

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Habitat Committee Meeting Summary

April 22-23, 2015

Hyatt Regency Pier 66

2301 SE 17th St, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The habitat committee met over two days at the end of April. During this time, the committee received an update from Lisa Havel (ACFHP) on the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee meeting (held April 20-22), as well as an update from Pace Wilber (NMFS-SE) on Port Everglades: impacts and mitigation for coral and seagrass. Gabrielle Renchen (FL FWCC) spoke to the committee on the effects of lobster and stone crab traps on marine habitats of the Florida Keys, and Mark Rousseau (MA) gave an update on the Artificial Reef Committee meeting held in January. Toni Kerns (ASMFC) and Kent Smith (FL FWCC) gave an update on ecosystem-based fisheries management, and Toni will work with Bob Beal to schedule a time at the Annual Meeting for Council members and Commissioners to get together and discuss the topic.

Toni Kerns (ASMFC) reviewed the 2015 work plan with the group. Highlights include:

Habitat Fact Sheets

The committee will submit a list of the top 3 species they would like to update to Lisa by May 26th. Species were assigned, and updates are due back to Lisa by June 29th. If you do not see any need for changes, please let Lisa know. These fact sheets will be updated annually. The most up to date fact sheets are available here:

<https://app.box.com/s/m0ml4ne2x3txglk3czyj7nj7mq05yzvg>.

2015 Habitat Hotline

The topic will be the new BOEM plan and the effects of energy exploration and activity on fish habitat.

Draft articles are due to Lisa and Kent by September 1. A breakdown of the articles and timeline will be forwarded by Lisa to the Habitat Committee with the notes from the meeting. Jake will have to write an introduction to the Hotline and provide a photo of himself.

Habitat Management Series Sciaenid Habitat Source Document

Drafts are due by the end of July, with a complete draft compiled by October for the ASMFC Annual Meeting. The TCs of each species FMP will review the information in each chapter. The HC will need to develop habitat management/protection recommendations. Chip Collier, who is no longer with NC DMF, will continue to work on the kingfish section. Brian Boutin of TNC will be writing the general sciaenid habitat sections.

Work group members: Kent Smith (lead), January Murray, Jimmy Johnson, Jay Odell

Habitat Bottlenecks White Paper

Horseshoe crab will be incorporated into the document, and Pace will have the Atlantic Sturgeon section done by the end of July. Jeff Tinsman (DE) has been asked to write up the tautog section. Cheri volunteered to write northern shrimp. After receiving these drafts (end of July), they will be shared with the Habitat Committee for edits. These edits will be agreed upon by early October, and Jake will present the document to the Policy Board at the Annual Meeting the first week of November. This will then be posted on the ASMFC website and updated as necessary.

Fish Passage Database

Please submit any updates to the database to Jeff Kipp at jkipp@asmfc.org.

Additionally, Wilson Laney (USFWS) wanted to address a dredging issue in North Carolina. Results of the discussion include plans to write:

Dredging Letter from the Habitat Committee

Wilson will write up a draft letter and share it with the Committee and ASMFC by June 15th. It will then be edited and supplied to the Policy board for the August meeting.

Action items (page numbers reference meeting notes)

Page 1

Action item: The committee will submit a list of the top 3 species they are interested in updating for the habitat fact sheets. This is due to Lisa by May 26th.

Page 2

Action item: Lisa will give the list of assigned fact sheets to the committee, and they will have two weeks to review and edit them before sending them back to Lisa.

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Action item: Jay Odell and Bob VanDolah will work together to contact Mary Conley about the TNC Benthic Habitat Mapping Effort announcing a web-based product (1/2 page) for the Habitat Hotline. A draft is due on September 1st to Kent and Lisa.

Action item: Wilson Laney will contact Rua Mordecai to write up an article for the Habitat Hotline concerning SALCC habitat prioritization tools in the marine/estuarine systems: information to inform the ocean energy exploration. A draft is due on September 1st to Kent and Lisa.

Action item: Dawn McReynolds will contact Megan Tyrell to write up an article for the Habitat Hotline concerning NALCC habitat prioritization tools in the marine/estuarine systems: information to inform the ocean energy exploration. A draft is due on September 1st to Kent and Lisa.

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Action item: [Wilson Laney](#) will make contacts for the acoustic tagging article. This will be less than a page and will be due to Kent and Lisa by September 1st.

Action item: [Jessica Coakley](#) will take the lead on the seismic testing article. The seismic testing article should address overall G&G activities in the Atlantic; effects of seismic testing on fish and habitat; impact of acoustic sound on fish behavior and habitat use. Jessica will contact the BOEM folks, Brian Hooker and/or Jake. A draft of this article is due to Lisa and Kent by September 1st.

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Action item: For the state updates, each [Habitat Committee member](#) will be responsible for their jurisdiction's update. Please send a draft report to Kent and Lisa by September 1st.

Action item: [Bob VanDolah](#) and [Penny Howell](#) will work on the lobster bottlenecks teaser for Habitat Hotline. A draft is due to Kent and Lisa by September 1st.

Action item: [Jessica Coakley](#) will work with BOEM for an article on the permitting components/public comments for Habitat Hotline. A draft is due to Kent and Lisa by September 1st.

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Action item: All [Habitat Committee members](#), please send in any pertinent fish passage data to Jeff Kipp (jkipp@asmfc.org).

Action item: [Wilson Laney](#) will contact Chip Collier and verify his interest in continuing to write the weakfish section of the sciaenid source document. He will cc Lisa when he does. A draft is due by the end of July.

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Action item: [Marek Topolski](#) will give finished aquaculture document to Lisa by end of July.

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Action item: [Toni Kerns](#) will talk to Bob about scheduling a brief (~1 hour) symposium by Council members on EBM during a day where the meetings end early at annual meeting.

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Action item: [Wilson Laney](#) will take the information about the technology discussed during the Artificial Reef section to the SAFMC Law Enforcement Committee.

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Action item: [Wilson Laney](#) will work with [Pace Wilber](#) on a draft *generic* letter to address the sampling and dredging compliance issues discussed at the meeting. It should reference ASMFC-managed species. The draft will be sent out to HC and ASMFC staff for review by June 15th. The draft with edits will be sent to the Policy board in August for their consideration.

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Action item: [Lisa Havel](#) will work with [Toni Kerns](#) on updating the Habitat Committee membership.