



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2011 Winter- Spring Meeting Summary

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

2011 Winter-Spring Meeting
Alexandria, Virginia
March 21-24, 2011

For more information, please
contact the identified individual,
Robert Beal, ISFMP, or
Tina Berger, Public Affairs

703/842-0740

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 21, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Board met to review the current version of Draft Addendum XVII, which it initiated to reduce exploitation in the Southern New England (SNE) stock by 50 or 75% to begin stock rebuilding. To respond to the Board objectives, the Draft Addendum evaluated multiple input and output control measures, including limited entry, trap limits, minimum and maximum sizes, escape vents, mandatory female v-notch requirements, a male-only fishery, closed seasons, closed areas, and quota-based landing limits to include in the Draft Addendum.

The document acknowledged the effectiveness of certain output controls (like a quota based on landings) and input controls. It also looked at the ability to effectively monitor, administer, and uniformly enforce selected management tools in the short and long-term. The Draft Addendum has a two phase approach to initiate SNE stock rebuilding, with a preferred option to utilize input controls for an initial short-term period (2-4 years), with the intent to transition all jurisdictions towards effective and uniformly enforceable long-term management tools.

The draft document proposes the immediate establishment of a subcommittee to evaluate all jurisdictions ability to monitor various output controls, such as a quota-based approach. The two phase approach is proposed to allow time for federal regulators to complete their regulatory action intended to align state and federal trap allocations in Area 2, (see Section 2.1.2—for details). The Board discussed the significant impact a 50 to 75% reduction would have on the fishery. Due to this impact, a proposal for a 25 and 50% reduction in traps was presented and added to the document; thus, changing the original purpose of the addendum to reduce exploitation by 50 – 75% in exploitation.

The Board did not take action to approve the document for public comment at this time. The Plan Development Team (PDT) will add an option for trap reductions to the document. The State of New Jersey also expressed the desire to gather input from the Area 3, 4, and 5 Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMT). The Board agreed that if any additional proposals are to be considered for inclusion in the Draft Addendum they must be presented to the PDT no later than June 15, 2011. Proposals will not be accepted beyond this date.

In May 2010, the Board approved a motion to initiate the development of an addendum to respond to the Technical Committee report finding of recruitment failure in the SNE lobster stock area. In response to this motion, the Area 3 LCMT met in October 2010 and presented a rebuilding plan to the Lobster Board in November. The Board did not review the Plan at this time but did agree to include it in Draft Addendum XVII. The PDT's work on the draft did not address area-specific plans and promoted a single stock-wide approach for the first phase of the proposed measures. Therefore, a separate Draft Addendum (XVIII) was developed to address the LCMT proposed plan for LCMA 3. The Board reviewed the draft addendum which includes a trap reduction plan and changes to the Area 3 transferability plan. The Board has delayed action on the draft until it considers action on Draft Addendum XVII.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or at 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to add an option for a 25% reduction in Draft Addendum XVII for Public Comment. Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion fails (0 in favor, 10 opposed).

Move to amend the Draft Addendum with two modifications. First, to establish the timeline for the biological measures by phasing the minimum size increase in either over a two or four-year period. Second, to incorporate the language presented by Bill McElroy to accomplish effort reduction and consolidation but to add an option of doubling the goal of the program by doubling the target of trap allocation reduction from 25 to 50% on the same timeframe as presented in the proposal. This means the initial reduction in traps would be 10% with a 5% cut in each year thereafter.

Motion made by Mr. McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion passes (Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, MD, NMFS; Opposed – NJ; Abstentions – VA, NC).

Move to amend to exclude Areas 4 and 5 from Draft Addendum XVII for Public Comment. Motion made by Mr. Himchak and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion fails (3 in favor, 7 opposed).

Move to postpone taking Draft Addendum XVII to public comment until the August Board Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Himchak. Motion passes (6 in favor, 4 opposed).

ATLANTIC HERRING SECTION (March 21, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Herring Section reviewed the status of the 2010 fishery. Preliminary landings based on a comparison of IVR and VTR data suggest that there were no overages in Area 1A and 1B as was previously thought. Final landings should be available around summer 2011.

The Section also considered Draft Addendum III, which proposed to allocate one or two additional landing days to small mesh bottom trawl and small purse seine vessels per week during weeks that days out restrictions are set. Section members reviewed public comment and input from its Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Law Enforcement Committee on the proposed measures. Following deliberation, a motion to adopt provisions in the Draft Addendum failed due to lack of a majority vote.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to include Options 2 and 5 with the exception that there would be a prohibition on carrier vessels on the extra landing day.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion fails (2 in favor, 5 opposed).

SHAD & RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 22, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Board met to review a River Herring Sustainable Fishery Management Plan (SFMP) from New Hampshire, discuss alosine bycatch management measures currently being developed in the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Amendments 5 and 14, consider approval of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the River Herring Stock Assessment and discuss committee membership and leadership.

The Board reviewed New Hampshire's revised River Herring SFMP, as required under Amendment 2. The proposed plan contains a fishery-dependent sustainability target of a harvest level that results in an exploitation rate that does not exceed 20% in their "Great Bay Indicator Stock" and a fishery-dependent sustainability target escapement level of 350 fish per acre of available spawning habitat (~72,500 fish). Based on the advice of its Technical Committee, Board approved the New Hampshire SFMP. This is the fifth SFMP the Board has approved. States or jurisdictions without an approved plan in place will be required to close their commercial and recreational fisheries by January 1, 2012.

The Board received an update on federal waters shad and river herring bycatch management measures currently being developed through the New England Fishery Management Council's (NEFMC) Draft Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring FMP and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) Draft Amendment 14 to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish FMP. At the NEFMC Meeting in February, options for a portside monitoring program and "move-along" rule were removed from the Draft Amendment 5, while an option for consideration of a bycatch cap upon the completion of the ASMFC river herring stock assessment and the development of shad and river herring "catch triggers" were added to the document. At the MAFMC Meeting in February, options for a portside monitoring program were also removed from Draft Amendment 14 while options for 100% observer coverage and a river herring and/or shad mortality cap were advanced for further analysis. The Board discussed the potential development of a federal plan for alosines or inclusion of shad and river herring as a "stock in the fishery" in Draft Amendment 14.

The Board reviewed Terms of Reference (TOR) as proposed by the River Herring Stock Assessment Subcommittee. The Board discussed the inclusion of an additional TOR specifically addressing bycatch estimates and the removal of a specific TOR dealing with minority reports. Based on the discussion, the Board approved the TOR, including the bycatch TOR and excluding the minority report TOR. The stock assessment is expected to be completed by the end of 2011. The Board was updated on current Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) membership. Three members of the SAS had recently stepped down from the committee due to other commitments and John Sweka (US Fish and Wildlife Service) was recently appointed as the new Chair of the SAS. The TC Chair will be vacant in April. There is currently no Vice-Chair on the committee.

