



ASMFC

Volume 20, Issue 6  
September/October 2011

# FISHERIES *focus*

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*



**70th Annual Meeting  
BOSTON 2011**

**PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The preliminary agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein. The final agenda and meeting materials will be available October 26<sup>th</sup> on the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/70thAnnualMeeting.htm>.

**November 6, 2011**

- 2:00 - 5:30 PM                      Registration
- 6:00 - 7:00 PM                      Welcome Reception

**November 7, 2011**

- 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM &  
2:30 - 4:00 PM                      Registration
- 8:00 - 10:30 AM                      Atlantic Herring Section
- 10:45 AM - 12:30 PM  
& 1:45 - 3:00 PM                      American Lobster Management Board
- 1:00 - 5:00 PM                      Law Enforcement Committee
- 1:00 - 5:00 PM                      Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee

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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

**10/7 (9 AM - 4:30 PM)**

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Technical Committee, New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept., Marine Fisheries Division, 225 Main Street, Durham, New Hampshire; 603.868.1095

**10/11 - 13:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Seaview Dolce, 401 South New York Road, Galloway, New Jersey; 609-652-1800.

**10/14 (9 AM - 5:30 PM):**

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section & Advisory Panel (Section will consider final approval of Draft Amendment 2), Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**10/19 & 20:**

National Fish Habitat Board Meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

**10/25 (Noon - 4 PM):**

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel, Sheraton BWI Airport Hotel, 1110 Old Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland; 800-325-3535 or 443-577-2100.

**10/25 - 27:**

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting, Washington, DC.

**10/27 & 28:**

Northeast Regional Collaborative Research Conference ([www.northeastconsortium.org](http://www.northeastconsortium.org)), Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**10/28 (9 AM - 5:30 PM):**

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section & Advisory Panel (Section will set 2011/2012 fishing season specifications), Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**11/6 - 10:**

ASMFC 70th Annual Meeting, The Langham Hotel, 250 Franklin Street, Boston, Massachusetts; (617) 451 1900.

**11/15 - 17:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Newport Marriott, Newport, Rhode Island.

**12/5 - 9:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina; 800/331-7919.

**12/13 - 15:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Kingsmill, 1010 Kingsmill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia; 757-253-1703.

ASMFC Fisheries Focus, Vol. 20, Issue 6, September/October 2011

## A Tale of Four Fisheries

Most would readily agree that there are great economic and social benefits to be had from healthy and abundant fish stocks. In cases where a stock has failed or is failing, the scientific advice of what to do is usually pretty clear. However, managers often find it difficult to take effective action, usually out of concern about doing harm to fishermen.

To be effective, most conservation measures need to restrict harvest in a substantial way to either protect young fish long enough to get them into the spawning stock or to protect what is left of the spawning stock. Often, it is necessary to do both.

Commercial and recreational fishermen typically oppose reductions in catch, citing the economic and social burdens such measures would place on them and related businesses. Their arguments take different forms, but their position is grounded in the belief that restrictive regulations will permanently put fishermen out of business.

Fishery managers are then given the false choice of whether to save the fish or save the fishermen, a dilemma most find incredibly difficult to resolve. In some cases, the first response is to postpone action while more data are collected. Managers are understandably reluctant to impose economic hardships to solve a problem that might not exist. If the additional data confirm the negative stock trend, then often the second response is to implement partial measures in hopes of helping the stock, while limiting the impact to fishermen.

Unfortunately, while the strategy of delay and partial measures is responsive to the political pressure generated by fishermen, it has not been very effective in restoring stocks. Often, this generates poor results and the need for more drastic action. As the cycle continues, stocks spiral down towards depletion and sometimes beyond recovery. This well-intentioned approach saves neither fish nor fishermen.

However, there are noteworthy exceptions where managers have taken action before stocks collapsed. In the case of Atlantic sea scallops, a series of unpopular and painful regulations including extensive area closures and effort reduction measures were implemented starting in 1994 in response to declining stocks. While a number of boats went out of business, the measures have led to a tenfold increase in scallop biomass since its low point in 1993.

