



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

74th Annual Meeting Summary

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

74th Annual Meeting
St. Augustine, Florida
November 2-5, 2015

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

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)	3
<i>Press Release</i>	3
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	3
<i>Motions</i>	4
ATLANTIC HERRING SECTION (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)	5
<i>Press Release</i>	5
<i>Motions</i>	6
SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)	6
<i>Press Release</i>	6
<i>Motions</i>	7
SEAMAP-SOUTH ATLANTIC & GSMFC CRUSTACEAN WORKGROUPS (NOVEMBER 2 & 3, 2015)	8
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	8
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	9
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	9
HABITAT COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	9
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	9
AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	10
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	10
<i>Motions</i>	10
WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	11
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	11
<i>Motions</i>	11
LEGISLATORS & GOVERNORS' APPOINTEES LUNCHEON (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	11
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	11
WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	12
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	12

<i>Motions</i>	12
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)	12
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	12
<i>Motions</i>	13
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	13
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	13
<i>Motions</i>	14
JOINT MEETING OF THE ASMFC LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE AND GSMFC LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY PANEL (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	15
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	15
TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	16
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	16
<i>Motions</i>	17
ASMFC CAPTAIN DAVID H. HART AND GSMFC LYLES-SIMPSON AWARDS LUNCHEON (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	18
<i>Press Release</i>	18
ASMFC Presents Willard Cole Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award.....	18
BUSINESS SESSION (NOVEMBER 4 & 5, 2015)	19
<i>Press Release</i>	19
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	20
<i>Motions</i>	20
ATLANTIC COAST FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP (NOVEMBER 4 & 5, 2015)	21
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	21
COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	22
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	22
<i>Motions</i>	22
SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)	23
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	23
<i>Motions</i>	23
HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)	23
<i>Press Release</i>	23
<i>Motions</i>	24
INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)	25
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	25
<i>Motions</i>	25
SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)	26
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	26
<i>Motions</i>	26

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)

Press Release

**ASMFC American Lobster Board Initiates Addendum to Jonah Crab FMP
*Draft Addendum to Consider Changes to Non-trap Bycatch Limit***

St. Augustine, FL – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board initiated Addendum I to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to consider changes the incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear. The FMP currently prescribes a 200 crabs per calendar day/500 crabs per trip incidental bycatch limit; however, concerns were expressed over the appropriateness of these limits. Data submitted by the New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries illustrated while 97-99% of trips from 2010 through 2014 have been within the current limit, there were a number of trips above the limit. Furthermore, current bycatch landings are sufficiently low, accounting for approximately 1% of total landings.



Photo © Derek Perry, MA DMF

Given a goal of the Jonah Crab FMP is to prevent expansion of the fishery while including all current participants, the Board has initiated an addendum to consider altering the incidental bycatch limit with options to increase the limit to 1000 crabs per trip or eliminate the bycatch limit for non-trap gear. Draft Addendum I will be presented to the Board in February. If approved, the Board would release the Draft Addendum for public comment and will consider final approval of the addendum at the Commission’s Spring Meeting in May. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR15-34

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Management Board met to discuss potential management measures for the Southern New England (SNE) lobster stock and review aspects of the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP), including effort controls for Jonah-crab only trap fishermen, current claw exemptions, and the incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear.

The Board reviewed management objectives presented by the SNE Subcommittee which ranged from stabilizing the stock through reductions in fishing mortality to preserving the fishery infrastructure at the expense of the stock. Discussion also focused on ways to reduce natural mortality, which is believed to be a critical component of the stock decline. In order to gain more information on the SNE stock and options moving forward, the Board charged the Technical Committee to complete several tasks, including a review of preliminary stock projections and a recalculation of reference points.

The Board also discussed three aspects of the Jonah Crab FMP: effort control measures for Jonah crab only trap fishermen, claw exemptions, and the incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear. In order to understand the scale of the fishery, the Board tasked the Plan Development Team (PDT) to examine catch and landings records to characterize participants in the Jonah crab-only trap fishery. Similarly, the PDT was asked to review Jonah crab claw landings given that the number of claw fishermen is greater than expected and the current claw exemption may no longer be appropriate. Finally, following concerns that the incidental bycatch limit does not capture all current participants in the fishery, the Board initiated Addendum I to increase or eliminate the trip limit.

The Board also approved the 2015 FMP Review and *de minimis* requests for Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. The Board approved 3 new members to the Advisory Panel: John Godwin (NJ), Grant Moore (MA) and Sonny Gwin (MD). Finally, the Board agreed to continue collaboration on federal and state at-sea observer programs so that agreed upon changes can be implemented by the 2016 fishing season. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Motion to initiate an addendum to remove the non-trap bycatch limit from the Jonah Crab FMP or increase the trip limit to 1,000 crabs.

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

Move to have the Technical Committee (TC) examine the tasks provided today.

TC Tasks:

- Review the SNE projections
- Methods to increase egg production
- Examine the cost/benefit of existing regulations
- Recalculate targets and thresholds without the bubble years (88-99) and based on the existing productivity
- Table of egg production by size for each LCMA
- Examine the relationship of the inshore vs. offshore stocks and describe with a budget need studies
- Review statement of the problem from Ad. 12/17 and provide recommendation on how to solve the described problems
- Characterize the 2014 existing effort by LCMA

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

Move to approve the 2015 Lobster FMP Review, state compliance reports.

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

Move to accept MD, VA, and DE for *de minimis* status.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes (10 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention).

Move to approve Grant Moore (MA), John Godwin (NJ), and Earl Gwin (MD) to the American Lobster Advisory Panel.

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

Move to continue collaboration on federal/state onboard observer programs, including a discussion at the fall Northeast Regional Coordinating Committee meeting, so that agreed upon changes can be implemented by the start of the 2016 fishing year.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes (11 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention).

