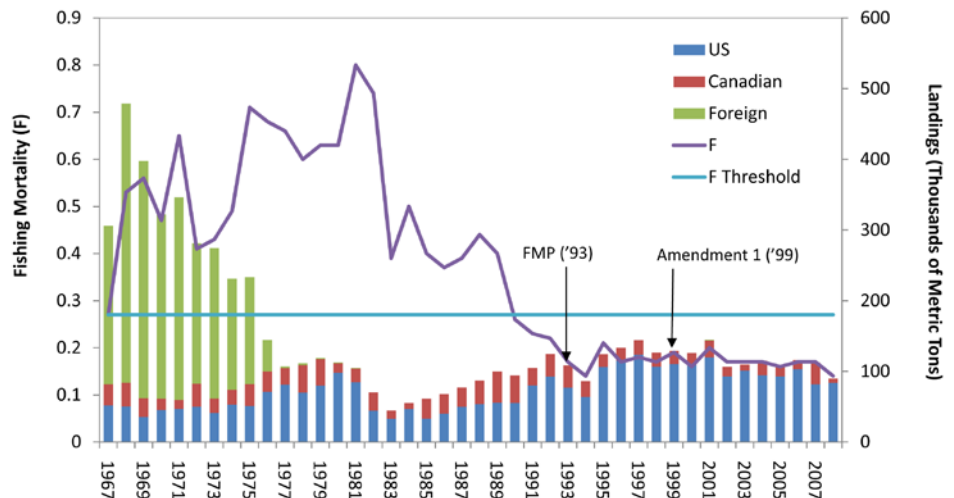
### Stock Status

Atlantic herring are a shared resource across the U.S./Canada boundary in the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank region. A

*continued on page 9*

**Figure 1. Atlantic Herring Fishing Mortality (F) and Landings by U.S., Canadian, and Foreign Fleets**

Source: Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee 2009



## Spiny Dogfish 2011/2012 Fishing Year Quota Set at 20 Million Pounds

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board (Board) approved a 20 million pound quota with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds for the 2011/2012 fishing season (May 1 – April 30). As specified under Addendum II, the quota will be allocated with 58% to states from Maine through Connecticut, 26% to New York through Virginia, and 16% to North Carolina.

Prior to setting the spiny dogfish quota, the Board approved new reference points based on information from the latest stock assessment. They include a target biomass of 351.23 million pounds (159,288 mt), a threshold biomass of 175.62 million pounds (79,644 mt), and a fishing mortality target and threshold of 0.207 and 0.325 respectively.

The 20 million pound quota was set to achieve a level of fishing mortality (F) equal to 75% of the target F and is consistent with recommendations of the Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee. The Technical Committee recommended reducing the target F by 25% to minimize any future drop in biomass. The quota is also consistent with the level recommended by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council for federal waters at its October meeting.

The latest stock assessment information indicates that spiny dogfish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The biomass in 2010 is estimated to be 361.77 million pounds, which is slightly above the target biomass of 351.23 million pounds and is the second year in a row that biomass has exceeded the target. In addition, F was estimated to be  $F = 0.113$  in 2009 which is well below the target (0.207) and threshold (0.325) rates and achieved the F rate as designed. While spiny dogfish have rebuilt, the stock is expected to decrease below the target biomass around 2014 because of record low recruitment from 1997 – 2003. The magnitude of this drop increases with fishing mortality and is projected to occur even if fishing mortality is zero.

The Board also initiated the development of an addendum to explore state-by-state allocation options for the southern management region (NY – NC). With the start of the season scheduled for May 1, the Board will consider approval of the draft addendum for public comment via email correspondence/conference call, with the intent to release it for public comment and state hearings in the winter and final approval at the Commission's March meeting. A press release will announce the availability of the Draft Addendum for public comment and the state hearing schedule once the hearing details have been finalized.

The Board also approved a 33 fish possession limit for sharks in the large coastal sharks (LCS) species group (silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead sharks) for 2011. The Coastal Sharks Technical Committee recommended continuing the 33 fish LCS possession limit in 2011 since it worked reasonably well in distributing the quota in 2010 and is consistent with proposed federal shark specifications.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).

## Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum I Released for Public Comment

The Commission's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board has approved Draft Addendum I to Amendment I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Croaker for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes two changes to the Atlantic croaker management program: (1) changing the management unit to one region (New Jersey to the east coast of Florida), and (2) modifying the biological reference points used to assess stock condition.

