



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

Harry Mears Receives Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award



From left: Awards Chair Jack Travelstead (VA), Hart Award Recipient Harry Mears, Chair George Lapointe (ME) and Executive Director John V. O’Shea

The Commission presented Harry Mears, Director of State, Federal and Constituent Programs for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Region, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission’s 67th Annual Meeting in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

The Commission instituted the 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 was dedicated to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

Mr. Mears has exemplified the ideals of the award throughout his career in fisheries management. For three decades, he has been an invaluable asset to the Commission process, serving as the lead NMFS representative on several Commission species management. His leadership and guidance have allowed NMFS to provide administrative and regulatory support to the Commission’s Interstate Fisheries Management Program.

Mr. Mears has been responsible for the federal management component of the American lobster fishery. His contributions to the American Lobster Management Board exemplify the benefits of effective state-federal partnership. He is also known for his long-standing involvement in the Commission’s Management and Science Committee, on which he prioritized research needs and scientific review processes critical to the Commission’s decision-making.

As the long-standing Director of State, Federal and Constituent Programs Office, he is the face of federal financial assistance for fisheries grants and contracts. These grants have supported the activities of the Commission and its member states on an annual basis, providing critical funding for interjurisdictional fisheries research and management activities. Under his direction, the Commission and its member states have received in excess of \$41 million in federal grants awarded under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, and Anadromous Fish Conservation Act since 1988.

Mr. Mears is a prominent and respected contributor to the Commission’s programs and activities. His expertise and dedication to interjurisdictional fisheries management has provided a solid foundation for the successful alignment of federal and state fishery management activities. His ability to analyze and work through the often complex and contentious issues that exist within the interstate fishery management process epitomizes the true spirit of collaborative and interjurisdictional natural resource management. He has clearly devoted his career to the promotion of sustainable coastal fisheries and is a dedicated proponent of facilitating the cooperative management of these important resources, consistent with the goals of the Commission and his agency.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and 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

11/18:

ASMFC/MAFMC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Monitoring Committee and Advisory Panels, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

11/18 - 20:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Ferncroft, Danvers, Massachusetts.

12/3 & 4:

ASMFC Interstate Shellfish Transport Committee, Baltimore, Maryland.

12/5:

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel, Urban Forestry Center, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

12/9 - 11:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Gurney's Inn, 290 Old Montauk Highway, Montauk, New York.

12/10 & 11:

NEAMAP Nearshore Survey Peer Review, Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel Virginia Beach, 36th & Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

2009

2/2 - 5:

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia.

2/10 - 12:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

2/11 - 13:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Seaview Marriot Resort and Spa, 401 South New York Road, Galloway, New Jersey; (609) 652-1800.

3/2 - 6:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Jekyll Island Club Hotel, 371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, Georgia; (800) 535-9547.

4/7 - 9:

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

4/14 - 16:

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

Leading the Way Forward

Our Commissioners have approved a new 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, culminating a year of extensive and thoughtful planning. The new plan charts a course for how the Commission intends to achieve its Vision of restoring Atlantic coast fish species. It provides a solid foundation for the 15 Atlantic states to work cooperatively to achieve their shared goal of stock rebuilding and sustainable resource management.

There are a number of noteworthy components of the new Strategic Plan. It recognizes that back in 1998 Commissioners committed to a 17-year timeline to rebuild stocks (or have restoration well in progress), and now that deadline is fast approaching. It identifies Commissioner values and discusses the driving forces likely to affect Commission activities. The plan describes the broad policies of how the Commission will pursue its Mission and Vision. Finally, it includes a list of eight major goals along with specific strategies to address the key issues related to these goals.

Key themes appearing throughout the plan are the commitment to accountability and the critical need for the states to cooperate in order to achieve results. Commissioners have identified the values which will guide their actions over the next five years. These include effective stewardship; forging a collective vision for the future; honesty and integrity; courage to make difficult decisions; and the commitment to support those decisions. There are also values reflecting Commissioners' intent to respect everyone involved in the process, an acknowledgment of freedom and flexibility to solve problems creatively, and a dedication to learning and growth.

The plan outlines a number of important driving forces influencing fisheries management, especially pressures on fisheries resources. The Commission has tools to respond to situations where stock status and health are being impacted by harvest levels (fishing mortality). Non-fishing activities, such as climate change and loss of habitat, are likely to have impacts on fish productivity and stock abundance and need to be considered while setting harvest levels.