In less than 10 years since being declared overfished in 1997, the sea scallop fishery became one of the most valuable fisheries on the East Coast. It is still strong today, with landings valued at more than \$450 million. Counting the general category permits, there are now more boats scalloping than any other time in the history of the fishery. In fact, new boats have been built to replace old ones, a clear sign of the prosperity of stock recovery.

Among Commission species, the recovery of Atlantic striped bass is another well-known and important exception. In 1984, the states moved to take decisive action in response to clear signs stocks were in trouble. At that time recreational and commercial landings were 1.3 and 2.9 million pounds respectively, levels that were not sustainable due to the depressed biomass. Multiyear moratoria were imposed on most harvesters, enabling a full recovery. In 2010, the recreational and commercial harvests were 21.3 and 7.3 million pounds, respectively.

There are now more recreational striped bass fishermen than there were before the recovery. In addition, rebuilding has generated a booming business for charter boats, tournaments, fishing tackle, and guide services. Moreover, most states with a commercial striped bass fishery report the ranks of their commercial fishermen have grown. Clearly, the regulations to restore scallops and striped bass did not destroy the fishery. In fact, they have had the opposite effect; they have brought great benefits to fishermen, fishing related businesses, and coastal communities.

We don't see Atlantic sturgeon or Atlantic halibut fishermen these days, even though these were both multimillion pound fisheries. At the time landings peaked, the stocks were thought to be inexhaustible. These were long-lived fish, growing to great size, with few predators. By the early 1900s, they were all but wiped out, along with the fishermen and businesses that depended on them. The lack of conservation rules did not save the fish or the fishermen.

These examples remind us of the irreversible consequences that can occur when fishery managers fail to act, and the dramatic and sustainable benefits that can result when they do. With the right decisions, we can have both abundant stocks *and* prosperous fishermen. Hopefully, these are goals with which we can all agree.



**Spot**

*Leiostomus xanthurus*

**Common Names:** Norfolk spot, flat croaker, golden croaker, spot croaker, silver gudgeon, goody, chub, roach, jimmy

**Management Unit:** Delaware to Florida

**Interesting Facts:**

- \* Spot travel in huge (>100 fish) slow-moving schools over sand-mud bottoms.
- \* Spot are the only member of the drum family, which includes weakfish, red and black drum, and croaker, with a forked tail.
- \* Spot tend to live longer and attain a greater size in the northern extent of their range.

**Largest Recorded:** 14" (Norfolk, VA, 2011)

**Life Span:** 6 years

**Stock Status:** Unknown

## Species Profile: Spot Short-Lived Fish Gets a Management Makeover

### Introduction

Spot directly support recreational and commercial fisheries in the Mid- and South Atlantic and function as an important forage species in the region. The range of this short-lived species includes brackish and saltwater habitats predominately between Chesapeake Bay and South Carolina. Annual variation in landings, typically composed of fish belonging to a single year class, is due in part to the prevailing environmental conditions at spawning and nursery sites. To date, a formal coastwide stock assessment of spot has not been conducted. Small-sized spot remain a major component of the bycatch associated with seine, trawl, and pound net fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay and North Carolina, as well as that of the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. However, substantial reductions in the magnitude of bycatch have occurred in the latter fishery.

### Life History

Spot occur along the U.S. Atlantic coast in estuarine and coastal waters from the Gulf of Maine to Florida, although they are most abundant from Chesapeake Bay south to South Carolina. Spot migrate seasonally, entering bays and estuaries in the spring where they remain until late summer or fall when they move offshore to spawn. Spot mature between the ages of two and three, at lengths of seven to eight inches. Their maximum life span is about six years, although fish older than four years are uncommon.

Spawning takes place in the ocean from fall to early spring and the post-larvae move into estuaries, utilizing low salinity tidal creeks where they develop into juveniles. As spot grow, they move toward higher salinity areas during the summer and early fall and offshore in the fall as water temperatures decrease. Those that summered in the northern portion of their range also move south in the autumn. Spot are opportunistic bottom feeders, eating mainly worms, small crustaceans and mollusks, and organic material. The post-larvae prey on plankton but become bottom feeders as juveniles or adults. Predators such as striped bass, weakfish, summer flounder, bluefish, and sharks eat them in turn.

### Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Spot support commercial fisheries along the Atlantic coast, particularly from Chesapeake Bay southward. They are harvested by a variety of commercial gears including haul seines, pound nets, gillnets, and trawls. Commercial catches fluctuated widely between 1950 and the early 1980s, ranging from 3.9 to 14.5 million pounds. Such variability is expected because spot are a short-lived species and catch in most years consists of a single year class, the strength of which appears to be determined

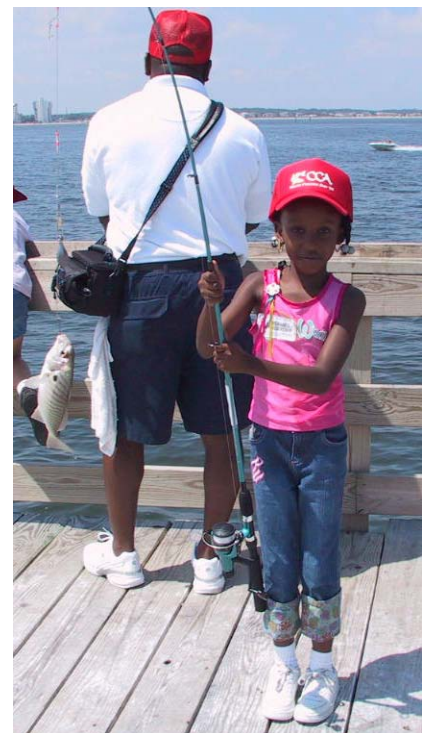


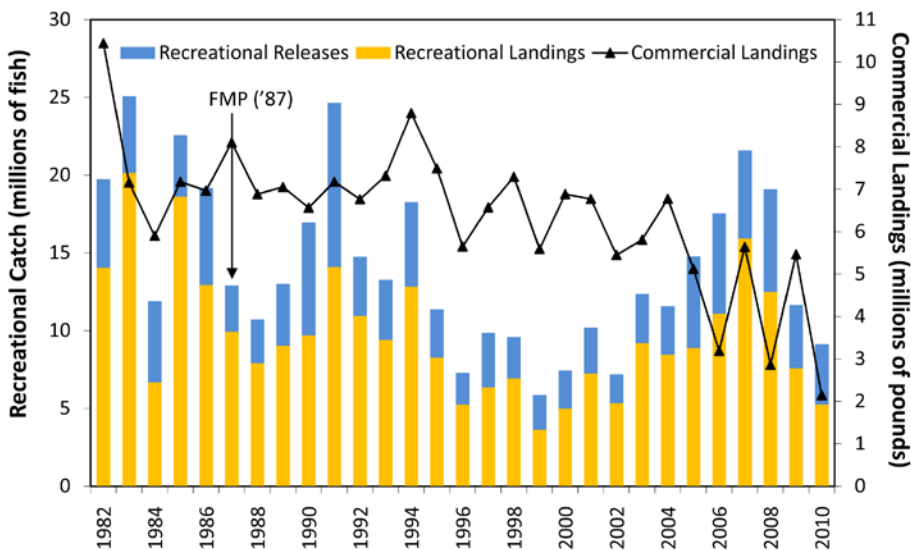
Photo courtesy of Virginia Marine Resources Commission

by environmental conditions that prevail on the spawning and nursery grounds in any particular year. Landings show less year-to-year variability from 1984 to 2010, ranging from 2.1 to 8.8 million pounds.

Spot is a popular recreational species sought by anglers from Delaware Bay to northern Florida. Most of the Atlantic recreational harvest is taken within three miles of the coast, from shore or by private or rental boats rather than by party or charter boats. Recreational harvest has fluctuated from a high of 6.9 million pounds in 1981 to a low of 1.6 million pounds in 1999. Over the last ten years, recreational harvest has averaged 3.7 million pounds, and for the first time in 2006, recreational landings surpassed commercial landings. Recreational harvest again surpassed commercial harvest in 2008, though recent years have again indicated a commercially-dominated harvest (see figure below).