Both proposed measures stem from the recommendations of the 2010 benchmark assessment, which indicates that Atlantic croaker is not experiencing overfishing. Based on the findings of the assessment, Atlantic croaker is now considered to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast. The previous stock assessment, which formed the basis of Amendment 1, divided the stock into Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions and assessed the resource separately in the two regions due to difficulty assessing the resource as a single unit. The 2010 assessment used data from both regions to produce a single, coastwide assessment. Draft Addendum I proposes adopting the single stock unit to be consistent with the current science on Atlantic croaker.

Draft Addendum I also proposes modifying the biological reference points (BRPs) used to assess stock condition since the results of the 2010 assessment cannot be compared to the Amendment 1 BRPs, which are specific to the Mid-Atlantic region only. The proposed BRPs are very similar to those in Amendment 1. They use the same definitions for the targets and thresholds (e.g., fishing mortality rate threshold =  $F_{MSY}$ ), but they differ in that absolute estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) are not estimated. Estimates are not given because of uncertainty in the assessment resulting from inadequate data on the magnitude of croaker discards in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. The determination of stock status is thus based on the ratios of F and SSB to their respective target and threshold, which are compared to one.

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## Science Highlight: *SEAMAP-South Atlantic Restores & Expands Research Activities with Increased Funding Nearshore Trawl Survey Builds Data Time Series*

After many years of level funding, the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program-South Atlantic (SEAMAP-SA) recently received a substantial increase in funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that has allowed for some restoration and expansion of its research activities. In the Southeastern U.S., SEAMAP surveys provide the only region-wide, fishery-independent data on economically significant fish and shellfish, and information on the critical habitats that support them.

SEAMAP is a cooperative state/federal program for collecting, managing, and sharing fishery-independent data that is used by fisheries managers, researchers, and the fishing industry. SEAMAP presently consists of three geographical components: SEAMAP-Gulf of Mexico, est. 1981; SEAMAP-South Atlantic, est. 1983; and SEAMAP-Caribbean, est. 1988. The Commission provides administrative support to the SEAMAP-SA component. The South Atlantic has several work groups to coordinate activities for gathering information on species

abundance, critical fish habitat, and the effects of changing environmental conditions: Coastal Survey, Bottom Mapping, Fish Habitat Characterization and Assessment, Crustacean, and Data Management. Another program partner, initiated in 1988 at the request of SEAMAP-SA, is the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise, which is in its twenty-third year of operation to tag striped bass for assessment of population structure and exploitation rates.

Long-term studies are the foundation of SEAMAP. The largest component of SEAMAP-SA survey research is the Coastal Survey conducted by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), which has been sampling in spring, summer, and fall for the last 20 years in shallow waters between Cape Hatteras, NC, and Cape Canaveral, FL. The increased funding has allowed several studies to resume, including diet studies, and age and growth sampling on weakfish, Atlantic croaker, and southern kingfish, with other species to be added shortly. Another survey of SEAMAP-SA is the North Carolina Pamlico Sound Survey, which has been surveying estuarine fish and decapod crustaceans in the Pamlico Sound since 1990, and with the new funds, a biologist has been brought on board for data analysis and management. The Coastal Survey is the only effort that has been supported with SEAMAP funds during level funding; all other SEAMAP projects have remained active through limited state and federal support.

A new effort being undertaken with new funds is coordination on fish assessment and habitat characterization with the Marine Resources Monitoring, Assessment, and Prediction (MARMAP) Program. To complement offshore sampling conducted through the MARMAP survey, the SEAMAP-SA component of the survey would sample nearshore waters year-round, targeting high priority finfish species dependent on live/hard bottom

habitat, including black sea bass, gag and red drum, from Cape Hatteras, NC to Sebastian Inlet, FL. In addition, expansion of offshore site sampling through SEAMAP-SA will result in more complete coverage of the MARMAP sampling regime. Regional fishery-independent sampling through SEAMAP-SA supported surveys will provide essential stock identification and characterization data (geographic distribution, relative abundance) needed to improve overall abundance indices and assessments of southeastern finfish populations, such as red snapper, and fully complement ongoing management and research efforts.

Another new effort possible with the increase in funds is support to South Carolina, Georgia and Florida to continue their red drum longline surveys. This work enables access to important information on the red drum stock for stock assessments as well as information that could be used for coastal sharks assessments in the South Atlantic.