The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) recognizes the inherent value of the states working together and provides the federal legislative basis for the Commission's management process. The Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act (MSRA) of 2007 strengthens requirements for fed-

eral managers to end overfishing and to restore depleted stocks. The Commission has an obvious interest in supporting these MSRA goals, while maintaining the flexibility that has made ACFCMA so effective.

There will be increasing demands for the use of science in the fisheries management process. Evolving principles related to ecosystem-based approaches to management will put greater demands on scientific data collection and advisory systems. Continuing cuts in state budgets will make the states more reliant than ever on federal support and will drive the need for efficiencies and validation of priorities.

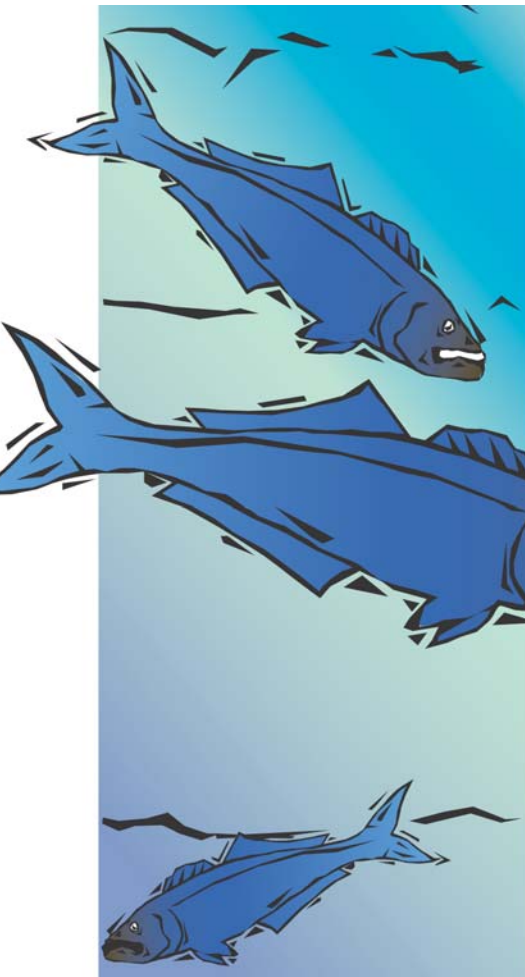
A changing internal environment at the Commission poses challenges and opportunities as well. Retaining institutional knowledge is a challenge as long-serving Commissioners retire. Replacing them are new Commissioners who bring fresh perspectives and energy into the process. They will want to build on the successes of those who came before them.

The new plan also acknowledges several broad policies. These include a focus on the long-term benefits of conservation, the value of proactive management, and the importance of defining success of fishery management plans in terms of specific measures and timelines. The policies also underscore a commitment to create and strengthen partnerships as a means to leverage resources and improve results.

Broadly stated, Commissioners have committed to the following eight goals:

- Rebuild depleted stocks and maintain recovered ones
- Strengthen the use of fisheries science
- Improve stakeholder compliance
- Protect and restore fisheries habitat
- Strengthen public support
- Represent the states' collective interests
- Enhance learning and growth
- Efficiently manage the Commission's business affairs

In addition to a complete description of these goals, the new plan includes specific strategies to achieve these goals. You can find the full plan on our website at www.asmfc.org. After reading it, I hope you will conclude that our Commissioners have provided clear direction of how they intend to achieve their Vision of healthy, self-sustaining stocks of Atlantic coast species. Hopefully, a goal with which we all can agree.



Species Profile: Bluefish

Joint Plan Restores Premier Fighting Fish

Introduction

Bluefish are one of the most sought after recreational species along the Atlantic coast. In the late 1970s, anglers petitioned the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to develop a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Bluefish to address concerns over the potential for harvest of bluefish by tuna purse seiners. The Bluefish FMP, developed in the late 80s, is the first management plan developed jointly by an interstate commission and regional fishery management council. As a result of harvest restrictions imposed under Amendment 1 (1998), bluefish are rebuilding. The 2007 stock status review estimates stock biomass at 330 million pounds, above the target biomass of 324 million pounds.

Life History

Bluefish are a migratory, pelagic species found throughout the world in most temperate, coastal regions, except the eastern Pacific. Bluefish migrate seasonally, moving north in spring and summer as water temperatures rise and moving south in autumn and winter to waters in the South Atlantic Bight. During the summer, concentrations of bluefish are found in waters from Maine to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. In winter they tend to be found offshore between Cape Hatteras and Florida. Bluefish generally aggregate by size in schools that can cover tens of square miles of ocean, equivalent to around 10,000 football fields.