ATLANTIC HERRING SECTION (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section Approves Public Hearing Document on Draft Amendment 3 for Public Comment

St. Augustine, FL – The Commission’s Atlantic Herring Section approved the Public Hearing Document for Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Herring for public comment. Draft Amendment 3 was initiated to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) and address concerns raised by the commercial fishing industry. The Public Hearing Document proposes (1) alternatives to the spawning monitoring program (protocol, default start dates, area boundaries, and length of the closure period); (2) removing the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision, and (3) requiring a vessel’s fish hold to be emptied before leaving on a fishing trip.



Today’s rebuilt herring population is comprised of a broader range of age classes with older and larger fish compared to the population during overfished conditions. Analysis of more than a decade’s worth of data suggests larger herring spawn first and the timing of the start of spawning varies from year-to-year. Proposed alternatives to the current spawning monitoring program address inter-annual differences and provide additional measures to more adequately protect spawning fish in the areas where they spawn.

At the request of the fishing industry, the Public Hearing Document includes an option to adjust the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision. Currently, the set-aside of 295 mt is available to fixed gear fishermen through November 1, after which the remaining set-aside becomes available to the rest of the Area 1A fishery. The November 1 date was set because, typically, herring have migrated out of the Gulf of Maine by that time. Anecdotal evidence suggests herring are in the Gulf of Maine after November 1, therefore, fixed gear fishermen requested the set-aside be made available to them for the remainder of the calendar year.

Members of industry also suggested a requirement for fish holds to be empty of fish prior to trip departures. This provision would allow for full accountability and encourage less wasteful fishing practices by creating an incentive to catch herring to meet market demands. The New England Fishery Management Council included a complementary provision in its Framework Adjustment 4 to the Federal Atlantic Herring FMP.

The states will be conducting public hearings on the Public Hearing Document this winter. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Public Hearing Document either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. A subsequent press release will announce the availability of the Public Hearing Document, details of the scheduled hearings, as well as the deadline for the submission of public comment. For more information, please contact, Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR15-35

Motions

Move to approve the 2016 to 2018 Atlantic herring specifications as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Gibson. Motion carries unanimously (Roll Call Vote: In favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ).

Move to approve Draft Amendment 3 for public comment.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. White. Motion carries (5 in favor, 1 opposed).

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 2, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board Revises 2016 Black Sea Bass Specifications & Initiates Draft Addendum for Regional Management of 2016 Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries

St. Augustine, FL – The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved increases to the 2016 black sea bass commercial quota and recreational harvest limit (RHL), with the commercial quota now being set at 2.71 million pounds and the RHL at 2.88 million pounds. These increases are consistent with actions taken by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in October. The increased quota for black sea bass was based on updated catch and survey information. A black sea bass benchmark stock assessment is underway for completion in December 2016.

The Board initiated development of Draft Addendum XXVII to the Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plans (FMP) to consider extending use of regional management approaches for the 2016 recreational summer flounder fishery, including an option that would allow for a Delaware Bay specific region. The Draft Addendum also will propose extending use of ad-hoc regional management approaches for black sea bass recreational fisheries in 2016 and 2017. In the event the options in Draft Addendum XXVII are not approved for management, the Board extended the current summer flounder regional management approach for use in 2016.

In 2014, the Board approved Addendum XXV to shift away from traditional use of state-by-state harvest targets under conservation equivalency to use of an alternative regional strategy for managing summer flounder recreational fisheries. Based on its success in keeping recreational harvest within the RHL and

providing greater regulatory consistency among neighboring states, this strategy was extended for use in 2015. State-by-state harvest targets previously utilized under conservation equivalency created difficulties for some states as overages occurred due largely to state shares and limits not reflecting local summer flounder abundance and its availability to recreational fishermen. In 2014 and 2015 management regions were the following: Massachusetts; Rhode Island; Connecticut-New Jersey; Delaware-Virginia; and North Carolina.

The Draft Addendum also will propose the continued use of regional management for the 2016 black sea bass recreational fishery with a northern (Massachusetts – New Jersey) and southern region (Delaware – North Carolina). The regional management approach has been used since 2011 and offers advantages over coastwide regulations by addressing geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance and seasonality) while maintaining the consistent application of management measures by neighboring states.

Draft Addendum XXVII will be presented to the Board for its consideration and approval for public comment at its joint meeting with the Council in December. At the December meeting, the Board and Council also will consider black sea bass and scup federal management measures for 2016. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR15-36

Motions

Main Motion

Move to initiate an addendum to extend ad hoc regional management for black sea bass recreational fisheries in 2016.

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

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to include 2017.

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

Main Motion as Amended

Move to initiate an addendum to extend ad hoc regional management for black sea bass recreational fisheries in 2016 and 2017.

Motion passes (13 in favor).

Main Motion

Move to extend provision of Addendum XXVI for 2016 [summer flounder regional management].

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Borden.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to initiate a draft addendum to establish 2016 regional recreational summer flounder management options, including a regional option for Delaware Bay. Options for consideration in the addendum will only be for Delaware Bay and all other regions will remain as currently constructed, including all other waters of New Jersey implementing the same management measures as New York and Connecticut.

Motion made by Mr. Baum and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion fails (5 in favor, 6 opposed).

Main Motion

Move to extend provision of Addendum XXVI for 2016 [summer flounder regional management].

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes (9 in favor, 2 opposed).

Move to initiate an addendum to address the discrepancies in measures within Delaware Bay.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion carries unanimously.

Move to approve the 2016 black sea bass terms of reference.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries.

Move to accept a 2.71 million pound commercial quota and 2.88 million pound recreational harvest limit for 2016.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion passes without objection (Roll Call Vote: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Abstention – NOAA Fisheries).

Move to postpone decision on this issue (discrepancies in state/federal landings data) until Winter Meeting and ask states to work with NOAA Fisheries to resolve the differences.

Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries (11 in favor, 1 opposed).

Move to approve *de minimis* status for Delaware for summer flounder and scup.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion carries.

Move to approve the 2015 FMP Reviews for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass.

Motion made by Mr. Adler and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion carries unanimously.