New funds will also support management of all data collected through SEAMAP-SA activities into a SEAMAP Information System, hosted at SC DNR. This data will be web-accessible for SEAMAP-SA partners, managers, researchers, and the public.

Finally, some funds were used to support the Southeast Regional Taxonomic Center (SERTC), which maintains a collection of marine and estuarine animals from the South Atlantic Bight and assists scientists with taxonomic research. SERTC is presently concentrating SEAMAP-SA work on stomach content analysis, and SERTC facilities may serve as a potential sample processing facility for collections generated through research by SEAMAP components. For more information on SEAMAP-SA, please visit [www.seamap.org](http://www.seamap.org) or contact Melissa Paine, SEAMAP-SA Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or [mpaine@asmfc.org](mailto:mpaine@asmfc.org).



Red Drum Longline Survey. Photo courtesy of Bryan Frazier, SC DNR

# Striped Bass Board Approves Addendum II: Coastal Commercial Quotas Remain Unchanged; Juvenile Abundance Index Management Trigger Improved

The Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The Addendum revises the definition of juvenile recruitment failure based on a recommendation from the Striped Bass Technical Committee. The Management Board approved status quo management for the coastal commercial quotas, which were being considered for an increase as part of the Addendum.

"After lengthy deliberation, the sense of the Board was that recent fishery trends do not warrant an increase in fishing mortality, commercial or recreational, at this time," said Board Chair, Jack Travelstead. "The Board also accelerated the assessment schedule, requesting an

update assessment in 2011 prior to the next benchmark assessment in 2013 to more closely track changes in the fishery and the resource."

The proposal to increase the coastal commercial quota by a percentage selected by the Management Board was intended to bring more parity between the commercial and recreational fishery sectors. Although Amendment 6 established management programs for both fisheries based on the same target fishing mortality rate, the coastal commercial fisheries are controlled by quotas whereas the coastal recreational fisheries are managed through possession and size limits. As a result, the recreational harvest has increased with expanding striped bass population levels, and now accounts for approximately 75% of total

harvest. The Management Board opted to maintain the existing coastal commercial quotas for several reasons, including a 66% decline in estimated recreational catch (harvest plus releases) from 2006 to 2009; a 25% decline in estimated striped bass abundance from 2004 to 2008; and several years of below-average production of fish from the Chesapeake Bay. The 2011 assessment update will help to indicate whether these trends are short- or long-term, and if corrective action is necessary to maintain the spawning stock biomass above the target level.

Juvenile abundance indices are an important component of the striped bass monitoring program. Under the manage-

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## Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum I (continued from page 6)

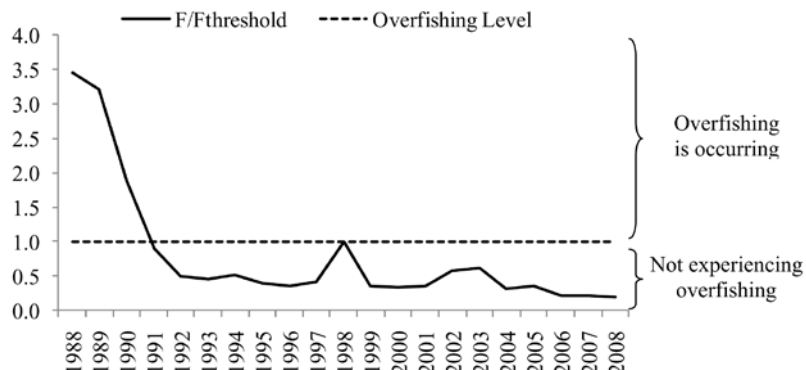
The proposed targets and thresholds are:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{F target} &= 0.75 * F_{MSY} \\
 \text{F threshold} &= F_{MSY} \\
 \text{SSB target} &= SSB_{MSY} \\
 \text{SSB threshold} &= 0.70 * SSB_{MSY}
 \end{aligned}$$

