Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

ASMFC 2026 Annual Meeting

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

ASMFC 2026 Annual Meeting
November 9-12, 2026

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP, Tina Berger, Communications or the identified individual at 703.842.0740

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026) 3

Meeting Summary 3
Motions 4

ATLANTIC COASTAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSIP STEERING COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 9 & 10, 2026) 4

Meeting Summary 4

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026) 5

Meeting Summary 5
Motions 7

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 9 & 10, 2026) 7

Meeting Summary 7

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026) 8

Press Release 8
Meeting Summary 9
Motions 10

SCIAENIDS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026) 11

Press Release 11
Meeting Summary 13
Motions 13

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL NOVEMBER 10, 2026) 14

Meeting Summary 14

Motions *14*

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10, 2026) **15**

Press Release *15*
Motions *16*

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10, 2026) **16**

Meeting Summary *16*
Motions *17*

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10 & 11, 2026) **17**

Press Release *17*
Meeting Summary *18*
Motions *19*

EXECUTIVE COMMTTEE (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **21**

Meeting Summary *21*
Motions *22*

HABITAT COMMTTEE (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **22**

Meeting Summary *22*

COMMISSION BUSINESS SESSION (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **22**

Meeting Summary *22*
Motions *23*

SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **23**

Meeting Summary *23*
Motions *24*

CAPTAIN DAVID H. HART AWARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **24**

Press Release *24*

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026) **25**

Meeting Summary *25*
Motions *26*

ISFMP POLICY BOARD (NOVEMBER 12, 2026) **26**

Meeting Summary *26*
Motions *29*

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 12, 2026) **30**

Press Release *30*
Meeting Summary *30*
Motions *31*

ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Herring Management Board met to set specifications for the 2027-2029 fishing years; set quota periods for the 2027 Area 1A fishery; review the draft Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance and a *de minimis* request; and receive an update from the New England Fishery Management Council (Council).

The Board considered specifications for the 2027-2029 fishing years. The Board received an overview of the specifications package recommended by the Council in September 2026. The Council recommended a 5-year specifications package based on results of the 2026 stock assessment and peer review, the Council Risk Policy, and recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Herring Committee. Due to substantial uncertainty associated with the assessment projections and the poor condition of the stock, the SSC recommended a constant interim catch level. The Council recommended two additional changes from past specification packages. Regarding the management uncertainty buffer to account for Canadian landings, the Council recommended using the more recent, 5-year average landings instead of the 10-year average. For the fixed gear set-aside, the Council recommended an increase to 45 metric tons from 30 metric tons based on catch information from the Maine fixed gear fishery. The Board approved specifications as recommended by the Council for the 2027-2029 fishing years, as the Board can set specifications for up to three years.

The Board considered quota periods for the 2027 Area 1A fishery. Per Amendment 3 to the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Herring, quota periods are determined annually for Area 1A. The Board can consider distributing the Area 1A sub-ACL using bi-monthly, trimester, or seasonal quota periods. The Board can also decide whether quota from January through May will be allocated later in the fishing season, and underages may be rolled from one period to the next within the same year. For the 2027 Area 1A fishery, the Board adopted a seasonal quota approach with 72.8% available June-September and 27.2% available October-December with underages from June through September rolled into the October through December period, if applicable. These 2027 quota periods are the same as the quota periods implemented for the last seven fishing years.

The Board approved the Atlantic Herring FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and a *de minimis* request for New York. In 2025, all states implemented management measures consistent with the FMP.

The Board received an update from the Council on recent and upcoming Atlantic herring actions. The Council will be submitting its recommended specifications package to NOAA Fisheries with target implementation of January 1, 2027. The Council is also working on development of alternatives for Amendment 12 to consider (1) modifying Atlantic herring measures to avoid or minimize the catch of river herring and shad, including consideration of time-area closures; (2) rescinding the Industry Funded Monitoring program and slippage measures for Atlantic herring and reconsidering the haddock catch caps; (3) modifying carryover provisions and the specifications process. The Council anticipates final action on Amendment 12 in April 2027.

The Board discussed the issue of clarifying the targeting of other species during the Area 1A Atlantic herring spawning closures. There were questions raised by the public after midwater trawl vessels were targeting mackerel within the Massachusetts-New Hampshire Atlantic herring spawning area during the closed spawning period. The spawning closures prohibit directed herring fishing in the spawning area. Vessels can participate in other fisheries in the closed spawning area with a 2,000-pound bycatch allowance of Atlantic herring.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to adopt the following specifications for the 2027-2029 fishing years for Atlantic herring as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council, contingent on a rule being published by NOAA Fisheries:

- **Annual Catch Limit = 6,926 mt**
- **Area 1A Sub-ACL = 2,002 mt**
- **Area 1B Sub-ACL = 298 mt**
- **Area 2 Sub-ACL = 1,925 mt**
- **Area 3 Sub-ACL = 2,701 mt**
- **Border Transfer = 0 mt**
- **Fixed Gear Set-Aside = 45 mt**
- **Research Set Aside as a Percentage of Sub-ACLs = 0%**

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to implement a seasonal distribution of quota for the 2027 Area 1A sub-ACL with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December, with no landings prior to June 1. Underages will be rolled over into the next quota period. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota is projected to be caught.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by consent with 1 abstention (NOAA).

Move to approve the Atlantic Herring FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* request for New York.

Motion made by Ms. Zobel and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC COASTAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSIP STEERING COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 9 & 10, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) Steering Committee convened its 2026 Fall Meeting in Newport, Rhode Island, and via webinar. Day one included updates on active FY26 ACFHP-funded

projects, review and approval of the final FY27 National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) project list, an update on NFHP activities and the Fish Habitat Fund, and progress on the ACFHP Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Workshop. The Committee also finalized and approved the 2027–2031 Conservation Strategic Plan and began developing its next Action Plan, which it completed and adopted on day two.

Four FY26 projects funded through NFHP and NOAA are underway: the Atlantic Mills Dam Removal design (RI), eelgrass restoration in Long Island Sound (CT), the Tyson Point living shoreline (NC), and Casting for Conservation (FL). Together they received $297,000 in ACFHP funding, are valued at about $1.74 million, and will restore or conserve about 35 acres and reopen 2.5 river miles to fish passage. NFHP staff also recapped the Partnership's 20th anniversary year, including a virtual celebration with more than 100 participants. Guest presenters Darcy Young and Jenny Rogers of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) described the program's aquatic connectivity planning and design work, upcoming 2027 funding opportunities for implementation and outreach projects, and NBEP's pending support for the ACFHP-funded Atlantic Mills Dam project. The Committee identified opportunities to coordinate on strong projects that ACFHP is unable to support due to limited funding availability.

For more information, please contact Simen Kaalstad, ACFHP Director, at skaalstad@asmfc.org.

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Board met to consider a final report from the Management Objectives Process Steering Committee (SC); reports from the American Lobster Technical Committee (TC); reports from Maine and Massachusetts on recent industry meetings with the Gulf of Maine lobster industry; the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Reviews for the 2025 Fishing Year for American Lobster and Jonah Crab; and an update from NOAA Fisheries on the Request for Information (RFI) on alternative gear marking.

The Board formed an SC in May 2026 to develop a process to define management objectives for the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) lobster fishery, which was comprised of representatives of the Board, TC, the Commission's Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, Commission staff, and industry stakeholders. The SC met three times from June to September to review existing management objectives established in Amendment 3 and develop recommendations for a management objectives process to identify new management objectives across all stakeholders. The final report included recommendations on process goals, meeting structure and logistics, participants, facilitation needs, as well as estimated costs of the process envisioned by the SC. The Board acknowledged that while a management objectives process could help guide the direction of future management of the GOM/GBK lobster fishery and allow for the identification of appropriate management tools and actions, the Commission does not currently have sufficient funding to carry out the process as recommended by the SC. Several Board members also expressed concern that getting industry participation and engagement in this process could be a challenge under current fishery conditions including high operating costs. The Board agreed to postpone action on a management objectives process for the time being.

