



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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

ASMFC Approves Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks

In August, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The FMP addresses the management of 40 species, including smooth dogfish, and establishes a suite of management measures for recreational and commercial shark fisheries in state waters (0 – 3 miles from shore).

Coordinated state and federal management is essential to establishing healthy self-sustaining populations of Atlantic coastal sharks. Many species are depleted and vulnerable to collapse if fish-

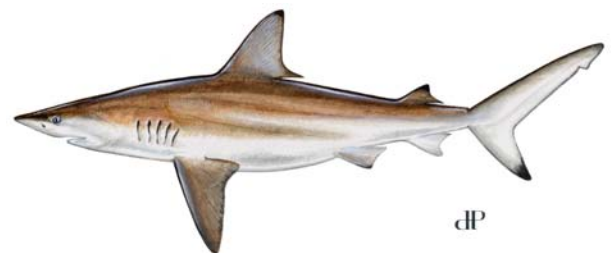
ing pressure continues as it has in recent years. Most of these sharks utilize state water coastal estuaries and bays as pupping grounds and nurseries. The FMP seeks to protect pregnant females when they are concentrated in these areas to give birth.

Prior to the FMP, there was inconsistent application of shark regulations at the state level. Some states mirrored federal regulations while others had less stringent provisions. Implementing the complementary plan will not only help the stocks rebuild by controlling fishing pressure but will also increase enforceability throughout the species management area.

The FMP includes management measures for smooth dogfish and will offer the first coastwide management of that species off the Atlantic coast. Smooth dogfish are not managed in federal waters and the FMP will control harvest through state landing restrictions.

The FMP establishes a seasonal closure to protect pregnant female sharks and a requirement that fins must remain attached through landings; these measures apply to both recreational and commercial fisheries. Recreational management measures include a prohibition on the harvest of severely depleted species, size limits, and authorized gear. Commercial management measures include spe-

cies groupings (such as prohibited and research only); the opening and closing of fisheries concurrent with federal actions for small coastal, large coastal and pelagic species groups; a smooth dogfish quota; seasons, landings restrictions, possession limits, gear restrictions and bycatch reduction measures; state commercial license/permit requirements; display and research permit exemptions; and federal dealer permit requirements.



Initial commercial shark specifications for the 2009 fishing season are a 33 fish possession limit for large coastal shark species and a 1,000 pound possession limit for smooth dogfish with no quota. State water fisheries for any shark species will close when NOAA Fisheries closes the fishery in federal waters.

The Plan will be available in September and can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

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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

10/7 (9 AM - 4 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina.

10/7 - 9:

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

10/7 - 9:

ACCSP Operations and Advisory Committees, Mulberry Inn, 601 East Bay Street, Savannah, Georgia.

10/8 (8 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Croaker and Red Drum Aging Workshop, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina.

10/9 (9 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC Red Drum Technical Committee, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina.

10/11 - 15:

4th Annual National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration: Creating Solutions Through Collaborative Partnerships, Rhode Island Convention center, Providence, Rhode Island.

10/14 - 16:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Ramada Inn, 1701 South Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina; 252-441-2151.

10/17 (9 AM - 5 PM):

2008 Northeast Regional Tagging Symposium, University of New Hampshire campus in Durham.

10/19 - 23:

ASMFC 67th Annual Meeting, Atlantic Sands Hotel and Conference Center, 101 North Boardwalk, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; 800/422-0600.

11/8 - 20:

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

12/9 - 11:

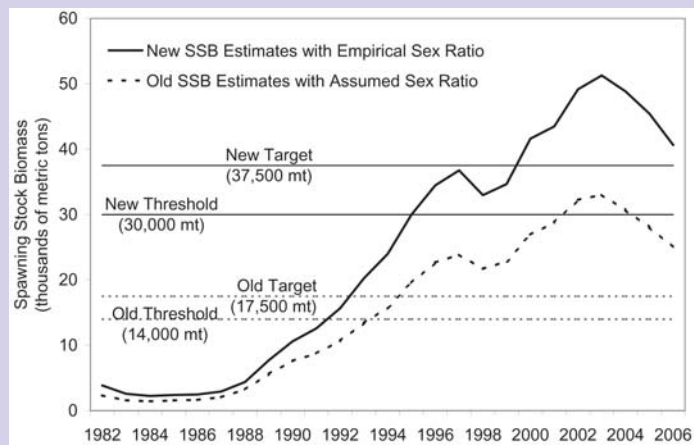
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Gurney's Inn, 290 Old Montauk Highway, Montauk, New York.