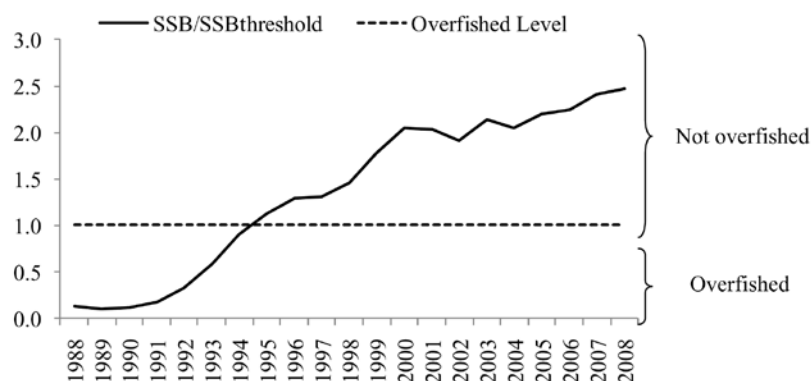
Under the proposal, if  $F/F_{MSY}$  is greater than 1, then overfishing is occurring. If  $SSB/(0.70 * SSB_{MSY})$  is less than 1, the stock is overfished (see Figures 1 and 2). In other words, F must be lower than its threshold, and SSB must be higher than its threshold, or the stock will be considered to be experiencing overfishing or be in an overfished condition, respectively. The targets would still represent the levels that management measures are designed to achieve.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum through written comment. The Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on January 31, 2010 and should be forwarded to Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA 22201-2196; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Atlantic Croaker).

**Figure 1. The ratio of F to  $F_{MSY}$  (the F threshold).** Under the proposed biological reference point, if the ratio is less than 1.0, the stock is not experiencing overfishing.



**Figure 2. The ratio of SSB to  $0.70 * SSB_{MSY}$  (the SSB threshold).** Under the proposed BRP, if the ratio is more than 1.0, the stock is not overfished.



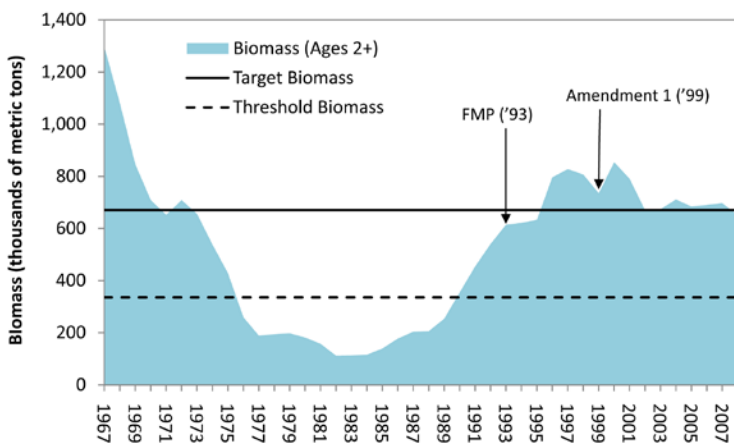


## Species Profile: Atlantic Herring (continued from page 5)

Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC), made up of scientists from the U.S. and Canada, was created to assess the status of the stock throughout its entire range. The 2009 TRAC assessment update estimated biomass at 652,000 mt (slightly below  $B_{MSY} = 670,600$ ) with  $F = 0.14$  (well below  $F_{MSY} = 0.27$ ) in 2008. Limitations to the assessment method included a significant retrospective pattern that overestimated biomass an average of 42% per year and an inability to estimate the probability of achieving a fishing mortality target. Based on the 2009 TRAC report, herring are not overfished nor is overfishing occurring.

**Figure 2. Atlantic Herring Biomass for Ages 2+**

Source: Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee, 2009



### Atlantic Coastal Management

Two new management documents, the Commission's Addendum II and the Council's Amendment 4, will become effective in late 2011 and early 2012, respectively. These documents are generally administrative, establishing new specification definitions with an updated process to set the specifications, but do not change the general management scheme. Amendment 4 was initiated by the Council to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act (MSA) which requires Regional Fishery Management Councils to establish annual catch limits (ACL) and accountability measures (AM). The Section developed Addendum II to ensure consistency between the Council's and

Commission's specifications processes and definitions/acronyms.

Specific changes include specifying an ACL (instead of optimal yield) that is distributed to management areas that are now called sub-ACLs (previously TAC). In addition to changing some terms, five obsolete specifications relating to foreign fishing effort are removed by Addendum II and Amendment 4. They are joint venture processing (JVP), total joint venture processing (JVpt), internal waters processing (IWP), total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF), and the reserve. All were included as part of the specifications because foreign vessels historically

landed a significant amount of herring in U.S. waters. Domestic vessels now have sufficient capacity to land the entire herring allocation and JVP, JVpt, IWP, TALFF, and the reserve are consistently set at zero. The most significant measure in Addendum II and

Amendment 4 is the establishment of AMs. Under the AM provision, a quota overage will result in a deduction in that area's quota that is equal to the amount of the overage.