The TC Chair presented the annual update of lobster stock indicators with data through 2025. Data sets updated during this process indicate exploitable lobster stock abundance conditions expected in subsequent years, including young-of-year (YOY) indicators, recruit abundance, survey encounter rate, and ventless trap survey (VTS) sex-specific abundance indices. This data update also includes a combined index for tracking recruit abundance in the GOM/GBK stock, which averages relative

recruit abundance across three survey indices. Overall, GOM indicators show a mix of conditions that are primarily neutral with marginal changes and variability since the stock assessment, and a slight increase in the recruit index since the terminal year of the stock assessment (2023). Georges Bank

indicators show a mix of positive and neutral conditions that are unchanged since the stock assessment. Southern New England (SNE) indicators show continued negative conditions since the stock assessment, with most updated indicators at or near time series lows; there were slight but consistent increases across RI indicators for SNE in 2025.

The TC Chair also reported on possible environmental and ecosystem indicators that could provide additional information on conditions affecting American lobster, responding to Board interest in adding environmental indicators into the annual data update process. The TC identified several possible indicators that may be suitable for further investigation, including bottom temperatures from state and federal trawl surveys, ocean temperature data from long-term monitoring buoys, temperature-based molt timing prediction from Gulf of Maine Research Institute, long-term modeled ocean temperatures, and zooplankton abundance time series. The Board expressed an interest in the TC investigating all of these indicators to determine their utility in annal updates as qualitative indicators of conditions the lobster stocks are experiencing, with a long-term goal of estimating quantitative impacts on population dynamics and stock productivity from these indicators during future stock assessments.

Maine reported that the state conducted a survey and has continued to hold meetings with stakeholders to identify potential management approaches for the Gulf of Maine. These meetings led to the Lobster Advisory Council recommending an increase in the size of the required biological escape panel to 4.5 by 6 inches to allow more escapement of larger lobsters. Massachusetts reported that the state is in the process of scheduling an industry roundtable early next year. The Board agreed that rather than requiring the GOM/GBK states to report on industry meetings at every Board meeting, updates can be provided by the states as needed.

The Board received an update from NOAA Fisheries on the RFI published on July 16, 2026 to gather additional information on ropeless gear and visualization technology, including information related to the program design, utility, limitations, and technical capability of ropeless fishing. This information will help inform Council decision-making regarding the development of the Joint New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Alternative Gear Marking Framework Adjustment. The comment period closed on October 14, 2026 and a summary of comments will be provided to the Board at a future meeting. NOAA Fisheries also updated the Board on rulemaking to modify the lobster fishery season closure in LCMA 5 to align federal regulations with the conservation equivalency plan for LCMA 5 approved by the Board in August 2026. The change would to allow black sea bass fishermen that hold a federal lobster permit to set and haul gear to fish for black sea bass beginning on March 9 instead of March 24 while maintaining the prohibition on lobster and Jonah crab harvest and possession from February 1 through March 31. This rulemaking is expected to be completed in time for the 2028 fishing year.

The Board also approved the lobster and Jonah crab FMP Reviews for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the American Lobster and Jonah Crab FMP Reviews for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests from Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion approved by consent.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 9 & 10, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) conducted a hybrid meeting during the 84th Annual Meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in Newport, Rhode Island. The Chair recognized Mr. Wayne Hettenbach from the USDOJ for his years of participation in the LEC and wished him well in his new position in the private sector. The following leadership changes were approved by the committee, Lt. Jeff Mercer as the new Chair and Deputy Chief Brian Scott as the new Vice-Chair of the LEC. The Committee discussed the following topics.

Species Discussion

Atlantic Menhaden Management Discussion – Mr. James Boyle outlined the management options in draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Menhaden Fishery Management Plan. After reviewing Section 3.0, Proposed Management Program, the LEC reached consensus on the most enforceable options and found minimal enforcement concerns. A report summarizing the discussion was forwarded to the Menhaden Management Board for consideration.

Other Business

Electronic Reporting Compliance – Assistant Director James Cassins of NOAA OLE and Lieutenant Jeff Mercer of the Rhode Island Environmental Police led a discussion on vessel owners' and operators' obligations under Code of Federal Regulations 50-648.7, Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements. The LEC examined Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting requirements and industry compliance. Director Cassin's characterized compliance as fair to poor. Proposed improvements included drawing law enforcement's attention to reporting compliance issues, public outreach to the regulated community, revising regulations to strengthen reporting deadlines, and reviewing summary settlement penalties in reference to reporting compliance. The LEC stressed that sound management decisions depend on complete, accurate data.

Best Practices for Drone and ROV Use – With the increased use of this type of technology in marine law enforcement, Conservation Officer Joseph Canfield of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department presented best practices for developing law enforcement DRONE and ROV programs. He reviewed SONAR and ROV teams, including their equipment, operating principles, and recent operations. He explained the differences among the technologies and recommended equipment for specific applications. The team emphasizes mission readiness, equipment maintenance, and training. Case studies illustrated best practices for evidence detection and locating missing people.

Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact (IWVC) - Ms. Viviana Aristugui of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, a current compact Board member, reviewed the compact's goals, statistics, and state participation. All U.S. states have passed legislation recognizing the compact; forty-nine have joined, with

Hawaii the only state not fully committed. Every Atlantic coastal state actively participates, and twelve states nationwide submit commercial and recreational marine suspensions. The LEC continues to urge member states to use the compact to deter violations and support compliance with marine fisheries regulations.

Patrol Boat Manufacturing Trends – LEC Chair Captain Scott Pearce of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission facilitated a roundtable discussion on patrol boat manufacturing trends. Participants reviewed manufacturers used by law enforcement and compared each platform's strengths and limitations, including cost, delivery schedules, and design.

NOAA Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) Program Update – AD James Cassins led a discussion on the JEA program's status. The LEC reviewed shared expectations and priorities and reaffirmed participating states' commitment to the program's objectives and cooperative enforcement. Members expressed hope for increased NOAA funding for JEAs in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget to strengthen the partnership and advance fisheries enforcement initiatives.

A closed session was convened during our meeting to facilitate open discussion regarding new and emerging issues in law enforcement. Each agency was provided an opportunity to highlight their work and share updates on ongoing enforcement initiatives.

For more information, please contact Kurt Blanchard, LEC Coordinator, at Kurt Blanchard kurt.blanchard@verizon.net.

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026)

Press Release

ASMFC Coastal Sharks Board Sets Specifications for 2027-2031 to Complement the Federal Default Season Start Date and Retention Limits

Newport, RI – The Commission's Coastal Sharks Management Board approved commercial fishery specifications for 2027 through 2031, matching the default season start date and retention limits as specified by the National Marine Fisheries Service final rule published on November 8, 2023. Beginning in 2024, the fishing year for Atlantic commercial shark fisheries automatically starts on January 1 of each year under the base quotas and default retention limits.

The Board set specifications that include a commercial possession limit of 55 large coastal sharks (LCS) other than sandbar sharks (i.e., aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups) per vessel per trip and 8 blacknose sharks per vessel trip. NOAA Fisheries may consider in-season adjustments to the commercial possession limits depending on catch rates; states will follow NOAA Fisheries for in-season changes to the commercial possession limit. The Coastal Sharks Board does not actively set quotas for any species contained in the non-blacknose, small coastal shark (SCS), blacknose, aggregated LCS, hammerhead or pelagic species groups but will close the fishery for any species in these groups when NOAA Fisheries closes the fishery in federal waters, as outlined in the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

Under Addendum II to the FMP, the Coastal Sharks Board establishes state shares of the base federal coastwide quota for the Atlantic smooth dogfish fishery. At this meeting, the Board approved shares for 2027-2031 based on the base federal quota of 1,802.6 dressed weight (dw) metric tons, or 3,973,902 dw pounds (Table 1). Rollover of unused state shares is not permitted because it could result in overages of the federal coastwide quota.

Under the Coastal Sharks FMP, if a multi-year commercial quota and/or possession limit is implemented, annual review of updated information on the fishery and stock conditions by the Technical Committee and Management Board is required. If scientific review finds that specified measures should be modified based on updates to stock conditions, then the Coastal Sharks Board will be presented with this information and a new specification setting process will be initiated.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Table 1. State shares of the coastwide smooth dogfish quota based on the base coastwide quota for the 2027-2031 fishing years (January – December).