### Spot Recreational Catch & Commercial Landings

Source: Personal communication with NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, 2011



### Stock Status

No coastwide assessment has been performed for spot; however, spot are a target or component of several state surveys using trawls, gillnets, or seine nets. Juvenile abundance indices (JAIs) have been highly variable throughout the survey time series, although many indices, including some from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, showed increases in 2010. In contrast, many of the adult abundance indices show little change or a decline over the past years, possibly indicating a disconnect between juvenile recruitment and adult abundance.

In addition to these surveys, commercial and recreational catch-per-unit effort (CPUE) data provide indices of relative spot abundance. Since 1980, commercial CPUE has generally increased over time in Maryland, although it has declined over the past five years. Within Virginia, it has varied without trend since 1994. Trends have been relatively stable in North Carolina, but most have been showing a decline since 2000. Maryland recreational CPUE has generally decreased with a few spikes and a small amount of potential recovery in 2000-2006, but recent years have shown additional declines. Virginia's recreational CPUE has been variable around the time series average, and North Carolina recreational CPUE has shown a

## Science Highlight: Regional Fishery- Independent Surveys are Spot On

When it comes to understanding the ebb and flow of spot (*Leiostomus xanthurus*) population size and health, fisheries scientists and managers are often left searching for more information. A limited number of local life history studies have been conducted, providing valuable insight into the age, growth, and maturity characteristics of the species. Commercial and recreational landings and discard amounts and rates allow for rough estimates of removals and other fishery-dependent mortality. Scientists use life history and fishery-dependent information in stock assessments but to truly understand stock dynamics, scientists need fishery-independent surveys. Independent surveys are ideal because they are unbiased by changes in fishing effort that often confound results from fishery-dependent data.

Several state fishery-independent surveys encounter spot and provide local snapshots of how healthy the stock may be. Spot are managed as a single stock unit, with the primary range of the species occurring between Chesapeake Bay and South Carolina. Geographically broad fishery-independent surveys are best-suited for characterizing the trends in the spot stock because regional surveys use consistent sampling methods, unlike state-specific surveys whose methods differ between states. Fortunately, two regional surveys provide growing time series of relative abundance, biomass, and life history measures to give scientists a comprehensive look at how the spot stock is doing.

The Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) has

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## Species Profile: Spot (continued from page 5)

general increase over time, although there have been decreases since 2007. South Carolina's recreational CPUE has shown high variability since 1981, with a large peak in 2007 and a gradual decline to the time series mean in 2010.

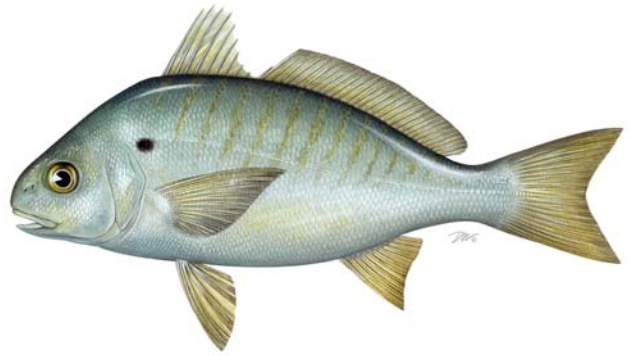
### Atlantic Coastal Management

The Commission adopted the Spot Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in 1987. A major problem addressed in the FMP was the lack of stock assessment data for effective management of the resource. Basic data requirements include information on recruitment, age, size, and sex composition, and variations in these characteristics over time and space. In addition, accurate catch and effort statistics are needed from the recreational and commercial fisheries to assess the effect of fishing activities on the population. Progress has been made on collecting these data elements, but more work remains to make an assessment possible.