The Science Behind Striped Bass Management: Good and Getting Better

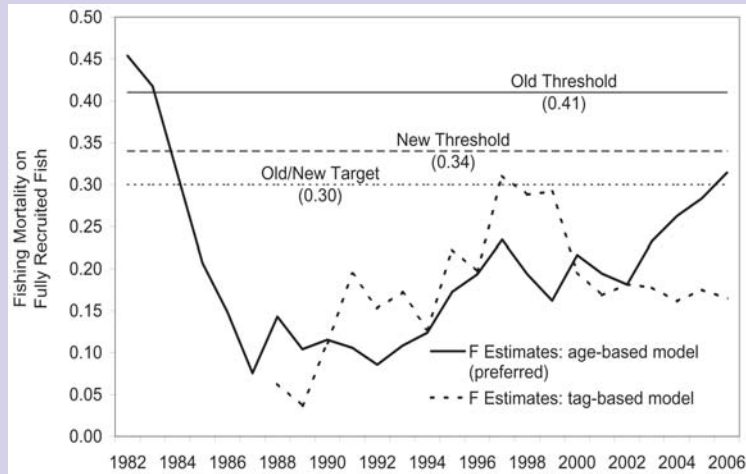
Few would argue with the collective success of the states in restoring Atlantic striped bass. Both the biomass and age structure of the stock have been fully restored, resulting in a large population providing great economic and social benefits on a sustainable basis to coastal communities. The most recent peer reviewed benchmark stock assessment for striped bass confirmed the health and abundance of this stock.

In addition to validating the assessment work, the review panel advised that the biological reference points used to determine overfished and overfishing status be updated to reflect the new assessment data. The panel also recommended that the female spawning stock biomass (SSB) estimates be recalculated with an empirical sex ratio. In response, the Commission recently approved new estimates of the fishing mortality threshold and the female SSB target and threshold established in Amendment 6, as well as improved estimates of female SSB for 1982-2006. With these new estimates, the status of striped bass remains not overfished and not experiencing overfishing.

Amendment 6 defines the female SSB threshold as the level when the stock was declared restored in 1995, and the female SSB target as 125 percent of the threshold. The old threshold and target are based on data from the 2001 assessment, while the new threshold and target are based on data from the 2007 assessment, incorporating an empirical sex ratio. Both sets of female SSB estimates shown in the graph to the right are from the 2007 assessment. However, the new set incorporates the revised sex ratio.



Amendment 6 defines the F threshold as F_{MSY} , and the F target based on the plan's objective to maintain an age structure for long-term sustainability. Again, the old threshold is based on 2001 assessment data, while the new threshold is based on 2007 assessment data. The review panel preferred the age-based model estimates to the tag-based model estimates for comparison to biological reference points. The 2006 estimate of F from the age-based model is expected to decline below the target with the addition of future years of data.



In plain terms, the new assessment approach and reference points will provide even more reliable scientific advice. This should allow managers to better respond to changes in population size, further ensuring sustainable management of this important species.

The science supporting striped bass management is one of the strongest of any species managed along the Atlantic coast. It is based on a long-standing commitment by the states and federal agencies to data collection and the refinement of assessment methodologies. It serves as a powerful example of what we can achieve together to restore all Atlantic coast fish species. Hopefully, a goal we can all agree upon.



Summer Flounder
Paralichthys dentatus

ASMFC Management Area:
MA - NC

Interesting Facts:

* **Left-eyed flatfish (both eyes on left side of its body when viewed from above with the top fin facing up).**

* **Begin with eyes on both sides of its body; the right eye migrates to the left side in 20 - 32 days.**

* **Called chameleons of the sea because of their ability to change color to match the bottom on which they are found**

Age at Maturity: 50 % mature by age 1 (9.8") for males and age 1.5 (11") for females.