	State Share Percentages	State Share (dw mt)	State Share (dw lbs)
ME	0.021%	0.4	817
MA	0.433%	7.8	17,195
RI	1.363%	24.6	54,163
CT	0.234%	4.2	9,282
NY	7.953%	143.4	316,037
NJ	18.828%	339.4	748,214
DE	0.339%	6.1	13,464
MD	6.703%	120.8	266,362
VA	34.803%	627.4	1,383,026
NC	28.583%	515.2	1,135,860
SC	0.742%	13.4	29,481
TOTAL	100%	1,802.6	3,973,902

###

PR26-18

Meeting Summary

In addition to setting specifications for Atlantic coastal shark fisheries, the Board considered updates from NOAA Fisheries on several issues relating to coastal sharks; received a presentation on shore-based recreational shark fishing in North Carolina, discussed drone use in shark fishing; and approved the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review and state compliance for coastal sharks for the 2025 fishing year.

NOAA Fisheries updated the Board on recent activities related to coastal sharks and the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) FMP. NOAA Fisheries received a recent letter from the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries that requested the HMS Highly Migratory Species Division prioritize the following issues related to shark management: reviewing weak hook requirements; assessing current FMPs and removing species that no longer require conservation and management; expanding and continuing the use of exempted fishing permits; and actions related to shark depredation. Several

regulatory actions are currently underway, including rulemakings on indicator species; swordfish and shark limited access permits; electronic reporting; blacknose and recreational shark measures; gear restrictions; and Amendment 16, which considers changes to commercial and recreational shark quotas, management groups, retention or bag limits, and minimum size limits. A stock assessment update for sandbar sharks is ongoing, which is expected for completion in 2027. Along with the assessment, a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) will be used to develop a model-based or empirical harvest control rule or strategy. NOAA Fisheries is developing a strategic plan on shark depredation using a multiple step approach to answer research questions about shark population trends, behavior, deterrents, and management impacts on depredation. From this strategic plan a framework will be developed to give policy makers, stakeholders, and the public better information on how to best manage this issue. Lastly, NOAA Fisheries provided an update on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species implementation; the implementation date for the Appendix II listing for Atlantic smoothhound sharks is June 5, 2027.

The Board received a presentation on a study of the land-based recreational shark fishery in North Carolina, led by Sally Dowd, a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Through interviews with anglers, the study characterized the fishery, defined angler perceptions of environmental drivers of large coastal shark catch, identified how anglers learn to fish and share information in the community, and gathered angler input on local fisheries management. The study revealed angler fishing techniques, practices, effort, and large coastal shark catch, as well as species-specific catch hotspots in space and time. Bait or prey and water temperature were the most commonly mentioned drivers of shark catch and distribution. Respondents suggested anglers often learn land-based shark fishing from experienced anglers and recognize issues and risks associated with the sport. They also provided suggestions for fisheries management including minimum fishing gear requirements, time restrictions to reduce conflicts with tourists, and increasing education such as an online permit-based course.

The Board discussed the use of drones in shark fisheries, which are increasingly being used to target sharks, deploy bait, and film fishing activity. Florida and South Carolina described some concerns about the ethics, safety, and conservation impacts of drones in this setting, and noted that they are considering regulatory responses to address these issues. Other states also described concerns and regulations addressing the use of drones in fishing. The Board will continue to consider this topic and whether there is a need for collective action on this topic.

The Board approved the FMP Review and state compliance for coastal sharks for the 2025 fishing year, and granted continued *de minimis* status to Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Adopt the coastal shark specifications for 2027-2031 matching the default season start date and retention limits as specified by the National Marine Fisheries Service final rule published on November 8, 2023 (88 FR 77039). The fishing season will open on January 1, 2027 with a commercial possession limit of 55 large coastal sharks (LCS) other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip and 8 blacknose sharks per vessel trip. The commercial possession limit is subject to change; states will follow NMFS for in-season changes to the commercial possession limit.
Motion made by Mr. Clark and second by Dr. Rhodes. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the Coastal Sharks FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* request from Massachusetts.
Motion made by Ms. Madsen and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

SCIAENIDS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 9, 2026)

Press Release

Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment Finds Northern Stock Depleted but Not Overfished and Southern Stock Not Overfished Nor Experiencing Overfishing

Newport, RI – The Commission's Sciaenids Management Board received the results of the 2026 Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, which indicate the northern stock of Atlantic croaker (New Jersey through Cape Lookout, North Carolina) is depleted but not experiencing overfishing, while the southern stock (south of Cape Lookout, North Carolina through Florida) is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

"The Benchmark Stock Assessment is a considerable advancement in our understanding of Atlantic croaker spawning stock biomass and stock status which was able to determine a clearer dividing line between the northern and southern stocks for the first time. It was also the first assessment that we have been able to successfully include shrimp trawl data, a major source of croaker removals, into the assessment model," said Board Chair Ben Dyar of South Carolina. "These data have been considered in past assessments but have never been incorporated into the stock status determination. The assessment was fully endorsed by an external panel of fishery scientists as the best scientific information available to manage the croaker resource, and I commend the members of the Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee for their outstanding work on the Benchmark Stock Assessment."

The two Atlantic croaker stocks were separately assessed using the Stock Synthesis (SS) population modeling framework. Stock status at the end of the assessment time series was determined from the three-year average (2021-2023) of fishing mortality (*F*) and spawning stock biomass (SSB) compared to their threshold levels. Two *F* thresholds were recommended for each stock to better understand sources of fishing pressure, one including *F* for all ages in the population (i.e., age-0+) and one including *F* for only ages older than age-0 (i.e., age-1+). *F* for age-0 includes mortality from shrimp trawl fleets that catch

Atlantic croaker as bycatch while *F* for ages-1+ only includes mortality from recreational and commercial fisheries targeting Atlantic croaker. The assessment determined that the northern stock was depleted and not experiencing overfishing. The three-year average SSB at the end of the assessment was below the threshold and the three-year average Fs for both age ranges were below thresholds (see Figures on next page).

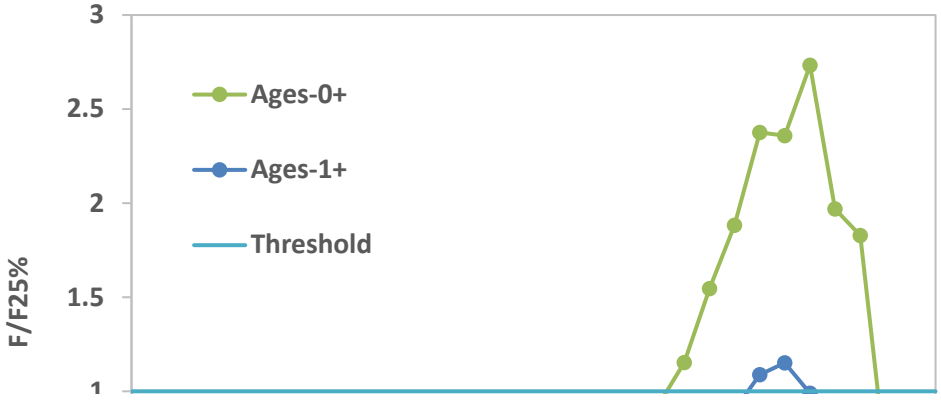
Stock status is described as depleted because it was not clear what caused the initial decline in abundance observed in the 2000s, though overfishing may have limited stock recovery following the

initial decline. In addition to the unfavorable SSB status, individual growth has declined and length and age structure of the stock remains truncated relative to those observed in the past.