SEAMAP-SOUTH ATLANTIC & GSMFC CRUSTACEAN WORKGROUPS (NOVEMBER 2 & 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The SEAMAP-SA Crustacean Workgroup met on November 2 to discuss emerging issues in each partner state, review the SEAMAP 2016-2020 Management Plan, and discuss SAFMC Fishery Ecosystem Plan Amendment II. The Workgroup received presentations on black gill shrimp research and discussed ideas for future research initiatives. The Workgroup also received a presentation on offshore spawning of blue crabs in the Southeast U.S. This presentation lead directly into a discussion of a potential South Atlantic regional blue crab assessment. On November 3, the SEAMAP-SA Crustacean Workgroup met jointly with the GSMFC TCC Crab Subcommittee. Participants discussed the methodology and outcome of the Gulf States' regional blue crab assessment and how this may apply in the South Atlantic. The group received a presentation on the Atlantic horseshoe crab fishery and discussed the emerging Gulf fishery implications and management. All partners shared information on derelict trap and gear issues and established collection programs. Finally, the group received a report on the status of terrapin in South Carolina and made suggestions for future research. For more information, please contact Shanna Madsen, Fisheries Science Coordinator, at smadsen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee approved the FY 2015 audit. It discussed the revisions to the Commission's guidance documents, which will be forwarded to the Commission and ISFMP Policy Board for consideration. It also tasked the Management and Science and Assessment Science Committees with developing a framework for a risk and uncertainty policy. Lastly, the Committee discussed its strategy for communicating Commission priorities to Congress. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

HABITAT COMMITTEE (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Habitat Committee held its second in-person meeting of the year at the Commission's 74th Annual Meeting. The Committee received an update on the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership program from the coordinator, Lisa Havel. The Committee then received presentations from Ron Brockmeyer of the St. Johns River Water Management District, and from Deb Wilson of the ASMFC Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel. Ron presented on marsh habitat restoration success in the Indian River Lagoon, in Florida, and Deb gave a presentation on the restoration of the Damariscotta Mills Dam fish ladder in Maine.

The new Habitat Committee Chair, Jake Kritzer, gave a presentation on the Environmental Defense Fund Northeast Ecosystem Stressors Workshop that was held in September. He summarized the results from both an online survey and meeting discussions on the relative importance of various threats to coastal towns and cities, marsh and estuarine habitats, marine habitats, and fisheries. Four representatives from the Habitat Committee were present at the meeting.

The Committee reviewed its 2015 work plan. The 2015 issue of *Habitat Hotline Atlantic*, with a focus on the impacts of energy development to fish habitats, is on track for publication by the end of the year, although some articles and state/federal agency updates are still needed. The Committee has completed a habitat bottlenecks white paper, which includes case studies on examples of species with physical bottlenecks. The first draft of the *Sciaenid Habitats Source Document*, which was initiated in 2014, is ready for editing from the Habitat Committee and the South Atlantic Species Technical Committee. This latest installment of the *Habitat Management Series* will be ready for approval and publication by the winter Commission meeting. The Habitat Committee also reviewed and updated the each Species Habitat Factsheet, which will be put on the website in the upcoming weeks.

For 2016, the Committee plans to finalize the next installment of the *Habitat Management Series*, which will focus on Aquaculture. Ideas for the next *Habitat Hotline* were discussed, and will be finalized at the Spring Meeting. Potential topics include diversity (genetic, behavioral, life history, and geographic), fishing gear impacts, pelagic habitats, power plant impingement, and living shorelines. The Committee plans to identify common climate change themes and gaps in their state coastal regulatory plans, and will incorporate climate change threats into the upcoming Fishery Management Plans (Northern shrimp, tautog, and menhaden).

For more information on the activities of the Habitat Committee, please contact Lisa Havel, Habitat Coordinator, at lhavel@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The American Eel Management Board met to review and approve Maine's Life Cycle Survey design and Addendum IV implementation plans that detail how states and jurisdictions plan to monitor and manage a state-by-state yellow eel quota if triggered. The Board also accepted the 2014 and 2015 FMP Reviews, as well as a deadline waiver request for an Aquaculture Plan from the State of North Carolina.

The Technical Committee presented its acceptance of Maine's Life Cycle Survey to the Board noting it will review the survey design after the first year of implementation to address any challenges that occur through the first field season. The Technical Committee (TC) notes the sampling framework was approved specifically for the Cobboosecontee Stream drainage in Maine, and future life cycle survey designs for other river systems will need to be reviewed and approved by the TC separately. The Board also approved Addendum IV implementation plans for the potential implementation of yellow eel state quotas. Included in the Board's approval was the TC's recommendation to use harvester reporting to monitor the quota as well as requiring the states to submit preliminary landings data for the previous fishing year by March 1 so the quota triggers can be evaluated by the Board at its May meeting.

The Board approved the 2014 and 2015 FMP Reviews and approved *de minimis* status for New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Georgia yellow eel fisheries. The only notable compliance issue was Delaware's non-compliance for failing to not implement management measures contained in Addendum III (the Commission had found the state out of compliance in August 2015). A moratorium will occur in Delaware state waters on March 18, 2016 unless the Commission finds that Delaware has implemented the necessary measures to come back into compliance with Addendum III.

In the Board's final action, it approved a deadline waiver request from the State of North Carolina allowing the state to submit an Aquaculture Plan by December 1. This plan will be reviewed by the Law Enforcement Committee and TC and submitted to the Board for its consideration at the Commission's Winter Meeting in February 2016. For more information please contact Mike Waine, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Motion to accept Maine's Life Cycle survey.

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to add to the February agenda a discussion to potentially revisit the Addendum IV allocation.

Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion carries (11 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions, 1 null vote).

Move to approve the Addendum IV implementation plans with the recommendations from the Technical Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carries unanimously.

Move to accept and approve the compliance reports, FMP Review, and *de minimis* requests.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion passes unanimously.

Move to accept North Carolina's aquaculture plan for submission on December 1st and Board consideration at the February 2016 Meeting.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion passed by consent.

WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Weakfish Management Board met to review progress on the Weakfish benchmark stock assessment, which is scheduled for peer review in early 2016. The Board also approved the 2015 FMP Review, granting *de minimis* status to Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, and Florida. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, aharp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the 2015 Weakfish FMP Review, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, and Florida.

Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded Mr. Fote. Motion passes unanimously.

LEGISLATORS & GOVERNORS' APPOINTEES LUNCHEON (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Commission's Legislators and Governor's Appointees (LGAs) met to elect new leadership and discuss issues of importance to the Commission. The following Commissioners were elected to serve as the leadership of the LGAs:

- Dennis Abbott (NH), Legislative Chair
- Roy Miller (DE), Governor's Appointee Chair
- Sarah Peake (MA), Legislative Vice-Chair
- Emerson Hasbrouck, Jr. (NY), Governor's Appointee Vice-Chair

A number of long-serving LGAs encouraged new Commissioners to take advantage of Commission resources and attend non-Board meetings such as the Habitat and Executive Committees whenever possible. Commissioners also discussed ways to communicate the states' needs to Congress as well as the importance of working with other national advocacy groups. Finally, the LGAs discussed the importance of regular communication between all three Commissioners within each of the state delegations. For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, at dtompkins@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Winter Flounder Management Board met to review the recent stock assessment for the Gulf of Maine (GOM) stock and the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock, and discuss potential management responses.

Based on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) operational (update) stock assessment for GOM, the stock biomass status is unknown and overfishing is not occurring. This assessment updates commercial and recreational fishery catch data, research survey indices of abundance, and the area-swept estimates of 30+ cm biomass based on the fall NEFSC, MDMF, and MENH surveys.

Based on the NEFSC operational assessment, the SNE/MA winter flounder stock is overfished but overfishing is not occurring. This assessment updates commercial fishery catch data, recreational fishery catch data, and research survey indices of abundance, and the analytical ASAP assessment models and reference points through 2014. Additionally, stock projections have been updated through 2018. The Board did not set the 2016 specifications at this time. It will address the issue during the Commission's Winter Meeting, after the New England Fishery Management Council has had an opportunity to set its specifications for the 2016 fishing year.

For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to elect Dr. David Pierce as Vice Chair of the Winter Flounder Board.

Motion made by David Simpson. Motion carries by acclamation.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 3, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to discuss progress on the development of Draft Amendment, including committee recommendations on ecosystem reference points (ERPs), revisiting allocation, and upcoming socioeconomic analysis of the menhaden fishery. The Amendment will consider both ERPs and revisit allocation. As the first step in the amendment process, a public information document will be developed to scope both allocation options, and available ERPs in early 2017, followed by a Draft Amendment document in mid-2017 for potential implementation of final measures in 2018.

The reason for the extended timeframe is to provide the opportunity to conduct a socioeconomic analysis to further characterize the Atlantic menhaden fishery. The socioeconomic analysis will be conducted through a request for proposals with the goal of providing much needed information on the importance of menhaden to its stakeholders to help inform allocation discussions. The socioeconomic analysis will be conducted throughout 2016, and will rely on stakeholder engagement to obtain socio-economic data to conduct the analysis.

Simultaneously, the Biological Ecological Reference Point Working Group will continue to work on the development of ERPs through multi-species modeling approaches. Although the development of ERPs

by the Working Group are not anticipated until 2019-2020, the Board will consider any available ERPs in 2017 when moving forward with Amendment 3.

In its final action, the Board extended a provision to allow cast net fisheries to be managed under the bycatch allowance provision of Amendment 2 for 2016. For more information, please contact Mike Waine, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Motion to not move forward with BERP WG recommended ERP modeling and move forward with a biologically conservative reference point.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Goldsborough. Motion fails (Roll Call Vote: In Favor – NC, FL; Opposed – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, PRFC, SC, GA, USFWS, NMFS).

Main Motion

Move to proceed under option 2 which initiates a PID in 2017 and includes ERPs and allocation with the CESS report to be implemented in 2018.

Motion by made Ms. Fegley and seconded by Ms Cary.

Motion to Amend

Motion to amend the substitute to include after 2017 “to include an option to freeze the quota until 2020.”

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded Mr. Gary. Motion fails (6 in favor, 11 opposed).

Motion to Substitute

Substitute to proceed with an addendum to implement BRPs from the 2015 benchmark stock assessment for implementation in 2017.

Motion made by Mr. O’Reilly and seconded by Mr. Allen. Motion fails (8 in favor, 9 opposed).

Main Motion

Move to proceed under option 2 which initiates a PID in 2017 and includes ERPs and allocation with the CESS report to be implemented in 2018.

Motion by made Ms. Fegley and seconded by Ms Cary. Motion passes.

Move to continue the management of cast nets under the bycatch provisions for 2016.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion passes unanimously.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to review the 2015 Stock Assessment Update and receive a Technical Committee Report on fleet-specific fishing mortality reference points using two different time periods for selectivity.

According to the 2015 Stock Assessment Update, female spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the terminal year (2014) was estimated at 63,918 metric tons, which is a slight increase from the 2013 benchmark assessment but still between the SSB reference points (i.e., below the target and above the threshold).

Similarly, fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.21 which is just below the F threshold of 0.22. Based on these results and public comment received from Chesapeake Bay stakeholders indicating economic hardships in 2015 due to Addendum IV regulation changes, a motion was made to “initiate an Addendum to reconsider management options in the Chesapeake Bay from Addendum IV for 2016 based on the stock assessment update in 2015 and retrospective projections.” A subsequent motion to amend the original motion was made to remove the words “in the Chesapeake Bay.” Following discussion on the motions, both the original motion and the motion to amend were tabled to the February 2016 Board meeting primarily because the 2015 Stock Assessment Update does not reflect Addendum IV regulation changes. Subsequently, the Board tasked the Technical Committee to conduct a stock assessment update in 2016 utilizing catch and index data through 2015. It is anticipated that no additional management will occur until completion of the 2016 assessment update, which is anticipated for next fall.