Largest Recorded: 24.3 lbs, 38.25" (Bradley, NJ in 2007)

Stock Status: Not overfished and overfishing not occurring

Current FMP Rebuilding Goal: Scheduled to be rebuilt by 2013

Species Profile: Summer Flounder

Positive Assessment Results Yield Higher Quotas

Introduction

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board set the 2009 the total allowable landings for summer flounder at 18.45 million pounds, an increase of 2.68 millions pounds from 2008. The initial commercial quota is 11.07 million pounds and the recreational is 7.38 million pounds. The increase is a direct result of data reported at the 2008 June Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) and Peer Review. Owing to a new assessment model, the biological reference points were lowered resulting in a positive turn in the stock status. Summer flounder is no longer overfished and is not experiencing overfishing, but is not yet rebuilt.

Life History

Summer flounder are found in inshore and offshore waters from Nova Scotia, Canada to the east coast of Florida. In the U.S., they are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic region from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Fear, North Carolina.

Summer flounder usually begin to spawn at age two or three, at lengths of about 10 inches. Spawning occurs in the fall while the fish are moving offshore. Spawning migration is linked to sexual maturity, with the oldest and largest fish migrating first. As in their seasonal migrations, spawning summer flounder in the northern portion of the geographic range spawn and move offshore (depths of 120 to 600 feet) earlier than those in the southern part of the range. Larvae migrate to inshore coastal and estuarine areas from October to May. The larvae, or fry, move to bottom waters upon reaching the coast and spend their first year in bays and other inshore areas. At the end of their first year, some juveniles join the adult offshore migration.

Adults spend most of their life on or near the sea bottom burrowing in the sandy substrate. Flounder lie in ambush and wait for their prey. They are quick and efficient predators with well-developed teeth allowing them to capture small fish, squid, sea worms, shrimp, and other crustaceans. A great fishing technique to take advantage of their ambush behavior is to fish close to bottom with moving bait.

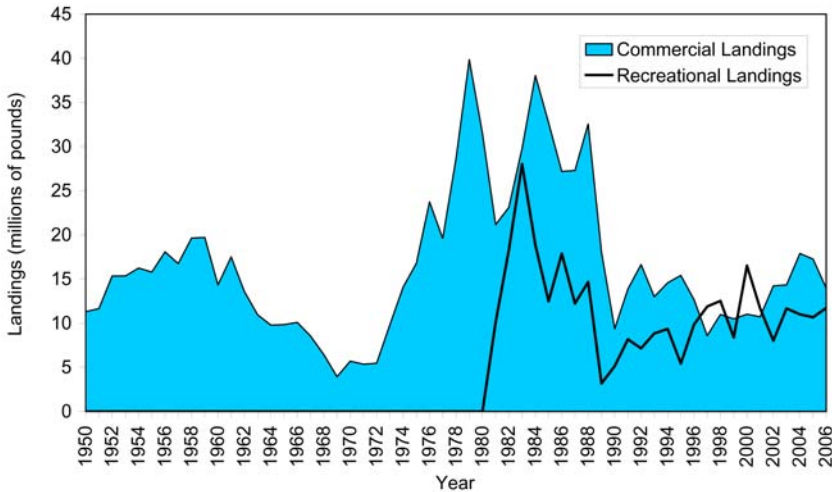
Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Summer flounder are one of the most sought after commercial and recreational fish along the Atlantic coast. Using baseline data from 1980 to 1989, the current plan allocates the summer flounder quota on a 60/40 percent basis to commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively. This period was chosen because the data represent the most complete and accurate landings information available for both commercial and recreational fisheries prior to the implementation of coastwide management measures.



Photo courtesy of Paul Caruso, MA DMF

Figure 1. Commercial and Recreational Summer Flounder Landings
 Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service,
 Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD



Two major commercial trawl fisheries exist — a winter offshore and a summer inshore. Summer flounder are also taken by pound nets and gillnets in estuarine waters. Throughout the 1980s, commercial landings ranged from 21 to 38 million pounds. By 1990, landings reached a low of nine million pounds and have since fluctuated between nine and 17 million pounds. In 1993, the coastwide quota was implemented for the first time, setting a commercial landings limit of 12.35 million pounds. Commercial quotas have since ranged from 9.46 to 18.18 million pounds. Commercial landings (which are limited by the quota) have ranged from 8.81 million pounds to 18.17 million pounds since 1993 (see Figure 1). 2007 commercial landings were estimated at 9.95 million pounds. Commercial discards, estimated from fishery observer data, accounts for five to ten percent of the commercial catch, assuming a discard mortality rate of 80 percent.