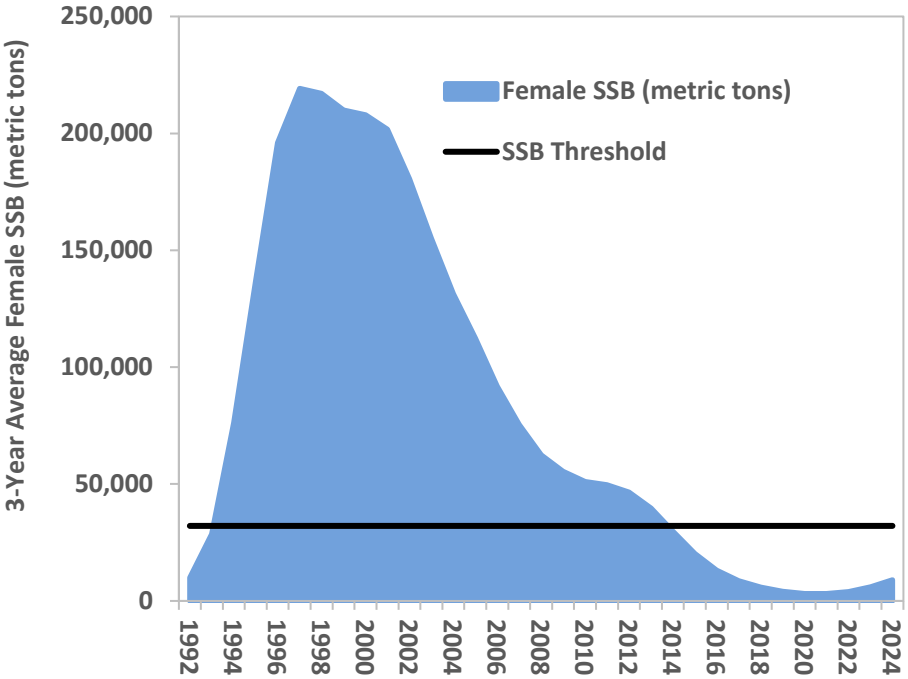
The southern stock was not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The southern stock SSB is at time series highs, well above the threshold, and *F* rates are at time series lows, well below thresholds, at the end of the assessment time series. There are no troubling signs for the condition of the southern stock as this time.

The Commission's Sciaenids Management Board accepted the Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use and tasked the Technical Committee with additional analyses to evaluate possible paths forward for management of the northern stock.

3-year Average Fishing Mortality (*F*) Estimates Compared to *F* Thresholds for the Northern Stock Average F for All Ages (Ages-0+) and Ages Older Than Age-0 (Ages-1+).



3-year Average Female Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) for the Northern Stock



A more detailed description of the stock assessment results, as well as the Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, will be available on the Commission website at https://asmfc.org/species/atlantic-croaker under News & Resources. For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, FMP Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org, or Jeff Kipp, Senior Stock Assessment Scientist, at jkipp@asmfc.org.

###

PR26-22

Meeting Summary

The Sciaenids Management Board also met to consider an update to the black drum indicators, provide guidance on the timing of future updates to the red drum traffic light analyses (TLAs), and receive an update on the 2028 spot benchmark stock assessment.

The Board received a presentation from the Chair of the Black Drum Technical Committee (TC) on the results of an update to the black drum indicators of abundance and stock and fishery characteristics. This update incorporated two additional years of data (2024 and 2025), as well as the newly calibrated Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) catch estimates. Overall, the TC did not observe any concerning trends in the indicators. The Board agreed with the TC recommendations to continue the course for the next assessment update to be completed in 2028. The assessment update will include the new, lower magnitude of catch estimated for recreational fisheries.

The Board provided guidance on the timing of future updates to the red drum TLAs. A TLA was developed for both red drum stocks during the 2024 benchmark assessment, originally intended as a tool to informally assess stock status between assessments. However, a robust, technically-sound Stock Synthesis model could only be developed for the southern stock, so the northern stock was assessed using the TLA. The Board agreed to update the TLA for only the northern stock following the release of preliminary 2026 MRIP estimates through wave 4, which are expected around December 15, 2026. This would allow the northern stock TLA results to be presented at the Board's 2027 Spring Meeting. The Board determined it would not be appropriate to update the southern stock's TLA at this time for several reasons including 1) changes to red drum regulations recently were implemented in Georgia (which go into effect on January 1, 2027) and South Carolina (which went into effect on July 1, 2026); and 2)Florida has a state-specific red drum assessment scheduled for 2027.

The Board received an update on the progress of the 2028 spot benchmark stock assessment A Data Review and Methods Workshop and an Assessment Workshop are tentatively scheduled for February 2027 and July 2027, respectively. Following these meetings, a Peer Review Workshop is tentatively scheduled for November 2027, and the Assessment and Peer Review Report is scheduled to be presented to the Board in February 2028.

Finally, the Board elected Ethan Simpson from Virginia as Vice-Chair. For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, FMP Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to accept the 2026 Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use.

Motion made by Mr. McDonough and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to nominate Ethan Simpson as Vice-Chair of the Sciaenids Management Board.

Motion made by Ms. Kennedy and seconded by Mr. Batsavage. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL NOVEMBER 10, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The ACCSP Coordinating Council met to consider the FY2027 Partner and Administrative proposals, and take action on the addition of two questions on the MRIP Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS).

The Coordinating Council moved to support the ACCSP administrative grant, four maintenance projects and four new project proposals as ranked and recommended by the Advisory and Operations Committees. The Coordinating Council approved funding at an expected $3.35M level, noting that any additional funds allocated will be put on the ACCSP administrative award to adapt to a 5 month lag in 2026 award start date. The Council noted appreciation to the Operations and Advisors on the work done to rank proposals and provide thoughtful recommendations to utilize available funding.

The ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee (RTC) chair presented two additional questions to be added to APAIS in 2027. Responses to both recommendations would be available in the downloadable MRIP micro-data, and not impact standard MRIP catch estimation calculations.

The Council approved the recommendation to adding a question on unavailable catch on type of predator observed in 2027 to include: sharks, bony Fish, dolphins/porpoises, seals/sea lions, birds, and other/unknown.

The Council discussed the addition of more granular spatial information on primary area fished to a 10-minute grid chart. The Council approved the recommended comparative sub-sample approach on all APAIS boat (private and For-Hire) assignments to ask the area fished question to every 3rd boat party, beginning in Wave 2 2027. This approach provides the opportunity to collect greater spatial resolution on area fished to support stock assessment splits (e.g., cod stock areas, activity N/S of Cape Hatteras, etc.) while simultaneously allowing broader testing before full implementation.

The Council was presented updates on ACCSP program activities, including recreational data collection initiatives, software development timelines, extensive updates in the fall commercial data load, and biological data load projects into the ACCSP Data Warehouse.

The Council elected Renee Zobel (NH) as Chair and Erika Burgess (FL) as Vice-chair. For more information, please contact Geoff White, ACCSP Director, at Geoff.white@accsp.org.

Motions

Move to approve FY2027 funding for the ACCSP maintenance and new projects as recommended by the Operations and Advisory Committees.

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Ms. Kennedy. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the addition of depredation question on list of predators to the MRIP APAIS in 2027 as recommended by the Recreational Technical Committee.
Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the addition of area fished question to the MRIP APAIS in 2027 as recommended by the Recreational Technical Committee.
Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Dr. McNamee. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Renee Zobel as chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council.
Motion made by Ms. Burgess and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve Erika Burgess as vice-chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council.
Motion made by Mr. Beal and seconded by Mr. Dyar. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10, 2026)

Press Release

ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Initiates Draft Addendum X to Consider Stakeholder Recommended Changes to the ARM Framework

Newport, RI – The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board initiated Draft Addendum X to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to consider changes to the Adaptative Resource Management (ARM) Framework, including modifying the horseshoe crab and red knot utility functions, and adding a minimum population threshold to the female horseshoe crab harvest policy function. The ARM Framework is designed to balance the commercial harvest of horseshoe crabs with the abundance of migratory shorebirds — in particular, the threatened rufa red knot — which depend on horseshoe crab eggs as a critical food source during their migration stopover in Delaware Bay Region each spring.

Draft Addendum X responds to recommendations from the horseshoe crab stakeholder engagement process completed earlier this year. Participants represented groups with interests in horseshoe crab harvest management in Delaware Bay: bait harvesters, bait dealers, the biomedical industry, ecosystem

conservation organizations, horseshoe crab conservation organizations, and shorebird conservation scientists and organizations. The process convened stakeholders to explore possible changes to the values-based components of the ARM Framework to better align the model with current stakeholder values. These components include the utility functions for horseshoe crabs and red knots, which assign quantitative measures of value to different levels of horseshoe crab harvest and red knot stopover abundance, and the harvest policy functions, which translate long-term projected horseshoe crab and red knot population trends into optimal annual harvest recommendations.

Draft Addendum X will consider three changes to the ARM Framework's utility and harvest policy functions based on recommendations with broad stakeholder agreement:

1. Update the horseshoe crab harvest utility function to reflect a male-to-female bait harvest value ratio of 2.65 males per 1 female, based on values elicited from bait harvesters and dealers.
2. Update the red knot abundance utility function using values elicited from conservation stakeholders.
3. Update the harvest policy function to trigger zero female harvest if the Delaware Bay population of female horseshoe crabs falls below 7 million crabs.
4. The Board will consider approval of Draft Addendum X for public comment in January 2027, with public hearings held in the late winter/early spring.