At its August meeting, the Board tasked the Technical Committee to recalculate fleet-specific F reference points using a composite selectivity over a 17-year period, 1996-2012, and to compare those results against the 5-year period, 2008-2012. The Technical Committee report indicated that the results of both sets of F reference points are nearly the same, and that the management issues raised in August, e.g., the inability to control discard mortality through direct management action, still exist regardless of which time period the Board chooses. Accordingly, these results provided the necessary information for the Board to reaffirm their commitment to the Technical Committee’s recommendation to pursue a sex-specific approach for the upcoming 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

For more information please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to initiate an Addendum to reconsider management options in the Chesapeake Bay from Addendum IV for 2016 based on the stock assessment update in 2015 and retrospective projections.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. O’Reilly. Motion tabled.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to remove the words “in the Chesapeake Bay”.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion tabled.

Move to table motion to amend until the February meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion passes (Roll Call Vote: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, CT, NY, PA, NC, USFWS, NMFS; Opposed – RI, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA).

Move to table main motion.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Keliher. Motion carries (Roll Call Vote: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, NC, NMFS; Opposed – MD, PRFC, VA, USFWS).

Move to recommend the ISFMP Policy Board adjust the 2016 stock assessment schedule to include a striped bass update in 2016.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. O’Reilly. Motion carries (13 in favor, 2 opposed).

JOINT MEETING OF THE ASMFC LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE AND GSMFC LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY PANEL (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met in joint session with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission's Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) on November 4, 2015. Following is a brief summary of the issues discussed at the meeting.

Species Issues

Striped Bass

Mark Robson briefed committee members on a request from ASMFC staff to compile and provide information from their respective states or agencies regarding general understanding of and compliance with changes to Atlantic striped bass bag regulation changes. A Subcommittee of the LEC will compile information for the compliance report on the 2015 fishing year.

Tautog

Four members of the LEC participated in a Law Enforcement Subcommittee with a subset of Tautog Management Board members to review enforcement concerns with the commercial and recreational tautog fishery. Jason Snellbaker presented key findings and recommendations to the Tautog Board, and also reviewed the Subcommittee's work with the LEC. In follow-up, the Enforcement Subcommittee will continue to work on suggested details for implementing a tag system for harvested tautog. The LEC will review and prepare written recommendations regarding regional management options for tautog to be considered in an upcoming addendum.

American Eel

Mike Waine (ASMFC staff) attended the LEC meeting and requested to continue working with the LEC and Mark Robson to document and report on any ongoing enforcement issues with the glass eel fishery. Members reported on the success of the Maine swipe card system in reducing illegal activity, but cautioned that continued vigilance will be necessary to suppress illegal harvest and export of glass eels.

Horseshoe Crab

The LEC had requested that on occasion, it would be helpful to receive reports on the current management and science activities related to ASMFC managed species. This is particularly helpful since the LEC does have newer members who may not be as familiar with ongoing management issues. Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC staff) presented an overview of the horseshoe crab fishery, including the unique nature of the bait fishery and biomedical harvest.

Action Plan Issues

Mark Robson briefed the LEC on the proposed changes to the ASMFC 2016 Action Plan, and reviewed changes and additions to Goal 3, which specifically addresses enforcement issues. Members were presented with key tasks that need to be accomplished in 2016. While many tasks are ongoing from year to year, there were additional items to consider, including the addition of a new task to review enforcement needs for the offshore American lobster fishery, particularly in the offshore waters of Lobster Conservation Management Area 3.

Other action plan items include providing enforcement advice regarding compliance with new or changed regulations for Atlantic striped bass, tautog, American eel, and Jonah crab.

Members discussed the recent results of the enforcement matrix in the LEC's Enforceability Guidelines. Members discussed the low ratings for "airborne" enforcement and considered changes to that category that reflect the value of airborne assets when used in conjunction with land or water-based patrol or electronic surveillance systems.

Joint Meeting with GSMFC LEAP

Because of the unique opportunity presented by the Annual meeting in Florida, the LEC's of both the ASMFC and GSMFC met in joint session. It was a productive and informative meeting and members appreciated the opportunity afforded to share information. This meeting also meets several objectives of the ASMFC LEC to encourage information exchange among state and federal enforcement partners. There was also opportunity to coordinate areas of enforcement for consistency. Following were some of the joint topics that generated considerable discussion:

- Aerial Enforcement needs and benefits.
- TED enforcement checks and coordination with NOAA OLE reporting needs.
- Enforcement of licensing in federal waters.
- Review of state and federal policies regarding recruitment, hiring and retention of officers.
- Illegal, under-reported and unreported fishing issues in the Gulf of Mexico at the U.S./Mexico border.
- Atlantic states policies regarding safe-harbor provisions and offloading of multi-state quotas.

The LEC thanks all of the members of the GSMFC LEAP and staff for meeting jointly and helping to make for a very productive meeting.

New Members to ASMFC LEC

Colby Schlaht is now on-board as the primary USCG representative. Winn Carney is now attending as a representative for NOAA OLE from the mid-Atlantic region. Bob Lynn is the new representative from the Great State of Georgia. Andrew Aloise attended the meeting as a representative for USFWS. For more information, please contact Mark Robson, LEC Coordinator, at markrobson2015@outlook.com.

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Tautog Management Board reviewed submitted public comment on the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 1 to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan and subsequently tasked the Plan Development Team (PDT) with developing a draft Amendment focusing on regional management. The Draft Amendment will include two regional management options, in addition to status quo, shown below.

Coastwide	Three-Region Approach	Four-Region Approach
Status Quo: Massachusetts – Virginia	1) Massachusetts–Rhode Island	1) Massachusetts–Rhode Island
	2) Connecticut–New Jersey	2) Long Island Sound (Connecticut–New York)
	3) Delaware–Virginia	3) New York–New Jersey (excluding LIS)
		4) Delaware–Virginia

The four-region approach requires the completion of two stock assessments: one for Long Island Sound (LIS) and the other for New York-New Jersey (excluding LIS). The Board expects to review the peer-reviewed assessments at the August 2016 Board meeting. The PDT will start developing the amendment and provide an update at the February 2016 meeting. The Law Enforcement Subcommittee will evaluate the feasibility of a commercial tagging program.