A highly prized food fish, summer flounder are one of the most popular recreational fish on the Atlantic coast. Anglers catch summer flounder from the shore, piers, and boats with hook and line. From 1980 through 2004, recreational landings varied widely from a high of 38 million pounds in 1980 to a low of three million pounds in 1989. Starting in 1993, quotas were implemented for the recreational fishery. From 1993 to 2007, landings have ranged from 5.4 to 16.5 million pounds. 2007 recreational landings are estimated at 9.8 million pounds, 3.13 million pounds over the harvest target. In 2007, the states of New Jersey, Virginia, and New York landed the highest number of summer flounder. Recreational discards have recently accounted for 10 to 15 percent of the total recreational catch, assuming a discard mortality rate of 10 percent. Combined commercial and recreational landings were 19.97 million pounds in 2007.

Stock Status

The most recent peer review of the summer flounder assessment was the SAW 47 in June 2008, at which the Southern Demersal Working Group presented an updated benchmark assessment to the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee. The working group

Q&A on the New Summer Flounder Assessment

The following is based on a document developed by Jessica Coakley of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

1. What is the new rebuilding goal for summer flounder?

The June 2008 peer review (SAW/SARC 47) set the rebuilding goal at 132 million pounds of spawning stock biomass (the amount of fish in a stock that are able to reproduce), the current spawning stock size is about 72% of the biomass goal. The assessment also indicates that once this goal is achieved sustainable catches would be higher than catches at the current population size, and that rebuilding can occur on schedule (by January 1, 2013), given continued success in staying at or below annual commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits.

2. Have rebuilding targets been set too high in the past?

No, but since 1999 the targets have been declining. However, none of the targets has ever been achieved. Targets often change over time as fishery scientists improve models and methods, and as new data are available on how the stock responds to ecosystem conditions (grows, produces young, dies) and fishing rules intended to end overfishing and rebuild the stock.

3. Have harvest quotas and limits been set too low in the past?

No. The quotas and limits have been set consistent with the assessment advice, and have been exceeded in most years since 1982. In 2007, overfishing was not occurring for the first time since 1982. The 2008 assessment suggests that initial quotas and limits for 2009 may be set at the same level or even slightly higher than in 2008 without compromising rebuilding goals if 2008 quotas and limits are not exceeded. In August, the Commission set the 2009 total allowable landings for summer flounder at 18.45 million pounds.

4. Are we overfished or overfishing?

No, but the stock is not yet rebuilt and fishing harvests need to stay within the annual limits to ensure that it will be.

5. How do we assess the fish population?

The population is modeled, much as the U.S.

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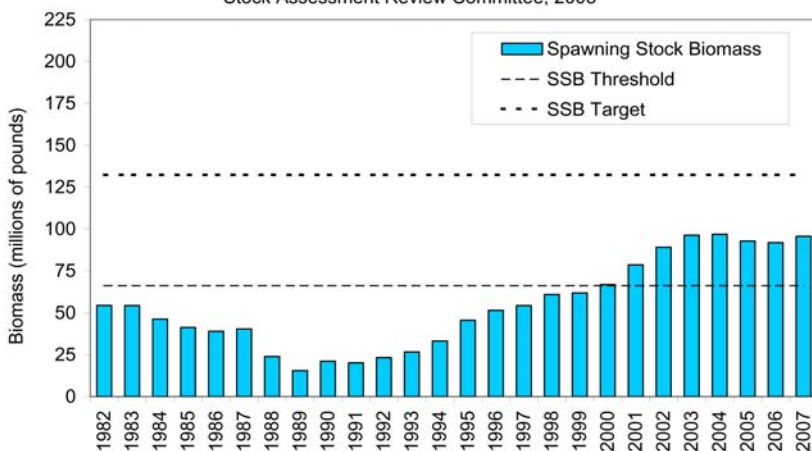
Species Profile: Summer Flounder (continued from page 5)

proposed changing models from ADAPT VPA to ASAP, a statistical catch at age model. With the same inputs and underlying assumptions, these models produced similar results. ASAP was selected because it provides assessment modelers with techniques to characterize the stock in greater detail. A new value for natural mortality (M) was used, changing it from an age-aggregated M of 0.02 to an age-specific schedule of M with a mean of 0.25. The biological reference points were revised to reflect changes in the input data and assessment model.