The Board also maintained the male-only harvest specifications for the Delaware Bay region established for 2027. The Board reviewed survey data for red knots and horseshoe crabs and determined no changes to the specifications are needed.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR26-19

Motions

Move to initiate an addendum to consider adopting the recommended changes to the ARM Framework from the stakeholder engagement process, with the horseshoe crab utility function, red knot utility function, and female horseshoe crab threshold considered as individual options. Motion made by Mr. Zimmerman and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the horseshoe crab FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2025 fishing year, and de minimis status for SC, GA, and FL.
Motion made by Mr. Haymans and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Management Board met to consider updates to the American Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plans (SFMPs) for Maine and Florida, River Herring Alternative Management Plan (AMP) for South Carolina, and the American Shad Habitat Plan for the Delaware River Cooperative. Additionally, the Board reviewed the Technical Committee report on exceeded sustainability metrics in New York and South Carolina, received an update on the New England Fishery Management Council's (NEFMC) action to modify shad and river herring management to reduce bycatch in the Atlantic herring fishery, and consider the timing of the next stock assessments for American shad and river herring.

SFMPs for American shad and river herring are required for all states and jurisdictions that have a commercial fishery under Amendment 2 (river herring) and Amendment 3 (American shad) to the

Shad and River Herring FMP. Plans are updated and reviewed by the Technical Committee every five years.

In Maine, there were no significant changes to the updated SFMP, which will continue to prohibit commercial harvest and maintain a recreational limit of 2 American shad per day, and the sustainability metrics were updated with data through 2025.

In South Carolina, there were no significant changes to the updated AMP. South Carolina's recreational fishery has a one-bushel (22.7 kg) fish aggregate daily creel for blueback herring in all rivers throughout the state; however very few recreational anglers target blueback herring, and none have been observed outside of the Santee-Cooper system. Additionally, legislation to change the current daily limit to a more enforceable creel (e.g., a specific number of fish) has been developed and vetted through an internal working group and is awaiting introduction to the South Carolina General Assembly.

In Florida, after nine consecutive years below sustainability metrics, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted to remove American shad from the statewide bag limit and become catch and release only. Therefore, Florida has determined to remove their SFMP until harvest may be permitted again.

The Delaware River Cooperative intends to continue using the American Shad Habitat Plan for the next five years. The plan notes the removal of 33 dams since 2020, with 4 more planned in Delaware and New Jersey. Additionally, the plan notes the increase of invasive species in the river basin in recent years, which may increase predation on American shad.

The Board approved Maine's SFMP, South Carolina's AMP, the Delaware River Cooperative's Habitat Plan, and the removal of Florida's SFMP. For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fshery Management Plan Coordinator, at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the updated American Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan from Maine, River Herring Alternative Management Plan from South Carolina, American Shad Habitat Plan from the Delaware River Cooperative, and the removal of the American Shad Sustainable Fishery Management Plan from Florida, as presented today.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Haymans. Motion approved by consent.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 10 & 11, 2026)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Reduces 2027 and 2028 TAC and Lowers Chesapeake Bay Cap through Addendum II

Newport, RI – The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board adopted further reductions to both the coastwide total allowable catch (TAC) and the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap. The Board set the 2027 and 2028 TAC at 170,000 mt and 155,000 mt, respectively. This represents a 17% reduction from the 2026 TAC and a 34% reduction from the 2025 TAC over the next two years.

Projections indicated these TACs would have a 0% chance of overfishing in 2027 and 2028 but would still result in a high probability of fishing mortality *(F)* being above the Ecological Reference Point (ERP) *F* target. In setting the TAC, the Board considered both the ecosystem benefits of leaving more menhaden in the water and the socioeconomic harms of further restricting harvest. The Board chose TAC levels for 2027 and 2028 that are projected to bring *F* closer to the ERP *F* target while mitigating some of the negative socioeconomic impacts on the menhaden fisheries and the fisheries that rely on menhaden for bait.

The Board also approved Addendum II to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The Addendum links the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap to the coastwide TAC by setting the Cap as 21.8% of the TAC with a maximum of 51,000 mt. Previously, the Bay Cap was set by Amendment 3 statically at 51,000 mt. The new measures will result in a Bay Cap of 37,123 mt in 2027 and 33,847 mt in 2028 under the TACs approved by the Board. The Board took this action due to concerns about the impact of reduction harvest on the ecosystem and other fisheries in the Bay, which is an important nursery ground for species like striped bass, osprey, and menhaden themselves. Additionally, the Addendum adds a provision where the Board will revisit the Bay Cap at least every 3 years and consider whether to initiate a management document to adjust how the Cap is set.

"The Board received over 48,000 comments from stakeholders on both sides of these issues – those that advocated for leaving more fish in the water as forage and those who sought to protect the livelihoods of harvesters who rely on menhaden," said Board Chair Joe Cimino of New Jersey. "The ERPs we have chosen strike a balance between these priorities in managing this species that is critically important to both the ecosystem and Atlantic coast fisheries. This decision was not entered into lightly and the Board wrestled with some of the scientific uncertainties around the issues. The Board highlighted new state, federal, and industry funding dedicated to research on menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. The Board looks forward to receiving the results of this research over the next few years to help inform the future management of menhaden."

The 2027 TAC is effective January 1, 2027, and the Bay Cap will become effective May 1, 2027, ahead of the reduction fishing season in Chesapeake Bay. The Addendum will be available on the Atlantic Menhaden webpage at https://asmfc.org/species/atlantic-menhaden/ under News and Resources. For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at jboyle@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR26-21

Meeting Summary

In addition to setting the specifications for the 2027 and 2028 fishing years and approving Addendum II to Amendment 3 regarding the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap, the Board also discussed next steps to address commercial quota reallocation,

According to Amendment 3, commercial quota allocations will be revisited at least every three years, when the Board can opt to maintain the current allocations or initiate management action. The current allocations were approved in October 2022. In 2025, the Board elected to maintain the current allocations but to revisit them at the 2026 Annual Meeting. The Board briefly touched on

the issue of potential reallocation but decided to address the issue more fully at the 2027 Winter Meeting.

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review for the 2025 Fishing Year was also up for consideration. However, due to time constraints, the Board decided to consider approval of the FMP Review via email. For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

TAC Specifications

Main Motion
Move to set the total allowable catch (TAC) for 2027 through 2028 at 114,200 metric tons (mt) to maintain a 50% probability of not exceeding the ERP F Target.
Motion made by Mr. Gates and seconded by Dr. Colden.
Motion to Substitute
Move to substitute to set the annual Atlantic coastwide TAC at 186,840 mt per year for 2027 and 2028.
Motion made by Del. McClure and seconded by Mr. Pugh. Motion fails (7 in favor, 11 opposed).

Main Motion
Move to set the total allowable catch (TAC) for 2027 through 2028 at 114,200 mt to maintain a 50% probability of not exceeding the ERP F Target.
Motion made by Mr. Gates and seconded by Dr. Colden.

Motion to Substitute
Move to substitute to set the 2027 coastwide total allowable catch (TAC) at 170,000 mt and the 2028 TAC at 155,000 mt.
Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Ms. Zobel. Motion carries (14 in favor, 4 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted
Move to set the 2027 coastwide total allowable catch (TAC) at 170,000 mt and the 2028 TAC at 155,000 mt.

Motion to Substitute
Move to substitute to set two-year specifications as follows: 2027 TAC of 158,814 mt (-15% from 2026 TAC) and 2028 TAC of 134,992 mt (-15% from 2027 TAC).
Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Mr. Bellavance. Motion fails (8 in favor, 10 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted
Move to set the 2027 coastwide total allowable catch (TAC) at 170,000 mt and the 2028 TAC at 155,000 mt.
Motion carries (11 in favor, 7 opposed).

Draft Addendum II

Main Motion

Move to adopt Option C1e to set the annual proportion of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap to 0.136 of the coastwide total allowable catch.