Another problem referenced in the FMP was the bycatch (or inadvertent catch of

undersized or unwanted fish) of spot in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl, pound net, long haul seine, and trawl fisheries. The magnitude of the problem was underestimated at the time of FMP development, although it was cited as having potentially significant effect on spot stocks. Since adoption of the original FMP, significant progress has been made in the development of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) for shrimp trawlers. In some tests, bycatch has been reduced by 50 to 75 percent while still retaining a significant shrimp catch. Although commercial fishermen did not readily accept use of them initially because of their expense and handling problems, the devices are now used by shrimpers throughout the South Atlantic states.

Unlike the majority of the Commission's FMPs, the original Spot FMP did not contain mandatory management measures, as it was adopted prior to passage of the



Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (1993) and adoption of the Interstate Fishery Management Program Charter (1995). As part of managing the spot resource and fishery, the Board initiated an update to the FMP in August 2009, as part of the larger Omnibus Amendment that includes spotted seatrout and Spanish mackerel as well. The Omnibus Amendment, approved by the Commission at its 2011 Summer Meeting, updated all three plans with the requirements of the Act and the Charter. The updated Spot FMP now includes yearly management triggers to monitor the status of the stock until a full coast-wide stock assessment can be completed.

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## Science Highlight (continued from page 5)

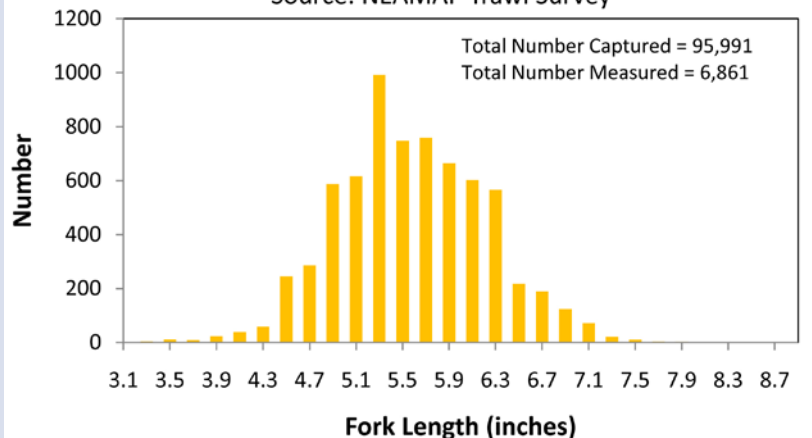
conducted a shallow water trawl survey in spring, summer, and fall continuously since 1982 with 112 stations between Cape Canaveral and Cape Hatteras. Spot is consistently one of the most commonly encountered species in the SEAMAP trawl survey. For example, a total of 65,220 spot, with an average of 582 per tow, were caught in the fall 2010 survey, more than any other species. In addition to measuring abundance, the SEAMAP trawl survey also collects spot lengths and weights, and in select years, ageing, stomach, and tissue samples.

The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) survey has been conducted from 2007-present and trawls 150 nearshore stations from Cape Hatteras to Martha's Vineyard. Spring and fall surveys both encounter spot, with fall catches often ranking in the top five among the 100+ species the survey encounters. The fall 2010 survey, for example, caught 95,991 spot ranging in length from 8-22 cm (3-9 inches) (Figure 1), with an average catch per station of 640 spot.

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**Figure 1. Fall 2010 Spot Length Frequencies**

Source: NEAMAP Trawl Survey



# ASMFC 70th Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

## November 7, 2011 (continued)

3:15 - 5:30 PM Meeting with Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

6:00 - 9:00 PM Reception at UMASS Club

## November 8, 2011

7:00 AM - 1:00 PM & 2:30 - 4:00 PM Registration

8:00 - 10:00 AM Law Enforcement Committee (continued)

8:00 - 11:00 AM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

8:00 AM - Noon Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee (continued)

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

11:15 AM - 1:00 PM Legislators/Governors' Appointees Luncheon

Noon - 5:00 PM Fish Passage Site Visits to Jones River and Mystic Lakes Dam, sponsored by MA DMF and ACFHP (please contact Emily Greene at [egreene@asmfc.org](mailto:egreene@asmfc.org) by October 13 if you are interested in participating)