The new reference points were changed from the old threshold spawning stock biomass (SSB) of 98.559 million pounds to the new threshold of 66.2 million pounds. The old target SSB was set at 197.118 million pounds and is now set at 132.4 million pounds. The fishing mortality (F) also changed with F threshold now set at $F_{35\%}=0.31$ and F target set at $F_{40\%}=0.255$. A stock is not considered rebuilt until it SSB is at or above the SSB target.

Relative to the new reference points the stock is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing, but is not rebuilt. F has been declining since the 1990s. In 1996, it dropped below 1.0 for the first time since management began. F is estimated to be 0.288 in 2007, below the threshold. SSB declined in the 1980s and began to increase in the 1990s. In 2007, SSB is estimated to be 95.6 million pounds or 72 percent of its target (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Summer Flounder Spawning Stock Biomass
Source: Summary Report of the 47th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee, 2008



Since 1982 average recruitment (the number of juvenile fish that will be able to reproduce that year) has been 41.6 million fish. This largest class was in 1983 at 81.6 million fish and the lowest was in 1988 at 12.8 million fish. The 2007 year class is estimated to be just below average at 40 million fish (see Figure 3).

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Q&A on the New Summer Flounder Assessment (continued from page 5)

Census Bureau models human populations using similar data—population size at age, growth rates, age at maturity, reproductive potential and success, life span, and removals by deaths. The summer flounder stock assessment model uses widely-accepted and commonly-used fishery science principles to analyze the population size. The data used have been collected annually since 1982 from fish caught (recreational and commercial) and fish sampled in the ocean (taken on research surveys). Summer flounder is recognized as one of the most intensively sampled stocks off the Northeast coast.

6. Why are the 2008 assessment results different from those in 2006?

Primarily because of a more refined way of attributing natural mortality, the addition of data on stock performance in 2006 and 2007, and better success in 2007 in reducing mortality caused by fishing. The assessment also used a different model and included other data updates (such as, average weights of fish in the population); however, these changes were less influential on the results.

7. How do we “check” the models?

By conducting a benchmark assessment such as the June 2008 SAW for summer flounder. A working group of fishery scientists conducts a thorough evaluation of available data, methods and models, and selects those that best represent the summer flounder population. This work is then “peer reviewed” by a group of independent experts. The summer flounder assessments have been peer-reviewed 17 times in the last 24 years. The peer reviews have validated assessment results and helped improve stock assessment methods and modeling.

8. What change in the assessment had the greatest effect?

Revising the natural mortality rate from a constant 0.20 for all age groups to a rate that varies by age. Natural mortality is now figured as higher at younger ages, when fish are smaller and more vulnerable to natural mortality (e.g., predation and disease), and decreases at older ages. The average of this set of age-specific natural mortality rates is 0.25 and results in a lower rebuilding goal than in the last assessment.

ASMFC Shad and River Herring Board Releases Draft River Herring Amendment for Public Comment and Review

In August, the Commission's Shad & River Herring Management Board approved sending forward Draft Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for River Herring for public review and comment. It seeks input on proposed requirements for population and bycatch monitoring, as well as commercial and recreational management measures. It is anticipated that the majority of coastal states will be conducting public meetings on the Draft Amendment; information on those meetings will be released once they become finalized.

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 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



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

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.

The Draft will be available in September 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 Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at (202) 289-6400.

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners:

Willard W. Cole -- This month, Mr. Bill Cole joins the Commission as North Carolina's Governor Appointee. With nearly 40 years of experience in fisheries conservation and management, Bill is no stranger to the Commission. Prior to his retirement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2005, Bill served as the Service's representative on several species management boards, including chairing the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board. For many years, he served as the Southeast Regional Director's designee for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and is recognized a charter member of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. Bill is probably best known for his many years as Chief Scientist on the SEAMAP Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise, which has provided fisheries managers and scientists invaluable data regarding important fish species. Welcome aboard, Bill!