Bluefish feed voraciously on their prey, eating almost anything they can catch and swallow. Over 70 species of fish have been found in their stomach contents, including butterfish, mackerel, and lobster. Razor sharp teeth and a shearing jaw movement allow bluefish to take large bites, which increases their maximum prey size. Bluefish live for up to 14 years and may exceed lengths of 39 inches and weights of 31 pounds.

Bluefish reach sexual maturity at age two and spawn offshore between Massachusetts and Florida. Discrete groups spawn at different times and are referred to by the season in which they spawn: spring-spawned cohort and summer-spawned cohort. Recent research has also identified a fall-spawned cohort, demonstrating an expansive and prolonged spawning season. The cohorts mix extensively throughout their range and probably comprise a single genetic stock.

Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Bluefish are caught along the entire Atlantic coast. They are popular with recreational anglers, no doubt due to their aggressive feeding habits and their spirited fight. According to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, recreational harvest averaged 11 million fish annually from 1981 to 2007 and total catch averaged 18.5 million fish for the same time period. Since Amend-



Photo credit: Captain John McMurray, www.nycflyfishing.com

Bluefish

Pomatomus saltatrix

ASMFC Management Area:
ME - FL

Common Names: snapper, baby blue, choppers, elfs, tailors

Interesting Facts:

* **Voracious feeders, bluefish are known to have taken a nibble out of surfers' legs.**

Largest Recorded: 31 pounds, 12 ounces

Oldest Recorded: 14 years

Age/Length at Maturity: 2 years/14.9 - 20.1 inches.

Age/Length at Recruitment: 1 year/9.3 - 11.1 inches

FMP Rebuilding Goals:

* **Biomass Threshold (1/2 BMSY) = 162 million pounds**

* **Biomass Target = 324 million pounds**

Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing not occurring

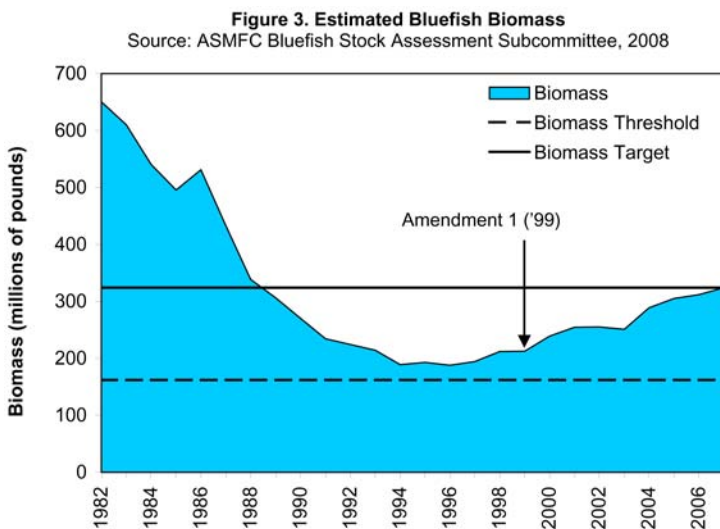
ment 1 was implemented in 1999, recreational catch has generally increased. The proportion of the catch that is released alive has increased from an average of 33% prior to the implementation of Amendment 1, to an average of 64% after the Amendment came into effect (see Figure 1).

Commercial fishermen target bluefish using a variety of fishing gear including trawls, gillnets, haul seines, and pound nets. Commercial harvest peaked in the 1980s, with the highest recorded harvest totaling almost 16.5 million pounds (1981). Currently, the commercial fishery is managed under a state quota system and landings have ranged between 6.9 and 8.7 million pounds (see Figure 2). In 2007, commercial landings reported by the National Marine Fisheries Service totaled 7.4 million pounds.

Stock Status

The most recent stock status information indicates that bluefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring (Figure 3), based on the biological reference points developed in the 2005 stock assessment. State and Northeast Fisheries Science Center data show a decreasing trend in fishing mortality, an increasing trend in population biomass, and an increasing trend in population numbers. Population abundance estimates show a general increase in overall abundance since 1997. Abundance peaked in 1982 at 176 million fish, declined to 57 million fish in the mid-1990s and has been on the rise since.