The Board approved Captain Mel True (MA) as a member of the Advisory Panel. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to direct the PDT to develop the draft amendment under option 4 (regions of Massachusetts-Rhode Island; Long Island Sound including Connecticut-New York; New York-New Jersey excluding Long Island Sound; Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia).

Motion made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend

Motion to amend to include options 3 and 4.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded Mr. Miller. Motion carries (9 in favor, 1 abstention).

Main Motion as Amended

Move to direct the PDT to develop the draft amendment under option 3 (regions of Massachusetts-Rhode Island; Connecticut, New York, New Jersey; Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) and option 4 (regions of Massachusetts-Rhode Island; Long Island Sound including Connecticut-New York; New York-New Jersey excluding Long Island Sound; Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia).

Motion made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion carries (9 in favor, 1 abstention).

Move to approve Captain Mel True as a member of the Tautog Advisory Panel.

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

Move to nominate David Simpson as Vice-chair of the Tautog Management Board.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. Augustine. Motion passes unanimously

ASMFC CAPTAIN DAVID H. HART AND GSMFC LYLES-SIMPSON AWARDS LUNCHEON (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Presents Willard Cole Prestigious Captain David H. Hart Award

St. Augustine, FL – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Willard “Bill” Cole, formerly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission’s 74th Annual Meeting in St. Augustine, FL.



Throughout his nearly 40-year career as a state, university, and federal fishery manager and scientist, Bill Cole worked to protect, restore, and conserve fisheries resources and their habitats along the Atlantic coast. Bill graduated from North Carolina State University in 1966, and moved to Lake City, Florida, where he began his career with the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. Shortly after, he joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), where he stayed for the remainder of his career. At USFWS, Bill served in different capacities and numerous offices from North Carolina, to New York, DC, Texas and even New Mexico. In each place he left an indelible mark; serving on review teams for the first Everglades study, developing the Navigable Waters Handbook; protecting riverine, wetland, and coastal habitats in Long Island Sound, the Hudson River and St. Lawrence Seaway; and establishing what ultimately would become the USFWS South Atlantic Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. While with the South Atlantic Office, he worked closely with the State of North Carolina to restore anadromous fishery resources throughout the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, once the site of the largest commercial American shad and river herring fisheries on the entire East Coast.

With his customary vision, Bill understood early on that management of fishery resources in North Carolina required participation in regional fishery management institutions as well. As such, he became involved with both the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Commission, as the Southeast Regional Director’s designee for both institutions. He served in that capacity continuously for 19 years. Bill served on numerous committees and management boards for both institutions, and prior to his retirement served as Chair of the Commission’s South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board.

Along with several colleagues, Bill conceived the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise off North Carolina and Virginia. The Cruise was designed to tag striped bass in a mixed stock of migratory fish wintering off the North Carolina Outer Banks and southern Virginia as a part of the Commission’s Atlantic migratory striped bass management program. The Cruise began in 1988 and has been conducted annually with few interruptions. It is one of the longest time series of any such coastal tagging program, as well as one of the most effective federal, state, and academic partnerships. Bill served as Chief Scientist on all but two of the cruises during an 18 year period, and annually coordinated scheduling, equipment acquisition, and recruitment of all Scientific Party members. Through the years, tagging of additional ASMFC- and Council-managed species was added to the Cruise protocol. To date,

the Cruise has tagged 252 Atlantic sturgeon and over 47,000 striped bass, with a tag return rate approaching 20 percent.

Bill is a charter member of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Operations Committee, and has been an ardent supporter of the Program since its inception, providing staff to serve as the initial Program Coordinator, and working tirelessly with federal and state partners to move the program forward.

Finally, during his last year with USFWS, Bill was detailed to the National Marine Fisheries Service, where he served as Special Assistant to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Dr. William Hogarth. Bill was a key element in the planning of several national-level meetings that brought together fisheries professionals from Regional Fishery Management Councils and Interstate Fisheries Management Commissions to consider the future directions of fisheries management.

Bill has characterized himself as a “biopolitician,” but his contribution to the management of U.S. East Coast fisheries goes well beyond his many notable accomplishments. Bill has been a true friend and mentor to many in our fisheries management family and we are deeply indebted to him. Since Bill was unable to attend the Hart Award ceremony, Dr. Wilson Laney, a longtime colleague and friend, accepted the award on Bill’s behalf.

The Commission instituted the Award in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The Hart Award is named for one of the Commission’s longest serving members, who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources.

###

PR15-32

BUSINESS SESSION (NOVEMBER 4 & 5, 2015)

Press Release

Douglas Grout Elected ASMFC Chair

St. Augustine, FL – Today, member states of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission acknowledged the many accomplishments of outgoing Chair, Dr. Louis B. Daniel of North Carolina and elected Douglas Grout as its new Chair.

In assuming the chairmanship, Mr. Grout spoke enthusiastically about his new position, “I am honored to be elected by my colleagues from the 15 Atlantic coast states, and pledge to uphold the trust they have placed in me as I serve my term chairing the Commission. Under my watch, I will work to lead the Commission responsibly through the many challenges inherent in managing our nation’s coastal fisheries. I look forward to working closely with the Commission’s management partners and will ensure the voices of our many stakeholders are heard.”



“My predecessor, Louis Daniel, has cemented his legacy as a champion of marine fisheries and a role model to those they support by guiding the Commission through two productive years that included major management decisions for two of the Atlantic coast’s most iconic species, Atlantic striped bass and Atlantic menhaden. Evidenced by the fact that a record number of Commission-managed fisheries are thriving, Louis never backed away from making tough decisions and always did what he believed to be the right thing. Under his leadership, the Commission transitioned smoothly through a period of major staff turnover, avoided an Endangered Species Act listing of American eel, and completed numerous benchmark stock assessments. In a tough fiscal environment, he also fought to provide the states with the resources they needed to get the job done.”