For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Main Motion:

Move to remove the tabled motion “To approve the New Hampshire River Herring Sustainable Fisheries Plan with the addition of a fisheries-independent target that equates to a 50 percent average of the river herring returns to the fish ladders in the Great Bay Indicator Stock from 1990-2009. This equates to 70,369 fish. If the three-year running average of the annual river herring returns to the fish ladders in the Great Bay Indicator Stock falls below this target, New Hampshire will take steps to prohibit harvest of river herring in state waters.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute:

Move to substitute to approve the New Hampshire Sustainable Fishery Management Plan as recommended by the Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Substitute motion passes unanimously.

Main Motion as Substituted:

Move to approve the New Hampshire Sustainable Fishery Management Plan as recommended by the Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Motion passes unanimously.

Move that the Board send a letter via its Policy Board to the MAFMC expressing its preference regarding alternatives in Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Amendment 14, including whether to continue to consider alternatives to federally manage river herring and shad.

Motion made by Dr. Kray and seconded by Mr. Damon. Motion postponed until August 2011 meeting.

Move to postpone this motion until the August Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Meyers. Motion passes (8 in favor, 6 opposed, 3 abstentions, 1 null vote).

Main Motion:

Move to accept the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the river herring assessment as presented.

Motion by Dr. Kray and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion amended

Motion to Amend:

Move to amend to remove the minority report as being a part of the TOR.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion passes (15 in favor, 3 opposed).

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to accept the TOR as amended (to include the bycatch TOR and without the minority report).

Motion made by Dr. Kray and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion passes (17 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions).

WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 22, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Weakfish Management Board elected Russ Allen (NJ) as Board Vice-Chair. The Board reviewed and accepted the 2010 Fishery Management Plan Review of the 2009 fishery. While several states fell short of their biological sampling requirements due to fiscal constraints and low weakfish landings from which to sample, the states reconfirmed their intention to fulfill future sampling requirements. The Board approved the requests of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, and Florida for continued *de minimis* status.

To actively monitor stock status, the Board will review stock status indicators annually at the August Board Meetings. The Board tasked the Technical Committee (TC) to prepare and update annually the following stock status indicators (1) proportion of trips that max out the harvest limit, (2) relative biomass indices (e.g., recreational CPUE, and trawl surveys), (3) proportional stock density, (4) relative F, and (5) juvenile indices. The Board also encouraged the TC to explore other indicators of status, including but not limited to, an analysis of each states' juvenile index individually.

The Board requested that the TC and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee be presented with the assessment model work being developed by Dr. Jiao and her team at Virginia Tech University for potential use in the 2014 weakfish stock assessment.

For more information, please contact Michael Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to approve the *de minimis* request for MA, CT, GA, and FL.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Dr. Duval. Motion passes.

Move to accept the 2010 FMP Review of the 2009 fishery.

Motion passes.

Move that the Technical Committee and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee be presented with the work completed by Dr. Jiao.

Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to approve Russ Allen as Vice-Chair.

Motion made by Mr. O'Connell and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion passes.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (March 22, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met to discuss a number of issues. Committee members discussed and drafted a letter to the Policy Board regarding the Law Enforcement Committee coordinator position and their desire to attract candidates which would best represent

the Committee while fulfilling responsibilities of that position. The Committee also discussed at length issues relating to the enforcement of striped bass regulations in light of recent publicity regarding bycatch and illegal poaching of striped bass in federal waters. The group brought forward a request to the Policy Board that the LEC draft a letter to NOAA General Counsel with suggestions for improving compliance in the striped bass fishery. The Committee received updates on species management for tautog, Atlantic herring, spiny dogfish, spot, spotted seatrout, Spanish mackerel, and horseshoe crab. Reports were also provided by federal and state representatives on current law enforcement issues they are facing. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 22, 2011)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Initiates Addendum to Increase Abundance and Spawning Stock Biomass

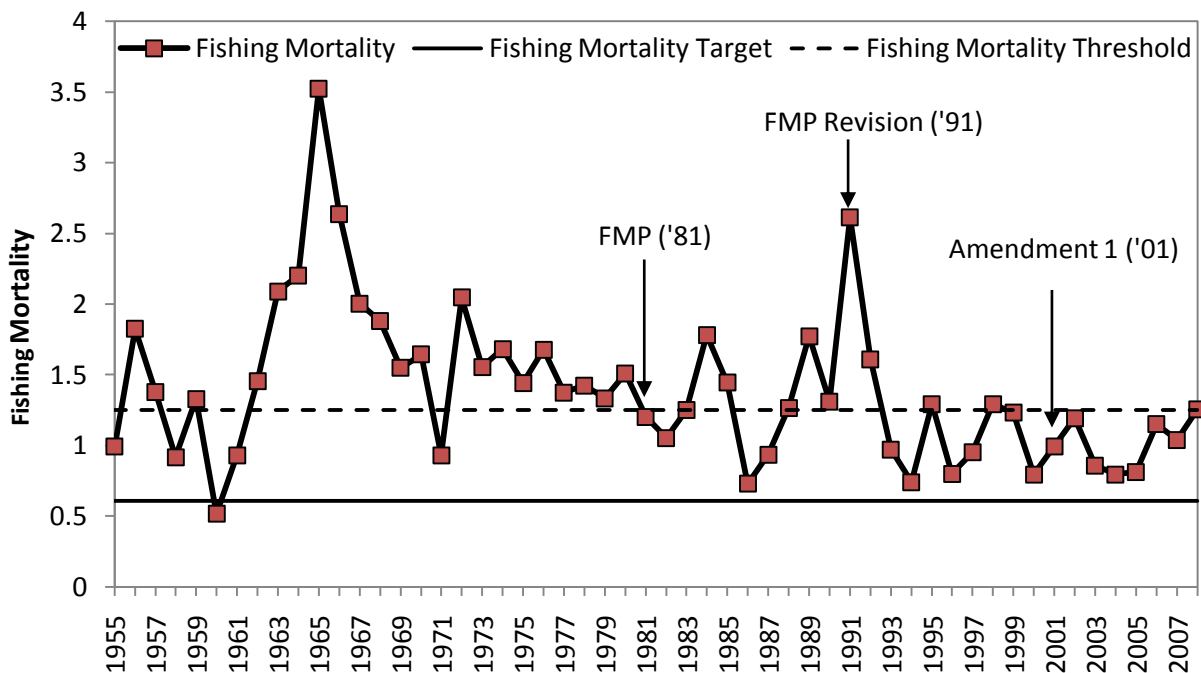
Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board initiated a draft addendum proposing an interim biological reference point of 15% maximum spawning potential (MSP) with the goal of increasing abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species. The MSP approach identifies the fishing mortality rate necessary to maintain a given level of stock fecundity (number of mature ova) relative to the potential maximum stock fecundity under unfished conditions. In this case, a 15% MSP would equate to a fishing mortality rate threshold required to maintain approximately 15% of virgin stock fecundity. The current MSP level is 9%. The draft addendum will also include a suite of management measures to achieve 15% MSP.