Management in state and federal waters is identical in most respects. There are four management areas, 1A, 1B, 2, and 3, each of which are assigned a quota or sub-ACL. The Commission and Council have worked cooperatively to set identical quotas since the creation of the management areas in the late 1990s. The overall ACL, which is allocated to these areas, is set based on maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and accounts for management and scientific uncertainty. Calculating the

ACL using maximum sustainable yield allows fishermen to harvest the maximum amount of herring while leaving enough for fish, birds, and marine mammals that depend on herring for food.

There are a few differences between state and federal management as well. The Council implemented a federal waters mid-water trawl ban from June 1 – September 30 beginning in 2007. The Commission has implemented month-long spawning closures in the Gulf of Maine and "days out" of the fishery in Area 1A. The days out provision prohibits directed commercial herring fishing during certain days of the week that are chosen by the Commission's Section members from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts (the states adjacent to Area 1A). Days out is the primary effort control measure of this fishery and is intended to allow the sub-ACL to be landed throughout the entire season. The Commission also allocates the Area 1A sub-ACL seasonally through Addendum I. Under Addendum I, the Section can allocate the Area 1A sub-ACL bi-monthly, in trimesters, or in two seasons and may prohibit landing prior to June 1. The Area 1A allocation is specified annually and intended to make herring available during times of peak demand.

In November 2010, the Section initiated development of Draft Addendum IV that would allow small mesh bottom trawls and small purse seine vessels additional landing days on days out of the fishery. The draft addendum is intended to allow smaller day-boats an equal amount of fishing days as larger vessels that can hold fish for several days and will include an analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed action to river herring stocks. The draft addendum will be available for Section review and possible approval in January. If approved, it will be released for public comment in the winter, with final Section approval slated for March.

*continued on page 11*



## ACCSP Funds Marine Fisheries-Dependent Data Projects for 2011

### ACCSP Welcomes New Staff

#### ACCSP Funds Marine Fisheries-Dependent Data Projects for 2011

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has allocated nearly \$2 million to its state and federal partners for new and ongoing projects to improve data for coastal fisheries in 2011.

- **Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR)** received funds to continue portside bycatch sampling and commercial catch sampling of the Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*), Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), and Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) fisheries. Also, DMR received funds to continue to manage dealer and harvester reporting in Maine.
- **Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries** received funds to continue collecting trip-level reports for all Massachusetts commercial permit holders.
- **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management** received funds to maintain and coordinate fisheries-dependent data feeds from the state to ACCSP.
- **New York Department of Environmental Conservation** received funds to continue and expand its fishery-dependent data collection and biological sampling efforts.
- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection** received funds to further develop biological characterization and implementation of the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) for its commercial fisheries.
- **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources** received funds to continue instituting a collection

method for ACCSP commercial module in South Carolina.

- **The ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee** received funds to increase intercept sampling levels for the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) for-hire methodology of charter boat and headboat fisheries along the Atlantic coast (New Hampshire through Florida).
- **Maryland Department of Natural Resources** received funds to expand online commercial reporting through SAFIS to various commercial fisheries.
- **The ACCSP Commercial Technical Committee** received funds to validate, verify, update, and document conversion factors used to determine whole weight of commercial landings from reported units of Atlantic finfish and shellfish species.
- **The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission** received funds for a new project to collect biological and discard data for commercially and recreationally important species from the small mesh otter trawl fisheries of the Mid-Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia) and Rhode Island using at-sea observers.

The Program received approximately \$1.5 million as the annual operational administrative grant.

#### ACCSP Welcomes New Staff

In October, Timothy Sartwell joined the ACCSP staff as a Data Coordinator. As a Data Coordinator, Tim will be working closely with all of the ACCSP Partners to coordinate the submission and merging of data sets and the maintenance of the ACCSP databases. Additionally, he will provide data to partners and other interested individuals via custom data requests and attend stock assessments and conferences.