Motion made by Dr. Colden and seconded by Mr. LaFrance.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to adopt option 3.1 sub option C, linking the Bay Cap to the coastwide TAC to include the same TAC percentage reductions for 2027 and 2028 as approved by the Board during the November 10th 2026 menhaden Board meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Grist and seconded by Mr. Pugh. Motion fails (6 in favor, 11 opposed, 1 null).

Main Motion

Move to adopt Option C1e to set the annual proportion of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap to 0.136 of the coastwide total allowable catch.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to adopt Option C1c to set the annual proportion of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap to 0.218 of the coastwide total allowable catch.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Ms. Meserve. Motion passes (15 in favor, 3 opposed).

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to adopt Option C1c to set the annual proportion of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap to 0.218 of the coastwide total allowable catch.

Motion passes (14 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to adopt Option C2a to set the upper limit of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap at 51,000 metric tons with no lower limit.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Gates. Motion passes (13 in favor, 2 opposed, 3 abstentions).

Move to adopt in section 3.2.1, Option B2 for three quota periods of equal length and uneven harvest.

Motion made by Dr. Colden and seconded by Mr. LaFrance. Motion fails (1 in favor, 10 opposed, 6 abstentions, 1 null).

Move to adopt in section 3.2.1, Option A for status quo

Motion made by Mr. Grist and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion passes (8 in favor, 1 opposed, 7 abstentions, 2 null).

Move to adopt in Section 3.3, Option B to revisit the Chesapeake Bay cap every 3 years following implementation of the Addendum.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes by consent.

Move to approve the Addendum, as modified today, with an implementation date of May 1, 2027.
Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Kane. Motion passes by consent with 1 abstention from VA.

Main Motion
Move to not consider menhaden re-allocation for the next three years.
Motion by Ms. Burgess, second by Mr. Grist

Motion to Postpone
Move to postpone the motion until the ASMFC 2027 Winter Meeting.
Motion by Mr. Reid, second by Mr. Gates
Motion passes by consent

EXECUTIVE COMMTTEE (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Meeting Summary
The Executive Committee met to receive updates on the FY26 Audit, Species Declared Interest on Management Boards, legislation, CARES Act, For-Hire Permitting and Reporting Related to Sector Separation, Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Overview document and future annual meeting locations.

- The Chair of the Administrative Oversight Committee presented a summary of the FY26 Audit and recommended approval by the Executive Committee. The Audit did not identify any negative findings. The Executive Committee unanimously approved the FY26 Audit
- Staff provided a legislative update. This included the results of the recent election, a summary of the FY27 funding outlook, recent bill activity, and potential priorities for the upcoming 120th Congress.
- Staff provided an update on the CARES cooperative agreement. The Commission continues to try to collect funds from those who received funds deemed ineligible. The current deadline for the Commission to pay remaining funds has been extended by NOAA to December 4, 2027.
- The Executive Committee reviewed for-hire permitting and reporting related to sector separation. Each of the states verbally reviewed their current permitting and reporting requirements. The Executive Committee tasked staff with compiling the current state requirements as well as the federal requirements for presentation to the Executive Committee at the Winter Meeting.
- The ASMFC Chair introduced the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Overview document. Executive Committee members were asked to review the document and provide feedback to staff. Staff will update the document based on feedback and present to the ISFMP Policy Board at the Winter Meeting.
- Lastly, staff provided an update on future Annual Meeting locations.
    - South Carolina will host the 2027 Annual Meeting at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston from October 24 to 28.
    - Massachusetts will host the 2028 Annual Meeting; Pennsylvania in 2029; Georgia in 2030 and Connecticut in 2031.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org.

Motions
On behalf of the Administrative Oversight Committee, move to approve FY2026 Audit.
Motion by Mr. Haymans. Motion carries.

Move to recommend the ISFMP Policy Board approve the new ISFMP Charter language on declared interest reviews.
Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

HABITAT COMMTTEE (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Meeting Summary
The ASMFC Habitat Committee met to review committee species assignments, discuss the Commissioner survey results and ASMFC habitat priorities, finalize the 2026 Habitat Hotline Atlantic, and share updates on emerging habitat issues and the Fish Habitats of Concern (FHOC) Mapping Project. The Committee reviewed previous species board and technical committee summaries and received an updated summary of the ASMFC Commissioner survey (23 respondents). Respondents identified spawning habitat as the top information need and dredging, offshore wind, and watershed impacts as the top industry concerns. Members discussed using these results to set ASMFC habitat priorities in a 1–3-year plan, which will be communicated to the ISFMP Policy Board.

The Committee worked to finalize the Habitat Hotline Atlantic (2026 issue), which includes the Commissioner survey summary, feature articles on horseshoe crab spawning in salt marshes and a fish-friendly turbine on the Roanoke River, state updates, and an ACFHP update highlighting FY26 projects. Most content is final; updates from Connecticut and Rhode Island are outstanding. The fisheries production value of habitat was suggested as a theme for the 2027 issue. Committee members also received an update on the FHOC Mapping Project, which will translate ASMFC's narrative FHOC designations into habitat layers for each species and life stage, plus a composite map showing where designations overlap. The project is in its early stages, and external funding opportunities are being pursued. Members discussed starting with a pilot for data-rich species and pooling small state contributions as match for larger grants. The Committee also congratulated Dr. Wilson Laney on receiving the Captain David H. Hart Award; he is only the second person to receive all three ASMFC awards.

For more information, please contact Simen Kaalstad, Habitat Committee Coordinator, at skaalstad@asmfc.org.

COMMISSION BUSINESS SESSION (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Meeting Summary
The Business Session of the Commission met to review and consider approval of the 2027 Action Plan and re-elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for another year. The Commission approved, with minor edits, the 2027 Action Plan, which guides the activities of the Commission and its programs over the next year. The Plan will be available on the Commission's website at https://asmfc.org/about/.

The Commission also re-elected Dan McKiernan of Massachusetts and Doug Haymans of Georgia as its Chair and Vice-chair, respectively. For more information, please contact Bob Beal, Executive Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org.

Motions
Move to approve the 2027 Action Plan, as modified today.
Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Ms. Zobel. Motion carries without objection.

On behalf of the Nomination Committee, move to elect Dan McKiernan as Commission Chair Doug Haymans as Commission Vice Chair.
Motion carries without objection.

SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Meeting Summary
The Spiny Dogfish Management Board met to discuss the spiny dogfish accountability measures proposed rule and consider complementary action.

In December 2025, the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils took final action on a framework adjustment to change accountability measures in the federal Spiny Dogfish FMP, and NOAA Fisheries published the proposed rule to implement the Framework in October 2026. Public comments close on November 12, 2026. If approved, annual catch limit (ACL) overages would be calculated using a 3-year average of total catch from all sources compared to a 3-year average of ACLs and payback amounts would be scaled to biomass level as follows:

- At or above target biomass: No payback would be required for ACL overages.
- At or below 75% of target biomass: 100% paybacks would be required from the next applicable year
- Between 75% and 100% of target biomass: The payback amount would be calculated on a sliding linear scale based on biomass level (e.g. a 50% payback would be required when the stock is at 87.5% of the target biomass)

The Board discussed the payback provision of the Interstate FMP, which requires a pound for pound payback from the region or state that incurred the overage in the subsequent fishing season, and how it may interact with the revised federal measures. Under certain circumstances, the Board raised concern about the possibility of a double payback, where an overage would be repaid under both the federal and Interstate FMPs. However, staff noted the flexibility of the Board to set a coastwide quota separately from the federal quota and alleviate the issue. The Board noted that under the current circumstances where spiny dogfish are above their biomass target, the Framework resolves concerns of double paybacks as commercial harvest overages will be addressed solely by the Interstate FMP, and they decided not to initiate action at this time.

For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at jboyle@asmfc.org.