Mr. Grout currently serves as the Chief of the Marine Fisheries Division of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department where he has worked for over 30 years. He has been actively involved in the Commission process for many years, beginning in 1988 serving on the Management and Science Committee and numerous species technical committees. He received the Commission’s Award of Excellence in the Scientific/Technical/Advisory category in 2005. As a Commissioner he has chaired the Northern Shrimp Section, the American Lobster Board, and most recently, the Atlantic Striped Bass Board. Mr. Grout received his M.S. and B.S. in Zoology from the University of New Hampshire and is an American Fisheries Society Certified Fisheries Scientist.

The Commission also elected James Gilmore from New York as its Vice-Chair.

###

PR15-32

Meeting Summary

The Business Session met to review the Draft 2016 Action Plan, the FY2015 audit, and elect a new Commission Chair and Vice-Chair. The Business Session approved the 2016 Action Plan, with minor revisions, as well as the FY2015 audit. The Action Plan will guide staff, committee, and board activities throughout 2016 and will be available the week of November 9th on the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/guiding-documents>. The Session received the Annual Report from the outgoing Chair Dr. Louis Daniel and thanked him for his outstanding leadership over the past four years as Commission Chair and Vice-Chair. By unanimous consent, the Session elected Douglas Grout, Chief of Marine Fisheries for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and James Gilmore, Director of the Bureau of Marine Resources for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as the Commission’s new Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. For its last order of business, the Session received a report from the Resolutions Committee honoring Florida Commissioners and staff with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for hosting this year’s Annual Meeting.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Executive Director, at rbeal@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the 2016 Action Plan and budget.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion carries without objection.

ATLANTIC COAST FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP (NOVEMBER 4 & 5, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) Steering Committee had a productive meeting, covering a variety of topics including science and data, outreach, and on-the-ground restoration projects. The Steering Committee reviewed the applications received for fish habitat restoration project funding and recommended five highly ranked projects to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A large portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the status of the 2012 – 2016 Conservation Strategic Plan and its associated Implementation Plan, starting to formulate ideas on the direction the program would like to take with the subsequent (2017 – 2021) plan.

The Science and Data Committee Chair, Caroly Shumway, presented an update on the September in-person Science and Data meeting. From this update, the Steering Committee decided to move forward with developing the Species-Habitat Matrix website, updating specific aspects of the Assessment of Existing Information, and developing a coastwide fish habitat score and map to inform the next Conservation Strategic Plan. The Committee agreed to set aside operation funds to support a contractor to develop this need in the upcoming months.

There were multiple updates on various ACFHP projects. Dawn McReynolds presented the results of the survey on habitat restoration priorities according to restoration practitioners. Chris Powell gave an update on the conservation mooring project in Jamestown, RI, which is close to completion. Julie Devers provided a status update on the fish habitat decision support tool, which is currently online (www.fishhabitattool.org). Some of the data used in the tool came directly from The Nature Conservancy, which was presented to the Steering Committee at the last fall meeting by Erik Martin. Finally, Lisa Havel provided a summary of the status of a new grant that ACFHP received from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to research and/or restore offshore reef in the Mid-Atlantic.

The Steering Committee had the opportunity to hear from invited speaker Chuck Jacoby (St. Johns River Water Management District) about the status of the Indian River Lagoon post-algae blooms.

The Committee also discussed its current collaborative efforts and possible future directions with the National Fish Habitat Partnership, Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership, and the Whitewater to Bluewater collaboration (between ACFHP and the two other eastern Fish Habitat Partnerships: Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture and the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership). The National Fish Habitat evaluation of ACFHP and the current draft of the Business Plan were discussed and areas of improvement are being considered for the next Conservation Strategic Plan. Members of the Steering Committee had the opportunity to visit marsh restoration projects in Mosquito Lagoon, located in the Canaveral National Seashore on Wednesday.

Lastly, at the Annual Meeting evening reception on November 2nd, ACFHP Steering Committee Chair Kent Smith and Habitat Committee Chair Jake Kritzer proudly presented Deb Wilson with the Melissa Laser Fish Habitat Conservation Award for her exemplary work in furthering the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes. In particular, Deb was recognized for her efforts to restore river herring runs in Nobleboro, Maine through restoration of the Damariscotta Mills fishway. A press release detailing the full extent of Deb's contributions will be released early next week.

For more information, please contact Lisa Havel, ACFHP Coordinator, at lhavel@asmfc.org.

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Coastal Sharks Management Board received updates from NOAA Fisheries on Amendment 6 and 9, as well as proposed 2016 specifications. The proposed rule for Amendment 9 focuses on smoothhound shark management. The recent final rule for Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (effective August 18, 2015) implemented adjustable commercial retention limits (CRL).

Previously, the CRL for federal and state waters was set at 36 large coastal sharks (LCS) per trip, excluding sandbar sharks, for directed permit holders. Amendment 6 created a default CRL of 45 (and a maximum of 55) LCS per trip, excluding sandbar sharks, for directed permit holders. NOAA Fisheries may modify the LCS CRL, anywhere from 55 LCS to 0 LCS, to ensure equitable distribution of the resource throughout the fishing season. Landings will be monitored on a weekly basis and an adjustment to the LCS CRL will be evaluated when 30% of the quota is harvested.

The proposed 2016 specifications include an opening date of January 1, 2016 and an initial CRL of 45 LCS per trip, excluding sandbar sharks, for directed permit holders. States discussed their ability to implement variable CRLs. Some states have proclamation authority which allows them to amend regulations within 48 hours, while other states would likely take 2-3 months to amend their CRLs.

Given the proposed specifications may differ from the final rule. The Board deferred setting final specifications until NOAA Fisheries publishes the final rule. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Main Motion

Move that the Board approve the coastal shark specifications including changes in the final rule.

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

Motion to Amend

Move to amend that the Board agree to the small coastal shark specifications as outlined in the final rule and large coastal shark specifications with a July 15th increase to 45 sharks.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Motion fails (12 opposed, 1 abstention).

Move to table the motion for an email vote until after the final rule is published.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Geer. Motion carries unanimously.

SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 4, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The Spiny Dogfish Management Board reviewed the 2015 stock assessment update and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Science and Statistical Committee's (SSC) recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC). The assessment found the stock to be neither overfished nor subject to overfishing; the estimated stock biomass is 87% of the rebuilt target. The new estimate of stock biomass was a marked decrease from the 2013 update, which indicated that the stock's biomass was at 135% of the target. The SSC recommended an ABC limit of 37 million pounds.