A number of research needs were identified during the 2005 stock assessment, including increased collection of age data, improved estimates of discard mortality, and initiation of tagging studies to improve understanding of migration and distribution.



changes in the fishery or the resource. During the rebuilding period, the target F for the next fishing year will be set at the level specified in the schedule or the level estimated for the most recent year, whichever is lower. The stock is expected to reach its rebuilding target by 2010.

Figure 1. Recreational Bluefish Catch
Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2008.

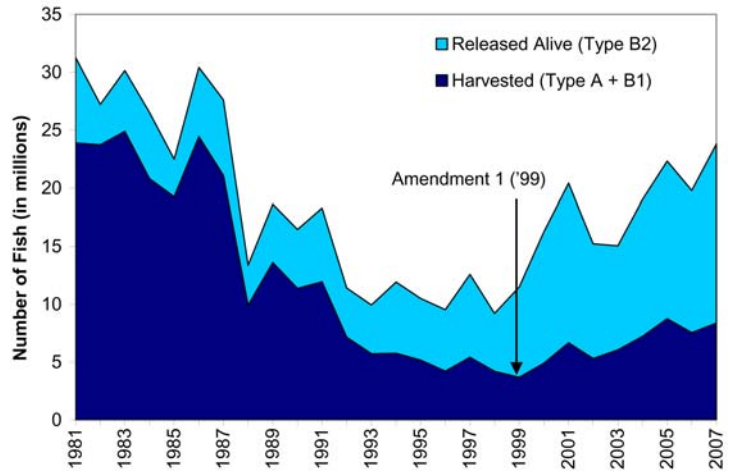
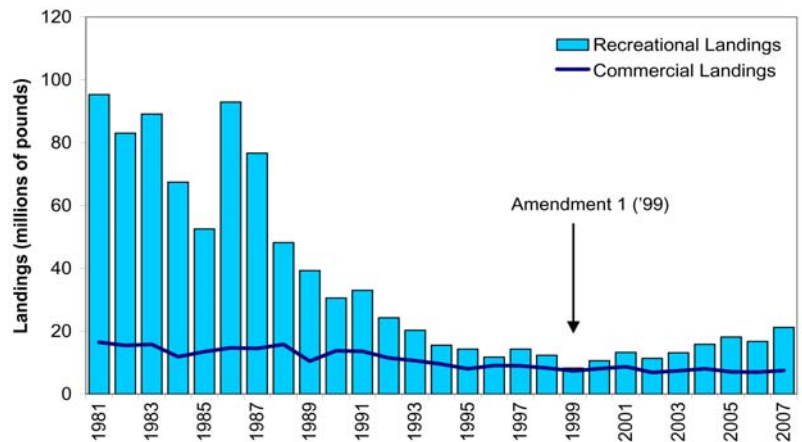


Figure 2: Commercial and Recreational Bluefish Landings
Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2008



Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

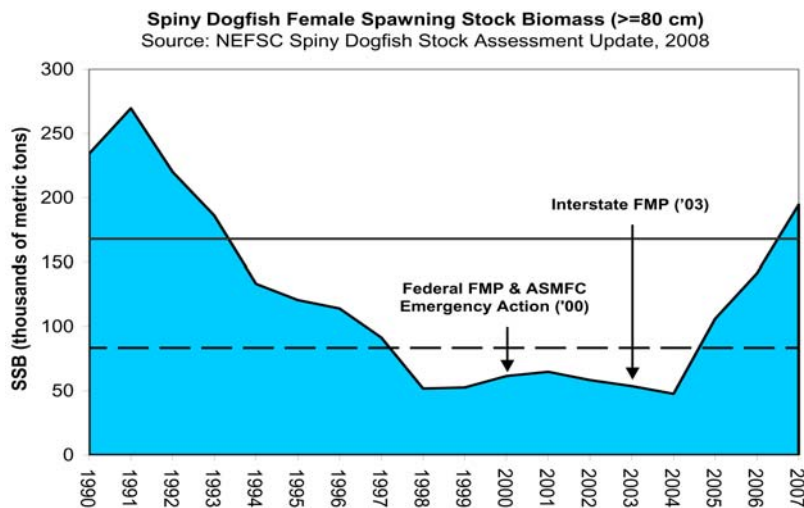
The Commission and Council approved Amendment 1 to the FMP in 1998. Amendment 1 allocates 83 percent of the resource to recreational fisheries and 17 percent to commercial fisheries. However, the Commission and Council can increase the commercial quota up to 10.5 million pounds if the recreational fishery is projected to not land its entire allocation for the upcoming year. The commercial fishery is controlled through state-by-state quotas based on historic landings from 1981-1989. The recreational fishery is managed using a 15-fish bag limit.