Damon Tatem -- Mr. Damon Tatem leaves the Commission after serving twelve years as North Carolina's Governor Appoin-

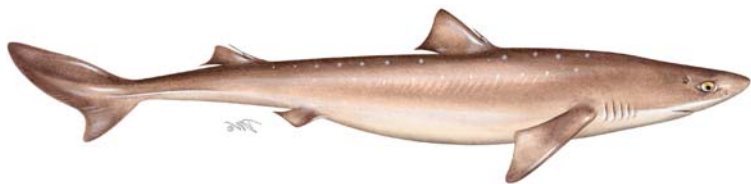
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ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Board Approves Draft Addenda II and III for Public Comment

In August, the Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board approved the release of two addenda for public review and comment. Both addenda propose management options that reflect the historic regional distribution of the spiny dogfish landings among the states. The Board's action responds to the concern of some states that the current seasonal allocation program is not providing their commercial fishermen the opportunity to harvest the available quota as was intended by the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spiny Dogfish. It is anticipated that the many coastal states will be conducting public meetings on the Draft Addenda; information on those meetings will be released once they become finalized.

Currently, the interstate spiny dogfish management program allocates the annual commercial quota seasonally while a Board action distributes the quota regionally within the seasonal allocation. The seasonal allocation system divides

the quota into two periods, with 57.9% of the quota available for harvest from May 1 to



October 31 and 42.1% available for harvest from November 1 to April 30. Through Board action, states agreed upon a regional allocation system dividing the quota between two regions, with 58% allocated to the northern states (ME – CT) and 42% allocated to the southern states (NY-NC). The 58/42 percent allocation was designed to preserve the historical distribution of landings. In recent years, however, the seasonal allocation strategy, which is influenced by dogfish migratory patterns, has resulted in overages of the northern quota share and reduced access to the resource by the southern states.

Draft Addendum II proposes to eliminate the current seasonal allocation system and to formalize the regional allocation system. To ensure a fair allocation of the annual quota between regions and maintain the conservation goals of the plan, the Draft Addendum proposes that each region be accountable for its overharvest through quota reductions the following year. Under the current system, overages in one region have resulted in a reduced quota to the other region. Draft Addendum may be applied to the 2008/2009 fishing season.

Draft Addendum III proposes a suite of options for the establishment of a state-by-state allocation system including quota transfer between states. Options include a minimum threshold (fixed percentage of the annual quota to be distributed to all states independent of historical landings) and percent allocations based on a variety of base years. Addendum III also includes an option for state payback of overages.

Both addenda will be available by early September 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 Christopher Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Addendum V

In August, the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum V to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab. The Addendum maintains the suite of management measures contained in Addendum IV for an additional year. These measures seek to address the needs of the migratory shorebirds, particularly the red knot, while allowing a limited commercial bait fishery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Technical Committee has indicated that the red knot, one of many shorebird species that feed upon horseshoe crab eggs, remains stable at very low population levels. Red knots have shown no sign of recovery, despite a nearly 70 percent reduction in horseshoe crab landings since 1998.

With Addendum IV due to expire on September 30, 2008, the Board initiated development of Addendum V to continue horseshoe crab management in Delaware Bay for another year. Based on the most recent surveys of horseshoe crabs, management measures in Addendum IV and previous management plans are resulting in increased horseshoe crab abundance in the Delaware Bay region. A horseshoe crab trawl survey administered by Virginia Tech shows increases in both immature and mature males and females over the past four to five years. A survey of spawning crabs on the beaches of Delaware Bay indicate stable female spawning activity and increased male spawning over the past nine years.