Since June 2009, Tim held the position of ACCSP Maryland State Coordinator, working to expand electronic reporting and improve data organization. He was also an intern for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission during the summer of 2008 working on a variety of issues including lobster management.

Tim spent time in Louisiana where he assisted the Louisiana Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Rescue Program in New Orleans, LA. In New Orleans, he helped receive, treat, and rehabilitate sea turtles impacted by the BP Gulf Oil Spill. Many of the turtles he cared for are now being released back into the wild after their rehabilitation is complete.

Tim received his Bachelor of Science from the University of Maryland at College Park in Marine Biology in 2007. In 2009, he graduated with his Master's in Coastal Environmental Management from Duke University. Welcome aboard, Tim!

#### 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 contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at [info@accsp.org](mailto:info@accsp.org).



## Species Profile: Atlantic Herring (continued from page 9)

Recent questions about river herring (alewife and blueback herring) bycatch in the Atlantic herring fishery has prompted the Council to include catch/bycatch monitoring requirements and measures to reduce interactions with river herring stocks in Draft Amendment 5. Measures to reduce these interactions may include a river herring catch cap for the Atlantic herring fishery and/or area closures in river herring 'hot spots'. Limitations with the data has made the development of these measures difficult, but the monitoring component of Amendment 5 will help collect valuable data to better understand any interactions and adapt future management accordingly. The Section also places a high priority in protecting river herring and has tasked the Atlantic Herring Technical Committee (TC) to work with the Council's Plan Development Team (PDT) to see what role the Commission can have in developing a comprehensive monitoring program. Shoreside monitoring programs are a cost effective way to collect catch/bycatch data and are a vital part of a coastwide monitoring program. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Atlantic Herring FMP Coordinator, at 703/842-0740 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

## Striped Bass Addendum II (continued from page 8)

ment plan, six states are required to conduct juvenile sampling surveys, and the resulting indices of abundance are analyzed for recruitment failure. "Recruitment" is the appearance of young-of-the-year fish in the nursery areas. When recruitment failure occurs in a given year, there may be reduced abundance and availability of fish from that year class when surviving fish become available to the fisheries. Management action is prompted when recruitment failure occurs for three consecutive years in any of the surveyed areas.

The revision results in a fixed value to determine recruitment failure in each surveyed area rather than a value that changes from year to year. Additionally, the data points used in the calculation have been standardized, which will result in a more conservative evaluation of recruitment failure in several surveys. Under the revised definition (as with the original definition), three consecutive years of recruitment failure has not occurred in any area, and no management action has been triggered based on the juvenile abundance indices. Copies of the Addendum will be available on the Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under Breaking News.

## ASMFC Comings & Goings

### Staff

**Danielle Brzezinski** – This December, Danielle Brzezinski will be joining the Commission staff as its newest FMP Coordinator. Danielle has a Master of Science in Marine Biology and Marine Policy from the University of Maine; her Master's thesis was on the "Broader implications of voluntary participation in fisheries management." She also has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Denison University in Granville, Ohio. Before coming to the Commission, Danielle was a Knauss Sea Grant Fellow, providing staff assistance to Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). Welcome aboard, Danielle!

**Nichola Meserve** – In November, the Commission said goodbye to Nichola Meserve as she left to further her career working with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). Nichola accomplished a great deal in her four years coordinating the Commission's management programs for striped bass, weakfish, and the South Atlantic species group (red drum, Atlantic croaker, spot, spotted seatrout and Spanish mackerel). She was the lead staff for four benchmark stock assessments (striped bass, Atlantic croaker, red drum and weakfish), as well as the management responses to those assessments and their respective peer reviews. Although she will no longer be with the Commission, Nichola will be continuing her dedication to improving Atlantic coast stocks with her new position in Boston with the Massachusetts DMF. We wish Nichola all the best with her future endeavors!

**Linda Schwab** – In October, after 29 years with the Commission, Linda Schwab announced her retirement. She began her career in 1981 as secretary, working closely with then-Executive Director Irwin Alperin and other technical staff. For the past 16 years, Linda has been the Meetings and Membership Coordinator, overseeing the many Commission meetings and aiding and orienting new Commissioners as they become part of the Commission process. She was the first staff member to reach the impressive 25 year milestone for service to the Commission. During her retirement, Linda plans on enjoying her days relaxing, being with her cats, and taking many long-awaited trips to visit old friends. We will miss her smiling face and wish her all the best for a long and joyful retirement!



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