At the same time, the Board placed a high priority on continuing work on developing ecosystem reference points using a multispecies modeling approach (MSVPA). Ecosystem reference points are expected to address the forage needs of menhaden’s predator species such as striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish. This work is anticipated to take a few years.

The Board received an update on the revised 2009 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment, which finds the stock is not overfished but is experiencing overfishing in 2008. Given the current overfishing definition, which sets the fishing mortality rate (F) target at 0.61 and the F threshold at 1.25, this is the first time overfishing has occurred since 1998 (see figure on next page). F in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 1.26. This change in stock status is a result of a corrected error in the code of the stock assessment model. No other significant changes in estimated stock trends were identified in the stock assessment. The Board accepted the corrected stock assessment for management use.

The Board will review and consider approval of the the draft addendum for public comment at the Commission’s Summer Meeting in August. If approved, the draft addendum will be released for public comment in late summer, with state public hearings occurring throughout early fall. Final Board approval of the addendum could happen in November at the Commission’s Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

Atlantic Menhaden Fishing Mortality Abundance-Weighted for Ages 2+



For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

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PR11-15

Motions

Move to elect Robert Boyles as Vice-Chair of the Management Board.

Motion made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move to accept the updated Benchmark Stock Assessment Report.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries.

Tabled Motion from November 2010:

Move to allow the Technical Committee to complete its work on the reference point alternatives and report to the Board at the August meeting, at which point an addendum could be initiated.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Augustine.

Main Motion:

Move to recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board to task the Multispecies Technical Committee and the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee 1) to proceed with work on multispecies approach as a priority and 2) have Menhaden Technical Committee prepare and present annual recruitment information to the Board.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend:

Motion to amend to include 3) utilize the goal to increase abundance and SSB and initiate an addendum to implement an interim reference point of 15% MSP level and develop a suite of management measures the Board could use in managing the fishery.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carries (Roll Call Vote: In favor – NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS; Opposed – ME, VA; Null – PRFC).

Motion to Amend:

Motion to amend to include the current % MSP level (9%), 15%, 25% and 40%.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Martens. Motion fails. (6 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 null, 2 abstentions)

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board to task the Multispecies Technical Committee and the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee 1) to proceed with work on multi-species approach as a priority and 2) have Menhaden Technical Committee prepare and present annual recruitment information to the Board and 3) utilize the goal to increase abundance and SSB and initiate an addendum to implement an interim reference point of 15% MSP (maximum spawning potential) level and develop a suite of management measures the Board could use in managing the fishery.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion carries (15 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 null).

SPINY DOGFISH & COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 22, 2011)

Press Release

**ASMFC Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Board Approves Addendum III
*State-Specific Spiny Dogfish Shares Established for Southern Region***

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board (Board) approved Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Dogfish (Addendum III). The Addendum divides the southern region annual quota of 42% into state-specific shares (see table below). It also allows for quota transfer between states, rollovers of up to five percent and state-specified possession limits, and includes a three-year reevaluation of the measures. The Addendum’s provisions apply only to states in the southern region (New York through North Carolina) and do not modify the northern region allocation. The states of Maine to Connecticut will continue to share 58% of the annual quota as specified in Addendum II.

Southern Region State Shares. Quota allocation differs slightly from specific options presented in the draft addendum and are based on needs of states in the southern region with a consideration of historic landings.

| | NY | NJ | DE | MD | VA | NC |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Percent of Annual Coastwide Quota | 2.7% | 7.6% | 0.9% | 5.9% | 10.8% | 14% |
| Allocation for 2011/2012 Fishing Season (in pounds) Based on 20 Million Pound Coastwide Quota | 541,559 | 1,528,931 | 179,208 | 1,184,006 | 2,159,043 | 2,807,254 |

Addendum III was initiated to give the southern states greater control of their spiny dogfish fisheries through state-specific quotas and to achieve consistent allocation for all states in the southern region. The southern region’s previous allocation was established in Addendum II, which set a regional allocation with 26% of the annual quota to New York through Virginia and 16% to North Carolina. States were interested in lowering daily possession limits when demand and value are low and increasing them when demand and value are greatest—but the southern region allocation did not allow them (with the exception of North Carolina) to do so without having less access to the regional quota.

Copies of Addendum III will be available on the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News by the end of March. For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt, FMP Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

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PR11-14

Meeting Summary

In addition to establishing southern region state shares for spiny dogfish in Addendum III, the Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board received an update from Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DE DFW) on proposed regulations prohibiting removal of non-retainable (prohibited and research-only species) from the water. The new regulations are in response to shore anglers targeting prohibited and research only species from shore and bringing them on the beach to take pictures. Concerns about the survival of these sharks has prompted the regulation changes.

The Board also received updates from NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division (HMS) regarding potential and pending changes to federal waters coastal sharks management. HMS is considering a number of potential future management measures including quota structure changes (e.g., changes to the species complexes), permit structure changes (e.g., permit stacking, use it or lose it), catch shares (e.g., ITQs, sectors), and in-season possession limit changes to manage the quota (reducing the possession limit to 0 in-season). The potential management changes are likely to have implications for interstate shark management and Board members agreed to review the measures and provide feedback to HMS individually. In addition, Commission staff will prepare a report on states possession limit regulations to determine the feasibility of in-season possession limit changes. The Coastal Sharks FMP does not require states to change their possession limits in-season.

The pending HMS measures include recommendations to ICCAT and smooth hound (smooth dogfish) trawl restrictions. HMS is considering recommending that ICCAT prohibit the retention of hammerhead (scalloped, smooth, and great hammerhead) and oceanic whitetip sharks in ICCAT fisheries (e.g., targeting tuna, swordfish, and/or billfish). The proposed rule is expected to publish in April/May 2011. The proposed HMS trawl rule (published March 17, 2011) addresses retention of smooth hound (including smooth dogfish) in Atlantic trawls fisheries with the preferred alternative prohibiting retention of smooth hound species in excess of 25% total catch by weight. HMS is accepting comments on the trawl rule by April 17, 2011. The Board agreed to have the Board Chair work with staff to poll commissioners and provide comment on behalf of the Board.

The Boards considered a request to initiate an addendum to establish smooth dogfish state shares. Board members agreed to postpone initiating management measures until the Commission's Summer Meeting when changes to federal smooth dogfish measures will be final. Staff will prepare a report on current Commission and HMS smooth dogfish management measures including pros and cons of state shares. The Board will review the report in August and reconsider initiation of a smooth dogfish state shares addendum.

For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt, FMP Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or (703) 842-0740.