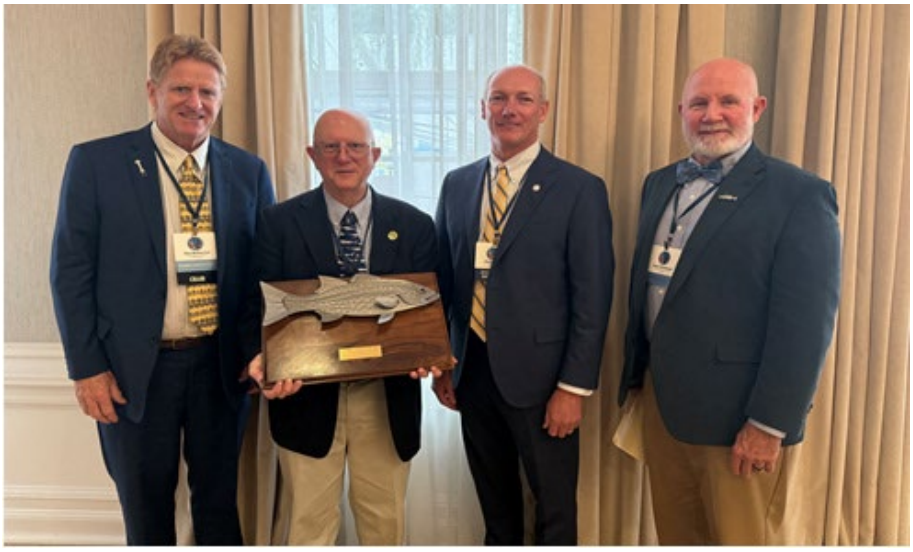
Motions
No motions made.

CAPTAIN DAVID H. HART AWARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Press Release

Dr. Wilson Laney Receives Captain David H. Hart Award for Outstanding Contributions to Atlantic Coast Fisheries

Newport, RI – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is pleased to announce Dr. Wilson Laney, formerly with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as the recipient of the Captain David H. Hart Award, the Commission's highest honor recognizing outstanding individual contributions to marine fisheries along the Atlantic coast.



From left: ASMFC Chair Dan McKiernan from Massachusetts, Captain David H. Hart Award recipient Wilson Laney, ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal, and Awards Committee Chair Spud Woodward of Georgia

Dr. Laney is being recognized for more than three decades of exceptional service to Atlantic coast fisheries science and interstate fisheries management. Throughout his career, he has been a dedicated scientist, collaborator, mentor, and advocate for sound science, contributing to virtually every aspect of the Commission's work, including stock assessments, fishery monitoring, habitat conservation, and fishery management planning.

"Wilson contributions to Atlantic coast fisheries and this Commission are truly extraordinary. His dedication to sound science, his ability to bring people together, and his tireless commitment to the conservation of our marine resources exemplify everything the Captain David H. Hart Award represents. His legacy will continue to benefit fisheries professionals and the resources we manage for years to come," stated Spud Woodward, ASMFC Awards Committee Chair.

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Laney played an instrumental role in establishing the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership and provided longstanding leadership to the Commission's Habitat Committee. He also made significant contributions to numerous Commission technical committees and management boards, helping advance science-based management for a wide range of Atlantic coast species.

One of his most notable contributions was his leadership of the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruises, a research initiative that spanned 38 years. Beginning in the program's early years in 1987, Dr. Laney helped coordinate vessels, researchers, funding, and field operations, bringing together more than 125 scientists and graduate students from state and federal agencies and universities. The cruises generated valuable information on striped bass movements, growth, survival, and mortality, with tagging data contributing to the coastwide striped bass stock assessment and providing a unique source of information on the species' wintering grounds.

Dr. Laney's commitment to fisheries conservation and science has continued well beyond his retirement from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. He remains actively engaged in fisheries research, habitat conservation, and mentoring colleagues and students, demonstrating an enduring dedication to the resources and professionals he has served throughout his career.

Named for Captain David H. Hart of New Jersey, one of the Commission's longest-serving members and a tireless advocate for the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources, the award recognizes individuals whose contributions have made a lasting difference to Atlantic coast fisheries.

Dr. Laney exemplifies the spirit of this award through his scientific excellence, collaborative leadership, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to the stewardship of marine resources. The Commission congratulates Dr. Wilson Laney on this well-deserved recognition and thanks him for his extraordinary contributions to Atlantic coast fisheries.

###

PR26-20

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 11, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to receive an overview of revised recreational catch estimates; consider next steps for the Work Group on Future Management; and receive a progress update on the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

The Board received an overview of the revised striped bass recreational catch estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) based on the improved Fishing Effort Survey (FES) design. The revised estimates of striped bass harvest and live releases are overall 43% lower than the prior estimates. When considering only the more recent years from 2018-2025, striped bass harvest and live releases estimates are 27% and 29% lower than prior estimates, respectively. These revised estimates will be incorporated into the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

The Board considered recommendations on next steps for the Work Group on Future Management from the group's Steering Committee. For the hatchery stocking task, the Board agreed with the Steering Committee's recommendation to form a sub-group to address this task; work can begin after sub-group nominations are received and approved by the Board. For the recreational release mortality task, the Board confirmed continued interest in this task to consider gear/tackle modifications. The Board also added gear restrictions by season and shark depredation as additional

topics to consider. The Board agreed with the Steering Committee's recommendation to utilize the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel as the starting point for discussion. Staff will schedule an Advisory Panel meeting for early/mid 2027. For the biological reference points task, the Board agreed with the Steering Committee's recommendations to address this at a management objectives workshop to be conducted after the stock assessment is complete. However, there was concern that a management objectives workshop would need to be much larger in scale than originally planned in order to capture the breadth of stakeholder perspectives. The Steering Committee will meet to discuss what a management objectives workshop would look like in more detail. There was also concern about waiting until the assessment is complete to consider reference points, though the Board also recognized the value of waiting until the assessment is complete, so stakeholders have the most updated information on the stock. Staff clarified that the intent of the Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) is to develop a method/tools for evaluating a range of biological reference points to present to the peer review panel. The goal is to provide the Board with the ability to select biological reference points after the assessment so the Board and stakeholders can consider tradeoffs between fishing mortality and abundance/ biomass/age structure, etc. to determine which meets their management objectives. Finally, for the remaining tasks regarding other river spawning areas, recruitment drivers, and reproductive contribution of different size fish, the Board agreed with the Steering Committee's recommendation to work on those tasks after the assessment is complete.

The Board received a progress update on the 2027 benchmark stock assessment. The Assessment Workshop took place in late August, and the assessment is on track for a late May or early June peer review.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org.

Motions
No motions made.

ISFMP POLICY BOARD (NOVEMBER 12, 2026)

Meeting Summary
The ISFMP Policy Board met to jointly discuss the Sector Separation Amendment with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council); receive a report from the Executive Committee (see earlier Executive Committee summary); review newly released Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES) estimates; receive an update on the Recreational Angler Partnership Improvement Directive (RAPID) Initiative; receive committee reports from the Law Enforcement Committee (see earlier LEC summary), the Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership (see earlier AFCHP summary), and the Habitat Committee (see earlier summary), the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS), and the Assessment Science Committee (ASC). Lastly, it received and update on stock assessments for species boards that did not meet this week.

Joint Policy Board & Council Discussion on Sector Separation Amendment
The Policy Board met jointly with the Council to review the draft alternatives included in the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment, consider feedback from the Recreational Sector

Separation Stakeholder Workshop, and provide guidance to the Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT) on further development of the amendment.

The Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop was held September 23–24, 2026, in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, to gather stakeholder input to inform continued development of the amendment. The amendment considers approaches for managing the for-hire and private recreational fishing modes separately for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, as well as related permitting and reporting requirements. Specifically, the amendment includes three sets of alternatives: (1) Mode Management Guidelines; (2) Federal For-Hire Permit Requirements; and (3) State-Level Permitting and Reporting Requirements. Based on feedback received at the workshop, the Policy Board and Council narrowed the scope of the amendment by removing several alternatives and providing additional guidance on the remaining alternatives.

For Alternative Set 1, Mode Management Guidelines, the Policy Board and Council removed Alternatives 1C (For-Hire Resiliency Measures Setting Process) and 1F (One-Time Baseline Measures Recalibration) from further consideration. The bodies also streamlined Alternative 1E (Letter of Authorization, or LOA, Program for Federally Permitted For-Hire Vessels) by removing several sub-options. Remaining sub-options for Alternative 1E will focus on the length of participation, eligibility criteria, additional reporting requirements, and process for establishing regional LOA measures. Additionally, Alternative 1E will now only apply to species eligible for federal recreational conservation equivalency under the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (note that this differs from conservation equivalency as defined in the Commission's overarching Conservation Equivalency Guidelines). Currently, federal conservation equivalency is available only for summer flounder and black sea bass; however, this alternative would also apply to scup if it becomes eligible for conservation equivalency in the future.