12:30 - 5:30 PM Management & Science Committee

1:15 - 3:15 PM Tautog Management Board

3:30 - 5:30 PM Action Plan Workshop

6:00 - 10:00 PM Dinner on the Odyssey

## November 9, 2011

8:00 - 9:30 AM Horseshoe Crab Management Board

8:00 - Noon Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program Board

8:30 AM - Noon Habitat Committee

9:45 - 10:45 AM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM Registration

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM & 1:45 - 3:00 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

## ASMFC Public Comment Guidelines

With the intent of developing policies in the Commission's procedures for public participation that result in a fair opportunity for public input, the ISFMP Policy Board has approved the following guidelines for use at management board meetings:

*For issues that are not on the agenda*, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

*For topics that are on the agenda*, but have not gone out for public comment, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

*For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment*, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the *submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period* (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

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# Fisheries of the United States 2010

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Office of Science and Technology

Fisheries Statistics Division  
David Van Voorhees, Chief  
Alan Lowther, Editor

Silver Spring, Maryland  
August 2011



Current Fishery Statistics No. 2010

U.S. Department  
of Commerce  
Rebecca Blank, Ph.D.  
Acting Secretary

National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.  
Under Secretary

National Marine  
Fisheries Service  
Eric C. Schwaab, Assistant  
Administrator for Fisheries

## 2010 Fisheries of the U.S. Released

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) was pleased to collaborate with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service for the release of the *2010 Fisheries of the United States* (FUS) publication. The document is a preliminary report of the commercial fisheries data for 2010 and a final report for the recreational data for 2010. FUS includes landings from U.S. territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone, and the high seas. According to the FUS release from NOAA Fisheries Service, “U.S. commercial fishermen landed 8.2 billion pounds of seafood in 2010, valued at \$4.5 billion, an increase of 200 million pounds and more than \$600 million in value over 2009. This report shows U.S. fishermen, who meet high environmental and safety standards, continue to be competitive in the dynamic, fast-paced global seafood marketplace.”

Since 2007, ACCSP has worked with Northeast program partners to provide NOAA Fisheries Service headquarters with landings from Maine to Virginia. Landings data from South Carolina and Georgia are also provided to the NOAA Southeast Regional Office. These datasets were obtained in the spring as preliminary and updated as final data in the fall of 2010. By working with partners to develop the FUS datasets,

ACCSP is able to populate the Data Warehouse at a finer resolution to further support the ACCSP mission.

In 2010, Alan Lowther, a statistician with NOAA Fisheries Service, spoke on the relationship between the collaborating partners, “I am pleased with the relationship ACCSP has developed with NOAA Fisheries Service and other partners to efficiently collect and disseminate data for the FUS publication. It has only been three years that we’ve been working with ACCSP for FUS, but each year there has been improvement in the data collection process. I look forward to continuing this positive collaboration and working together on future enhancements.”

For more details on the FUS, please visit <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/fus/fus10/index.html>. For more information about the Data Warehouse, please visit <http://www.accsp.org/dataware.htm>.

### 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. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries

Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information, please visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org).



### FUS Highlights

- Commercial and recreational fisheries generated \$166 billion in sales impacts, contributed \$72 billion to the Gross National Product and supported 1.4 million jobs in the fishing sector and across the broader economy.
- For the 22nd consecutive year, the Alaska port of Dutch Harbor-Unalaska led the nation with the highest amount of fish landed, primarily pollock. For the 11th consecutive year, New Bedford, Massachusetts had the highest valued catch, due in large part to the sea scallop fishery.
- All coastal regions of the country saw increases in total value of fisheries landings in 2010. The Gulf of Mexico region, which suffered the nation’s worst marine oil spill in 2010 and saw landings drop by 19%, achieved a modest two percent increase in total landings value.
- The U.S. continues to be third-ranked for consuming fish and shellfish, behind China and Japan. Americans consumed 4.878 billion pounds of seafood in 2010 (15.8 pounds on average).
- About 86% of the seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported, up four percent from 2009 (a portion of this imported seafood is caught by American fishermen, exported overseas for processing and then re-imported to the U.S.).
- Almost half of imported seafood comes from aquaculture or farmed seafood.
- In 2010, the U.S. exported 63% of its domestically produced seafood, measured by live weight.