Motions

Move to approve VA option one as presented today.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion passes (9 in favor, 3 opposed, 4 abstentions).

Main Motion:

Move to approve issue 2: State Quota Transfer option B; issue 3: State Quota Rollover option B and D; issue 4: Payback of Transferred Quota option A; issue 5: Possession Limits option B; and issue 6: Three Year Re-evaluation option B.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend:

Move to amend to add option E (Max 5% total rollover) to issue 3: State Quota Rollover.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. O'Connell. Motion passes (11 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 null, 3 abstentions).

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to approve issue 2: State Quota Transfer option B; issue 3: State Quota Rollover option B, D, E; issue 4: Payback of Transferred Quota option A; issue 5: Possession Limits option B; and issue 6: Three Year Re-evaluation option B.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion divided.

Main Motion as Divided:

1. Move to approve Issue 2 State Quota Transfer option B.

Motion passes (9 in favor, 7 abstentions).

Move to approve issue 3: State Quota Rollover option B, D, and E.

Move to amend to adopt option A of issue 3.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Ross. Motion fails (3 in favor, 8 opposed, 5 abstentions).

2. Move to approve issue 3: State Quota Rollover option B, D, and E.

Motion passes (11 in favor, 1 opposed, 4 abstentions).

3. Move to approve issue 4: Payback of Transferred Quota option A.

Motion passes (9 in favor, 6 abstentions).

4. Move to approve issue 5: Possession Limits option B.

Motion passes (9 in favor, 1 opposed, 6 abstentions).

5. Move to approve issue 6: Three Year Re-evaluation option B.

Motion passes (10 in favor, 6 abstentions).

Move to approve Addendum III to the Spiny Dogfish FMP as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion passes (12 in favor, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions).

Main Motion:

Move to direct the PDT to develop an addendum to the Coastal Sharks FMP to include a state-by-state allocation for smooth dogfish to be implemented prior to the 2012 fishing season.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute:

Move to substitute to direct the staff to prepare a background paper on smooth dogfish landings data detailing the pros and cons of state-by-state shares of smooth dogfish.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion passes (6 in favor, 4 opposed, 5 abstentions).

Move to direct the staff to prepare a background paper on smooth dogfish landings data detailing the pros and cons of state-by-state shares of smooth dogfish.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion passes (7 in favor, 3 opposed, 6 abstentions).

ANNUAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE (March 22, 2011)

Press Release

ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

Arlington, VA – Mr. Michael E. Howard, Mr. Charles A. Wenner, and members of the National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) Beaufort Laboratory Atlantic Menhaden Team (Dr. Douglas S. Vaughan, Dr. Erik H. Williams, Mr. Joseph W. Smith and Ms. Ethel A. Hall) were named recipients of the Commission’s Annual Awards of Excellence in Arlington, Virginia for their contributions to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. Mr. Howard received his award in the Law Enforcement category. Mr. Wenner and the NMFS Beaufort Lab Atlantic Menhaden Team, who were unable to travel to the award ceremony, will be presented awards in the Scientific, Technical, and Advisory category later this year.

“Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission’s Annual Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve our fisheries,” said ASMFC Chair, Robert H. Boyles, Jr., of South Carolina. “Today, we honor several outstanding individuals for their contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries.”

Law Enforcement

Mr. Michael E. Howard has been involved in the Commission process for nearly two decades, first as a member and then Coordinator of the Law Enforcement Committee. He began his career with the Maryland Natural Resources Police (NRP) where he excelled in all forms of conservation law enforcement, particularly fisheries. Much of his career was spent supervising all inland enforcement officers in the lower four counties of Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Mr. Howard’s final assignment was as Chief of Support Services, at the rank of Major, in Maryland’s NRP Annapolis Headquarters.

In this position, he not only oversaw functions such as training, vessel maintenance, communications, and records, but also initiated college curriculum specializing in conservation law enforcement at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Mr. Howard retired from the NRP in 2001.

As Coordinator for the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee from 2002 to 2010, Mr. Howard was responsible for all aspects of the Committee’s activities from meeting planning, coordination, and follow-up, to reporting the Committee’s positions to management boards. His greatest contribution was his ability to thoughtfully raise issues that would impact marine



From left: ASMFC Executive Director Vince O'Shea with AAE Recipient Mike Howard.

fisheries law enforcement regionally. Mr. Howard consistently strived to advance the committee's goal of working with fishery managers to develop regulations that would protect the stocks through the fully enforced measures. He recognized the importance of a realistic balance between species management and law enforcement strategies, and his institutional knowledge of the Commission and marine fisheries law enforcement were valuable assets to new Chairs allowing the committee to be an effective body within the Commission. Mr. Howard is a consummate professional and well respected in the law enforcement and scientific communities, working diligently for marine conservation in various capacities for over 35 years.

Scientific, Technical, and Advisory

Mr. Charles A. Wenner, former Senior Marine Biologist with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Marine Resources Research Institute, dedicated his career to improving the data upon which stock assessments are built. A long-standing member of several of the Commission's species technical committees, Mr. Wenner long sought to improve aging databases for Atlantic croaker, bluefish, red drum, and weakfish.

Over the years, Mr. Wenner developed a number of fisheries initiatives on aging Atlantic croaker, bluefish, red drum, and weakfish. In the mid-1990s, he spearheaded the effort to ensure weakfish were aged using more reliable methods of aging ear bones, or otoliths, rather than scales. Furthermore, he obtained funding to place personnel on NMFS Fall Trawl Survey to collect otoliths from weakfish, which his lab subsequently aged. He also made the generous offer (and followed through on it) to age weakfish otoliths from any other state willing to send him the hard parts. He labored in a legendary fashion over red drum, aging more than 30,000 otoliths for the 2000 stock assessment while simultaneously conducting the long running fishery-independent trammel survey. Mr. Wenner has devoted significant time and effort over the years to ensure quality data is available for fishery managers to make informed management decisions.

NMFS Beaufort Atlantic Menhaden Team, located in the Beaufort, North Carolina, has been a cornerstone of fisheries data collection and stock assessments, particularly with Atlantic menhaden, for over 40 years. The Team's dedication to Atlantic menhaden science is impressive, especially given that no federal management plan for the species exists.

The retirement of several team members in the near future will no doubt be a huge loss for the Commission and its member states. Fortunately, team leader Dr. Erik H. Williams, Supervisory Research Fish Biologist, is committed to making certain the high level of work and the fluid partnership between state and federal agencies continues. Dr. Williams also contributes his modeling expertise to the team and communicates his complex technical work in a clear and effective manner.