Regarding further development of Alternative 1B (Uniform Approaches/Guidelines for Mode Management), the Policy Board and Council agreed that the FMAT/PDT should consider a maximum allowable level of deviation between the for-hire and private recreational modes, as well as guidelines to consider each mode's recent contribution to catch and harvest during the recreational measures setting process. The bodies also discussed access to the Recreation Demand Model (RDM) emphasizing the value of using the model to perform analyses of the remaining alternatives.

For Alternative Set 2, Federal For-Hire Permit Requirements, the Council and Policy Board removed Alternative 2C (Require Minimum Threshold of Participation in the For-Hire Survey), as well as the following sub-alternatives from Alternative 2B:

- 2B-1. Moratorium on New For-Hire Permits; and
- 2B-2. Limited Entry System with Qualification Criteria Designed to Reduce Latent Effort.

The remaining alternatives in this set will focus on developing a Tiered Permit System that would establish two levels of federal for-hire permits based on activity level or other qualifying criteria.

All alternatives under Alternative Set 3, State-Level Permitting and Reporting Requirements, were removed from further consideration. However, it was suggested that state-level reporting be considered under Alternative 1B as a potential prerequisite for states to be able to adopt mode splits. A requirement for state-level reporting across all states will not be further pursued through this

action. However, the Commission's Executive Committee may continue broader discussions regarding state-level permitting and reporting.

Finally, the Policy Board and Council voted to remove bluefish from consideration in the amendment. While the amendment now only considers the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP, the action will remain under the purview of the Policy Board.

The Policy Board and Council are next scheduled to discuss amendment development at the Commission's Winter Meeting in January 2027. Prior to that meeting, staff will work with Commission and Council leadership to develop possible timeline revisions for consideration. To follow the continued development of the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment, please visit the Recreational Sector Separation Action Tracker page on the Commission's website.

For more information on summer flounder, scup, and bluefish, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at ctuohy@asmfc.org. For more information on black sea bass, please contact Tracey Bauer at tbauer@asmfc.org.

FES Estimates

In 2026, NOAA Fisheries updated its recreational fishing effort and catch estimates dating back to 1981. These updated estimates reflect the improved 2026 Fishing Effort Survey design. The FES estimates the number of recreational saltwater fishing trips taken from private boats and shore. NOAA revised the fishing activity question order and increased the frequency of the mail survey administration from every two months to monthly. The new design addresses overreporting of private boat and shore fishing trips and generally produces lower effort estimates. MRIP staff presented revised estimates to the Policy Board. Key take aways include:

- While the updated total recreational catch estimates are systematically lower, historical trends remain largely the same.
- The magnitude of the reduction in total catch estimates varies by species because the updated effort estimates differ by state, fishing mode (shore vs. private boat), and time of year
- Reductions are larger for fisheries occurring in low-activity months via private boat.
- Data outliers across the time series are reduced.
- Management changes will occur over time, and not all fisheries will be affected at the same time. Timing will vary depending on assessment schedules, management processes, and when updated scientific advice becomes available.

RAPID Initiative

In April 2026, NOAA Fisheries introduced RAPID as a core component of its updated National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. RAPID is the collaborative process to remodel and improve recreational fisheries data collection through a series of national workshops. It is a unique opportunity to co-develop a framework for recreational fisheries data collection that builds trust and stronger partnerships between anglers, state agencies, Regional Councils, Interstate Commissions, and NOAA. Staff provided the Policy Board an update of recent work. A national steering committee is helping to guide and support the process with eight regional workshops to be held early next year. The workshops will include a discussion of what is working well, what can be improved, and what may need to be removed from the current recreational data systems. It will be an opportunity to identify resources needed to improve recreational data collection at a regional and national level.

There will be angler listening sessions in early December, information on these can be found on NOAA's website.

ASMFC Stock Assessment Schedule
Finally, the Policy Board received an update for ongoing stock assessments for species whose management board did not meet this week. There will be an Atlantic sturgeon methods workshop the week of March 9, 2027. Atlantic cobia has an assessment workshop scheduled for the week of December 14, 2026 and a review workshop the week of May 18, 2027 through SEDAR 107. The stock assessment subcommittee is being formed for the 2028 tautog benchmark stock assessment. The subcommittee will draft terms of reference for approval by the Tautog Management Board in January 2027.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org.

Motions
Move to remove the following draft alternatives from the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment:

- **1C. For-Hire Resiliency Measures Setting Process**
- **1F. Baseline Measures Recalibration for For-Hire Vessels**
- **2B-1. Moratorium on New For-Hire Permits**
- **2B-2. Limited Entry System with Qualification Criteria Designed to Reduce Latent Effort**
- **2C. Require Minimum Threshold of Participation in the For-Hire Survey**
- **3B. Require State-Level For-Hire Limited Entry Programs**
- **3C. Require State-Level For-Hire Reporting**

Policy Board: Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes by consent.
Council: Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Blazer. Motion passes by consent.

Main Motion
Move to remove the following Alternative 1E. Letter of Authorization (LOA) Program Sub-Alternatives from consideration in the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment:

- **1E-1-a. All four species**
- **1E-1-c. Species not eligible for conservation equivalency (scup, bluefish)**
- **1E-4-a. Must complete and cooperate with surveys (e.g., requirement to participate in For-Hire Survey)**
- **1E-5-c. Coastwide LOA measures**

Policy Board: Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Bellavance.
Council: Motion made by Mr. Risi and seconded by Mr. Hueth.

Motion to Amend
Move to amend to remove 1E-4-a from this list.
Policy Board: Motion made by Mr. Haymans and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes by consent.
Council: Motion made by Ms. Beckwith and seconded Mr. Janeski. Motion passes by consent.

Main Motion as Amended
Move to remove the following Alternative 1E. Letter of Authorization (LOA) Program Sub-Alternatives from consideration in the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment:

- **1E-1-a. All four species**
- **1E-1-c. Species not eligible for conservation equivalency (scup, bluefish)**
- **1E-5-c. Coastwide LOA measures**

Policy Board: Motion passes by consent.
Council: Motion passes by consent.

Move to remove bluefish as a species for consideration in the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment.
Policy Board: Motion made Mr. Bellavance and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion passes (11 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention, 2 null).
Council: Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Risi. Motion passes (18 in favor).

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 12, 2026)

Press Release

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board Approves Draft Addendum XXXVII for Public Comment

Draft Addendum Considers Changes to Scup Commercial Management

Newport, RI – The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) approved Draft Addendum XXXVII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for public comment. Draft Addendum XXXVII is intended to complement the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Framework 20 for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass, which was approved for final action in August 2026. The Draft Addendum considers an option to forgive commercial scup quota period overage paybacks in years where the annual quota is not exceeded. The current payback requirements for the commercial scup fishery may unnecessarily constrain harvest opportunities and disrupt the fishery when quota period overages do not result in an annual quota overage.

A press release will follow with details on the availability of the document for public comment, the public hearing schedule, and how to submit written comments. This information will also be available on the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Draft Addendum XXXVII Action Tracker webpage. The Board will meet to review submitted comments and consider final action on the addendum in January 2027 at the Commission's Winter Meeting in Arlington, VA.

For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR26-23

Meeting Summary
The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board also met to review recent black sea bass state-by-state commercial quota allocation performance. Black sea bass state-by-state commercial quota allocations were last modified through Addendum XXXIII (2021), which was intended to address disparities between some states' historical allocations and current availability of black sea bass. Addendum XXXIII directs the Board to routinely review black sea bass state-by-state

commercial quotas, not to exceed 5 years between reviews. The Board agreed to meet again at the Commission's Winter Meeting in January 2027 to continue a discussion of black sea bass commercial state-by-state quota allocations. The Board requested additional analyses of quota performance and information on the feasibility of adding quota rollover provisions to the black sea bass fishery management plan, as well as updates from Virginia and Maryland regarding possible paths forward to improve utilization and allow transfers of their respective state's quota allocations.

For more information on black sea bass, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org, and for more information on scup and summer flounder, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve Draft Addendum XXXVII on scup (i.e., golden sea bream) commercial management for public comment as presented today.

Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion passes by unanimous consent.