Amendment 1 established a rebuilding schedule that sets a target fishing mortality (F) value to achieve a biomass that will support the maximum sustainable yield by year 2010, while providing the Commission and Council with the flexibility to modify the management program based on

Spiny Dogfish Board Sets 2009/2010 Fishing Year Quota at 12 Million Pounds

On October 22, 2008, the Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board approved a 12 million pound quota with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds for the 2009/2010 fishing year (May 1 – April 30). Under the newly approved 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.

The 2008 New England Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) assessment update indicates that the spiny dogfish biomass is no longer overfished, with the 2008 estimate of spawning stock biomass (194,600 mt) exceeding the target biomass of 168,000 mt (see Figure). Further, the most recent estimate of fishing mortality for spiny dogfish stock indicates that overfishing is not occurring.



Total removals in 2007 were approximately 12,136 mt corresponding to an F estimate of 0.1104, well below the overfishing threshold of $F = 0.39$ and essentially equivalent to $F_{rebuild} = 0.11$. Among the sources of removals, U.S. commercial landings comprised 3,524 mt, Canadian commercial landings were 2,328 mt, U.S. commercial discards were 6,247 mt, of which U.S. recreational dead discards were 861 mt.

While the stock is considered rebuilt, the assessment update contains a number of caveats. These caveats include: a size frequency of the female population that is concentrated between 75 and 95 cm with very few fish above 100 cm or below 70 cm; low numbers of juvenile male and female dogfish that imply that the population will fluctuate over time decreasing around 2017; a continued skewed sex ratio; and the use of assumptions about pup survivorship and selectivity of gear. After reviewing the assessment update, the Technical Committee recommended that the Board take a precautionary

continued on page 12

Spiny Dogfish Board Approves Addendum II

At its October meeting, the Board also approved Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Dogfish. The Addendum includes measures from both Draft Addenda II and III that were released for public comment throughout September and early October.

Addendum II uses the regional management approach from Draft Addendum II and includes an allocation for North Carolina similar to options contained in Draft Addendum III. Under Addendum II, the annual quota will be divided regionally with 58% allocated to the states of Maine to Connecticut, 26% allocated to the states of New York to Virginia, and the remaining 16% allocated to North Carolina. The Board allocated a specific percentage to North Carolina because spiny dogfish are not available to their fishermen until late into the fishing season when most of the quota has already been harvested. The North Carolina allocation will allow fishermen and processors to plan fishing operations based on a specific amount of dogfish.

Regional overage paybacks were also included in the addendum to maintain the conservation goals of the plan. Any overage of a region and/or state quota will be subtracted from that region/state the subsequent fishing year.

Addendum II will be applied retroactively to the 2008/2009 fishing season which has an annual quota of 7,940,776 pounds after adjustments for overages. Under Addendum II, states from Maine to Connecticut may harvest 4,605,650 pounds, states from New York to Virginia may harvest 2,064,602 pounds, and North Carolina may harvest 1,270,524 pounds. The northern states (ME – CT) have already harvested their entire allocation and their fishery will remain closed until the beginning of the 2009/2010 fishing season.

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

ASMFC Presents Annual Award of Excellence to John Carmichael

Mr. John Carmichael of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council was presented the Commission's Annual Award of Excellence at its 67th Annual Meeting in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

"Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve our fisheries," said ASMFC Chair, George D. Lapointe, of Maine. "Today, we honor John Carmichael for his scientific, technical and advisory contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries."

Mr. Carmichael has participated in the Commission process for over fifteen years. He currently works for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, where he has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR), the stock assessment peer-review process used by the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, and the Commission to improve the quality and reliability of fishery stock assessments in the US Southeast.

Mr. Carmichael began his career in fisheries at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. After receiving a master's degree at North Carolina State University, he came to work for the Commission as a Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, and tautog. In his three years as Plan Coordinator, he skillfully oversaw plan amendments for tautog, scup and black sea bass, setting the bar high for future FMP Coordinators with his outstanding work ethic and keen attention to detail.

Next, Mr. Carmichael returned to work for a state resource agency, this time lending his talents to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries as a stock assessment biologist. He developed stock assessments for a variety of species, including striped bass and river herring. He represented the state on the Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee, which he chaired for two years. He earned especially high accolades for his river herring assessment.