The remaining members of the team are Dr. Douglas S. Vaughan, Mr. Joseph W. Smith, and Ms. Ethel A. Hall. Dr. Vaughan, Research Fish Biologist, is a seasoned and invaluable team member who has participated and led many menhaden stock assessments. His unparalleled knowledge of past menhaden studies and assessments has been a huge asset to the ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee. Research Fish Biologist, Mr. Smith has facilitated long-standing and productive relationships with the menhaden fishing industry to collect key data and information. His encyclopedic knowledge of the industry's evolution over the past century and his successful working relationship with the menhaden industry have been

indispensable to the Commission's menhaden management program. Ms. Hall, Biological Scientific Technician and the longest serving member of the team, has consistently aged menhaden samples for over 40 years. Her efforts have led to the most impressive and robust aging database for any species along the Atlantic coast. Atlantic menhaden science and stock assessment approaches have been greatly advanced by the combined efforts of the members of the NMFS Beaufort Lab Atlantic Menhaden Team.

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PR11-13

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 23, 2011)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Board Initiates Addendum to Reduce Fishing Mortality

Alexandria, VA – The Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board has initiated development of Draft Addendum III with the goals of reducing striped bass fishing mortality (F) up to 40% and further protecting spawning stock when it is concentrated and vulnerable. The addendum was initiated in order to allow managers to promptly respond to the results of the stock assessment update in the fall if necessary. Provisions of the addendum, if passed, could be implemented prior to the start of the 2012 fishing year.

The Board's action responds to recent trends in the fishery and resource, including a 66% decline in estimated recreational catch from 2006 to 2009; a 25% decline in estimated striped bass abundance from 2004 to 2008; and lowered recruitment in recent years. Additionally, states in the northern extent of the fishery have expressed concern over decreased availability of striped bass as a result of the diminished water quality in the Chesapeake Bay during the summer months that may also contribute to increased prevalence of mycobacteriosis in striped bass.

Draft Addendum III will propose a range of fishing management measures including, but not limited to, adjustments to commercial and recreational minimum size (for jurisdictions outside Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River), reductions in annual coastal commercial allocation, reductions in recreational bag limits, revisions to the target F rate (for Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River), and reductions on fishing for striped bass in known spawning areas during the spawning season by at least 50% (for jurisdictions bordering the Hudson River, Delaware River, Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River).

The commercial and recreational fishery is currently managed through Amendment 6 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. The Amendment, passed in 2003, allocates the coastal commercial quota and set a two fish bag limit and a 28 inch size minimum for the recreational fishery, with the exception of the Chesapeake Bay fisheries, Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River fisheries, and states with approved alternative regulations.

The Draft Addendum will be developed for preliminary review by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board in August. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

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PR11-17

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to consider a proposal for alternative recreational management from Connecticut, review and discuss the recent illegal striped bass harvest events in Maryland and the striped bass discarding incidents in North Carolina, and consider initiation of an addendum to reduce fishing mortality.

Connecticut submitted a proposal to implement the transfer of the annual commercial quota of 23,750 pounds to a “bonus” recreational fishery. The fishery would allow the harvest of 4,025 striped bass (sizes 22 -27.9 inches) in the Connecticut River and provide marginal predator control to help rebuild blueback herring stocks. The Technical Committee recommended approval of the proposed regulations. The Advisory Panel members were mostly supportive of the proposal, but did not reach a consensus agreement. The Management Board approved the proposal.

The Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum III to Amendment 6 aimed at reducing striped bass fishing mortality (F) up to 40% and further protecting the spawning stock when it is concentrated and vulnerable. A preliminary draft will be reviewed by the Board in August.

The Board reviewed the recent striped bass illegal harvest events in Maryland and the striped bass discarding incidents in North Carolina. Maryland Natural Resources Police officers recovered 12.6 tons of striped bass in nine separate seizures throughout February. In response the commercial fishery was shut down on February 4th over concerns the state would exceed its monthly quota. The fishery was reopened for two days at the end of February after it was estimated that 200,000 pounds of the quota still remained. Poor weather conditions prevented fishermen from harvesting the remainder of the quota.

Two separate discarding incidents occurred off the coast of North Carolina during the striped bass ocean trawl fishery. The first occurred on January 20th when one trawler caught 3-4,000 striped bass, as estimated by the captain and the second incident occurred on Feb 3rd, with an estimated 250 floating striped bass counted on the water by the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). Throughout the season DMF enacted regulations to raise the daily quota from 50 fish to 2,000 pounds, allowed transfer of striped bass to other permit holders and limited tow time to 30 minutes in order to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

The nominations of David Sikorski, Douglas M. Amorello, and John Pedrick to the Advisory Panel were unanimously approved. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move for approval of the CT striped bass commercial quota utilization plan.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion carries (16 in favor).

Move to instruct the Striped Bass PDT to begin drafting an Addendum to Amendment 6 aimed at reducing striped bass fishing mortality (F) up to 40% and further protecting the spawning stock when it is concentrated and vulnerable. Provisions of the Addendum, if passed, will be implemented prior to the start of the 2012 fishing year. The Draft Addendum will include, but is not limited to, the following options:

- **For all jurisdictions, proposed bag limit reductions in recreational fisheries to reduce F;**
- **For all jurisdictions except those fisheries in Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River, proposed adjustments to minimum sizes allowed in the commercial and recreational fisheries to increase striped bass spawning potential;**
- **For recreational fisheries in Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River, proposed revisions in the target F rate to complement proposed cuts in coastal recreational fisheries;**
- **For all jurisdictions, proposed reductions in annual coastal commercial allocations to reduce F;**
- **For commercial fisheries in Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound, proposed revisions in the target F rate to complement proposed cuts in coastal commercial fisheries;**
- **For jurisdictions bordering the Hudson River, Delaware River, Chesapeake Bay, and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River, proposed reductions on fishing for striped bass in known spawning areas during the spawning season by at least 50%.**

Motion made by Mr. Diodati and seconded by Dr. Kray. Motion carries (12 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve David Sikorski, Douglas M. Amorello, and John Pedrick to the Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Dr. Kray. Motion passes by consent.

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 23, 2011)

Press Release

**ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Addendum I
to the Atlantic Croaker FMP**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board has approved Addendum I to Amendment I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Croaker. The Addendum changes the management unit to one region (New Jersey through the east coast of Florida) and modifies the biological reference points used to assess stock condition.

Both measures stem from the recommendations of the 2010 benchmark assessment, which indicates that Atlantic croaker is not experiencing overfishing. Based on the findings of the assessment, Atlantic croaker is now considered to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast. The previous stock assessment, which formed the basis of Amendment 1, divided the stock into Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions and assessed the resource separately in the two regions due to difficulty assessing the resource as a single unit. The 2010 assessment used data from both regions to produce a single, coastwide assessment.

Addendum I also modifies the biological reference points (BRPs) used to assess stock condition since the results of the 2010 assessment cannot be compared to the Amendment 1 BRPs, which are specific to the Mid-Atlantic region only. Addendum I's BRPs are very similar to those in Amendment 1. They use the same definitions for the targets and thresholds (e.g., fishing mortality rate threshold = F_{MSY}), but they differ in that absolute estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) are not estimated. Estimates are not given because of uncertainty in the assessment resulting from inadequate data on the magnitude of croaker discards in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. The determination of stock status is thus based on the ratios of F and SSB to their respective target and threshold, which are compared to one.