The primary cause of the reduction in the biomass estimate is that the last update was driven by survey data points that were above average (2011), very above average (2012), and near average (2013), while the current update is driven by survey data points that are near average (2013) and below average (2015). There is no NMFS survey value (and therefore no stock size estimate) for 2014 because important spiny dogfish areas were skipped by the Bigelow trawl survey due to a mechanical breakdown.

The SSC is reviewing alternatives to determine an overfishing limit and ABC for 2016 using averaged data to fill in the missing 2014 data point. The SSC will meet in November to discuss alternatives. The Council will review the alternatives in December 2015, thereafter, the Board will review the outcome. Final action on the 2016-2018 spiny dogfish specifications were postponed until the next meeting. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to postpone final action on 2016-2018 spiny dogfish specifications until February 2016 meeting. Motion made by Mr. Stockwell and seconded by Dr. Pierce. Motion passes unanimously.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)

Press Release

ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2016 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin

St. Augustine, FL – The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2016 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin:

	Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	Total Quota
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia*	34,615	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

The Board chose a harvest management program based on the Technical Committee and ARM Subcommittee recommendation. The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Previously the horseshoe crab abundance estimate was based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute, however, due to the Benthic Trawl Survey not having been conducted in recent years, a composite index of the Delaware 30ft Trawl Survey, New Jersey Delaware Bay Trawl Survey, and New Jersey Ocean Trawl Survey was used instead. Funding has been secured for the Benthic Trawl Survey to be conducted in 2016.

The Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee, Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee, and the ARM Subcommittee also recommended the ARM Framework be reviewed and updated in 2016. The Board agreed with this recommendation, with specific interest in re-considering the thresholds to allow the harvest of female horseshoe crabs, as well as the recent listing of red knot as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The ARM Subcommittee will develop specific recommendations to the Board on changes to the ARM Framework in 2016.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR15-37

Motions

Motion to approve the 2016 Delaware Bay Horseshoe Crab harvest recommendations, harvest package 3, as provided by the technical committee.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Millard. Motion carries without objection.

Move to approve the 2015 FMP Review, and approve de minimis status for SC, GA, PRFC and conditional de minimis status for FL.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion carries without objection.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The ISFMP Policy Board met to receive reports from the Executive Committee, Habitat Committee, and Law Enforcement Committee; review progress on changes to the Commission guiding documents; consider changes to the Biological Ecological Reference Points Working Group (BERP); review progress on the Atlantic sturgeon stock assessment; and consider a change in the Atlantic striped bass stock assessment schedule.

The Policy Board reviewed and approved the Habitat Bottlenecks White Paper presented by the Habitat Committee. The white paper will be a living document on the habitat section of the Commission webpage which provides information on habitat bottlenecks for some Commission species including horseshoe crab and tautog.

The Commission's Executive Committee and Administrative Oversight Committee have been reviewing Commission Guidance documents to reflect the current practices (e.g. amendment and addenda process, appeal criteria, and definition of final action). The Policy Board reviewed their recommendations and have placed these issues on its agenda for further consideration at the Commission's Winter Meeting in February 2016.

The BERP is a spin-off of the Multispecies Technical Committee, both of which report to the Policy Board. The Policy Board agreed the BERP should report directly to the Atlantic Menhaden Board since the Working Group is primarily working on menhaden-related issues.

The Atlantic sturgeon benchmark stock assessment is scheduled to undergo a peer review in 2017. The Stock Assessment Committee is making progress on the assessment work. A letter requesting acoustic tagging data, an important component of the assessment, has been sent to states, agencies, and academics. The Committee has also been working on genetic information for the assessment.

The Board approved a request from the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board to conduct a stock assessment update in 2016 to receive a report on the stock condition that includes 2015 data and reflects Addendum IV regulatory changes. Due to the addition of the update to the Stock Assessment Subcommittee's workload, the 2018 benchmark stock assessment may be delayed. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, ISFMP Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the habitat bottleneck white paper for use by the Commission.

Motion by Mr. Adler, second by Mr. Fote. Motion carries without objection.

On behalf of the Atlantic Striped Bass Board, I move the ISFMP Policy Board adjust the 2016 stock assessment schedule to include a striped bass update in 2016.

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

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BOARD (NOVEMBER 5, 2015)

Meeting Summary

The South Atlantic State/Federal Management Board discussed progress on the red drum stock assessment, future management of spotted seatrout, and FMP Reviews for Spanish Mackerel and spotted seatrout.

The Board reviewed progress on the red drum stock assessment, which was peer reviewed in August 2015. Throughout the past year, the Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SASC) has worked to develop a new model framework in order to determine an overfishing and overfished status of the stock. During this transition, the SASC encountered several challenges in developing a stable model which estimates plausible stock conditions and dynamics. As a result, the SEDAR peer review workshop was a collaborative effort focusing on model development, where panelists reviewed the assessment work to date and provided constructive comments on modifications to the model. The SASC is currently working to incorporate the recommendations of the peer review panel and the updated model will be desk reviewed this winter. The Board will be presented the complete assessment in February.

Given spotted seatrout's limited migratory range, the Board agreed species management would be best left to the individual states rather than being managed through an interstate fishery management plan. Therefore, the Board recommended to the ISFMP Policy Board that spotted seatrout be removed from ASMFC management authority. The Policy Board will consider this recommendation at its next meeting in February 2016.

Finally, the Board approved the FMP Review for Spanish mackerel and spotted seatrout. The Board also changed the due date for black drum compliance reports from March 1 to August 1. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

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

Motion made by Mr. Boyles and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion carries without objection.

Move to approve the 2015 Spotted Seatrout FMP Review, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for Delaware and New Jersey.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Boyles. Motion carries without objection.

Move to recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board that the spotted seatrout FMP be withdrawn.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel and seconded by Mr. Estes. Motion carries (10 in favor, 1 abstention).