During his time with the South Atlantic Council, he has continued to be in-



involved with the Commission as a member of the Commission's Assessment Science Committee, including chairing the committee from 2004-2006. Throughout his career, Mr. Carmichael has consistently demonstrated the expertise and work ethic needed to put together complex stock assessments and the ability to effectively communicate assessment methodologies and results to both managers and constituents. These traits have not only gained him the respect of his peers and colleagues but also have helped to advance the public's understanding of fisheries stock assessments.

The Commission established the Annual Awards of Excellence in 1998 to recognize the important contributions of individuals to the success of the organization.

Atlantic Herring Section Initiates Addendum to Address Effort Control in Area 1A

The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section approved initiation of an addendum to explore additional options to control harvest in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine). Five specific measures will be considered for inclusion in the final draft: (1) monthly or bimonthly quotas with payback and carry over; (2) determination of landing and fishing days; (3) no fishing prior to June 1; (4) timely reporting of state-registered landings; and (5) restricted harvest of juvenile fish.

Currently, effort in Area 1A is controlled through a days at sea restriction. However, a 25 percent decrease in the Area 1A total allowable catch and a federal mid-

water trawl ban from June 1 – September 30 have significantly changed the fishery since Amendment 2 implementation, limiting the overall effectiveness of the days at sea restriction to control harvest and effort. The new addendum will seek to identify additional management tools to better control effort in the fishery.

The Section will seek input from its Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, and the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee on the five measures and provide guidance to the Plan Development Team at the next Section meeting, scheduled for February 2009.

States Schedule Hearings on Draft River Herring Amendment

Atlantic coastal states have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for River Herring. The dates, times, and locations of upcoming meetings.

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

December 2, 2008, 6 PM

Wiscasset High School
272 Gardiner Road
Wiscasset, Maine

Contact: Terry Stockwell, (207) 624-6553

December 8, 2008, 6PM

Ellsworth High School
299 State Street
Ellsworth, Maine

December 11, 2008, 6PM

Univ. of Maine Machias Science Center
9 O'Brien Avenue
Machias, Maine

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

December 1, 2008, 6PM

Plymouth Radisson
180 Water Street

Plymouth, Massachusetts

Contact: Melanie Griffin, (617) 626-1528

December 2, 2008, 6PM

Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

November 18, 2008, 6PM

URI Narragansett Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium

215 South Ferry Road

Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Phillip Edwards, (410) 789-0281

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

December 2, 2008, 7PM

Bureau of Marine Resources Headquarters
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, New York

Contact: Steve Heins, (631) 444-0433

December 8, 2008, 7PM

Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve

256 Norris Point Way

Staatsburg, New York

Contact: Andy Kahnle, (845) 256-3072

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

November 17, 2008; 6PM

Charles City Government Administrative Building
10900 Courthouse Road
Charles City, Virginia

Contact: Jack Travelstead,
(757) 247-2247

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

November 18, 2008, 6:30PM

College of Albemarle
1208 North Road Street
Room FC121B/C

Elizabeth City, North Carolina

Contact: Sara Winslow, (252) 264-3911

The Draft Amendment has been developed in response to widespread concern regarding the decline of river herring stocks. While many populations of blueback herring and alewife, collectively known as river herring, are in decline or remain depressed at stable levels, lack of fishery-dependent and independent data makes it difficult to ascertain the status of river herring stocks coastwide. Between 1985 and 2004, commercial landings of river herring dropped by 90 percent from 13.6 to 1.33 million pounds. In 2007, Commission member states reported river herring landings of approximately 1.1 million pounds. In response to declining stocks within their own waters, four states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and North Carolina—have closed their river herring fisheries. River herring stocks are a multi-jurisdictional resource occurring in rivers and coastal waters. River herring bycatch continues to be a significant concern. Preliminary analyses indicate that, in some years, the total bycatch of river herring species by the Atlantic herring



Photo courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Dept. of Commerce

fleet alone could be equal to the total landings from the entire in-river directed fishery on the East Coast.

The Draft Amendment proposes a suite of management measures to address these concerns and ensure the survival and enhancement of depressed stocks or the maintenance of presently stable stocks. The Draft Amendment proposes mandatory data and bycatch monitoring provisions, as well as options to close fisheries by river system or establish a coastwide moratorium on the river herring fishery. Specific commercial measures include area closures, escapement provisions, and landings reductions by river systems, as well as limited access. Recreational measures include recreational license/permit, limiting recreational harvest by the days of the week, coastwide creel limit, gear restrictions, and area or seasonal closures by river system.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Amendment 2, either through attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmf.org under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on January 1, 2009** and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, FMP Coordinator, 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject: River Herring).