The new targets and thresholds are:

$$\begin{aligned} F \text{ target} &= 0.75 * F_{MSY} \\ F \text{ threshold} &= F_{MSY} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} SSB \text{ target} &= SSB_{MSY} \\ SSB \text{ threshold} &= 0.70 * SSB_{MSY} \end{aligned}$$

If F/F_{MSY} is greater than 1, then overfishing is occurring. If $SSB/(0.70 * SSB_{MSY})$ is less than 1, the stock is overfished (see Figures 1 and 2). In other words, F must be lower than its threshold, and SSB must be higher than its threshold, or the stock will be considered to be experiencing overfishing or be in an overfished condition, respectively. The targets would still represent the levels that management measures are designed to achieve.

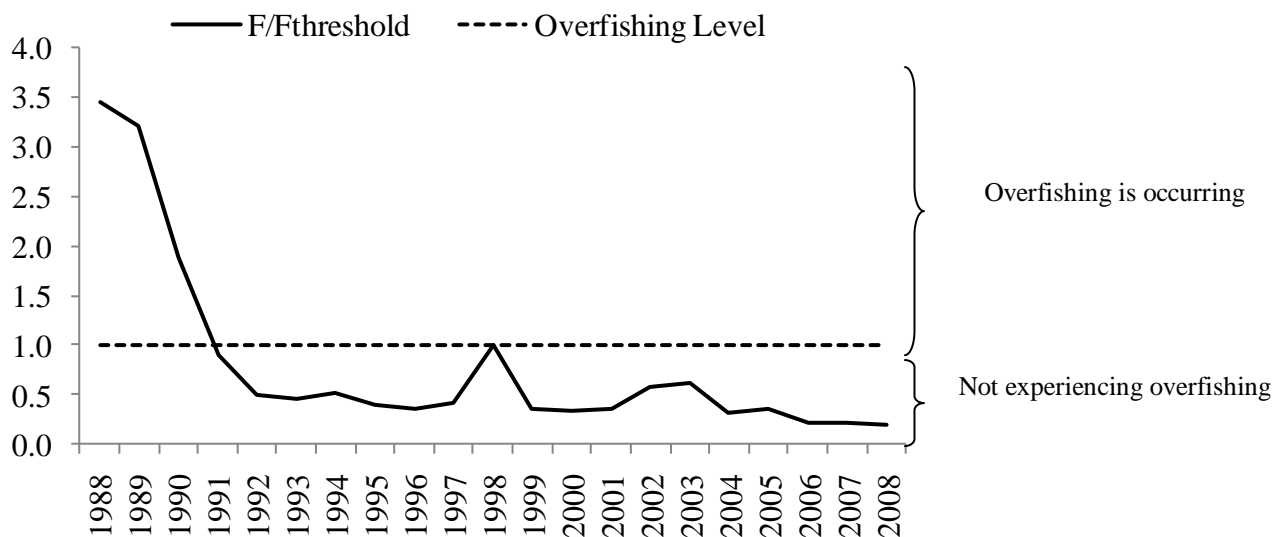


Figure 1. The ratio of F to F_{MSY} (the F threshold). If the ratio is less than 1.0, the stock is not experiencing overfishing.

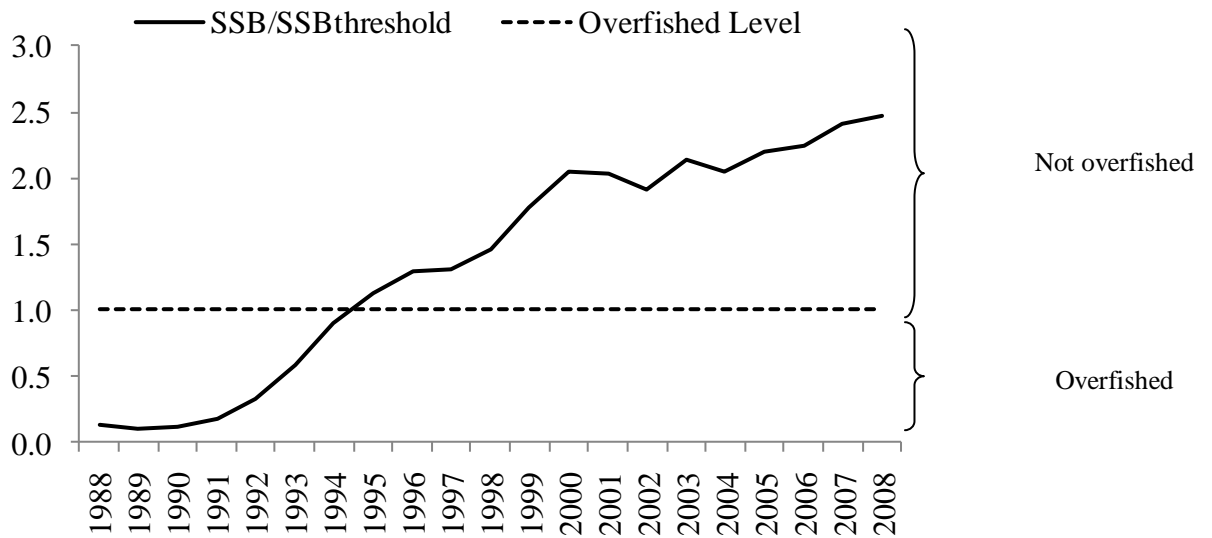


Figure 2. The ratio of SSB to $0.70 \cdot SSB_{MSY}$ (the SSB threshold). If the ratio is more than 1.0, the stock is not overfished.

Copies of Addendum I will be available on the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News by the end of March. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

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PR11-16

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic Board approved the Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel Omnibus Amendment for public comment with preferred options for the monitoring of the spot stock status, as well as commercial and recreational measures and *de minimis* options for all three species. The Board also directed staff to make any updates to the current measures within the Omnibus Amendment for Spanish Mackerel, dependent upon any changes made by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils in their final approval of Amendment 18 to the federal fishery management plan. The Omnibus Amendment for Public Comment will most likely be released for public review this summer following approval of Amendment 18.

In addition, the Board approved Addendum I to the Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plan that expanded the current definitions of the biological reference points (BRPs) and provided the Board with greater flexibility to update the BRPs with the best available science. Following the approval of Addendum I, the Board used that greater flexibility to update the current BRPs based on the recommendations from the 2010 stock assessment.

The Board approved the Fishery Management Plan Reviews for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Board also approved the 2011-2015 SEAMAP Management Plan and

received an update on the current funding status for the SEAMAP program, which is dependent upon federal funding.