Addendum V essentially mirrors the management measures contained in

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Species Profile: Summer Flounder (continued from page 6)

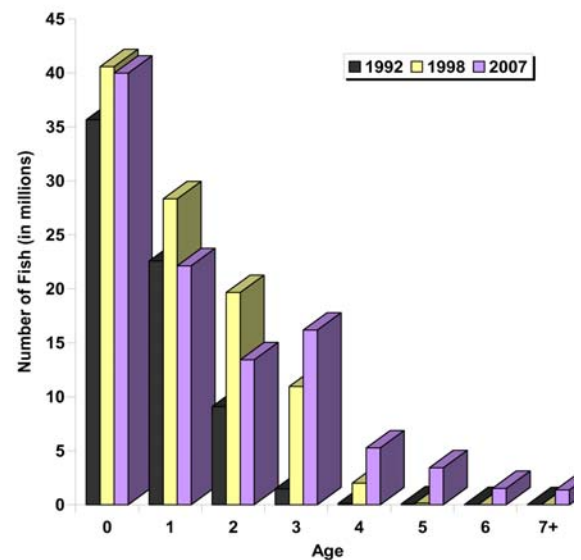
Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

The Commission approved the first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Summer Flounder in 1982, followed by a similar FMP approved by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in 1988. Since then, both agencies have made significant revisions to the plan, increasing the protection of juvenile fish and ensuring the maintenance of an adequate spawning population. This increased protection was achieved through the implementation of larger minimum size limits across all sectors, increased mesh sizes, and decreased recreational possession limits. Cumulatively, these changes have contributed to rebuilding the resource. This is not to say that challenges in managing this species do not still exist. Issues related to sector allocation and annual harvest levels persist. While states have adopted management measures to stay within their commercial and recreational quotas, overages continue to occur, particularly in the recreational sector. Additionally, managers and scientists continually strive to improve the data and science used to manage this species.

Managers are currently considering additional potential tools for summer flounder recreational management. These tools include maximum size limits, which would allow for slot limits or trophy fish, and mandatory regions that would group specific states together to set like regulations. Please check the Commission's website (www.asmfmc.org) and future issues of *Fisheries Focus* to stay abreast of upcoming activities. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center. 2008. 47th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (47th SAW) Assessment Summary Report. US Dept Commerce, Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document 08-11; 22p.

Figure 3. Summer Flounder Abundance at Age
Source: Summary Report of the 47th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee, 2008



ASMFC American Eel Board Approves Draft Addendum II for Public Comment

In August, the Commission's American Eel Management Board has approved the release of Draft Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes a number of management options to facilitate an increase in the number of adult American eel (also known as silver eel) that are able to out-migrate to the ocean and spawn. Specific options include gear and size restrictions, seasonal closures, and recommendations to protect the upstream and downstream migration of American eel.

The Board initiated the Addendum due to continued concern for the American eel population. While the status of the

stock is uncertain, the latest stock assessment information indicates the abundance of yellow eel (a juvenile life-stage of the American eel) has declined in the last two decades and the stock is at or near low levels. Further, relative abundance is likely to continue to decline unless mortality decreases and/or recruitment increases. As such, the primary management objective of the Draft Addendum is to facilitate escapement of silver eel on their spawning migration with the intent of halting any further declines in juvenile recruitment and eel abundance.

Copies of the Draft Addendum will be made available in early September. It is anticipated that several states will be

conducting public hearings on the Draft Addendum. A notice of the Draft Addendum's availability as well as the public hearing schedule will be released in September. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at (202) 289-6400 or rbeal@asmfc.org.



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources



ACCSP Announces Phase II for eTrips

Comings and Goings

ACCSP Announces Completion of Phase II for eTrips

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistical Program (ACCSP) currently manages two distinct areas of fisheries data. The first is the Data Warehouse, a compilation of ACCSP compliant data collection systems that have gone through an error checking process. The 23 program partners have created the ACCSP data collection systems with local quality control procedures that send transactions to the Data Warehouse on a regular basis.

ACCSP also manages the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS). SAFIS comprises three components: Electronic Dealer Reports Electronic Dealer Reports (eDR), SAFIS Management System (SMS), and Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting (eTrips). eDR is a forms-based function used for collecting data, such as condition and price, from the dealers. SMS is the web-based application providing administrative tools to SAFIS. Finally, eTrips is the web-based application used for collecting the vital catch and effort data from fishermen.

Most recently, the second phase of eTrips was brought on-line. Phase II is designed with the data entry processors in mind, and enables them to enter in numerous trips from different fishermen. With the update, eTrips now provides a one-page entry form that allows the data entry processor to enter and transition from trip information, effort, and species. Lastly, Phase II of eTrips provides a way for dealers to store "favorite" fishermen they frequent and a way of seamlessly transitioning from one fisherman to another.