American Lobster Board Approves Draft Addendum XII for Additional Public Comment

The Commission's American Lobster Board approved Draft Addendum XII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for an additional round of public comment. The Draft Addendum XII proposes the establishment of protocols for the consistent application of trap transferability programs for the plan's lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs).

Since its initial release for public comment in March 2008, the Draft Addendum was substantially modified by eliminating the option that would allow for trap transfers between states. This is to ensure trap numbers do not increase in a particular state's waters. Increasing trap numbers could cause a burden to a state or agency concerning marine mammal interactions, interactions with other fisheries and increases to fishing effort. As a result of this change, the Board decided to release the document for additional public comment before taking final action.

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, Draft Addendum XII proposes to do three things. First, it would seek to clarify certain principles present in the Commission's overall history-based trap allocation effort control plan. Second, it would reconsider the Commission's most restrictive rule as stated in Addendum IV. Third, it would establish further 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.

The goal of the Draft Addendum is to provide for fair and consistent implementation of individual trap transferable (ITT) programs that 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 transfers. Addendum VII specified that an ITT program would be established. Trans-

ferability was a critical element brought forward by the Area 2 Lobster Conservation Management Team in developing the Area 2 effort control plan outlined in Addendum VII.



Photo courtesy of Trisha Cheney, ME DMR

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XII. Copies can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by calling (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on December 1, 2008** 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 tkerns@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Staff:

Kate Taylor -- Kate Taylor joined the Commission staff in September as the newest Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Atlantic sturgeon, American shad & river herring, American eel and bluefish. Growing up in a coastal community in Massachusetts, Kate never was far from the sea. Her passion for ocean conservation has led her to work with various organizations including the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the New England Aquarium, and Environmental Defense. She has a Master's in Environmental Management from the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, where she focused on fisheries interactions with endangered species and also earned a certificate in geospatial analysis. Kate received her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from the University of San Francisco, where she conducted research on the reintroduction potential of Central California Coast Coho Salmon in a Bay Area tributary. Welcome aboard, Kate!





ACCSP Announces Milestone with FWCC Data

Releases Major Revisions to SMS, SAFIS

ACCSP Announces Milestone with FWCC Data

In September 2008, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) marked a milestone with the most recent upload of trip-level dealer reports from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) into the ACCSP Data Warehouse.

ACCSP began uploading the nearly 6.8 million computerized trip level dealer reports from Florida in 2001 and works continuously with FWCC to transfer the reports each month. During the entire transfer process ACCSP and FWCC work to ease data conversion to provide the most accurate information for the ACCSP Data Warehouse.

These reports represent the oldest and largest trip level dealer report set in the ACCSP Data Warehouse, reaching back to 1986. Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina have provided trip summary dealer reports dating back to 1980 (see Table 1).

Noteworthy, FWCC began collection trip level reports from the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of Florida in 1986. Virginia was next to implement a trip level reporting system in 1993, and was soon followed by North Carolina in 1994.

It was not until 2004 that electronic trip-level dealer reporting was mandated for federal dealers. In response, ACCSP developed the Standard Atlantic Fish-

eries Information Systems (SAFIS) for its state and federal partners to integrate the collection and storage of fisheries data on the Atlantic coast.

SAFIS is currently comprised of three components: Electronic Dealer Reports (eDR), Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting (eTRIPS) and the SAFIS Management System (SMS). eDR is a web-based application for collecting data, such as condition and price, from the dealers. eTRIPS is the web-based application used for collecting the vital catch and effort data from fishers. SMS is the web-based application providing administrative tools to SAFIS.

All information entered into these three components of SAFIS is available through the ACCSP Data Warehouse after an error checking process to ensure the most accurate information. In September 2008, ACCSP released a major revision to SMS along with an updated ACCSP website.

ACCSP is looked upon as a trusted source of fisheries data and shares information with many of its constituents and partners, including Gulf Fisheries

Information Network (FIN), NOAA Fisheries Service, as well as many state and regional fisheries management agencies.

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coast wide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For more information, please contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at ann.mcelhatton@accsp.org or visit www.accsp.org or call (202) 216-5690.