Finally, the Florida presented its new management plan updates for red drum following its new state assessment. The state assessment was positive, and Florida proposed changing the management areas to match those of spotted seatrout, increase the bag limit in the northeast region from one to two fish, and implement a statewide eight-fish vessel limit. The Board approved these changes, as they were still projected to maintain the management requirements.

For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to select option 2 as the preferred option for spot stock status.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes (9 in favor, 1 opposed).

Move to select option 2 for Spanish mackerel as the preferred option for recreational management measures, with the understanding that staff can update the measures if there are changes in the final action of South Atlantic and Gulf Council's Amendment 18.

Motion by made Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes (10 in favor).

Move to select option 2 as the preferred for spot recreational management measures.

Motion by made Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Duren. Motion passes.

Move to select option 2 as the preferred option for spotted seatrout recreational management measures.

Motion made by Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes.

Move to select option 2 as the preferred option for the Spanish mackerel commercial management measures, with the understanding that staff can update the measures if there are changes in the final action of South Atlantic and Gulf Council's Amendment 18.

Motion made by Mr. Duren and seconded by Dr. Laney. Motion passes.

Move to select option 2 as the preferred option for the spot commercial management measures.

Motion made by Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes.

Move to include the 20% SPR as part of the preferred option 2 for spotted seatrout commercial management measures.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion passes.

Move to select option 1 as the preferred option of *de minimis* criteria for Spanish mackerel, spot, and spotted seatrout for both recreational and commercial fisheries combined.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion passes.

Move to approve the Omnibus Amendment as modified today for public comment.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Dr. Laney. Motion passes.

Move to select option 2 for management areas for Atlantic croaker.

Motion made by Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion passes.

Move to approve option 3 for Atlantic croaker biological reference points.

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion passes.

Move to approve Addendum 1 for Atlantic Croaker.

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion passes.

Move to update the biological reference points for Atlantic croaker as recommended by the PRT from the 2010 stock assessment.

Motion made by Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion passes.

Move to approve the Spot FMP Review.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Cole. Motion passes.

Move to approve the Spotted Seatrout FMP Review.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes.

Motion to approve the Spanish Mackerel FMP Review.

Motion made by Mr. Cole and seconded by Dr. Laney. Motion passes.

Move to accept the SEAMAP 2011-2015 Management Plan.

Motion made by Dr. Laney and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion passes.

Move to approve the proposed changes to Florida's red drum management.

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 23, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Horseshoe Crab Board received an update regarding the funding for the Virginia Tech Trawl Survey. The current funding total is at \$118,000 with contributions from the biomedical and fishing industries. That level is still short of the \$200,000 needed to continue the survey. The Board recommended that the ISFMP Policy Board direct the Executive Director to send another, more directed letter to some of the environmental groups who have been involved in horseshoe crab management in the past. Dr. Jamie Geiger informed the group that he would be reaching out to some of the shorebird groups regarding the survey's importance to the rebuilding of the shorebird populations that depend upon horseshoe crab eggs.

Jeff Brust, Chair of the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee, presented a report from the Committee to the Board regarding the allocation of the ARM Harvest output. Mr. Brust

provided summaries of the Committee's discussions and recommendations, where appropriate, on the technical aspects of the proposed allocation model. The Board identified additional options and directed the report to the Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Advisory Panels for review and to report back to the Board at the August 2011 meeting.

The Board approved the Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan Review as well as the requests for *de minimis* by Maine, New Hampshire, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The Board discussed the concerns raised in the Review regarding the Virginia harvest overage and the biomedical mortality. The Commonwealth of Virginia expressed similar concern and discussed its plans to reduce harvest and monitor the landings. The Board directed the Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee to review the biomedical mortality to determine whether the 15% estimated post-bleeding mortality level is accurate as well as review studies on biomedical mortality and best management practices for the industry.

The Board also approved the nomination of Dr. David Mizrahi to the Shorebird Advisory Panel and recognized the appointment of Rachel Sysak to the Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee. Finally, the Board received a quick update from Dr. Geiger on the status of shorebirds. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to approve the requests for *de minimis* by Maine, New Hampshire, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries.

Move to accept the 2010 Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan Review.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Motion carries.

Move to approve the nomination of Dr. David Mizrahi to the Shorebird Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Himchak. Motion carries.

BUSINESS SESSION (March 23, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Commission conducted its Business Session to review the results of the Annual Commissioners Survey. The Survey asks the Commissioners to evaluate the progress toward achieving the Commission's Vision. The results indicated that the Commissioners ranked "execution and results" as the topic that needs additional attention to achieve the Vision. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

No motions made.

ISFMP POLICY BOARD (March 23, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) met to address a number of issues that impact the Commission and its interstate fishery management process.

The first issue addressed was a consideration of Policy Board involvement in the management of species that are listed as *species of concern, depleted or unknown status*. The Policy Board reviewed a list of options that would increase oversight of species management boards to ensure actions are consistent with the Commission's Vision. The Policy Board agreed to continue the discussion at the Summer Meeting to explore options to provide additional oversight while not delaying the management process.

An update on the status of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) was presented to Policy Board. The update provided information on the status of research projects and pilot programs that will address the short comings of the current recreational data collection program. The Board was also updated on the changes that will occur in the site intercept surveys. A more detailed presentation will be provided to the Policy Board at the Summer Meeting.

The Policy Board received an update from the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP). The presentation provided a summary of the results of the NEAMAP trawl survey, funding history, and the use of the data in species assessments. The need for long-term stable funding was highlighted to ensure the time series of data is not interrupted.

The Policy Board discussed the Commission's involvement in National Seafood Marketing Coalition. The Board agreed that Commission staff should monitor the activities of the Coalition and distribute information to the states for consideration. The states individually would decide if they should interact with the Coalition.

The Policy Board discussed the impacts of invasive catfish species in the Chesapeake Bay region. The Board agreed that the Commission should develop a resolution on catfish that highlights the predation of the rapidly increasing population on diadromous species managed by the Commission.

A report from the Law Enforcement Committee's (LEC) meeting earlier in the week was presented to the Policy Board. The LEC provided feed back to the Policy Board on the hiring a new LEC Coordinator. Also, based on the recommendation of the LEC, the Policy Board agreed to submit letters to NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard requesting an increase in the penalty structure and consideration for permit suspension/revocation for illegally harvesting striped bass.

An update on efforts to develop an assessment for black drum was presented to the Policy Board. A data workshop was held earlier this year and an assessment workshop will be presented later in the spring. The results of the assessment will be presented to the Policy Board at the Commission's Summer Meeting.

The Policy Board also addressed a number of issues under other business. It agreed to send letters to NMFS Highly Migratory Species office on proposed rules for smooth dogfish trawl fisheries and pending ICCAT requirements. The Commission will also send another set of letters to bird conservancy groups seeking funding for the Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey. The Policy Board tasked the Multispecies Technical Committee with continuing to work on the biological reference points for Atlantic menhaden.