Comings and Goings

Ms. Ann McElhatton joined the ACCSP staff as the Outreach Coordinator in August 2008. Ann was born with a lifelong passion for ocean conservation while growing up along the Atlantic in Cape May County, N.J. She has been employed in various roles in the marine fisheries community for over a decade. Ann has previous field experience with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. She has also worked in the outreach and communication sectors with Florida Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, Florida Oceanographic Society in Stuart, Florida, and Restore America's Estuaries in Arlington, Virginia. She earned a master's degree in Environmental Education from Florida Atlantic University where she specialized in adult education. Ann received her Bachelors of Science in Marine Resource Management from Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

One of Ann's first tasks will be to increase awareness and use of ACCSP's first-rate error checked data by fisheries professionals. This data is vital to formulating good decisions for sustainable fisheries management. For more information, contact Ann at ann.mcelhatton@accsp.org.

ACCSP Presents at 138th Annual Meeting of AFS

ACCSP was a very strong presence at the 138th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) in Ottawa, Ontario, held from August 17-21, 2008. More than 1,200 agency directors, fisheries scientists, administrators, educa-



tors, consultants, and field biologists participated in the event. Julie Defilippi, Fisheries Data Coordinator with ACCSP, presented "Improvements in Data Collection Spark New Ideas in Reporting Compliance and Overall Data Quality" and Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator with ACCSP, was an active part of the trade show.

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 visit www.accsp.org or call (202) 216-5690.

Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Addendum V (continued from page 8)

Addendum IV. These include a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware for one year. Specifically, it prohibits the harvest and landing of male and female horseshoe crabs from January 1 through June 7 in the Delaware Bay, and restricts the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. As with all Commission plans, states have the prerogative to implement more conservative management measures. In the case of New Jersey, it implemented a moratorium on the harvest and landing of horseshoe crab.

The Addendum also establishes a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 for one year. The Addendum further prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from federal waters from January 1 through June 7 for one year. No more than forty percent of Virginia's quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1. The Addendum also contains an adaptive management provision that allows,

through Board vote, the extension of these management measures an additional one-year period.

The Addendum will be available in September. Copies can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at www.asmf.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 7)

tee. During his tenure, he was an active member of the Legislators and Governor Appointees (LGAs), including several years as the Chair of the Governor Appointees. He served as a member of the Administrative Oversight Committee and on various species management boards. He owns and operates a full-service retail and wholesale fishing tackle and bait business, and continues to write columns for various coastal publications. During his tenure with the Commission, Damon worked hard to ensure effective stakeholder input through the Commission's advisory and public input process. We wish Damon and his family the very best in all their future endeavors!

Staff:

Randall Dorf & Tim Sartwell — This August, the Commission said good-bye to two fantastic summer interns, Randy Dorf and Tim Sartwell. They spent the last two months working on a wide range of fisheries projects. Randy did database development, summarized public comments to Draft Addendum V to the Horseshoe Crab FMP, (80+ unique comments and thousands of form letters), tracked HR-21 (national ocean policy), assisted with the review of annual state compliance reports, and worked on several outreach projects. Tim worked on a variety of projects with American lobster management, including writing a grant proposal to fund the building of a database to monitor and track lobster traps throughout all of the Lobster Conservation Management Teams, and compiling all of the Addenda to Amendment 3 of the American Lobster FMP into a universal lobster management document that included how regulations have changed over the years. He also worked on the development of a webpage on ethical angling to be posted on the Commission website. Tim assisted the efforts of the Multispecies Committee through extensive research on the diet of all Commission-managed species.

Randy will be a senior at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, majoring in political science with concentrations in leadership studies and maritime studies. After graduation, he plans on going to England to pursue a master's degree and possibly a law degree. Tim is a second year graduate student at Duke University working on his master's degree in Environmental Management, with a focus on fisheries management. He received his bachelor's degree in marine biology from the University of Maryland in 2007.



From Left: ASMFC Summer Interns, Tim Sartwell and Randy Dorf, with ASMFC Executive Director Vince O'Shea

Both interns received an ASMFC travel bag in appreciation of their efforts. Their enthusiasm, professionalism, and helpfulness will be greatly missed by the entire staff. We wish them the very best in all their endeavors!

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