Table 1. Years of Catch and Effort Data Available by State

STATES	COMMERCIAL CATCH (POUNDS AND VALUE)	RECREATIONAL CATCH/EFFORT
Maine to Virginia	1994 – 2006: NMFS monthly summaries 2007: Partner provided trip level	1981 - 2007 (MRFSS)
North Carolina	1980 - 1993: NMFS monthly summaries 1994 - 2007: Partner provided trip level	1981 - 2007 (MRFSS)
South Carolina	1980 - 2003: NMFS monthly summaries 2004 - 2007: Partner provided trip level	1981 - 2007 (MRFSS)
Georgia	1980 - 1988: NMFS monthly summaries 1989 - 1999: Partner provided monthly summaries 2000 - 2007: Partner provided trip level	1981 - 2007 (MRFSS)
Florida	1980 - 1985: NMFS monthly summaries 1986 - 2007: Partner provided trip level	1981 - 2007 (MRFSS)

Melissa Paine Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

For nearly two and a half years, Melissa Paine has promoted the Commission's Vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015" through her critical support to the Commission's key scientific committees, two fishery-independent data collection programs, and stock assessment review processes. Her efforts have ensured that scientific advisors are fully engaged in the Commission process, essential fishery data is collected, disseminated and used, and stock assessment schedules are well balanced and timely. In recognition of these accomplishments, Melissa was named Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of 2008. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

As Scientific Committee Coordinator, Melissa provides lead staff support to the Commission's Assessment Science Committee, Management and Science Committee, Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, and Multispecies Technical Committee, as well as the committees associated with both the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program-South Atlantic and the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP). Over the last year, she has worked with these groups to revise the Commission's protocols for benchmark stock assessments; prioritize research needs for all Commission-managed species; complete a horseshoe crab economic assessment; and coordinate a peer review of the NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Survey, to be conducted in December. Melissa also provides a critical link between the Commission's Science and ISFMP Programs, facilitating effective coordination and development of the Commission's stock assessment activities.

Melissa is a true team player who approaches her tasks with a cheerful and professional attitude that motivates coworkers and committee members alike. She has a Master's in Marine Science from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and a Bachelor of Science from the University of California at San Diego. As an Employee of the Quarter, she received a \$500 cash award, a small gift, and a letter of appreciation to be placed in her personnel record. In addition, her name is on the Employee of the Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Melissa!



ASMFC American Eel Board Approves Addendum II

The Commission's American Eel Management Board approved Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel. In essence, the Addendum maintains status quo on state management measures and places increased emphasis on improving the upstream and downstream passage of American eel. The states will revisit management measures upon completion of the American eel stock assessment in 2010.

The Board chose to delay action on management measures in order to incorporate the results of the upcoming 2010 stock assessment which will present new and updated information on American eel

stock status, including the long-term young-of-the-year index being conducted by the states. In addition, the Board received substantial public comment and advice from its Advisory Panel that further restrictions on American eel harvest would significantly impact fishermen.

The Addendum will be available in early November and can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at

www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or ktaylor@asmfc.org.



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Spiny Dogfish Board Sets 2009/2010 Fishing Year Quota at 12 Million Pounds (continued from page 6)

approach and set a quota based on $\text{Frebuild} = 0.11 = 12$ million pounds. After considering the assessment update and Technical Committee advice, the Board agreed with the recommendation for the 2009/2010 quota.

The Technical Committee recommended status quo possession limits at a maximum of 3,000 pounds, noting that under the 3,000 pound possession limit, target fishing mortality rates have not been exceeded and fishermen have been able to harvest the entire quota. The Technical Committee urged that possession limits should be set at a level that minimizes discards. Qualitative evidence has demonstrated that discards are associated with both high and low possession limits.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Monitoring Committee re-

viewed the best available science in late October and has forwarded its recommendations to the Council for consideration. The Council is likely to take action on recommendations at its meeting in December. The Council's recommendation will then be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for consideration and final approval.

The Board also reconsidered its previous action regarding the 1,000 pound commercial trip limit for smooth dogfish. In August 2008, the Board voted to implement a 1,000 pound trip limit to keep landings from increasing without having a negative impact on fishermen. After review, the Board found that 1,000 pound trip limits would have a

large impact on fishermen because it would eliminate the directed smooth dogfish fishery. To address the problem, the Board removed possession limits for smooth dogfish while monitoring landings for significant increases. In the case that landings increase by 25% relative to the previous three years, the Board will review and consider adjusting smooth dogfish specifications accordingly.

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

