



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

75th Annual Meeting Summary

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

75th Annual Meeting
Bar Harbor, ME
October 23 – 27, 2016

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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Members shared information on their states' participation levels in the **Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact**. In most cases adherence to the compact includes recognition of another state's action to suspend or revoke licenses of a resource violator, and an equivalent suspension in the cooperating state. Members discussed problems of sharing data on license suspensions, and inconsistencies among the states in how provisions of the compact may be applied. While the language of the compact is general in nature, some states do not apply it to commercial or fisheries violations. The LEC Coordinator will review and compile information for more in-depth review by the committee.

Dan McKiernan requested information from the LEC on state regulations or statutes that address **combining recreational and commercial landings** on the same trip. Members provided general information from their states, which varied widely in approaches. Mark Robson was directed to forward additional details of state regulations for Massachusetts' use when those are provided.

The work of the **Aerial Enforcement Subcommittee** was reported to the LEC. There are two primary issues. First, the current *Enforceability Guidelines* ratings of management measures include separate ratings for "Aerial Enforcement". The LEC has concluded that these ratings are not justified as a stand-alone category. Rather, as with vessels, vehicles and other equipment, aerial resources are part of the suite of tools that enable at-sea and dockside enforcement. The LEC recommends that this category be removed from the rating system, conduct an updated survey with the current LEC members, and amend the guidelines document. The second issue relates to funding of aerial enforcement work by NOAA through joint enforcement agreements (JEAs) with the states. NOAA OLE reported on changes underway that will guide how state enforcement activities will be reimbursed through JEAs.

Commissioner Dennis Abbott presented information on a fund-raising **effort to honor Chris Schoppmeyer** for his years of dedication to the Town of Newmarket, NH, and for his distinguished career in conservation enforcement. Funds will be used to secure land for a local park dedicated to Mr. Schoppmeyer.

Members shared information from their respective agencies on recent **staffing and training activities**. Several LEC members reported on the high-value training offered by the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Leadership Academy. The LEC currently has two members of the Academy steering team and three additional recent graduates.

For more information, please contact Mark Robson, LEC Coordinator, at markrobson2015@outlook.com.

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 25, 2016)

Press Release

ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Cobia PID for Public Comment

Bar Harbor, ME – The Commission's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Plan approved for public comment the Public Information Document (PID) for the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Cobia. As the first step in the FMP development process, the PID provides stakeholders with an opportunity to inform the Commission about changes observed in the

fishery and provide feedback on potential management measures as well as any additional issues that should be included in the Draft FMP. Specifically, the PID seeks comment on the management unit; goals and objectives of the plan; commercial and recreational measures; coastwide, regional or state-by-state measures; and other issues.

This action responds to a request by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) for the Commission to consider joint or complementary management of the resource in light of the significant overage of the 2015 recreational annual catch limit (ACL) and the impact of those overages to state management. Further, during most recent years, a majority of recreational landings of cobia along the Atlantic coast occurs in state waters. The Commission considered this request in August and agreed to move forward with the development of a complementary FMP.

Widely distributed throughout the western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, cobia are managed as two distinct groups – the Gulf Migratory Group and the Atlantic Migratory Group. The Atlantic Migratory Group, which range from New York to Georgia, is managed by the SAFMC. The east coast of Florida falls under the Gulf Migratory Group. The SAFMC manages the east coast of Florida sub-ACL which is set by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Recreational landings of the Atlantic Migratory Group in 2015 were approximately 1.5 million pounds, 145% over the ACL, resulting in a June 20, 2016 closure of the fishery by NOAA Fisheries. Commercial cobia landings in 2015 were 83,148 pounds, 38% over the ACL. Late landings reports in 2015 precluded a timely closure of the commercial fishery.

Concerns were expressed by some states whose recreational seasons would have been significantly reduced by federal waters closure due to the 2015 quota overage. Instead of following the federal closure, several states developed alternate management strategies to reduce economic impacts to their state fisheries which resulted in differing regulations for federal and state water fishing. An intent of the complementary Cobia FMP is to provide the states the flexibility to respond to changes in the fishery and stock that meet their state fisheries needs without impacting federal fishermen while meeting the goals and objectives of the FMP.

The PID will be available on the Commission website early next week under Public Input (<http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>). It is anticipated states from Delaware through Florida will be conducting hearings over the next couple of months. The details of those hearings will be released in a subsequent press release. For more information, please contact Louis Daniel at ldaniel@asmfc.org or 252-342-1478.

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PR16-29

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board met to review the Red Drum Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) to investigation of the appropriateness of current biological reference points and development of an overfished reference point, investigate the feasibility of an F-based reference point that looks strictly at the harvest of juvenile red drum, evaluate how red drum life history and current regulations may limit the validity of an age-based model, and provide a recommendation on how to proceed with the Stock Synthesis III (SS3) model. The Red Drum

TC and SAS jointly constructed a report recommending the use of spawning potential ratios as appropriate reference points for management use. The TC and SAS do not recommend using a reference point for overfished status because of difficulties in reliably estimating spawning stock biomass for this stock. The TC and SAS do not recommend using a juvenile fishing mortality reference point for management because this reference point would require information on a stock-recruit relationship (which is currently unreliable), would not account for adult mortality, and would not be able to reliably account for recruitment variability. The TC and SAS recommended the use of an age-structured model and did not recommend SS3 as the modeling framework at this time due to current data limitations. The TC and SAS recommended using a statistical catch-at-age model (consistent with that used in SEDAR 18), with the addition and continuation of current survey indices, as the base model for the stock assessment.

The Board discussed the timing and ways in which the red drum stock assessment could be completed. Currently, only data through 2013 is being used in the assessment model. The decision before the Board was to complete the ongoing assessment using the currently available data and plan to update the assessment soon after its completion or to delay the completion of the assessment until data for more recent years could be compiled and incorporated into the stock assessment data set. The Board decided to have the TC/SAS complete the ongoing assessment through 2013, with the intent of updating with data through 2015 or 2016 soon after the assessment's completion.

Lastly, the Board approved FMP Reviews, State Compliance Reports, and *de minimis* statuses where applicable for black drum, Spanish mackerel, and spotted seatrout.

For more information, please contact Michael Schmidtke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mscmidtke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to accept the Draft Cobia FMP Public Information Document for public comment as amended.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Ms. Fegley. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to accept the FMP Review and compliance reports for the black drum 2014 and 2015 fishing years.

Motion made by Dr. Rhodes and seconded by Dr. Laney. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to approve the FMP Review and compliance reports for the Spanish mackerel 2015 fishing year, approve *de minimis* status for Georgia, New Jersey, and Delaware.

Motion made by Dr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to accept the FMP Review and compliance reports for the spotted seatrout 2015 fishing year, and approve *de minimis* status for New Jersey, and Delaware.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Geer. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to accept Bill Parker, Glenn Ulrich, Lee Southward, and Aaron Kelly to the South Atlantic Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Dr. Rhodes and seconded by Mr. Batsavage. Motion passes unanimously.