The Policy Board agreed that staff should review the NOAA Aquaculture Policy and work with the Executive Committee to submit comments on the draft policy.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, ISFMP Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

No motions made.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (March 24, 2011)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee approved the FY2012 budget and received updates on future annual meeting dates and locations. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 24, 2011)

Press Release

ASMFC Tautog Board Approves Addendum VI to the Tautog FMP *States to End Overfishing*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board (Board) approved Addendum VI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog in response to the latest scientific advice that the stock continues to be overfished with overfishing occurring. According to the 2011 stock assessment update, spawning stock biomass (SSB) has remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 10,553 metric tons — 39% of the target SSB (26,500 metric tons). Current coastwide fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.38, well above the management plan’s target of F=0.20. Overfishing has occurred since 2005. These findings and the remaining information contained in the 2011 assessment update were approved by the Board for management use.

In order to end overfishing and initiate stock rebuilding, Addendum VI lowers the F target to 0.15 and requires states to implement measures to achieve a 56% reduction in exploitation by January 1, 2012. The Technical Committee recommended implementing the F target at 0.15 or lower to stop overfishing and improve chances of rebuilding. Tautog’s slow growth rate, late maturity, and spawning behavior makes it particularly susceptible to overfishing and limits stock

rebuilding. The Technical Committee advised that SSB will not increase under the current F (0.38) and will just reach the SSB threshold (21,500 metric tons) by 2025 under $F = 0.15$.

Addendum VI requires all states to prohibit the possession of undersized tautog in excess of bag and possession limits. The measure is intended to deter illegal harvest of tautog for the live market. The Board remains concerned about the illegal live harvest and will continue to work with the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee on ways to reduce it. Based on the advice of the Law Enforcement Committee and submitted public comment, the Board did not implement the other measures contained in the public comment draft.

The Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703/842-0740. For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

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PR11-18

Meeting Summary

The Tautog Management Board (Board) began the meeting by electing Bill Goldsborough (MD) to Board Chair; and Jim Gilmore (NY) to Vice Chair.

Stock Assessment Subcommittee Chair, Paul Caruso presented the Board with results of the 2011 Tautog Stock Assessment Update. The updated assessment was a "turn-of-the crank", updating input data through 2010 to rerun the peer reviewed 2005 VPA assessment. Results of the assessment indicate that the tautog stock is overfished with 2009 spawning stock biomass (SSB) at 10,553 mt, 39% of the SSB target (26,500 mt). Overfishing is also occurring with fishing mortality (F) estimated at 0.38 (previous $F_{TARGET} = 0.20$). The SAS and Technical Committee (TC) both endorsed accepting the update for management use and recommended immediate harvest reductions and a reduction of the target F to rebuild the stock.

In addition to taking final action on Addendum VI (see press release above), the Tautog Board agreed on a timeline for implementation of new regulations to comply with the 56% harvest reduction. The Tautog Technical Committee (TC) will provide Board members with recommendations for state reductions by May 15, states will submit reduction proposals for TC review by July 15, the Board will review the proposals the week of August 1, and final measures will be implemented by January 1, 2012 at the latest. States will be allowed to submit proposals based on regional F rates and reductions can be taken from the recreational and commercial fisheries as best meets each state's needs. The TC Chair stressed to the Board that the TC will be available to work with states and provide support as needed.

For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or 703/842-0740.

Motions

Move to nominate Bill Goldsborough as Board Chair and Jim Gilmore as Board Vice Chair, Motion by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries

Move to accept the Technical Committee Report.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Travelstead. Motion passes by consent.

Decision 1: Fishing mortality rate

Move to select Option B for issue 3, F = 0.15.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Travelstead. Motion carries unanimously.

Move to substitute that F target = 0.10.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. Ross. Motion fails (4 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention).

Decision 3: Measures to address the illegal live market

Move to adopt Option A, Status quo, for issue 1.

Motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion carries.

Decision 4: Recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce

Move to adopt Option B, State possession restrictions, for Issue 4.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move to adopt Addendum VI as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion carries unanimously.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP & BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (March 24, 2011)

Press Release

ASMFC Black Sea Bass Board Establishes State Shares and Specifies Required Reductions for 2011 Recreational Fisheries

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board approved state-by-state shares for the 2011 black sea bass recreational season in order to mitigate potential disproportionate impacts to an individual state(s) that coastwide measures may cause. The 2010 regulations resulted in a preliminary estimated harvest of 2.98 million pounds, approximately 1.15 million pounds above the 2010 target. Given that the 2010 regulations were not effective in staying within the target, coastwide harvest will need to be reduced by 37% to achieve, but not exceed, the 2011 target of 1.78 million pounds.

Under state-by-state shares the following states will need to reduce harvest by the identified amount: Massachusetts (43%), Rhode Island (37%), Connecticut (37%), New York (39%), New Jersey (40%), and North Carolina (37%). Over the next two months, states will need to submit their proposed recreational measures to meet the required reduction for technical review and Board approval. The states of Delaware, Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, whose combined harvest represent less than three percent of the coastwide total, are not required to meet any harvest reductions and have committed to maintaining 2010 measures (25 fish, 12.5

inches TL minimum fish size, and an open season from May 22 to October 11 and November 1 to December 31) for the 2011 fishery.

These required reductions apply to state waters for the 2011 fishing season only. Recreational measures for the 2012 fishing season will be coastwide unless the Board decides to change that through future management action.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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PR11-19

Meeting Summary

The Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board received an update on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's progress to fund an economic evaluation of the scup fishery, specifically the existing allocation percentages used to distribute total allowable catch between the commercial and recreational fishing sectors as well as the appropriateness of the commercial seasonal allocations. The Council hopes to have the project completed within a year for Board and Council review and use. The Board also received an update on the Council's progress to develop an amendment to address regional and spatial management of the black sea bass recreational fishery because of the observed regional differences in catch rates and their impact on the recreational fishery. The Board will delay initiation of a concurrent action until the Council develops more specific options. Paul Caruso (MA) was added to the Black Sea Bass Plan Review Team.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve Dr. David Pierce.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries.

Move to adopt state shares using 2010 data as shown in option D with the following changes, MA 26%, RI 8%, CT 1%, NY 30%, NJ 27%, DE 2%, MD 2%, VA 4%, NC 1%. DE, MD, and VA will remain at status quo.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce and seconded by Mr. McElroy. Motion passes (8 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to substitute to adopt state shares using 2010 data as shown in option D. DE, MD, and VA will remain at status quo.

Motion made by Mr. Himchak and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion fails (4 in favor, 6 opposed, 2 abstentions)

Move to approve Addendum XXI as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Martens. Motion passes (10 in favor, 1 opposed).