## ASMFC & Mid-Atlantic Council Approve 2012 Specifications for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Bluefish

was set at 12.63 million pounds for the 2012 fishing year.

The Commission approved and the Council recom-

of this year that will provide an update on the status of the stock.

Finally, the Commission approved and the Council recommended a commercial quota of 10.50 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 17.19 million pounds for the bluefish fishery. These levels are about 1% higher compared to the 2011 limits.

The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have established the 2012 commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. The Commission's actions are final and apply to state waters. The Council will be forwarding its recommendations to NOAA's Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval.

The table below summarizes those actions/recommendations (commercial quota and recreational harvest limits are in millions of pounds):

mended a commercial quota of 34.43 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 10.85 million pounds for the scup fishery. These limits are 66% and 86% higher for the commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively, compared to 2011 levels. The Board adopted a new landing limit to not exceed 50,000 pounds per day for the Winter I fishery (January 1-April 30). Previously, it was a one-week landing limit of 30,000 pounds.

For black sea bass, the Commission approved and the Council recommended

For all four species, the action was consistent with the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) regarding acceptable biological catch (ABC), which is the level of total removals that cannot be exceeded based on the best available scientific information. The Commission and Council maintained the 2011 commercial management measures for all four species for 2012, with the exception of the Winter I landing limit, and approved a Research Set-Aside (RSA) quota of up to three percent for each fishery. Prior to the start of the new fishing year, RSA quota allocations will reduce the above commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits.

Species	Commercial Quota	Commercial Minimum Fish Size (TL)	Commercial Mesh Size	Recreational Harvest Limit
Summer Flounder	18.95	14"	5.5"	12.63
Scup	34.43	9"	5"	10.85
Black Sea Bass	1.76	11"	4.5"	1.36
Bluefish	10.5	---	---	17.19

The Commission approved and the Council recommended a 7% increase in the summer flounder harvest limits from 2011 using the process detailed in the recently approved Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measure Amendment. The commercial quota was set at 18.95 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit

the same commercial quota as 2011, 1.76 million pounds. However, they recommended a lower limit of 1.36 million pounds for the recreational fishery to address the management uncertainty associated with that fishery. A benchmark stock assessment for black sea bass will be reviewed in December

For more information about summer flounder, scup, or black sea bass, please contact Toni Kerns, FMP Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org). For more information about bluefish, please contact Mike Waine, FMP Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or [mwaine@asmfc.org](mailto:mwaine@asmfc.org).

## ASMFC 70th Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 7)

### November 9, 2011 (continued)

12:30 - 1:30 PM	Captain David H. Hart Award Luncheon
3:15 - 3:45 PM	Business Session
3:45 - 6:15 PM	ISFMP Policy Board

### November 10, 2011

7:00 - 8:30 AM	Executive Committee
8:45 - 10:45 AM	Shad & River Herring Management Board
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Winter Flounder Management Board
12:30 - 1:00 PM	Lunch for Commissioners and Proxies
1:00 - 3:30 PM	Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board
3:45 - 4:15 PM	ISFMP Policy Board (continued)
4:15 - 4:45 PM	Business Session (continued)

## ASMFC Public Comment Guidelines (continued from page 7)

Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of a meeting week will be included on the briefing CD.

Comments received by 5:00 PM on the Tuesday immediately preceding the scheduled ASMFC Meeting (in this case, the Tuesday deadline will be *November 1, 2011*) will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.

Following the Tuesday, November 1, 2011 5:00 PM deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for the management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

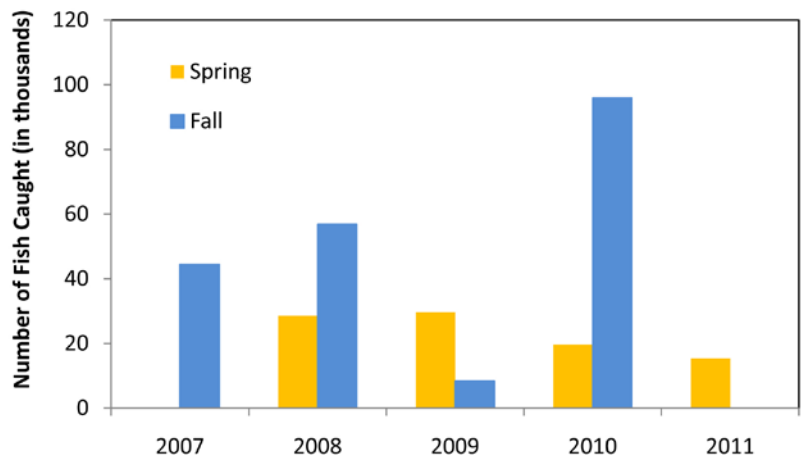
The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, it will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

## Science Highlight (continued from page 6)

Research and data deficiencies, most notably bycatch estimates, remain for spot, but the regional surveys are providing a steady measure of trends in abundance (Figure 2) throughout the core range of the species, making a formal stock assessment more feasible than in the past. The NEAMAP trawl survey is proving particularly valuable as it fills the data gap in the northern part of the species' range. The Commission continues to provide coordination and administrative support to both Programs, to assist South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SEAMAP lead) and the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (NEAMAP lead) in keeping these valuable trawl survey time series going.

For more information on spot science, please contact Dr. Genny Nesslage (GNesslage@asmfc.org). For more information on SEAMAP or NEAMAP, please contact Melissa Paine (MPaine@asmfc.org).

**Figure 2. NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Survey Spot Catches by Year & Season**



# ASMFC Approves Resolution on Non-native Invasive Catfish

At its Summer Meeting, the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board approved the following resolution on non-native invasive catfish (blue and flathead) based on concern about the potential impacts these species may have on Commission managed species, particularly in the Chesapeake Bay region.

*Whereas*, the states along the Atlantic coast from Maine through Florida, including Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, are concerned about the increasing variety, abundance, range, and ecological impact of invasive species in estuaries, tributaries, and coastal waters; and

*Whereas*, invasive species negatively impact native species managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission through predation and displacement; and

*Whereas*, blue and flathead catfish are non-native invasive species that have been introduced and spread to many watersheds along the Atlantic coast; and

*Whereas*, blue and flathead catfish are large, long-lived fish species exhibiting an opportunistic and non-selective feeding strategy.

*Whereas*, the spread and high abundance of non-native catfish are causing trophic impacts throughout their range, resulting in unbalanced ecosystems; and

*Whereas*, predation by blue and flathead catfish is likely having a negative effect on species managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, most notably, shad, river herring, striped bass, and American eel. Other prey species of concern include white and yellow perch, gizzard shad and freshwater mussels and clams; and

*Whereas*, the populations and ranges of blue and flathead catfish have become increasingly problematic and both species are expanding significantly in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and

*Whereas*, the fishery management jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay region are developing policies to address the impacts of invasive catfishes.

*Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved,*

*That* the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission does not support the introduction of nor transport of non-native invasive species;

*That* additional research should be conducted to more fully understand the ecological impacts of non-native catfish on species managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission;

*That* all practicable efforts should be made to reduce the population levels and ranges of non-native invasive species;



USFWS Fishery Biologist, Mike Mangold with blue catfish taken from Dyke Marsh, Potomac River, VA (Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

*That* the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission supports the development and implementation of a strategy that minimizes the population and ecological impacts of non-native invasive catfish species throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

## Spot Species Profile (continued from page 6)

Further, the plan's adaptive management section provides the states the ability to more quickly implement management changes in the future. Each year, the South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board reviews an assessment of the Spot FMP, the current year's landings, and data from fishery independent surveys to determine whether revised management action is required. This review will now include the management triggers. Although relatively short-lived compared to other species in its family, spot plays an important role as prey and bait, as well as being a targeted fishery. These updates will ensure continued responsive and responsible management. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, FMP Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or [dbrzezinski@asmfc.org](mailto:dbrzezinski@asmfc.org).

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